The Positive Polarity of EADVs

4.1 Introduction

In Chapters 2 and 3, I have argued that a proper semantic analysis of EADVs needs to relate them to the notions of presupposition and conventional implicature and that in order to incorporate them into a semantic theory, we need a three-dimensional formal language with CP and CI dimensions $L_{CP/CI}$. The multidimensional semantic analysis of EADVs not only solves the logical problem of Potts’ (2005) CI analysis but also explains the distribution of EADVs, that is, why semantically apparently synonymous EADVs show different distributional behaviours and how EADVs project in entailment-cancelling contexts. In this chapter, I will move to the distribution of EADVs in and beyond entailment-cancelling contexts. The aim is to show that $L_{CP/CI}$ can provide a type-logical account for the ‘polarity sensitivity’ of EADVs, that is, the observation that they tend not to occur in negation.

Polarity sensitivity is one of the most popular topics in generative linguistics. The idea is that in the lexicon there are items that tend only to occur in negative contexts and items that tend only to occur in positive contexts. The former are called negative polarity items (NPIs), and the latter positive polarity items (PPIs). EADVs are claimed to be PPIs in Nilsen (2004) and Ernst (2005, 2009). As (1) shows, the German evaluative adjectives\footnote{By evaluative adjectives, I refer to adjectives taking propositional arguments such as in (1-a), to be distinguished from their other uses, for example, in *ein trauriger Junge* ‘a sad boy’ or *Der Junge ist traurig* ‘The boy is sad’. Correspondingly, the evaluative use of such adjectives has the semantic type $<t,t>$ and their other use has the semantic type $<e,t>$.} traurig ‘sad’ can follow a sentence negation whereas its EADV counterpart traurigerweise ‘sadly’ cannot.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{traurig} ‘sad’
\item \textbf{traurigerweise} ‘sadly’
\end{itemize}
For syntacticians, this is a question of ‘adverb placement’, that is, how a certain adverb or a certain class of adverbs are linearly ordered in relation to other (classes of) adverbs and the rest of the sentence, and what the underlying syntactic structures containing them look like. Cinque (1999) proposes a universal hierarchy of adverb ordering, according to which (1-b) is odd for purely syntactic reasons, namely, higher adverbs (e.g. EADVs) should precede lower adverbs (e.g. negative adverbs). Semanticians working on polarity phenomena or syntacticians committed to a semantically motivated adverb syntax, though, make inquiries into what semantic properties the contexts where EADVs do not occur have and why EADVs do not occur in them. For Nilsen (2004) and Ernst (2009), the contexts where EADVs among other PPIs do not occur are negative. However, in addition to sentence negation and other negative contexts to be mentioned later, EADVs also tend not to follow quantifiers, no matter whether they are negative or not, as shown in (2).2

(2) a. *Bei der Hochzeit hat niemand erfreulicherweise gefehlt.
   at the wedding has nobody happily been missing

   b. ?Die Prüfung haben alle erfreulicherweise bestanden.
   the exam have all happily passed

If the EADV in (1-b) and (2) precede sentence negation or quantifiers, all the sentences become fine, as in (3).

(3) a. Otto ist traурigerweise nicht krank.
   Otto is sadly not sick
   ‘Sadly, Otto is not sick.’

2(2-b) is slightly better than (2-a). Frey (2004) has attributed the deviance of (2-a) to the fact that pre-sentence-adverbial positions are reserved for topics. According to him, niemand is lexically/inherently anti-topical (it can never be given information), thus it is excluded from this position. I pursue a different route to these data in the chapter. It has to be noted that both sentences in (2) are ok with prosodic breaks on the EADV, but I will not be concerned with such cases.