
LANGUAGE AND SUBJECTIVITY

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II SUBJECTIVE ADVERBS

In this section I discuss how subjectivity can be expressed in Italian (and in other European languages) through the use of adverbs. I want to show that certain classes of adverbs are particularly relevant in the analysis of the act of utterance insofar as they signal in the utterance itself the presence of the locutionary agents' involvement. Among these adverbs I shall specifically concentrate on the so-called "modals", whose function, I will argue, is to express the locutionary agent's commitment to the speech-act that he is performing. But there are also other classes of adverbs that can be considered subjective in the same way, such as the so-called "evaluative adverbs" (like 'surprisingly' or 'strangely') that convey the locutionary agent's emotive reaction to the content of his utterance and the so-called "speech-act adverbs" (like 'honestly' or 'frankly') through which the locutionary agent qualifies the act of utterance itself. I think that the adverbs classified by Jendoff (1972) as "subject-oriented" (like 'in-

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telligently', 'stupidly', etc.) are also partly relevant to a study of subjectivity given that they convey the locutionary agent's evaluation of the behaviour of somebody else. I will confine my discussion specifically to modal adverbs, but I will, when necessary, compare them with evaluative and speech-act adverbs. I will not take into account adverbials because I could not be exhaustive on this point as well. I take as my language of reference Italian modal adverbs, but I think that most of the conclusions valid for them can be applied to English modal adverbs too. "Modal", "evaluative" and "speech-act" adverbs are classified as sentence adverbs, that is adverbs that can modify the whole sentence, as opposed to adverbs that modify the predicate, this is why in the first subdivision of this section I will discuss different criteria that have been proposed to distinguish between sentence and predicate adverbs. Then I will briefly analyse how subjective adverbs have been studied within the framework of generative grammar and the limitations of this approach. In the following subsection I will concentrate on modal adverbs specifying what are their syntactic and semantic properties and the kind of subjective meanings that they express.

Distinction of Sentence and Predicate Adverbs: Semantic Criteria.

As I have said before, the subjective adverbs on which I concentrate in this paper are generally classified as sentence-modifiers. In fact while adverbs like 'velocemente' (quickly) or 'bene' (well) generally only modify the predicate to which they are attached, other adverbs like 'certamente', 'probabilmente' (certainly, probably) modify the whole sentence in which they occur. This distinction looks innocent enough but, as a matter of fact, no

clear semantic or syntactic criteria have been offered to make it unambiguously and without exceptions. Moreover, there are a number of adverbs that seem to have both functions like *l francamente¹* and *s i nceramente¹* (frankly, sincerely).

An attempt to offer criteria for distinguishing between sentence and predicate modifiers was made by Thomason and Stalnaker (1973) in a classic article on the semantics of adverbs, which is a reformulation of earlier hypotheses. The distinction is made within the framework of intensional logic. Sentence adverbs are defined as denoting functions that take propositions into propositions, while predicate adverbs are defined as denoting functions that take singularly propositional functions into singularly propositional functions. The difference between these two kinds of adverbs is defined in terms of difference in scope. The authors propose 4 criteria based on semantic principles:

Criterion 1: only if an adverb is a sentence modifier can it give rise to opaque contexts everywhere in a sentence in which it occurs.

Opacity arises when there is substitution failure under identity. I take and adapt to Italian an example given by Henry (1973, p. 218) which I think is clearer than the one given by the authors:

(7) Il presidente degli Stati Uniti e' necessariamente un cittadino degli USA

If one substitutes the expression *Ml presidente degli Stati Uniti* with the expression '*Reagan*', one obtains

(8) Reagan e' necessariamente un cittadino degli USA

The two sentences do not have the same truth-conditions, therefore the adverb generates opacity, which means that it is a sentence modifier. The authors notice that this criterion does not apply to all sentence modifiers. For example it does not apply to 'actually' (which has no correspondent adverb in Italian).

Criterion 2: only if an adverb is a sentence modifier can it give rise to quantifier scope ambiguities in simple universal or existential sentences

In other words if there is a contrast between *Someone 2-ly F's* and *2-ly someone F's*, then *2-ly* is a sentence modifier. In Italian *Q-ly* is equal to *Q-mente*. For example:

(9) Frequentemente qualcuno si ubbria-
c o

(10) Qualcuno si ubbriacó frequentemente

which can be transcribed respectively as:

(9) F (3x) Px where F modifies a closed
fo rmul a

(10) (3x) FP where F modifies an expres-
sion

As the authors point out this criterion does not apply to 'actually' and I think that it does not apply to 'ovviamente', 'chiaramente', 'probabilmente', and a number of other adverbs that are considered sentence modifiers and that are freely movable in different positions in the sentence without altering its meaning.

Criterion 3: if an adverb contains within its scope an adverb or adverbial phrase that has already been shown to be a sentence modifier and if the whole of the rest of

the sentence is within the scope of that sentence modifier, then the original adverb is also a sentence modifier.

The authors exemplify this criterion using the 'if-clause' which is, by criterion 1, a sentence modifier. See the examples:

(11)Frequentemente se John andava a scuola a piedi, Mary andava con lui

This sentence cannot be paraphrased by the following :

(12)Se John andava a scuola a piedi, Mary frequentemente andava con lui

Therefore the adverb has the whole sentence within its scope.

Again this criterion does not work for 'actually' and I think that it does not work for 'ovviamente', 'probabilmente', etc. for the same reasons given with respect to the second criterion.

Criterion 4:only if Q-ly (Q-mente) occurs as a sentence modifier can one paraphrase the sentence by deleting the adverb and prefacing the resulting sentence by *it is 2-ty true that*

See examples below:

(13) John frequentemente succhia limoni

(14) E' frequentemente vero che John succhia limoni

but not

(15) Sam succhia limoni lentamente

(16) *E' lentamente vero che Sam succhia
limoni

This criterion is put forward as the most important one by the authors, nonetheless it rests on the validity of a paraphrase that is not always applicable without generating problems. First of all it is arguable that the following sentences are synonymous and have the same truth conditions:

(17) Ovviamente e' mattina

(18) E' ovviamente vero che e' mattina

Secondly, this criterion, like all the previous ones, is only with difficulty applicable to speech-act adverbs like 'francamente' and 'onestamente'. In fact if the previous paraphrase was doubtful, the following does not seem acceptable in the sense that is certainly not synonymous with the paraphrased sentence:

(19) Francamente ti sbagli

(20) E' francamente vero che ti sbagli.

I think that this brief account of Thomason and Stalnaker's criteria confirms the impression that the analyses of adverbs carried out within the framework of logic are often not entirely adequate to deal with the function of such adverbs in natural languages and that without further refinements they do not allow a distinction between sentence and predicate modifiers.

Syntactic Criteria

A number of syntactic criteria for distinguishing between sentence and predicate modifiers have been proposed for English by Aller-

ton and Cruttenden (1974). I try to apply them to Italian adverbs given that they do not, in my opinion, behave very differently from English adverbs. The criteria put forward by the authors are co-occurrence, position and intonation.

A) *Co-occurrence*

Sentence adverbs are generally neutral with respect to co-occurrence restrictions, while manner and time adverbs, for example, have co-occurrence restrictions with the lexical verb and the auxiliary respectively. So, for example, given a sentence like:

(21) Gianni dorme

it is possible to add any sentence adverb without producing a meaningless sentence. We can say 'Gianni dorme probabilmente', 'certamente' 'francamente', etc. but we cannot say

(22) Gianni dorme velocemente

because the occurrence of 'velocemente' is determined by the lexical verb that it modifies.

This criterion does not allow us to distinguish those adverbs that can function as sentence and predicate modifiers, because given (21) we can add 'francamente' only if we take it as a sentence modifier and not as a predicate modifier, but given

(23) Gianni parla

we can add the adverb in both cases and cannot decide what its role is.

B) Position

Four positions may be taken by most sentence adverbs in the sentence: initial, medial before the auxiliary, medial after the auxiliary, medial after the auxiliary but before the lexical verb, after the lexical verb, final.

See the examples:

(24) Probabilmente Gianni fu ferito

(25) Gianni probabilmente fu ferito

(26) Gianni fu probabilmente ferito

(27) Gianni fu ferito probabilmente

are all acceptable, but

(28) *Leggermente Gianni fu ferito

(29) *Gianni leggermente fu ferito

(30) Gianni fu leggermente ferito

(31) Gianni fu ferito leggermente

This criterion does not work in all cases because many predicate adverbs can be moved in all positions. What happens in these cases, however, is that the movement of the adverb may provoke a change in its scope. For example:

(32) Giorgio *raccolse i suoi vestiti*
lentamente

(33) Lentamente *Giorgio raccolse i*
suoi vestiti

The scope of the adverb seems different in (32)

and (33).

C) *Intonation*

The authors present a study of the intonational patterns of English sentence adverbs which cannot of course apply in detail to Italian, given the differences between the two languages in this respect. The general principle can be retained that functional differences between adverbs correlate with intonational patterns. In fact sentential adverbs tend to constitute autonomous intonational units more than predicate adverbs.

In other words the "normal" intonation of a sentence containing a sentence modifier tends to separate the modifier (when it is in initial or final position) from the rest. This intonational behaviour would support the comparison between sentence adverbs and parenthetical expressions that can also be separated from the sentence in which they appear by means of intonation.

The last criterion proposed is:

D) *Non focusability*

These adverbs cannot, generally, constitute the focus of a question or negation. For example:

(34) Marina e' arrivata lentamente

5. See Lonzi (1981) in this point. The author proposes to derive all sentence adverbs from parenthetical structures. Lonzi, L.: "Avverbi frasali e strutture parentetiche", *Lingua e Stile*, No. 16, pp. 393-431.

(35) Marina e' arrivata lentamente?

In (3*+) and (35) the focus of the question is the adverb. But in the following:

(36) Marina e' arrivata certamente

(37)? Marina e' arrivata certamente?

(38) Marina non e' arrivata certamente

the focus is not on the adverb. Moreover (37) is not obviously acceptable but this problem of the occurrence of modal adverbs in questions will be discussed later.

This criterion does not work with adverbs that can be both sentence and predicate modifiers and it is not infallible with sentence modifiers either.

As we have seen, both semantic and syntactic criteria proposed to distinguish between different kinds of adverbs have serious limitations and can only be taken as very general directions for recognizing the function of the adverb. It is because of these difficulties that some authors have reacted against the category of adverb itself which has been defined since thg antiquity as a sort of dustbin of grammar. Feuillet (1981), for example, only classes predicate adverbs as adverbs in the sense of invariable parts of the sentence, and classes sentential adverbs as "unités sublocu-

6. See Matthews (1967): "Definitions of the term 'adverb' have been vitiated by the tendency to use this class as a dustbin for items which do not fit anywhere else." "Latin", *Lingua* no. 17, p. 159.

tives", that is "les unités qui sont chargées d'apporter la marque du locuteur dans l'énoncé (jugement sur le contenu propositionnel, émotions, opérations logiques, etc,)" (p, 22), In this definition sentence adverbs are only defined on semantic grounds.

Adverbs and the Performative Analysis

Subjective adverbs like modal, evaluative and speech-act adverbs have been analysed within the framework of generative grammar from two points of view:

a) Their derivation

b) Their relation to the performative analysis of sentences proposed by Ross (1970).

Both questions have been treated by Schreiber in two subsequent articles (1971, 72). Let me start from the second point which is the most important because it is the performative analysis of speech act adverbs that justifies a separation of those adverbs from the other sentence modifiers and their different derivation. Schreiber takes as his starting point the analysis of declarative sentences put forward by Ross. According to such an analysis all declarative sentences have above them, in underlying representation, a superordinate performative clause which is later deleted by a rule. Any simple declarative sentence would be derived from an abstract structure of the sort: I tell (declare, state, etc.) you that + surface sentence. Such an analysis was devised to eliminate the difference between performative and constative sentences by giving them a unified description in deep structure. Before going on I must clarify that neither Ross nor his followers draw a distinction between sentences and utterances and this is why they talk about performative sentences. I think that the term performative should be used to refer to utter-

ances, but since I am referring to Ross I shall call performative a sentence which is declarative in form and can be used in a performative utterance.

According to Schreiber "style disjuncts" (what we called speech-act adverbs) can be viewed as evidence for the validity of the performative analysis. They would be the superficial trace of the transformation that erased the performative clause, but in deep structure they would be adverbs of manner modifying a verb of telling. The same would hold for adverbials like 'in all frankness', 'to be honest', etc. Style-disjuncts, or "permanner adverbs", as he calls them, are therefore not sentential adverbs. The evidence provided for this analysis are the following:

a) There is similarity between manner and permanner adverbs in that both occur with performative verbs, while other sentential adverbs do not.

b) There are structural differences between permanner adverbs and other sentence adverbs, namely:

i) Permanner adverbs, but not modal or evaluative appear initially in interrogative sentences,

ii) Permanner adverbs cannot appear in phrasal negated sentences either interrogative or negative, while evaluative can.

iii) Permanner adverbs, unlike modals, cannot constitute an answer to a yes/no question by themselves.

c) The final argument is that permanner adverbs cannot appear in imperative sentences that are

derived from a structure of the kind; 'I command you S', but only from 'I suggest you S'.

These arguments are closely related to the different derivation in the transformational analysis of the other subjective adverbs. Both evaluative and modal are derived from sentences containing simple adjectives. Schreiber (1971) puts forward this hypothesis distinguishing these two kinds of adverbs on semantic and syntactic grounds. I shall have occasion to come back to this distinction. But here it is sufficient to say that Schreiber maintains that a sentence like

(39) Clearly Nixon is beholden to
Strom Thurmod

can be given the same deep structure as

(40) It is clear that Nixon is beholden to Strom Thurmod

(41) That Nixon is beholden to Strom Thurmod is clear

On the other hand

(42) Ironically Agnew loves Orientals
is related in deep structure to

(43) Agnew loves Orientals and it is
ironical that he does.

Criticisms of the Performative Hypothesis

I do not have the time or space here to go into the details of the criticisms directed against the preceding analysis and also I think that the performative analysis has already been largely discredited. I shall concentrate on

what seem to be the main objections against such analysis. Some objections came from inside the framework of generative grammar. The main one is that, contrary to what Schreiber says, sentence adverbs do occur in performative utterances. It is perfectly possible to say, for example:

(44) Obviously I concede that I lost
the elections

as Michell (1974, p. 436) notices. Such evidence either led to the rejection of the performative hypothesis or to readjustments of it to allow for these facts.

Other syntactic difficulties raised by the analysis were discussed by Jackendoff (1972) leading him to propose a classification of adverbs which allowed their generation on the base and which was more closely based on superficial syntactic properties of the adverbs themselves. An example of these syntactic difficulties is given by the derivation of per manner adverbs occurring in subordinate clauses. For example, Mittwoch (1977) discusses the intricacies in the derivation of a sentence like

(45) I voted for John because, frankly,
I don't trust Bill

where to maintain the performative analysis it would be necessary to postulate an underlying structure like:

I tell you that I voted for John and
I tell you frankly that I voted for
John because I do not trust Bill.

Then it would be necessary to delete the so-called "performative clause" and the second occurrence of 'that I voted for John' and shift the adverb from its position thus violating one

of the constraints proposed by Schreiber to prevent the adverb from moving out of a higher clause. I quote this example to show that in fact the performative analysis created more problems than is solved.

From outside the field of generative grammar the criticisms of the performative hypothesis were motivated by a distrust of the attempt to eliminate the difference between performative and constative sentences. But objections have been raised also against the fact that the performative hypothesis leads to wrong conclusions. There are, in fact, adverbs or adverbials that can modify a verb like 'tell' without belonging to the same class of 'permaner adverbs'. An example from Italian would be the adverb 'risolutamente' and the adverbial 'con sincerità' that can modify a verb of telling, nonetheless it would be wrong to predict sentences like:

(46) *Risolutamente Pietro e' venuto

(47) *Con sincerita', Pietro e' venuto

I think that the main criticism of Schreiber's analysis refers to the legitimacy of deriving adverbs from corresponding adjectives both from a semantic and a syntactic point of view. This criticism is particularly important here because the identification of adjectival constructions and adverbs, as it will be seen, obscures the subjective value of adverbs, and I think that this subjective value determines the strongest difference between adverbs and adjectival constructions. Such difference is confirmed by semantic and syntactic considerations. Some are noticed by Mørdrup (1976). According to him the paraphrase of the adverb through the construction "it is adg. that" is sometimes impossible and sometimes misleading. See for example:

Decisamente/e' deciso che

that mean two different things; or in French

II est capital/ *capitalement

where the adverb does not exist.

See also the possibility of focusing the adjective but not the adverb:

(48) E' evidente che Pietro ama Maria ?

(49) *E' evidentemente che Pietro ama Maria?

The lack of semantic equivalence between the adverb and the corresponding adjective is evident in question-answer pairs. For example:

Q. (50) E' naturale che Pietro ami Maria?

A (a) Si, e' naturale

(b) Si, naturalmente

In A (a) the scope of the adjective is the clause 'che Pietro ami Maria', while in A (b) it is the whole sentence.

The same happens with negation. If we take:

(51) E' probabile che Pietro ami Maria

(52) Probabilmente Pietro ama Maria

and deny them with

(53) Non e' vero

The negation of (51) would refer to the proba-

bMity that Peter loves Mary, but the negation of (52) would refer to the whole proposition expressed by the sentence.

These differences reflect, as I said at the beginning, a semantic difference between subjectivation and objectivation. The paraphrase obscures the role played by the speaker when using a modal or evaluative adverb. Corum(1977) notices that even if one could say that the following sentences are grammatically equivalent:

(54) it is fortunate that Burrows was elected

(55) Fortunately Burrows was elected

that is that they have the same descriptive content, it is obvious that (55) expresses the speaker's attitude much more evidently and strongly than (54) This point is central in my discussion.

In fact these considerations show the limits of the performative analysis but also the importance of defining what adverbs mean in utterances, what kinds of meanings are associated with them. Only an answer to these questions can allow us to see the specific subjective value of these adverbs. The performative analysis and, I think, any purely syntactic analysis of adverbs cannot provide this answer, I have not taken into consideration other analyses of adverbs which have attempted to give a classification of these linguistic elements because in such analyses adverbs are classified according to syntactic tests without any consideration of semantic characteristics. I am referring to studies like the one carried out by Greenbaum (1969) for English adverbs or Pisacane and Pecoraro (1984) for Italian, where it is not possible to find any semantically unitary class,

Modal Adverbs

As I said in the previous section, if we look at adverbs from the point of view of the expression of subjectivity, we can identify a class of adverbs that can be seen as a trace of the involvement of the locutionary agent in the act of utterance, which has been left in the utterance itself. Within this class it is possible to make a number of subdivisions according to the kind of subjective intervention that they express. There is a general agreement in the literature on the fact that it is possible to make a distinction between modal adverbs, *evolutive* adverbs and *speech-act* (or pragmatic) adverbs. All these adverbs are generally considered of the sentential type and in fact they respond positively to most of the criteria that have been sketched in the previous section. Using a terminology introduced by Greenbaum (1969) and then widely accepted, all these adverbs are *disjuncts*, that is "they are not integrated within the clause to which they are subordinated" (p. 25) as opposed to *adjuncts* (like 'ora', 'fuori', 'bene') that are integrated within the clause and *conjuncts* (like 'tuttavia', 'però', 'allora') that also are not integrated but link two clauses. Before discussing the different semantic characteristics of these adverbs I shall indicate which Italian adverbs belong, in my opinion, to the

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7. I am using the term "trace" in the same sense as Culioli uses it, that is as an overt indication of the illocutionary agent's involvement in the act of utterance.
 8. The only study of Italian modals that I have found is Venier (1983), "but unfortunately this author does not give an explicit list of the adverbs that she calls modals.

modal, the evaluative and the speech-act group.

Modals: certamente, forse, probabilmente, presumibilmente, possibilmente, necessariamente, evidentemente, chiaramente, indubbiamente, ovviamente, sicuramente, effettivamente, naturalmente.

Evaluative: stranamente, sorprendentemente, incredibilmente, fortunatamente, sfortunatamente, ironicamente, paradossalmente, disgraziatamente.

Speech-act: francamente, onestamente, sinceramente, confidenzialmente, seriamente, incidentalmente.

I am not considering in this analysis what are frequently referred to as "Subject-oriented" adverbs (i.e. adverbs like 'intelligentemente' or 'stupidamente') because they have somewhat different syntactic properties from the other classes. Generally they modify something that is predicated of the subject of the utterance, but at the same time they reflect the viewpoint of the locutionary agent and that is, presumably, what is meant by the term subject-oriented. For example:

(56) Luigi intelligentemente ha rifiutato

here the adverb modifies something that is predicated of Luigi but reflects the appreciation of the locutionary agent on Luigi's behaviour.

I have found a tentative list of modal, evaluative and speech-act adverbs in a work by Lonzi (1901, p. 394, footnote 5), but this author does not give an exhaustive list since her work is on sentential adverbs and their derivation.

The semantic differences between modal and evaluative adverbs have been discussed by Schreiber (1971) and Bellert (1977). According to Schreiber:

"While an evaluative adverb presupposes the positive truth value of the (surface) predication with which it is in construction and offers an evaluation (value judgement) of it, a modal adverb assigns a degree of likelihood (a probability truth-value) to the associated predication."

In other words, the main difference between evaluative and modal adverbs lies in the fact that while the former are factive predicators, the latter are not. Schreiber uses the term 'factive' in the sense that in a sentence containing a factive predicator (likethe verb 'to know') the speaker is committed to the truth of the proposition expressed by the utterance, given that the truth is presupposed by the predicator. In this respect see the difference between:

(57) Stranamente, hanno superato gli esami

(58) Probabil mente hanno superato gli esami

While in (57) the truth of the proposition expressed by the utterance is presupposed, in (58) it is not. Bellert (1977) rephrases this distinction saying that evaluative adverbs are predicators, the argument of which is the fact, event, or state of affairs denoted by the sentence in which they occur, while modal adverbs are predicators whose argument is the truth of the proposition expressed by the respective

sentence (see p. 342). Speech-act adverbs, on the other hand, reflect the attitude of the speaker towards the act of utterance itself, through them the locutionary agent qualifies his act of utterance as sincere, honest, confidential, etc. In a sense one could say that they operate on the form, not on the content of the utterance. According to Bellert, only this last kind of adverb can truly be said to be speaker-oriented. I think that, on the contrary, they are all speaker - oriented in that they all reflect subjective attitudes in different ways, and that the main characteristic of speech-act adverbs is that they are related to the act of utterance, while the others are related to the utterance itself. This property is confirmed, as it will be shown later, by syntactic facts. Let me retain, for a moment, these definitions of the three kinds of adverbs in order to see what differences they show in syntactic behaviour and then I shall come back to this point to show that the semantic characterisation given by Bellert and Schreiber is not adequate.

First it should be noticed that modal adverbs can be subdivided according to whether they express certainty or uncertainty. Allerton and Cruttenden (1974) propose to call them dubitative and indubitative. The dubitative class includes 'forse', 'presumibilmente', 'possibilmente', 'probabilmente', while the indubitative includes 'certamente', 'evidentemente', 'sicuramente', 'indubbiamente', 'chiaramente', 'naturalmente', 'effettivamente', 'necessariamente', 'ovviamente'. This distinction is necessary to justify the different behaviour of the two subclasses in certain kinds of utterances. The difficulty of applying syntactic criteria to describe the behaviour of these adverbs has already been noticed in connection with the fact that some of them can also function as predicate modifiers. The following observations are

therefore only valid when they function as sentence modifiers.

Following some of the criteria proposed by Greenbaum (1969) to distinguish between different classes of adverbs, I shall mention below some of the characteristics of modal adverbs comparing them to evaluative and speech-act adverbs.

A) Modal adverbs can appear in front of a clause that is being negated. They share this property with evaluative and speech-act adverbs:

(59) Certamente Giorgio non verra'

(60) Probabilmente Giorgio non verra'

(61) Fortunatamente Giorgio non verra'

(62) Onestamente Giorgio non verra'

B) Modal adverbs are "uncomfortable" in interrogative sentences, that is, whether they are unacceptable or their presence calls for an explanation. For example:

(63) *Certamente, finirai a tempo?

(6A) ?Probabilmente finirai a tempo?

(65) Francamente, finirai a tempo?

(6b) *Fortunatamente, finirai a tempo?

As can be seen speech-act adverbs can appear in front of an interrogative clause, while the evaluative adverbs are ungrammatical. This is consistent with the fact that speech-act adverbs are related to the act of utterance, 'Francamente' here can refer either to the fact

that the question is presented as frank by the speaker or to the fact that he is requesting a frank answer from the hearer. Evaluative adverbs, on the other hand, are incompatible with the interrogative sentence because of their character of factive predicators. The case of modal adverbs will be discussed when I analyse their role in different kinds of utterances.

C) Modal adverbs cannot appear in imperative sentences. In this respect they are like evaluative adverbs, but unlike speech-act adverbs.

(67) *Certamente, apri la porta

(68) *Probabilmente, apri la porta

(69) *Fortunatamente, apri la porta

(70) Francamente, apri la porta

Not all authors agree with the acceptability of but I think that their appearance in imperative sentences is consistent with their characteristics, given that their function is that of qualifying the act of utterance.

D) Modal adverbs cannot be placed after "speaking" (parlando), like evaluative, but unlike speech-act adverbs. See examples:

(71) *Parlando probabilmente, Luigi non ha capito niente

(72) *Parlando certamente, Luigi non ha capito niente

and this characteristic enables us to distinguish speech-act adverbs from the others and confirms their intimate relationship with the act of utterance itself.

E) Modal adverbs can, alone, constitute an answer to an interrogative sentence used as a

question. They share this property with evaluative but not with speech-act adverbs.

(75) Gianni ha finito il suo lavoro?

a) Probabilmente/certamente

b) Fortunatamente

c) *Francamente

The unacceptability of (c) again, is due to the fact that a speech-act adverb does not qualify the content of an utterance and therefore cannot stand elliptically for the utterance itself. 'Francamente' by itself can only be taken as introducing a new utterance and not as referring back to the previous one.

F) Modal adverbs, unlike evaluative, but like speech-act adverbs can appear in hypothetical sentences. For example:

(76) Se verrai con me, probabilmente ti divertirai

(77) Se verrai con me, certamente ti diverti

(78) Se verrai con me, francamente, ti divertirai

(79) *Se verrai con me, fortunatamente ti divertirai

This confirms the character of factive predicates of evaluative adverbs,

G) Another property of Modal adverbs that has been noticed in the literature (see Mørdrup Ole (1976) and Schreiber (1971)), but is not among Grenbaum's criteria, is that no modal adverb has an equivalent with a negative prefix, unlike

evaluative, but like speech-act adverbs, While we have the pairs 'fortunatamente'/'sfortunatamente', we do not have a pair 'insinceramente' 'incertamente' or 'probabilmente'/'improbabilmente'. It is true that the adverb 'indubbiamente' exists but here the negative prefix has the effect of reinforcing the positive meaning or the adverb (without any doubt).

H) All three classes of adverbs cannot be denied independently.

(80)*Non probabilmente avete fatto un affare

(81)*Non certamente avete fatto un affare

(82)*Non fortunatamente avete fatto un affare

(83)*Non francamente avete fatto un affare.

This fact seems to differentiate English and Italian. In English certain evaluative adverbs can be denied independently, For example, 'Not surprisingly you made a bargain' is acceptable in English. According to Schreiber (1971) all evaluative adverbs in English can be denied, but it does not seem to be so in all cases. I do not think that 'not hopefully' and 'not luckily' are possible in English either.

The syntactic properties listed above allow us to distinguish the three classes of adverbs and to talk about a class of modal adverbs that shows a unitary syntactic behaviour, The interpretation of this syntactic behaviour must be given in connection with an hypothesis about the semantic properties of modal adverbs and I shall try to explain their syntactic properties

or at least part of them, on semantic grounds in the following pages. To do so I must go back to the definitions of modal adverbs given by Schreiber and Bellert.

Modal adverbs are defined by these authors, and in most works that I have consulted, as modifiers expressing the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed by the sentence he is uttering. Borillo (1976), for example, calls them 'modalisateurs d'assertion' because their function is that of indicating the affirmative opinion of the speaker towards the truth of the proposition that he formulates. These views justify the name given to this class insofar as modality is traditionally associated with the assignment of degrees of truth to the propositional content of sentences. These studies disregard two important things, one is the fact that modal adverbs can appear in utterances that are not statements like promises or in utterances containing an explicit performative verb, and this would require a redefinition of modal adverbs. The second question is that they disregard the subjective value of these adverbs. In fact, according to Bellert for example, a sentence like:

(84) Possibly John has come

can be paraphrased as

(85) The truth that John has come is possible

where the speaker's opinion is totally objectified.

A different approach is taken by Venier (1983) who proposes an interesting definition of modal adverbs as the linguistic expression of the 'neustic' as defined by Hare (1971) that is as a sign of subscription to the assertion

or other speech-act.⁹ This thesis, in my view, allows both a unified treatment of modal adverbs and an account of their subjective value. But, as I shall argue below, it cannot be consistently sustained if the neustic is identified, as in Venier' work, with the subscription to the truth of the propositional content of the sentence, and if no clear distinction is provided of the way different modal adverbs contribute to the meaning of utterances. I shall come back to this point presently. I think that to give an account of the meaning of modal adverbs it is necessary to distinguish clearly between sentences and utterances and to verify what function they can carry not only in different types of sentences, but also in different types of utterances in order to show how the definition that we give of these linguistic items allows us to interpret their function in different concrete occurrences. To do so I shall discuss the role of modal adverbs in declarative sentences when they are used to make statements both positive and negative and when they are used to make promises, in interrogative sentences when they are used to issue commands. I shall also discuss the case when modal adverbs appear in explicitly performative utterances.

Modal Adverbs and the Signs of Subscription

Venier (1983) proposes to identify modal adverbs with the "neustic" as defined by Hare. Let me go back to what Hare says in order to discuss this proposal. Hare (1971), in an article in which he defends a conception of meaning based on speech-act theory, draws a distinction between different elements of meaning present in the sentence: namely the *neustic*, the *tropic* and the *phrastic*. He does not make a distinction between sentences and utterances. He takes the idea of the "neustic" from the assertion sign used by Frege and Russell, but

9. See Hare (1971): *Practical Inferences*, Mac-Millan, p 90.

defines it as

"The sign of subscription to an assertion or other speech-act."

(p. 90)

In other words, he substitutes for the concept of assertion sign, that of subscription sign in order to be able to generalise this sign also to speech-acts that are not statements. The "tropic" is defined as the sign of mood and the "phrastic" as:

"The part of sentences which is governed by the tropic and is common to sentences with different tropics."

(p. 90)

According to Hare:

"Although a sentence may have an indicative tropic, it cannot be used to make an assertion unless a neustic be added or understood. Neustics are normally understood with uttered sentences unless something special is done to indicate that they are not being subscribed,"

(p. 92)

To explain further the distinction between tropic and neustic he adds:

" (. . .) although a neustic has to be present or understood before a sentence can be used to make an assertion or perform any other speech-act, it is in virtue of its tropic that it is used to make an assertion and not to perform some other speech-act."

The tropic is, then, a sign of mood indicating what speech-act is being performed. The

neustic, on the other hand, is that part of a sentence (I would say of an utterance) that implies the subjectivity or the speaker, his commitment to the speech-act that he is performing. This distinction is rephrased by Lyons (1977) who says that in a statement the tropic can be viewed as the "it-is-so" component and the neustic as the "I-say-so" component, while, for example, in commands the neustic is still "I-say-so" but the tropic is "so-be-it":

"Both categorical assertions and commands (...) contain the same unqualified I-say-so component, indicating that the speaker commits himself to the factuality (it-is-so) or desirability (so-be-it) of what is described by the phrastic. The difference of the locutionary force between categorical assertions and commands, is therefore, a function of the difference between "it-is-so" and "so-be-it".

(p. 751)

These notions are very important, I think, for a study of subjectivity because they introduce the idea that there is no utterance lacking an explicit or implicit subscription from the locutionary agent. The implicit subscription is what determines the apparently neutral status of non-modalised utterances, while the explicit subscription is what defines a modalised utterance. It is not surprising, then that we should find a very similar idea in Halliday (1970), precisely, in an article on modality. According to this author:

"An utterance usually embodies an element of content, 'this is what I have to say'; an element of speaker's involvement 'this is

where I come in', and a third element, 'this is the kind of message I want' which gives the sentence the status of a text,"
(p.326)

These three elements have to do respectively with the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual component of the utterance and reflect, according to Halliday, the three main functions that language carries out. It is not difficult to see in these definitions Hare's phras tic, neustic, and tropic, and again, the interpersonal element is the indicator of subjectivity, I think that the notion of neustic is now clear enough to see its possible application to modal adverbs.

I believe that there are two problems in Venier's proposal:the first is the identification between the neustic and the propositional attitude of the speaker. In fact according to Venier (1983):

"Il neustic sembra essere un mezzo per indicare il grado di credenza del parlante in cio' che dice, cioe il grado di verita' che assegna alia proposizione che enuncia",

(p. 98)

and again

"il segno di sottoscrizione opera su, verte sul valore di verita' della proposizione."

(p. 103)

I think that Hare's definition of the neustic is wider insofar as he makes clear that the neustic is a sign of subscription to the assertion or pther speech-act, therefore it does not only pperate on the truth value but on the factuality or desirability of what is described by the

phrastic.

The second problem with Venier's proposal is that, given this definition of the neustic, she cannot easily adjust to this theory a number of adverbs that do not appear to refer to the truth value of the proposition, but to other aspects of the utterance (like 'obviously', 'evidently', etc.).

The question is then, is it possible to apply Hare's original definition of the sign of subscription to modal adverbs? And how? Is it possible to account for the differences among modal adverbs saving a homogenous definition of their function? I will try to show that it is possible. The idea of a relationship between modal adverbs and the neustic is interesting, I think, and worthwhile exploring, provided that we maintain the distinction between the different values of the neustic in different illocutionary acts. I would prefer this term to the term speech-act, because it is more precise. On the other hand, I do not agree with the identification of the neustic and modal adverbs, since I think that the neustic is an abstract element, something that describes the relationship between the speaker and his own utterance and that is always present, the "this is where I come in" element, following Halliday's terminology. I would therefore go back to the perhaps more traditional view that the function of modal adverbs is that of qualifying the subscription of the speaker to the illocutionary act, indicating whether it is complete, partial and of what nature it is. They do so in different ways: there are modal adverbs that only operate on the content of the utterance and others that also operate on the conditions of validity of the utterance. Their relationship to the neustic is therefore more one of modification than one of identification. I shall now consider how, in the light of this hypothesis,

it is possible to explain the behaviour of modal adverbs in different kinds of utterances.

Modal Adverbs in Statements

As discussed previously, the most common descriptions of modal adverbs are based on the kind of modification that they introduce in statements. If we take two statements containing a modal adverb like:

(86) Probabilmente il treno e' arrivato

(87) Certamente il treno e' arrivato

what the adverb does is modify the value of the content of the statement in relation to certainty and probability and therefore reflects the degree of commitment of the speaker to the truth of the content of his utterance. This particular kind of modification explains the fact that modal adverbs are generally studied together with verbs like 'may', 'can!', 'might' (in Italian 'potrebbe', 'può') as indicators of modality. Now, the modality of an utterance can be treated as something totally objective or as something fundamentally subjective, depending on whether the speaker is taken into account or not. If we take the kind of modality expressed in an utterance to be related to the expression of some kind of commitment on the part of the speaker, then we cannot expect to describe it in terms of traditional modal logic which is basically concerned with "aletheic" modality.

According to Lyons (1983):

"The only kind of modality recognised in traditional modal logic is that which has to do with the notions of necessity and possibi-

lity insofar as they relate to the truth (and falsity) of propositions: Alethic modality ('aletheic' comes from, the Greek word for truth) (...) We noted that aletheic necessity and possibility are interdefinable under negation. To take an example (...) "Necessarily, the sky is blue" is logically equivalent to "It is not possible that the sky is not blue" ($Np = M \neg p$); and "Possibly the sky is blue" is logically equivalent to "It is not necessarily the case that the sky is not blue" ($Mp = N \neg p$). (...) Aletheic modality, then, like propositional negation, is by definition truth-functional."

(p. 237)

But Lyons (1977) notices that the way modality works in everyday use of language cannot adequately be described by this model which takes modal elements to contribute objectively to the propositional content of sentences. He suggests, then that modality in natural languages can be described in terms of epistemic logic. Epistemic logic deals with:

"The logical structure of statements that assert or imply that a particular proposition, or set of propositions, is known or believed."

(p. 793)

The way Lyons applies this particular concept to the analysis of utterances is of particular concern here because I think that it can throw light on the function of modal adverbs. He says that we can describe straightforward statements of fact as epistemically non-modal.

"The speaker, in uttering an unqualified assertion, is committing himself

to the truth of what he asserts, by virtue of the felicity conditions which govern the illocutionary act of assertion, but he is not explicitly laying claim to knowledge in the utterance itself: he is not asserting the epistemically modalised proposition "I know that p"; he is saying without qualification of the I-say-so component or the it-is-so component of this utterance, that (it is the case that) p is true (of the world he is describing). Any utterance in which the speaker explicitly qualifies his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed by the sentence he utters (...) is an epistemically modalized utterance."

(p. 792)

In the light of this definition all statements containing a modal adverb can be seen as epistemically modalised utterances. So when I say:

(88) Indubbiamente la situazione politica e' grave

the adverb conveys a strong commitment of the speaker to the truth of what he is saying, in the absence of other indications (like an ironic intonation, for example). But there is a further distinction drawn by Lyons which is necessary to take into account here, between epistemically subjective and objective modality. In fact possibility, certainty, etc. can be presented by the speaker as something that holds independently of his own evaluation of the facts, as something given in relation to objective considerations. Therefore a modal expression can be construed subjectively or ob-

jectively. An utterance like:

(89) Potrebbe piovere

can be given the subjective interpretation paraphrasable as "In the light of what I know it is possible that it rains" or an objective interpretation paraphrasable as "In the light of what is known, it is possible that it rains." In the subjective reading there is a kind of I-think-so component which disappears in the objective reading.

It is interesting to notice that a distinction between a) "In the light of what is known" and b) "In the light of what the speaker knows" is found in recent works on modality. Karttunen (1972), for example, maintains that an expression like "it is possible that p" can be read as: "For all A knows it is possible that p", introducing the speaker as the source of the judgement. But such introduction of the speaker is, in a sense, more apparent than real because the locutionary agent's involvement is propositionalised, that is, embedded in a proposition "It is true that". Therefore even epistemic models that appear to take the speaker into account fail to capture the essence of subjectivity in modalised statements.

Lyons puts forward the idea that epistemic modality is normally subjective in languages, that is that modalised utterances are interpreted by speakers as expressing a subjective appreciation of some state of affairs which is presented by the locutionary agent as exclusively grounded in his own judgement and beliefs. If modal adverbs are modifiers of the neustic, which is the subjective element in the utterance, then it is arguable that the only epistemic modality that they can express is subjective rather than objective.

In this sense the interpretation of utter-

anees like:

(90) Probabilmente piovera'

(90) Certamente piovera'

is normally given in terms of what the speaker believes to be the case. The distinction between subjective and objective modality is valuable in the sense that there are expressions of the language that allow the objectification of epistemic modality and others that do not. I think that in Italian while modal adverbs always express epistemic subjective modality, the corresponding constructions with the adjective can also be used to objectify modality. Compare the following utterances:

(92) (a) E' possibile che lui venga/
(b) Possibilmente lui verra'

(93) (a) E' probabile che lui venga/
(b) Probabilmente lui verra'

(94) (a) E' sicuro che lui verra'/
(b) Sicuramente lui verra'

It seems to me that while the expressions of the (b) type are most naturally interpreted as subjectively modalised, the expressions of the (a) type also allow an objective reading. This would be confirmed by the fact that if we imagine a situation in which some kind of statement is not asserted by the speaker, but presented as having been made by somebody else, or as having been made by somebody unknown, the most natural construction would be with an expression of the (a) type.

Compare:

(95) (a) Secondo fonti ufficiali e' probabile che il Presidente si dimetta

(96) (b) Secondo fonti ufficiali probabilmente il Presidente si dimetterà'

95 (a) seems more natural insofar as (b) introduces an element of subjectivity which is not appropriate in the utterance. Similar facts are noticed for German by Kratzer (1981)¹⁰

The claim that the epistemic modality expressed by modal adverbs is subjective can only be sustained on the grounds of interpretation.

I think, though, that there is a further consideration that might confirm such a hypothesis. I referred above to the impossibility for modal adverbs to be directly negated, except for 'necessariamente'. But 'necessariamente' is somewhat a particular adverb because it is strongly connected with logical argumentation and therefore would need a more specific treatment. Except for this adverb, all the others cannot be negated, while the corresponding adjectives can. I can say:

(96) Non è possibile che lui venga

(97) Non è certo che lui venga

But I cannot say:

(98) *Non certamente lui verrà'

(99) *Non possibilmente lui verrà'

and no other modal adverb can appear in such a construction, which, incidentally, confirms the difference between adverbs and adjectival cons-

10. See her discussion of different ways of expressing modality in German in her article "The Notional Category of Modality" in H.J. Eikmeyer and H. Rieser (eds.) (1981) *Words, Worlds and Contexts*, Walter de Gruyter, pp. 38-74 (esp.p. 57).

difference between adverbs and adjectival constructions. It is not very easy to show that this fact has to do with subjectivity but I think that it can be related to the problem of the deniability of the neustic. If it can be shown that the neustic cannot be negated, then it cannot be given a negative qualification either. I do not want to go too deeply into such a complicated matter, but let me briefly refer to the problem. According to Hare (1971) (and many other authors), two kinds of negation are possible: external and internal.

"The internal negation of 'I promise to pay you before the end of the tax year' is 'I promise not to pay you before the end of the tax year'. The external negation of the same promise is 'I do not promise to pay you before the end of the tax year'. Nearly all speech-acts can be negated in these two ways."

(p.82)

Lyons (1977, p. 769) takes external negation to be the negation of the neustic. In a statement like:

(100) I do not say that the door is open

there would be a negation of the subscription sign. But I think that not even in this case is the subscription sign being negated. What the person uttering (100) is denying is that he is asserting such and such, but this person is still subscribing to the utterance, by asserting that he does not say such and such. In other words my impression is that one can deny an utterance recursively by adding elements and negating them without ever getting to deny the abstract element of subscription which is inescapably there, whenever a sentence is uttered. The neustic "I-say-so" is an abstract ele-

ment, if I say " I-do-not-say-so" I am not negating the neustic itself, but only asserting piy unwillingness to make a certain statement. The non-deniability of the subscription sign kould therefore be a good explanation for the non-negability of modal adverbs and would also account for the ambiguous effect of the "performative negation". Such an effect is obvious when somebody says something like "I do not say that you are wrong" and his utterance is interpreted as implying "I do not say that you iare right" as well. In a sense I think that this is what Halliday means when he says that modality is always positive (see 1970, p. 333).

As I noticed previously, modals can easily appear in front of negative clauses, therefore they can qualify negative statements, e.g.:

(101) Certamente non ci siamo capiti

(102) Probabilmente non ci siamo capiti

Such utterances are perfectly acceptable and this is consistent with the idea that both negative and positive statements can be treated as assertions. I can indicate my degree of subscription to a negative statement in the same way as I do for a positive statement.

At this point I would like to note that even if most modal adverbs can be used to express epistemic modality, that is to assign degrees of commitment to the truth of the propositional content of statements (on a scale from possible to necessary), some of them have more specific functions as I shall explain presently. In this sense I would not call these adverbs "epistemic modal adverbs" (like in Venier, 1983) but simply *modal*, if modality can be interpreted in the general sense that Halliday (1970), for example, gives to the term. He says:

"Modality is a form of participation by the speaker in the speech event, the speaker associates with the thesis and indication of its status and validity in his own judgement; he intrudes and takes up a position. Modality thus derives from what we called above the 'interpersonal function' of language, language as expression of role."

(p. 335)

This definition of modality is looser than the one given in logical terms and allows us to treat together the adverbs that I have been considering up to now without obscuring their differences. I think that it is precisely a lack of distinction within the category of modals itself that is responsible for the contradictions and confusions that sometimes are present in works devoted to this kind of adverb.

Let me give a few examples. Compare the following utterances:

(103) A: Questo film e' pessimo

(104) B: a) Sicuramente e' stato fatto
con pochi soldi

b) Ovviamente e' stato fatto
con pochi soldi

c) Evidentemente e' stato fatto
con pochi soldi

All variants of B are responses to A, They all indicate that the speaker thinks that his statement is true. But there are differences among them not only in the degree of commitment but also in the way commitment is expressed. 'Sicuramente' only indicates that the speaker

fully subscribes to his statement, but does not make any other kind of claim. But 'ovviamente' and 'evidentemente' also indicate that the validity of the statement can be verified by the hearer, that there is some kind of proof that can be invoked to support it.

It is a difference to which Halliday (1970) refers by means of a double characterisation of modal adverbs. He places them on a matrix that indicates horizontally what position they occupy on a scale going from possibility to certainty and vertically what kind of force they have. So, for example, he gives neutral force to 'possibly' or 'certainly', tentative force (undertone) to 'perhaps' and strong force (overtone) to 'surely'. I think that he captures the fact that by using certain adverbs the speaker makes stronger claims about the validity of a statement, that they have what one could call an "argumentative" force. This definition came to my mind reading some observations made by Ducrot (1977) on the power that illocutionary acts have and their ability of modifying the relationships between the partners in conversation. He says:

"Se puede establecer una observación análoga a propósito de la orden - que confiere (pretende conferir) al destinatario una obligación de hacer - o de la promesa, que no tiene ningún valor si el locutor no manifiesta adquirir, a causa de ella una obligación nueva. La demostración será menos simple para la afirmación, pero resulta difícil describirla sin decir que el locutor, al realizarla, se hace responsable de la verdad de lo que afirma, acepta que se le cuestione a él personalmente si lo asertado resulta ser falso.

Ultimo ejemplo, si se admite un acto ilocutorio de argumentación, a mi entender indispensable, este acto consiste en imponer al destinatario una determinada conclusión como la única dirección en la que el diálogo puede continuar (el valor argumentativo de un enunciado es, de este modo, una especie de obligación relativa a la manera en que el discurso debe ser continuado. Incluso me parece posible (pero eso es todavía muy vago y problemático) integrar el acto de argumentar al acto de afirmar: se atribuiría, pues, a la afirmación la segunda propiedad de conferir al destinatario una especie de "deber de deducir". Lo que también implicaría una tercera propiedad: un "deber de creer".¹¹

(p. 251)

I think that among the adverbs that express

- 11, This quotation is taken from an article "Illocutoire et performatif" and appeared in *Linguistique et Semiologie*, 1977, n. 4, but I found it reproduced in the Spanish edition of *Dire et ne pas dire*, Anagrama, published in 1982. This is why I quote in Spanish. I find Ducrot's idea that illocutionary acts modify the "juridical" relationship between partners in conversation very interesting because it allows us to see that subjectivity and intersubjectivity are often interrelated in language, a point which, I hope to have shown, Benveniste captured very clearly in his later works.

certainly some have this argumentative force, that is the speaker presents what he says as strongly supported by facts and therefore he is also appealing directly (and not implicitly like in normal statements) to the hearer's duty of deducing and believing. I think that these kinds of adverbs exemplify how subjectivity and intersubjectivity interrelate in that whenever the speaker asserts his own views he also involves the hearer. Adverbs like 'clearly', 'obviously', 'evidently', 'naturally' indicate not only that the locutionary agent believes that what he says is true, but that the validity of what he says can be confirmed and verified by the hearer.

Consider the following dialogue:

(105) A - Ieri sono andato a lavorare..

B - Ovviamente sei arrivato tardi

The adverb 'ovviamente' does not only express that B assigns a high degree of certainty to the truth of what he is stating, but also makes the claim that the speaker is presenting his conclusion as following some kind of premise, as highly motivated by certain reasons. The addressee is then forced to look for these reasons and find them in the context of utterance. It might be that there was a strike in the transport system or that the speaker means that A always arrives late because he has the habit of doing so. In any case the speaker, by using an argumentative modal adverb is obliging the hearer to the duty of verification. No such thing happens with 'sicuramente' or 'certamente' which do not present any claim to verification and merely indicate that the speaker makes himself fully responsible for what he says. When somebody says 'certamente' the only thing that is communicated is that he personally believes in what he says, but when somebody says

'ovviamente' the hearer is also involved. This fact is also noticed by Michell (1974) when she says that

"Certain assertions (...) are picked out by the speaker as having the force of conclusions, as following from certain evidence or premises, by use of modal adverbs."

(p. 500)

And consequently she proposes subdividing modal adverbs according to the kind of proofs that they invoke, so that 'certamente' and 'presurnibilmente' would be based on inference, while 'chiaramente', 'evidentemente', 'ovviamente' would be based on perception. I do not find this kind of sub-categorisation particularly useful, however, because it does not allow us to see the differences between neutral and argumentative adverbs and also because I do not think that 'ovviamente' is more perceptual than 'certamente' or 'chiaramente' more perceptual than 'sicuramente'. Neither 'ovviamente' nor 'chiaramente' necessarily appeal to visible or audible evidence.

As I said before, by using a modal assertive adverb, the speaker indicates that he commits himself to his statement because he can defend it. This appeal to validity is only implicit in neutral modal adverbs. Therefore the basic difference between the two kinds of modal adverbs is that the argumentative type refers to the conditions of validity of the statement by making it clear that the speaker can defend it not only on the basis of his own personal judgement. There is in argumentative modal adverbs a reference to the felicity conditions of the statements which is not present in neutral modal adverbs and not necessary in dubitative modal adverbs. Among the felicity conditions for making a statement there is that the speaker be in a position to state

whatever he is stating, Austin (1975) notices, talking about the infelicity of illocutionary acts, that

"Statements too are liable to infelicity of this kind in other ways also parallel to contracts, promises, warnings, etc. Just as we often say, for example, 'you cannot order me', in the sense 'you have not the right to order me', which is equivalent to saying that you are not in the appropriate position to do: so often there are things you cannot state - have no right to state - are not in a position to state."

(p. 138)

In this sense I think that what I have called argumentative modal adverbs indicate the speaker's commitment to the truth of his statement by stressing its validity and therefore by operating on its felicity conditions,

Modal Adverbs in Other Illocutionary Acts

While modal adverbs in statements operate on the truth or validity of what is said, they seem to have different functions in other types of utterance. Let us take a promise, for example. Promises, unlike other illocutionary acts, are not associated in Italian (and English) with sentences of a certain type. Declarative sentences are generally used to make statements and imperative sentences to issue commands, so generally statements and commands are associated with those kinds of sentences, but promises are a type of illocutionary act which can only be recognised in context.¹²

12. But for a critique of the distinction he-

Suppose X asks Y whether he is going to give back the money that he owes and that Y replies:

(106) Certamente ti paghero'

or (107) Probabilmente ti paghero'

If the illocutionary force of these utterances is that of a promise, the function of the adverb will not be that of modifying the truth of the propositions expressed by the relative sentences, but the factuality of the propositional content. The case is not obvious with 'probably' because generally a promise requires full commitment, but I think that (.107) can be taken as a half-promise, a half-commitment in virtue of the fact that the speaker does not say openly "I promise", Y is saying that certainly or probably it will be the case that he will pay and not that the proposition "Y will pay X" is certainly or possibly true, in other words the use of the adverb will be interpreted in a different way from statements. But the fundamental function of the adverb remains the same in both utterances. In a statement the adverb indicates that the locutionary agent presents the content of his utterance as more or less true, more or less valid and therefore shows the extent to which he subscribes to the statement. In a promise, on the other hand, the adverb indicates that the locutionary agent considers the facts described in his utterance as more or less realisable and therefore that he subscribes more or less strongly to his promise. The general function of the adverbs allows users to interpret them according to the kind of illocutionary act in which they are used. From what

tween direct and indirect illocutionary acts, see the article by Recanati (1982) "Déclaratif/nom déclaratif", *Langage*.6, no, 67, pp. 23-31.

has been said before, it is clear that the interpretation of

(108) *Ovviamente ti paghero'*

will be that not only is the speaker subscribing to the factuality of the content of the utterance, but also that the reasons for his subscription should be something known or inferred by the hearer and that therefore the promise is particularly valid.

Modal adverbs in Questions

In the previous section I noticed that modal adverbs are at least uncomfortable in interrogative sentences. That means that it is not impossible to imagine cases in which a modal adverb would appear in an interrogative sentence, but that to explain and interpret this appearance it is necessary to look at the utterance, that is at the type of question that is being asked by means of that interrogative sentence. A difficulty with Italian is that often the only device that allows us to distinguish between a statement and a question is intonation and therefore the only way to check whether modals really appear in questions would be to collect data from conversations.

Given this difficulty I shall use as a starting point a question that I have heard. First of all, is there any reason why modals should not appear in questions? I think that the main reason lies in the type of neustic that is attached to questions. According to Lyons (1977) while statements have an I-say-so neustic, questions have an I-don't-know neustic, that is the locutionary agent's subscription to the content of his utterance is suspended. It is not surprising therefore that in most types of questions the modal adverb sounds unacceptable. If

the locutionary agent does not know whether the content of his utterance is true or not there would be no sense in qualifying his subscription to it. Consider the following examples of yes/no questions, X-questions, deliberative questions.

(109) *Certamente, hai finito di studiare?

(110) *Chi ha scritto, probabilmente, la Divina Commedia?

(111) *Cosa devo fare oggi, evidentemente?

None of these utterances is acceptable. Let me now give an example of a question that has been addressed to me with a modal adverb;

(112) Hai un pezzo da 10 pence, forse?

Between the first part of the utterance and the adverb there was a significant pause, I think that in this case the use of the modal adverb signals a change in the utterance from a question into a conjecture. The speaker was going to ask a question and then added the adverb to indicate that he thought that the addressee actually had the ten pence piece. In this sense the utterance does not have an I-don't-know sign of subscription, but the same sign of subscription of a tentative statement. So if somebody says:

(113) La tua arnica e' arrivata, probabilmente?

he is not really asking a question but advancing an hypothesis to which he partially subscribes.

In these kinds of questions only dubitative adverbs can appear but I think that it is pos-

sible to imagine cases where both types of adverbs would appear. For example, in questions asked by a lawyer to a defendant or witness in court. Consider the following:

(114) Lei probabilmente conosceva la vittima?

(115) Lei, evidentemente, non era sul posto in quel momento?

The functions of these adverbs would appear to be the same as in (113), in fact in this type of "conducive" question what the speaker is doing in reality is asserting something to influence the addressee and the hearers and doing so in a way that cannot be openly recognised. In fact I think that modal adverbs can appear, for the same reason in tag-questions:

(116) Probabilmente partirai, non e' vero?

Whether these questions are true questions or not is not of concern here¹³, what is important here is that they exhibit a different kind of neustic from that of "normal" questions, and which could be described as a mixed neustic between statement and question.

Modal Adverbs in Commands and Request

It was said at the beginning that modal ad-

13- But see Cornulier (1982) on the critique of an "innocent" view of questions that tends to consider that the normal attitude of the speaker in a question is that of not knowing the answer, "Sur le sens des questions totales et alternatives", *Langages*, 1982, n. 67, pp. 55-109.

verbs are Incompatible with sentences containing imperatives. This does not mean that they are always incompatible with utterances that have the illocutionary force of commands and requests. How can we account for this fact?

According to Venier (1983):

"Gli avverbi modali non possono fungere da segno di sottoscrizione dell'ordine perche essi assegnano un grado di verita' alla proposizione su cui vertono: per gli ordini, invece, non si pone il problema della verita', il problema della giustificabilita' di un ordine e' diverso da quello della giustificabilita' di una asserzione."
(p.128)

I think that, if we relate modal adverbs exclusively to the function of assigning degrees of truth to propositions, then there are too many things about their behaviour that cannot be explained (like their appearance in explicit performative utterances, as it will be seen later) On the other hand, if we think of the grammatical structure of an imperative, for example, we notice that it is addressee-oriented, This reflects, I think, a semantic property. When issuing a command the speaker is only present implicitly. He obviously subscribes to his act of ordering, but his subscription must be full and unquestioned. The felicity conditions for a command require that the person who issues the command really wants the addressee to act accordingly. It is true of commands and requests that they do not require the speaker to comment on his own subscription, since this subscription is not at stake. On the contrary in promises, that have the same so-be-it tropic as commands and requests, it is primarily the speaker's commitment that is at stake. This, I think, might explain semantically why modal adverbs do

not occur with imperative sentences used to issue commands or with utterances with the force of requests, e.g.;

(117)*Probabilmente fai come ti dico

(118)*Sicuramente fai come ti dico

(119)*Ovviamente, vai a casa

(120)*Certamente, mi faresti un favore?

(121)*Presumibilmente, potete comprarmi un gelato?

Modal adverbs are acceptable in utterances like:

(122) Certamente, aiuteretvostro fratello

(123) Evidentemente, tornerai a casa presto

(124) Sicuramente, farai i compiti

but these utterances are all presented like statements and acquire their value of orders in context. The speaker is indirectly indicating that his assertion has to be taken as an order through intonation or other devices, therefore the modal adverbs have their normal function discussed for statements. Obviously, 'possibilmente' and the other dubitative adverbs are not possible here because they would violate the felicity conditions for issuing commands and making requests that have been discussed before.

Modal Adverbs in Explicitly Performative Utterances

Let me make clear that when I talk about ex-

plicit performative utterances I refer to utterances containing an explicit performative verb, that is utterances that have an overt indication of their illocutionary force. This distinction was made by Austin in the last part of *How to do things with words* and replaces the original distinction between constative and performative.

The occurrence of modal adverbs in this kind of utterance was noted by various authors in connection with the debate on the performative hypothesis. Michell (1974) observed that the following utterance is perfectly acceptable:

(125) Obviously I concede that I've lost
the elections

and in fact it is not difficult to imagine similar utterances:

(126) Chiaramente, apro la seduta

(127) Ovviamente, dichiaro lo stato d'as
sedio

(128) Evidentemente, mi dimetto

As is obvious, such occurrences constitute a problem not only for the performative hypothesis, but also for the hypothesis that their function is that of assigning degrees of truth to propositions. Michell, who sustains this thesis, is obliged to notice that in such cases:

"The adverb does not modify a sentence with truth conditions, because whereas non performative sentences may be true or false, as Ross points out, performative sentences have instead of truth-values, various conditions pertaining to appropriateness of use."

(p. 437)

A formulation which is somewhat ambiguous given that it seems to imply that statements do not have felicity conditions. In all cases the author proposes that in performative utterances the function of the adverb is that by using it the speaker emphasizes that the felicity conditions for performing a certain act are met.

It seems to me that this is indeed what the speaker conveys. Suppose the case when somebody says:

(129) Ovviamente battezzo questa nave
con il nome di Maria

Let us try to give a context to such an utterance. Suppose Maria is the name of the wife of the shipbuilder and everybody knows this. The speaker is then referring to the reason for his illocutionary act and therefore is openly subscribing to it.

Let us take another example: in a country devastated by civil war the president says on television:

(130) Naturalmente dichiaro lo stato di
assedio

Again, what does 'naturalmente*' mean in this context? It means that the president is presenting his action as something justified by the emergency situation of the country.

Suppose further that somebody involved in a serious scandal utters:

(131) Evidentemente, mi dimetto

Here I do not think that 'evidentemente' means something like 'as everybody can see', but rather it has a meaning paraphrasable as 'the rea-

sons why I resign are evident'. In all these cases the modal adverb seems to have the function of strengthening the subscription of the speaker to the speech-act by pointing at its validity, and it appears to be exactly the same function that these adverbs carried out in statements. It is perhaps superfluous to say that no dubitative modal could be used in this context, because it would be an open contradiction to realize an illocutionary act and at the same time to doubt that one is realising it.

But the question that should be put forward here is whether all modal adverbs can appear in explicitly performative utterances. I do not think that

(132)*Sicuramente dichiaro lo stato d'assedio

(133)*Certamente apro questa seduta

are acceptable. It seems that only what I called, following Ducrot, argumentative modal adverbs can appear in such contexts because of their property of pointing at the felicity conditions of illocutionary acts. It seems therefore that a difference should be maintained between those adverbs that are used by the speaker to modify the content of his own utterances and that express degrees of commitment to the truth or factuality of that content and modal adverbs that are used by speakers to stress the validity of illocutionary acts. They all express the subscription of the speaker, but in different ways. It may be that this observation is necessary in order to avoid a confusion the consequence of which is that of saying that statements do not have felicity conditions but only truth conditions, or that the felicity condition of a statement is its truth.

Conclusions

In the first part of this paper I have discussed the importance of the notion of subjectivity in the study of language and particularly the value that this notion acquires in a conception that opposes the reduction of language to an instrument for the transmission of information. Such reduction has led to an exclusive attention to the propositional content of sentences and to the abstraction of language from its conditions of usage.

I have argued that subjectivity should be interpreted as the presence of the speaker in language. This presence is, according to me, very often implicit in utterances or texts and even when it is made explicit it still belongs to a level of the language which is not the same as the one to which the descriptive content of utterances belongs. The notion of subjectivity forces us to see a difference between what is said and what is shown in language. In this sense I have argued, following certain ideas put forward by the linguists developing the "theory of utterance", that subjectivity can be studied by looking for the traces of the speaker's presence in the utterance.

I have also argued that modality is among the means that the speaker can use to express his own attitudes towards what he is saying. I have studied modal adverbs as signs that are generally used to make explicit a qualified commitment of the speaker towards the content of his utterance and I have analysed how different modal adverbs can make explicit different kinds of commitment. In this sense I have argued that a modalised utterance is an utterance that shows an explicit trace of the speaker's involvement. I have also tried to show how in treatments of modality that objec-

tivise it thrs presence of the speaker is eliminated leading to an interpretation of modalised utterances which is, according to me, far away from the one that speakers generally give.

My analysis of modal adverbs is an attempt to provide an example of how subjectivity can be expressed through the use of particular linguistic items. This does not mean, of course, that the expression of subjectivity is always related to particular words or constructions but simply that there are devices of the language that are consistently used by speakers to make their attitudes explicit.

The study of these linguistic devices is, in my view, central to show that we can have a greater understanding of the way language works only if we relate utterances or texts to the speakers that produce them and interpret them.

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