

A Descriptive Study of *the other way (a)round*

by

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(Manuscript received September 29, 2018)

Abstract

This paper presents a descriptive (non-theoretical) study of the phrase *the other way (a)round*, whose meaning is ‘the opposite position, direction or order’ and ‘the opposite situation’ according to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* (9th edition) (s.v. way). The aims are (i) to briefly review the history of *the other way (a)round*; (ii) to show some variants in its form (e.g. *the other way about*) and (iii) to give a full description of three different uses (i.e., the adverbial, the predicative and the *vice-versa* uses). The study demonstrates that all three uses have shared features of oppositeness and directionality, such that the former is intrinsic to the phrase, whereas the latter has some types that are uniquely associated with each use.

Keywords: oppositeness, directionality, interchange, *vice versa*, Relevance Theory

1. Introduction

This paper presents a descriptive (non-theoretical) study of the phrase *the other way (a)round*, which is a very interesting expression from the viewpoint of cognitive pragmatics or Relevance Theory. Although the phrase consists of conceptual words (excluding the determiner ‘the’) that make significant contributions to its whole meaning, it often appears to function as a procedure in utterance interpretation, although this is not always the case. This idiomatic phrase is well worth investigating in terms of the nature of conceptual and procedural meanings and the distinctions between them, which are topics of extensive discussion in Relevance Theory. However, we should obtain more fundamental knowledge about ‘the other way (a)round’ before giving a theoretical account of its uses.

This paper aims to briefly review the history of *the other way (a)round*, discuss some variants in its form (e.g., *the other way about*) and provide a full description of three different uses of the phrase. This analysis encompasses the dialectal difference between *round*, which is usually used in British English, and *around*, which is more common in American English. I consider these two variants to have almost no difference in meaning. Therefore, for purposes of convenience, I will use the abbreviated form OWR to refer to all variants henceforth.

The linguistic contexts of OWR works in three main ways: (i) as an adverbial that modifies the neighbouring predicate; (ii) as a subject complement or predicate in the construction ‘S be OWR’ and (iii) as a replacement of *vice versa*. Those uses are demonstrated respectively as follows:

- (1) This jacket is styled for the American market, so the pocket zips open bottom to top and the main zip connects **the other way round**. (*British National Corpus* (BNC)) [(i)]
- (2) Some people might say advertising reflects society, but I think it can be **the other way round**. (BNC) [(ii)]
- (3) In the second place, the modal meaning is derivable from the canonical lexical meaning but not **the other way round**. (BNC) [(iii)]

In (1), OWR functions as an adverbial modifying the VP *connects* and it indicates the direction opposite to that expressed by the antecedent clause, that is, ‘top to bottom’. Thus OWR operates as a manner adverbial.

In (2), OWR makes a statement about the situation indicated by the subject *it* and which is opposite to the situation indicated by the antecedent (i.e., ‘advertising reflects society’), thus roughly indicating the opposite situation ‘society reflects advertising’.¹⁾ OWR is typically used in the construction ‘S be OWR’, in which ‘S’ is usually occupied with the pronoun *it*, thus indicating (part of) the antecedent, and ‘be’ represents a copula (literally *be* in most cases) and often appears with a modal auxiliary. The construction can sometimes include an optional phrase that provides a contrast to some element of the antecedent. We call this a predicative use.

Lastly, in (3), OWR would most likely be interpreted as ‘the canonical lexical meaning is derivable from the modal meaning’, in which the subject is exchanged with the object of the preposition on the basis of the predicate

be derivable from. This ‘interchange’ interpretation can be brought about by replacing it with *vice versa*.²⁾ In fact, OWR in (3) occurs in the same environments as *vice versa*: both are typically followed by a coordinate conjunction such as *and, but, or* and *than*.³⁾ Do they have the same meaning, then? Note that the same linguistic environment does not necessarily guarantee the same meaning and any similar structures might be sheer coincidence. I put this issue aside in this paper. For the time being, we can say that *vice versa* and OWR as in (3) are interchangeable and lead to the same interpretation. Therefore, for purposes of convenience, I call this use of OWR ‘the v-v use’.

OWR has some variants in form. For example, *round/around* can be replaced with *about*, as in ‘What you have must exceed the requirements of your office, and not **the other way about**’ (*Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA)). Needless to say, as verified by the COCA and BNC, *the other way (a)round* is the most widely used form, whereas *the other way about* is hardly used in present-day English, although it was common in the latter half of the 19th century. Another variant is gained by replacing *other* with *opposite* or *wrong*: for example, ‘You have a situation where once it’s opened to whites and blacks directly, that it becomes apartheid just **the opposite way around**, that the blacks totally take over and root the whites out’ (COCA). Note, however, that the meaning and use of *opposite way (a)round* or *the wrong way (a)round* are slightly different than those of *the other way (a)round*. The former is based on the speaker’s different assumptions, such that in the case of *the opposite way (a)round* the speaker assumes that there is an opposite relation between what it

indicates and its antecedent; whereas in the case of *the wrong way (a)round*, she assumes that it follows an antecedent she believes to be right (in the sense of being correct or appropriate). Such assumptions are not needed when using *the other way (a)round*.

Let us take a brief look at the history of OWR. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) states that OWR (including its variants) began to be used around the 1820s and that it originated from the phrase *the other way*, which was not paired with any particles such as *round* or *around*. According to the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA), the version including the particle began to occur from the 1890s; however, it was much more uncommon than the original form *the other way*. *The other way* + particle appeared among about 20 percent of such uses in the 1910s, which suggests that this form was beginning to be conventionalised during that decade. Currently, *the other way* + particle is the more familiar form of the phrase, which is usually used as an adverbial modifying the directed motion verb, such as *look, go, turn*, etc., to indicate an opposite direction to the antecedent.

The data in COHA suggest that OWR can shift in meaning whereby it is first used as an adverbial and a predicate and then extended to the v-v use. One noteworthy feature is that the v-v use necessarily requires accompanying a particle like *round* or *around*. This requirement does not apply to the other uses: according to COHA, *the other way* functions only in either the adverbial or the predicative form. This rule might generate the question of why the v-v use must meet the requirement of particles and the others do not, to which I can only provide a speculative answer: the

manner adverbial use intrinsically does not need the support of any particle (or even the preposition *in*), whereas the v-v use might be attached to a particle to express the propositional content (rather than the adverbial content); the predicative use might fall between those two uses: the construction ‘S be OWR’ would be interpreted as the propositional content as a whole, whereas OWR itself means to be in opposite relation (to the antecedent), thus functioning only as a predicate. My speculation aligns with the meaning development of OWR: *the other way* includes the adverbial and predicative uses, whereas OWR obtains the v-v use to encompass all three uses.

In the next three sections, I present further observations about each use in terms of form and meaning.

2. Adverbial use

This section deals with the adverbial use of OWR. As mentioned above, in this case, OWR works as an adverbial modifying the predicate of the host clause (typically the motion verb), roughly meaning in the opposite direction, or more specifically in the direction opposite to that expressed by (part of) the antecedent. Let us start with the typical example (1), repeated below as (4):

(4) This jacket is styled for the American market, so the pocket zips open bottom to top and the main zip connects **the other way round**. (=1))

In (4) OWR works as a modifier of the directional verb *connects* to indicate the direction in which the main zip

connects. What is most significant in interpreting OWR is that the notion of ‘opposite’ is context-dependent or dependent on the hearer. Thus, the hearer in (4) would bear in mind the direction expressed by the antecedent (i.e., bottom to top) and interpret the opposite direction expressed by OWR as ‘top to bottom’.⁴⁾

However, the direction is not always physical or spatial. Consider the case of (5), where direction is rather sequential or temporal:

(5) Do you measure food in ounces or grams? Most cookery columns have settled into providing metric measurements first, followed by ounces. SHE [a British women’s magazine—nk] does it **the other way round**, because we’re convinced that not only our readers, but most UK cooks, don’t cook metric. (BNC)

The hearer would lead from *first* and *followed by* in the antecedent sentence, which specify the sequential or temporal order, to the assumption that the direction (or order) most cookery columns provide is from the metric system (i.e., grams) to the imperial system (i.e., ounces). On the basis of this assumption, the hearer would interpret the opposite direction expressed by OWR as ‘from the imperial system to the metric one’. More precisely, the hearer would interpret the VP (i.e., *does it the other way round*) as ‘providing imperial measurements first, followed by grams’. Note that the predicate *does it* modified by OWR lacks any sense of motion and is merely a predicative substitute. There is no requirement that the verb (phrase) modified by OWR must be directional. Rather, directionality is only

obligatory in the antecedent.

Finally, there are some cases in which it is difficult to identify any direction in the antecedent at a first glance. Consider (6) and (7), which share the verb *put*:

(6) PP may ask, ‘What is ... noted for?’ or the question may be put **the other way round**—‘Which city is noted for ...?’ (BNC)

(7) But how do we know that it is vocationally advantageous to study history or to put it **the other way round**, that to study history is not vocationally disadvantageous? (BNC)

The verb *put* might be regarded as a motion verb, however, there seems to be little or no sense of directionality. Moreover, *put* in (6) and (7) does not express physical motion (i.e., ‘to move something to a particular place’), but rather denotes to say something using words in a particular manner. As noted just above, directionality is necessary for the hearer to identify in the antecedent; however, this seems to be quite difficult in (6) and (7). This would suggest the possibility that (6) and (7) involve directionality in a dimension other than the spatial or temporal, i.e. the perspectival direction, or one in which the speaker construes a state of affairs. In English, the speaker’s perspective is generally reflected in the subject.⁵⁾ The active and the passive differ in the speaker’s perspective even though they refer to one and the same state of affairs (or have the same truth-conditional meaning). In (6), the question in the antecedent (i.e., ‘What is ... noted for?’) contains two slots, a particular place and its specialities. The speaker inquires about the latter from the perspective of the

former (the slot of which she satisfies with a particular place like Kyoto). OWR would thus indicate the ‘opposite’ perspective: the question asks what is noted for its specialities, such as temples and shrines. Similarly in (7), the antecedent reflects the speaker’s positive view about studying history and OWR indicates the ‘opposite’ view, or her negative one. Thus, directionality is a critical component of OWR.

However, it might be disputable whether or not the notion of ‘perspective’ is directional. What is critical in (6) and (7) is the binarity in the antecedent: the question in (6) has two slots, of which one is satisfied by the speaker and the other is what she asks and (7) involves two fundamental viewpoints, namely positive and negative. It is reasonable to regard binarity as a decisive factor in recognising oppositeness. That is, oppositeness is another critical element of OWR.

Unlike (4) and (5), OWR in (6) and (7) is idiomatic or conventionalised in that it usually co-occurs with the verb *put*. The construction *put ... the other way (a)round*, in which the slot is usually satisfied with what has just been mentioned, roughly means to restate what is mentioned from the opposite perspective, and—more importantly in communication or utterance interpretation—helps to tell the hearer to understand what follows as a restatement of the same state of affairs from the opposite perspective. This would suggest that the idiomatic construction has the same function as adverbials for propositional attitude and speech acts, such as *fortunately* and *frankly*: it does not contribute to what is said, but rather to a higher-level structure under which it is embedded.⁶⁾ To put it another way, the construction as a whole plays its part in helping the

hearer's utterance interpretation; it is a unit for utterance interpretation rather than a combination of constituents.

In summary, OWR as a manner adverbial modifies its host predicate to indicate the direction 'opposite' to that expressed by (part of) the antecedent. There are two key notions in the interpretation of OWR, namely directionality and oppositeness. The former has three types: physical or spatial; sequential or temporal and perspectival. The latter, however, is intrinsic to OWR, which indicates that there is an opposite relation between the clause with OWR and its antecedent in terms of the former.

3. Predicative use

In Section 3, I discuss OWR as the predicate. As mentioned in Section 2, the adverbial use of OWR involves the two key concepts of directionality and oppositeness. Thus, the question arises, are these concepts also involved in the predicative use? I can give an immediate answer about the latter: obviously, the notion of oppositeness is an essential feature of OWR. Considering the issue of directionality, however, we must reply yes and no: of three types of directionality, physical and temporal directions are reflected in the predicative use; however, perspective is not included, as we will see below.

First, we can observe syntactic and semantic characteristics of the predicative use, as is normally found in the construction 'S be OWR', where S is typically filled with the pronoun 'it', which refers to the content expressed by the antecedent or the topic. This was shown in (2), now repeated as (8):

(8) Some people might say advertising reflects society, but I think it can be **the other way round**. (=2))

The subject *it* would refer to (part of) the antecedent clause, or what some people might say: advertising reflects society, which is the main topic in (8). Almost all the examples in BNC and COCA take *it* as the subject of the construction. It is a given that the verb must be a copula—normally *be* and exceptionally *look*, as exemplified in (9); otherwise, OWR could not be used predicatively. This requirement is consistent with the predicative use of OWR.

(9) 'You bolted off into the forest', said Tommy, his eyes never leaving Trentham. 'I was pursuing two Germans who were attempting to escape.' 'It looked **the other way round** to me', said Tommy. (BNC)

As is obvious in (8), its frequent co-occurrence with the modal auxiliary is another characteristic of the verb in this construction. The presence of the auxiliary reflects the interpretation of the construction, such that *it can be the other way round* in (8) would be interpreted as 'society can reflect advertising', whereby the auxiliary *can* makes some contribution to the speaker avoiding asserting the absolute truth of the proposition and rather indicating its possibility. In fact, the replacement of *can* with *is* would make the hearer interpret the proposition indicated by the construction as the speaker's assertion. More interestingly, the auxiliary sometimes helps to shed light on a contrast between the antecedent and the proposition indicated by the construction. For example, the use of *can* in (8) makes the hearer notice that there is

a contrast between an assertion made by the antecedent and a possibility stated by the construction. Thus, the modal can work as a contrastive element.

In addition, a contrastive element can be linguistically realised along with the construction, as illustrated in (10):

(10) In the old days a performer would play gigs as a way to get a record deal and shoot a video; now it's **the other way around**. (COCA)

In (10), *now* marks the context of the propositional content indicated by the construction as being in the present and helps to highlight the contrastive relationship with *in the old days* in the antecedent, which marks the context of the proposition expressed by the antecedent as being in the past. Similarly, *I (think)* and *can* in (8) and *look* and *to me* in (9) also work as contrastive elements. In (8), as mentioned above, *can* indicates a possibility and contributes to making a contrast with the assertion made by the antecedent. Then, *I (think)* creates a contrast with *some people (might think)*, which could lead to an explication of differences between the speaker's private thoughts and public thoughts. Those contrastive elements are both attributors of the proposition, such that the proposition expressed by the embedded clause is attributed to 'some people' in the antecedent and to 'I' in the construction. In (9), *to me* would play the same role as *I* in (8); it demonstrates that the proposition indicated by *it looked the other way round* is attributed to Tommy, who is referred to by *me*. Thus, Tommy's utterance would be roughly interpreted to mean that it looked to Tommy as if two Germans were pursuing Trentham, who

was attempting to escape. Furthermore, this interpretation illustrates that *looked* reflects the speaker's past recognition or construal (or the attributor's construal), and thus highlights an epistemic contrast between two attributors: Trentham recognised himself as a person who was running after two Germans whereas Tommy recognised him as a person who was running away from them.

However, we should note that whatever significant role it might play in the interpretation of the construction, a contrastive element is not obligatory:

(11) So, this week I traveled to the Mountain State to find out, did West Virginians abandon the Democrats or was it **the other way around**? (COCA)

In (11) the construction shows an alternative option that the speaker aimed to uncover when travelling to the Mountain State. This would be interpreted as another potential thought of the speaker's: did Democrats abandon West Virginians? What is most important here is there is no contrast between the constituents of the two propositional contents, but rather a contrast in the relation between the two propositions, or a contrast in the correspondence between an entity that is alleged to have committed the abandonment and an entity that was purportedly abandoned. In the antecedent clause, the former corresponds to 'West Virginians' and the latter to 'Democrats', whereas this corresponding relation is turned around in the construction. This construction can be interpreted as involving physical or temporal directionality. Thus, what is required in the interpretation of OWR is not a contrastive element, but rather a

contrast. In (8), for example, there are contrasts in the attributors (*some people* vs. *I*), the certainty of thoughts (assertion vs. possibility) and the participants' active/passive roles in the relevant situation (an entity that reflects something vs. an entity that is reflected).

Let us return to our discussion of the roles a contrastive element plays in utterance interpretation. As mentioned just above, the contrastive element works as an attributor, as shown in (8), and it also functions as a constituent of the content conveyed by the construction 'S be OWR', as demonstrated in (10). Consider (12), which looks a little more complicated:

(12) Likewise, light does not penetrate through water as well as it does through air, whereas with sound and chemicals it is **the other way round**. (BNC)

In (12) the contrastive element is obviously *with sound and chemicals*. Thus, what is communicated by the construction would roughly be 'sound and chemicals does not penetrate through air as well as it does through water'. We should not consider that the contrastive element can be the subject because it does not matter how the communicated content is represented. Rather, we should seriously consider that the contrastive element replaces *light* in the antecedent. What drives the replacement? One key factor would be a contrast in relationship. In (12), one salient relation in the antecedent is specified by the predicate *penetrate through*: the predicate connects two participants in the proposition, namely *light* (a participant that penetrates through something) and the object *water* or *air* (the participant that is penetrated). It is the former that is

comparable to the contrastive element *sound and chemicals*, rather than the latter, because the hearer has some accessible assumptions: light and sound travel in the air to respectively convey visual and auditory information.⁷⁾ Conversely, we cannot consider *sound and chemicals* to be comparable to *air* or *water* because there is no available assumption. Comparability is critical in recognising a relation between two things as being contrastive. The two comparable things should share many similarities and very few differences, which is a cognitive environment where we are more likely to recognise a contrast or a type of oppositeness.⁸⁾ Thus, comparability is a significant index in recognising which element in the antecedent is in contrast with a contrastive element in the construction.

Next, I would like to discuss the meaning of OWR in the predicative use and the roles it plays in the interpretation. Taking our observations into account, we consider that OWR simply means to be opposite to the content expressed by the antecedent, and it does not signify what the opposite situation is like. In other words, the opposite situation is determined pragmatically rather than semantically.

This is supported by the fact that the interpretation of 'S be OWR' is sometimes linguistically realised or made explicit by the speaker, as in (13):

(13) "A little dark for target practice," Kat said. "How can you hit what you can't see?" Sam said, "It's **the other way around**—what you hit is what you get." (COCA)

In his answer to Kat's question, Sam makes explicit the

content indicated by *it's the other way around* without leaving it to her to grasp what it communicates. In fact, the construction is interpretable without Sam's explicit representation of its communicated content. Based on her question, Kat would probably be bearing in mind an assumption such as 'what you get is what you hit'. That said, Sam would use a communicative strategy to prevent her misunderstanding.⁹⁾ The speaker's own representation would guarantee that OWR simply functions as a predicate of the construction and signifies to be in opposite relation to what is said by the antecedent. In addition, the speaker's representation might suggest that OWR in itself does not force the hearer to make clear or specific what is indicated by the construction 'S be OWR'. If it did do so, it would be impossible for the speaker to make explicit the interpretation or what she intends to communicate.

Finally, I will show that there are two main ways of interpreting the predicative use of OWR. Consider (8), repeated below, and (14).

(8) Some people might say advertising reflects society,
but I think it can be **the other way round**.

(14) Why should women be allowed to compete on the men's tour, but men are not allowed to compete on the women's tour? Or, why is it a good idea to have a women's-only membership policy in some venues, but it's suddenly unacceptable when it's **the other way around?** (COCA)

In (8), the construction would be interpreted as 'society can reflect advertising'. This interpretation is gained by interchanging two elements, *advertising* and *society*,

which are linked by the relational predicate *reflect*. Note that the relationship between the two interchanged elements is not intrinsically established, but rather is motivated at the time of utterance by the predicate as a relation specifier. In (14), on the other hand, the construction would roughly communicate 'to have a men's-only membership policy', such that no interchanged elements are identified. This interpretation would be based on the linguistic knowledge that *men* and *women* are antonymous. Their relationship is obviously intrinsic in lexical or conceptual meaning, and they are, therefore, comparable to each other such that the relationship need not be built contextually. Thus, the predicative use of OWR has two interpretive forms. I call the former type exemplified in (8) 'syntagmatic interchange', whereas I consider latter cases such as (14) 'paradigmatic interchange'.

However, the situation is not so simple, as there are some cases in which two interpretive forms seem to be intertwined. Recall that the construction in (12) roughly indicates 'sound and chemicals penetrate through air as well as they do through water', in which *sound and chemicals* replaces *light* because they are comparable to each other, and *air* is apparently interchanged or replaced with *water* because the construction and its antecedent are opposite in how well something penetrates through another thing. However, it would be more feasible to consider both of the replacements to be substitutions for two comparable things (i.e., *light* and *sound and chemicals* on the one hand and *air* and *water* on the other) that are contextually associated. The case of (13) is another complicated example requiring explanation; as shown above, what the construction communicates is

something like ‘what you get is what you hit’. Kat’s utterance would be difficult to regard as a direct clue leading to that interpretation. Then, how would the hearer achieve it? From Kat’s utterance, the hearer Sam would assume she wonders why he can hit what he cannot see on the basis of the general assumption that if we can see something, we can hit it, which would be essentially equivalent to ‘what you see (or get with your eyes) is what you hit’. This general assumption can also be communicated implicitly rather than only explicitly. Thus, the construction ‘S be OWR’ can communicate the opposite of what the antecedent communicates not only explicitly but also implicitly.

To summarise, the predicative use of OWR is normally found in the conventional construction ‘S be OWR’, which often contains the modal auxiliary and/or accompanies a contrastive element. The construction has its own essential feature of oppositeness and is associated with physical and temporal directionality. However, it is not related to perspectival directionality, but rather is characteristically linked with relational directionality. OWR in itself simply means to be the opposite (of what the antecedent says). What is indicated by the entire construction depends on the hearer. That is, the construction would semantically communicate the opposite of what the antecedent expresses as true such that what the opposite is must be determined pragmatically. There are two ways of interpreting the construction, namely ‘syntagmatic interchange’, which involves two elements (or participants) of the proposition expressed by the antecedent being interchanged based on the predicate specifying their relation, and ‘paradigmatic interchange’, which involves the interchange between an

entity and its comparable entity.

4. Vice versa use

In Section 4, I will take a close look at the third use of OWR in syntactic and semantic terms, which I termed ‘the v-v use’ in the introduction. What is critical in this use is that OWR can literally be replaced with *vice versa*, as supported by the fact that both occur in the same linguistic or syntactic environment—the first conjunct + the coordinate conjunction + OWR (or *vice versa*).¹⁰⁾ Let us first consider the typical example (3), repeated below as (15):

(15) In the second place, the modal meaning is derivable from the canonical lexical meaning but not **the other way round**. (=3)

As (15) demonstrates, the v-v use is totally different from the other uses in the linguistic environment such that OWR seems to occur in isolation. The adverbial use must take a verb (phrase) to be modified by OWR as a manner specifier; it functions as a predicate along with a copula in the predicative use. Those uses syntactically and semantically require a constituent modified by OWR. By contrast, OWR would be independent in the v-v use in the sense that it indicates the propositional content in itself; however, it does not compose any larger phrase or proposition, although it is coordinated with its antecedent conjunct. In (15), for example, what is indicated by OWR (i.e., ‘the canonical lexical meaning is derivable from the modal meaning’) and what is expressed by the first conjunct are both self-contained.^{11), 12)}

Example (16) might seem to deviate from the typical

patterns with respect to the coordinate conjunction:

(16) Unlike those stressed above, these are questions about the impact of social policy upon economic policy rather than **the other way round**. (BNC)

However, *than* can function as a coordinate conjunction such that it can take an NP, a PP or a clause that is syntactically parallel to an element in the preceding conjunct, respectively (Napoli 1983; Huddleston and Pullum 2002).¹³ Thus, OWR accompanies the same conjunction to which *vice versa* is linked.

Another point related to (15) and (16) is that the first conjunct can be occupied by both a clause (a proposition) and a phrase (a subproposition). In (16), for example, OWR would indicate ‘the impact of economic policy upon social policy’ on the basis of (part of) the first conjunct, *the impact of social policy upon economic policy*. Furthermore, OWR and its antecedent normally appear within one and the same sentence. In other words, OWR corresponds to the second conjunct, which is also true for *vice versa*.

Let us turn to the semantic aspect of OWR, which in this use also indicates the opposite of what is expressed by the antecedent conjunct. The notion of oppositeness is normally limited to relational oppositeness. That is, it would be more appropriate to say ‘interchange’ than ‘oppositeness’ because the content indicated by OWR involves syntagmatic or paradigmatic interchange. The cases of (15) and (16) each involve the syntagmatic interchange between two elements (i.e., *the modal meaning* and *the canonical lexical meaning* in (15) and *social policy* and *economic policy* in (16)), which is

motivated by the constituent denoting a two-place relation (i.e., *be derivable from* in (15) and *the impact* in (16)). Again, this interchange is characterised as on-the-spot association of two arbitrary (or intrinsically unrelated) yet comparable elements with their connector. This is consistent with the view that (15) and (16) involve relational directionality. Sequential directionality is also found in the v-v use, as in (17):

(17) Conversation in the Rigali household is bi-lingual.
‘Many times I start in Italian and finish in English and then **the other way round**,’ says Franca. (BNC)

Start and *finish* contribute to establishing the sequential relation between the two languages used in the conversation. OWR indicates the opposite order, or that Franca begins speaking in English and finishes speaking in Italian.

Conversely, paradigmatic interchange can rarely be seen in this use. Among the few examples of this is (18):

(18) The women choose their husbands, not **the other way around**. (COCA)

OWR would indicate that ‘the men choose their wives’, whereby there are two paradigmatic interchanges between *the women* and *the men* and between *their husbands* and *their wives*. The interchanges are based on the lexical knowledge that both pairs are antonymous.¹⁴ Strictly speaking, *their* in the antecedent has different referents from that indicated by OWR; the former refers to the women and the latter denotes the men. This might suggest that two participants referred to by *their* are

interchanged; however, in fact, they are not because utterance interpretation is a matter of language of thought (or mental representation) rather than natural language. An alternative means of representing the interpretation of OWR in (18) would be ‘the women are chosen by their husbands’, which is equivalent to the representation ‘the men choose their wives’. Regardless of the manner of representing the interpretation, it is no doubt certain that the relational direction is reversed.

Finally, I would like to make a brief comment on the functional difference between the predicative use and the v-v use. In Section 3, I noted that OWR does not force the hearer to make specific what is indicated by the construction ‘S be OWR’; however, the same does not seem to be true for the v-v use, as OWR at least ‘urges’ the hearer to make specific what it indicates. Unless the hearer understands (or makes specific) what it indicates, he could not understand well enough what the speaker intends to communicate. In other words, the hearer is required not only to understand the encoded meaning of OWR, ‘the opposite (of what is expressed by the antecedent conjunct)’, but also to interpret what it indicates in that context. In this sense, OWR is more ‘functional’ in the v-v use than in the predicative use, as it functions as an indicator to interpret what the opposite is on the basis of the content expressed by the antecedent.

This function is exactly the same as *vice versa*, which is supported by the fact that OWR can be replaced with *vice versa* in (15)–(18), but not in (4)–(17).¹⁵⁾ Are there any differences between these phrases except their etymology? First, it is self-evident that OWR has three main uses, whereas *vice versa* only corresponds to the

v-v use. *Vice versa* specialises in requiring the hearer to interpret what it indicates, whereas the v-v use of OWR shares its meaning or concept—‘the opposite (of what the antecedent expresses)’—in common with the other uses. Second, as elucidated in Section 1, OWR has some variant forms; however, *vice versa* does not generate variations, which suggests that each constituent of OWR makes a large or small contribution to the whole meaning, whereas *vice versa* looks like one word rather than a two-word item.¹⁶⁾ Therefore, it is concluded that *vice versa* is functional and the v-v use of OWR has the functional aspect.

To summarise, the third use of OWR can be replaced with *vice versa*. A syntactic characteristic of this use is that OWR appears in the same construction as *vice versa*: the first conjunct + the coordinate conjunction + OWR (*vice versa*). OWR does not link any constituents in this use, whereas it modifies the predicate of a host clause in the adverbial use and co-occurs with a copula in the predicative use. This demonstrates that the linguistic environment determines each use of OWR. In semantic terms, the v-v use of OWR involves two types of interchange (i.e., syntagmatic and paradigmatic). The notion of ‘interchange’ is a kind of oppositeness, which all the uses of OWR have in common, and it is directly associated with relational directionality in the same manner as *vice versa*. Furthermore, unlike the other uses, the v-v use of OWR drives or at least ‘urges’ the hearer to understand what it specifically indicates. Thus, the v-v use is more functional than the others.

5. Concluding remarks

In this paper, I have demonstrated three main uses of

OWR, namely the adverbial, predicative and v-v uses, and elucidated their shared features of oppositeness and directionality. The former is the semantically intrinsic feature of OWR, whereas the latter has certain forms that are uniquely associated with each use. The adverbial use involves physical, temporal or perspectival direction; the predicative use involves either of the first two and the v-v use is relational in directionality.

I would like to make a brief comment on the meaning shift (or more precisely the ‘use’ shift) of OWR.¹⁷⁾ As mentioned in Section 1, the use of OWR appears to have emerged around the latter half of the 1800s; however, at that time, it functioned solely as an adverbial or a predicate. According to the COHA, the v-v use seems to have become increasingly common after 1900. The v-v use is noticeably different from the other forms in that it specialises in relational directionality, as is characteristic of *vice versa*. In addition, this use motivates the hearer to understand what the opposite indicates, whereas the others lack such a function. That is, this form is more functional and closer to *vice versa* than the other uses. Note, however, that OWR denotes oppositeness, the concept that all the uses have in common, such that the v-v use simply has a functional aspect rather than being completely functional. I speculate that oppositeness remains retained in the adverbial and predicative uses such that functionality is foregrounded, whereas oppositeness is positioned more in the background in the v-v use. This meaning shift would result in the equivalence to *vice versa*.

Notes

- 1) In (2), OWR might be interpreted as ‘advertising does not reflect society’ rather than the more likely interpretation ‘advertising reflects society’; however this is not so in fact because the negative interpretation is not ‘relevant’ in the relevance-theoretic sense. That interpretation plays no role in modifying the hearer’s cognitive environment; specifically, it does not make any contribution to strengthening or eliminating his existing assumptions and deriving extra assumptions.
- 2) According to OED, *vice versa* was common much earlier than OWR: use of the former began around 1600, whereas the latter came into use around the 1820s.
- 3) Note that *than* can be regarded as a coordinate conjunction. For arguments in favour of this, see Napoli (1983) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002), for example.
- 4) I use ‘hearer’ and ‘speaker’ to refer to the hearer and reader and the speaker and writer, respectively. In addition, I normally respectively use ‘he’ and ‘she’ as their corresponding pronouns in adherence to relevance-theoretic conventions.
- 5) According to Langacker (1987), the creator of cognitive grammar, the conceptualiser takes the primary salient entity (which he technically calls a ‘trajector’) as the subject. It is beyond the scope of this study to take up Langacker’s position here; however, I think he was on the right track at least in conceptualising how the speaker turns his/her thought into an utterance.
- 6) In relevance-theoretic terms, what is said and a higher-level structure correspond to basic (or base-level) explicature and higher-level explicature respectively. For the definition of each of these

technical terms, see Carston (2002), for example.

- 7) There might be few people (including me) who have significant knowledge about chemicals as an information conveyor in the natural world; however, it could be that chemicals are known for conveying neural information. Even if that were not available to us, we could at least assume that chemicals are a medium for conveying something because the coordination of *chemicals* with *sound* makes us categorise them into one group.
- 8) See also Kurokawa (2013: Ch.3), in which I introduce ‘the Principle of Minimal Difference and Maximal Similarity’.
- 9) In relevance-theoretic terms, the speaker Sam makes communicative contributions (i.e., Sam’s utterance is relevant to the hearer Kat) by reducing the hearer’s unnecessary processing effort. As Sperber and Wilson (1986/95) defined the notion of relevance in terms of cognitive effect and processing effort, the hearer would normally achieve more cognitive effects with no unjustifiable processing effort in utterance interpretation.
- 10) The first conjunct can be either a proposition or a phrase in both cases.
- 11) In (15), OWR indicates an affirmative proposition; however, this is externally negated by *not*, which would indicate that OWR is even independent of *not*.
- 12) In (15), the coordinate conjunction *but* is optional, which is allowed by the presence of *not*. Thus, we can interpret cases like (15) as situations in which the coordinate conjunction is omitted, and a frequent pattern is ‘not OWR’ without a coordinate conjunction, as in (18).
- 13) *Instead of* can occur in the v-v use of OWR. It might not be normally regarded as a conjunction; however, it can also take any constituent that retains syntactic parallels with an element in the host clause, and it can also co-occur with *vice versa*.
- 14) Example (i) might be a borderline case:
- (i) Baseball fans point out that Jackson bats right-handed and throws left instead of **the other way round**. (BNC)
- OWR would indicate something like ‘Jackson bats left-handed and throws right’. It could be assumed that *right-handed* is interchanged with *left in throws left*. It would be appropriate, however, to think that *right-handed* in the antecedent conjunct is interchanged with *left-handed*, not only because of the lexical knowledge that the terms are antonymous, but also due to the general knowledge that we are generally either left-handed or right-handed. That said, it is probably fair to say that our explanation is not sufficiently decisive; however, (i) seems to be more similar to (18) than it is to (15)–(17).
- 15) For the details of *vice versa* and a relevance-theoretic analysis, see Kurokawa (2013, Ch.4). Also see Fraser (1970) and McCawley (1970) for early generative analyses and Kay (1997) for a cognitive linguistic analysis.
- 16) It seems to me that the determiner *the* of OWR contributes to the interpretation rather than the encoded meaning of OWR, such that *the other way* appears to be helpful in referring to or specifying an alternative direction. In this sense, *the* would play a different role

than that of the other constituents.

17) The reason I find it more appropriate to choose the ‘use’ shift rather than the meaning shift relates to my relevance-theoretic view that OWR is univocal, i.e. semantically unambiguous. Put simply, OWR has one meaning and three uses. As I demonstrated in Sections 2–4, oppositeness and directionality are semantically inherent in OWR; however, each of them has pragmatic variations, such that various uses are endowed with different types of oppositeness and directionality.

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