

Adjectives and Adverbs—Syntax, Semantics, and Discourse. Ed. by LOUISE MCNALLY and CHRIS KENNEDY. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.

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The volume comprises an introduction by the editors plus eleven articles, each of which addresses some intriguing puzzle about the syntax, semantics or pragmatics of adjectives and adverbs. The collection as a whole deepens the reader's understanding for why adjectives and adverbs pose special challenges to linguistic analysis.

Adjectives and adverbs are mostly non-obligatory material in the sentence. They can occur in various positions in sentences, and hence appear less syntactically restricted than other parts of the clause (at least in languages like English). Yet, if several adjectives / adverbs occur together in a sentence, their relative order to one another is usually restricted. This can be made sense of in different ways; a syntax-based analysis will assume a comparatively rigid syntactic backbone within the adjectival / adverbial parts of the sentence, whereas a semantics-based approach will attempt to derive facts about word order from the nature of modified arguments (Cinque 1999 and Ernst 2002 define two opposing camps). The semantics-based approaches lead towards a deeper problem in the syntax-semantics interface of adjectives and adverbs. The way in which they are interpreted can differ, and sometimes differs dramatically, depending on their position. These differences can concern the lexical content (e.g. *careful(ly)* as a manner versus an evaluation by the speaker), the arguments of the predicate (e.g. resultative vs. manner readings of *elegantly*), restrictive vs. non-restrictive modification by adjectives, commentary vs. at-issue interpretations and more. Such facts can be relegated to syntax ("brute homonymy" approach), to semantics or to pragmatics, but any analysis will have to address questions that do not arise in the linguistic description of the core sentence structure. Finally, the content that adverbs and adjectives contribute to the overall message of the sentence can range at any level between truth conditional content and speaker comment. Here, several articles explore formats like dialogue semantics, expressive content (Potts 2005) in contrast to focus semantic value (Rooth 1992), and common ground (Stalnaker 2002) to achieve a fuller analysis of commentary material in the sentence. The collection as a whole allows the reader to see how syntactic and semantic analyses of interrelated phenomena dovetail—or, sometimes, do not—and hence to experience the challenges of the topic.

Two contributions explore the syntax of adjectives. PETER SVENONIUS, 'The position of adjectives and other phrasal modifiers in the decomposition of DP' proposes a universal syntactic structure of DP which, as far as adjective ordering is concerned, rests on the classes focused adjectives, idiomatic adjectives (= near compounding), count adjectives and SORT adjectives (including gradable adjectives). Each of these can be multiply instantiated, and their relative order might in part be motivated semantically. RICHARD LARSON and HIROKO YAMAKIDO, 'Ezafé and the deep position of nominal modifiers', propose that certain adjectives are in fact arguments of the determiner and receive abstract case. According to this view, semantic combination of adjective and noun is steered by, somewhat surprisingly, the determiner in DP. The analysis is motivated by Modern Persian but extends to ModGreek, Japanese and to English postponed adjectives like in '*everything interesting*'. Here, the article overlaps with data discussed by Demonte and Morzycki, who both invoke different means to guide the semantic interpretation of postposed adjectives. VIOLETA DEMONTE's 'Meaning-form correlations and adjective position in

Spanish' offers a differentiated overview over the correlation between position interpretation of adjectives in Spanish. She distinguishes two semantic types (predicative/non-predicative) for adjectives, which can be combined with the noun by three kinds of syntactic Merge operations. Taken together, these determine the readings for all adjective/noun combinations she observes in Spanish. Demonte's analysis rests on the assumption that semantics will be able to provide closely related, but distinct predicative/non-predicative readings for many adjectives. ADAM ZACHARY WYNER, in his article 'Towards flexible types with constraints for manner and factive adverbs', spells out the details of such an assumption for adverbials. He argues in favour of a flexible type analysis for certain adverbs with regular meaning variation (*stupidly, quickly*). Interpretation *in situ* restricts the possible readings of adverbs at a given position, as the logical type will have to match the type of the adverb's argument that is provided by syntax.

A well-connected series of papers treats the links between aspect, degrees, and time. The authors can harvest the results of careful semantic analysis in either field over the last decades, including the bonus of a coherent paradigm which, now, allows to combine the best of all studies in very detailed lexical analyses. In 'Measure of change: The adjectival core of degree achievements', CHRISTOPHER KENNEDY and BETH LEVIN propose to use complex scales on the basis of degrees and times. This allows a treatment of verbs like *to cool, to darken* that rests on gradable adjectives. Taking the adjectival core serious, the analysis covers differential degrees (*cool 17 degrees*), predicts the scale properties from the semantic content of the adjective and moreover promises to explain the variable aspectual properties of these verbs. 'Aspectual composition with degrees' by CHRISTOPHER PIÑÓN takes up exactly this point and proposes a detailed analysis of the alternation between telic (*'the soup cooled in 10 minutes'*) and atelic (*'the soup cooled for 10 minutes'*) uses of verbs. He presents his version of a degree based approach within the (somewhat thorny) axiomatic formulation of a theory of Aktionsart by (Krifka 1989). Piñón's analysis fills in concepts that were claimed absent by critics of that approach, and shows how results of twenty years of intermediate research can fruitfully be turned into a richer new version of a theory. GRAHAM KATZ, in 'Manner modification of state verbs', takes advantage of underlying degrees in order to argue against state arguments for stative verbs. Apparent manner modifications like *know well* are proposed to be modifications of a degree argument of the verb. Another class of modifications is shown to be collocational, or about events that can indirectly be accessed by the verb. JENNY DOETJES, 'Adjectives and degree modification', investigates the distribution of degree modifiers like *much, erg* (Dutch), *sehr* (German) and tentatively proposes an implicational hierarchy for their distribution, relating them to the scale properties of various types of gradable words (adjectives, nouns and verbs).

Overall, the articles on adverbials and degrees rest carefully limited to those cases where verb-related scales are time based or derive from adjectival scales. What still seems missing is a formal treatment of gradable manner adverbials in parallel to adjectives, which covers comparatives like *stroke softly/ more softly than / most softly*.

A final set of articles addresses the commentary nature of certain adjectives and adverbs. In 'Nonrestrictive modifiers in non-parenthetical positions', MARCIN MORZYCKI proposes that nonrestrictive adjectives are commentary. Refuting earlier focus-based treatments, he analyses them at the expressive level (Potts 2005). Perhaps the most radical proposal is his Configurationality Hypothesis (for English), according to which expressive predication is never available in right branches in syntax. Controversial as that may be, hypotheses of this kind could explain why some

positions in English show semantic effects similar to focusing without being focus positions proper (e.g. positions that do not attract accents; positions where, if accented, additional pragmatic focus effects arise, etc.). In ‘Lexical semantics and pragmatics of evaluative adverbs’, OLIVIER BONAMI and DANIELLE GODARD argue carefully that opacity and scoping tests place adverbs like *unfortunately* between manner adverbs and propositional attitude operators. The authors offer a dialogue based analysis in HPSG from which they derive the scope effects, veridicality and the fact that *unfortunately*, even though a propositional attitude predicate, is not opaque. Finally, ‘Discourse adjectives’ by GINA TARANTO focuses on adjectives like *clear* in ‘*it is clear that p*’. She proposes a comparatively weak literal semantics in terms of speaker and hearer belief (Stalnaker 2002), according to which the speaker’s evidence favours the expectation ‘*that p*’ over beliefs to the contrary. This allows her to explain why *it is clear that p* can make an informative contribution (in spite of *p* being “clear”), and why the construction is only pseudo-factive, as shown by the non-factive negation *it is not clear that p* (from which *p* does not follow).

In sum, the articles offer an excellent reflection of the current state of the field, even without aiming at comprehensive coverage. All authors take great care in laying out their sets of data, and the recurrently applied standard series of tests for grammaticality, distinctness of readings, coherency in discourse, and entailment witness the generally excellent standards of empirical argumentation that the field has reached. Another pleasant feature of the overall collection is that all authors develop their analyses against a range of background theories in (minimalist) syntax, (truth conditional) semantics plus compatible pragmatic frameworks which, though all different in focus, could optimistically be viewed as belonging to one homogeneous paradigm. This allows the reader to confront hypotheses of different chapters with each other. The tensions that, at times, arise from such comparisons are all the more suited to fire the reader’s interest in the topic.

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