PARTICULARITIES OF THE ADVERB IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN

Alina Ungureanu

Lecturer, PhD, University of Pitești

Abstract:This paper aims to present the various uses that the adverb has both in English and in Romanian. The main function of an adverb is that of being a qualifier of the verb, but also of an adjective and of another adverb. The form of the adverb and its special uses generate different classifications. The various types of adverbs and their place in the sentence represent important grammatical problems.

Keywords: adverb, classification, form, function, syntax

1.The function of the adverb, both in English and Romanian sentence, is to be a qualifier of the verb, representing a morphological class which contains inflexible words. But the adverb can also determine an adjective, a noun, a pronoun or another adverb: *We met yesterday.*

He looked very sad.
Only John could have done that.
Practically everyone came to his party.
Thank you very much.

In a similar way, an adverb can determine a participle, a gerund as well as an infinitive form:

This is the reward fora well done thing.
The little girl was coming quickly towards us.
Drinking heavily is bad for your health.

The form of the adverb in English

As a rule, the English adverbs are formed by the addition to adjectives of the *–ly* suffix:

clever- cleverly; sharp- sharply; short- shortly;

There are the following orthographical situations when the *–ly* suffix is added:

- adjectives ending *–y* preceded by a consonant change *-y* into *–i:*

naughty- naughtily

There are also exceptions. A number of adjectives do not obey this rule:

shy- shyly; dry- dryly; sly- slyly.

- after a vowel, the ending *y* is preserved as a rule:

gay – gayly, but also *gaily.*

- final *-e* is dropped in the following three adjectives:

due - duly, true- truly, whole- wholly.

- the ending *–le* with syllabic value is dropped:

noble- nobly; simple- simply; notable- notably.

- adjectives ending in *double l* drop one before the *–ly* ending:

full- fully; dull- dully.

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureș, 2017, e-ISBN: 978-606-8624-01-3

BDD-V4084 © 2017 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:51:13 UTC)

- the adjectives: *public* and *politic* have regular corresponding adverbial forms: *publicly* and *politicly* , but the other adjectives ending in *–ic* add *–al* before the *–ly* suffix: *majestic- majestically, drastic- drastically, emphatic- emphatically.*

The Romanian adverbs are usually formed with the help of the suffixes: *-eşte, -iş/îş, -mente*: *bărbăteşte, frăţeşte, româneşte, voiniceşte, făţiş, pieptiş, morţiş, chiorâş, finalmente, realmente, totalmente* etc. It is to be noted that the adverbs derived with the suffix *–mente* were borrowed directly from Italian or French language.

Romanian adverbs can be easily confused with prepositions or conjunctions, although the rules are very clear. For instance, the preposition *după* in the example: *Acum sunt la şedinţă. Vorbim după*.[1] can be considered an adverb if we do not take into consideration the fact that the noun that follows it can be deduced from the context.

Another important problem related to the Romanian adverbs refers to the so-called semi-adverbs such as: *numai, doar, chiar, tot, şi, cam, mai* etc., words that have specific syntactical and semantical features. They do not have a proper meaning unless they accompany another word: *chiar el, doar astăzi, tot frumoasă*.

2. Classification of adverbs can be done according to their form and to their meaning.

According to their form, adverbs fall into:

a. simple;
b. derived;
c. compound;
d. adverbial phrases.

a. Simple adverbs are: *in, out, up, down* etc. or: *abia, acum, aici, aşa, atât, ba, bine, cât, doar* etc..

b. Derived adverbs are formed from other parts of speech with the help of suffixes and prefixes: *long- along; sleep- asleep* etc. or: *cioban- ciobăneşte, om- omeneşte* etc..

c. Compound adverbs are made of two or several parts of speech forming a perfect semantic fusion: *hereby, however, nevertheless, sometimes, therefore* etc.or: *acasă, altădată, altfel, deloc, devreme, decât, demult, îndată, nicicum, numai* etc..

d. Adverbial phrases are groups of words which can function as adverbs in the sentence and they are felt as semantic fusion because of their frequency: *little by little, step by step, to and fro, by chance, not in the least* etc. or: *zi de zi, cât de cât, zi şi noapte, aşa şi aşa, când şi când, din când în când* etc..

There are various classes of adverbs that interfere between them and it is difficult to divide the adverbs into certain categories. Still, from a semantic point of view, the adverbs fall into: *modifying adverbs* and *determinative adverbs*[2].

The modifying adverbs include *the adverbs of manner* and *the adverbial particles*, while the determinative adverbs include: *the adverbs of place, of time, of quantity, measure, degree and approximation.*

Thus, the most commonly used types of adverbs are:

a. adverbs of manner: *well, hard, slow, fast, quickly, shortly, immediately* etc. or: *aşa, bine, cum, cumva, zadarnic* etc.

[1] according to GALR, 2005: 585
[2] according to Leviţchi, 2009: 173-177

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureş, 2017, e-ISBN: 978-606-8624-01-3

BDD-V4084 © 2017 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:51:13 UTC)

b. adverbs of place: *here*, *there*, *up*, *down*, *above*, *upstairs* etc. or: *aici*, *acolo*, *sus*, *jos*, *afară, înăuntru, deasupra, nicăieri, aproape, departe* etc.

c. adverbs of time: *now*, *then*, *just*, *already*, *yet*, *recently*, *soon*, *tomorrow*, *yesterday*, *before*, *weekly*, *monthly*, *afterwards* etc. or: *acum, adineaori, alatăieri, aseară, azi, cândva, ieri, mâine, poimâine, în curând* etc.

A special type of the adverbs of time is represented by the adverbs of frequency: *always*, *ever*, *never*, *often*, *frequently*, *rarely*, *generally*, *sometimes* etc or: *adesea, câteodată, frecvent, iarăşi, întotdeauna, mereu, niciodată, rareori, zilnic* etc.

d. adverbs of degree: *very*, *much*, *really*, *quite*, *too*, *so*, *thoroughly* etc. or: *mult, puţin, destul*, *sufficient*, *foarte*, *enorm*, *extraordinar*, *grozav*, *teribil* etc.

e. adverbs of comment and attitude: *actually*, *perhaps*, *surely*, *oddly*, *wisely* etc. or: *desigur, fireşte, bineînţeles, evident, sigur, poate, probabil, parcă* etc.

f. conjunctive adverbs: *so*, *therefore*, *then*, *however*, *besides* or: *astfel, aşadar, totuşi* etc.

g. adverbs or adverbial phrases of cause, reason and result: *consequently*, *on purpose*, *for that reason*, *for that purpose*, *therefore* etc. or: *de ce*, *la ce*, *de aceea*, *pentru aceea*, *de asta*, *pentru asta*, *de aia*.

h. concessive adverbs: *however*, *still*, *yet* or: *totuşi, cu toate acestea*.

i. interrogative- relative adverbs: *when*, *how*, *where* or: *când, cum, unde*.

3. The English adverbs are usually placed at the end of the sentence *(George will come tomorrow.; They will meet there.; The child thinks deeply.*), but for emphasis, they can also take the first position in a sentence *(Today we are going shopping.; Strictly speaking, we had no chance in front of them.).*

It is to be noted that a number of short adverbs go into mid position in the sentence. A list of such short adverbs would include: *now*, *then*, *just*, *recently*, *soon*, *immediately*, *finally*, *really*, *also*, *since*, *already* etc. (*They will soon know the truth about that person.; We are really sorry.; You could also read the book.*).

3.1. Some of the English adverbs of time have also special uses.

Yet is used at the end of a question. It expresses an action which has already happened or happened very soon.

The same adverb *yet* is placed at the end of a negative statement in connection with the respective question:

A: Has George arrived yet?
B: No, not yet.

When *yet* is placed in mid position in connection with a negative statement, it sounds rather formal. For example:

We have not yet reached a reasonable conclusion.

Still is used in mid position in positive statements and questions.

No, we have not finished yet. We are still working on it.

A special usage of *still* is after the subject in negative statements to express an unfulfilled action.

They still haven't arrived.

Already is used to express something happening sooner than expected, it is mainly used in mid position, in positive statements or in questions.

They have already finished.
Have they already arrived?

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureş, 2017, e-ISBN: 978-606-8624-01-3

BDD-V4084 © 2017 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:51:13 UTC)

As a rule, the adverb *no longer* is used in mid position to show the end of an action or state:

George is no longer here.

As a less formal alternative to *no longer* in mid position, we can use *anymore* or *any longer* in end position in negative statements.

Mr. Smith doesn't work with us anymore/ any longer.

The adverb *long* is used in front or end position in questions and negative statements.

Have you been waiting long?

How long have you been waiting?

The word *after* can not be used as an adverb of time on its own, but in the form of a compound adverb or a compound prepositional adverbial phrase such as: *afterwards, after that, after a day, after a week, the day after, the week after* etc.

Adverbs of frequency show the repetition of an action or state. Such adverbs usually go in mid position of the sentence.

People are often manipulated in their opinion by mass- media.

When such adverbs are placed in front position, their degree of emphasis is obtained and in such cases grammatical and stylistic inversion takes place.

Never in my life have I seen such a beautiful place.

Both in English and in Romanian, some adverbs of time such as: *yesterday, today, tomorrow* or: *ieri, astăzi, mâine* are used in connection with certain verbal tenses in order to form the temporal deixis.

Yesterday I met my mother, today I am travelling to the countryside and tomorrow I will see my doctor.

3.2. Another situation is represented by a number of adverbs of manner ending in *–ly* which have corresponding *–ly* adjectives. For example: *She looks lovely in green. / Alice is a lovely girl.*

A number of adjectives function as adverbs of manner without adding the *–ly* ending: *A fast car goes fast.*

The same situation is to be found in Romanian language with such adverbs as: *frumos, greşit, încet, rău, serios*, adverbs which have the same form with that of the adjectives they come from: *Copilul este frumos. / El cântă frumos.*

3.3. A special usage of the modifying Romanian adverbs of the type: *desigur, eventual, evident, fireşte, poate, probabil, parcă* etc.is to fulfill the syntactic function of a predicate when they are followed by the conjunction *că* (*Poate că va veni mâine.)* or to be part of an impersonal expression asking for a subject clause (*E posibil să fie promovat*).

4. According to the number of syllables, English adverbs, especially the adverbs of manner, may have a synthetic comparison (*fast-faster-the fastest*) or an analytical one (*naturally- more naturally- the most naturally*). It is to be mentioned that such adverbs as: *well, badly, much, little, far* have an irregular comparison.

Most of the Romanian adverbs of manner, some of the adverbs of place (*sus, jos, aproape, departe*) and some of the adverbs of time (*devreme, târziu, curând*) have degrees of comparison. On the other hand, the so-called semi-adverbs, pronominal adverbs and a series of adverbs, which express circumstances or different features (*aidoma, absolut, astăzi, acasă, împotrivă, nicăieri* etc.) can not be used in comparisons.

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureş, 2017, e-ISBN: 978-606-8624-01-3

BDD-V4084 © 2017 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:51:13 UTC)

Finally, the adverb does not only represent a qualifier of the verb, but also of some other parts of speech. It has similar forms to those of the adjective and common degrees of comparison, but, at the same time, the adverb is different in point of its syntax.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alexander, 1998- L.G. Alexander, Longman English Grammar Practice, Longman Group UK;
Eastwood, 1999 – J. Eastwood, *Oxford Practice Grammar*, Oxford University Press
GALR, I, 2005 – Gramatica limbii române, I, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române;
GALR, II, 2005 – Gramatica limbii române, II, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române;
GBLR, 2010 – G. Pană Dindelegan (coordinator), *Gramatica de bază a limbii române*, Bucureşti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold;
Levițchi, 2009- L. Levițchi, Gramatica limbii engleze, Bucureşti, Editura Teora;
Murphy, 2004- R. Murphy, *English Grammar in Use*, Cambridge University Press;
Thomson, Martinet, 1986- A. J. Thomson, A. V. Martinet, *A Practical English Grammar*, Oxford University Press.

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureș, 2017, e-ISBN: 978-606-8624-01-3

BDD-V4084 © 2017 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:51:13 UTC)