



## SYNTACTIC VALENCY AND COMBINABILITY PATTERNS OF ADVERBS

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<https://www.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8378413>

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Accepted: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Online: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### KEY WORDS

### ABSTRACT

Every word is characterized by its semantic and syntactic valencies potentially inherent in it, which in syntagmatics become the actualization of these potentials, i.e. semantic (or lexical) and syntactic combinabilities.

The establishment of constructional syntagmatic relations is conditioned by the valent properties of the units entering into the syntagmatic relation. The valency of notional units is their potential ability to get into syntagmatic relations and to pattern with the units of appropriate types. The character of valency is predetermined by the semantic specialization and by the semantic completeness of the unit. These characteristics are evidently diametric: the more specialized a notional element is the less valent it is. But it does not mean that semantically specialized notional units are devoid of any valency, they can pattern with extensions which are optional.

Syntagmatic valencies can be of categorial, subcategorial and individual character [1, 40]. The categorial valency is usually specified by the subcategorial valent properties of linguistic units. Their interaction makes the unit active in its syntagmatic behaviour when its valency is realized. For instance, every lexico-grammatical class of notional words possesses categorial and subcategorial valency.

Due to their central role in the sentence notional verbs are the most syntagmatically active elements which realize their valency functioning as “heads” in syntactic constructions of nominal and adverbial complementation.

According to their categorial valency substantive elements display patterning with the qualitative elements which are designed to denote qualities of objects and phenomena. The categorial valency of qualifying elements (adjectives and adverbs) is not strong, they pattern regularly with degree adverbs: too imposing, very short, extremely difficult, easily enough. The subcategorial and individual valencies are in full accord with the categorial valency of linguistic units [1, 42].

Grammatical valency of linguistic units reveals their ability to pattern with particular grammatical forms [2].



Since the valency of linguistic units is their potential ability to contract syntagmatic relations, it should be actualized in speech. This takes place in speech communication whenever linguistic units occur in actual speech units (utterances). The actualization of valency is achieved through the concrete combinability of linguistic units in quite concrete cases of their occurrence in speech units [2].

The realization and actualization of the valent properties pertaining to units and classes of units are conditioned by several factors among which the semantic compatibility of combining elements is of primary regulating significance [1, 42]. The actualization of valency is regulated and conditioned by contextual conditions or the distribution of a linguistic unit.

Here is the list of possible models of grammatical (syntactic) combinability of adverbs in modern English [3, 146]:

- Adv + Adj
- Adv + Adv
- Adv + N
- Adv + V
- Adj + Adv
- N + Adv
- V + Adv
- Adv + conj + Adj
- Adv + conj + Adv
- Adv + conj + N
- Adv + conj + V
- Adj + conj + Adv
- N + conj + Adv
- V + conj + Adv
- Adv + link + Adj
- Adv + link + Adv
- Adv + link + N
- Adv + link + V
- Adj + link + Adv
- N + link + Adv
- V + link + Adv
- Adv + prp + Adj
- Adv + prp + Adv
- Adv + prp + N
- Adv + prp + V
- Adj + prp + Adv
- N + prp + Adv
- V + prp + Adv

It follows that adverbs could realize their syntactic valent properties in 7 models of contact combinability and 21 models of distant combinability. But the results of numerous studies demonstrate that the following models of syntactic combinability of adverbs are typical for modern English [3, 147]:



- 1) Adv + Adj: very nice;
- 2) Adv + Adv: quite politely;
- 3) Adv + N: He is quite a child;
- 4) Adv + V: never come;
- 5) Adj + Adv: good enough;
- 6) N + Adv: a step aside;
- 7) V + Adv: run fast;
- 8) Adv + conj + Adj: We arrived **earlier than usual**;
- 9) Adv + conj + Adv: **anywhere** else **than at home**;
- 10) Adv + conj + V: He knows **better than to start a quarrel**;
- 11) Adj + conj + Adv: They were **wider** apart **than before**;
- 12) N + link + Adv: The sun is not enough;
- 13) Adv + prp + N: early in February;
- 14) N + prp + Adv: the writer of today.

English adverbs realize their syntactic valent properties in all of 7 models of contact combinability and only in 7 (out of 21) models of distant combinability. The nature of restrictions on combinability of adverbs in 14 models of distant combinability in some cases is conditioned by relations of objects and phenomena of extralinguistic reality (N + conj + Adv, V + conj + Adv, Adv + link + Adj, Adv + link + Adv, Adv + link + N, Adv + link + V, Adj + link + Adv, Adv + prp + Adj, Adv + prp + Adv, Adv + prp + V, Adj + prp + Adv, V + prp + Adv), in other cases it is conditioned by the system of the language (Adv + conj + N, V + link + Adv).

Morphological characteristics of the notional units can influence their syntactic valent properties or they can remain neutral with respect to these properties. For instance, the category of degrees of comparison of adverbs remains neutral with respect to valent properties of notional units in such models of combinability as Adv + Adv (well enough, better enough), Adj + Adv (good enough, better enough), V + Adv (move slowly, move more slowly), Adv + prp + N (early in February, earlier in February).

The meaning of models of combinability of English adverbs with other notional units is determined by semantic relations which occur in the process of their interaction.

In accord with their categorial meaning, adverbs are characterised by combinability with verbs, adjectives and words of adverbial nature. The functions of adverbs in these combinations consist in expressing different adverbial modifiers. Adverbs can also refer to whole situations; in this function they are considered under the heading of situation-"determinants" [4, 220]:

The woman was crying **hysterically**. (an adverbial modifier of manner, in left-hand contact combination with the verb-predicate)

Wilson looked at him **appraisingly**. (an adverbial modifier of manner, in left-hand distant combination with the verb-predicate)

Without undressing she sat down to the poems, **nervously** anxious to like them... (an adverbial modifier of property qualification, in right-hand combination with a post-positional stative attribute-adjective)

You've gotten **awfully** brave, **awfully** suddenly. (an adverbial modifier of intensity, in right-hand combination with an adverb-ascriptive determinant of the situation)



**Then** he stamps his boots **again** and advances into the room. (two adverbial determinants of the situation: the first — of time, in right-hand combination with the modified predicative construction; the second — of recurrence, in left-hand combination with the modified predicative construction) [4, 220]

Adverbs can also combine with nouns acquiring in such cases a very peculiar adverbial-attributive function, essentially in post-position, but in some cases also in pre-position:

The world **today** presents a picture radically different from what it was before the Second World War.

Our vigil **overnight** was rewarded by good news: the operation seemed to have succeeded.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, the **then** President of the United States, proclaimed the "New Deal" — a new Government economic policy. [4, 220]

The use of adverbs in outwardly attributive positions in such and like examples appears to be in contradiction with the functional destination of the adverb — a word that is intended to qualify a non-noun syntactic element by definition.

However, this seeming inconsistency of the theoretical interpretation of adverbs with their actual uses can be clarified and resolved in the light of the syntactic principle of nominalisation elaborated within the framework of the theory of paradigmatic syntax [4, 221]. In accord with this principle, each predicative syntactic construction paradigmatically correlates with a noun-phrase displaying basically the same semantic relations between its notional constituents. A predicative construction can be actually changed into a noun-phrase, by which change the dynamic situation expressed by the predicative construction receives a static name. Now, adverbs-determinants modifying in constructions of this kind the situation as a whole, are preserved in the corresponding nominalised phrases without a change in their inherent functional status:

The world that exists today. → The world today.

We kept vigil overnight. → Our vigil overnight.

Then he was the President. → The then President.

These paradigmatic transformational correlations explain the type of connection between the noun and its adverbial attribute even in cases where direct transformational changes would not be quite consistent with the concrete contextual features of constructions [4, 221]. What is important here, is the fact that the adverb used to modify a noun actually relates to the whole corresponding situation underlying the noun phrase.

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