

# The "-Ly Manner Adverb Opposability Theorem"

Sam Clymer

[clymersam@gmail.com](mailto:clymersam@gmail.com) | [sec288@cornell.edu](mailto:sec288@cornell.edu)

## Abstract

This paper introduces the "-Ly Manner Adverb Opposability Theorem," which states that any "-ly" adverb describing the manner in which an action is performed must possess a definable scalar opposite to carry semantic meaning. A thorough review of English manner adverbs reveals strict adherence to this rule.

## 1. Introduction

This paper proposes a simple, formal test - the -Ly Manner Adverb Opposability Theorem - to evaluate whether manner adverbs meaningfully specify how an action is performed.

## 2. The "-Ly Manner Adverb Opposability Theorem"

An "-ly" adverb that describes the manner of an action must have a clear, definable opposite. If no opposite exists, the adverb does not differentiate a mode of action and becomes a rhetorically empty addition.

## Examples

- - Quickly vs. Slowly -> valid, informative contrast
- - Carefully vs. Carelessly -> valid, informative contrast
- - Awkwardly vs. Gracefully -> valid, informative contrast

## Special Case: Time-Based "-Ly" Adverbs

Adverbs like "hourly," "daily," "monthly," "yearly," "regularly," "intermittently" are not manner adverbs but time-frequency markers. These terms specify when an action occurs, not how it is performed. As such they are exempt from the -Ly Manner Adverb Opposability Theorem

## 3. Conclusion

The -Ly Manner Adverb Opposability Theorem is a strict linguistic rule that English follows. This understanding may better inform large language models on the explicit structure that English follows.