

Speaker-oriented Adverbs of the German *-weise* Sort

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In this paper, we discuss certain SpOAs (speaker-oriented adverbs) of the German *-weise* sort. Nilsen (2004) claims that SpOAs are positive polarity items (PPIs). The results of our speaker judgement experiment confirmed his claim, e. g. our 24 subjects all accepted (1a) and all rejected (1b).

- (1) a. Die Vorschule hat glücklicherweise einen tollen Spielplatz.
'The pre-school has fortunately a great playground.'
- b. *Die Vorschule hat **nicht** glücklicherweise einen tollen Spielplatz.
'The pre-school has not fortunately a great playground.'

Bonami and Godard (to appear) suggest that the oddness of such sentences as (1b) is due to the clash between the “main assertion”: \neg **have**(**v**, **ts**) and the “ancillary commitment”: **have**(**v**, **ts**) \rightarrow **fortunate**(**have**(**v**, **ts**)). However, even when preceding adverbs are not negative, e. g. *immer* ‘always’, with which the clash should not arise as the “main assertion” is positive, the sentences remain bad. Compare:

- (2) a. Peter ist unglaublicherweise **immer/nie/selten/häufig** gut angezogen.
'Peter is unbelievably always/never/seldom/often well-dressed.'
- b. *Peter ist **immer/nie/selten/häufig** unglaublicherweise gut angezogen.
'Peter is always/never/seldom/often unbelievably well-dressed.'

Thus, the question turns into either why SpOAs cannot scope over the rest of the sentence with adverbs such as *immer* ‘always’, *nie* ‘never’, *selten* ‘seldom’ in a higher position, as with e. g. *nichts* ‘nothing’, *niemand* ‘nobody’, *wenig* ‘few’, or modals, or why these adverbs cannot outscope SpOAs.

- (3) a. **Wenige** sind unglaublicherweise gut angezogen. = Unglaublicherweise sind **wenige** gut angezogen.
'Few are unbelievably well-dressed.'
- b. Peter **könnte** unglaublicherweise gut angezogen sein. = Unglaublicherweise **könnte** Peter gut angezogen sein.
'Peter could be unbelievably well-dressed.'

Lewis (2002/1975) claims that these adverbs are quantifiers over cases (which might as well simply be events) : E. g. *always* in *A man who owns a donkey always beats it now and then* is a quantifier over the case: [if x is a man, if y is a donkey, and if x owns y, x beats y now and then]. We claim that SpOAs are not quantifiable as they are not cases (not e. g. an event but an evaluation). Following Bellert (1977) and Bach (1999), we take a double-proposition view, namely, SpOAs take the rest of the sentence, i. e. the main proposition, as the argument, which yields an additional proposition. Quantifying adverbs are part of the main proposition that SpOAs predicate over and should therefore be in the semantic scope of the latter. Sentences modified by SpOAs are closed cases (by evaluation) and allow no further quantification.

predication (quantification (case))
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SpOAs should take a syntactically higher position than quantifying adverbs, because they, being both adverbs, are in a competing relation for scope-taking over the rest of the sentence and syntactically higher ones win.

We distinguish these SpOAs from modal adverbs e. g. *möglicherweise*, because the latter does not constitute an extra proposition but is part of the (main) proposition. This is why modal adverbs can stand in the scope of SpOAs but not vice versa.

- (4) a. Unglücklicherweise ist Peter möglicherweise krank.
 ‘Unfortunately, Peter is possibly sick.’
- b. *Möglicherweise ist Peter unglücklicherweise krank.
 ‘Possibly, Peter is unfortunately sick.’

SpOAs are also different from what Bellert (1977) calls “speaking speaker-oriented adverbs” (SSpOAs) e. g. *honestly, briefly, precisely*. SpOAs can occur in indirect speech while SSpOAs can not because they are not part of what is said but modify the act of speaking. For this reason, Bach (1999) calls the former “content modifiers” and the latter “utterance modifiers”. Both SSpOAs and SpOAs are syntactically optional, but the former are semantically independent whereas the latter are in a predicate-argument relation with the rest of the sentence.

- (5) a. Maria sagte dass Peter unglücklicherweise krank war.
 ‘Mary said that Peter was unfortunately sick.’
- b. Maria sagte dass *kurz erwähnt Peter krank war.
 ‘Mary said that briefly Peter was sick.’

Using SpOAs in an utterance presupposes the speaker’s belief of the main proposition being true. The hearer can agree or disagree with either of the two propositions. However, due to the relation between them, it does not make sense to deny both at the same time, because denying the main proposition makes the denying of the second one unnecessary and denying the second presupposes the agreeing on the main one. The truth/falsity of the main proposition is independent on that of the extra proposition, while the latter becomes an issue only when the main proposition holds true. Consider the dialogue:

- (6) A: Tom ist unglaublicherweise intelligent. $(\lambda Q.\lambda P.Q(P(t)))(s_{poa})$
 ‘Tom ist unbelievably intelligent.’
- B: Nein, er ist nicht intelligent. $\lambda P.\neg P(t)$
 ‘No, he is not intelligent.’
- C: Er ist intelligent, aber ich finde das nicht unglaublich. $\lambda P.(P(t) \wedge (\lambda Q.\neg Q(P(t)))(s_{poa}))$
 ‘He is intelligent, but it is not unbelievable to me.’

SpOAs tend not to occur in non-veridical contexts such as questions, conditionals or predicates such as *hoffen* ‘hope’, because the main proposition there is an open case, i. e. its truth value is not settled yet, thus it would be odd to use SpOAs, which presupposes the main proposition to be true.

- (7) a. *Hat die Vorschule glücklicherweise einen tollen Spielplatz?
 ‘Does the pre-school fortunately have a great playground?’
- b. *Wenn die Vorschule glücklicherweise einen tollen Spielplatz hätte, würde es die Eltern freuen.
 ‘If the pre-school fortunately had a great playground, the parents would be happy.’
- c. *Die Eltern **hoffen** dass die Vorshule glücklicherweise einen tollen Spielplatz hat.
 ‘The parents hope that the pre-school fortunately has a great playground.’

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