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SEMANTIC AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF *OBVIOUSLY* AND *APPARENTLY*

Abstract: In this paper we are going to show how disjuncts obviously and apparently from the same category of truth-orientated disjuncts behave in different contexts. We are also going to measure the frequency of their occurrence, determine the meanings they convey and observe the position they take. Both disjuncts 'present comment on the truth value of what is said, expressing the extent to which, and the conditions under which, the speaker believes that what is saying is true' (Quirk et al, 1985:p.620). The primary function of these two is to modify the whole sentence, but they can also highlight the meaning of the modal expression they are used with. The comment expressed by obviously does not intend to convince the interlocutor to trust the speaker's judgement but to act as an eye-opener for interlocutors to discern the truth themselves based on the evidence given. The comment expressed by apparently relies either on speaker's perception of things or someone else's perception which is not to be believed blindly without questioning. In other words, apparently 'qualifies claims based on reported information and inference' (Rozumko, 2019). Hence conviction expressed by it drifts from the truth conveying a certain degree of doubt.

Keywords: obviously, apparently, truth value of the proposition, judgements, convictions.

1. Introduction and methodology

The English epistemic system deals with judgements. The English evidential system deals with judgements too. These two notions are sometimes difficult to

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separate because their essence is more or less the same: to express speaker's attitude to the content of the proposition with respect to the notion of certainty. That attitude may rely on the speaker's own sources of information or on 'the source of information which is external to the speaker' (Rozumko, 2019:p.41). Linguistically speaking, that attitude may be expressed by various linguistic means, but it is usually expressed with the help of modal auxiliaries and modal adverbs. Here we compare two such adverbs, *obviously* and *apparently*.

Modal adverbs like *obviously* and *apparently* are referred to as stance adverbials (Biber et al, 1999:p.549) that mark the speaker/writer's assessment of the proposition in the clause expressing the level of doubt or certainty. *Obviously* is a content disjunct (Quirk et al, 1985:p.620) which expresses a degree of truth with conviction. *Obviously* means a fact that can easily be noticed or understood (LDCE). Using it, speakers connect their judgements and convictions with evidence that can be somehow perceived by the speakers themselves and does not have to be part of general perception. Yet, it is a bit of a paradox 'when the speaker opens with *Obviously*... what follows may well not be obvious at all' (Hoye, 1997:p.286). In Hoye's classification (1997:p.242), *obviously* is one of the evidential adverbs 'whose role is not simply to reinforce the modality but to provide an evidential submodification of an epistemic system which is essentially judgement-based'. *Obviously* gives comment which helps speakers make their interlocutors agree showing in this way that they assume that what they are saying is obvious. The comments they make may be based on audio, visual and mental perception.

Like obviously, *apparently* is also a content disjunct whose meaning is equalled with 'it appears' or 'it seems', and these do not express certainty (Quirk et al, 1985:p.623). *Apparently* can also be used to say that you have heard something is true although you are not completely sure about it (LCDE). The speaker uses it to quote someone else's perception, present a hearsay evidence, something they have heard from other people but do not know to be definitely true or correct. Hoye (1997), and Downing & Locke (2006) classify *apparently* as one of evidential adverbs which 'signal the source of knowledge or information which ranges from the speaker's own experience or belief to the beliefs or accounts of others' (Downing & Locke, 2006:p.73).

Describing the features of modal adverbs in *Adverbs and Modality in English* (1997), Hoye argues that they can occur in a sentence-initial position which is syntactically peripheral to clause structure and sentential in scope. Halliday sees this kind of fronting as a logical thing for 'if the speaker includes within the message some element that expresses his own angle of judgement on the matter it is natural

for him to make this his point of departure' (Halliday, 1985:p.50). While the initial position of these adverbs signals the point of departure, final position gives the effect of post-commenting.

Focusing of modal values can also be intrasentential (Hoye, 1997) when modal adverbs highlight the meaning of the modal auxiliary from the same semantic category.

In order to observe the behaviour of these two truth-orientated content disjuncts and their usages we analysed the two-million-word corpus of short stories, and spoken language, one million each. The corpus used was compiled by the authors of this paper and it comprises the selections of short stories from American and British literature, and transcriptions of celebrity speeches taken from the official BBC website. The analysis has been carried out using contrastive method.

2. Findings and discussion

The analysis shows that *obviously* is more frequent in spoken language (with 1297 instances) than in written (only 61 instances) whereas *apparently* has a similar frequency of occurrence in written and spoken language (45 vs 30).

The vast majority of examples of *obviously* and *apparently* found in the corpus is used in affirmative environments. However, this does not mean that *obviously* and *apparently* cannot occur in negative environments as well. *Obviously* and *apparently* cannot be prefixally negated but their environment can be made negative by negating the verb, in which case modal adverbs are not affected by the negation and 'lie outside the scope of negation' (Hoye, 1997:p.186) as in (1), or by using non-verbal negator *not* which always follows a modal adverb (2):

(1) *Obviously I can't do the whole lot myself.*

(2) *You had thought there was an unspoken understanding of no touching, but apparently not.*

When used with a negative verb, *obviously* may provide a contrast between what speaker believes was true on the one side and what turns out to be true on the other side:

(3) *Obviously the conclusion was not one which I or any of us were seeking.*

Like some other modal adverbs (*surely* for example), *obviously* can seek reassurance from the interlocutor in the form of a question which comes either at the beginning or at the end of the sentence (4). Within the frame of this survey, we found no examples of *apparently* used for this purpose:

(4) *TB: You are obviously going to enter this family, the most famous royal family in the world. William's mother was this massive iconic figure. The most famous figure of our age, is that worrying? Is that intimidating? Do you think about that a lot both of you, you particularly Kate, obviously?*

The survey shows that the comments speakers make by using *obviously* are mainly based on their mental perception of things (5). In a smaller number of instances, these comments rely on the speaker's audio (6) and visual perception of a matter (7):

(5) *Yeah, obviously I would be disappointed if nothing changed.*

(6) *Obviously we're not deaf.*

(7) *Obviously they were expected – their table was ready, and a third place, was quickly added.*

Apparently qualifies claims based on the speaker's knowledge, whether it be indirect or direct knowledge. To be used indirectly with reportive meaning *apparently* does not have to be combined with one of the verbs of communication (like *speak, talk, tell* and *say*) even though these verbs support its reportive meaning. It can be used with some other parts of speech (prepositions for example) whose meaning clearly indicates that something has been stated by someone else:

(8) *According to the scullery maid she was still bedridden; apparently her labor had been complicated.*

It is possible to use *apparently* with no exact source of information to open a remark whose aim is to make interlocutors or listeners laugh. The remark does not reflect the real state of affairs and does not rely on the information the speaker himself got or was told. That is why *apparently* in such cases functions as a rumour marker which can be paraphrased with *it is said*. Interviewing Enthyony Hopkins about his most famous line from *The Silence of the Lambs* when he tells agent Clarice Starling “I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice chianti“ the interviewer wanted to know whether he has ever eaten a fava bean in real life:

(9) *I don't even know what a fava bean is like. And I'm not a vegetarian. I don't know what fava beans are. Are they like baked beans? I don't know.*

MORGAN: *Apparently, sales of fava beans just collapsed after that film.*

When speakers establish a causal relation with a previous sentence using *apparently*, then the meaning of *apparently* relies on a direct source of information. The conclusions speakers reach are their own, based on their perception of a matter but are not necessarily a hundred percent true:

(10) *The toaster popped up before the toast was ready, as it always did. Something was wrong with the timer, apparently.*

Both adverbs can be used as a single-word response. It is more a characteristic of *apparently* than of *obviously* to be used like this. However, it should be noted that on such occasions they rarely occur alone, no matter the answer (11) but rather in combination with the adverbs *yes* (12) and *no* (13). *Yes* always comes before the adverb, whereas *not* follows:

(11) *Well, the Bank of England has looked at this and said there is a benefit that can be measured either way. A benefit, obviously.*

(12) *Well, the Bank of England has looked at this and said there is a benefit that can be measured either way. A benefit, yes obviously.*

(13) *He kissed her with some force on the lips. Was it palpable there on the lips, as a shock of cold perhaps? Apparently not.*

Obviously and *apparently* are very mobile within a sentence, which means that they can be used in a sentence-initial, medial and final position depending on the semantic function they have. The first and the last position signal the speaker's authority. Placing them initially means that speakers want to show that their views are strong enough to be believed (14). Typically, *obviously* occurs initially in spoken language and *apparently* only when the speakers express judgements based on their direct knowledge (15). Placing these adverbs in final position functions like a reminder that the attention should be paid to what has just been said as in (16) and (17):

(14) *Obviously they were important to the people who used to live here.*

(15) *It is a cool cover, although I was a bit worried about it making surviving the airplane trip to New York. Apparently this is tougher than a normal paper cover.*

(16) "So you didn't just hire a tourist to keep the neighbors away from your party?"
"Well, yes and no. We had a few other candidates, obviously.

(17) *ANDY MURRAY: I have never noticed that before. I mean, there was maybe one time today when there was a fly went just as I was about to serve, but I have never noticed that before, and I didn't realize that was an issue for some of the players. Never seen it before.*

Q. Flying ants, apparently.

On the other hand, medial position is rather unmarked. This is the position *apparently* frequently takes in written language (18). According to the data from the survey, *obviously* does not tend to occur medially in written language.

(18) *On the other hand, one of those infants in, say, Ethiopia, can't weigh more than a pound or two. But the loss at death, apparently, will be the same.*

When *obviously* and *apparently* occur with a negative complex predicate, they tend to follow the subject rather than the auxiliary which they would normally do when occurring with a positive complex predicate:

(19) *You are a sad little man who has achieved a position of power accidentally by backing into it. Circumstances demanded leadership and you obviously could not provide it, and I hope they get rid of you too.*

Modal adverbs have a very close connection with modal auxiliaries particularly those from the same category. Since epistemic *must* makes judgement upon the evidence, it is reasonable to expect it will attract adverbs like *obviously*. All examples of *must* in the Survey have past reference and the structure *must* + *past infinitive* even though the modality (judgement) is not in the past:

(20) *Yeah, I didn't see the match, but he obviously must have played very well.*

Must is not the only modal *obviously* shows tendency to occur with. It also occurs with other epistemic modals like *will/would* (21a/21b), quasi modals like *be going to* (22) and with modal lexical verb *want to* (23). Modal epistemic *will* expresses confidence and is likely to be found in the written and spoken language. Unlike modal *will*, modal epistemic *would* suggest that something would be done without confidence (21b). The *be going to* structure (22) which conveys likelihood and *want to* structure (23) which conveys volition are likely to be found in spoken language. Almost all examples of the previously mentioned structures occur in the first person:

(21a) *Obviously I'll be having conversations with branches.*

(21b) *Obviously I'd love to try and win that.*

(22) *Well obviously I'm not going to discuss tax measures ahead of the Budget, Andrew, but we, recognise the challenge for young first time buyers, that in many parts of the country deposits are now*

(23) *Obviously I want to try to get to the final.*

Obviously also harmonises with modal lexical verbs like *think*. Modal lexical verbs share some linguistic features with modal adverbs like that of modifying proposition from outside and expressing the speaker's attitude toward it. The choice

of the modal lexical verb influences this bond. For example the verb *think* reflects cognitive process of reasoning with knowledge and it enables speaker to express a particular opinion or belief regarding the truth. *Apparently* on the other hand shows no tendency to establish ties with modal lexical verbs:

(24) *ANDY MURRAY: No, not today. I think obviously still recovering a little bit from the first few days of the tournament.*

The speaker may use *obviously/ apparently* and dynamic *can* to express his own conviction that some entity, animate (25) or inanimate (26) has the ability or quality to do something:

(25) *Now, once we're out of the European Union obviously we can then decide how we spend that money.*

(26) *The launch of the Adblock Plus Android browser which can apparently block Facebook ads, a carrier-backed plan to block ads at a network level, Apple looks like it is going to allow ad blocking on iPhones, and so on.*

Dynamic possibility can also be expressed with the structure *obviously + modal could + past infinitive* where past infinitive suggests unreality and can be seen as the continuation of a conditional (see Palmer 1979) whose second part would mean *if circumstances allowed me*:

(27) *I played some decent stuff there. Obviously could have been a bit better.*

Modal adverbs occur in apodosis only. Apodosis is that part of a conditional sentence that enables speakers to draw conclusions based on the conviction they hold (28). In almost all examples of *obviously* found with conditional sentences, *obviously* behaves like the opener of the conditional clause (29) which gives comments on what we as speakers are saying enabling us to sound more convincing whether stating general truth, predicting a possible result or responding to a possible hypothetical situation. We found no instances of *apparently* used like this.

(28) *If you're to get to the final, then it obviously has an affect.*

(29) *Obviously, if you're to get to the final, then it has an effect.*

Obviously can occur as a discourse marker together with clausal items *I mean*, and *you know* in spoken English:

(30) *Well, yeah, I mean, obviously if you see a result or hear, you know, the fans, then you think about it. That's natural.*

(31) *Obviously, you know, when Wimbledon comes 'round, maybe a little bit more rested, a little bit more practice and preparation, you know, I won't give my opponents those opportunities that I have done this week.*

In the same type of discourse both *obviously* and *apparently* combine with a discourse marker *well* which expresses hesitation. Yet, the overall meaning of the proposition is not changed:

(32) *Well, apparently at the beginning he actually intended to write a novel about Karenin.*

The expression *well obviously* can also be found in spoken language to express the speaker's wish to sound less assertive and wash his hands of making firm convictions:

(33) *Well obviously there are individual cases where it looks as though the system is not working..*

Another feature of *obviously* which is realised in spoken language especially when *obviously* occurs in initial position is its ability to tie itself to central coordinators *and* and *but*:

(34) *And obviously this is a piece of negotiating strategy that we're seeing in Brussels.*

(35) *But obviously not quite as experienced as John.*

When *apparently* is used with central coordinators, which is a very infrequent situation, then it shows contrast:

(36) *We know that the Imam in his local mosque used the prevent strategy again to get in touch and say this guy is out of control, he's dangerous and apparently nothing happened.*

(37) *You had thought there was an unspoken understanding of no touching, but apparently not.*

3. Conclusion and Implication

In this paper, we tried to show similarities between modal adverbs *obviously* and *apparently*. Modal adverbs *obviously* and *apparently* belong to the same class of truth-orientated disjuncts, but their meanings vary. They both express speaker's attitude to the content of the proposition with respect to the notion of certainty. But *apparently* expresses a lower level of conviction than *obviously*. *Obviously* relies on the speaker's knowledge about a matter which mainly depends on their mental perception. *Apparently* also qualifies claims based on the speaker's knowledge, whether it be their own knowledge or the knowledge acquired by someone else and then reported. One of the indirect uses of *apparently* refers to the knowledge acquired from no exact source of information with the intention to make listeners or interlocutors laugh. *Obviously* and *apparently* modify lexical-grammatical means

of expressing modality they combine with. They harmonise with modal auxiliaries and some other structures that convey epistemic modality and volition. Speaking of harmony, only *obviously* harmonises with modal lexical verbs like *think* and *want to*. Both *obviously* and *apparently* are mainly used in declarative sentences, but *obviously* can be used in interrogative sentences to ask for reassurance. In spoken language, they can be used as a single word response, with *apparently* being used more frequently. That is the characteristic it shares with some other truth-orientated disjuncts like *certainly* and *surely*. Both adverbs are mobile within a sentence. When used initially, they may turn into discourse markers. *Apparently* is used initially only when the speaker expresses judgement based on their direct knowledge, whereas medial position is the typical position *apparently* takes in written language.

This mini research on modal adverbs *obviously* and *apparently* will, we believe, contribute to the studies of modality of adverbs and encourage further researches on this topic especially cross-linguistic ones in the field of translation studies for it seems that such comparative researches could shed more light on modal-adverb systems in general.

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SEMANTIČKE I PRAGMATIČKE ODLIKE MODALNIH ADVERBA *OBVIOUSLY* I *APPARENTLY*

Rezime

Rad se bavi semantičko-pragmatičkim odlikama modalnih priloga *obviously* i *apparently* u korpusu pripovijedaka i govornom jeziku. Pomenuti adverbni pripadaju istoj vrsti disjunkta kojom govorno lice iznosi svoj stav vezan za istinitosnu vrijednost propozicije, a na osnovu informacija koje je govorno lice dobilo direktno, mentalnom, audio ili vizuelnom percepcijom stvari, ili posredno, prenošenjem tuđih opažanja. U radu se porede sličnosti i razlike koje ova dva adverba ispoljavaju u pomenutim tipovima diskursa kada se nađu u ulozi modifikatora cijele rečenice, ali u funkciji modifikatora glagolske fraze, prvenstveno modalnih i modalno-leksičkih glagola.

► *Gljučne riječi*: *obviously*, *apparently*, istinitosna vrijednost propozicije, sudovi, ubjeđenja.

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