
Reviewed by Eric Potsdam, University of Florida

In his 1972 monograph Semantic interpretation in generative grammar, Ray Jackendoff begins the chapter on adverbs saying, ‘the adverb is perhaps the least studied and most maligned part of speech, . . . maltreated beyond the call of duty’ (47). Thirty years later, adverbs and adverbials are finally receiving the needed attention, and Thomas Ernst’s book is an important and ambitious contribution to the recent body of work. Its goal is a comprehensive theory of adverbial distribution: the base positions and licensing of a wide range of adverbs and adverbial expressions.

The book is transparently organized and well written and will be accessible to those with a good understanding of current syntactic and semantic theory. It is data-rich, with most of the evidence coming from English, supported by examples from Italian, French, and Chinese. In many places, E is very careful to formulate descriptive generalizations, which any theory of
adverb placement will need to address. It is thus of interest to those with a wide range of theoretical and descriptive concerns. For those who like clearly laid out ideas, interesting predictions, and deft argumentation, this book is also a must. The analytical proposals are consistently argued for, rather than simply asserted, and E attempts to show how his proposals make sense within current syntactic theory. In what follows, I briefly review the contents of the nine chapters in an effort to give a flavor for his overall approach as well as a few of the particulars.

Ch. 1 provides a bird’s eye view of the work and outlines the main theses within the context of earlier work. E’s theory is largely semantic and there are four modules that interact to account for adverbial distribution: (1) the lexicosemantics of individual adverbs—lexical specifications for individual adverbs indicating the type of semantic object(s) (speech act, proposition, fact, event, specified event, etc.) that the adverb takes in its scope; (2) a compositional-semantics rule system—a set of rules ‘which takes the basic event and builds “layers” of event types and proposition types until the representation of the proposition for the whole sentence is completed’ (35); (3) weight theory—preferences or disregarding for certain constituent orders based on the ‘weight’ of constituents in a sentence; and (4) directionality principles—syntactic principles governing the direction of phrase structure construction, including a head-initial/head-final parameter. In E’s system, adverbials are simply syntactic adjuncts and their distribution is determined largely by their lexical semantics and a compositional semantic interpretation system. Adverbs adjoin to syntactic projections that correspond to the semantic objects specified in their lexical entries. Various illicit adverbial positions are filtered out by the four modules.

Ch. 2 illustrates the system by providing an in-depth semantic analysis of nonquantificational, predicational adverbs (modal adverbs, subject-oriented adverbs, speaker-oriented adverbs, and excomparatives such as similarly or likewise). Such adverbs have semantic selectional requirements, taking speech acts, facts, propositions, events, or specified events as arguments.

(1) a. Frankly, [why would he do such a thing]? (speech act)
   b. Unfortunately, [she lay down on a scorpion’s nest]. (fact)
   c. Sam probably [has made an appointment]. (proposition)
   d. Kim intelligently [bought the tickets]. (event)

A main goal of the chapter is to account for the well-known clausal/manner ambiguity of such adverbs without resorting to homophony.

In Ch. 3, E shows how his semantic theory of adverb licensing accounts for a wide range of traditionally syntactic facts: adverb positioning and ordering restrictions with which most theories are concerned. The crucial ingredients are the lexical semantics and compositional rule system (modules 1 and 2 above). To illustrate, an evaluative adverb like probably must occur above a subject-oriented adverb like unfortunately, because the former takes a fact as its argument while the latter takes an event and an event may be converted into a fact by the rule system (2a). In the reverse ordering, unfortunately selects a fact but the rule system cannot then convert this fact back into an event required by probably (2b).

(2) a. Someone unfortunately [FACT probably [EVENT asked to stay behind]]
   b. *Someone probably [FACT EVENT unfortunately [FACT asked to stay behind]]

E specifically argues against a syntactic feature licensing analysis of adverb distribution in which adverbs are licensed in the specifiers of syntactic projections ordered by Universal Grammar (UG) (Alexiadou 1997, Cinque 1999). E draws together numerous arguments against the Cinque approach, both empirical and theory-internal in nature. He makes a strong case that despite what one commonly reads, his scope-based theory is overall more restrictive, once the entire grammar is taken into account. The argumentation to my mind is compelling and sets up real challenges for the universal ordering approach.

Ch. 4 turns to linearization principles, whose goal is to capture crosslinguistic patterns of head, adjunct, and complement ordering. E proposes a set of relatively simple directionality principles and syntactic features that get the gross word order differences between head-initial and head-final languages. For head-final languages, adjuncts are uniformly left-adjointed, and complements
and specifiers are uniformly leftward. The system thus captures the typically-strict head-finality of such languages. For head-initial languages, adverbials may be left- or right-adjointed, complements to lexical heads appear in left specifiers (i.e. direct objects originate in spec, VP), and complements to nonlexical heads occur as right sister to the head. For English-type languages, the results are summarized by the tree in 3 (E’s example 4.43).

In proposing and defending right adjunction of some adverbials, E also argues against an antisymmetric analysis as in Kayne 1994 involving only left adjunction with multiple leftward movements (intrapositions) to achieve the correct surface word order. The argumentation seems thorough; the main point is that intraposition analyses can be made empirically adequate but they are theoretically more complex and less motivated than the traditional right-adjunction alternative. Although E’s own linearization principles remain somewhat ad hoc, they represent a spelled-out alternative and establish a clear starting point for future research.

Ch. 5 turns to adverbials that are interspersed among arguments within the verb phrase.

(4) a. Tim gave the money immediately to Ray.
   b. They read eagerly both War and Peace and the whole Harry Potter series.

E argues that such data are derived by rightward movement of the argument over a right-adjointed adverbial, and he develops a general analysis of rightward movement, building on earlier work on heavy XP shift. The analysis appeals to a partially developed weight theory, a set of linearization principles referring to grammatical weight that determines the relative ordering of adjuncts and moved, heavy elements. Although weight-related syntactic and prosodic principles seem necessary for a full understanding of rightward movements, more work is clearly needed in this domain, as E acknowledges. The theory extends to head-final languages where the parallel movement of heavy elements is to the left. Despite the partially developed nature of weight theory, E argues that such an account is nevertheless superior to a Kayne-style analysis that does not countenance rightward movement at all. As before, E claims that the antisymmetric analysis requires ad hoc derivations and unnecessary complexity.

Chs. 6 through 8 provide detailed analyses of particular adverbial ranges. They illustrate the theoretical machinery developed in earlier chapters, flesh out specific proposals, and provide evidence for earlier assumptions. Ch. 6 analyzes event-internal modification by manner, domain, and measure adverbs; participant PPs; and restitutive again. Such lower adverbials adjoin to VP
or PredP in English (projections which correspond to internal events) but do not adjoin to higher projections, which correspond to inappropriate semantic types. This illustrates the semantic nature of the proposal. Here and elsewhere the data illustrate the basic expectations from the theory, though there are interesting complexities.

Ch. 7 analyzes adverbials in the middle range between the subject and the main verb. Such adverbs have received the most attention in the literature because of their interaction with head movement, negation, and subject position(s). They also seem to provide the strongest evidence for syntactic approaches to adverb ordering such as Cinque 1999. E accounts for these well-known ordering facts semantically, making limited use of verb movement. Representative examples as in 5 are acceptable or not depending upon whether the selectional restrictions of the higher adverb can be satisfied.

(5) a. They now have already moved the statue.
b. *They already have now moved the statue.
c. The club still is willingly accepting new members.
d. The club is willingly still accepting new members.

Ch. 8 analyzes topicalized elements in clause-initial position, as in Obviously this is going to bother you. The major debate concerning such adverbials is whether they are base-generated in or moved to that position. E claims that both options are permitted and this follows from his system. Building on the work of others, he proposes that topicalized arguments and adjuncts are in different structural positions.

In this chapter E also addresses the crosslinguistic variation in the availability of the immediately post-subject adverb position. It is possible in English but not French, for example:

(6) *Jean-Pierre certainement a parlé à Marie.
Jean-Pierre certainly has spoken to Marie
‘Jean-Pierre certainly has spoken to Marie.’

Others have tied this variation to the availability of preposing (Belletti 1990), the landing site of verb movement (Pollock 1997), or multiple subject positions (Cinque 1999). E argues persuasively against these alternatives and proposes instead that the T*-adjoined position illustrated is parametrically available based on the semantic properties of TP in a given language, whether or not regular rules for semantic interpretation apply there (399).

Ch. 9 closes with a complete summary of the proposal’s pieces: a relatively small number of general principles, few of which are adverb-specific. The syntactic picture E arrives at is rather conservative and in some ways traditional: UG allows iterative left and right adjacency and leftward and rightward movement. Functional projections and unmotivated movements are highly restricted. Most of the work in getting adverbial distribution is done by the semantics.

As E notes, his proposals have consequences for some significant linguistic issues: the number and identity of functional projections, adverb placement as a diagnostic on syntactic structure, antisymmetric clause structure, the nature of the syntax-to-semantics mapping, and the role of precedence in the grammar, to name a few. That the book has implications in so many domains and for so many language types is a testament to its coherence and thoroughness. While individual analyses may not stand the test of time (few do), no future work on adverbials should ignore E’s contribution.

REFERENCES


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Words travel easily, as we all know, and the vocabulary of English in particular is known to have encroached strongly upon many other languages globally. In contrast, structural effects of one language upon another are less common and typically associated with heavy contact (Thomason 2001). The book under review documents and analyzes the lexical influence that English has exerted on sixteen European languages, listing and discussing not only lexical loans as such but also processes of structural adaptation on the levels of phonology and morphology. While it can be read, used, and appreciated independently, it is not really a stand-alone publication but rather one out of three volumes closely related to each other because of their shared project design and histories, developed and monitored by Görlach, the mastermind behind the entire project and editor of the three books resulting from it. In a sense, it is a spin-off of and a companion to the editor’s Dictionary of European anglicisms (DEA; Görlach 2001). In turn, it is accompanied by a book-length annotated bibliography of publications on anglicisms in the languages of Europe (Görlach 2002).

The book investigates the importation of anglicisms into sixteen European languages—four Germanic, four Romance, four Slavic, and four others—thus ensuring a well-balanced and representative coverage of Europe’s languages and nations. The chapters are written by linguists, mostly from the respective countries, who had contributed to the DEA. The listing of languages and contributors includes the following: German (13–36) by Ulrich Busse and Manfred Görlach; Dutch (37–56) by Amand Berteloot and Nicoline van der Suij; Norwegian (57–81) by Anne-Line Graedler; Icelandic (82–107) by Gudrún Kvaran and Ásta Svavarðsdóttir; French (108–27) by John Humbley; Spanish (128–50) by Félix Rodríguez Gonzáles; Italian (151–67) by Virginia Pulcini; Romanian (168–94) by Ilincă Constantinescu, Victoria Popovici, and Arianța Ştefanescu; Russian (195–212) by Tamara Maximova; Polish (213–28) by Elżbieta Mančzak-Wohlfeld; Croatian (229–40) by the late Rudolf Filipović; Bulgarian (241–60) by Nevena Alexieva; Finnish (261–76) by Keith Battarbee; Hungarian (277–90) by Judit Farkas and Veronika Knieza; Albanian (291–300) by Rolf Köderitzsch and Manfred Görlach; and Modern Greek (301–30) by Ekaterini Stathi. The book has been flawlessly edited and typeset, except for the noticeable typo ‘Honophthongs’ (201). Addresses of contributors and three indices (of subjects, names, and words) are also provided.

The volume is characterized by a remarkable degree of uniformity of structural presentation across its individual contributions. All chapters have exactly the same subsections, thus exploring exactly the same issues and types of data in corresponding sections, covering processes of incorporation on the levels of pronunciation, spelling, form, and use in their respective languages. This consistency, conveniently allowing for comparisons of similar phenomena across different languages, has been achieved by editorial persistence and effectiveness; a blueprint chapter structure was prescribed to authors, and in addition, the chapter on German was written beforehand and circulated to the contributors as a model paper. The strategy has been successful: all contributions conform to the framework. Certainly some chapters are longer and more informative than others (the ones on Norwegian, Icelandic, Spanish, and Greek stand out for their comprehensiveness of discussion and richness of documentation), but all authors have complied with the rules and produced high-quality work. The result is commendable for its fundamental insights.