

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF SENTENCE ADVERBS

Sandra Mara Pereira Cardoso - UFMG

1. INTRODUCTION

A difficult problem that grammarians have to face concerns adverbs. Perhaps because adverbs play a variety of semantic and syntactic roles in English, they have been the least studied and the most badly treated part of speech.

In this paper, we will consider how sentence adverbs have been treated up to now. Our position is a reflection of the way in which both traditional grammar and contemporary linguistics (structural, transformational and eclectic approaches) deal with the subject.

The aim here is, of course, not to present solutions to the several problems raised by grammarians, but to compare their approaches so as to evaluate the various formulations that have been suggested for the classification of English sentence adverbs and their possible application in the description of English grammar.

As far as traditional grammar is concerned we will consider the analysis proposed by Zandvoort who, in spite of presenting some limitations inherent in the approach adopted by notional grammarians, proved to be aware of some points which even nowadays have been considered relevant to the study of sentence adverbs.

In our analysis of the problem the description given by Nelson Francis, especially concerning phonological aspects, will

represent the structuralist point of view.

The importance of transformational generative grammar may be felt through the influence it has exerted with respect to syntactic criteria. Therefore it could not be excluded here. Following this specific current we will consider the work of Eirian Davies, which, however, presents some gaps and limitations.

We also have to consider the descriptions given by Sidney Greenbaum in his *Studies on English Adverbial Usage* and the one given by Quirk et alii in *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. The eclectic point of view of these writers accounts for the fact of their being included in this paper. The relevance of their approaches lies in the fact that not only syntax but also semantics and phonology are taken into account.

More recently two other descriptions of English adverbials have been suggested.

In 1972, a different insight was presented by Jackendoff, whose grammatical theory incorporates an interpretative semantic component. In his paper, he considers that a cross-classification of syntactic and semantic functions is necessary to keep syntactic and semantics distinct. The importance of his description, concerning the subject matter of this paper, is mainly because of the restrictions he points out related to transformational approach.

A more recent source to be considered is the paper by Allerton and Cruttenden which also includes syntactic, semantic and phonological criteria to account for the classification of sentence adverbs in English.

The first problem we are faced with in the study of sentence adverbs in English is the lack of a rigorous definition

of the terms used and, consequently, the employment by several authors of either different terms, to designate different concepts.

Starting from the concepts, we will consider here what is understood by "sentence adverb" and the problems of isolating sentence adverbials as a class.

Since it would lead us to a very long discussion to go into all the complicated problems raised by every type of sentence adverb in detail, our attention turns to what Greenbaum has termed *Style Disjuncts*.

The controversial points as well as the similarities that may occur among the writers' formulation and the difficulties found in classifying the items will be pointed out.

Finally some conclusions will be drawn and at that point we shall be able to understand that it is impossible to classify sentence adverbs in terms of just one of the criteria suggested, whether syntactic, semantic or phonological. The problem is much more complex than it was expected to be.

Note: All the examples given were taken from the references.

2. SENTENCE ADVERBS

2.1 - Definition

Different terminology has been employed in almost every grammatical description to refer to the concept of 'sentence adverb'.

The term 'sentence adverb' is traditionally used to designate those adverbs that, as was pointed out by Zandvoort, "are often equivalent to a sentence (or clause)", as, for example,

WISELEY and PRESUMABLY in sentences like:

He WISELEY held his tongue.

- *He held his tongue which was wise.*

His own share in the undertaking was PRESUMABLY a modest one.

- *His own share in the undertaking was a modest one as may be presumed.*

(Zandvoort, p. 250)

An adverb functioning as a sentence adverbial refers to the whole combination of the subject and the predicate

There is a tendency for the adverbial adjunct to dissociate itself from the sentence it qualifies, and take up a semi-independent position. This may be indicated in writing by a comma.

(Ibid., p. 204)

Thus, FORTUNATELY in:

FORTUNATELY, I had plenty of food with me.

is a sentence adverb, distinct from QUIETLY in:

She QUIETLY sat down.

QUIETLY refers to a group of words outside the subject and does not take up a 'semi-independent position' with regard to the rest of the sentence; thus, QUIETLY is not a sentence adverb.

The terms 'sentence adverbs' or 'sentence adverbials' are also used in more recent works such as the ones by Jackendoff and

by Allerton and Cruttenden similarly referring to the concept mentioned above, though their approaches vary considerably in other respects.

Allerton and Cruttenden do not exactly define what a sentence adverb is. Instead, they present criteria to identify the items and to classify them.

Jackendoff also is not concerned with concepts and definitions since his insight of the problem is a theoretical one, and therefore related to formulation of grammatical rules.

Following the structural analysis of the sentence in terms of its immediate constituents, Nelson Francis defines a sentence adverb, which he calls a 'sentence-modifier', as

a modifier whose head is all the rest of the sentence of which it is a part.

(Francis, p. 399)

Thus, a sentence which contains a 'sentence-modifier' is

a single large structure of modification, consisting of the usual two immediate constituents: head and modifier.

(Ibid., p. 399)

His definition, however, does not concern adverbs specifically but refers also to other types of 'modifiers' of sentences, without characterizing what are traditionally called sentence adverbs.

It seems that the clearest way of defining a sentence adverb is the one presented by Greenbaum and by the authors of *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, though they do not use this term. They divide adverbials into two main classes according to the degree of their integration into the structure of the clause. Those that are INTEGRATED to some extent into the clause structure are termed ADJUNCTS (non-sentential) and those that are PERIPHERAL to the clause structure correspond to what has been called 'sentence adverbs'.

An adverbial may be said to be integrated into the clause structure if it is affected by clausal processes. Therefore, sentence adverbials are not affected by clausal processes.

Many writers include among these, adverbs such as THEREFORE and NEVERTHELESS, which have a connective function, linking sentences. This position is taken not only by Greenbaum, Quirk and the authors of *A Grammar of Contemporary English* but also by Allerton and Cruttenden.

Nelson Francis seems to be in doubt as to what to include them among. He presents adverbs of this sort as being sentence modifiers functioning as, what he calls, 'sequence signals', which correspond to traditional 'conjunctive adverbs'. He points out, however, that

they should, in fact, not be called adverbs at all, but should be treated as a separate class of function words and called by some such name as 'sentence-linkers'.

(Ibid., p. 471).

since their only function is to link sentences.

Eirian Davies is not concerned with 'linking' adverbs of this kind. In her paper she simply mentions them.

3. PROBLEMS OF ISOLATING SENTENCE ADVERBIALS

Various approaches have been proposed for identifying sentence adverbs as a class and for setting up their subclasses.

In general, grammarians fail to be precise about the criteria adopted or fail even to provide any criteria for isolating sentence adverbs.

One of the tests that have been proposed is that sentence adverbials are formed from adjectives which can take an abstract subject nominal (Schreiber, p. 83-102), e.g.

The idea was fortunate.

However, this does not apply to adverbials which are not derived from adjectives and does not even cover all classes of adverbials.

Transformational accounts of adverbs postulate that they originate from deep structure sources similar to paraphrases which do not contain the adverb. But generally cannot be expected in the underlying forms of surface adverbials. There are many cases where a related adjective exists but cannot be used to form a convincing paraphrase, e.g.

The men were INDIVIDUALLY asked to leave.

* It was individual that the men were asked to leave.

* The manner in which the men were asked to

leave was individual.

Irving FINALLY broke down and proposed to Daisy.

* It was final that Irving broke down and proposed to Daisy.

* The event in which Irving broke down and proposed to Daisy was final.

Tom ABSOLUTELY refuses to give up.

* The degree to which Tom refuses to give up is absolute.

* Tom is absolute in refusing to give up.

A positional criterion has always been applied to isolate sentence adverbs. However, they cannot be identified solely by position.

Most sentence adverbs may occur in four different positions: initial, medial before the auxiliary, medial between auxiliary and lexical verb and final position, e.g.

PROBABLY John was hurt.

John PROBABLY was hurt.

John was PROBABLY hurt.

John was hurt, PROBABLY.

On the other hand many non-sentence adverbs present some restrictions in their occurrence in these positions. For example, degree adverbs like SLIGHTLY may occur only before the lexical verb or finally

* SLIGHTLY John was hurt.

* John SLIGHTLY was hurt.

John was SLIGHTLY hurt.

John was hurt SLIGHTLY.

As regards intonational criteria we may say they are not

satisfactory at all. In initial position many sentence adverbs have a separate intonation-group and a falling-rising tone which many other kinds of adverbs (notably most of place and time) also have.

It was suggested that, in final position, most sentence adverbs have a low rising intonation, others, like DEFINITELY, must have a high fall. Thus it can be said that sentence adverbials obligatorily have a low-rise or high-fall in final position. The problem, then, is that it is also possible for those which have high-fall to have low-fall in final position and it is equally possible for many other types of adverbials to have high-fall in final position.

Greenbaum suggests some diagnostic criteria to identify an adverb which is not sentential, that is, an 'adjunct'. If an adverbial fulfills one or more of the following conditions it is an ADJUNCT:

1. it cannot appear initially in a negative declarative clause
 *QUICKLY they didn't leave for home.
 but
 PERHAPS they didn't leave for home.
2. it can be the focus of negation
 He didn't walk SLOWLY - he walked QUICKLY.
 but
 *He didn't walk PROBABLY - he walked POSSIBLY.
3. it can be the focus of interrogation
 Did he walk SLOWLY or QUICKLY?
 but
 *Did he walk PROBABLY or POSSIBLY?

Those that do not satisfy any of the above criteria correspond to what have been called 'sentence adverbs' which, according to Greenbaum, may be of two types: DISJUNCTS and CONJUNCTS.

To distinguish between them, he proposes another test: DISJUNCTS can serve as a response to YES/NO questions, though they usually require to be accompanied by YES or NO; whereas CONJUNCTS cannot serve as a response either to YES/NO questions or WH-questions even if they are accompanied by YES or NO. Examples:

Does India face famine? BRIEFLY, yes.

Is the analogy helpful? *HOWEVER, yes.

Allerton and Cruttenden, however, present some examples to show the latter test fails to assign correctly some of the so-called CONJUNCTS, which can also serve as a response to YES/NO questions when accompanied by YES or NO:

D' you think he's suitable for the post?

OVERALL, yes.

Did John do well in the exam? ON THE CONTRARY, no.

Eirian Davies was also unfortunate in presenting, among other things, an inadequate test for isolating sentence adverbs. By using the term CLAUSE COMMENT ADJUNCTS, she refers to those items which were classified by Greenbaum as DISJUNCTS. According to her, all other adjuncts which are not CLAUSE COMMENT can be subject to clefting, e.g.

INITIALLY I was rather against the idea.

= It was initially that I was rather against the idea.

(Davies, p. 5).

This is not true for other kinds of sentence adverbs such as INCIDENTALLY, OTHERWISE and even for some frequency adverbs like

OFTEN, NEVER or for some manner adverbs like QUICKLY, which cannot be subject to clefting, as was pointed out by Allerton and Cruttenden. (cf. Allerton & Cruttenden, p. 4).

Eirian Davies subdivides her COMMENT ADJUNCTS into two main classes: PRESENTATION and INTERPRETATION COMMENT ADJUNCTS which correspond to Greenbaum's classification of DISJUNCTS into STYLE and ATTITUDINAL ADJUNCTS, respectively.

Allerton and Cruttenden, accepting some of the categories suggested by Greenbaum and by Davies, propose four main classes of sentence adverbs according to a 4-point test based on the possibilities of occurrence for adverbs in YES/NO questions themselves, in initial position and in final position with nuclear accent and on their transformational relationship to adjectival and adverbial constructions. (Ibid., pp. 4-5)

They divide sentence adverbs into: INTERPRETATION, PRESENTATION, CONTINGENCY and CONJUNCTIONAL. The first two classes correspond to what Davies calls CLAUSE COMMENT ADJUNCTS and to Greenbaum's ATTITUDINAL and STYLE DISJUNCTS, respectively, whereas some adverbs of the second two correspond to his CONJUNCTS.

4. STYLE DISJUNCTS

4.1 - Concept

DISJUNCTS - whether STYLE or ATTITUDINAL - convey some comment on the communication. Therefore, it is not without reason that Davies refers to them as CLAUSE COMMENT ADJUNCTS.

The comment expressed by ATTITUDINAL DISJUNCTS refers to the

content of the communication whereas STYLE DISJUNCTS, as was pointed out by Quirk et alii

convey the speaker's comment on the form of what he is saying, defining in some way under what conditions he is speaking.

(Quirk et alii, p. 508)

The term STYLE DISJUNCTS is an adaptation of Jespersen's 'style-tertiaries' and first used by Greenbaum to refer to what Poldauf has called 'the form of communication'.

Jackendoff also distinguishes two types of sentence adverbs: those "relating the speaker's attitude towards the event" and those that "comment on the subject of the sentence." (Jackendoff, p. 56).

As was mentioned above, PRESENTATION COMMENT ADJUNCTS and PRESENTATION SENTENCE ADVERBS are other terms used by Davies and, more recently, by Allerton and Cruttenden to express practically the same concept of Greenbaum's STYLE DISJUNCTS.

4.2 - Subcategorization

Although Quirk et alii have given an adequate definition of such kind of sentence adverbs, it seems that their subclassification of the items which belong to this class is not good. Items such as BLUNTLY, CANDIDLY, FLATLY, FRANKLY, HONESTLY, SERIOUSLY, STRICTLY, TRULY, TRUTHFULLY are classed as STYLE DISJUNCTS which convey the speaker's assertion of truth of what he is saying (Group A), e.g.

SERIOUSLY, do you intend to resign?

FRANKLY, he has a chance.

STRICTLY speaking, nobody is allowed in here.

Another group (B) of adverbs expresses the speaker's "indication of generalization," as they pointed out, and includes adverbs such as APPROXIMATELY, BRIEFLY, BROADLY, CRUDELY, GENERALLY, ROUGHLY, SIMPLY, e.g.

BRIEFLY, there is nothing more I can do about it.

You ask me what he wants. Quite SIMPLY, he wants to move to a better climate.

A third group includes items such as CONFIDENTIALLY, LITERALLY, METAPHORICALLY, PERSONALLY, which they don't know how to classify and so, they set them up as 'others', e.g.

PERSONALLY, I don't approve of her.

I don't want the money, CONFIDENTIALLY.

Davies gives us three types of PRESENTATION COMMENT ADJUNCTS. The first group, referred to as SPEAKER-ORIENTED, consists of items such as FRANKLY, HONESTLY, which, according to her,

may be thought of as attributing a quality to the speaker himself as well as to his presentation of what he has to say.

(Davies, p. 10)

She gives examples:

HONESTLY, no one could have taken more trouble about it.

FRANKLY, the lecture lasted far too long.

The second group of PRESENTATION COMMENT ADJUNCTS consists of

adverbs which are not subject-oriented and can be illustrated by BROADLY, BRIEFLY, ROUGHLY, GENERALLY, e.g.

BROADLY, the essence of running a university is to know what you stand for.

The other group she presents expresses the point of view from which the speaker makes a comment. This group includes: LINGUISTICALLY, OFFICIALLY, PERSONALLY, e.g.

OFFICIALLY, these gates close at seven.

LINGUISTICALLY your description leaves much to be desired.

Quirk et alii consider such items as viewpoint adjuncts because they allow the features general to adjuncts, except that they cannot be modified. According to them, both viewpoint adjuncts and STYLE DISJUNCTS may have correspondences with 'speaking' but viewpoint adjuncts do not allow the other correspondences for STYLE DISJUNCTS.

Allerton and Cruttenden divide their PRESENTATION SENTENCE ADVERBS into four subclasses according to which of the transformations presented applies to them. The four subclasses are: 1) VIEWPOINT-ORIENTED: LEGALLY, SCIENTIFICALLY; 2) SPEAKER/LISTENER-ORIENTED: HONESTLY, FRANKLY; 3) STYLE-ORIENTED: BRIEFLY, LITERALLY; 4) VALIDITY-ORIENTED: BROADLY, OSTENSIBLY.

4.3 - Correspondences

It has been very common among grammarians to express the relationship of a STYLE DISJUNCT to its clause by means of a corresponding structure in which a verb of speaking is present. In such a corresponding clause the STYLE DISJUNCT is a process

adjunct and the subject is the I of the speaker.

A series of different paraphrases has been given, as, for instance, for CONFIDENTIALLY, in:

CONFIDENTIALLY, she is very stupid.

that may have the following correspondences:

I am speaking confidentially when I say (that)...

I am putting it confidentially when I say (that)...

I tell you confidentially (that)...

I would say confidentially (that)...

If I may speak confidentially I would say (that)...

If I may put it confidentially I would say (that)...

Other examples can be given:

FRANKLY, he hasn't a chance.

In all frankness, he hasn't a chance.

To be frank/ to speak frankly/ to put it frankly,...

Frankly speaking...

If I may be frank,...

However, not all STYLE DISJUNCTS will allow all the above constructions.

It is worth noting that correspondences have to be equivalent in meaning to the original clause. We may have some constructions that might be taken as related to a clause containing the STYLE DISJUNCT which are, however, different in cognitive meaning. For instance, the sentence

HONESTLY no one could have taken more trouble
about it

is not cognitively the same as:

It is honest that no one could have taken more
trouble about it.

According to Jackendoff, the existence of a paraphrase with an adjective construction is somewhat fortuitous. When there is a paraphrase its importance is that it indicates a lexical relationship and that the semantic structure of the paraphrase can tell us something about the semantic structure related to the adverb.

Jackendoff considers that the transformationalist position of predicting the orientation of sentence adverbs by means of the exact form of the paraphrase is "clearly untenable" since paraphrases are hopelessly varied. (cf. Jackendoff, p. 57).

In his opinion the presence of the I of the speaker or the subject somewhere in the paraphrase is also weak to predict whether the orientation refers to the subject or to the speaker since there are some cases in which orientation is revealed by the reference of the deleted subject as in:

To tell the truth, Bill has ruined his chances
for inheritance.

He has pointed out that orientation of sentence adverbs is much more a matter of semantics than of transformational theory, thus, it would be a loss of generality to account for adverb orientation transformationally.

It seems, then, that there is a conflicting point between Jackendoff's insight and the approach given by Davies with respect to their classification of items according to the orientation of sentence adverbs.

On the other hand, Allerton and Cruttenden consider that transformational tests are useful only to identify the majority of the members of the class. Those adverbs to which the tests cannot be applied are then ascribed to a group on the basis of apparent

syntactic and semantic similarity with the other members of the class.

4.4 - Intonation and Position

As was pointed out, sentence adverbs may occur in initial, medial and final positions within the sentence.

The most common position for sentence adverbs is at the beginning of the sentence. Unless some special intonation is given, most adverbs are to be considered sentence adverbs when occurring in this position in which they have a separate group and a falling rising tune.

When occupying medial or final position, sentence adverbs are often structurally ambiguous since other kinds of adverbs can also occur in these positions. In cases of ambiguity, intonation very often provides the intended meaning.

It is less common for a sentence adverb to appear in final position, but when it does occur there it takes a rising sentence-final contour, as it was observed by Nelson Francis. (cf. Francis, p. 408).

Allerton and Cruttenden consider that it is possible for sentence adverbs to have either low rise or high fall intonation when in final position.

It seems that the most detailed analysis we have considered with respect to the intonation of sentence adverbs was proposed by Allerton and Cruttenden. The other writers have also mentioned this point but not so exhaustively. The description given by Allerton and Cruttenden is concerned mainly with initial position. They have also treated intonational aspects of sentence adverbs in

isolated position, that is, as a sentence in themselves, following statements or questions.

As far as the so-called STYLE DISJUNCTS are concerned, Allerton and Cruttenden have made some considerations which could not be excluded here. As they present a different classification compared to other writers, their terminology and subclassification will be maintained at this point.

Although most classes of sentence adverbials can occur in initial position as part of the pre-nuclear tune, that is, without the main accent, SPEAKER/LISTENER-ORIENTED and STYLE-ORIENTED adverbials require a separate group with a consequent nuclear tune.

* | HONESTLY I don't think he will |

* | BRIEFLY he decided to give up |

Those adverbs which are grouped as VIEWPOINT and VALIDITY can occur as part of the pre-nuclear tune in initial position though they may take level tunes as alternative intonation:

LEGALLY | it's possible

BASICALLY | I agree.

4.5 - Intonation, Syntax and Semantics Combined

VIEWPOINT-ORIENTED adverbials have the possibilities of either (a) a separate group with fall-rise, or (b) no separate group and a fall followed by a rise later in the sentence, e.g.

How would you rate his ability?

(a) \vee LINGUISTICALLY | he is fairly \backslash competent.

(b) \backslash LINGUISTICALLY he is fairly \vee competent.

Intonation determines two different meanings here. According to Allerton and Cruttenden, in all sentences with a VIEWPOINT adverbial a proposition is offered with a reservation. In the examples above, reservation is marked by intonation. In (a) the speaker is less concerned with the VIEWPOINT reservation, he gives the impression he thinks the proposition would appear to be generally valid. Falling intonation in (b) implies that the general proposition may not be true or that the speaker expects it to be disputed.

Adverbs such as HONESTLY, SERIOUSLY, TRUTHFULLY, FRANKLY, CONFIDENTIALLY and CANDIDLY, which are called by Allerton and Cruttenden SPEAKER/LISTENER-ORIENTED, depending on their occurrence either in statements or in questions differ in their transformational relationships

| | | |
|-----------|---|-------------------------------------|
| HONESTLY | } | I'm quite fond of her. |
| FRANKLY | | |
| ↔ I'll be | { | and tell you I'm quite fond of her. |
| | | |
| | | FRANK |
| HONESTLY | } | d'you like her? |
| FRANKLY | | |
| ↔ Be | { | and tell me whether you like her. |
| | | |
| | | FRANK |

HONESTLY, SERIOUSLY, TRUTHFULLY when they occur in statements have a falling intonation with a separate group whereas FRANKLY, CONFIDENTIALLY, CANDIDLY have got a fall-rise with a separate group. The former group suggests some scepticism on the part of the listener and falling intonation asserts honesty and seriousness; the latter has nothing to do with the truth-value of the statement

but suggests that a concession is made by the speaker in saying something.

However, generalization cannot be made since there are cases in which TRUTHFULLY may also occur either with fall-rise with a separate group or, with fall plus "tail," i.e., the adverbial has a falling intonation followed by the rest of the sentence on a low pitch as a "tail" to the fall. It is also possible for HONESTLY to occur with fall plus tail.

In questions, both groups require a falling intonation:

\HONESTLY | d'you think he'll come?

\FRANKLY | d'you think he'll come?

Most of the so-called STYLE-ORIENTED (BRIEFLY, LITERALLY, METAPHORICALLY, SPECIFICALLY, etc.) occur with a fall-rise with a separate group:

^BRIEFLY | he lost his nerve.

META^PHORICALLY speaking | he put his foot down.

The group containing items like BASICALLY, ESSENTIALLY, RELATIVELY, SUPERFICIALLY (VALIDITY-ORIENTED) require a fall-rise with a separate group or fall plus rise with a slight difference in presuppositions in each case

SUPER^FICIALLY | he's a good teacher.

SUPER^FICIALLY | he's a good teacher.

In the first sentence, 'he's a good teacher' seems to be 'new' whereas in the second it seems to have been mentioned previously.

The approach given by Allerton and Cruttenden concerning intonational, syntactic and semantic aspects combined proved to be much more detailed than the others. For this reason, to make a parallel between them is quite out of the question.

5. CONCLUSION

Because of the great complexity that involves English adverbials, it has been very difficult to classify them and, as regards sentence adverbs, we have seen that many points have been left unclear. Some grammarians, for instance, have not even defined what a sentence adverb is. Others, on the other hand, do not mention this term, though they have set up some classes for what we may call sentence adverbs.

Different terminology has been employed in the classification of the items, according to the various approaches and criteria adopted.

We have also noticed that grammarians are not in general agreement about the items that are included in the several groups. Moreover, they either fail to be precise about the criteria to be employed in assigning adverbs to this or that class or fail to provide any criteria. Thus many problems have been faced for isolating sentence adverbs as a class.

For a grammatical analysis to be valid, rigorous as it might be, it would demand an explicit basis for the classification in the form of the criterion whereby grammatical elements are classified.

For the purpose of the grammatical description of sentence adverbs in English there are several limitations inherent in the approach adopted by notional grammar which consists of selecting items intuited to be similar and listing them mainly in terms of the position they occupy in a sentence.

On the other hand, the correspondence relationships treated in terms of transformational-generative grammar is not satisfactory at all, with respect to formulation of rules to classify sentence

adverbs. A classification based on correspondence relationships does not coincide completely with one based on syntactic features nor does it coincide completely with a semantic classification.

We cannot even distinguish sentence adverbs solely by position and intonation and punctuation, although for given items their function may be unambiguous in a given context if the items are in certain positions or are accompanied by certain intonation or punctuation features. Classification may be attempted on the basis of the probability of a particular semantic interpretation.

What we may conclude from the various approaches considered is that most descriptions lack completeness and that the study of sentence adverbs reflects a conflict that is not settled yet.

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