

# Adverbs and Stylistic Inversion in English

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## 1. Introduction

In this paper I will be concerned with the syntactic and semantic behavior of adverbs in stylistic inversion (SI) constructions developed by Culicover (1980) and Rochemont and Culicover (R&C) (1990).<sup>1</sup> They argue that the constituent which is topicalized in a SI construction is a VP and that an adverb and a PP in the VP can form a constituent.<sup>2</sup> I will use Jackendoff's (1972) analysis of adverbs to account for the constituency of the combination of an adverb and a PP.

## 2. Adverbs in English

### 2.1. Jackendoff (1972)

Jackendoff (1972), within the framework of interpretive semantics, divides adverbs in English into six types depending on where they occur in a sentence, as summarized in (1)-(6).<sup>3</sup>

- (1) Type 1: This class can occupy all three positions, but changes meaning according to position. (*cleverly, clumsily, carefully, carelessly, happily, truthfully, specifically, frankly*, etc.)
  - a. *Cleverly*(,) John dropped his cup of coffee.
  - b. John *cleverly* dropped his cup of coffee.
  - c. John dropped his cup of coffee *cleverly*.
- (2) Type 2: This class can occupy all three positions, but there is no discernible change in meaning. (*quickly, slowly, reluctantly, sadly, quietly, indolently, immediately, often, soon*, etc.)
- (3) Type 3: This class can occur only in initial and auxiliary position. (*evidently, probably, unbelievably, certainly, understandably, naturally, apparently*, etc.)

- a. Evidently Horatio has lost his mind.
  - b. Horatio has evidently lost his mind.
  - c. \*Horatio has lost his mind evidently.
- (4) Type 4: This class can occur only in auxiliary and final position. (*completely, easily, purposefully, totally, altogether, handily, badly, morally, tremendously, etc.*)
- a. \*Completely Stanley ate his Wheaties.
  - b. Stanley completely ate his Wheaties.
  - c. Stanley ate his Wheaties completely.
- (5) Type 5: This class can occur only in final position. (*hard, well, etc.*)
- a. \*Hard John hit Bill.
  - b. \*John hard hit Bill.
  - c. John hit Bill hard.
- (6) Type 6: This class can occur only in auxiliary position. (*merely, truly, simply, etc.*)
- a. \*Merely Albert is being a fool.
  - b. Albert is merely being a fool.
  - c. \*Albert is being a fool merely. (Jackendoff (1972: 49-51))

Sentences (1a) and (1c) may be paraphrased as (7a) and (7b), respectively and sentence (1b) is itself ambiguous between (7a) and (7b).

- (7) a. It was clever of John to drop his cup of coffee.  
b. The manner in which John dropped his cup of coffee was clever.  
(*ibid.*: 49)

Jackendoff (1972) calls adverbs which correspond to (7a) and (7b) subject-oriented and manner adverbs, respectively. On the other hand, *evidently* in (3a) can be paraphrased as (8) and is called a speaker-oriented adverb.

- (8) It is evident that Horatio has lost his mind. (*ibid.*: 50)

2.2. *Quickly* and *Slowly*

Jackendoff (1972) observes, as shown in (2), that *quickly*, for example, can occupy three positions and that it does not show any difference in meaning. There are, in fact, other analyses of *quickly* and *slowly*. The (a) sentences in (9)-(12) may be paraphrased as *John was quick (slow) in ...*, while the (b) sentences in (9)-(12) may be paraphrased by using a PP such as *in a quick (slow) way*.

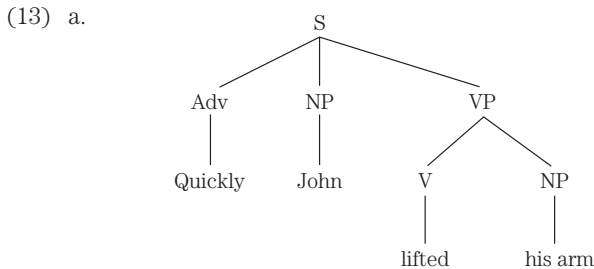
- (9) a. John quickly lifted his arm.  
 b. John lifted his arm quickly. (Cinque (1999: 93))

- (10) a. He slowly tested some bulbs.  
 b. He tested some bulbs slowly.  
 (Thomason and Stalnaker (1973: 200))

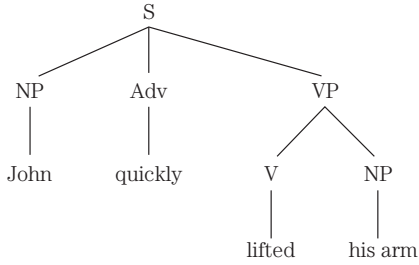
- (11) a. Slowly, everyone left.  
 b. Everyone left slowly. (McConnel-Ginet (1982: 175))

- (12) a. Quickly, he denied her words.<sup>4</sup>  
 b. He denied her words quickly.  
 (Yasui, Akiyama and Nakamura (1986: 195))

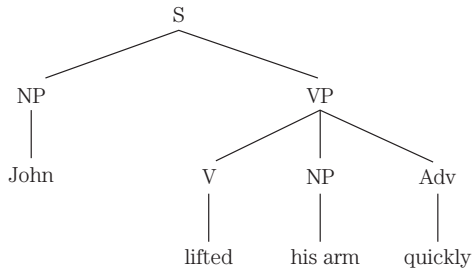
*Quickly* or *slowly* in the (a) sentences is regarded as a subject-oriented adverb, while that in the (b) sentences as a manner adverb. It may be possible to assume within the framework of Jackendoff (1972) that the position of *quickly* or *slowly* in the (a) and (b) sentences is represented as in (13a, b) and (14), respectively.<sup>5</sup>



b.



(14)



Notice, incidentally, that Jackendoff (1972) cites the following examples in which *quickly* acts as a subject-oriented adverb.

- (15) a. Quickly, Max was climbing the walls of the garden.  
 b. Probably, Max quickly was climbing the walls of the garden.  
 c. \*Quickly, Max probably was climbing the walls of the garden.

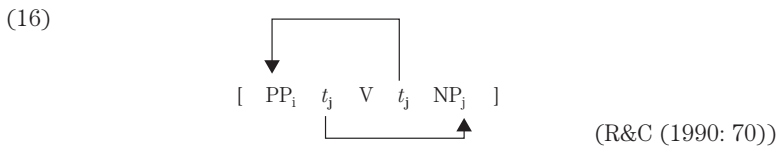
(Jackendoff (1972: 88-89))

(15b) and (15c) indicate that *quickly* must follow a speaker-oriented adverb. It is also in order here to notice that Jackendoff (1972:58) also states that “*John opened the door slowly* asserts that the motion of the door is slow (contrast with *Slowly John opened the door*).” This seems to indicate that Jackendoff (1972) also recognizes the subject-oriented reading of *quickly*.<sup>6</sup> In this paper, I will assume that *quickly*, for example, can occupy all three positions, but changes its meaning depending on the position.

### 3. Stylistic Inversion

#### 3.1. R&C (1990)

R&C (1990: 69) observe that “[SI is] viewed as involving movement of the subject to the right around the VP.” As to SI, however, Culicover (1980) and R&C (1990) propose different rules. In this paper I will basically adopt the framework of R&C (1990). They assume that Directional and Locative Inversion (D/L), a form of SI, contains the following derivation.



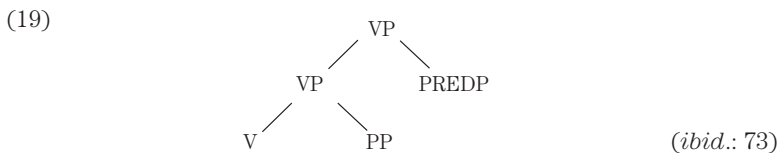
Rule (16) derives sentences such as those in (17).

- (17) a. Into the room walked John.  
 b. In front of her sat her mother. (*ibid.*)

They also cite the following sentences and argue that “it is not always simply a PP or even obviously a constituent that precedes the verb.” (*ibid.*: 71)

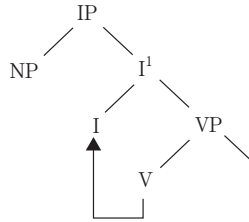
- (18) a. Into the room nude walked John.  
 b. In front of her smiling stood Bill. (*ibid.*: 71)

In order to account for the derivation of the sentences in (18), they assume the following structure.



That is, sentences (17a) and (18a) correspond to structure (19), and the upper VP will move to the beginning of the sentence. They also assume that V will be raised to I prior to the topicalization of VP, as shown in (20).

(20)



(*ibid.*: 75)

This yields the derivation in which the PP and predicate sequence will move to the beginning of the sentence.

### 3.2. Culicover (1980)

Culicover (1980: 3) argues that when there are two sisters to the verb in the same VP, it is possible to move them to the beginning of the sentence, as shown in (21).

- (21) a. Into the room quickly went Bill.  
 b. Into the room will quickly go Bill. (Culicover (1980: 3-4))

He uses Gapping as a test of the consistency of SI, as shown in (22).

- (22) a. Into the room went Bill, and out of the room, Mary.  
 b. Into the room will go Bill, and out of the room, Mary.  
 c. Into the room will quickly go Bill, and out of the room, Mary. (*ibid.*)

Culicover (1980: 7) also cites the following examples and argues that “the adverb moves with the PP, and is not moved by a separate rule of topicalization.”

- (23) a. Quickly into the room went Bill, and slowly onto the roof, Mary.  
b. \*Quickly Bill went into the room, and slowly Mary, onto the roof.  
(*ibid.*: 8)

He argues that (23b) is ill-formed because of the “requirement that only one constituent precede the gapped sequence.” (*ibid.*: 8)

### 3.2. Arguments for VP Topicalization.

R&C (1990), as mentioned above, assume that the constituent that will prepose in SI is a VP. Consider the following sentences.

- (24) a. Quickly into the room went Bill.  
b. Gracefully down the staircase walked the Queen.  
c. Meekly under the table crouched the dog. (R&C (1990: 80))

R&C (1990: 80-81) assume that the adverb in each of the sentences in (24) is a constituent with the PP in VP.

They also discuss the case of multiple complements to V, as shown in (24).

- (25) a. Down the stairs into the kitchen walked Mary.  
b. Beside her in the waiting room sat her husband. (*ibid.*: 82)

Based on the grammaticality of the examples in (25), they assume that the PPs in (25) are constituents of VP. The same is true of sentence (26), which is ambiguous between the two readings in (27).

- (26) Into the room behind her ran several guards.  
(27) a. Several guards ran into the room that was behind her.  
b. Several guards ran into the room following her. (*ibid.*: 83)

The fact that (26) has two readings such as (27) indicates that “multiple constituents in VP act like a single constituent.” (*ibid.*: 83)<sup>7</sup>

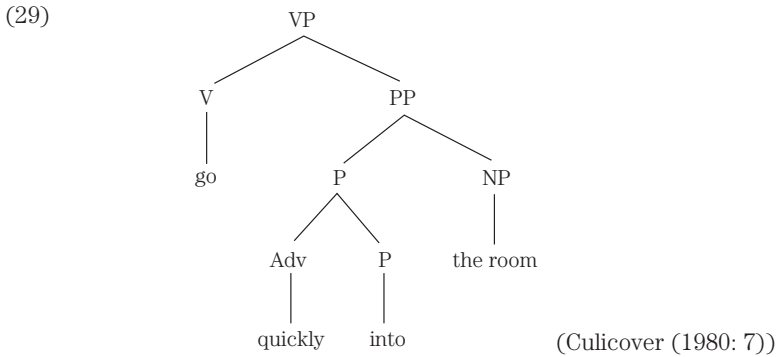
**4. A Problem and its Semantic Solution**

Look again at the following examples.

- (28) a. Quickly into the room went Bill, and slowly onto the roof, Mary.  
(=23a)
- b. \*Quickly Bill went into the room, and slowly Mary, onto the roof.  
(=23b)

Culicover (1980: 8) argues that (28b) is ill-formed because it does not meet the “requirement that only one constituent precede the gapped sequence.” Although I accept Culicover’s explanation, there seems to be another solution.

Sentence (28a) can be derived by applying SI and Gapping. In this case, the adverb *quickly* is adjoined to P, as shown in (29).



The tree in (29) indicates that *quickly into the room* is a constituent and SI can yield (28a).

On the other hand, in the case of (28b), in which SI has not applied, *quickly* must be interpreted as a subject-oriented adverb because of its position. Then it is impossible to regard the sequence *quickly ...into the room* as a constituent. In (28b), the adverb and the PP would refer to different events. This is why (28b) is ill-formed.



## 5. Concluding Remarks

We have been concerned with the syntactic and semantic behavior of adverbs in SI constructions. Jackendoff's (1972) classification of adverbs makes it possible to account for the ungrammaticality of (28b). The occurrence of an adverb in SI seems to indicate that SI is based on the preposing of VP instead of PP topicalization.

## NOTES

1 It is plausible to assume, based on Culicover (1980), that SI includes two rules: Post-Verbal Complement Topicalization and Stylistic Inversion. The former fronts a constituent of VP and the latter moves a subject NP to the end of the sentence.

2 Maruta (1992) argues that SI will be derived by preposing a PP instead of a VP, based on Hoekstra and Mulder (1990). In this paper, I will use the framework of R&C (1990). For relevant discussion, see Maruta (1992) and Hoekstra and Mulder (1990).

3 This summary is based on Okuno and Ogawa (2002: 207-208).

4 Ota (1980: 482) cites the following example.

(i) \*Quickly, he didn't walk.

The ungrammaticality of (i) seems to indicate that the subject-oriented reading of *quickly* depends on the sentence in which it occurs.

5 Sentences (9)-(12) contain only Tense in the auxiliary. Travis (1988) cites the following sentences.

- (i) a. Quickly John will be arrested by the police.
- b. John quickly will be arrested by the police.
- c. John will be quickly arrested by the police.
- d. John will be arrested quickly by the police. (Travis (1988: 292))

She says that “in ([i]a, b) *quickly* appears to be modifying the event of the arrest while in ([i]c, d) *quickly* modifies the process of the arrest.” (292) For more discussion on sentences in which there are more than one element, such as Modal, *have* and *be* in the auxiliary, see Jackendoff (1972).

6 It is helpful here to look at the following sentence.

- (i) Quickly, what would you say are the opposites of the following words? (Nakau (1994: 70))

*Quickly* in (i) may be regarded as a speaker-oriented adverb. For more discussion on the relation between adverbs and modality, see Nakau (1994).

7 For relevant discussion on multiple complements to V, see Yoneyama (2014, 2015).

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