

ADVERBS OF DEGREE
IN DUTCH AND
RELATED LANGUAGES

HENNY KLEIN
University of Groningen

JOHN BENJAMINS PUBLISHING COMPANY
AMSTERDAM / PHILADELPHIA

Contents

Preface	ix
Introduction	1
1 Grading, Gradability and Degrees	3
1.1 An Introduction to Grading and Gradability	3
1.1.1 Grading	3
1.1.2 Adverbs of degree	5
1.1.3 Negation and understatements	6
1.1.4 Absolute adjectives	7
1.2 Grading in various Syntactic Categories	8
1.3 Classifying the Adverbs of Degree	14
1.3.1 Scales of implication	15
1.3.2 Proposals for classification in the literature	17
1.3.3 The classification used in this manuscript	20
1.4 Notes on Terminology	23
2 The Origin of Adverbs of Degree	25
2.1 Introduction	25
2.2 Issues of Grammaticalization	27
2.3 Expressions of Quantity	31
2.3.1 Discerning the grading function	31
2.3.2 Details on the grading use of quantitative expressions	33
2.3.3 Universals and expressions of completeness	37
2.4 Expressions of Distance	39
2.5 Identifiers and Comparative Expressions	40
2.5.1 Referring to objects	40
2.5.2 Referring to properties	42
2.5.3 Deictics and comparatives as adverbs of degree	44

2.6	Modal Adverbs	45
2.6.1	The process of change	45
2.6.2	Discerning the grading function	46
2.6.2.1	Tests for English adverbs	46
2.6.2.2	The tests of van Os	47
2.7	Qualitative Expressions	50
2.7.1	The process of change	50
2.7.2	Discerning the grading function	51
2.7.3	Overview of expressions around the neutral range	54
2.7.4	Overview of expressions with an extreme meaning	56
2.7.4.1	Expletives	57
2.7.4.2	Expressions denoting emotional impact	57
2.7.4.3	A striking high or extreme position on a scale	58
2.7.4.4	The incorporation of intensifying elements	58
2.8	Conclusions	60
2.8.1	Grammaticalization revisited	60
2.8.2	Source and grade	61
2.8.3	Source and restrictions	61
3	Semantic Restrictions on the Use of Adverbs of Degree	63
3.1	Introduction	63
3.2	Restrictions on the Modified Element	65
3.2.1	Absolute versus gradable	65
3.2.1.1	The modification of absolute predicates	65
3.2.1.2	The relativity of absoluteness	69
3.2.2	Inherent polarity: Positive versus negative predicates	71
3.2.2.1	Types of polarity for predicates	71
3.2.2.2	Inherent polarity and adverbs of degree	73
3.2.3	Comparatives and comparative-like expressions	80
3.2.3.1	Grading change	80
3.2.3.2	Adverbs modifying expressions with comparative semantics	82
3.2.3.3	Modifying superlatives	83
3.3	Polarity Restrictions on the Environment	85
3.3.1	Polarity of the environment	85
3.3.2	Views on the polarity sensitivity of adverbs of degree	90
3.3.3	The interpretation of the negation of a degree	93
3.3.4	Negating the various degrees	96

3.3.5	Adverbs of degree in monotone decreasing environments	103
3.4	Combining Restrictions to Environment and Modified Element	106
3.4.1	Strengthening negation	106
3.4.2	The evaluative polarity of a statement	109
3.5	Monotonicity Properties of Adverbs of Degree	114
3.5.1	A square of opposition for adverbs of degree	115
3.5.2	The monotonicity properties explored	120
3.5.3	Consequences of the monotonicity properties	126
3.6	Restrictions on Reduplication and Stacking	133
3.6.1	Reduplication	133
3.6.2	Stacking	134
	3.6.2.1 The syntactic structure of multiple modification	135
	3.6.2.2 Restrictions on a complex degree modifier	140
	To conclude	147

Case study 1

	<i>Vrijwel</i> and <i>Nauwelijks</i>: the negative side of the absolute	151
1.1	Introduction	151
1.2	The Function of <i>Vrijwel</i> and <i>Nauwelijks</i>	152
1.3	Constraints on the Use of <i>Vrijwel</i> and <i>Nauwelijks</i>	153
1.3.1	Summary of the constraints	153
1.3.2	Absoluteness	153
1.3.3	Possibility of approximation	154
1.4	Overview of the Modifiable Expressions	155
1.5	Modification of Generalized Quantifiers	156
1.5.1	Monotone increasing quantifiers	157
1.5.2	Monotone decreasing quantifiers	158
1.5.3	Non-monotonic quantifiers	159
1.5.4	The common element in quantifiers modifiable by <i>vrijwel</i>	160
1.6	General Constraints on the Use of <i>Vrijwel</i> Reformulated	161

Case study 2	
<i>Bar</i> and <i>Bijster</i>: two polarity sensitive adverbs	163
2.1 The Problem	163
2.2 The Survey	167
2.3 The Results	169
2.3.1 Judgements per category	169
2.3.1.1 Influence of lexical choice	170
2.3.2 Judgements of individual subjects per category	170
2.4 Data from the Corpus	172
2.5 Conclusions	177
2.6 Discussion	178
Case study 3	
<i>Noemenswaardig</i> and <i>Nennenswert</i>: a comparison	183
3.1 Introduction	183
3.2 A Short Overview of the Data	184
3.3 The Adjectival Use of <i>Noemenswaardig</i> / <i>Nennenswert</i>	185
3.4 The Adverbial Use of <i>Noemenswaardig</i> / <i>Nennenswert</i>	188
3.5 Why is <i>Noemenswaardig</i> / <i>Nennenswert</i> an NPI?	190
3.6 Conclusions	191
Notes	193
Appendix of Dutch Adverbs of Degree	207
References	213
Name Index	221
Subject Index	223
A. Index of lexical items	223
B. General Index	227