

# Functions of Derivational ‘*Un-V-ly*’ Adverbs Found in Some Novels

Koshiro Kusamoto\*

1. Derivational adverbs are adverbs that are derived from morphologically and semantically related verbs. Among the derivational adverbs are adverbs which possess the prefix *un*. They are realized in an ‘*un-V-ly*’ form, and there are two forms of these adverbs with the prefix *un*: ‘*un-V-edly*’ and ‘*un-V-ingly*.’ The number of such adverbs is rather limited.

Some ‘*un-V-ly*’ adverbs are derived from the ‘*un-V*’ forms which are verbs in themselves. The prefix *un* added to verbs can trace its history back to Old English. In Old English the prefix *ond-* or *and-* was added to some verb, and as Jespersen says, “... it was liable to lose *d* before a consonant.”<sup>1</sup> Jespersen terms this added prefix the privative *un*, distinguishing it from the negative *un* whose sphere is with adjectives and adverbs.<sup>2</sup> Concerning a semantic function of this prefix, he says that “privative *un-* is prefixed to vbs and derivatives from vbs, giving the derivative a contrary sense to the simple word.”<sup>3</sup> Jespersen specializes the characteristics of the prefix *un*, depending on whether it is prefixed to verbs or to adjectives or adverbs. Similar distinction in the use of the prefix *un* can be seen in Quirk *et al.* Quirk *et al.* differentiate the reversative or privative *un* which “... ‘reversing the action,’ combines fairly freely with verbs,” from the negative prefix *un* whose meaning is ‘not’ or ‘the converse of’ and which can be combined fairly freely with adjectives and participles, showing derivatives such as *unassuming* and *unexpected*.<sup>4</sup>

However, ‘*un-V-ly*’ adverbs seem to be derived mostly from verbs without the prefix *un*. It is difficult for them to be regarded as immediate derivatives of ‘*un-V*’ verbs because the ‘*un-V*’ verbs linked to the ‘*un-V-ly*’ adverbs are thought not to be used at least in modern English. It can be considered reasonable to think that the process of derivation is that the *un* in an ‘*un-V-ly*’ adverb was prefixed to such a derivative of a verb as a ‘*V-ed*’ or ‘*V-ing*’ participial adjectival, which was derived from a bare verb, that is, a verb without the prefix

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\* 大阪電気通信大学人間科学研究センター助教授

*un*.

As for the functions of adverbs, it is known that adverbs in sentences can serve in two syntactically different ways: one as a modifier and the other as an adverbial. An adverbial is a constituent of a sentence, which is functionally distinct from a subject, verb, complement or object of a sentence. 'Un-V-ly' adverbs also function within this sphere. This paper, dealing with 'un-V-edly' and 'un-V-ingly' adverbs encountered in some novels, aims to see how they can be classified in terms of a syntactic word-formation and what their syntactic functions are in sentences.

2. In respect to the functions of adverbials, Greenbaum divides adverbial usage, depending on syntactic characteristics, into three: an adjunct, a conjunct, and a disjunct. Derivational 'V-edly' and 'V-ingly' adverbs used as adverbials are categorized in disjuncts.<sup>5</sup> As for 'un-V-edly' and 'un-V-ingly' adverbs, Greenbaum lists *undoubtedly* and *unexpectedly* in the disjuncts, and gives some grammatical explanation to them.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Quirk *et al.* also describe those derivational adverbs in disjunct class,<sup>7</sup> while dividing grammatical functions of adverbials into an adjunct, a conjunct, a disjunct, and a subjunct.<sup>8</sup> Similar to Greenbaum, they also list *undoubtedly* and *unexpectedly* in their description.

2.1. 'Un-V-ly' adverbs illustrated in this section are the ones that are in an 'un-V-edly' form. The 'un-V-edly' adverbs in this group are not immediate derivatives of verbs in an 'un-V' form but indirect derivatives of verbs without the prefix *un*. The assumed process of derivation of 'un-V-edly' adverbs can be that the participle 'V-ed' is firstly derived from a related verb, and secondly the prefix *un* is added to the 'V-ed', and then the suffix '-ly' is added to the 'un-V-ed' form to make an adverb. Many of the derived 'V-ed' participles and their related 'un-V-ed' forms have come to syntactically function as adjectives. And it can be said that the explanation on the process of the derivation assumed here seems reasonable because all of the 'un-V-edly' adverbs in the examples shown below have the related 'un-V-ed' forms which function syntactically as adjectives. Here are some examples of 'un-V-edly' adverbs<sup>9</sup>:

• *unconcernedly* (*unconcerned* from *concern*)

On the other hand, it is startling, if anyone has the nerve to do an action openly and *unconcernedly*, how little people are likely to notice it! (MA) - MCSS, 82

Placidly and *unconcernedly* he resumed his nocturnal strolling. (MA)

- MBT, 12

- *undoubtedly* (*undoubted* from *doubt*)

*Undoubtedly* it would be a very good idea to poison her, too. (DJ) - AD, 65

- *unexpectedly* (*unexpected* from *expect*)

She found herself, *unexpectedly*, in an almost oriental interior. (DJ) - DU, 157

There was a quality of passive resistance about her that seemed *unexpectedly* strong. (MD) - AF, 136

"That's more like it," said Bobby gratefully. "Sort of noise a fellow might let out if a ball hit him *unexpectedly*." (MA) - WDAE?, 22

- *uninterestedly* (*uninterested* from *interest*)

The friend, who in a bored manner was turning over the pages of a three-weeks-old Sketch, replied *uninterestedly*. (MA) - DC, 104

- *unreservedly* (*unreserved* from *reserve*)

The whole of his vast fortune is left *unreservedly* to his wife. (MA) - ML, 83

- *unsuspectedly* (*unsuspected* from *suspect*)

...and I met with, even in my own sex, some that were above denying me that justice, whilst others praised me yet more *unsuspectedly*, by endeavouring to detract from me... (MA) - FH, p.24

Although it seems that *unconcernedly* in the second is a disjunct because it is in the front position of the sentence, it is a manner adverb, since it refers to his behavior.

Different syntactic functions of *unexpectedly* are found in the sentences shown above: the first *unexpectedly* is traditionally called a sentence adverb, the second one is used as a modifier of an adjective, and the one in the last functions as a manner adverb.

The verbs from which the above adverbs derive are all transitive verbs. It may seem possible for each of the verbs to form a counterpart of the '*un-V-edly*' adverb; that is, an '*un-V-ingly*' adverb. However, the '*un-V-ingly*' adverb is not derived from such a verb as *concern* or *reserve*.

2.2. '*Un-V-ly*' adverbs described below are those in an '*un-V-ingly*' form. Similar to the '*un-V-edly*' adverbs in 2.1, the '*un-V-ingly*' adverbs in this group are not direct derivatives of verbs in an '*un-V*' form. They are presumed to derive from the '*un-V-ing*' forms which are formed from verbs without the prefix *un*. The process of derivation of '*un-V-ingly*' adverbs of this type is thought to be probably the same as that of the '*un-V-edly*' adverbs in 2.1: a form '*V-ing*' is firstly derived from a verb without *un*, and the prefix *un* is added to the '*V-ing*,' creating '*un-V-ing*,' and then an '*un-V-ingly*' is formed from the '*un-V-ing*.' Again as

indicated in 2.1, this can be also rationalized because all of the '*un-V-ing*' forms shown below from which '*un-V-ingly*' derive can be used as adjectives. The counterparts of the '*un-ingly*' adverbs shown below, that is, '*un-V-edly*' adverbs, are not derived from mother verbs, except for *unsuspectingly*. The adverbs encountered are as follows:

- *unavailingly* (*unavailing* from *avail*)

She turned and rattled the handle *unavailingly*. (MA) - *DU*, 67

- *unblushingly* (*unblushing* from *blush*)

Then he tiptoed to the door of the sitting-room and *unblushingly* applied his ear to the crack. (DJ) - *DW*, 123

*Unblushingly* Tommy said: "Most ingenious thing I've heard in my life, Major."

(DJ) - *NM*, 80

- *unceasingly* (*unceasing* from *cease*)

If I ever see anyone who appears to think a lot of themselves and boasts *unceasingly*, I always know that there's a secret sense of inferiority somewhere.'

(MA) - *TAT*, 119

Now they were going down hill, twisting and curving *unceasingly*. (MA) - *MBT*, 12

- *uncomprehendingly* (*uncomprehending* from *comprehend*)

Jimmy still stared *uncomprehendingly*. Poirot went on. (MA) - *PEC*, 152

The others crowded round and stared *uncomprehendingly* at the three articles he held. (MA) - *SC*, 174

- *uncompromisingly* (*uncompromising* from *compromise*)

This one was *uncompromisingly* British with a long, sad, horse-like face. (MD) - *DU*, 53

- *unendingly* (*unending* from *end*)

...as Mr Satterthwaite reflected how *unendingly* maternal women were. (MD) - *TAT*, 21

- *unerringly* (*unerring* from *err*)

You place a finger *unerringly* -- Ah, here is our good Fournier. (MA) - *DC*, 89

- *unhesitatingly* (*unhesitating* from *hesitate*)

...he would *unhesitatingly* testify to Ramius' skill and craftiness. (MD) - *HRO*, 31

- *unsuspectingly* (*unsuspecting* from *suspect*)

The second woman would kneel on the ground quite *unsuspectingly*. (MA) - *MM*,

- *unwillingly* (*unwilling* from *will*)

Mrs. Tanios frowned again. Then she said almost *unwillingly*. (MA) - *DW*, 140

- *unwittingly* (*unwitting* from *wit*)

She had thought of the possibility of such a signal in answer to that which had been *unwittingly* given by Charley; but she had not expected it yet. (MD) - *RN*, 348-349

*Unwittingly*, I had hit upon a sovereign remedy for her tears. (MA) - *MAS*, 132

The adverbs in this group are mostly manner adverbs and modifiers. There are some '*un-V-ly*' adverbs whose syntactic functions, it seems, are rather ambiguous. While adverbs preceding verbs such as *unblushingly* and *unhesitatingly* are thought to be used as modifiers of verbs, it is still possible to say that they can be regarded as manner adverbs, because it seems that, even if they followed the verbs, the meaning of each of the sentences with '*un-V-ingly*' adverbs would not be so much changed.

Although the adverb *unwillingly* may seem to have been derived from the verb *unwill*, it is proper to think that, because the relational similarity in meaning cannot be found between the two, the derivation of *unwillingly* was conducted on the basis of the verb *will*. The similar explanation can be applied also to the adverb *unwittingly*.

Probably it may be possible to semantically characterize most of the verbs from which the above adverbs are presumed to have derived: they are conditioned by the semantic feature '+Animate.'

2.3. The last type of '*un-V-ly*' adverbs also has an '*un-V-ingly*' form, but, unlike adverbs in 2.1 and 2.2, the '*un-V-ingly*' adverb seems to have derived from a verb with the prefix *un*.

- *unbelievably* (from *unbelieve*)

Half *unbelievably* Jane picked up her gains. (MA) - *DC*, 14

- *unknowingly* (from *unknow*)

The rage he had almost *unknowingly* suppressed throughout his life had burst forth with a violence and passion that he had struggled to contain. (MD) - *HRO*, 37

- *unseeingly* (from *unsee*)

He had stared at it *unseeingly* (was it only yesterday?) then turned to look again at the man facing him across the table. (MA) - *OI*, 8

Instead, he sat there in his chair staring *unseeingly* across the room, his mind busy in the past. (MA) - *OI*, 72

Although it is in the front position of the sentence, *unbelievably* is a manner adverb. The meaning of *unbelievably* is equivalent to that of *disbelievably*. The 'un-V-edly' adverb is not derived from such a verb as *unbelieve*, *unknow* or *unsee*.

3. As a brief summary, it can be said that most of the 'un-V-ly' adverbs shown above function as manner adverbs, some of these 'un-V-ly' adverbs function as modifiers of an adjective or of a verb, and some others function as disjuncts. An adverb can function differently, depending on a context, as in the case of *unexpectedly* shown in 2.1. Most 'un-V-ly' adverbs are derived from verbs whose subjects or objects are conditioned by the semantic feature '+Animate.' Therefore, it is understandable that the 'un-V-ly' adverbs function mostly as manner adverbs, because the manner adverb is linked in meaning to a subject itself or to its action. As for the word-formation of 'un-V-ly' adverbs, it is then possible to say that all of both 'V-edly' and 'V-ingly' adverbs, except for *unbelievably*, *unknowingly* and *unseeingly*, are derived from verbs without the prefix *un*.

\*This paper is a revised and enlarged version of the author's *Description of Some Derivational 'Un-ly' Adverbs and Related Verbs* (KWANSAI REVIEW No 17, The Kwansai English and American Literary Society of Japan, 1998).

### Notes

1. O.Jespersen, *A Modern English Grammar* (reprinted; London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1974), VI, pp.476-477.
2. *Ibid.*, p.465.
3. *Ibid.*, p.477.
4. Quirk *et al.*, *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (London and New York: Longman, 1985), pp.1540-1541.
5. S.Greenbaum, *Studies in English Adverbial usage* (London: Longmans, 1969), pp.94 ff.
6. *Ibid.*, pp.105-108.
7. Quirk *et al*, *op. cit.*, p.620-622.
8. *Ibid.*, p.503.
9. Each adverb in sample sentences is followed by a 'V-ed' or 'V-ing' form derived from a verb in parentheses. Italics indicating 'un-V-ly' adverbs shown in sample sentences

are not in the original. The abbreviation in parentheses DJ, MA, or MD used at the end of each sample sentence indicates that the '*un-V-edly*' or '*un-V-ingly*' adverb used in each sentence functions as a disjunct, as a manner adverb, or as a modifier respectively. Capital letters in italics without parentheses are abbreviated titles of the books listed at the end of this paper, and numbers indicate pages quoted.

## Books

- Christie, A. *After the Funeral*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1984.
- . *Appointment with Death*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1984.
  - . *Death in the Clouds*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1985.
  - . *Destination Unknown*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1984.
  - . *Dumb Witness*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1985.
  - . *Murder in Mesopotamia*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1985.
  - . N or M? New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1985.
  - . *Ordeal by Innocence*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1985.
  - . *Poirot's Early Cases*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1985.
  - . *The Mirror Cracked From Side To Side*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1984.
  - . *The Murder on the Links*. London: Pan Books Ltd, 1974.
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  - . *The Secret of Chimneys*. London: Pan Books Ltd, 1975.
  - . *Three-Act Tragedy*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1986.
  - . *Why Didn't They Ask Evans?* Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1989.
- Clancy, T. *The Hunt for Red October*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1986.
- Hardy, T. *The Return of the Native*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1974.
- Lawrence, D. H. *Women in Love*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975.