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

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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.” Jespersen terms this added prefix the privative un, distinguishing it from the negative un whose sphere is with adjectives and adverbs. 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.” 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.

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.
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, compliment 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. 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. Similarly, Quirk et al. also describe those derivational adverbs in disjunct class, while dividing grammatical functions of adverbials into an adjunct, a conjunct, a disjunct, and a subjunct. 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:

- 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 unsuspectedly. The adverbs encountered are as follows:

- **unavailing** *(unavailing from avail)*
  
  She turned and rattled the handle *unavailing*. *(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*,...
Mrs. Tanios frowned again. Then she said almost unwillingly: (MA) - DW, 140

She had thought of the possibility of such a signal in answer to that which had been unwillingly 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.

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

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

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, unbelievingly is a manner adverb. The meaning of unbelievingly is equivalent to that of disbelievingly. The ‘un-V-edly’ adverb is not derived from such a verb as believe, 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 unbelievingly, 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 Kwansei English and American Literary Society of Japan, 1998).

Notes

2. Ibid., p.465.
3. Ibid., p.477.
6. Ibid., pp.105-108.
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.  


Clancy, T.  

Hardy, T.  

Lawrence, D. H.  