

Contrastive Analysis of English and German Adverbials : From a Viewpoint of an Addresser*

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I. Introduction

A cross-linguistic analysis can assist in locating difficulties which language learners may meet with. More specifically, linguistic interference from the mother tongue is clearly one of the major obstacles in second language acquisition. A comparative analysis is defensible in identifying areas of interlanguage interference. Our discussion relies on the linguistic similarities or dissimilarities between a native language (L1) and a target language (L2) for a positive transfer.

The language data to be used for discussion are from English. However, there are occasional parallel references to the corresponding linguistic forms in German and, to a lesser degree, in French. The topic to be highlighted is a sentential adverbial in a clause-initial position. Different linguists utilize different terminologies to denote this type of adverbial. For example, Bellert (1977) uses "evaluative, pragmatic, and so forth", while Jackendoff (1972) calls it a speaker-oriented adverbial. In the first place, I will describe the general crosslinguistic outlook of the adverb distribution, because adverb placement in languages like English, German, or French is relatively free. In other words, adverbials can occur in a number of positions in the sentence, although there are syntactic or semantic restrictions on which adverbials can appear in which positions. Secondly, it is maintained that German people who learn English can easily reset to the English parameter value and vice versa under certain circumstances, for instance, in acquiring English sentential adverbials, because these two languages share this property in common.

II. Temporal and Locative Adverbials

In a broader sense of meaning, a temporal adverbial has a wider distribution than does a locative adverbial. Examples¹⁾ (1) and (2) show how indefinite and quantified temporal and locative NP adverbials are distributed each other, while examples (3) and (4) verify which distribution, temporal or locative, of two pairs of name NP and restricted definite NP adverbials is grammatically acceptable.

1. Mary will see John one day.

- *Mary will see John one place.
2. Peg will enjoy the movie with Tom someday.
*Peg will enjoy the movie with Tom someplace.
3. Mary will go bathing Monday.
*Mary will go bathing Madison Avenue.
4. John saw Tom the day that Bill left there.
*John saw Tom the place that Bill built.

English and French show certain contrasts with respect to adverbial placement. First, they allow adverbials both at the end of verb phrases and in the pre-subject position. In contrast, adverbials can appear between the subject and the verb in the case of English, whereas they cannot in French. A further contrast is that adverbials can occur between the verb and its direct object in French, while in English, they are not allowed to interrupt their occurrence in an SVO construct, as are exemplified in (5) to (8):

5. John drinks his coffee quickly.
Jean boit son café rapidement.
6. Carefully John opened the door.
Prudemment Jean a ouvert la porte.
7. *Mary watches often television.
Marie regarde souvent la télévision.
8. Mary often watches television.
*Marie souvent regarde la télévision.

The above observation is based on White (1991)'s²⁾ experimental study where one group of French learners of English was explicitly instructed on adverbial placement and another group on question formation. The results show that the adverb group scored higher in an English proficiency test and that there was a significant difference between these two groups. She argues that form-focused classroom instruction is more effective in helping L2 learners to arrive at the appropriate properties of English than positive input alone. It is revealed that the adverb group successfully learned that the English value of the parameter allows SAVO order and prohibits SVAO order, while the French value allows SVAO and prohibits SAVO.

We can postulate that positive utterances in the language input must be effective in L1 acquisition. However, in L2 acquisition, L2 learners make incorrect generalizations, often based on the mother tongue, that cannot be disconfirmed by positive evidence alone. It follows that explicit information about ungrammatical forms, error correction and other grammatical evidence may trigger the suitable parameter setting. Finally, communicative language teaching with little introduction of negative evidence is not the best means of instruction for L2 learners.

III. Placement of German Adverbials

German adverbials, on the other hand, can be distributed far more widely than their English counterparts. Based on the example sentences in (9), it can be confirmed that German adverbials, *morgen* and *endlich*, can occur freely:

9. (a) Morgen wird Fritz die Bilder kaufen. (Tomorrow will Fritz the picture buy.)
 Fritz wird morgen die Bilder kaufen.
 Fritz wird die Bilder morgen kaufen.
 Die Bilder wird Fritz morgen kaufen.
- (b) Endlich machte Fritz die Tür zu. (Finally Fritz made the door closed.)
 Fritz machte endlich die Tür zu.
 Fritz machte die Tür endlich zu.

Furthermore, the verb appears in the position immediately following the initial element, whatever it may be. However, in a complement clause introduced by complementizers such as *dass*, *ob*, *weil*, the auxiliary can fill the verb position and, consequently, the finite verb is required to appear in a clause final position. German verbs, whether they are finite or auxiliary in a broader sense, are characterized by the placement in a right or left peripheral position of sentential constituents. This peripheral property which German has may influence the adverbial placement. See the following for confirmation:

10. Jutta findet diese Bilder schön. (Jutta finds these pictures beautiful.)
 Er hat den Brief abgeschickt. (He has the letter sent off.)
 Er schickte den Brief ab. (He sent the letter off.)
11. Ich weiss, dass Fritz hier wohnt. (I know that Fritz here lives.)
12. *Ich weiss, dass Fritz wohnt hier.
 *Ich weiss, dass wohnt Fritz hier.
13. Ich weiss nicht, ob Fritz hier wohnt. (I know not whether Fritz here lives.)
14. *Ich weiss nicht, ob Fritz wohnt hier.
 *Ich weiss nicht, ob wohnt Fritz hier.
15. Ich gehe jetzt, weil es spät ist. (I go now, because it is late.)
 *Ich gehe jetzt, weil es ist spät.
 *Ich gehe jetzt, weil ist es spät.

It is now attested that what is more crucial in German in sentence constituent ordering is not a placement of adverbials but a placement of auxiliary and finite verbs. In consequence, adverbial preposing is not an instance of topicalization. In contrast, in English, a clause-initial adverbial carries thematic semantics in terms of its position. As a result, it forms the functionally salient notion in a message-sending language behavior. In the following examples, a preposed elements *on Monday*, *or that guy*, are thematic but they are not equivalent to topicalization, because the topic is a wh

-constituent, *who*. These questions are derived from presuppositions, *Someone went to the beach*, and, *Someone talked to that guy for a long time*. Fronted adverbials with a constituent question should not be a possible construct.³⁾

16. *On Monday, who went to the beach?

*That guy, who talked to for a long time?

This principle holds true for a general question. Compare a pair of the sentences in Example (17).

17. Because Mary left for Paris, I didn't start for London.

*Because Mary left for Paris, do you want to stay here?

In addition to a thematic notion, adverb preposing conveys other communicative functions. A cited text in (18) contains several temporal adverbials. Those clause-initial temporal adverbials indicate a textual shift, and can be a signal of text continuity. Adverb preposing, in effect, reflects various text strategies, and the role of preposing is multifunctional. Therefore, it is natural for such a communicative strategy marker as adverbials to appear early in the sentence.

18.⁴⁾ (A) *By 1476*, Leonardo da Vinci was living in the house of his master Verrocchio and had already painted the portrait which anticipates his famous *Mona Lisa* by 25 years, the *Ginevra di Benci*, now in Washington. *In 1481* he was commissioned to paint *the Adoration of the Magi*. The unfinished picture. ...

In 1483, Leonardo offered his services to Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, as painter, sculptor, military engineer and architect. ... *In 1517*, Leonardo moved to France to the Château of Cloux, where he continued until his death to investigate the nature of the world around him, respected both for his intellectual integrity and for his artistic genius.

(B) *In Redhall Bank Road, off the south side of Lanark Road*, is an eccentric block of quarriers' cottages by Sir James Gowans, c. 1850, built, unusually for this area, of a type of Kentish Rag stone. *Nearby in the same road* is Millbank, an 18th-century house with pediment, roundel and stone stair.

IV. Semantics of Preposed Adverbials

The last part of our presentation will focus on a sentential adverbial, more specifically, a modal adverbial, from the viewpoint of an addresser and an addressee. This is called a disjunct in the framework of Quirk et al. (1985), and it consists of the two categories, a style and an attitudinal disjunct. My aim is, rather, to clarify what are subject-oriented disjuncts and what are speaker-oriented disjuncts. A sentence is, universally, made up of a proposition and, optionally, a modal expression, which conveys a speaker's

judgement and comment on the proposition, when an utterance is made.

First, let us take a look at one of the commonly used subject-oriented disjuncts, *foolishly*, or *wisely*. These adverbials make a judgement on what the sentence agent, *Jutta*, performs, and on the proposition as a whole at the same time. In uttering example (19-a) below, the speaker implies that “*It is wise/foolish of Jutta to trust me, not him.*” Naturally, it can be paraphrased as example (19-b). These two sentences in (19) are semantically equivalent. The same theoretical interpretation holds true for the German case. Investigate (19) and (20) for comparison :

- 19-a. Wisely, Jutta trusted me, not him.
 Foolishly, Jutta trusted me, not him.
 b. Jutta was wise/foolish in trusting me, not him.
 20-a. Klugerweise glaubte Jutta mir, nicht ihm.
 b. Jutta war so klug, mir zu glauben.

This kind of disjunct cannot occur in a sentence, when a predicate of the proposition is not controllable by a grammatical subject. In (21) the event ‘*raining*’ is not the subject’s intention, nor is *having a cold* intentional in a normal language behavior. Therefore, these two are ungrammatical. Compare them with their German counterparts in (22) :

21. *Wisely, it was raining.
 *Wisely, Jutta had a cold.
 22. *Klugerweise regnete es.
 *Klugerweise hatte Jutta eine Erkaeltung.

More than two adverbials can cooccur, unless they conflict semantically. A manner adverbial ‘*stupidly*’ and a subject-oriented disjunct ‘*cleverly*’ are used concurrently in a cross-linguistic way as follows :

23. Cleverly, Jutta answered stupidly in order to fool the spy.
 Geschickterweise antwortete Jutta ausweichend, um den Spion zum Narren zu halten.

It is often pointed out that the well-formedness of coordinate constructions depends on the categorial identity of the conjoined constituents, or identity of the syntactic category. However, there are some examples which show that the categorial identity constraint is not viable as a sufficient condition for coordination. Example (24) is an instance of mismatching of syntactic categories. The constituent ‘*beautifully*’ is adverbial, while *a hymn* is a noun used as a direct object. Example (25) has two direct objects of the same syntactic category, but they are preceded by the same verb with different meanings ; ‘*make money*’ and ‘*make a dress*’.⁵⁾

24. *Yesterday Tom sang beautifully and a hymn.
 25. *Mary makes very little money and her own dresses.

Categorial identity is a necessary factor of grammatical acceptability. Example (26)

can be captured by the principle. However, the example in (27) verifies that both a syntactic condition and a functional equivalence are needed for coordination;

26. John sang a hymn and a carol.⁶⁾

27. *John ate with his mother and with good appetite.

The example below can be explained by the same principle. If we reverse the order of 'a headache' and 'a new car', we can obtain a causal connection between owning a new car and suffering from a headache, which makes the degree of grammaticality increased, as shown in examples (28) and (29):⁷⁾

28. * John now has a headache and a new car.

29. ? John now has a new car and a headache.

The ungrammaticality of the following cannot be explained, either, by means of the identity-of-syntactic category constraint, because these two adverbials carry different semantic functions, although they belong to the same syntactic category. The former is speaker-oriented, and the latter is subject-oriented.

30. *John probably and unwillingly went to bed at 9 p.m.⁸⁾

Now we will have a discussion on speaker-oriented adverbials. In our framework, they are included in attitudinal disjuncts. They are commonly called sentential adverbs in the literature of structural linguistics. One of the most important properties that this type of adverbial has is that it is semantically external to the proposition expressed by the utterance. Therefore, it can be restated that speaker-oriented adverbials do not contribute to the truth condition expressed by a proposition. More specifically, they are an indicator of the extent to which the speaker's statement is reliable. On this interpretation, four characteristics are now considered.

(1)⁹⁾ This group of adverbials can be used independently in an answering sentence to an yes-no interrogative, while style disjuncts such as *frankly*, *briefly*, *honestly*, *generally* can not.

31. Is Tom an ideal teacher? ... (a) Yes.

(b) Yes, probably.

(c) Probably.

(d) Frankly, yes.

(e) *Frankly.

(2) This group can cooccur with epistemic auxiliary verbs in a clause under a specified circumstance. The degree of probability of these two categories of constituents have should coincide. When it does not, a grammatically unacceptable sentence is produced.

32. Possibly, Tom may pass the examination.

33. Probably, Tom will pass the examination.

34. Surely, that newspaper report must be true

35. *The report may surely be true.

The German counterparts corresponding, for example, to examples (32) and (33) are examples (36) and (37).

36. Möglicherweise kann Tom die Prüfung bestehen.

37. Wahrscheinlich wird Tom die Prüfung bestehen.

(3) According to Massam (1990), adjectives derived from subject-oriented adverbials can modify cognate objects. There are shared notional entities between a verb and a cognate object in a cognate object construct. (ex. *The baby was sleeping a sound sleep in the cradle.*) More importantly, a grammatical subject is a realistic participant in the language action denoted by the verb and the cognate object. Therefore, adverbials which belong to this group and their derived adjectives can modify shared semantic aspects of these two grammatical categories. On the other hand, speaker-oriented modal adverbials are external to the utterance behavior conceived by a proposition. It is evident that a speaker is not a real participant in the language performance itself. In consequence, adjectives derived from speaker-oriented modal adverbials can not modify cognate objects. The constructed examples below can confirm the above discussion.¹⁰⁾

38. Foolishly, John smiled at the ceremony. John smiled a foolish smile at the ceremony.

Wisely, Susan smiled before her interviewer. ... Susan smiled a wise smile before her interviewer.

Clinton unwillingly danced with Susan. Clinton danced an unwilling dance with Susan.

Evidently, John smiled at the meeting. *John smiled an evident smile at the meeting

Probably, Jill died at the war in Africa. *Jill died a probable death at the war in Africa.

One way to account for the linguistic behavior is to interpret a cognate object as an adverbial. The majority of grammarians regard a cognate verb as a transitive verb, presumably because objects in the following display the characteristics of regular objects such as passivization, topicalization, pronominalization, and questionability.¹¹⁾

39. Mary sang the aria.

The aria was sung by Mary.

The aria, nobody sang.

I sang the aria, and then John sang it.

What did Mary sing?

Contrary to the above objects, which can be called a transitivizing object, true cognate objects do not share the linguistic properties mentioned above as exemplified in example (40).¹²⁾

40. *Maggie smiled a silly smile.

*A silly smile was smiled by Maggie.

*A silly smile, nobody smiled.

*Our pet cat died a slow death, then Tom's dog died one, too.

*What did Tom's dog die?

(4) The last part of our discussion concerns transformation of a style/an attitudinal adjunct construct to an *it-that* sentence organization. In principle, a style adjunct modifies an implicit illocutional verb such as '*I tell you frankly*', '*I tell you confidentially*'. As a result, an adjective derived from a style disjunct is not allowed to appear in an *it-that* sentence type. On the other hand, adjectives derived from attitudinal disjuncts can appear in an *it-that* construct. However, a derived sentence does contribute to a proposition. Hence, we cannot obtain an equivalent derivation.

41. Honestly, John is not mistaken.

*It is honest that John is not mistaken.

42. Briefly, John is wholly correct in this point.

*It is brief that John is wholly correct in this point.

43. Obviously, Susan behaved herself at the party. = It is obvious that Susan behaved herself at the party.

V. Conclusion

Our discussion concerned various characteristics of adverbial expressions. Specifically, sentential adverbials were focused on from a crosslinguistic point of view. What was emphasized is how an addresser's judgement and attitude are conveyed to an addressee by means of preposed adverbials. A clause-initial adverbial is background-providing. In other words, it forms the informationally foregrounded and salient notion. Often it functions as a point of departure for what follows, and it is a signal of textual continuity. Therefore, it can be maintained to be a multifunctional strategy marker. It is natural for such a marker to appear early in the clause. So far as modal sentential adverbs are concerned, L2 learners can reset to the parameter of Universal Grammar with reduced difficulty, because our study of clause-initial adverbials provides us with useful, although limited, insights into the behavior of adverbs in general and of preposed sentence constituents in particular.

Footnotes

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George Russell and Dr. Gesine Gessner. They could make it possible for me to make stylistic improvements in many ways. Of course, all remaining errors are my own.

- 1) Similar examples are found in T. Stroik (1993) p. 269.
- 2) I cannot manage to locate Lydia White (1991) at the time I submit this paper, although my assumption was influenced by it, while I wrote its draft in July, 1996.
- 3) Much of our argument is cited in Davison (1984) pp. 822-824.
- 4) Refer to the citation in Virtanen (1992) pp. 104-106. Emphasis is mine.
- 5) Our discussion is based on Peterson (1981) pp. 449-453.
- 6) For citation, refer to Peterson (1981) pp. 449-451.
- 7) *ibid.*
- 8) *ibid.*
- 9) We follow the concept in Okada (1985) Chapter 3.
- 10) See Massam (1990) pp. 174-175.
- 11) They are quoted from Massam (1990) pp. 163-165.
- 12) *ibid.*

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