Adjunct Adverbials in English

In this original study, Hilde Hasselgård discusses the use of adverbials in English, through examining examples found in everyday texts. Adverbials – clause elements that typically refer to circumstances of time, space, reason and manner – cover a range of meanings and can be placed at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a sentence. The description of the frequency of meaning types and discussion of the reasons for selecting positions show that the use of adverbials differs across text types. Adverbial usage is often linked to the general build-up of a text and can reflect its content and purpose. In using real texts, Hasselgård identifies a challenge for the classification of adjuncts, and also highlights the fact that some adjuncts have uses that extend into the textual and interpersonal domains, obscuring the traditional divisions between adjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts.

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Adjunct Adverbials in English

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Abbreviations

A       Adverbial
BNC     British National Corpus
CD      Communicative dynamism
E       End position
ENPC    English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus
FSP     Functional sentence perspective
I       Initial position
ICECUP  ICE Corpus Utility Program
ICE-GB  International Corpus of English, British component
LLC     London-Lund Corpus (of spoken British English)
M       Medial position
NP      Noun phrase
O       Object
OED     Oxford English Dictionary
OMC     Oslo Multilingual Corpus
PP      Prepositional phrase
S       Subject
SEU     Survey of English Usage
SFG/SFL Systemic-functional grammar / systemic-functional linguistics
V       Verb

Notational conventions

^ is used for indicating sequential order (space’time means that a space adjunct occurs directly before a time adjunct)
∥ is used for marking the boundary between adjacent adjuncts
# has been inserted to mark boundaries between ‘sentences’ (parsing units) in longer excerpts from spoken texts from the ICE-GB
* in front of an example marks it as unacceptable
? in front of an example marks it as doubtful
List of abbreviations

Lit in front of a line following a corpus example in a language other than English indicates a literal, word-by-word, translation

*italics* are used to highlight the part of an example that is most relevant to the discussion

*overstrike* is used in corpus examples as in the ICE-GB, to represent corrections made by either the speaker/writer or the corpus annotators

Corpus examples are represented as in the corpora from which they are taken, including the prosodic mark-up found in the London-Lund Corpus.

For a complete list of text codes in the core corpus (from the ICE-GB), see the Appendix.
Preface

This book has grown out of many years of studying adverbials and other word order-related matters from a functional perspective. Adverbials are fascinating because of their enormous semantic and syntactic flexibility, as well as their elusiveness. In many ways a functional study of adverbials thus becomes a study of text and language in general.

During the work on this book I have had the advantage of two periods of research leave from the former Department of British and American Studies and the present Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages at the University of Oslo. Parts of chapters have been presented at various seminars and conferences in Oslo and elsewhere, and I am indebted to my various audiences for useful feedback. I would like to thank Merja Kytö for her encouragement during the early stages of this project. At later stages I received constructive and helpful responses from anonymous referees at Cambridge University Press. I am also grateful to colleagues in Oslo for useful discussions and for contributing to a fruitful research environment, and to my friends and family for a healthy mixture of support and distraction. In particular, I would like to thank my colleague, friend and mentor Stig Johansson for guiding me into corpus linguistics in the first place and for invaluable help, advice and encouragement during all my years of researching the English language.

Oslo, April 2009
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