

## ON DERIVATIONAL AND PHRASAL ADVERBIALS OF MANNER

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This paper compares the usage of derivational and phrasal adverbial expressions of manner in several related languages and points to possible translational and learning problems due to peculiarities of selection in one language or another.

English, French, Italian and Spanish use both simple adverbs of manner (ex. *well*) and derivational adverbs of manner formed by adding a suffix to an adjective (ex. *poorly*). German uses the same form for both adjective and adverb. One could consider that for the adverb in German a zero suffix is added to the root, but rather than make that argument here it will simply be stated that for purposes of comparison the German adverbs will be classified as derivational. All five languages form adverbial expressions of manner consisting of a preposition plus a noun phrase (ex. *with pleasure*).

Grammars of individual languages, except for German, state how derivational adverbials of manner are formed, but rules for selecting derivational or phrasal adverbials are either non-existent or hard to come by. There are language-specific constraints, and while there may be a large degree of one-one correspondence, the translation of an adverbial of manner construction into another language using the same adverbial type can lead to ungrammatical or unnatural results. Choosing the wrong type can even cause a semantic change.

In English it is natural to say *John waited calmly*, but in Spanish the translation of the foregoing as *Juan esperó calmamente* is unacceptable. Conversely, *John waited with calm* is questionable, and *Juan esperó con calma* is normal.

Some other questionable, non-occurring (at least non-occurring in some

idiolects), or extremely low frequency items in everyday, colloquial American English are *difficulty*, *sinisterly*, and *desirously*, as in *John worked difficulty*, *John walked through the night sinisterly*, and *John looked at the girl desirously*. The Spanish cognates *difícilmente* and *siniestramente*, using the same adverbial type shown in English, are acceptable translations of the two statements in English.

Are the examples just cited merely rare but prominent cases evident in English and Spanish only, or is the problem more pervasive, affecting languages other than English and Spanish? In order to answer this question, lists of sentences in English containing adverbials of manner were given to native speakers of the other languages mentioned here with instructions to translate the adverbials into their own language.

There were two lists, identical except that one list contained only derivational adverbials with the suffix *-ly*, all presumed to be acceptable in English. The other list contained only phrasal adverbials consisting of a preposition followed by a noun phrase. This second list was made by arbitrarily converting the derivational expressions to phrasal constructions without regard for acceptability or meaning. The purpose of two lists, identical except for adverbial type, was to account for translational pressures of English. The responses to the two lists from each informant were merged and categorized, and frequencies were computed.

Before turning to the results of the elicitation and the conclusions based on those results, let us consider some peculiarities and problems of adverbials of manner in English.

We have noted that *John waited calmly* is grammatical. Now, considering the other possibility, *John waited with calm*, we take the position that the phrasal adverbial is ungrammatical, or extremely rare. And while we have noted that *John looked at the girl desirously* is not grammatical, we now point out that *John looked at the girl with desire* containing a phrasal adverbial is grammatical. We have seen, then, lexical items in English behaving in exactly opposite ways under a transformation of adverbialization.

But in the case of *John won easily* and *John won with ease* it seems that both utterances may occur freely, and with the same meaning. Some other pairs of this type are:

- John drives carefully.
- John drives with care.
- John played the role feelingly.
- John played the role with feeling.
- John acted justly.
- John acted with justice.

While meaning seemed to remain constant in each of the foregoing pairs, let us turn to some other pairs:

- John confessed his sins openly.
- John confessed his sins with openness.

- John told the truth freely.
- John told the truth with freedom.

- John told the story a second time forgetfully.
- John told the story a second time with forgetfulness.

In each of the pairs there seems to be a possible significant meaning difference. If John confessed his sins openly, he might have confessed them to anyone who would listen, but if he confessed with openness, he may have been before only his priest. If John told the truth freely, he did so willingly and without hesitation, but if he told the truth with freedom, there was no danger of reprisal. And if John told the story a second time forgetfully, he may have told the story again without a flaw or hesitation but failed to recall that he had already entertained his listeners. If John told the story a second time with forgetfulness, it may have been to a second audience and he forgot essential parts.

Two other sets of examples with one sentence in common in each pair seem to display sameness in meaning on one occasion and difference in meaning on the other:

- John lived poorly.
- John lived in poverty.

Here John did not have sufficient resources to live well, whichever sentence is chosen.

- John lived poorly.
- John lived with poverty.

In the first instance John had insufficient resources; while in the second he either had insufficient resources and tolerated poverty, or perhaps he had resources but resided amidst poverty, as one who lives with death on unfortunate occasions. Here we have two meanings in phrasal adverbials depending on selection of the prepositions.

The foregoing examples should make it clear that selection of the adverbial of manner type is not a simple matter. While stylistic or dialectal differences might bring about some disagreement with the examples cited above, not to mention idiolectal differences, there seems to be no hesitation on the part of individual native speakers to rule that either type of adverbial may occur in a given context with the same meaning, that one type or the other is un-

grammatical, or that either may occur, but with a meaning difference. Also, there are occasions when both types seem possible, but one seems to be preferred, as in:

John laughed heartily.

John laughed with hardiness.

John treated the matter laughingly.

John treated the matter with laughter.

John performs ably.

John performs with ability.

In these pairs the first sentence seems to be preferred. In the following two pairs the reverse is the case:

John looked at me questioningly.

John looked at me with question.

John behaved reasonably.

John behaved with reason.

While it is not the purpose of this paper to discover and formulate the rules held in the mind to select adverbial type, but rather to contrast the application of these rules, it may be of interest to point to the possible nature of these rules, which may be based on syntax, the accident of morpheme cooccurrence, or semantics.

The phrasal adverbial may not in English precede the verb. No one, if the writer may dare, would accept *\*John with desire looked at the girl*. Terminal junctures, though, might make the following acceptable: *John, with desire, looked at the girl*. Nor may the phrasal adverbial occur after a transitive verb and before its object, as in *\*John played with perfection the piano*.

Some derivational adverbials may precede verbs, as in *John quickly left the room* and *John lovingly stroked his dog*, but others cannot, as in *\*John reasonably acted*. And, as in the case of the phrasal adverbials of manner, the derivational adverbials may not occur between a transitive verb and its object, as in *\*John left quickly the room*.

Both types of adverbials may be modified by elements expressing degree, as in *John waited very calmly* and *John looked at the girl with great desire*. Of course, only the phrasal type may contain a modifying clause, as in *John looked at the girl with the greatest desire he had ever experienced*.

Where selection does not depend on syntactic constraints, then morphological, semantic, or stylistic constraints must be involved.

Using the 1000 words occurring most frequently on the Thorndike and Lorge wordlist as a source of words to form adverbials of manner, the writer

selected adjectives and words from which adjectives could be derived, and nouns and words from which nouns could be derived, and used them to form adverbials of manner.

The following ungrammatical derivational adverbials resulted: *alonely*, *bigly*, *hardly*, (meaning diligently), *manlily*, *rightly* (as in *\*John worked the problem rightly*), *afraidly*, *fastly*, and *illy*. Suppression of the *-ly* suffix, (or replacing it with zero), produces the following grammatical constructions: *alone*, (*John works alone*), *big* (*John talks big*), *hard* (*John works hard*), *fast* (*John works fast*), and *ill* (*John thinks ill of me*).

The following ungrammatical phrasal constructions resulted from the same word source: *with bigness*, *with dearness*, *with hardness*, *with highness*, *with knowledge*, *with heat*, *with prettiness*, *with quickness*, *with senselessness*, *with shadiness*, *with softness*, *with straightness*, and *with suddenness*.

When certain nouns in the above ungrammatical constructions are modified, the phrasal adverbials become acceptable, and they are the only means of expressing the semantic intention of the speaker, as in: *with bigness of heart*, *with unforgettable dearness*, *with considerable knowledge*, etc.

It is not possible to modify *hardness*, *highness*, *movement*, *fame*, and *straightness* and produce grammatical adverbials matching *hard*, *highly*, *movingly*, *famously*, and *straightly* because the nouns are not semantic matches for the adjectives from which adverbials are derived.

The compilation of the responses of native speakers to the two lists of adverbials revealed that of the 72 derivational adverbials of manner in English with the suffix *-ly* and the one item with a zero suffix (*alone*) representing 100% in close translational equivalents of English there was a 78% match in German with adjective-adverb forms, a 48% match in French with forms taking the suffix *-ment*, a 48% match in Spanish with forms taking *-mente*, and a 40% match in Italian with forms ending in *-mente*.

If one included in the calculations above more distant translational equivalents for English, such as *magnifiquement* for *beautifully*, *leggermente* for *laughingly*, and *tranquilamente* for *peacefully*, the derivational matches with English increase to 56% for French, 63% for Italian, and 60% for Spanish.

These figures, if they are typical of a more or less complete data set, mean that if one had a translating machine programmed with the rules of English, there would be an error rate with close translational items of 60% for Italian, 52% for French and Spanish, and 22% in German.

On only 13 items out of 73 did all five of the languages considered here agree in usage of derivational adverbials of manner. This is only an 18% match.

In English, phrasal adverbials are possible for 26 of the 73 items which take the suffix *-ly*. Not counted are phrasal adverbials whose meaning is not the same as that of the derivational form. Since English items with the *-ly*

suffix representing 100% were matched by considerably less than 100% in each of the other languages, it is not surprising to find that each of the other languages also has phrasal adverbials matching a number of the *-ly* forms in English. In several instances, though, other languages, according to these particular informants, use neither the derivational nor the phrasal adverbials comprising a preposition and a noun phrase. Examples include *en riant* and *riéndose* for *laughingly*, *en souriant* for *smilingly*, *er wartete voller Hoffnung* for *hopefully*, *fragend* for *questioningly* and *faceva il proprio dovere* for *dutifully*.

The percentage of phrasal adverbials used by the informants in giving close translational equivalents of English were as follows: French 48% (49% including more distant equivalents), German 33%, Italian 14% (15% including more distant equivalents), and Spanish 58% (60% including more distant equivalents).

Let us return to the question earlier in this paper: Are examples of non-matching adverbials of manner across language boundaries merely rare or is the problem more pervasive? The data discussed here indicate that the non-matches are not rare and that the complication is considerable. A detailed investigation of the occurrence of each type of adverbial of manner in each language would seem to be in order.

#### REFERENCE

Thorndike, E. L. and Lorge, I. 1944. *The teachers word book of 30,000 words*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College.