

A Comprehensive Analysis of Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases in

English

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Abstract:

The current study delves into the nuanced nature of adverbs, elucidating their role in enhancing the meaning of verbs and other linguistic elements. It acknowledges the vast spectrum of adverbs in the English language, cautioning against excessive embellishment while celebrating their capacity for imaginative and nuanced expression. Emphasizing the importance of early instruction on adverbs for young learners, the text advocates for clarity in distinguishing adverbs from adjectives. The choice of the term 'modify' over 'quality' aims to mitigate confusion, ensuring a clearer understanding of adverbs' functions. Furthermore, the study explores the distinction between adverbs and adverbials, shedding light on their various forms and functions within sentences. Ultimately, the research underscores the significance of adverbs and adverbials in conveying information about manner, place, and reason, while also highlighting the fundamental interplay between form and function in linguistic analysis.

Key words: English language, adverbs, adverbials, sentences, analysis.

Introduction

Adverbs can be classified into two types: those that modify verbs and those that modify other parts of speech or other adverbs. The English language encompasses a wide variety of adverbs. While excessive use of adjectives

and adverbs can lead to overly ornate writing, they allow for vivid imagination and nuanced description.

It's best to teach adverbs first to young children, as they can grasp either function easily. To clearly differentiate between adverbs and adjectives, using a term other than 'quality' for adverbs is advisable. The term 'limit' might confuse young students by suggesting reduced meaning, although it does indeed limit meaning in some cases.

For instance, if you attribute one quality to a verb such as ' He ran quickly', you have denied it as an opposing or conflicting quality – ' He did not run slowly'. However, to avoid any confusion for learners the term 'modify' have been chosen for the functions of adverbs. Also, many students cannot differentiate between the adverb ad adverbial, so both of adverb and adverbials will be illustrated in this paper.

1- Adverbs and Adverbials 1-1 Definitions of Adverb

Hatch (1995:234) says that adverbs, as well as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, belong to major word classes. These major word classes may be called open classes, which means that new nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs the words that are borrowed from one language to another are from of these major open classes. Besides, nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are typically content words with semantic qualities allow to be described. These major word classes are contrasted to pronouns, prepositions,

conjunctions, and determiners, which are called closed classes. Furthermore, words in these classes are often called function words because their meanings reveal relations between the words in utterances. Another significant difference between this two divisions of word classes, corresponding with the creation of new words, is that nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs can be modified by a series of affixes. This is not generally applicable to function words for they are, for the most part, already affix like in function, which means that they carry grammatical meanings other than content meanings.

Leech (1994:402,1978: 307) expresses similar views, and adds two more items to the closed classes: auxiliary verbs and interjections. He characterizes this group of the closed classes because their membership is limited and concrete members can be listed. Moreover, he claims that these classes undergo a relatively small change from one period of the language to another. On the other hand, he attributes to the open classes the property of the indefinite extension, thus it is impossible to make a complete list of for example all contemporary nouns of English because new ones are constantly being formed (e.g. miniskirt, minicomputer, and mini recession).

Quirk (1973:19-20), moreover, apart from the information already mentioned, characterizes items that are said to constitute a system (for the closed classes, he uses the term close- system items), identifies their

characteristic features, which are : i) the items are reciprocally exclusive: "the decision to use one item in a given structure excludes the possibility of using another" (Quirk:1973: 19), therefore we may say the runner or a runner, depending on grammar, but not *a the runner; and ii) the items are reciprocally defining, it is more difficult to "state the meaning of any individual item than to define it in relation to the rest of the system" (Quirk: 1973: 19). He supports this view by the example of a non- linguistic analogy: if there is an utterance, in which it is mentioned that a student came third in the examinations, the "meaning" that we attach to the expression "third" would heavily depend on non-linguistic reality, which for example the number of candidates; "third" would have a different meaning in a set of four from the one it would have in a set of thirty (Quirk: 1973: 19). Also, Quirk (1973: 19-20) points out that these distinctions should not be exaggerated, the occurrence of new nouns is not as frequent as it would suggest. Besides, new prepositions also happen to be formed (especially according to the pattern "prep+ noun+ prep", like by way of). Moreover, he believes that parts of speech tend to be rather heterogeneous; adverbs and verbs should be understood as mixed classes since they both have well-defined groups of closed-system items (for example verbs have auxiliary verbs) as well as the indefinitely large open- class items. There exists a clear distinction between adverbs that end in -ly that can be easily added to

the adjectives (quick-ly), and those that do not (e.g. then, backwards, here quiet, for example).

1-2 The adverbial

Leech (1994: 274) categorizes adverbials into two classes based on their integration into the clause structure. Adverbials that are integrated to some extent are called ADJUNCTS, while those that are peripheral to the clause structure are further divided into DISJUNCTS or CONJUNCTS.

Meaning of adverbials

Alexander (1999: 108) suggests that understanding the various roles of adverbials is highly beneficial. Adverbials typically provide details about when, where, or how events occur. Therefore, adverbials are defined as elements that answer questions such as when?, where?, how?, how long?, how often?, or with whom?, but they do not address questions like what? or who?

Consider the sentence below, where the bracketed phrases function as adverbials answering when? and how?, respectively: "He started his career [at the age of 13] [with the Latin boy-band Menudo]."

In this sentence, only "he" and "his career" can answer basic who? or what? questions—they are the subject and object, respectively, not adverbials.

2- Information about Adverbs

2-1 A Modification by an Adverb

Most adverbs are used for modification, claims Leech (1978:202, 1994: 232-233), belong to the semantic category of degree adverbs. For the classification of adverbs as modifiers I have chosen to present Quirk's division of adverbs (1973: 126-129). An adverb can be used as :

A) a modifier of an adjective (Leech: 1978:202, 1994: 232-233, Quirk: 1973: 126-127).

An adverb in general precedes an adjective (pre-modifies it):

[1] the post office has a very interesting sign in the shape of a black and white pig hanging at the entrance.

[2] institutions that train teachers have traditionally been sensitive to social need, and, through the controlling agency of public bodies, they have been quickly responsive to it.

There is, however, one adverb which post modifies adjectives- enough:

[3] You were not quick enough though.

The adverb too, what, and how (i.e. how in interrogative and exclamatory sentences) are exceptions because they are used for modifying an adjective in a noun phrase:

[4] Can't you see how quick I am on my feet?

B) a modifier of an adverb (Leech: 1978: 202-203, 1994:232-233, Quirk: 1973: 127)

An adverb can be modified (intensified) by another adverb which pre-modifies it.

[5] He speaks very, very slowly, and you have to lean in to hear him.

Similarly, to adjectives, there is the same post modifying adverb enough:

[6] He recovered quickly enough to win the army squash championship.

There are only a few adverbs, particularly right and well, that pre-modify particles in phrasal verbs:

[7] The democrats, significantly, finished well behind even the Greens and won no seats at all.

C) a modifier of a prepositional phrase (Leech: 1978: 203, 1994: 233, Quirk: 1973: 127).

The two adverbs which may pre-modify particles in phrasal verbs (well and right) can also pre-modify prepositions or prepositional phrases:

[8] This means the customer has to walk right through the store and may well be tempted by other items.

D) a modifier of a determiner, pre-determined, or post determiner (Quirk: 1973: 128).

Intensifying adverbs can be used for pre-modification of indefinite pronouns, pre-determiners, and cardinal numbers:

[9] Nearly everyone watches television news regularly.

[10] Such an exercise might even spread over two or three terms.

E) a modifier of a noun or a noun phrase (Leech: 1978: 203, 1994: 234-235, Quirk: 1973: 128-129)

Only a few intensifiers can modify (pre-modify) noun phrases – quiet, rather, and the pre-determiners such and exclamatory what. When using these adverbs, the noun phrase is normally indefinite, and the adverbs used as intensifiers precede any determiners (Quirk: 1973:129):

[12] it's all these visitors: they make such a mess.

[13] What a fool I was then!

2-2 The Identification of an Adverb

Many adverbs are morphologically marked by ending in a Suffix –ly, in which case they are created traditionally from adjectives. As Hladky (2003: 43,178) finds out, in old English, adverbs were made from adjectives (adjectival adverbs) by the means of suffix–e, e.g. lang (an adjective which meant "long")– lange, or frèõndlić (an adjective meaning "friendly") – frèõndlice. The ending –licestarted to be regarded as an adverbial suffix, and so it was used besides or instead of the suffix –e. In late old English and middle English, the final adverbial suffix –e ceased to be pronounced, and an adverb was awkward. However, already in Old English, a process of "re-establishing the boundary between the two parts of speech by the spreading use of a suffix –ly (which could also have, as it has

been mentioned above , the form of -lice" started and this boundary was fully re-established after the year 1350 (Hladky: 2003: 178).

According to Hatch (1995: 268-269), the derivational adverbial suffix -ly has become a highly productive affix. Hatch backs up her view by the example, in which a friend of hers, listening to a newscast, exclaimed: "He said it very nastily" (Hatch: 1995: 269). Qurik (1973: 441) claims, as far as the meaning of the word is created by the adding - ly to an adjective in order to form an adverb is concerned, that it produces predominantly adverbs of manner, viewpoints, etc.

3- Syntactic Functions of Adverbs 3-1 Adverbs Modifying Adjectives

One of the primary functions of adverbs is to modify adjectives (Biber et al., 1999: 544-551).

For instance:

I was utterly, hopelessly horribly [glad]. He is deeply [sick] man.

Usually, adverbs precede the adjectives that they modify, but other adverbs can also be postponed:

Down came they dry flakes, [fat] enough and [heavy] enough to crash like nickels stone.

In conversation, there is a higher occurrence of adverb + adjective combinations compared to academic prose, and these combinations are

more diverse in academic writing. This reflects a general difference between conversational and expository registers, where conversational language tends to have less variety in word choice.

Notably, adverb + adjective pairs in conversation typically involve a single type of modifier: a degree adverb. Degree adverbs like "quite," "really," "too," "pretty," and "very" are particularly common in this context. These adverbs often modify vague or informal adjectives such as "bad," "good," and "nice" (ibid).

3-2 Adverbs Modifying other Adverbs

Adverbs also function as modifiers of other adverbs: They will figure it out really [fast].

The do-it-yourself builder almost [always] uses water-resistant plywood, oil-tempered hardboard, or fiber-cement sheet.

In both conversation and academic prose, adverbs commonly modify pairs that express quantity or comparison. In conversation, typical pairs include "very much," "much better," and "much more," emphasizing amounts or comparisons. In contrast, academic prose also uses "very much," "much more," and "much less," similarly focusing on degrees of quantity or comparison.

Example of these items includes:

(1) Oh, you are going to do much better.

(2) Thanks very much for listening.

In academic prose, the adverbs "more" and "less" in combinations like "much more" and "much less" typically modify subsequent adjectives, as seen in examples 3 and 4. The phrase "pretty much" in American English conversation can blur distinctions between reducing intensity and hedging (ibid:449).

(5) What they did in India was study Sanskrit, which is pretty much a waste of time.

(6) Like I am pretty much in awe of it when I see it.

In 5, pretty much could signal either that the study of Sanskrit was mostly_ but not entirely a waste of time , or that waste of time is not a precisely accurate choice of words.

In example 6, "pretty much" might suggest a slight rather than significant sense of awe, or imply that the phrase "in awe" itself lacks precision. The use of "right" in American English conversation often indicates exactness in time or place, similar to how "just" is occasionally used in British English. For example: "I really couldn't keep him in my apartment right now." "She already received a twenty percent tip right here." "And the what chachallems are right there. See? Can you see a little spark of green just there? I think we will put it off just now, Grant."

3-3 Adverbs Modifying Other Elements.

Adverbs commonly modify adjectives or other adverbs but can also serve as modifiers in various other structures such as noun phrases, prepositional phrases, particles, and numerals or measurements:

"It came as quite [a surprise]," said one. (pre-modifier of noun phrase)

"Almost [nobody], it seemed, could eat what they were given." (modifier of pronoun)

I've done about [half] a side. <modifier of pre-determiner> But there is a hell of a lot well [into their seventies].

<modifier of prepositional phrase> it is still not clear whether the approximately [250] people still listed as missing include those whom ex-detainees say were still alive in May <modifier of numeral> as with adjective and adverb modifiers, most of these adverbs also occurs, especially with locative information about a noun phrase:

Therefore, in the example above concerning ammonia (NH₃), if it escapes from the reaction, equilibrium cannot be achieved. (post-modifier of noun phrase)

For certain functions, only a limited number of adverbs are commonly used. For instance, besides "right," "well," and "directly," few adverbs are typically used to modify prepositions (Biber et al., 1999: 450-451).

3-4 Adverbs as Complements of Prepositions

Another function of adverbs is to serve as the complement of a preposition, the following examples are to be considered preposition in [] and the adverb in bold:

1 You cannot go [through] here, can you?

2 There is another sweatshirt lurking [under] there that I did not see. 3
But I am seeing all this [from] above.

4 [until] now, I did not realize how much of a ski lesson is spent not skiing.

5 [before] long, he met a pretty singing cowgirl from Texas who went by the name of Dali Evas. Adverbs that serve as complements of prepositions usually refer to place or time (Hatch, 1995: 109).

4- Functional Classes of Adverbials: Adjuncts, Disjuncts, and Conjuncts
Quirk (1973: 207-207) defines three classes of adverbials according to their inclusion (or exclusion) to the structure of the sentence. Adverbials can either be integrated to some extent into the structure of the clause, or they may be peripheral to it. In the cases when they are integrated into it, we label them with a term adjunct. If they are peripheral, we term them disjuncts or conjuncts; conjuncts primarily having a connective function.

An adverbial is "integrated to some extent into a clause structure if it is affected by such clausal processes as negation and interrogation" (Quirk: 1973: 208). An adjunct cannot be used in a front-position in a negative

declarative clause (see sentence [1]), and it can become focus of a question, or of a clause negation (see sentence [2] and [3]):

[1] * Quickly they didn't leave for home.

[2] Does he write to his parents because he wants to (or does he write to them because he needs money)? (Quirk: 1973: 208)

[3] I won't have left by Monday (but I will have left by Wednesday). (Alexander: 1999: 132)

On the other hand, a disjunct or a conjunct cannot be affected by either of these clausal processes (see sentence [5]), and it may appear in initial position in a negative declarative clause (see sentence [4]):

[4] Frankly, I am not satisfied with your work. (Alexander: 1999: 142)

[5] * We didn't go to Chicago, to my regret, (but we did go there, to my relief). (Quirk: 1973: 208)

While Quirk (1973) divides adverbials into three classes, Huddleston (1984: 224) forms only one class, the one of adjuncts (including also connective function etc. into it); this class is therefore more variable and heterogenous. According to him, adjuncts are "less closely integrated into the structure of the clause than are complements" (Huddleston: 1984: 224). He is, however, aware of the fact that there are different degrees of the integration into the sentence structure; some of the adjuncts being close in that sense to complements. These adjuncts share similar properties with complements,

such as the property of being able to be brought into contrastive focus in constructions like thematically marked cleft construction:

Thematically unmarked cleft

[6] she died in 1942. It was in 1942 that she died. (Huddleston: 1984: 224)

Huddleston (1984) calls these modifiers. Besides, he describes the adjuncts that are less integrated into the clause, and calls these peripheral dependents:

[7] However, the situation is much more complicated than I thought. Nevertheless, he is aware of the fact that the boundary between these two is not sharply drawn. Besides, Quirk (1973: 208) says that some of the items do not belong only to one class.

4-1-Adjuncts:

According to Quirk (1973:210-242), it is possible and convenient to divide adjuncts in to several classes. These classes would be viewpoint adjuncts(e.g. technically, program-wise, or as for as...is concerned); focusing adjuncts (e.g. only, especially, or also);intensifiers(e.g. definitely, completely, very much, hardly, partly, or almost);subject adjuncts(e.g. He deliberately misled us (Quirk:1973:223).); place adjuncts (e.g. there, in a small town, or from the table);time adjuncts(e.g. today, afterwards, briefly, annually, always, or occasionally); other adjuncts expressing purpose (e.g.

symbolically), or a source of origin (e.g. He took the book from me (Quirk:1973:241).); and process adjuncts (e.g. skillfully), which express the means, instrument, and manner. According to Quirk (1973:220-222), the process adjuncts define in a certain way the process denoted by the verb, and they occur with dynamic verbs, and not with stative verbs:

[10] He owns it*awkwardly. (Quirk: 1973:220)

As for as the position of the process is concerned, "they favor a final position, since they usually receive the information focus" (Quirk:1973:220). Actually, if the process adjunct is obligatory for the verb, then on other position is possible:

[11] They lived frugally (but in style).

[12] They frugally (lied but in style).

If the process adjuncts are used with the passive voice, the mid – position is more usual:

[13] The August 1988 ceasefire was warmly welcomed. In cases when the process adjuncts are realized via units other than adverb phrases, they may occupy an initial position:

[14] by pressing on different spots on the foot, practitioners say they free up blocked in energy channels, helping the body to heal itself.

4-2 Disjuncts:

According to Quirk (1973: 242–246), disjuncts either convey "the speaker's comment on the form of what he is saying, defining in some way under what he is speaking" (Quirk: 1973: 242), these disjuncts he calls style sentence [15]; or comment on the content of the communication (e.g. obviously, of course, even more important etc.) which he labels attitudinal disjuncts, see sentence [16]:

[15] Frankly, I don't have much faith in the aunt.

4–3 Conjuncts:

The function of conjuncts is to connect clauses, sentences etc. Most conjuncts, Quirk says (1973: 246), are adverbs or prepositional phrases (e.g. first, second, third..., furthermore, in the same way, in conclusion, for instance, the, or alternatively):

[17] Many people do not like the idea of performing experiments on animals. Furthermore, they disagree with those who kill animals for sport.

Conclusions

The study concludes that adverb is a part of speech that adds meaning to a verb, adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs may be single words, phrase, or clauses. A speaker or a writer uses adverbs or adverbials to show information about manner, place, or reason. That is showing us of the significance of adverbs and adverbials. The study also shows that the main way to talk about sentence elements is to talk about form and function. The

form like noun, verb, adjective, adverb and preposition. On the other hand, we have the function of these forms. These functions may be a nominal, adjectival phrase, adverbial, clause many other possible functions. For example, a prepositional phrase like (to home) functions as adverbial phrase.

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