SEMINAR 12B – ADJECTIVES and ADVERBS (3)

ADVERBS

Characteristics of the adverb

- there are two syntactic functions that characterize adverbs:
  a) clause element adverbial
      e.g. He quite forgot about it.

  b) premodifier of adjective and adverb
      e.g. They are quite happy.
      They are quite happily married.

Morphologically, we can distinguish 3 main types of adverb (a+b are closed classes, c is an open class)

a) SIMPLE adverbs – e.g. just, only, well
   - many of these denote position and direction: back, down, near, out, under

b) COMPOUND adverbs – e.g. somehow, somewhere, therefore

c) DERIVATIONAL adverbs - the majority of these adverbs have the suffix –ly. Other common suffixes are:

   -wise (clockwise)          -ways (sideways)
   -ward(s) (northward(s))    -style (cowboy-style)
   -fashion (schoolboy-fashion)

Note:

Rules for forming open-class –ly adverbs from adjectives:

1) adj. ending in consonant + le → ly
   e.g. simple – simply
        whole – wholly

2) adj. ending in consonant + y → i
   e.g. happy – happily
        dry - drily / also: dryly
        sly - slyly / also: slyly

3) adj. ending in –ic and –ical → -ically
   e.g. economic / economical – economically
        tragic / tragical – tragically

4) –ed participles form adverbs in –edly (pronunciation is /idli/)
   e.g. marked – markedly
        assured – assuredly
The adverb and other word classes

**Conjunct adverb (so, yet) and conjunction**

- similarly to conjunctions, also adverbs can express semantic relationship between two utterances or two parts – therefore, they are called conjunct adverbs:

  e.g. We paid him a very large sum. So he kept quiet about what he saw.

- these conjunct adverbs can also be preceded by a coordinator – *and so, and yet*

**Adverb and preposition**

- there are various combinations of verbs + particles
- a preposition is normally followed by its complement
- if the verb is intransitive, the particle is an adverb

Compare:

  e.g. I ran *down* the road. (prep) v. Please sit *down*. (adverb)
  He is *in* his office. (prep) v. You can go *in*. (adverb)
  Something’s climbing *up* my leg. (prep) v. She is not *up* yet. (adverb)

**Phrasal verbs:**

If they are separable, the particle is an adverb:

  e.g. They turned *on* the light. / They turned the light *on*.

If they cannot be separated, the particle is a preposition:

  e.g. They took *to* John.
  She looked *after* her children well.

**SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS OF ADVERBS**

I. Adverb as adverbial

- we distinguish 4 categories according to grammatical functions
  a) *adjunct* – *Slowly* they walked back home.
  b) *subjunct* – Would you *kindly* wait for me?
  c) *disjunct* – *Frankly*, I’m tired.
  d) *conjunct* – She has bought a big house, *so* she must have a lot of money.

II. Adverb as modifier

  **A) Modifier of adjective**
  - most commonly the adverb is an intensifier or emphaziser
    e.g. *extremely* dangerous  *really* beautiful
    *deeply* concerned  *very* good
perfectly reasonable just impossible
awfully sorry highly intelligent

- also downtoners are modifiers
e.g. a bit dull relatively small
  almost impossible pretty rare
  nearly dark rather late
  fairly small

- some premodifiers are related to adverbs that express manner or means, and also have some intensifying effect
e.g. easily debatable
  openly hostile
  readily available

- some premodifiers express `viewpoint`
e.g. theoretically sound economically weak
  technically possible ethically wrong

Note:
- enough may postmodify an adjective: e.g. old enough
  or an adverb: e.g. carefully enough

- quite has two meanings: a) She’s quite right. (= absolutely, completely)
  b) That’s quite good. (=fairly, rather)

- fairly is typically used to modify an adj. (or adv.) that denotes a desirable quality
e.g. It’s fairly warm in here. (=warm enough, I feel comfortable in a warm room)
  v. It’s rather warm in here. (= too warm)

    + we usually say: fairly clean v. rather dirty

- pretty is informal and stronger than rather or fairly
e.g. we can say: pretty clean (+) v. pretty dirty (-)

B) Modifier of adverb and preposition

- an adverb may premodify another adverb
e.g. very heavily surprisingly well
  extremely quickly so clearly

- enough and indeed can postmodify an adverb:
e.g. She spoke clearly enough.
  She spoke very clearly indeed.

- a few intensifying adverbs (right, well) premodify prepositions:
e.g. The nail went right through the wall.
  His parents are dead against the trip.
C) Modifier of pronoun, determiner, numeral
- intensifying adverbs can premodify:

  i) indefinite pronouns – e.g. Nearly everybody came to our party.
  ii) predeterminers – e.g. They recovered roughly half their equipment.  
      Virtually all the students passed the test.
  iii) cardinal numerals – e.g. Over / Under 200 deaths were reported.
      As many as 500 candidates have applied for the post.
  iv) ordinals and superlatives – e.g. We counted approximately the first thousand votes.
      She gave me almost the largest piece of cake.

D) Modifier of noun phrase
- a few intensifiers may premodify noun phrases and precede the determiner (quite, rather)
  e.g. She gave quite a party.
       They were quite some players.
       It was rather a mess.
       It is rather a big / a rather big table.

- if the indefinite article is equivalent to ‘one’- some intensifiers precede it:
  e.g. They will stay for about a week.
       Nearly a thousand demonstrators attended the meeting.
       I didn’t have more than a dollar on me.

- ‘kind of’ and ‘sort of’ (both infml) usually follow the determiner
  e.g. This must be a sort of joke. / sort of a joke (infml)

- other of-phrase precede the determiner
  e.g. I had a bit of a shock.

- some time / place adverbs postmodify nouns:
  e.g. the meeting yesterday the hall downstairs  
       the meal afterwards the quotation above / below  
       the day before that man there

- others may either pre- or postmodify nouns:
  e.g. the downstairs hall or the hall downstairs  
       the above quotation or the quotation above  
       the upstairs neighbour or the neighbour upstairs

- ‘else’ can postmodify:
  i) indefinite compound pronouns – e.g. somebody else, nothing else
  ii) interrogative pronouns and wh- adverbs – e.g. who else, what else, how else
  iii) singular all (=everything), much, a great / good deal, a lot, little – e.g. much else, all else

E) Adverb as complement of preposition
- some place and time adverbs function as complement of a preposition
  e.g. over here near there from behind for ever till then
Note:
Certain verbs are followed by adjectives, not adverbs: look, feel, seem, smell, sound, taste
E.g. This tea tastes a bit strange. The idea sounds quite interesting.
The dinner smells good. The cloth feels smooth.

COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

- with gradable adjectives and adverbs there are 3 types of comparison:
  a) to a higher degree – inflectional comp. (-er, -est) or periphrastic (more, most)
     E.g. Anna is cleverer / more clever than Susan.
         She arrived sooner than you.
  b) to the same degree – as ... as (not as... as / not so ... as)
     E.g. Ann is as tall as Bill. Ann is not as / so tall as Bill.
  c) to a lower degree – less and least
     E.g. This problem is less difficult than the previous one.
         This is the least difficult problem of all.

Note:
- comparatives of adj. and adv. can be modified by intensifiers:
  E.g. much easier / far easier
       somewhat shorter
       much more difficult
       a lot more convenient
       very much better
       a good deal sooner
- also superlatives can be modified by intensifiers:
  E.g. the youngest candidate ever
       by far the best solution
       the most absurd answer by far
- inflected superlatives (-est) can be modified by ‘very’:
  E.g. the very youngest
- ‘more’ and ‘most’ have other uses:
  E.g. He is more than happy about it. He is more keen than wise.
       He is more good than bad. She is more lazy than stupid.
- ‘most’ can have an intensifying meaning:
  E.g. Della is a most efficient publisher. (= very, extremely)

COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES

I. Regular forms

1) One-syllable adjectives - er, -est
   E.g. old, tall, long, young, cheap, late, nice
2) Two-syllable adjectives
   a) –er, est - adj. ending in –y: e.g. happy, easy, lucky, noisy, busy, etc.
      + adj. ending in an unstressed vowel - /ʌ/: feeble, gentle, noble, simple
      + adj. ending in –ow: mellow, narrow, shallow
      Also: unhappy, untidy

   b) more and most - other two-syllable adj. ending in –ing, -ed, -ful, -less

!! With some two-syllable adjectives both ways are possible:
   e.g. polite, common, clever, narrow, simple, quiet, shallow

3) Three-syllable and longer adj. – more and most
   e.g. intelligent, practical, beautiful, interesting, expensive, comfortable, etc.

Note:
- Some compound adjectives, like good-looking or well-known have two possible forms:

   e.g. good-looking  better-looking / more good-looking  best-looking / most good-looking
   well-known      better-known / more well-known  best-known / most well-known

- more and most with short adjectives instead of –er, -est - when a comparative is not
   followed immediately by than, forms with –er are also possible

   e.g. The road is getting more and more steep. (also: steeper and steeper)
       also: John is more mad than Bob is.

   But not with: bad, great, old, thin, big, hard, young, wide, etc.

II. Irregular forms

- some adjectives have irregular comparative and superlative forms:

   e.g. good    better    best
       bad       worse       worst
       ill        worse       worst
       far        farther    farthest (usually about physical distance, further is also possible)
       (in all senses)
       old        elder       eldest

- the determiners little and much / many have irregular forms:

   e.g. little          less          least
       much / many      more         most

Note:

- ’old’ - is regularly inflected as ’older’ and ’oldest
- in attributive position, particularly when referring to the order of birth of members of a
  family – the irregular forms elder / eldest are normally used:

   e.g. My elder / older sister is an artist.
   My eldest / oldest sister is an artist.
- but!! *elder* is not used with *than*
  e.g. My sister is three years *older* than me. (not: *elder*)

- *elder* / *eldest* require personal reference, they are not used to talk about things
  e.g. This viola is the *older*. (not: *elder*)

- *further* has one more meaning, it is not comparative - *more*, *additional*, *later*
  e.g. Any *further* questions?
  We intend to stay for a *further* two months.

**Changes in spelling and pronunciation**
- with regular inflections there are certain changes in spelling or pronunciation

  a) a single consonant at the end is doubled if the preceding vowel is stressed and spelled with a single letter
  e.g. *big* *bigger* *biggest* / *fat* *fatter* *fattest*
  but not with: *neat*, *thick*, etc.

  b) a consonant is followed by *–y* → *ier*, *iest*
  e.g. *angry* *angrier* *angriest*

  c) if the base ends in mute (=unpronounced) *–e*, this *–e* is dropped before *–er*, *-est*
  e.g. *brave* *braver* *bravest*
  *pure* *purer* *purest*
  *free* *freer* *freest*

  d) if *–r* is not pronounced in base, we pronounce it before the inflection
  e.g. *poor* *poorer* *poorest*
  *clear* *clearer* *clearest*

  e) final *ng* /ŋ/ is pronounced /ng/ before the inflection
  e.g. *long* *longer* *longest*
  *young* *younger* *youngest*

**Note:**
- repeated and coordinated comparatives indicate gradual increase:
  e.g. She is getting *better and better*.
  They are becoming *more and more difficult*.

- comparatives with the .... the – to say that things change or vary together

  e.g. *The warmer* the weather, *the better* I feel.
  *The sooner* we leave, *the sooner* we will arrive.
  *The younger* you are, *the easier* it is to learn.
  *The more* I study, *the less* I learn.
  *The more* I thought about it, *the less* I liked it.
  *The more expensive* the hotel, *the better* the service.
  *How do you like your coffee? – The stronger the better*
COMPARISON OF ADVERBS

1) most adverbs take more and most (esp. those ending in –ly cannot take another inflection – er, est)
   e.g. Could you talk more quietly /slowly / clearly?

2) the adverbs that have the same form as adjectives (fast, hard, late, long, early) – take –er,-est
   e.g. Can you drive a bit faster?

3) the irregular forms- the same as with adjectives
   e.g. badly worse worst
        well better best
        little less least (lesser – in a rather formal style – the lesser of two evils)
        far farther farthest
        further furthest
        much more most

   Note: often can have both forms – oftener / more often, oftenest / most often – the forms
   with more and most are more common!

ARTICLE USAGE WITH COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

1) there is no article in a `than construction`:
   e.g. Jane is cleverer than all the other girls in the class.

2) `the` with the superlative +of-construction:
   e.g. Jane is the cleverest of all the students in the class.

3) `the` with comparative – we compare two persons, items, etc.
   e.g. He is the younger (of the two brothers)
        John is the more polite (of the two boys) v. … the most polite (of the three boys)

4) if the superlative is used attributively, `the` is required:
   e.g. Ann is the youngest child. (or: their youngest child)

5) if the adjective is not attributive - `the` is optional!
   e.g. Ann is (the) youngest (of all).
        Della is (the) most efficient (of all).

!!! Without a definite determiner, the construction with most is ambiguous:

   e.g. Della is most efficient. = the most efficient of all  or extremely efficient

With the indefinite article (or zero), `most` is always interpreted as an intensifier

   e.g. She is a most efficient publisher. = very, extremely
        They are most efficient publishers. = very, extremely.