

DISJUNCTS:
Speech acts adverbials¹

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In this chapter, we will argue that disjuncts (unlike sentence adjuncts) are not, strictly speaking, sentence adverbials but speech acts adverbials. This view is consistent with the recent proposal that a pragmatic process is needed for the interpretation of disjuncts and we will show that they are better explained resorting to the relevance pragmatic notion of higher-level explicature. In this line, we will propose that they are constituents of certain implicit higher order propositions. However, our view differs from the relevance-theoretic proposal as, for us, the pragmatic process needed to recover the implicit meaning in which the disjunct is embedded is not optional but mandatory. In this way, we challenge the contextualist approach on disjuncts and argue that a mandatory pragmatic process of recovery of a higher order proposition is involved in the interpretation of disjuncts. This characterization of disjuncts provides us with the adequate framework to revise and modify Quirk et al. (1985)'s classification to provide a more consistent one.

INTRODUCTION

Although the term “disjunct” is occasionally used in syntax to refer to parenthetical elements of various types (Espinal 1991), here we restrict its use to adverbial disjuncts in the sense used by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985:612-631), a type of adverbial with a superordinate role in relation to the sentence in which it functions. They (*ibid.*:616) distinguish two types of disjuncts:

1. We are very pleased to contribute with a chapter to this volume of essays on occasion of Luis Quereda's retirement. Luis Quereda's ideas on language are always rigorous, far-reaching in their implications, and often so highly intriguing that we are compelled to reconsider matters we thought we had clear. These are among the qualities that have made his work so inspirational and that have made him such a wonderful teacher and colleague. This chapter is dedicated to him.

- (a) Style: conveys speaker's comments as to
 - modality and manner (e.g.: *frankly, confidentially*)
 - respect (e.g.: *personally, in broad terms*)
- (b) Content: making an observation as to
 - degree of or conditions for truth of content (e.g.: *certainly, obviously*)
 - value judgment of content (e.g.: *remarkably, curiously*)

This classification is explained in 8.124-129 using mainly examples of adverb and prepositional phrases like these used in brackets in the previous classification. In 15.20-21, however, they also classify examples of adverbial clauses as disjuncts. The characterization of disjuncts should serve equally for the explanation given to the examples, marked in italics, in (1) and (2).

- (1) *Frankly*, the road had a very poor surface.
- (2) Peter is drunk, *because he had to support himself on a friend's arm*.

The adverbial in (1) is a modality style disjunct and in (2) is, according to Quirk *et al.* (*ibid.*:616), a style disjunct of respect. However, there is no way of, and not justification for, considering the latter as such. The *because*-clause in example (2) does not fit in any of the subtypes for disjuncts. This expression is a reason-clause, a semantic role that Quirk *et al.*'s classification does not include. By contrast, Quirk *et al.* (*ibid.*:1104) do recognise that this type of examples are indirect reasons and justify that they are disjuncts by saying that "the reason is not related to the situation in the matrix clause but is a motivation for the implicit speech act of the utterance". The lack of coherence in considering the *because*-clause in (2) as a style disjunct of respect and as an indirect reason at the same time led us to focus on this type of examples.

Unfortunately, clauses used as disjuncts, such as the one involved in (2), have been poorly analyzed in the literature. Recently, however, there is a debate related to the nature of the contribution of these clauses to the utterance. Some consider they are syntactic phenomena that should be accounted for semantically as they generate conventional implicatures (Potts 2002), others consider that they must be analyzed as syntactic orphans that are integrated into the utterance at the level of utterance interpretation (Haegeman 1988), and that the relationship of the disjunct clause with its host depends on pragmatically constrained inference (Blakemore 2006). In this line, disjuncts can be considered as a second-order speech act (Bach 1999) or as a constituent of a higher-level explicature (Wilson and Sperber 1993; Carston 2002, 2010).

Taking into account these proposals, we reconsidered the characterization and classification of disjuncts and found that the relevance-theoretic view of disjuncts as constituents of higher-level explicatures is an illuminating idea that allows for a more explanatory and consistent account. From this stance, the interpretation of disjuncts involves embedding the proposition expressed under a higher-level description. This provides us with a hypothesis to analyze disjuncts as speech acts adverbials rather than as sentence adverbials. We, however, differ

from Carston's view in the character of the pragmatic process. While, for her it is optional, for us, the recognition of a disjunct triggers a mandatory pragmatic process. The disjunct is a syntactic orphan in the clause in which it is inserted and this demands a pragmatic process without which we lack an acceptable interpretation: Disjuncts cannot be interpreted unless embedded under a higher order proposition derived pragmatically.

This view is compatible with Quirk *et al.* (*ibid.*:1072): "Style disjuncts are distinguished semantically in that they generally imply a verb of speaking and the subject *I*." (1) can be explained through (1a).

- (1) (a) [S, THE SPEAKER, TELLS THE HEARER, H,] *FRANKLY* [THAT] THE ROAD HAD A VERY POOR SURFACE.

Its interpretation involves embedding the proposition expressed under a higher-order description of a speech act. But treating the adverbial in (2) as a style disjunct means that its interpretation should be (2a)

- (2) (a) [S, THE SPEAKER, TELLS THE HEARER, H, THAT] PETER IS DRUNK *BECAUSE HE HAD TO SUPPORT HIMSELF ON A FRIEND'S ARM*.

and (2a) is not an acceptable explicature derived from (2); that Peter had to support himself on a friend's arm is not the reason why the speaker tells the hearer that Peter is drunk. The interpretation of disjuncts involves embedding the proposition expressed under a higher-level description which, in this case, is a description of a propositional attitude associated to the speech act of assertion, belief, rather than a description of a speech act. The interpretation of (2) should be (2b)

- (2) (b) [S BELIEVES THAT] PETER IS DRUNK, *BECAUSE HE HAD TO SUPPORT HIMSELF ON A FRIEND'S ARM*.

If this is so, Quirk's classification should be revised. For a better characterization and classification of the *because*-clauses as disjuncts, the new classification should be designed taking into account the kind of higher order proposition recovered and the new role of the adverbial in it. In the case of style disjuncts, the adverbial depends on a description of some aspect of the illocutionary act; thus, we prefer to name this type of disjuncts illocutionary rather than style. In the case of content disjuncts such as "obviously", they are also better explained as higher-level explicatures so that the relation of the disjunct and the clause becomes apparent: The proposition expressed in the matrix clause becomes the argument of the operator "it is possible/obvious...that". This view of disjuncts as elements in a higher-level explicature allows for a more accurate classification in which we distinguish two types:

- (a) Illocutionary disjunct: The adverbial must be inserted in the higher order proposition describing the speech act of assertion or the propositional attitudes typically associated to it.
- (b) Epistemic and evaluative disjunct: It becomes part of a truth value or evaluative operator such as “it is possible/obvious... that”.²

Before explaining our proposals in detail, we must expound certain preliminary notions. We recall the distinction among different kinds of acts that are realized when a speech act is produced in order to focus merely on the illocutionary acts. In particular, we provide the conditions for the performance of one type: assertion. We also expound the relevance-theoretic notion of *higher-level explicature* to explain the kind of contribution made by disjuncts in syntax and communication.

SPEECH ACTS

In order to explain not only the many things we can do with words but also the fact that almost any speech act is really the performance of several acts at once, in 1962, Austin characterized the distinction among locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts as different acts that may appear in a speech act. These acts were distinguished by different aspects of the speaker’s intention: There is the act of saying something, what one does in saying it (such as asserting, requesting or ordering) and how one is trying to affect one’s audience. What a speaker says is the content of her locutionary act, what a speaker means is the content(s) of her illocutionary act(s), and both are distinct from her acts of (intentionally) producing further (perlocutionary) effects on his audience (Bach 2010:133).

This basic and well known distinction permits us to focus on a part of a whole speech act: the illocutionary one, the part that is related with the speaker’s meaning. Speaker’s meaning differs from perlocutionary effects, which are beliefs or attitudes the speaker intends the audience to form without considering them as something the speaker is expressing. Speaker’s meaning also differs from the content of the speaker’s locutionary act, what is said in the locutionary sense, that is, the linguistically encoded meanings of the words uttered and the fixing of values of pure indexicals (Bach 2001). Although this is a way of characterizing the expression “what is said”, nowadays the expression “what is said” is often used to mean what the speaker states or asserts, but stating and asserting are illocutionary acts. In this sense, “what is said” has also an illocutionary sense (*ibid.*) and thus the notion of what is said can be compared with others such as Bach’s (1994) implicature or the relevance-theoretic

2. The use of the terms “illocutionary” and “evaluative” in relation to disjuncts can be found in Carston (2002:121), the use of the term “epistemic disjuncts” in Quereda (1993:41). Our treatment of epistemic disjuncts as adverbials embedded in a complex proposition is consistent with Quereda’s (*ibid.*:232) idea that “there are always two components in every modal sentence”.

explicature. An explicature is the proposition developed from the meanings of the words expressed and it is speaker-meant.

There are many different illocutionary speech acts. Indeed, the theories of speech acts have been not merely explanatory but also taxonomic. Different taxonomies and also different ways to specify when an illocutionary speech act can succeed or fail are found in the literature, depending on the conditions that are attributed to each one. We will not intend here to decide what the best taxonomy is or what the whole way to characterize the acts is, we merely concentrate in assertions as these are the type of acts that are relevant for the discussion of disjuncts. Their occurrence in questions is possible only in reduced cases and they are not used in commands.³ An important aspect of the study of speech acts is the speaker attitude associated to that speech act (Bach and Harnish 1979). For example, a statement is associated to a speaker's belief or knowledge, a request to a speaker's desire, and a command to a speaker's order. As an act of communication, an illocutionary speech act succeeds if the audience identifies, in accordance with the speaker's intention, the attitude conveyed.

Although not all approaches to the study of speech acts accept that the attitude may be included in the content of what is said in the illocutionary sense, relevance theory does. Their notion of higher-level explicature is a good tool to explain the kind of contribution disjuncts make to the basic propositions expressed and, thus, we will explain this by resorting to it in the following section.

HIGHER-LEVEL EXPLICATURES

The relevance-theoretic category of explicature includes what is known as "higher-level" explicature (Sperber and Wilson 1995 [1986]; Wilson and Sperber 1993; Blakemore 1991; Ifantidou 2001; Carston 2002, 2010). In the relevance-theoretic framework, utterances typically have several explicatures. An explicature is a development of the logical form. The higher-level explicature is a particular kind of explicature which involves "embedding the propositional form of the utterance or one of its constituent propositional forms under a higher-level description such as a speech act description, a propositional attitude description or some other comment on the embedded proposition" (Carston 2002:377). For example, in (3), taken from Carston (2010:223),

- (3) [Bob utters:] I'll finish by Tuesday.
 a. BOB WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
 b. BOB IS SAYING THAT HE WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.

3. Disjuncts rarely appear with interrogative sentences and, even when they do, the kind of contribution made is somehow different. For example, in "Frankly, are you tired?" the disjunct is related to the speaker speech act description typical of questions and thus its higher-level explicature would be [*S* WANTS *H* TO TELL HER] *FRANKLY* [WHETHER] THE HEARER IS TIRED. It is thus not a commitment of the speaker to be frank but a demand that the hearer be frank.

- c. BOB BELIEVES HE WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.

there is one basic proposition expressed, (3a), and several higher-level propositions, (3b)-(3c). (3b) is the speech act description and (3c) is the propositional attitude description. The speaker may actually represent a subset of these (though the speaker has made manifest her intention to make the others manifest as well). (3a) is a base-level explicature and it is normally the explicitly communicated assumption most likely to give rise to contextual effects.

In some other cases, a higher-level explicature describing the speaker's belief might be the major contributor to the relevance of the utterance (Carston 2002:119). This is the case of (4), example also taken from Carston (2010:223),

- (4) [Someone Robyn doesn't recognise comes up to her and says:] You're Robyn Carston.
 a. THE INTERLOCUTOR OF *S* IS ROBYN CARSTON.
 b. *S* KNOWS THAT HER INTERLOCUTOR IS ROBYN CARSTON.

in it, the speaker communicates the higher order proposition in (4b).

In addition, when the basic proposition expressed that is embedded in a higher-level explicature is not ostensively communicated, the higher order proposition becomes the main point of the utterance as we can see in the next examples given by Carston (*ibid.*:225). In Ann's interrogative utterance, (5),

- (5) [Ann asks Bob:] Will you finish by Tuesday?
 a. BOB WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
 b. ANN WANTS BOB TO TELL HER WHETHER HE WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
 c. ANN WANTS TO KNOW WHETHER BOB WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.

the basic proposition expressed, (5a), is not speaker-meant. What the speaker communicates is the higher order proposition in (5b) and probably also the one in (5c). Through Ann's imperative utterance, (6),

- (6) [Ann tells Bob:] Finish by Tuesday.
 a. BOB WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
 b. ANN TELLS BOB TO FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
 c. ANN WANTS BOB TO FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.

she communicates the higher order proposition in (6b) and probably also the one in (6c), being these her higher-level explicatures. (6a) is the basic proposition expressed which again is not speaker-meant. The correct way to understand questions and commands is taking into account that they ostensively communicate only higher-level propositions.

The use of disjuncts entails, as we will see, a particular case in which both the basic proposition expressed and a higher order description are made manifest to the hearer. A disjunct is an explicit modifier of the implicit higher-level proposition which will be made more manifest to the hearer. In cases such as this, a single utterance conveys several explicatures, one at ground-level and

another higher-order one, dependent on the ground-level one. Each of them has an independent contribution to the truth conditions of the utterance.

DISJUNCTS AS SPEECH ACTS ADVERBIALS

To see in what sense a disjunct is not a sentence adverbial, let us see what a sentence adverbial is. A sentence adverbial is a type of adverbial with a scope over the whole clause. The distinction is typically drawn by the contrast between predication adjuncts and sentence adjuncts. Adjuncts are adverbials expressing circumstances surrounding the process represented in the clause in which they are fully integrated. To see the difference between the two types of adjuncts, we can compare the following examples:

- (7) *For the next two miles*, the road had a very poor surface.
 (8) She slapped him *in the face*.

In (7), the adjunct “for the next two miles” is syntactically and semantically more peripheral than the predication adjunct which appears, in italics, in (8). Syntactically the adjunct in (7) is less central, can be located at initial or final position in the clause and thus it is more detached. Semantically, the scope of the circumstance expressed by the adverbial in (7) extends over the whole proposition expressed, *THE ROAD HAD A VERY POOR SURFACE*. By contrast, in (8), the adverbial “in the face” is syntactically more central, it has a fixed end position. Semantically, the scope of the circumstance expressed by this adverbial affects only the predication and not the clause as a whole.

Disjuncts are typically considered as sentence adverbials, arguing that they have a scope over the clause as whole (Quirk *et al.* 1985). However, if we compare a sentence adjunct in (7) and the disjunct in (1), we can see that although both are more peripheral than predication adjuncts, disjuncts do not really express circumstances affecting the basic proposition expressed as it is the case of sentence adjuncts. “Frankly” is not a constituent in the clause expressed in (1), not even a peripheral one affecting the whole clause. It is a constituent of a higher order implicit proposition, a modifier of the implicit speech act description typical of an assertive speech act. For explanatory purposes, we represented this in (1a), and we repeat it here:

- (1) (a) [*S*, THE SPEAKER, TELLS THE HEARER, *H*,] *FRANKLY* [THAT] THE ROAD HAD A VERY POOR SURFACE.

Thus, “frankly” in (1) does not contribute with a more peripheral element to the basic proposition expressed as it happens with the adverbial that appears in (7). Rather, it represents a circumstance that modifies the higher order implicit proposition conveyed in performing the speech act of assertion and, thus, it lies outside the basic proposition expressed. Indeed, when we express the speech act

description explicitly we cannot include “frankly” in the *that*-clause. (1) cannot be paraphrased as (1b),

- (1) (b) **S*, the speaker, tells the hearer, *H*, that *frankly* the road had a very poor surface.

Disjuncts are constituents of an implicit illocutionary meaning. Indeed, if an adverbial is introduced in a sentence that expresses explicitly the illocutionary force, the adverbial is no longer a disjunct but an adjunct as it happens in (1c):

- (1) (c) I tell you *frankly* that the road had a very poor surface.

In (2), nevertheless, we cannot say that the meaning of the disjunct, “because he had to support himself on a friend’s arm”, implies a verb of speaking and the subject “I” as in (2c):

- (2) (c) I tell you that Peter is drunk, *because he had to support himself on a friend’s arm*.

The meaning of the disjunct is not a reason for the speaker to tell the hearer that Peter is drunk but a reason for the speaker to believe that Peter is drunk. It is then a modifier of the propositional attitude verb in the higher-level propositional attitude description and not of the speech-act verb. (2) must be understood as (2d):

- (2) (d) I believe that Peter is drunk, *because he had to support himself on a friend’s arm*

Cases such as this cannot be accounted for through Quirk’s explanation of style disjuncts. An additional type of higher-level description, the propositional attitude description, is needed to account for these cases. The pragmatic notion of higher-level explicature is useful to describe the kind of contribution made by disjuncts to the interpretation of the utterance, especially when they are realized by reason clauses. Let us see some relevant examples given by Quirk *et al.* (1985:1072):

- (9) Elisabeth enjoyed last night’s concert, since her brother told me so.
 a. *I tell you that Elisabeth enjoyed last night concert, since her brother told me so.
 b. I know that Elisabeth enjoyed last night concert, since her brother told me so.
 (10) I have no money in my bank account, because I checked this morning.
 a. *I tell you that I have no money in my bank account, because I checked this morning.
 b. I know that I have no money in my bank account, because I checked this morning.
 (11) He likes them, because his wife told me so.
 a. *I tell you that he likes them, because his wife told me so.

- b. I know that he likes them, because his wife told me so.
- (12) Since you don't seem to know, all further negotiations have been suspended.
- a. Since you don't seem to know I tell you that all further negotiations have been suspended.
- b. *Since you don't seem to know I believe that all further negotiations have been suspended.

The two possible descriptions (a) or (b) allow the explanation of the different types in (9)-(12). As the matrix clause must be contingent on the reason clause, there must be pragmatic compatibility and Quirk *et al.*'s treatment of all of them as style disjuncts does not allow an account of cases (9)-(11). Contrary to what Quirk *et al.* (*ibid.*:1073) say, we think examples such as (9)-(11) cannot be explained by (9a)-(11a). The addition of the propositional attitude description in (9b)-(11b) allows a better explanation. In (9b), the proposition expressed by the reason clause is contingent on the proposition conveyed by the higher order proposition, and its interpretation becomes acceptable. However, not all examples of disjunct reason clauses are cases of this type. We agree with Quirk *et al.* (*ibid.*) in explaining (12) as (12a).

After this explanation, we think we are in a position to propose a new classification of disjuncts which is, of course, an evolution of Quirk *et al.*'s:

- (a) *Illocutionary disjuncts*: adverbials in a description associated to the speech act
- *Speech act description*: the adverbial becomes an adjunct in the higher-level speech act description and the possible semantic roles are:
 - Manner (e.g.: *S TELLS H FRANKLY THAT P*).
 - Respect (e.g.: *S TELLS H PERSONALLY THAT P*).
 - Contingency
 - Contrast (e.g.: *S TELLS H THAT P ALTHOUGH...*).
 - Condition (e.g.: *S TELLS H THAT P IF...*).
 - *Propositional attitude description*: the adverbial becomes an adjunct in the propositional attitude description and the typical semantic role is:
 - Reason (e.g.: *S BELIEVES THAT P BECAUSE...*; *S KNOWS THAT P AS...*).
- (b) *Epistemic and evaluative disjuncts*: operator indicating truth value or value judgement
- *Operator indicating degree of or conditions for truth*: the adverbial acts as an operator indicating truth value or degree of conviction (e.g.: *IT IS POSSIBLE/OBVIOUS... THAT*).
 - *Operator indicating value judgment*: the adverbial acts as an operator indicating an evaluative value (e.g.: *IT IS ODD/WISE... THAT*).

The kind of contribution made to the higher-level explicature is different in the two major types: illocutionary disjuncts and epistemic and evaluative disjuncts. Still, all disjuncts share the characteristic of being embedded in a

higher order proposition and all the possible realizations, phrases or clauses, can be accounted for in terms of their semantic roles without having to squeeze certain examples in a category in which they do not really fit. For obvious reasons of space constraints, we focus only on an explanation of type 1, in which we introduce the most important change in the classification: the adverbial in the propositional attitude description. We, however, find it unavoidable to give a couple of examples of type 2. If Ann utters sentences such as (13)-(14),

- (13) *Obviously*, Peter is drunk.
 a. IT IS OBVIOUS (*OR OBVIOUSLY TRUE*) THAT PETER IS DRUNK.
- (14) *Oddly enough*, Peter is drunk.
 a. IT IS VERY OOD (*FOR ANN*) THAT PETER IS DRUNK.

the higher-level explicatures could be respectively (13a) and (14a). In these two cases, the basic proposition expressed is inserted within a higher-order proposition. It becomes the argument of an epistemic or evaluative operator. The relation of these operators and the conditions of the background circumstances and knowledge of *S* and *H* that must hold prior to the performance of the speech act is an interesting point for further research.

ILLOCUTIONARY DISJUNCTS AND THEIR ROLE IN SYNTAX AND COMMUNICATION

The identification of a disjunct is produced when an adverbial is inserted in a clause whose meaning is incompatible with the meaning of the adverbial. From a syntactic point of view, a disjunct is detached from the clause. However, as Quirk *et al.* (1985: 612) say, it is not the form that makes them different from other adverbials. They can be realized by adverb phrases like “frankly” or “oddly enough”, by prepositional phrases like “in broad terms” or by clauses like “because he had to support himself on a friend’s arm”. Nor yet it is the positions in which the adverbials are placed that make them different from adjuncts or even subjuncts and conjuncts. Disjuncts share with these two latter types the lack of integration in the matrix clause as neither disjuncts nor subjuncts or conjuncts can be made the focus of a cleft sentence, can be the basis of contrast in alternative interrogation or negation; can be focused by focusing subjuncts or can come within the scope of predication pro-forms or ellipsis (*ibid.*). Obviously, this syntactic characterization is not enough to identify disjuncts, as it is common to the three types of adverbials. Their identification as disjuncts is thus dependent on meaning. In order to identify a disjunct, we need to recognise an incompatible use of the adverbial with respect to the meaning of the matrix clause. We will explain this by focusing on the illocutionary disjuncts and will leave the detailed analysis of type 2 for future work. In (1)

- (1) *Frankly*, the road had a very poor surface,

the adverb phrase “frankly” appears together with the clause “the road had a very poor surface”, and the composition of their meanings is not possible as no resulting meaning is available to obtain an unacceptable interpretation; the normal interpretation of the sentence, “the road had a very poor surface”, cannot be modified by the manner adverbial “frankly”. The meaning of “frankly” typically selects a predicate typical of an illocutionary act such as “tell” and, thus, interlocutors know that it cannot be a modifier of the clause expressed, it cannot be an adjunct. The compositionality procedure by default (that manner adverbials are adjuncts) must be blocked. This renders the expression a *syntactic orphan*, a modifier without anything to modify, an adverbial without any clause dominating it. If we consider that in every speech act, the illocutionary act forms a part of the implicit information conveyed by the speaker, the orphan adverbial may be considered to modify the implicit speech act description. In this way, the proposition explicitly expressed by the sentence “the road had a very poor surface” is identified as the proposition embedded in the speech act description demanded by “frankly”, and thus (1) is incomplete unless this information is recovered as the clause dominating the adverbial. The incompatibility between “frankly” and “the road had a very poor surface” in (1) together with the orphanage of the adverbial that results from it triggers a mandatory process of recovery of information demanded by the meaning of “frankly” when used in (1). Taking into account the speech act conditions of assertion, it is easy to assume that [S, THE SPEAKER, TELLS THE HEARER, H,...] should appear as the higher order propositional form to host that disjunct. The hearer will easily recognize that it forms a part of the non-textual semantic value of the higher-order explicature without any risk of misunderstanding. “Frankly” in (1) is an adjunct in some implicit proposition of which both “frankly” and “the road had a very poor surface” are constituents.

Similarly, in (2)

(2) Peter is drunk, *because he had to support himself on a friend’s arm,*

the adverbial clause “because he had to support himself on a friend’s arm” appears together with the clause “Peter is drunk” and the composition of their meanings is not possible as no resulting meaning is available to obtain an acceptable interpretation. However, example (2) differs from the previous one in that the meaning of the *because*-clause itself does not select a special type of predicate as it happened with “frankly”. This makes the identification criteria less obvious. Still, in reason clauses, there is a need for the matrix clause to be contingent on the reason clause for it to be an adjunct and in cases such as (2), (9)-(12) this is not the case. Peter being drunk is not contingent on him having to support himself on a friend’s arm. The compositionality procedure for adjuncthood of the reason clause must be blocked as no acceptable interpretation can be obtained. This renders the reason clause a *syntactic orphan*. Again, if we consider that in every speech act there is always a propositional attitude associated to the illocutionary act, the orphan adverbial may be considered to

modify the implicit propositional attitude description. In this way, the proposition explicitly expressed by “Peter is drunk” is identified as the proposition embedded in the propositional attitude description. Although this is not directly demanded by the meaning of the *because*-clause, the incompatibility of the meanings and the orphanage leads the interlocutor to look for a proposition compatible with the reason encoded in the *because*-clause and this is easily recovered from the propositional attitude associated with the speech act performed. The incompatibility between “Peter is drunk” and “because he had to support himself on a friend’s arm” in (2), together with the orphanage of the adverbial that results from it, triggers a mandatory process of recovery of information. Taking into account the speech act conditions of assertion, it is easy to assume that [S, THE SPEAKER, BELIEVES THAT...] should appear as the higher order propositional form to host that disjunct. The hearer will easily recognize that it forms a part of the non-textual semantic value of the higher-order explicature without any risk of misunderstanding. If there is a higher-level explicature to make the interpretation acceptable, it will be selected as the one to embed the proposition expressed by the matrix clause and will become more manifest to the hearer.

In sum, disjuncts are modifiers of a higher-level explicature that results from applying a mandatory pragmatic process to overcome the syntactic orphanage of the adverbial expression and to get an acceptable interpretation. This serves to show once again that there is a compelling interaction between syntax and pragmatics.

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