

A Comparative Study of Manner Adverbials in English and Urdu: Analyzing (-ly) and (-se) Adverbs through Functional-Typological Approach

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Received: 06-02-2026

Revised: 21-02-2026

Accepted: 09-03-2026

Published: 23-03-2026

ABSTRACT

Adverbs play an important role in linguistic structures of different languages as they modify adjectives, verbs or entire clauses to express nuances of manner, time, place or degree. The formation of adverbs relies predominantly on the addition of a suffix, in English and other languages which serves the role of inflectional or derivational marker. When suffixes are attached to the adjectival bases, they mostly encode manner adverbials. The synthesis of this research aims to gain comparative insights into the manner adverbials in English and Urdu language specifically adverbs that end at -ly in English and -se in Urdu. The analysis of this qualitative study has been driven by the integration of Functional-Typological Approach in morphology. The sample includes sufficient number of adverbs of manner of both languages i.e. English and Urdu which ends at -ly and -se respectively. The data has been collected by using documented sentences from newspapers and through the emic approach. The implication of Functional-Typological framework reveals how morphological strategies shape the functional roles, lexical attachments and productivity of adverbial expressions. Moreover, the findings also exposed that whether -ly and -se are functionally equivalent or not. However, this study presents a detailed explication of formation of manner adverbials in English and Urdu morphology to illustrate the comparative patterns. Ultimately, the findings mainly reveal that -ly in English and -se in Urdu both prioritize manner adverbials through adjectival bases. Yet their role as a suffix and postpositional attachments respectively constructs morphological realization which yield distinct structural typologies but similar functional roles.

Keywords: Manner Adverbials, Functional-Typology, inflectional markers, derivational markers

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of derivational morphology presents a compelling site for cross-linguistics research among which the adverbials play a predominant role. Adverbs typically modify adjectives verbs and adverbs. Hence, Adverbs function as modifiers and they can be classified into various categories in English based on semantic roles i.e. manner adverbials, temporal adverbials, spatial adverbials and locative adverbials etc. (Huda, 2022). Manner adverbial stipulates how action is performed. In English there is a high proportion of adverbs which are derived from adjectives by the suffixation of -ly (Huddleston & Pullum et al., 2002).

The synthesis of this research explores the morphological strategies employed by English and Urdu which interpret the semantic domain of “manner.” It specifically focuses on the comparison of -ly and -se ending

morphological markers of both languages. In English, -ly is categorized as a derivational suffix which can alter the lexical category of a base and makes the word an adverb. Quirk et al. (1985) notes that -ly serves as the primary marker of adverbial modification. In English, manner adverbs extend roles into domains including, sentence adverbials, degree modification and stance marking etc. In contrast, Urdu -se performs multi-functional roles (instrumental/ablative) and is often categorized as an oblique postposition or clitic attached to a modifier (Mangrio, 2016). -se is instrumental in such a way that it extends the meaning metaphorically and links to quality or state of action such as, *zor se* (forcefully) and *makkari se* (cunningly). However, -se is ablative when it shows comparison or degree such as *sab se* (all). But in Urdu manner adverbials usually express instrumental function in abundance as compared to ablative (Mangrio, 2016). The suffix -ly in English is phonologically and structurally dependent on its base whereas, -se in Urdu features phonological independence but functionally persists a role of a bound unit in manner adverbials. Typological studies usually seek universals that surpass individual language families. Moreover, manner adverbials are polysemous. These markers used to indicate manners also perform additional functional roles in many languages. -ly is less common in usage in English while Urdu -se shows polysemy and encode instrumental and ablative functions.

Thus, the formal differences between both languages demonstrate the need to identify functional similarities and see if -ly and -se serve the same functions despite having different forms. Functional-Typological framework supplement to cope with this inquiry. The present synthesis aims to extend work on Functional Typological approach in morphology particularly through the comparative analysis between English and Urdu. It also intends to highlight the productivity of manner adverbials. Productivity refers to the process of generating new expressions freely. This research is significant for its distinctive focus on morphological markers in manner adverbials (-ly vs -se) in an Indo-European and an Indo-Aryan language i.e. English and Urdu respectively. The implication of emic approach leverages native speaker's intuition. The dual source data facilitates a robust analysis of how morphological markers function across diverse lexical categories.

Research Objectives

1. To explore how English and Urdu employ the markers -ly and -se to encode the functional role of manner adverbials.
2. To comparatively evaluate the equivalence of -ly and -se across the two languages.
3. To highlight the flexibility and productivity of -ly and -se in attaching to different lexical categories and forming adverbial expressions in various contexts.

Research Questions

1. In what ways the markers -ly in English and -se in Urdu function as strategies for expressing manner adverbials?
2. To what extent are -ly and -se functionally equivalent?
3. How flexible and productive are -ly and -se in forming adverbial expressions across different lexical bases and contexts?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adverbs are the most heterogeneous and least studied category especially in Indo-Aryan languages (Mustafa, 2020). All languages express manner via distinct adverb class. The manner adverbials in English

are usually marked by -ly which makes adverbs out of adjectives i.e. adverbs are the distinct lexical category from adjectives (Alexeyenko, 2025). Huddleston & Pullum et al. (2002) suggest that adjectives and adverbs are connected inextricably, and they differ only by the suffixal marker -ly. The literature discusses evidences on adverb formation in Urdu and English with a keen focus on -ly versus -se in terms of morphological markers. The postposition “-se” forms manner adverbials in Urdu (Schmidt, 1999).

The markers for manner adverbials manifest partial functional equivalence in such a way that they are also used as a marker to show stance and degree beyond manner (Taboada et al., 2024). For instance, the ablative/instrumental -se in Urdu also forms manner adverbials along with degrees of adjectives (Mangrio, 2016). The typological perspective supports cross-linguistic variation in encoding the adverbial meanings. Typologically, English is fusional for word-formation while Urdu is agglutinative with case clitics. Diepeveen (2011) suggest that function-based view of morphology often blurs the formal distinctions while focusing on the marking of adverbial functions instead of category. However, in both languages manner adverbials answers “how” during circumstantial modification. Alexeyenko (2025) clarifies that manner adverbials with -ly at end describe “how” an event occurs and structure the relationship between the action and the manner.

The fundamental gap in the existing literature is the lack of morphological comparative analysis of manner adverbials in English and Urdu. A few studies have focused on the description of adverbs of manner in English ending at -ly such as, (Huda, 2022) and (Jahangir, 2023), and a few have analyzed the structure of Pakistani languages (see Mustafa & Mangrio, 2019; Mustafa, Anwar & Rasool, 2021; Iqbal, Mangrio & Mustafa, 2021), but their comparison through the functional typological framework remained underexplored. The equivalence of -ly adverb has been studied in contrast with other languages i.e., Russian (Александровна & Анна, 2017) etc. but not with Indo Aryan language. This synthesis fills the gap by providing a comprehensive evaluation of -ly and -se in terms of comparative analysis to illustrate their functional roles, equivalence and productivity.

Theoretical Framework

The Functional-Typological approach in morphology caters a robust lens for analyzing morphological patterns across languages to examine similar communicative functions. This approach became generally recognized in 1970s. The integration of this framework emphasizes how various languages of the world have similarities and differences and what patterns are universal across languages. It is considered a scientific approach of typological generalization through which structural and functional patterns of different languages can be compared (Croft, 2003). In this way we can discover universal truths about languages (Greenberg, 1963). The typological comparison underline universals in adverbial coding in this research paper. Therefore, the Functional-Typological Approach posits that structures can be best understood through their functions (Givón, 1984). One of the fundamental concepts in this framework is “Function Over Form” which in case of this study suggests that English manner adverbials employ a bound derivational suffix (-ly) (Александровна & Анна, 2017) whereas Urdu utilizes postposition (-se) for manner modification (Mangrio, 2016). Typologists compare languages to discover that languages perform same functions but are structurally expressed differently. Moreover, it suggests that morphological structures are shaped by the communicative needs, they are not arbitrary for instance, manner reflecting how an event takes place would remain constant across languages even though morphological strategies vary. Forms are different due to distinct linguistic systems, but they serve the same communicative needs. Hence, Functional-Typological Approach classifies languages to discover cross-linguistic patterns by highlighting that languages are different but follow certain universal constraints.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The synthesis of this research incorporates a qualitative research design for descriptive analysis of comparative study of manner adverbials between English and Urdu. The qualitative research design is most suitable for this research because this synthesis does not aim to mention any frequency or statistical distribution of manner adverbs. Rather this study only describes the patterns and functions of manner adverbials used in both English and Urdu language. However, this study adopts “interpretivism” to understand the concerning patterns in analysis.

Sampling Technique

The data for the synthesis of this research has been collected through the technique of purposive sampling. This technique is suitable because rich information has been required for descriptive analysis therefore, random selection was infeasible. Only appropriate sentences were targeted for data collection.

Data Collection

The dataset contains considerable number of sentences carrying adverbs of manners from both languages. The data was sufficient enough for the descriptive analysis. The sample size includes fifty sentences for English language containing manner adverbials (specifically those ending at -ly) and similarly fifty sentences for Urdu language carrying those manner adverbials, having -se postposition. This research constitutes dual sample sources. The sources of primary data collection include newspapers. For English, sample has been collected from Dawn newspaper and for Urdu, sentences have been extracted from Jang newspaper. This sample supports the real evidence for the existence of morphological patterns in both languages. The secondary dataset consists of ten sentences per language. This sample was compiled through emic approach to indicate productivity and flexibility of manner adverbials in naturalistic context.

DATA ANALYSIS

This research comparatively analyzes manner adverbials in English and Urdu particularly those ending at -ly and -se respectively. This comparative analysis has been conducted through Functional-Typological approach of language universals in morphology. This approach focuses on the similar functional roles across languages which in this study, helps to examine morphological markers in the formation of manner adverbials of English and Urdu. English -ly in manner adverbials is a deadjectival form (carefully from careful) while Urdu -se plays the role of a postposition but functions as manner adverbial as in *dhyān se* (carefully) from *dhyān* (care). Although -ly and -se are structurally different in form but they perform same communicative functions. Therefore, the major focus of analysis is to show functional equivalence rather than structural similarities. Equivalence in languages could be addressed by stating their strategies for formation of certain words, i.e. in this study involves the formational patterns of adverbs of manner.

The primary strategy involved in the formation of manner adverbs include the transformation of adjectival or nominal bases into verb modifiers which reflects how an action takes place. This can be clearly evident from the sample that quickly is derived from the adjective quick, carefully is derived from care, quietly from quiet and honestly from honest. All these words are derived from adjectives. The sample also depicted that adverbs can be used to show process (rapidly, quickly, slowly), manner (carefully, quietly, gently), attitude (curiously, passionately, honestly). Hence, -ly is morphologically productive for encoding manner.

Conversely, Urdu -se shows postpositional strategy which facilitates flexible adverbialization. For instance, *nār'mi: se* (gently), *tezi se* (quickly), *mā'hā:rāt se* (skillfully), *sān'd̥zi:q̥gi: se* (seriously), *xā:'mo:fī: se* (quietly). In Urdu, -se not just attached to adjectives but also with abstract nouns, lexicalized expressions, and emotional states. It indicates that Urdu not only relies on derivational morphology rather it also relies heavily on analytical structures as well.

The collected sample shows a strong functional correspondence between -ly and -se in English and Urdu, respectively. In both languages manner adverbials are expressed through the modification of adjectives or adverbs. The data shows rich evidence, for instance, slowly: *a:'hīṣṭa: se*, honestly: *i:ma:n'q̥a:ri: se*, quietly: *xā:'mo:fī: se*, angrily: *'yūs:e: se*, seriously: *sān'd̥zi:q̥gi: se*. In the perspective of typological approach, -ly is a suffixal marker whereas -se is a postposition. In spite of structural divergence, both languages converge functionally. The equivalence between -ly and -se is not absolute, it is rather substantial. The areas which show strong equivalence commonly express, manner, attitude, intensity, behavioral quality and procedural style such as, rapidly: *d̥zāl'q̥i: se*, carefully: *dhyan se*, firmly: *māz'bu:ṭi: se*, passionately: *'fiq:āt se*. These examples clearly demonstrate the correspondence between both languages in comparison. -ly and -se are semantically and functionally equivalent despite morphological similarities.

Furthermore, the analysis also illustrates the patterns of productivity and flexibility. The productivity was measured by base types and contextual adaptability of adverbs. In English, -ly is highly productive as it can attach to Simple Adjectives (i.e. with slow and quick etc.), participial bases e.g. -ly modifies increasing to increasingly. Similarly, -ly can also modify complex abstract bases which can be seen through “continuously” and “passionately.” Urdu -se also signifies productivity. It can also modify abstract nouns such as *i:ma:n'q̥a:ri: se*, *omdayi se* etc., emotional states e.g. *khv'fī: se*, *be:'ṭa:bi: se* etc., qualitative expressions e.g. *nār'mi: se*, *zor se* etc. and lexicalized expressions such as, *'hio:le: se* and *'īṭopke: se* etc. Conversely, English -ly and Urdu -se are not restricted to adjectival bases only. Because they appear in diverse contexts. This shows far-reaching lexical flexibility and productivity of manner adverbials in both languages.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed that English -ly and Urdu -se both execute similar communicative functions to express manner adverbials. Through the typological lens, analysis of manner adverbials cultivated the core findings which demonstrated functional convergence. Therefore, -ly and -se form manner adverbials by supporting Functional-Typological claims. It asserts that when languages are in comparison, they may show distinct structural properties but exhibit similar functional roles. The comparative study between English and Urdu highlights that English follows derivational suffixation pattern whereas exhibits postpositional construction forming oblique adverbials from adjectival or nominal bases. Nevertheless, both languages foster semantic meanings successfully, related to manner. This convergence pattern between -ly and -se is strictly aligned with Croft (2003) claim that cross-linguistic equivalence is functional rather than purely structural. Greenberg's (1966) conceptualization related to language universals expresses manner adverbials in terms of similar composition across languages. Though this composition doesn't follow similar form, however, performs similar semantic roles. In this way, it satisfies the Functional-Typological claim which prefers function over form.

In Urdu, -se is also used to express polysemy. Polysemy refers to one form having different related meanings. It serves the functions as instrumental, ablative or comparative. -se significantly plays a role of postposition showing clitic dependence. It reflects the typological contrast between morphosyntactic and morphological strategies for encoding manner.

Consequently, the synthesis of this research also concludes that in the domain of manner adverbials, -ly and -se possess high functional equivalence though English -ly slightly exhibits broader grammatical extension. Therefore, findings challenge the rigidity of categorization of English and Urdu as unrelated systems by highlighting parallelism between them. Moreover, findings reveal that Urdu encounters highly systematic strategies for the formation of adverbs of manner. Ultimately, the research features typological insights regarding universals in adverb formation suggesting function over form. It highlights the diachronic evolution of polysemous markers by the comparative analysis of an Indo-European and Indo-Aryan language.

CONCLUSION

This research through comparative analysis demonstrates the functional convergence between manner adverbials of English (-ly) and Urdu (-se). This Functional-Typological approach harnesses the findings of this synthesis. The findings address that English -ly and Urdu -se are vigorously equivalent in their fundamental function of expressing manner. Although the languages in comparison showed structural variations but they converge functionally and semantically. English primarily serves as a role of derivational morphology by adding suffixal marking -ly. Urdu on the other hand, uses a postpositional marker -se and serves as a derivational marker. Despite this variation, both languages effectively encode manner adverbials. This synthesis also validates that both markers -ly and -se show high productivity and flexibility across lexical bases as well as in communicative contexts. Overall, the findings illustrate the Functional-Typological view that linguistic forms across languages may differ, but the communicative function remains the same across all languages.

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