

SEMINAR 10B – ADJECTIVES and ADVERBS 1 (SGEL 7.1 – 7.16)

(Chalker: ex. 70 – 74; GRAMMAR I: Adjectives – ex. 50 – 68, Adverbs – ex. 176 -203)

General characteristics of adjectives (attributive v. predicative, central v. peripheral) – gradability – adjectives v. adverbs– adjectives and adverbs beginning with a- - adjectives and nouns – adjectives and participles – syntactic functions of adjectives

Characteristics of the adjective

Four features are considered to be characteristic of adjectives (but not all adjectives share all four features!)

- a) they can occur in **ATTRIBUTIVE** function – they **premodify a noun** as in: an *ugly* painting, the *round* table, *dirty* linen
- b) they can occur in **PREDICATIVE** function – they function as **subject complement** (e.g. The painting is *ugly*.) or **object complement** (e.g. He thought the painting *ugly*.), usually used after ‘*be, seem*’

!! Some adjectives have **both attributive and predicative** function – these are called **CENTRAL** (e.g. *happy, infinite*).

Some adjectives can be **only attributive** (e.g. *utter nonsense, utter waste of time*) or **only predicative** (e.g. *afraid She was afraid.*) – these are called **PERIPHERAL**

- c) they can be premodified by ‘*very*’, e.g. The children are *very happy*.
- d) they can take **comparative** and **superlative** forms – either by means of inflections (*-er, -est*) or by adding premodifiers (*more* and *most*)

!! **Features c) and d)** depend on a semantic feature – the so-called **GRADABILITY** (some adjectives are gradable, others are non-gradable)

i.e. if the adjective is **non-gradable** – we cannot modify them using ‘*very, too*’ and we cannot make a **comparative** and **superlative** from them
– e.g. *atomic, dead, perfect, unique, medical, daily*

e.g. *an atomic scientist* - ~~*very*~~ *atomic scientist*, ~~*more*~~ *atomic scientist*
a disastrous mistake

Note:

Some **suffixes** are found only, or typically with adjectives, but many adjectives have no identifying form:

adj. suffixes: <i>-able (comfortable, capable)</i>	<i>-al (seasonal, mechanical)</i>
<i>-ful (playful, careful)</i>	<i>-ic (scientific, energetic)</i>
<i>-ish (greyish, foolish)</i>	<i>-less (useless, lifeless)</i>
<i>-ous (dangerous, humorous)</i>	<i>-y (dirty, rainy)</i>

The adjective and other word classes

A) Adjectives and adverbs

Normally, there is a regular difference between an adjective (a *rapid* car) and adverb (He drove *rapidly*.)

e.g.

He is a <i>slow</i> reader.	v. He reads <i>slowly</i> .
He speaks <i>fluent</i> English.	v. He speaks English <i>fluently</i> .
She is a <i>careful</i> driver.	v. She drives <i>carefully</i> .

!!But:

- a) there are words which have **the same form in adjective and adverb** functions – e.g. *fast, wide, late, long, deep, close*(in *stay close*), *direct* (in *fly direct*),

e.g.

Bill drove a <i>fast</i> car. (adj.)	v. Bill drove <i>fast</i> . (adv.)
She arrived in the <i>late</i> afternoon.	v. She arrived <i>late</i> in the afternoon.
I haven't seen him for a <i>long</i> time.	v. Have you been waiting <i>long</i> ?

- b) sometimes there is also an **-ly adverb with a different meaning** – e.g. *lately*, *nearly* (=almost), *hardly*, *freely*, *highly*, etc.

e.g. Have you seen her *lately*? (=recently)

He *hardly ever* works.

It's *nearly* ten o'clock.

- c) sometimes there are **two forms**:

Take a *deep* breath. (adj)

Breathe *deep*. (esp. informal) (adv)

Breathe *deeply*. (adv)

Sometimes, especially in non-standard and very familiar English, adjectives instead of adverbs are used:

e.g. She played *real good*.
He spoke to John *sharp*.

d) there are some words in **-ly** that can function both as **adjectives** and **adverbs**!

e.g. I caught an *early* train. v. We finished *early* today.
That was a *kindly* gesture. v. Will you *kindly* refrain from smoking?
(*kind* is also possible)

+ other words denoting time: *monthly, daily, hourly, weekly*

e.g. Exercise has become part of my *daily* routine. v. She gets paid *daily*.
It's a *daily* paper. v. It comes out *daily*.

!!Note:

- words '*daily*' and '*monthly*' are also nouns:

e.g. The story was covered in all the national *dailies*.

- if the adjective ends in **-ly** (*friendly, lively, masterly, lonely, cowardly, deadly*), we normally form the adverb meaning using an adjective construction:

e.g. She received us *in a friendly way / manner*. (not: ~~friendlyly~~)

- after certain verbs we use adjectives (in Czech often adverbs) – *smell nice / bad, look good, sound good, seem angry, appear nervous*, etc.

Compare: She looks *good*. (=appearance) v. She looks *well*. (=health)

I feel *good*. v. I feel *well / unwell*.

B) Adjectives and adverbs beginning with a-

- some words beginning with **a-** are **adjectives** – they can be used **predicatively** with '*be*' and other *copular (linking) verbs*

- **adverbs** beginning with **a-** can be used only with '*be*' (out of the copular verbs)

e.g. The patient was *asleep / hungry*. (adj)
The patient was *abroad / there*. (adv)

The patient seemed *asleep / hungry*. **But not!** The patient seemed ~~*abroad / there*~~.

- **a- adjectives** refer to **temporary states** – they **cannot** be used after **verbs of motion!**
- **a- adverbs** denote **direction** after such verbs:

e.g. Jane went *asleep*. - Jane went *abroad / away*. (adv)

Common **a- adjectives** include: *ablaze, alive, alike, alight, afloat, afraid, alone, ashamed, asleep, aware, awake, aghast*, → they are used **predicatively**:

e.g. The house was quickly *ablaze*.
The two brothers are very much *alike*.

The children were *asleep*. **Not!** The ~~*asleep*~~ children → *The sleeping children*

The girl was *afraid*. **Not!** The ~~*afraid*~~ girl... → *The frightened girl*....

Help me get the boat <i>afloat</i> .	V. the <i>floating</i> boat
Everything that is <i>alive</i> ...	v. All <i>living</i> things....
The buildings are <i>alight</i> ...	v. The <i>burning</i> buildings...

Note:

- 'alert' and 'aloof' can occur attributively: 'an *alert* mind'; '*aloof* character' (=reserved)

- most other a- adjectives can occur attributively **only when modified**:

e.g. a somewhat *afraid* soldier
the fast *asleep* children
a really *alive* student (*lively*)
the wide *awake* patient

C) Adjectives and nouns

- nouns commonly function as **premodifiers of other nouns**: the *bus* station, a *business* friend, *student* grants

- unlike adjectives, nouns:

- have no corresponding predicative function. (~~The station was *bus*.~~)
- cannot be modified by 'very'
- cannot take comparison

Nouns have other features that distinguish them from adjectives: article contrast, number contrast, genitive inflection, etc.

!Some items can be both adjectives and nouns (=conversion)

e.g. *criminal* (adj) v. noun

- a) attributive adj – a *criminal* attack
- b) predicative adj – The attack seemed *criminal* to us. (=very bad or morally wrong)
- c) noun – The *criminal* pleaded guilty.

Other examples of **conversion from adjective to noun**:

Adj.	Noun
a <i>black</i> student	There was only one <i>black</i> in my class.
a <i>classic</i> book	You won't find many <i>classics</i> in our library.
<i>intellectual</i> interests	She considers herself an <i>intellectual</i> .
a <i>noble</i> family	The king greeted his <i>nobles</i> .
a <i>six-year-old</i> boy	Our <i>six-year-old</i> is at school.

Note:

- like adjectives, nouns can function as **subject complement after copular verbs**:

e.g. That man is *a fool*. / She became *a nurse*.

- some nouns can also be used 'as **subject complement after seem**':

e.g. He seems *a fool*.
Your remark seems (complete) *nonsense* to me.
His friend seems very much *an Englishman*. (=very English)

D) Adjectives and participles

- there are many adjectives that have the same suffixes as participles - *-ing* or *-ed* – these are called participial adjectives:

e.g. His views were *surprising*. (predicative use)
His *surprising* views were..... (attributive use)
The man seemed very *offended*. (predicative use)
The *offended* man refused (attributive use)

- they include forms in **-ed** that have **no corresponding verbs** (e.g. to ~~unexpected~~, to ~~talent~~)

e.g. The results were *unexpected*. v. the *unexpected* results
All his friends are *talented*. v. his *talented* friends...
His lung is *diseased*. v. his *diseased* lung...

Since there are no corresponding verbs, the forms are obviously not participles!

- when there is a corresponding verb, **attributively used –ed forms usually have a passive meaning (but not always!)**

e.g. *lost* property = property that has been lost (passive)
the *escaped* prisoner = the prisoner who has escaped (active)

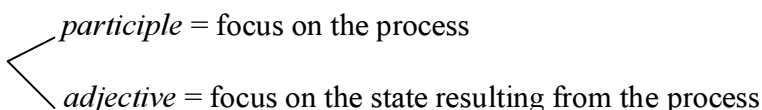
Adjective or participle?

Often the difference between the adj. and participle is not clear-cut, but the grammatical context distinguishes the **verbal** and **adjectival** use:

Compare:

- a) His views were *alarming* the audience. (since ‘*alarming*’ is followed by an object – it is **participle**)
- b) His views were very *alarming*. (intensifier ‘*very*’ – ‘*alarming*’ is an **adjective**)
- c) The man was *offended* by the policeman. (‘*by*’ indicates there is a corresponding active form – ‘*offended*’ is participle)
- d) The man was very *offended*. (‘*very*’ – ‘*offended*’ is an adjective)

However, without any such indicators (*very*, *by*, ‘*objects*’), the meaning is not clear – the sentence can be interpreted in two ways:

e.g. The man was *offended*. 

Note:

- some verbs have **different participle forms for verbal and adjectival use:**

e.g. You have <i>drunk</i> too much.	v.	<i>drunk</i> / <i>drunken</i> driver
Have you <i>shaved</i> ?	v.	a <i>clean-shaven</i> man
This shirt has <i>shrunk</i> .	v.	a <i>shrunk</i> shirt

- **pronunciation –ed = /ɪd/** in some adjectives ending in –ed – e.g. *beloved*, *naked*, *crooked*, *wicked*, *wretched*, *learned*, *ragged*,

Careful about ‘**aged**’ - /eɪdʒɪd/ - very old – e.g. an *aged* man, two *aged* aunts
/eɪdʒəd/ - at the age of – e.g. a man *aged* 50,

SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS OF ADJECTIVES

1) Attributive v. predicative

- adj. are **attributive** when they premodify the head of a noun phrase: e.g. a *small* garden, *popular* ballads

- adj. are **predicative** when they function as subject or object complement:

e.g. He seems *careless*. (subj. compl.) v. I find him *careless*. (obj. compl)

- adj. are **subject complement to noun phrase**, and also to **finite** clauses (see a) below) and **non-finite** clauses (see b) below):

a) That you need a car is *obvious*.
Whether she will resign is *uncertain*.

b) To complain may be *dangerous*.
Playing chess can be *enjoyable*.

- adj. can also be **object complement to clauses**:

e.g. I consider what he did *foolish*.
I consider taking such risks *foolish*.

2) Postpositive

- adj. can sometimes be **postpositive** = they can **immediately follow the noun or pronoun** they modify

- we many have 3 positions of adjectives:

- a) *predicative* – The information is *useful*.
- b) *attributive* – *useful* information
- c) *postpositive* - something *useful*

→ a **postpositive adj.** can usually be regarded as a **reduced relative clause**:

e.g. something useful = something *that is useful*

- **compound indefinite pronouns** and **adverbs** ending in *-body*, *-one*, *-thing*, *-where* can be modified **only postpositively!**

e.g. *Anyone* (who is) *intelligent* can do it.

I want to try on *something* (that is) *larger*.

We're not going *anywhere* *exciting*.

Where shall we go on holiday? – Let's go *somewhere* *hot*.

Obviously, adj. that can occur only attributively cannot be used in this way:

e.g. ~~something (that is) main~~

Note:

- there are several **institutionalized expressions** (mostly in official designations, names, titles) where **the adjective is postpositive**:

e.g. *the president elect* (i.e. elected but not yet officially placed in the function),
heir apparent, attorney general, notary public, proof positive

- adjectives in **-able** and **-ible** can be **postpositive** or **attributive** when they are modified by another adjective in the superlative degree or by certain other modifiers (e.g. *first, last, next, only*)

e.g. The *best use possible* is to (also: the best possible use)
The *greatest* insult *imaginable*....

The *only* actor *suitable* was Henry. Or The *only suitable* actor was Henry.
(but: The *only actor suitable for the part* was....)

The choice of attributive or postpositive position can involve an important difference in meaning!!

e.g. the stars *visible* (= stars visible at a time specified, now, etc. = **temporary!**)
the *visible* stars (= stars that can generally be seen)

the members *present* (= the members who were at the meeting)
the *present* members (= those are members now)

!Postposition is usual for: 'absent, present, concerned, involved'- when they refer to temporary attributes!!

e.g. an <i>involved</i> explanation (=complicated)	v. the person <i>involved</i> ...
the <i>concerned</i> mother (=anxious, worried)	v. the person <i>concerned</i>
an <i>adopted</i> child	v. the solution <i>adopted</i> (=chosen)

3) Adjectives with complementation

- normally, these adjectives cannot have attributive position – they require postposition:
e.g. an actor *suitable for the part* **Not!** a *suitable for the part* actor

- the complementation can be a **prepositional phrase** or **infinitive**:

e.g. They have a house *larger than yours*. (or: They have a *larger house than yours*.)
The boys *easiest to teach* were in my class. (or: The *easiest boys to teach* were...)

4) Adjectives as heads of noun phrases (e.g. 'the poor')

- can be subject, complement, object, prepositional complement
- do not have plural inflection or genitive case
- refer to certain well-established classes of persons:

'the brave, the innocent, the elderly, the weak, the sick, the unemployed, the blind, the poor, the rich, the young, the deaf, the injured, the homeless, the disabled, etc.'

- we can distinguish 3 types:

- a) **adj. which can premodify personal nouns** (e.g. *young* people – *the young*) – have plural and generic reference:

e.g. *The poor* are causing the nation's leaders great concern.
The extremely old need a great deal of attention.
The young in spirit enjoy life.

- instead of 'the', which is the most common, possessives are also possible:
e.g. It is the duty of the Government to care for *our poor*, *our unemployed*.

- b) **adj. denoting nationalities** ending in **-ish** (e.g. British, Spanish, Welsh), **-ch** (Dutch, French), **-ese** (Chinese, Japanese) and the adj. **Swiss**

e.g. *The industrious Dutch* are admired by their neighbours.
You French and *we British* ought to be allies.

- c) **adj. with abstract reference** (unlike a) and b), these have singular concord!)

e.g. The very *best* is yet to come.

- this category is restricted to certain fixed expressions: *the unknown*, *the unreal*, *the exotic*, *the supernatural*

Note:

- there are some set expressions in which the adj. with abstract reference is the complement of a preposition:

e.g. He left *for good*. (= for ever)
in short
in common
nothing *out of the ordinary*
He enjoyed it *to the full*.
from bad to worse

5) Verbless clauses

- adjectives can function as the **sole realization of a verbless clause**:

e.g. The man, *quietly assertive*, spoke to the assembled workers.
Unhappy with the result, she returned to work.
Long and untidy, his hair played in the breeze.
Anxious for a quick decision, the chairman called for a vote.

- the clause is mobile:

e.g. The chairman called for a vote, *anxious for a quick decision*.

- sometimes the adjective phrase can be replaced by an adverb phrase with little change of meaning:

e.g. *Rather nervous*, the man opened the letter.
The man opened the letter, *rather nervous*.
The man, *rather nervous*, opened the letter.
Rather nervously, the man opened the letter.

- the adjective clause can be **dependent** – such verbless clauses express circumstance or condition under which what is said in the superordinate clause applies:

e.g. *When fit*, the Labrador is an excellent retriever.
If wet, these shoes should never be placed too close to the heat.
(Whether) right or wrong, he always fails to communicate his ideas.
When (it is) necessary, he can be taken to the doctor.

- or it can be in final position:

e.g. You must eat it *when fresh*.

6) Exclamatory adjective clauses

- adjectives can be **exclamations**, with or without the initial *wh-element*:

e.g. *Excellent!* *(How) wonderful!* *(How) good of you!*