

**MINISTRY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION  
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**FERGHANA BRANCH OF THE TASHKENT UNIVERSITY OF  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES NAMED AFTER MUHAMMAD  
AL-KHWARIZMI**

**SUBJECT: ENGLISH**



**A B S T R A C T**

**GRAMMATICAL THEME: The Adverb**

**Done by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Rakhmatjonov Anvar**

**Checked by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Shukurjonova Gulzoda**

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## The Adverb

**The adverb** is a word denoting circumstances or characteristics which attend or modify an action, state, or quality. It may also intensify a quality or characteristics.

From this definition it is difficult to define adverbs as a class, because they comprise a most heterogeneous group of words, and there is considerable overlap between the class and other word classes. They have many kinds of form, meaning and function. Alongside such undoubtful adverbs as *here, now, often, seldom, always*, there are many others which also function as other word classes. Thus, adverbs like *dead* (dead tired), *clear* (to get clear away), *clean* (I've clean forgotten), *slow, easy* (he would say that slow and easy) coincide with adjectives (*a dead body, clear waters, clean hands*). Adverbs like *past, above* are homonymous with prepositions. There is also a special group of pronominal adverbs *when, where, how, why* used either as interrogative words or as connectives to introduce subordinate clauses.

The adverb is a part of speech characterized by the following features:

1. The lexico-grammatical meaning of “qualitative, quantitative or circumstantial characteristics of actions, states or qualities”.
2. The category of the degrees of comparison.
3. Typical stem-building affixes, as in *quick-ly, sideways, clock-wise, back-wards, a-shore*, etc.
4. Its unilateral combinability with verbs, adjectives, adverbs, less regularly with adlinks and nouns.
5. The function of adverbial complement, sometimes other functions.

The category of the degrees of comparison of adverbs is similar to that of adjectives. It is a system of three-member opposeemes (*soon — sooner — soonest; actively — more actively — most actively*) showing whether the characteristic the adverb contains is absolute or relative. In Russian these three-member opposeemes have the same forms: поздно, позднее, самый поздний. When compare with Russian second form, i.e. comparative degree has suffix

–ee and in superlative degree the word *самый* is put before an adverb. The ‘comparative’ and ‘superlative’ members of the opposeme are built up either synthetically (by means of affixation or suppletivity), or analytically (by means of word-morphemes). The synthetic and analytical forms are in complementary distribution like those of the adjective, only the number of synthetic forms is smaller inasmuch as there are fewer monosyllabic and disyllabic adverbs. For example: *lazy — lazier — (the) laziest, lazily — more lazily — most lazily*.

With regard to the category of the degrees of comparison adverbs (like adjectives) fall into comparables and non-comparables. The number of non-comparables is much greater among adverbs than among adjectives. In other words, there are many adverbs whose lexemes contain but one word (*yesterday, always, northward, upstairs, etc.*). In Russian we can meet the same thing: *вчера, здесь, всегда*.

As the definition of the lexico-grammatical meaning shows, adverbs may be divided into three lexico-grammatical subclasses: qualitative, quantitative and circumstantial.

Qualitative adverbs like *loudly, quickly, brightly, etc.* usually modify verbs, less often adlinks. They show the quality of an action or state much in the same way as a qualitative adjective shows the quality of some substance. For instance, *speaks loudly and loud speech, walks quickly and a quick walk*. But in Russian adverb is used: *говорить громко, громкий голос, быстро ехать*.

The connection between qualitative adverbs and adjectives is obvious. In most cases the adverb is derived from the adjective with the help of the most productive adverb-forming suffix *-ly*. Like the corresponding adjectives qualitative adverbs usually have opposites of the comparative and superlative degrees.

On the strength of this likeness **A. I. Smirnitsky** advances the view that *quick* and *quickly* might be treated as belonging to the same part of speech, but having different combinability<sup>1</sup>. In other words, *quick — quickly* might be regarded as an adjectival grammatical opposeme, and *-ly* as a grammatical morpheme of “adverbiality”. We must take issue with Prof. Smirnitsky over this theory.

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<sup>1</sup> А.И. Смирницкий, О.С. Ахманова. Образования типа *stone wall, speech sound* в английском языке. Инст. Язык-я, доклады. М., т. 2. стр. 97

1. The most typical feature of a grammatical morpheme distinguishing it from a lexico-grammatical one is its relativity.<sup>2</sup> As stated in page 10, the morpheme *-s* in *books* denotes ‘plurality’ because *books* is opposed to *book* with the zero morpheme of ‘singularity’. In the opposeme *quick* — *quickly* it is also possible to assert that *-ly* denotes ‘adverbiality’ because *quickly* is opposed to *quick* with the zero morpheme of ‘adjectivity’. But in *purpose* — *purposely*, *part* — *partly*, *night* — *nightly* *-ly* denotes ‘adverbiality’, though it is not opposed to the zero morpheme of ‘adjectivity’, but rather to that of ‘substance’. In *first* — *firstly*, *second* — *secondly*, *third* — *thirdly*, etc. *-ly* denotes ‘adverbiality’ though it is opposed to ‘numerality’. In *mocking* — *mockingly*, *admiring* — *admiringly*, *confused* — *confusedly*, *broken* — *brokenly*, etc. the ‘adverbiality’ of *-ly* is opposed to ‘participiality’, etc. In short, the ‘adverbial’ meaning in *-ly* is not relative, and *-ly* is not a grammatical morpheme.

2. The suffix *-ly* is a lexico-grammatical morpheme which accounts for its being common to all the words of an adverb lexeme (see A.I. Smirnitsky, op. cit. p. 14), e. g. *violently* — *more violently* — *most-violently*.

3. Though *-ly* is very productive, there are other lexico-grammatical morphemes forming the stems of qualitative adverbs from adjective stems, or else adverbs and adjectives are related by conversion. For example, *loud* (*a.*) — *loudly*, *loud* (*adv.*), *aloud*; *long* (*a.*) — *long* (*adv.*), *longways*, *longwise*.

4. There are many adjectives in *-ly* related by conversion with corresponding adverbs *early*, *daily*, *deadly*, etc.

There are other adjectives in *-ly* which have no corresponding adverbs, e. g. *lovely*, *lonely*, *lively*, etc.

5. The comparison of such words as

*high a.* — *high adv.*, *highly*,

*late a.* — *late adv.*, *lately*,

*hard a.* — *hard adv.*, *hardly*,

*near a.* — *near adv.*, *nearly*

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<sup>2</sup> op cit. p. 10-14

It shows that the suffix *-ly* introduces changes in the lexical meanings of words, so that words with and without *-ly* cannot belong to the same opposeme or lexeme.

The words *probably, possibly, luckily, etc.*, derived from adjective stems, are no longer adverbs but modal words, so that the adjectives *probable, possible, lucky* have no corresponding adverbs, but they have corresponding modal words with the suffix *-ly*.

All these and similar facts show that *-ly* is not an inflexion but a highly productive stem-building suffix. Therefore *quick* and *quickly* are not members of a grammatical opposeme. They have different stems and belong to different lexemes. These lexemes with different stems, different combinability and different syntactical functions, naturally, belong to different parts of speech.

Russian in this case has ending *-(н)о* (most Russian adverbs end in this suffix: *скоро, поздно, быстро, современно, дурно и т.д.*).

Thus, qualitative adverbs, with or without *-ly*, are a subclass of adverbs with peculiar lexico-grammatical features. As they characterize the quality of an action or state, they are inwardly bound with a verb or an adlink and are usually placed as close as possible to the verb or adlink they modify.

*And then nature mercifully intervened.*

*Tony and the daughter of the Polish governor catch one glimpse of each other and are madly aflame.*

Quantitative adverbs like *very, rather, too, nearly, greatly, fully, hardly, quite, utterly, twofold, etc.* show the degree, measure, quantity of an action, quality, state, etc.

The combinability of this subclass is more extensive than that of the qualitative adverbs. Besides verbs and adlinks quantitative adverbs modify adjectives, adverbs, numerals, modals, even nouns.

*You've quite vamped the foreman.*

*Rather disconsolate she wandered out into the cathedral.*

*She knew it only too well.*

*He had become fully aware of her.*

*It was nearly ten.*

*He is wholly master of the situation.*

*Very probably he won't budge.*

The combinability of some adverbs of this subclass can be rather narrow. The adverb *very* (*frightfully, awfully, etc.*), for instance, mostly precedes those adjectives and adverbs which have opposites of comparison. It does not, as a rule, modify verbs, adlinks or numerals.

The combinability of *nearly* or *almost*, on the other hand, is so extensive, that these words are close to particles.

Quantitative adverbs are correlative with quantitative pronouns, such as *much, (a) little, enough*.

Circumstantial adverbs serve to denote various circumstances (mostly local and temporal) attending an action. Accordingly they fall under two heads:

a) adverbs of time and frequency (*yesterday, to-morrow, before, often, again, twice, etc.*),

b) adverbs of place and direction (*upstairs, inside, behind, homewards*).

Circumstantial adverbs are not inwardly connected with the verbs they are said to modify. They do not characterize the action itself but name certain circumstances attending the action described in the sentence and usually referring to the situation as a whole. Therefore a circumstantial adverb can be used in a sentence in which the only verb is a link-verb, i. e. where no action is described.

*E. g.*

*He will be ten to-morrow.*

This accounts for the fact that, unlike qualitative and quantitative adverbs, circumstantial adverbs are not necessarily placed near the verb, they may occupy different places in the sentence. *E. g.*

*It wasn't any too warm yesterday.*

*Yesterday they had a snow-squall out west.*

When H. Sweet<sup>3</sup> speaks of adverbs, as showing “almost the last remains of normal free order in Modern English”, it concerns, mostly, circumstantial adverbs.

Similarly G. Curme's<sup>4</sup> words that “An adverb can freely stand in almost any position” mainly apply to circumstantial adverbs.

Barring some adverbs with the *-ward(s)* suffix (*backwards, inwards*), the *-ice* suffix (*twice, thrice*), circumstantial adverbs have no typical stem-building elements (compare with the *-ly* suffix incident to qualitative adverbs). They are often morphologically indivisible (*north, home, down, etc.*), even more often are they related by conversion with prepositions (*in, out, behind*), conjunctions (*since, before*), nouns (*north, home*), adjectives (*late, far*) or they are homonymous with lexical word-morphemes.

Only a small group of circumstantial adverbs denoting indefinite time and place (*soon, late, often, near, far*) have opposites of comparison. Most adverbs of this subclass form no opposeemes of any grammatical category.

Circumstantial adverbs are mostly used in the function of adverbial modifiers of time and place.

*See you tonight.*

*Going clear down-town?*

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<sup>3</sup> H. Sweet. *A new English grammar. Logical and historical.* Oxford. parag. 58

<sup>4</sup> G. Curme. *Syntax.* N.Y. 1931. p. 542

But sometimes they can be used in other functions, e. g. as attributes. E. g.

*See the notes above.*

*The room upstairs is vacant.*

The words of an adverb lexeme like *soon* — *sooner*— *soonest* represent three grammemes with one actual grammatical meaning each. Lexemes like *forward*, *yesterday*, *ahead* contain but one word each with the oblique grammatical meaning of the ‘positive degree’. There are no adverbs in English with the oblique meaning of the ‘comparative’ and the ‘superlative’ degrees. Thus we may speak of but four grammemes in the class of adverbs.

When comparing English and Russian adverbs as parts of speech, one may say that they differ but slightly. Their lexico-grammatical meanings, morphological categories, combinability and syntactical functions are fundamentally the same.

Nevertheless, certain distinctions are worth noting.

1. The stem-building (lexico-grammatical) morphemes of Russian adverbs are somewhat more numerous and varied.

2. Among the adverb building morphemes we find several suffixes of subjective appraisal (*-онько|енько*, *-онечко|-енечко*, *-охонько|-ехонько*, *-овато*), which are absolutely alien to English.

3. The adverbialization of substantival or adjectival grammemes, (e. g. *шагом, стрелой, весной*) is the most productive way of forming adverbs in Russian<sup>5</sup>, whereas in English it is less common.

4. As to the degrees of comparison one might say that the synthetic form of the superlative grammeme (*подробнейше, низжайше, малейше*) is no longer used colloquially and is employed for some stylistic purpose. The corresponding English grammeme (*oftenest, soonest*) occurs in different speech styles.

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<sup>5</sup> see any Russian Grammar book.

## Using Adverbs in a Numbered List

Within the normal flow of text, it's nearly always a bad idea to number items beyond three or four, at the most. Anything beyond that, you're better off with a vertical list that uses numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.). Also, in such a list, don't use adverbs (with an *-ly* ending); use instead the uninflected ordinal number (first, second, third, fourth, fifth, etc.). First (not firstly), it's unclear what the adverb is modifying. Second (not secondly), it's unnecessary. Third (not thirdly), after you get beyond "secondly," it starts to sound silly. Adverbs that number in this manner are treated as *disjuncts* (see below.)

## Adverbs We Can Do Without

Review the section on Being Concise for some advice on adverbs that we can eliminate to the benefit of our prose: intensifiers such as *very*, *extremely*, and *really* that don't intensify anything and expletive constructions ("There are several books that address this issue.")

## Kinds of Adverbs

### Adverbs of Manner

She moved slowly and spoke quietly.

### Adverbs of Place

She has lived on the island all her life.

She still lives there now.

### Adverbs of Frequency

She takes the boat to the mainland every day.

She often goes by herself.

### Adverbs of Time

She tries to get back before dark.

It's starting to get dark now.

She finished her tea first.

She left early.

## Adverbs of Purpose

She drives her boat slowly to avoid hitting the rocks.

She shops in several stores to get the best buys.

## Positions of Adverbs

One of the hallmarks of adverbs is their ability to move around in a sentence. Adverbs of manner are particularly flexible in this regard.

- Solemnly the minister addressed her congregation.
- The minister solemnly addressed her congregation.
- The minister addressed her congregation solemnly.

The following adverbs of frequency appear in various points in these sentences:

- Before the main verb: I never get up before nine o'clock.
- Between the auxiliary verb and the main verb: I have rarely written to my brother without a good reason.
- Before the verb *used to*: I always used to see him at his summer home.

Indefinite adverbs of time can appear either before the verb or between the auxiliary and the main verb:

- He finally showed up for batting practice.
- She has recently retired.

## Order of Adverbs

There is a basic order in which adverbs will appear when there is more than one. It is similar to The Royal Order of Adjectives, but it is even more flexible.

## THE ORDER OF ADVERBS

Verb	Manner	Place	Frequency	Time	Purpose
Beth swims	enthusiastically	in the pool	every morning	before dawn	to keep in shape.
Dad walks	impatiently	into town	every afternoon	before supper	to get a newspaper.
Tashonda naps		in her room	every morning	before lunch.	
	<p>In actual practice, of course, it would be highly unusual to have a string of adverbial modifiers beyond two or three (at the most). Because the placement of adverbs is so flexible, one or two of the modifiers would probably move to the beginning of the sentence: "Every afternoon before supper, Dad impatiently walks into town to get a newspaper." When that happens, the introductory adverbial modifiers are usually set off with a comma.</p>				

### More on Adverb Order

As a general principle, shorter adverbial phrases precede longer adverbial phrases, regardless of content. In the following sentence, an adverb of time precedes an adverb of frequency because it is shorter (and simpler):

- Dad takes a brisk walk before breakfast every day of his life.

**A second principle: among similar adverbial phrases of kind (manner, place, frequency, etc.), the more specific adverbial phrase comes first:**

- My grandmother was born in a sod house on the plains of northern Nebraska.
- She promised to meet him for lunch next Tuesday.

**Bringing an adverbial modifier to the beginning of the sentence can place special emphasis on that modifier. This is particularly useful with adverbs of manner:**

- Slowly, ever so carefully, Jesse filled the coffee cup up to the brim, even above the brim.
- Occasionally, but only occasionally, one of these lemons will get by the inspectors.

### **Inappropriate Adverb Order**

Review the section on Misplaced Modifiers for some additional ideas on placement. Modifiers can sometimes attach themselves to and thus modify words that they ought not to modify.

- They reported that Giuseppe Balle, a European rock star, had died on the six o'clock news.

**Clearly, it would be better to move the underlined modifier to a position immediately after "they reported" or even to the beginning of the sentence — so the poor man doesn't die on television.**

Misplacement can also occur with very simple modifiers, such as *only* and *barely*:

- She only grew to be four feet tall.

**It would be better if "She grew to be only four feet tall."**

### **Some Special Cases**

The adverbs *enough* and *not enough* usually take a postmodifier position:

- Is that music loud enough?
- These shoes are not big enough.
- In a roomful of elderly people, you must remember to speak loudly enough.

**(Notice, though, that when *enough* functions as an adjective, it can come before the noun:**

- Did she give us enough time?

**The adverb *enough* is often followed by an infinitive:**

- She didn't run fast enough to win.

**The adverb *too* comes before adjectives and other adverbs:**

- She ran too fast.
- She works too quickly.

**If *too* comes after the adverb it is probably a disjunct (meaning *also*) and is usually set off with a comma:**

- Yasmin works hard. She works quickly, too.

**The adverb *too* is often followed by an infinitive:**

- She runs too slowly to enter this race.

**Another common construction with the adverb *too* is *too* followed by a prepositional phrase — *for* + the object of the preposition — followed by an infinitive:**

- This milk is too hot for a baby to drink.

## Relative Adverbs

Adjectival clauses are sometimes introduced by what are called the relative adverbs: *where*, *when*, and *why*. Although the entire clause is adjectival and will modify a noun, the relative word itself fulfills an adverbial function (modifying a verb within its own clause).

The relative adverb *where* will begin a clause that modifies a noun of place:

My entire family now worships in the church where my great grandfather used to be minister.

**The relative pronoun "where" modifies the verb "used to be" (which makes it adverbial), but the entire clause ("where my great grandfather used to be minister") modifies the word "church."**

A *when* clause will modify nouns of time:

My favorite month is always February, when we celebrate Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day.

And a *why* clause will modify the noun *reason*:

Do you know the reason why Isabel isn't in class today?

We sometimes leave out the relative adverb in such clauses, and many writers prefer "that" to "why" in a clause referring to "reason":

- Do you know the reason ~~why~~ Isabel isn't in class today?
- I always look forward to the day ~~when~~ we begin our summer vacation.
- I know the reason that men like motorcycles.

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