

### ■ Intensificatory tautology

In [2ii], *a tiny little bird*, there is a sequence of two adjectives with identical or nearly identical meanings, interpreted as “a very little bird”: we accordingly call this **intensificatory tautology**. It belongs to informal style, and is found with a very narrow range of adjective meanings – normally “very small” or “very big” (e.g. *a huge big box*).

The adjective *great* is not much used for expressing largeness in contemporary English: *It was great*, for example, means “It was extremely good”, and likewise *They have a great house* means “They have a wonderful house”, not “They have a big house”. One of the places where *great* retains its “large” sense, however, is in this intensificatory tautology construction, as in *an enormous great house*, *a great big hole*, and so on. Some of the attributive-only degree adjectives with the *-ing* suffix are also found here: *a whopping great hole*, *a thumping big majority*, and so on.

## 5 Adverbs: delimitation of the category

### 5.1 Adverbs as modifiers of heads that are not nouns

We noted at the beginning of this chapter that the words that modify verbs are in general distinct from the words that modify nouns. Compare:

- | [1]  | MODIFIER OF NOUN | MODIFIER OF VERB                             |
|--|------------------|--|
| i. a. <i>old houses</i>                        |                  | b. * <i>They endured old</i> .               |
| ii. a. * <i>her quite enjoyment of it</i>      |                  | b. <i>She quite enjoyed it.</i>              |
| iii. a. <i>a remarkable/ remarkably change</i> |                  | b. <i>It changed remarkably/ remarkable.</i> |

*Old* and *remarkable* are adjectives, modifying nouns but not verbs, while *quite* and *remarkably* are adverbs, modifying verbs (or VPs) but not nouns. In a great number of cases, there are morphologically related pairs of adjective and adverb, with the latter derived from the former by suffixation of *-ly*, as with *remarkable* and *remarkably* in [iii].

This provides the starting point for a definition of adverb: a grammatically distinct category of words whose members are characteristically used to modify verbs but not nouns. Broadly speaking, however, the words that can modify verbs can also modify adjectives and other adverbs – and many can also modify expressions of additional categories other than nouns (or nominals). Compare, for example:

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| [2] i. a. <i>They [almost suffocated].</i>                             | [verb]          |
| b. <i>The article was [almost incomprehensible].</i>                   | [adjective]     |
| c. <i>She [almost always] gets it right.</i>                           | [adverb]        |
| d. <i>[Almost all] the candidates failed.</i>                          | [determinative] |
| e. <i>They are [almost without equal].</i>                             | [PP]            |
| f. <i>She read [almost the whole book] in one day.</i>                 | [NP]            |
| ii. a. <i>He [behaved annoyingly].</i>                                 | [verb]          |
| b. <i>We'd had enough of his [annoyingly unpredictable] behaviour.</i> | [adjective]     |
| c. <i>They are late [annoyingly often].</i>                            | [adverb]        |
| d. <i>Annoyingly, they hadn't left us any milk.</i>                    | [clause]        |

*Almost* is amongst the most versatile, occurring not just with verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, as in [ia–c], but also with determinatives, PPs, and NPs. Note that it is necessary

to distinguish between nouns and NPs. Adverbs do not occur as attributive modifiers within a nominal, but many can occur as external modifier with an NP as head. *Almost the whole book*, for example, has the NP *the whole book* as head, and may be contrasted with *She congratulated him on his [almost success]*, where it is inadmissibly functioning as modifier of the noun *success*. In [ii] we see *annoyingly* in construction with not only a verb, adjective, and adverb, but also a whole clause.<sup>15</sup>

The most important defining property of adverbs thus needs to be given in the form:

- [3] Adverbs characteristically modify verbs and other categories except nouns, especially adjectives and adverbs.

### ■ Heterogeneity of the adverb category

The fact that adverbs can modify such a wide range of expressions makes the category somewhat heterogeneous, for by no means all adverbs occur with all of the heads illustrated in [2]. For example, *very* “to a high degree” and *too* in the sense “excessively” modify adjectives and adverbs (and a few PPs), but not verbs or NPs or clauses. Their inability to modify verbs makes them sharply different from prototypical adverbs: compare *I enjoyed it considerably* and *\*I enjoyed it very*, or *He worries excessively* and *\*He worries too* (possible only with a quite different sense of *too*). Such adverbs as *moreover* and *nevertheless* modify clauses, but not verbs or predicative adjectives. Adverbs such as *only* and *even* differ from most adverbs by virtue of their ability to occur with a particularly wide range of heads, e.g. a content clause in *I regret [only that I couldn't do more to help]*, a non-idiomatic PP in *They open [even on Christmas Day]*. To say that a word is an adverb thus gives only a very rough indication of its syntactic distribution. A fuller description needs to include a statement of which categories it can modify.

It is worth emphasising, however, that some degree of unity is brought to the category of adverbs by the fact that all the types of expression that accept adverbs as modifier take some that are derived from adjectives by means of the *-ly* suffix. For example, the class of connective adverbs containing *moreover* and *nevertheless* also includes de-adjectival *consequently*. Similarly, the class of adverbs which, like *almost* in [2if], modify NPs includes *absolutely*, *possibly*, and numerous other *-ly* adverbs – cf. *absolutely the best way of handling the situation*.

It is also the case that no *-ly* adverb modifies nouns. This is the hallmark modifying function from which adverbs are absolutely excluded. (There are words ending in *-ly* that can modify nouns, as in *a likely story*, *the ugly building*, *my only daughter*, *this lovely party*; but these are adjectives, not adverbs: see Ch. 19, §5.8.)

### ■ Reducing the extension of the adverb category

In the practice of traditional grammar (as reflected, for example, in the classification of words in dictionaries), the adverb is a miscellaneous or residual category – the category to which words are assigned if they do not satisfy the more specific criteria for nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, and conjunctions. Nouns function as (head of

<sup>15</sup> *Annoyingly* in [2iid] is prosodically detached from the rest, and hence is a supplement rather than a modifier, but the relations are similar in the case of adverbs. Examples with an adverb integrated into the structure as a modifier of a clause are *Suddenly there was a tremendous crash* or *Perhaps you made a mistake*.

the) subject or object in clause structure, and (mostly) inflect for number and combine with determiners. Verbs function as head in clause structure and inflect for tense. Adjectives can normally function as attributive modifier in the structure of a nominal, and/or as predicative complement. Traditional prepositions take NP complements. Traditional conjunctions introduce subordinate clauses or coordinates. With fairly small-scale exceptions (including interjections), all other words are assigned to the adverb category.

In the present grammar we have endeavoured to make the adverb a more coherent category. To this end we have significantly reduced its membership in the following ways.

#### Major change: adverbs and prepositions

The main difference between our analysis and traditional grammar with respect to the adverb category concerns the boundary between adverbs and prepositions. We count as prepositions words that take other kinds of complement than NPs, and we also include in the preposition category some words that occur without any complement. In our analysis, then, the underlined words in [4] are prepositions, not adverbs:

- [4] i *[According to Mary, we have no chance of winning.*  
ii *The basket is outside.*

We discuss this issue in detail in Ch. 7, §2.4, and here will make only two brief points.

(a) PPs, no less than AdvPs, can function as adjunct in clause structure; the difference is then primarily a matter of their internal structure, and there are no good reasons for restricting PPs to phrases with an NP complement. From this point of view, there is a strong case for taking the head + complement phrase *according to Mary* in [4i] as a PP rather than an AdvP.

(b) *Outside* in [4ii] is complement of the verb *be*, a function that does not admit *-ly* adverbs; note that in cases where we have an adjective–adverb pair with the latter derived from the former by *-ly* suffixation, it is the adjective, not the adverb, that appears in this position. *Outside* cannot plausibly be said to be modifying the verb, and there are thus good grounds for removing it and similar words from the adverb category.

#### Minor changes: pronouns and determinatives

We also exclude the following from the adverb category:

- [5] i *yesterday, today, tomorrow, tonight* [pronouns]  
ii *the, this, that, all, any, a little, much, little, enough* [determinatives]

Traditional grammar takes the items in [5i] to be nouns in examples like [6i] and adverbs in [6ii–iii]:

- [6] i *Yesterday was the first day for weeks that it hasn't rained.*  
ii *They arrived yesterday.*  
iii *[Their behaviour yesterday] was quite embarrassing.*

There is, however, no need to distinguish the *yesterday* of [i] and [ii] in terms of category as well as function. There are a considerable number of NPs that can function as adjunct in clause structure – adjunct of temporal location (*They arrived last week*), duration (*They stayed a long time*), frequency (*They tried many times*), manner (*They did it this way*),

and so on. *Yesterday* in [ii] thus fits in with this pattern: an adjunct of temporal location realised by an NP with a deictic pronoun as head. As for [iii], *yesterday* is here modifying the noun *behaviour*, which makes it unlike an adverb. Compare, for example, *\*Their behaviour so badly was quite embarrassing*. To correct this we must replace the noun *behaviour* by a verb (*Their behaving so badly was quite embarrassing*) or the adverb *badly* by an adjective (*Their bad behaviour was quite embarrassing*).

The same general point applies to the items in [5ii], which are traditionally analysed as adjectives in examples like [7i] and adverbs in [7ii]:

- [7] i a. *We haven't got [much time].* b. *She wrote [this book].*  
ii a. *We didn't [like it much].* b. *She is [this tall].*

Again, we do not need to distinguish in terms of category as well as function, for the dual use applies to a significant proportion of the words that function as basic determiners. Determinatives which in NP structure select plural heads (such as *these, those, we, you, both, several, many, few, a few*) naturally do not occur as modifiers to verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The same applies to those that select count singulars (*a, each, every, either, neither, another*). But apart from the interrogatives and relatives, virtually all determinatives that can occur in NP structure with a non-count singular head can also function as modifier to verbs and/or adjectives and adverbs: see the account of individual items given in Ch. 5, §7.

## 5.2 The morphological form of adverbs

Adverbs differ from nouns, verbs, and adjectives in that the great majority of them are morphologically complex: there are relatively few adverbs with simple bases like *as, quite, soon*. For this reason, we survey the morphological form of adverb lexemes in this section, rather than in Ch. 19.

### (a) De-adjectival adverbs in *-ly*

A very high proportion of adverbs are formed from adjectives by suffixation of *-ly*. Many Adj + *-ly* forms can be paraphrased as “in an Adj manner/way” (e.g. *careful-ly, hasti-ly*, etc.), or “to an Adj degree” (*extremely, surprisingly*, etc.), but numerous *-ly* adverbs do not have this kind of meaning, and those that do can generally be used in other senses too, as described in Ch. 8. It must be emphasised, therefore, that there is no simple and regular semantic relation between adjectives and their *-ly* adverb counterparts. Thus in such pairs as the following the adverb cannot be paraphrased in any uniform way on the basis of the adjective:

- [8] i a. *their final performance* b. *They finally left.*  
ii a. *the individual members* b. *We must examine them individually.*  
iii a. *a real disappointment* b. *I really enjoyed it.*  
iv a. *a total failure* b. *She's totally absorbed in her work.*

There are also pairs where the meaning of the adverb is related much less directly to that of the adjective than in [8]: compare *bare ~ barely, hard ~ hardly, scarce ~ scarcely, late ~ lately, present ~ presently, short ~ shortly*.

Adjectives that do not form *-ly* adverbs

Although a great many adjectives form the base for *-ly* adverbs, there are also many that do not. Adjectives that do not accept the *-ly* suffix include the following:

[9]	i <i>afraid</i>	<i>aghast</i>	<i>alive</i>	<i>asleep</i>	<i>awake</i>	<i>awash</i>
ii	<i>inferior</i>	<i>junior</i>	<sup>%</sup> <i>major</i>	<i>minor</i>	<i>senior</i>	<i>superior</i>
iii	<i>friendly</i>	<i>leisurely</i>	<i>lonely</i>	<i>poorly</i>	<i>silly</i>	<i>ugly</i>
iv	<i>hurt</i>	<i>improved</i>	<i>surrounded</i>	<i>unexplained</i>	<i>written</i>	<i>Paris-based</i>
v	<i>American</i>	<i>British</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>European</i>	<i>Iraqi</i>	<i>Parisian</i>
vi	<i>blue</i>	<i>brown</i>	<i>orange</i>	<i>purple</i>	<i>scarlet</i>	<i>yellow</i>
vii	<i>big</i>	<i>content</i>	<i>drunk</i>	<i>fake</i>	<i>fat</i>	<i>female</i>
	<i>foreign</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>key</i>	<i>little</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>macho</i>
	<i>male</i>	<i>modern</i>	<i>nuclear</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>prime</i>	<i>sick</i>
	<i>small</i>	<i>sorry</i>	<i>tall</i>	<i>urban</i>	<i>woollen</i>	<i>young</i>

We ignore at this point cases of homonymy between adverb and adjective: see (c) below.

The adjectives in [9i–iv] illustrate morphological constraints: *-ly* does not attach to adjectives beginning with the prefix *a-* or, in general, ending with the Latin comparative suffix *-or*, or to adjectives that themselves end in *ly* (whether or not this represents the adjective-forming suffix *-ly*). Thus there are no adverbs *\*afraidly*, *\*inferiorly*, *\*friendly*, etc. The <sup>%</sup> annotation on *major* reflects the fact that <sup>%</sup>*majorly*, “in a major way, to a considerable degree”, has recently come to be used by some, predominantly younger, speakers. Likewise most adjectives based on past participles do not form adverbs, though there are some exceptions, such as *tiredly* or *determinedly*.

Semantic constraints are illustrated in [9v–vi]. The *-ly* suffix does not attach to adjectives derived from place-names, nor in general to those denoting colours. There are, however, a few colour terms that are occasionally found: *blackly*, *whitely*, *greenly*, *redly* (e.g. *The Huntleys' farmhouse rose redly out of the red Herefordshire earth, as if it had, over the centuries, just slowly emerged from it*).

Finally, [9vii] gives a miscellaneous set of other adjectives without adverbial counterparts in *-ly*. Note that the set includes a number of very common short adjectives denoting size or age. *Good* has a morphologically unrelated adverbial counterpart, *well*. *Content* and *drunk* are to be distinguished from *contented* and *drunken*, which do form *-ly* adverbs.

Adverbs in *-ly* derived from non-adjectival bases

[10]	i <i>bodily</i>	<i>namely</i>	<i>partly</i>	<i>purposely</i>	<i>matter-of-factly</i>
ii	<i>accordingly</i>	<i>exceedingly</i>	<i>jokingly</i>	<i>longingly</i>	

In [i], *-ly* attaches to a noun or, in *matter-of-factly*, to a phrase; for *daily*, *hourly*, etc., see (c) below. The bases in *-ing* in [ii] exist as verbs, but not (or hardly) as adjectives.

## (b) Other morphologically complex adverb lexemes

[11]	i <i>afresh</i>	<i>again</i>	<i>aloud</i>	<i>anew</i>	<i>apace</i>
ii	<i>almost</i>	<i>already</i>	<i>also</i>	<i>altogether</i>	<i>always</i>
	<i>anyway</i>	<i>somehow</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>somewhat</i>	<i>anyhow</i>

iii	<i>edgeways</i>	<i>lengthways</i>	<i>sideways</i>	<i>clockwise</i>	<i>crabwise</i>	<i>crosswise</i>
	<i>likewise</i>	<i>otherwise</i>	<i>moneywise</i>	<i>healthwise</i>	<i>plotwise</i>	<i>weatherwise</i>
iv	<i>forthwith</i>	<i>furthermore</i>	<i>indeed</i>	<i>maybe</i>	<i>meantime</i>	<i>meanwhile</i>
	<i>moreover</i>	<i>nevertheless</i>	<i>nonetheless</i>	<i>nowadays</i>	<i>oftentimes</i>	<i>doubtless</i>
v	<i>never</i>	<i>neither</i>	<i>nor</i>	<i>once</i>	<i>thrice</i>	<i>twice</i>

The prefix *a-* forms adjectives (such as *afraid*), prepositions (*along*), and also adverbs, as in [i]. The adverbs in [ii] are compounds beginning with a determinative base: in none of them is the meaning predictable from the parts. The examples in [iii] end in *-wise* or *-ways*, which sometimes yield alternants, as in *lengthwise* ~ *lengthways*. The last four illustrate a more recent use of *-wise*, with the sense “as regards”, which yields numerous nonce-forms, largely restricted to informal style, and more common in AmE than in BrE. There are also nonce-forms compounded with *fashion*, as in *doggy-fashion*. Set [iv] contains a miscellaneous group of compounds, together with the derivative *doubtless*. The first three items in [v] are negative forms, while the last three are morphologically irregular forms based on numerals. We might also include in the present category the underlined expressions in such examples as *It sort of collapsed*, *It looks kind of dangerous*, *He as good as admitted it*. These are best regarded as having been reanalysed as adverbs modifying the following verb or adjective. Note, for example, that *sort of collapsed* is a finite VP in predicate function: the verb *collapsed* must be head of this VP, not complement of *of*. For further examples of reanalysed comparative expressions like *as good as*, see Ch. 13, §4.5.

## (c) Adverbs that are homonymous with adjectives

There are a good number of adverbs that are identical in form with adjectives. The overlap is greater in non-standard speech, and within the standard variety there are some adverbs of this kind that are restricted to informal style. Compare:

[12]	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB
i	a. <i>She's a hard worker.</i>	b. <i>She works hard.</i>
ii	a. <i>It's a real gem.</i>	b. <i>That's real nice of you.</i>
iii	a. <i>They make regular payments.</i>	b. <i>'They pay the rent regular.</i>

*Hard* is one that is stylistically neutral; there is an adverb *hardly*, but its meaning is quite different, and there is no alternation between *hard* and *hardly* in [ib]. The use of *real* in [iib] is very informal: other styles would have *really*. And [iiib] is clearly non-standard, the standard variety requiring the *-ly* form *regularly*. Many examples of this last kind are familiar to speakers of Standard English through popular culture, e.g. song lyrics, as in ‘*Love me tender*’, ‘*Treat me nice*’. It should be noted that this non-standard usage is restricted to cases where the adverb follows the head: we do not find “*She tender loved him*” and the like.

One further general point to be made is that the distinction between adjective and adverb is not always entirely obvious. Adjectives can occur in predicative function with verbs other than *be*, as in *They sat still* or *We laid them flat*. Thus although we can have both *The moon shone brightly* and *The moon shone bright* these clauses do not have to be assigned the same structure: *bright* in the second is best taken as a predicative adjective (cf. *The moon was bright*), not an adverb.

Pairs where the adverb differs significantly in meaning from the adjective  
In a number of cases the adverb differs in meaning from the adjective in varying degrees:

[13]	<i>about</i>	<i>dead</i>	<i>even</i>	<i>far</i>	<i>ill</i>	<i>jolly</i>	<i>just</i>
	<i>only</i>	<i>pretty</i>	<i>sometime</i>	<i>still</i>	<i>straight</i>	<i>very</i>	<i>well</i>

The adverb uses are illustrated in:

- [14] *About* five people were present. You're *dead* right. He won't *even* talk to me.  
*This one is far* better. He won't speak *ill* of her. We had a *jolly* good time.  
*It was just* big enough. I've *only* got two dollars. It's *pretty* dangerous.  
We must get together *sometime*. I *still* love you. He went *straight* to bed.  
You are *very* kind. She speaks French *well*.

The meaning of *very* in *very kind* is clearly different from that of the adjective in *this very room* or *the very edge of the cliff*, but there is a further adverbial use of *very* whose meaning is quite close to that of the adjective – namely the use where *very* modifies superlatives or comparative *same*, as in *the very best hotel* or *the very same point*.

Pairs where there is little if any difference in meaning

A sample of adjective–adverb pairs of this kind is given in:

[15]	i	<i>daily</i>	<i>hourly</i>	<i>weekly</i>	<i>deadly</i>	<i>kindly</i>	<i>likely</i>
	ii	<i>downright</i>	<i>freelance</i>	<i>full-time</i>	<i>non-stop</i>	<i>off-hand</i>	<i>outright</i>
	overall	<i>part-time</i>	<i>three-fold</i>	<i>wholesale</i>	<i>worldwide</i>		
	iii	<i>bleeding</i>	<i>bloody</i>	<i>damn(ed)</i>	<i> fucking</i>		
	iv	<i>clean</i>	<i>clear</i>	<i>dear</i>	<i>deep</i>	<i>direct</i>	<i>fine</i>
		<i>first</i>	<i>flat</i>	<i>free</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>last</i>
		<i>light</i>	<i>loud</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>mighty</i>	<i>plain</i>	<i>right</i>
		<i>scarce</i>	<i>sharp</i>	<i>slow</i>	<i>sure</i>	<i>tight</i>	<i>wrong</i>
	v	<i>alike</i>	<i>alone</i>	<i>early</i>	<i>extra</i>	<i>fast</i>	<i>hard</i>
		<i>how(er)</i>	<i>late</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>next</i>	<i>okay</i>	<i>solo</i>

Those in [15i] contain the suffix *-ly*, but since it appears on the adjective too it cannot be identified with the suffix that derives adverbs from adjectives. This set includes words whose base denotes a period of time (*a monthly magazine* vs *It is published monthly*). The others are illustrated in *deadly poison* vs *deadly poisonous* and *the likely result* vs *He'll very likely die*.

The items in [15ii] are compounds: *It's a downright lie* vs *It's downright false*. Those in [15iii] are representative of expletives which occur as attributive-only adjectives and systematically exclude the *-ly* suffix, giving *a bloody disgrace* vs *bloody disgraceful*.

The items in [15iv] all have adverb counterparts in *-ly*, so there are three constructions to consider:

[16]	i	a. <i>a deep wound</i>	b. <i>the wrong decision</i>	[adjective]
	ii	a. <i>It cut deep into his flesh.</i>	b. <i>He guessed wrong.</i>	
	iii	a. <i>They were deeply distressed.</i>	b. <i>He acted wrongly.</i>	{ [adverb]}

The adverbs with and without the *-ly* suffix are not freely interchangeable, but differ in a variety of ways, only some of which can be mentioned here. *Firstly* and *lastly* alternate

with *first* and *last* as connective adjuncts used in enumeration (*First/Firstly I would like to thank my parents, ...*), but not normally elsewhere (*It was first/firstly noticed last week*). Adverbial *scarce* is archaic or literary relative to *scarcely*: *She could scarce/scarcely remember what she'd said*. Adverbial *dear* is largely restricted to modifying such verbs as *cost* and *pay*: compare *It cost us dearly/dear* but *They loved her dearly/ \*dear*. Adverbial *direct* is restricted to post-head position and situations of movement or transfer: compare *We went directly/direct to New York*, but *It won't affect us directly/ \*direct* and *We live [directly/ \*direct opposite the park]*. By contrast, *mighty* (more common in AmE than in BrE) occurs as a pre-head modifier of adjectives and adverbs: *mighty impressive; mightily* mainly occurs as postmodifier to a verb (*He laboured mightily against the elements*). *Slow* occurs only with verbs of motion, especially *go* and *drive*, and cannot occur in preverbal position: *Don't go so slowly/slow*, but *It improved slowly/\*slow* and *They slowly/\*slow moved away*.

There are no forms in *-ly* for the items in [15v] (leaving aside *nextly*, which has virtually disappeared from use, and the semantically quite distinct *hardly* and *lately*). *How* is not traditionally analysed as an adjective, but that is the appropriate category to assign it to in examples like *How are you?* and *How was the concert?*, where it is in predicative complement function – compare the adjectives in answers to these questions, such as *I am well* and *It was excellent*. Likewise *however*, though as an adverb this also has a distinct use as a connective adjunct.

Adverbial *long*, as in *It won't last long*, has a temporal meaning: "a long time". Its distribution is quite exceptional for an adverb, in that it can head phrases functioning as internal complement to a few verbs such as *take, have, need, spend, give, and be*:

- [17] i a. *Take as long as you like.*  
b. *You won't have very long to wait.*  
ii a. *How long can you give me?*  
b. *I won't be long.*

The underlined phrases are functionally comparable to NPs: compare *Take as much time as you like; You won't have more than ten minutes to wait; How much time can you give me?; I won't be more than ten minutes*. It is nevertheless clear from the dependents of *long* in [17] (*as, very, how*) that it is an adverb, not a noun. Notice, moreover, that such AdvPs cannot replace temporal NPs in subject function: *A long time/ \*Long had passed since their last meeting* (except, somewhat marginally, in passives – *How long was spent on the job?*). In post-verbal position, *long* tends to prefer non-affirmative contexts: *She didn't stay long*, but not *\*She stayed long* – compare pre-verbal (and somewhat formal) *I had long realised that it was dangerous*.

#### Inflected forms

The overlap between adjective and adverb is somewhat greater with comparatives and superlatives than with the plain form. Compare:

- [18] i a. *\*They are singing loud.* b. *They are singing louder than usual.*  
ii a. *\*Kim was moving slow.* b. *Kim was moving the slowest of them all.*

Note in this connection that the irregular *better* and *best* are forms of both the adjective

with examples following.

[10] i VP-ORIENTED ADJUNCTS

- a. VP-oriented adjuncts often prefer end position, where prosodic detachment is not normal except to separate the indication of manner from the rest of the clause, perhaps as a kind of afterthought.
- b. Central position (after the tensed auxiliary if there is one) is an alternative, especially if this means the adjunct is adjacent to the lexical verb of the VP it is semantically associated with, rather than being separated from it by secondary forms of auxiliaries. Prosodic detachment in this case is not normal, but would signal that the adjunct was an interpolation.
- c. Front position is highly unusual for VP-oriented adjuncts, and if used will normally require prosodic detachment.

ii CLAUSE-ORIENTED ADJUNCTS

- a. Clause-oriented adjuncts tend to prefer front position, where prosodic detachment is normal.
- b. Central position (preferably after the auxiliary if there is one) is an alternative, with prosodic detachment often preferred.
- c. End position is strongly disfavoured unless there is prosodic detachment.

[11] VP-ORIENTED ADJUNCT (MANNER)

- i. a. *<sup>1</sup>Expertly, Chris had repaired it.*      b. *<sup>2</sup>Expertly Chris had repaired it.*
- ii. a. *Chris, expertly, had repaired it.*      b. *?Chris expertly had repaired it.*
- iii. a. *Chris had, expertly, repaired it.*      b. *Chris had expertly repaired it.*
- iv. a. *Chris had repaired it, expertly.*      b. *Chris had repaired it expertly.*

[12] CLAUSE-ORIENTED ADJUNCT (EVALUATION)

- i. a. *Luckily, Chris had forgotten it.*      b. *Luckily Chris had forgotten it.*
- ii. a. *Chris, luckily, had forgotten it.*      b. *?Chris luckily had forgotten it.*
- iii. a. *Chris had, luckily, forgotten it.*      b. *Chris had luckily forgotten it.*
- iv. a. *Chris had forgotten it, luckily.*      b. *\*Chris had forgotten it luckily.*

Manner adjuncts are generally not placed in front position, as the marks on both examples in [11i] indicate, but, again, in some contexts such sentences will be encountered; in particular, where the manner in which some action is taken is crucial to the context of the action, a manner adjunct might perhaps be found in front position (*Smoothly the boat slid down the ramp into the water*). Similarly, although [11ii] is not a normal positioning of an integrated manner adjunct, it should not be assumed that such sentences will never be encountered. Similar remarks hold for [12ib] (consider *We fortunately hadn't gone very far*, which has the same structure), though [12ivb] seems implausible enough to be marked as ungrammatical.

#### ■ Survey of semantic types

To indicate in summary form where AdvPs can be positioned with full or partial acceptability, we will exhibit a sequence of words with indicators of acceptability for each of the potentially available positions in which a given adjunct might occur. We will put '✓' where it would be acceptable, '?' where it might occur but would be disfavoured (not fully acceptable), and '\*' where it is outright ungrammatical, or else so implausible (because

some other reading would be assumed) that we can treat it as ungrammatical. These marks apply to readings in which the adjunct is prosodically integrated, not detached. Thus for *Frankly* as a manner adverb combining with *Chris won't talk about it*, we would write [13], which is interpreted as in [14]:

- [13] *Frankly* MANNER \**Chris \* won't ✓ talk ✓ about it ✓*

[14] i *Frankly Chris won't talk about it* and *Chris frankly won't talk about it* have no chance of being interpreted with *frankly* as a manner adjunct (both would be interpreted with *frankly* as speech act-related).

ii Any of *Chris won't frankly talk about it*, *Chris won't talk frankly about it*, and *Chris won't talk about it frankly* are fully acceptable with the manner adjunct reading.

We do not put any mark between *about* and *it* since these are not separate dependents in clause structure, and no integrated adjunct could occur here.

We now summarise how the classes of adjuncts listed in [5–6] are typically positioned in clauses.

#### Manner, means, and instrument

- [15] i *erratically* MANNER \**Bill \* would ✓ stagger ✓ around ✓*  
ii *arithmetically* MEANS \**it \* was ✓ established ✓ today ✓*

Adjuncts of manner, means, and instrument must normally be within the VP whose head they modify, in either end position (which is preferred) or central position. Manner adjuncts may sometimes be found preposed (*Erratically he staggered across the room*), but this is not at all common.<sup>16</sup>

#### Act-related

- [16] ACT-RELATED  
i. *foolishly* (subjective) ✓ *she ✓ has ✓ gone \* to the police \**  
ii. *deliberately* (volitional) ? *they ? were ✓ delaying ✓*

Act-related adjuncts of the subjective subtype (*carefully, foolishly, rudely, wisely*, etc.) occur in front or central position: end position is possible only with prosodic detachment. For the volitional subcategory (*deliberately, intentionally*, and so on) the preference is for central position, following the auxiliary if there is one; end position is an available alternative.

#### Degree

- [17] i *almost* DEGREE \**I ✓ died \**  
ii *thoroughly* DEGREE \**I ✓ agree \* with you ✓*

There are significant differences among degree adverbs. Some, such as *almost*, *nearly*, *quite*, normally occur only in central position. Others, such as *thoroughly*, *enormously*, *greatly*, occur in either central or final position. With this second set, end position is the default, and acceptability in central position depends on the verb. Thus *He enormously admires them* is fine, but we cannot have *\*The price has enormously gone up*.

<sup>16</sup>In earlier centuries manner adjuncts could be preposed with subject-auxiliary inversion: *Gladly would I accept your invitation if I could*; but this is seldom found in Present-day English.

## Temporal location, duration, aspectuality, and frequency

- [18] i *earlier* TEMPORAL LOCATION ✓ *she had left for Chicago* ✓  
 ii *temporarily* DURATION ? *we are staying with mother* ✓  
 iii *already* ASPECTUALITY ? *our guests are here* ✓  
 iv *often* FREQUENCY ? *he would visit her* ✓

AdvPs expressing temporal location prefer central position; they are also acceptable in front position, and mostly in end position too (though a longer one, such as *subsequently*, would be questionable in end position in [i]). Duration, aspectuality, and frequency adjuncts are similar except that they are less likely to be in front position (but for a use of *already* in front position see example [10ii] in Ch. 8, §8).

## Serial order

- [19] i *last* SERIAL ORDER \* *I had eaten the previous day*\*  
 ii *next* SERIAL ORDER \* *'Salome' was performed in 1926* ✓

The serial order adverbs *again*, *first*, *last*, and *next* generally resist front position quite strongly, and must precede the temporal adjuncts with which they frequently occur. Front position is not impossible for the word *next* in [ii], but the sentence *Next 'Salome' was performed in 1926* would be interpreted with *next* as a simple temporal location adjunct ("What happened after that was that '*Salome*' was performed in 1926"), not with the reading where *next* has the serial order sense ("The next time '*Salome*' was performed was in 1926").

## Domain and modality

- [20] i *politically* DOMAIN ✓ *this will become very unpleasant* ✓  
 ii *probably* MODALITY ✓ *she will go with them* ✓

Domain adjuncts prefer front position and also accept end position, but in central position normally require prosodic detachment. For modality adjuncts the preferred position is central; they occur readily in front position, and are also found in end position (but often with prosodic detachment).

## Evaluation and speech act-related

- [21] i *unfortunately* EVALUATION ✓ *they had set out too late*  
 ii *frankly* SPEECH ACT-RELATED ✓ *this is becoming a joke*

Both of these types of adjunct are most often prosodically detached. When prosodically integrated both can occur in front position, and the evaluation type also centrally.

## Connective

In general, connective adjuncts most often occur with prosodic detachment. In this case front position is preferred, but with numerous alternatives. In writing, it is common to find them in immediate post-subject position (as in *The plan, however, had one serious flaw*), but this is markedly more formal, and less common in speech. There are nevertheless some connectives that can be prosodically integrated – like the centrally positioned *nevertheless* in this sentence. *So* is exceptional in being more or less invariably integrated and in front position.

## The so-called 'split infinitive'

In infinitival clauses containing the marker *to*, there are two variants of the pre-verbal central position, one in which the adjunct precedes *to*, and one in which it follows:

- [22] i *We ask you [not to leave your seats]*. [pre-marker]  
 ii *We ask you [to please remain seated]*. [post-marker]

The construction with an adjunct in post-marker position is traditionally called a 'split infinitive'. There has been prescriptive pressure against it for more than a century; in fact it is probably the best-known topic in the whole of the English pedagogical grammatical tradition. Disapproval of the construction leads many writers (and subeditors) to avoid it in favour of pre-marker placement of the adjunct. That is, in written English, sentences like those in [23i] will be found as alternatives to sentences like those in [23ii].

- [23] i a. *I want really to humiliate him*. b. *We aim utterly to ignore it*. [pre-marker]  
 ii a. *I want to really humiliate him*. b. *We aim to utterly ignore it*. [post-marker]

No rational basis for the prescriptive rule

Prescriptive condemnation of the 'split infinitive' did not arise until the second half of the nineteenth century. The construction can be found in the literature of the preceding several hundred years, but it became more popular in English writing as the nineteenth century went on, and the adoption of the rule in prescriptive grammar reflected disapproval of this change. No reason was ever given as to why the construction was supposedly objectionable, however.

It should be noted that the term 'split infinitive' is a misnomer: nothing is being split. In Latin there is an infinitive form of the verb, which is traditionally translated into English by means of *to* + the plain form. Latin *amare*, for example, is translated as *to love*. But while *amare* is a single word, *to love* is not: it is a sequence of two words. Thus the fact that no adjunct can be positioned within *amare* provides no basis for expecting that it should be contrary to grammatical principles to position one between *to* and *love*. Moreover, we will argue in Ch. 14, §1.4.2, that in such a VP as *to love her* the immediate constituents are *to* and *love her*, so that *to love* does not form a syntactic constituent, let alone a word. From a grammatical point of view, therefore, the adjunct in *to genuinely love her* does not split anything.

## Avoiding ambiguity

Prescriptive rules and recommendations are often motivated by the wish to achieve clarity of expression, in particular to avoid ambiguity – cf., for example, the discussion of the traditional rule concerning the placement of *only* in §7.3 below. A curious feature of the 'split infinitive' rule, however, is that following it has the potential to reduce clarity, to create ambiguity.

A modifier placed between *to* and a following verb will always be interpreted as modifying that verb, but one located before the *to* can in principle be interpreted as modifying either the following verb or a preceding verb in a matrix clause. Compare first the following unambiguous examples:

- [24] i *I urge you [to really immerse yourself in the topic]*.  
 ii *I hope [eventually to have my own business]*.  
 iii *I want desperately [to see him again]*.

In [i] *really* belongs in the infinitival clause: it is a matter of your really immersing yourself, not of my really urging you. In [ii] *eventually* will also be interpreted as modifying the infinitival: it is my having my own business that is in the future, for my hoping is in the present. In [iii], by contrast, *desperately* is interpreted as modifying *want*, not *see*: the adjunct here belongs in the matrix clause (where it is in end position, after the lexical verb). Modifiers with the same linear position between a matrix verb and infinitival *to* can thus occupy different positions as far as the constituent structure is concerned.

Compare now:

- [25] i *The board voted [to immediately approve building it].*
- ii *The board voted immediately to approve building it.*

In [i] *immediately* unambiguously modifies *approve*: the board decided (perhaps after months of debate with opponents) that they would give immediate approval for some building project. This violates the prescriptive rule, however, so one might seek to remedy that by placing the adverb to the left of *to*, as in [ii]. But this is ambiguous, and indeed much the more salient and natural interpretation is the one where *immediately* modifies *voted*: they voted immediately that the proposal should be approved. Note, moreover, that we do not fare any better if we move the adverb to the right instead of to the left:

- [26] i *The board voted to approve immediately building it.*
- ii *The board voted to approve building it immediately.*

The salient interpretation of [i] has *immediately* modifying *building*. In [ii] the adverb can be interpreted as modifying any of the three verbs, but the one where it modifies *approve* is the least likely of the three. It is clear, then, that for the intended meaning, version [25i] is far superior to any of the others.

#### Current usage

Placement of a modifier after infinitival *to* is not uncommon in either speech or writing (including works of many of the most prestigious authors). Among the adverbs that particularly lend themselves to placement in this position are those marking degree (such as *really* and *utterly* in [23ii]), *actually*, *even*, *further*, and so on:

- [27] i *I hadn't expected her to almost break the record.*
- ii *Following this rule has the potential to actually create ambiguities.*
- iii *I wouldn't advise you to even consider accepting their offer.*
- iv *It's important not to further complicate an already very tense situation.*

Such examples are unquestionably fully acceptable. Note, moreover, that it is not just adverbs that can appear in post-marker position: we also find PPs (e.g. *at least*, *in effect*, *in some measure*) and NPs (e.g. *one day*).

Modern usage manuals are generally aware of the points made above, and present the rule only with the qualification that a 'split infinitive' is acceptable if it improves clarity or avoids awkwardness. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that in careful or edited writing adjuncts are often consciously placed in pre-marker (or end) position in order to avoid infringing the traditional rule.

## 7.2 Adverbial modifiers of adjectives and adverbs

In the structure of attributive AdjPs, adverbs (or AdvPs) can be used with virtually any of the semantic functions that they have in clause structure. In the following

examples, the labels on the right match the ones used in the account of adjuncts presented in Ch. 8.

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| [28] i <i>his [quietly confident] demeanour</i>            | [manner]             |
| ii <i>their [unintentionally humorous] remarks</i>         | [act-related]        |
| iii <i>his [internationally famous] daughter-in-law</i>    | [spatial location]   |
| iv <i>his [recently very aggressive] behaviour</i>         | [temporal location]  |
| v <i>his [permanently sullen] expression</i>               | [duration]           |
| vi <i>an [already quite difficult] situation</i>           | [aspectuality]       |
| vii <i>her [sometimes very harsh] criticisms</i>           | [frequency]          |
| viii <i>his [again totally uncomprehending] response</i>   | [serial order]       |
| ix <i>an [extremely valuable] contribution</i>             | [degree]             |
| x <i>the [consequently inevitable] decline</i>             | [reason]             |
| xi <i>their [nevertheless very valid] objection</i>        | [concession]         |
| xii <i>the [otherwise preferable] course of action</i>     | [condition]          |
| xiii <i>a [philosophically very naive] argument</i>        | [domain]             |
| xiv <i>a [probably unintentional] slight</i>               | [modality]           |
| xv <i>their [fortunately quite rare] misunderstandings</i> | [evaluation]         |
| xvi <i>this [frankly rather unsavoury] character</i>       | [speech act-related] |

The degree function, however, is by far the most common, and in AdvPs and predicative AdjPs it is virtually the only possibility apart from that of the focusing adverbs *only*, *even*, etc. Moreover, degree modifiers are found in AdjP and AdvP structure much more frequently than in clause structure, because verbs are less readily gradable than adjectives and adverbs. For these reasons we will focus in the remainder of this section on degree modification, though we will not repeat the semantic classification of degree modifiers presented in Ch. 8, §11.

#### Degree adverbs in -ly

A great many adverbs function as degree modifiers. The following is a sample of -ly adverbs that can be used in this way:

- |                 |              |              |               |             |              |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| [29] absolutely | amazingly    | awfully      | barely        | completely  | considerably |
| dreadfully      | easily       | enormously   | entirely      | exceedingly | excessively  |
| extensively     | extremely    | fairly       | fantastically | fully       | greatly      |
| hardly          | highly       | hugely       | immensely     | incredibly  | infinitely   |
| intensely       | largely      | moderately   | nearly        | noticeably  | partly       |
| perfectly       | positively   | practically  | profoundly    | purely      | really       |
| reasonably      | relatively   | remarkably   | simply        | slightly    | strikingly   |
| strongly        | sufficiently | supremely    | suspiciously  | terribly    | totally      |
| tremendously    | truly        | unbelievably | utterly       | virtually   | wonderfully  |

For some of these the primary meaning has to do with manner, with the degree meaning secondary. Compare:

- | [30]    | MANNER                                | DEGREE                                      |
|---------|---------------------------------------|---|
| i. a.   | <i>They behaved dreadfully.</i>       | <i>I'm dreadfully sorry.</i>                |
| ii. a.  | <i>He was acting suspiciously.</i>    | <i>The kids are suspiciously quiet.</i>     |
| iii. a. | <i>She solved the problem easily.</i> | <i>She speaks easily the most fluently.</i> |

In [ia] *dreadfully* means “very badly” (“in a dreadful manner”), whereas in [ib] it simply indicates a very high degree (“extremely”). In [iia] *suspiciously* likewise indicates manner (“in a manner that gave rise to suspicion”), while in [iib] it is a matter of the kids being quiet to a degree that caused suspicion. *Suspiciously* does not occur with this extended sense as a modifier of verbs.

As a manner adverb, *easily* means “with ease”; as a degree adverb it occurs mainly with superlatives or expressions indicating sufficiency (*easily loud enough*, *easily sufficient*). The interpretation is that the degree expressed in the head is achieved by a considerable margin; in [30iib] she excelled the others in fluency by such a margin, and in *She's easily good enough* she is considerably higher on the relevant scale than the minimum necessary to count as good enough.

*Fairly* indicates a moderately high degree: *The weather has been fairly good* (“quite, reasonably”). This is very different from the manner sense of *They played fairly*, etc. *Fairly* does not occur in clause structure with the same sense as in AdjPs or AdvPs: it cannot, for example, replace *quite* in *I quite liked it*. It is found in clause structure, however, as a synonym of *positively*, as in *They fairly jumped at the idea*.

#### ■ Degree adverbs without the *-ly* suffix

Other adverbs that function as degree modifier include the following:

[31]	<i>about</i>	<i>almost</i>	<i>altogether</i>	<i>as-v</i>	<i>bloody</i>	<i>damn-v</i>
	<i>dead-v</i>	<i>downright</i>	<i>even-v c</i>	<i>extra-v</i>	<i>far c</i>	<i>how</i>
	<i>however</i>	<i>indeed</i>	<i>jolly-v</i>	<i>just</i>	<i>least</i>	<i>less</i>
	<i>mighty-v</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>most</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>outright</i>	<i>plain-v</i>
	<i>pretty-v</i>	<i>quite</i>	<i>rather</i>	<i>real-v</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>somewhat</i>
	<i>still c</i>	<i>too-v</i>	<i>very-v</i>	<i>way c</i>	<i>well</i>	<i>yet c</i>

The ‘c’ subset

The items marked ‘c’ occur with comparisons of inequality or (in most cases) *too*:

[32]	i <i>far less useful</i>	<i>far too old</i>	<i>*far old</i>
	ii <i>still better</i>	<i>*still too expensive</i>	<i>*still expensive</i>
	iii <i>way better</i>	<i>way too dangerous</i>	<i>*way dangerous</i>

The relevant sense of *still* is seen in:

- [33] i *I enjoyed the evening but it would have been still better if you had been there.*  
ii *Tuesday is possible, but Friday would be better, and Sunday better still.*

In this sense *still*, *even*, *yet*, and *again* are equivalent: these are the ones that do not combine with *too*. *Still too expensive* and *still expensive* are possible as attributive AdjPs with *still* having its aspectual sense.

The ‘-v’ subset

The items in [31] marked ‘-v’ do not occur with the same sense as modifiers of verbs.<sup>17</sup>

Their use as modifiers of adjectives is illustrated in:

[34]	<i>as tall as Kim</i>	<i>damn rude</i>	<i>dead right</i>	<i>even better</i>	<i>extra careful</i>	<i>jolly good</i>
	<i>mighty generous</i>	<i>plain wrong</i>	<i>pretty stupid</i>	<i>real kind</i>	<i>too big</i>	<i>very old</i>

<sup>17</sup>Strictly speaking we should also have marked *more*, *most*, *less*, *least* as ‘-v’, since in clause structure they are forms of the determinatives *much* and *little* rather than adverbs. Moreover, *not* (expressing “zero degree”) does not belong syntactically with the degree modifiers in clause structure.

But we do not find *\*I as enjoyed it as Kim*, *\*I damn hated it*, *\*They dead hit the target*, etc. In clause structure *as*, *too*, and *very* modify *much* rather than modifying the verb directly: *I enjoyed it as much as Kim*; *You indulge yourself too much*; *I regret it very much*. *Pretty* also combines with *much*, but with the meaning “just about, more or less”: *I've pretty much ruined my chances*. In addition, *still* and its synonyms occur in clause structure in combination with *more*, the comparative form of *much*. Compare [33i], for example, with *I enjoyed the party, but I would have enjoyed it still more if you had been there*. *Damn* and *jolly* combine with *well* to form clause-level modifiers with emphatic meaning: *I damn/jolly well hope you're right*.

We have noted that informal *real* alternates with *really*, and it is only the latter form that occurs in clause structure: *I really/\*real like him*. *Dead* and *plain* combine with a quite narrow range of adjectives. Compare, for example, *dead bored* and *\*dead interested* or *plain silly* with *\*plain bright*. There are others that are even more restricted in their occurrence, largely confined to one or two fixed phrases: *fast asleep*, *wide open*, *wide awake*.<sup>18</sup>

The primary sense of *too* is to indicate a higher degree than the maximum that is consistent with meeting some condition, achieving some purpose, actualising some situation:

- [35] i *She was too tired to continue.*  
ii *We didn't go out: it was too wet.*

In [i] the degree of tiredness was greater than the maximum consistent with her continuing: the sentence thus entails that she didn't continue. In this sense, *too* licenses an indirect complement with the form of an infinitival clause or a *for* phrase (*too valuable for this kind of use*). This indirect complement indicates the condition, purpose, or potential situation, but does not have to be overtly expressed. In [ii], for example, there is no complement in the *wet* phrase, but we understand “too wet to go out”. In informal style, *too* can be used with more or less the sense of *very*, as in *You are too kind* or *That's too bad* (“very unfortunate”). In negative contexts it can be glossed as “particularly”: *I wasn't too impressed*; *It wasn't too bad* (“It was tolerable”).

#### ■ Submodification and iteration

It is possible to have non-coordinate sequences of degree adverbs, involving either submodification of one by another or iteration of the same word:

[36]	i <i>way more useful</i>	<i>almost unbelievably greedy</i>	<i>quite amazingly irresponsible</i>
	<i>just barely alive</i>	<i>not entirely too eager</i>	<i>bloody nearly completely useless</i>
	ii <i>very, very good</i>	<i>much, much better</i>	<i>far, far more interesting</i>

The examples in [ii] illustrate the adverbs that iterate most readily, but the construction is not limited to these – cf. *It's quite, quite beautiful* or *You're too, too kind*.

<sup>18</sup>Because there are degree modifiers that combine with adjectives and adverbs but not verbs, some modern grammars assign the items in [29] and [31] to a distinct lexical category called ‘intensifier’. This cannot be regarded as an improvement on the traditional analysis, however, for the number of -v items is very small in comparison with the total number of items that can function as degree modifier in the structure of AdjPs and AdvPs: there is no basis for making a primary category distinction here. The term ‘intensifier’ is also used as a functional term, but again this is no improvement on the traditional ‘degree modifier’. A large proportion of degree adverbs indicate a relatively high degree, but there are a good number that do not, and it is semantically inappropriate to apply the term ‘intensifier’ to the modifiers in phrases like *moderately cool*, *slightly unusual*, *barely noticeable*, etc.: in this book ‘intensifier’ is used only for those indicating a high degree.

### ■ Linear position

Degree modifiers generally precede the head. *Still* and its synonyms, however, optionally follow, as in [33ii]. In addition, the preferred position for *indeed* is after the head (reflecting its transparent resemblance to a PP):

- [37] *We are fortunate indeed to live in such a wonderful country.*

This example belongs to quite formal style; elsewhere *indeed* normally modifies a head that contains its own degree modifier, typically *very*, as in *very good indeed*. Post-head position is not possible in an attributive AdjP. Instead, *indeed* is delayed and appears after the head of the NP: *a very good book indeed*.

## 7.3 Focusing modifiers

We conclude this section with a survey of the kind of modifying function realised by such adverbs as *only* and *also* in:

- [38] i *You can [only exit from this lane].*  
ii *Jill had [also attended the history seminar].*

In writing, both of these examples are ambiguous, with the interpretations given in:

- [39] i a. "The only thing you can do from this lane is exit"  
b. "This is the only lane from which you can exit"  
ii a. "Those attending the history seminar included Jill as well as others"  
b. "The seminars Jill attended included the one on history as well as others"  
c. "The things Jill attended included the history seminar as well as others"  
d. "The things Jill did included attending the history seminar as well as others"

Thus if the lane is on a motorway, then in [ia] you are prohibited from continuing along the motorway, and in [ib] you are prohibited from exiting from other lanes. A context for [iia] is one where Kim and Pat attended the history seminar: Jill did too. For [iib] it might be that she attended the history seminar as well as the philosophy seminar. For [iic] she may have attended the history seminar as well as some committee meeting. And in [iid] it might be that Jill attended the history seminar as well as giving a lecture on semantics.

The square brackets in [38] enclose the constituents in which *only* and *also* are modifiers, with underlining marking the head. But it follows from the ambiguities that in order to understand the meaning contribution of *only* and *also* it is not sufficient to identify the syntactic head that they modify: one must know which element they apply to semantically. This element is called the focus – hence the term **focusing modifier** for this type of modifier. In [38i] the focus is *exit* in the case of interpretation [39ia], and *this lane* (or just *this*) for interpretation [39ib]. Similarly, the focus of [38ii] for the four interpretations given is respectively *Jill*, *history*, *the history seminar*, *attended the history seminar*. Note that the first of these, *Jill*, is not part of the head constituent that *also* syntactically modifies.

Focusing modifiers occur in a wide range of constituent types: all the major phrasal categories, and in some cases whole clauses. They are, moreover, predominantly realised by adverbs. It is for these reasons that we deal with them in the present chapter.

*Only* has a restrictive meaning, *also* an additive one. These represent the two main kinds of focusing modifier, and we will consider them in turn. But we should first note that neither of them can be made complement of *be* in a cleft clause:

- [40] i \**It is only that you can exit from this lane.*  
ii *It is also that Jill had attended the history seminar.*

Example [i] is ungrammatical, while [ii] is not a cleft clause. It is not a cleft counterpart of *Also, Jill had attended the history seminar*. Thus the complement of *be* here is not *also* but the content clause: compare *It* ("the problem", perhaps) *is that Jill had attended the history seminar*.

### 7.3.1 Restrictive focusing modifiers

Adverbs that function as focusing modifiers of the restrictive type include the following:

- [41] alone but exactly exclusively just merely  
only precisely purely simply solely

### ■ Range of constructions accepting restrictive focusing modifiers

It is a characteristic of focusing adverbs that they modify a wide range of constructions:

- [42] i *He loves [only his work].* [NP]  
ii *It's the sort of thing that could happen [only in America].* [PP]  
iii *The problem is [only temporary].* [AdjP]  
iv *He agreed [only somewhat reluctantly] to help us.* [AdvP]  
v *He apparently [only works two days a week].* [VP]  
vi *I regret [only that I couldn't be there to see it].* [declarative content clause]  
vii *I need to know [only how much it will cost].* [interrogative]  
viii *I remembered [only what a close shave we'd had].* [exclamative]  
ix *She forbade [only his living there], not just visiting.* [gerund-participial]  
x *[Only to help you] would I have anything to do with him.* [to-infinitival clause]  
xi *Things will [only get worse].* [bare infinitival]  
xii *We had it [only checked once].* [past-participial]  
xiii *Only disturb me if there's a genuine emergency.* [imperative clause]

They cannot, however, modify any other kind of main clause than an imperative. Compare [42iv], for example, with [43i]:

- [43] i A: *What's the matter?* B: \**Just there's nothing to do.*  
ii A: *What's the matter?* B: *There's just nothing to do.*

B cannot reply to A's question by *just* (or *simply*, *only*, etc.) + main clause. Instead we can place *just* in the VP, as in [ii], or use a construction with *it is* (*It's just that there's nothing to do*). Nor do focusing adverbs modify nouns or nominals (as opposed to NPs): in *my only reservation*, for example, *only* is an adjective, and as such it is not replaceable by the other items in [41].<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>There are other limitations which apply to the additive type too. For example, they cannot modify a vocative element ('Hey, only Pat, would you like one of these biscuits'), coordinators ('You can have cheese and biscuits only or dessert – i.e. you can't have both'), or parts of idioms ('My opponent gave only in').

### ■ Interpretation of *only*

The meaning of an elementary and unambiguous example like [44i] can be broken down into the two propositions given as [iia–b]:

- [44] i *Only Kim resigned.*  
 ii a. "Kim resigned"  
 b. "Nobody except Kim resigned"

Proposition [iia] is a presupposition: it is [iib] that constitutes the foregrounded part of the information, the main assertion. The "except" component of the main proposition is based on the focus – *Kim*.

In some cases the relevant concept is not "except", but "more than". Compare:

- [45] i *Sue is only a tutor.*  
 ii *I saw them only yesterday.*

The natural interpretation of [i] is that Sue is located on the hierarchy of academic positions no higher than the rank of tutor. And for [ii] we understand "as recently as yesterday". There can be ambiguity between the two kinds of interpretation. *I've only got a Mini*, for example, might be understood in context as "I've only got one car, a Mini" or "The car I've got is no grander than a Mini". Example [45ii] is in fact ambiguous in this way, for it could also be interpreted in the "except" sense: "Yesterday was the only time I saw them". And indeed the same applies with [45i]: it could be saying that Sue has only one job.<sup>20</sup>

### ■ Negation

We observed that proposition [44iiia] is presupposed, and this is reflected in the fact that it is normally preserved under negation, as in:

- [46] *Not only Kim resigned.*

This conveys that Kim resigned and that someone else did too. Matters are more complex when *only* has the "not more than" sense. *Sue isn't only a tutor* (ignoring the case where it is denying that she has only one job) would require a context where it has been claimed that Sue was only a tutor, and in this case it would be saying that she isn't a tutor but holds some higher position. *Only yesterday* in the sense "as recently as yesterday" cannot occur within the scope of negation (see Ch. 9, §1.3, for this concept): the natural interpretation of *I didn't see them only yesterday* has the "except" sense of *only*, "Yesterday was not the only time I saw them".

It will be apparent from what was said about [46] that negation relates restrictive *only* and additive *also*. It follows from [46] that there was *also* someone else who resigned. This relationship is reflected in the fact that *also* is often used correlatively with *not only*:

- [47] i *He not only apologised, he also sent flowers.*  
 ii *She'll be working late not only today but also every other day this week.*

Similarly with synonyms of *only* and *also*: primarily *simply*, *merely*, *just* on the one hand, *too* on the other (see also Ch. 15, §2.7).

<sup>20</sup>For the interpretation of *only + if*, see Ch. 8, §14.2.1.

### ■ Scopal focus and informational focus

In speech, the focus of a focusing modifier is commonly marked by stress. But the main stress in a clause certainly does not have to fall at this point. Compare:

- [48] i *They only gave me a SANDWICH for lunch.*  
 ii *Only Kim preferred the ORIGINAL version.*

In [i] the main stress is on *sandwich*, and this will be interpreted as the focus of *only*: "They didn't give me anything except a sandwich for lunch". In [ii], however, the focus of *only* is *Kim*, but for reasons of contrast the main stress falls on *original*: we understand "No one except Kim preferred the original version – everyone else preferred some later version".

It is a common practice to use the term 'focus' for the constituent carrying the main stress as well as for the constituent that a focusing modifier applies to. This of course stems from the fact that they coincide in the default case. It will be clear from what has just been said, however, that they are distinct concepts, and it is potentially confusing to use the same term for both. We will therefore distinguish them as **scopal focus** and **informational focus** respectively. The latter denotes the constituent carrying the main stress, and represents the principal new information in the clause, or intonation group: see Ch. 16, §2.

Scopal focus is the type we are concerned with in this section. Focusing modifiers are scope-bearing items, and the scopal focus is the contrastive element in their scope. In [48ii], for example, the scope of *only* is the whole clause, since the meaning of the whole clause is affected by it. That is, the restriction to *Kim* applies to the variable *x* in the open proposition "*x* preferred the original version". The scope is thus the whole clause and the scopal focus is *Kim*.

The scope does not always embrace everything in the sentence. Compare:

- [49] *Pat said that only Kim preferred the ORIGINAL version.*

Here *Pat said that* is outside the scope of *only*, and this means that neither *Pat* nor *said* could possibly be the scopal focus of *only*. For example, [49] cannot mean that nobody except *Pat* said that *Kim* preferred the original version. (For further discussion of the concept of scope, which applies to many elements besides focusing modifiers, see Ch. 8, §1, and Ch. 9, §1.3.) In the rest of this chapter, the term 'focus' when used without modification is to be understood as 'scopal focus'.

### ■ Linear position of focusing modifier relative to focus

There are two questions to consider concerning the order of focusing modifier and focus: does the modifier precede the focus, and is it adjacent to the focus? These two parameters yield the following combinations of values, where double underlining marks the modifier and single underlining marks the focus:

	PRECEDES?	ADJACENT?
i <i>We found <u>only</u> one mistake.</i>	yes	yes
ii <i>We <u>only</u> found one mistake.</i>	yes	no
iii <i>Technology <u>alone</u> cannot solve these problems.</i>	no	yes
iv <i>Technology cannot <u>alone</u> solve these problems.</i>	no	no

Which of these four possibilities are admissible in a given instance depends on the particular focusing adverb concerned. The modifier is also occasionally found following part of the focus and preceding the rest. This is what we have in [43ii], where the focus is the rest of the clause, *There's nothing to do*.

#### Position of *only*

*Only* usually precedes its focus. Unlike *just*, *purely*, and *simply*, however, it can also follow, as in *This is for your eyes only* or *I'm giving these to special friends only*. Such examples seem slightly formal in style, and *only* is relatively unlikely to occur in post-head position within a subject NP: *Kim only went to the movies*, for example, will normally be construed with *only* modifying *went to the movies*, not *Kim*.

When *only* precedes the focus and the latter is contained within the VP, *only* is commonly non-adjacent, functioning syntactically as modifier to the whole VP, as in [50ii]. There is a long-standing prescriptive tradition of condemning this construction and saying that in writing *only* should be placed immediately before its focus. It is recognised that one needs to distinguish here between speech and writing, because in speech the focus will usually be prosodically marked (as noted above, the scopal focus usually coincides with the informational focus). In writing, however, there is generally no analogue of stress, and hence no comparable way of marking the intended focus. For this reason, the prescriptive argument goes, the focus should be marked by placing *only* immediately before it.

This is another of those well-known prescriptive rules that are massively at variance with actual usage, including the usage of the best writers. The more empirically based manuals recognise this, and cite numerous literary examples that violate the rule, such as those in [51], where the focus is marked by underlining:

- [51] i *I [only saw Granny at carefully spaced intervals]*.  
 ii *Boris doesn't eat shanks so, of course, I [only cook them when he's away]*.

Examples of this kind are clearly impeccable. There is no grammatical rule requiring that *only* be adjacent to its focus. And all that can validly be said from the perspective of style is that the general injunction to avoid potential confusion or misinterpretation should be respected as usual. In the absence of contextual indications to the contrary, *saw* and *Granny* in [i] are not plausible candidates for the status of focus: it is not necessary therefore to place *only* adjacent to the PP to indicate that it is the intended focus. Similarly, in [ii], the context provided by the first clause together with the connective *so* makes it obvious that *when he's away* is the intended focus, and it is therefore quite mistaken to insist that *only* must be placed after *cook them*. Such examples may be contrasted with those in [52], where there is significantly greater potential for misinterpretation, and hence a stronger case for recommending that *only* be placed next to the intended focus:

- [52] i *You can only access the web at this workstation*.  
 ii *Last Christmas he only gave money to his children*.

In [i] either *the web* or *this* might reasonably be taken as focus, yielding an ambiguity between the readings "At this workstation accessing the web is all you can do" and "This is the only workstation at which you can access the web". And in [ii] both *money* and *children* might be plausible candidates for focus: "He didn't give his children anything

except or more than money" or "His children were the only ones to whom he gave money". But of course, the issue of whether there is any real danger of misinterpretation will depend on the context in which the sentences are used.

#### ■ *Alone*

##### Association with NPs

The syntax of *alone* is strikingly different from that of other restrictive focusing adverbs. Leaving aside cases where it is non-adjacent to its focus, it occurs only in post-head position in NP structure, with the head of the NP as its focus. Compare:

- [53] i a. [*Only the president*] has the key. b. [*The president alone*] has the key. [NP]  
 ii a. [*Only reluctantly*] did he relent. b. \* [*Reluctantly alone*] did he relent. [AdvP]  
 iii a. *Things can [only improve]*. b. \* *Things can [improve alone]*. [VP]

Notice, moreover, that while the default place for the main stress in [ia] is *president*, in [ib] it is *alone*.

Two senses of *alone*: upper bound and lower bound

As a focusing modifier, *alone* has two senses, as illustrated in:

- [54] i *Los Angeles alone made a profit on the Olympic Games*.  
 "Only Los Angeles made a profit on the Olympic Games" [upper bound sense]  
 ii *Los Angeles alone has more murders than Britain*.  
 "Los Angeles by itself has more murders than Britain" [lower bound sense]

In [i] *alone* is equivalent to *only*: Los Angeles made a profit, but no other city did. We call this the 'upper bound' sense, since it places an upper bound or limit on the set of cities that made a profit on the Olympic Games – in this case, a limit of one. *Only* cannot substitute for *alone* in the natural interpretation of [ii]: it is not saying that nowhere but Los Angeles has more murders than Britain, but that if you count only those murders that take place in Los Angeles the number will exceed the number of murders committed in Britain. This is the 'lower bound' sense: it's not that you can't go beyond Los Angeles, but that you don't need to, for this city is sufficient to satisfy the condition of having more murders than Britain.

There may be ambiguity between the two senses:

- [55] *Musical excellence alone makes the drama memorable*.

In the upper bound sense nothing but musical excellence makes the drama memorable – other features, such as the plot and the dialogue, do not. In the lower bound sense the music is so excellent that it suffices to make the drama memorable irrespective of other features. We have noted that *only* cannot have the lower bound sense, but *just* can, provided it is adjacent to the focus. Compare:

- [56] i *They paid her \$50,000 for just that one performance*.  
 ii *They just paid her \$50,000 for that one performance*.

Here [i] is ambiguous between upper and lower bound interpretations: "There was only one performance that they paid her \$50,000 for" vs "That one performance on its own earned her \$50,000". Example [ii] does not permit the latter interpretation, though it does allow for something other than *that one performance* to be focus (e.g. "They paid her only \$50,000 for that one performance").

***Alone*** non-adjacent to its focus

When it has the lower bound sense and the subject as its focus, *alone* is sometimes found in post-auxiliary position:

- [57] i *This surplus is alone larger than the total sales listed for aircraft.*  
 ii *New interactive technologies cannot alone solve the problems of education.*

**■ Multiple occurrences of restrictive focusing modifiers**

Multiple occurrences are permitted under the conditions illustrated in [58]:

- [58] i *Only Kim has only one job.*  
 ii *And just exactly who do you think you are?*  
 iii *He sacked her purely and simply because he felt threatened by her.*

In [i] the two occurrences of *only* have different foci; the meaning is “Everyone (in some contextually determined set) except Kim has more than one job”. In [ii] *just* modifies *exactly*, but the two adverbs mean effectively the same, so this is a case of intensificatory tautology. This construction is limited to *just + exactly or precisely*. In [iii] *purely* and *simply* likewise have the same meaning, so here we have coordinative tautology – restricted, among focusing adverbs, to this one fixed phrase.

**■ Partial restrictive focusing modifiers**

The restriction expressed by the items listed in [41] is total; it may also be partial, as in:

- [59] i *I was concerned mainly about the cost.*  
 ii *I was mainly concerned about the cost.*

The focus here is *the cost*, or (equivalently) *about the cost*. The sentences do not say (as they would with *only*) that I wasn't concerned with anything except the cost, but rather that I wasn't concerned with anything else to the same extent: any other concerns were relatively minor. Other items of this kind are as follows (the set includes some PPs):

- [60] chiefly especially mainly mostly notably  
 particularly primarily at least for the most part in particular

**7.3.2 Additive focusing modifiers**

Focusing modifiers of the additive type include the PP *in addition* and the following:

- [61] also as well too even

There are other items that bear some semantic similarity to these but do not have the same syntactic versatility in that they do not occur as modifiers in a wide range of construction types. They include *nor*, *neither*, *either* (discussed in Ch. 9, §1.1, and Ch. 15, §2.4), and various comparative expressions, such as *similarly*, *likewise*, *equally*.

**■ Interpretation of additive *too* compared with restrictive *only***

The contrast between the meaning contributed by additive modifiers and that contributed by restrictive ones may be seen by comparing *too* with *only*, as analysed in [44] above:

- [62] i a. *Kim too resigned.* b. *Only Kim resigned.*  
 ii a. “*Kim resigned*” b. “*Kim resigned*”  
 iii a. “*Someone besides Kim resigned*” b. “*No one except Kim resigned*”

Both [ia] and [ib] entail that Kim resigned: the obvious difference between additive *too* and restrictive *only* is shown in [iii]. But there is also a difference with respect to the status of the component propositions given in [ii–iii]. We saw that with *only* the main assertion is [iib], with [iia] being backgrounded. With *too*, however, it is [iia] that is the main assertion, and [iia] that is backgrounded. And in fact [iia] (unlike [iib]) is not an entailment, not a truth condition, but merely a conventional implicature. The only scenario in which [ia] can be false is one where Kim didn't resign. To see more easily that this is so, consider a situation in the future. You say *Pat will sign the cheque* and I respond *Kim too will sign it*. And suppose that in fact Pat does not sign, and only Kim does so: it is clear that the prediction I made will be judged to have turned out to be true, not false.

Correlating with this is a difference with respect to negation. We have seen that negating [62ib] affects [iib]: *Not only Kim resigned* says that there was someone else besides Kim who resigned. But we can't negate [ia] so as to cancel [iia], while leaving [iia] intact. \**Not Kim too resigned* is ungrammatical, and *Kim too didn't resign* has *too* outside the scope of negation, so that the two components are “*Kim didn't resign*” and “*Someone besides Kim didn't resign*”.

**■ Position of *also*, *too*, and *as well***

- [63] i a. *Sue also bought a CD.* b. *Sue bought a CD too.*  
 ii a. *We plan to visit Paris also.* b. *I too think the proposal has merit.*  
 iii a. *Also, it was pouring with rain.* b. *I realised too that he was in great pain.*

The preferred position for *also* is central, as in [63ia]; auxiliaries tend to precede *also*, as in *Sue had also bought a CD*. End position is certainly possible, as in [iia]. In both [ia] and [iia] *also* can have a variety of foci – e.g. *Sue or a CD or bought a CD* in [ia], *We or Paris or to visit Paris or plan to visit Paris* in [iia]. In informal style *also* can occur in front position, with the whole clause as focus, as in [iiiia].

*Too* most often occurs at the end of the VP, as in [63ib]. Here it can have the same range of foci as *also* in [ia]; and indeed it can have the whole clause as focus, so that an alternant of [iiia] is *It was pouring with rain too*. A second possibility is for *too* to occur as postmodifier in a non-final NP, as in [iib]. Note, then, that [iib] is structurally different from [ia]: in [ia] *also* is premodifier in the VP, while the *too* of [iib] is part of the subject, and can have only *I* as its focus. Example [iiib] illustrates the fairly rare case where *too* precedes a post-verbal focus. There is no reason here, however, to analyse *too* as a premodifier of the following content clause: it is a modifier of *realised*, the structure being like that of *I realised suddenly that he was in great pain*.

The distribution of the idiomatic AdvP *as well* is similar to that of *too*, the preferred position being at the end of a VP. It can replace *too* in [63iiib], but not so readily in [iib]. In addition, it can, in informal style, occur in front position with the clause as focus, e.g. in the position of *also* in [iiia].

The relation of addition is closely associated with coordination, and *also*, *too*, and *as well* commonly occur in coordinates marked by *and* or *but*: *We saw Kim [and also Pat] at the wedding* or *She was bright [and energetic too / as well]*.

### ■ *Even*

*Even* differs from the other items in [61] in that it contributes an extra component of meaning, and can be negated. Let us consider the positive and negative together:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| [64] i a. <i>Even Kim resigned.</i>                                 | b. <i>Not even Kim resigned.</i>                                     |
| ii a. "Kim resigned"  | b. "Kim didn't resign"   |
| iii a. "Someone besides Kim resigned"                               | b. "Someone besides Kim didn't resign"                               |
| iv a. "Kim was the one least likely or<br>least expected to resign" | b. "Kim was the one least likely or<br>least expected not to resign" |

Propositions [iiia/iiia] are the same as with *too* in [62]: it is for this reason that *even* belongs with the additive modifiers. Moreover, the status of these propositions is the same: [iiia] is the main assertion, while [iiia] is a backgrounded conventional implicature. With *too* the information that someone other than Kim resigned will be retrievable from the prior discourse, but this need not be so with *even*.

Because [64ia] is the main assertion it is affected by negation, so in [iib] we have its negative counterpart. And [iiib] is likewise negative: Kim is added to the set of those who didn't resign.

The component of the meaning distinctively associated with *even* is [64iv]. *Even* indicates that the proposition expressed is being compared with one or more related propositions and judged stronger or more surprising. In the case of [64ia] there is implicit reference to a set of people who might have resigned – the members of some committee or society, perhaps – and Kim is judged to be the member of that set who was least likely to resign (or to be among a subset who were least likely to do so).

Consider some other examples:

- [65] i *Your task will be difficult, maybe even impossible.*  
ii *She can't have voted against the proposal: she didn't even attend the meeting.*  
iii *We can't even afford to go to the movies, let alone the theatre.*  
iv *He smiled, yet even so I sensed a deep terror within him.*

In [i–iii] both terms in the comparison are overtly expressed. In [i] to say that your task will be impossible is to make a stronger claim than that made by saying that it will be difficult. Example [ii] illustrates a common form of argument, where one negative proposition is presented as following from a second stronger one: the claim that she didn't attend the meeting is stronger than the claim that she didn't vote against the proposal. In [iii] the stronger term in the comparison is presented before the weaker, with the latter introduced by the idiom *let alone* – expressions such as *never mind*, *not to mention*, *still less* are used in the same way. In [iv] *even* modifies the pro-form *so*: we understand “even though he smiled”. It is more surprising that I should have sensed a deep terror within him when he smiled than if he hadn't done so. (For discussion of *even though* and *even if*, see Ch. 8, §14.1.3.)

## Position

*Even* is typical of focusing adverbs in being able to occur in a wide range of positions:

- [66] i Even you would have enjoyed dancing tonight.  
ii You would even have enjoyed dancing tonight.  
iii You would have enjoyed even dancing tonight.

- iv You would have enjoyed dancing even tonight.  
v You would have enjoyed dancing tonight, even.

It usually precedes the head it modifies, but in informal speech it occasionally follows, as in [v]. Where it modifies a VP there will typically be a number of possible foci, with the intended one being marked prosodically in speech. Thus the focus of *even* in [ii] could be *dancing*, *tonight*, or *you* – which are the only possible foci in [iii], [iv], and [i] respectively.

### Multiple occurrences

It is possible, though rare, for a clause to contain two instances of *even*:

- [67] Not even digital tape recorders, which everyone is ballyhooing, can even approach the new adapter format.