A couple of further observations about English adverbs

Concerning the difference between these two—

(1) TargetP

\[
\text{Target} \quad \text{Yet} \quad \text{ComplP} \quad \text{completely}
\]

(2) YetP

\[
\text{yet} \quad \text{ComplP} \quad \text{completely}
\]

So, (2) looks nicer, except it seems like specifiers don’t get in the way.

(3) John [concedes] [very well] 

So this is not just movement of the VP containing concedes into SpecwellP, because SpecwellP is occupied by very. Either:

- We need to allow for multiple specifiers, or
- A structure like (1) is at least sometimes right.

**Completely too? Consider almost completely…**

(4) a. John has already almost completely ruined it.
    b. John has already [ruined it almost completely].
    c. John has [almost completely ruined it] already.
    d. John has [ruined it almost completely] already.

(5) a. John has already almost [ruined it completely]
    b. John has already [completely ruined it] almost.
    c. John has already [ruined it completely] almost.
    d. John has [almost completely ruined it] already.
    e. John has [almost [ruined it completely]] already.
    f. John has [[completely ruined it] almost] already.
    g. John has [[[ruined it] completely] almost] already.

(6) a. John has not yet quite completely grasped the concept.
    b. John has not quite grasped the concept completely yet.

However, very works like we would have expected it to work—substitute very in for almost in (4) and (5) and we find that (4a–d) (thus (5d)) are fine, and the rest are bad. That is, breaking up very and completely results in a *.

So very completely is a true constituent. And quite completely, almost completely are actually two adverb phrases, with a specifier-space inbetween to host moved elements.

Note that quite or almost can be generated in various places. It’s weird that they aren’t specifiers because they seem to modify adverbs, but yet they don’t behave like very.

(7) a. John has not quite yet completely grasped the concept.
    b. John has not quite yet quite completely grasped the concept.
    c. John almost always almost completely eats the cake.

Maybe the weird fact about always comes from the fact that it is in a specifier position (like very) already, and so you can’t hop over it (since they specifier is full).

But what about almost always—where is almost if always is in Spec? The only solution seems to be to say that [almost always] is in Spec—almost is in the Spec of the Spec. Thus, almost can never be torn apart from always (like very couldn’t be torn away from its modifier).

(8) a. John usually almost always plays video games.
    b. * John usually almost plays video games always.
    c. John usually plays video games almost always.
    d. John almost always plays video games usually.
    e. * John almost plays video games always usually.
    f. ?? John always plays video games almost usually.
    g. ?? John plays video games almost always usually.

So, maybe the structure of the always phrase is like this:

(9) AdvP or AdvP

\[
\text{almost} \quad \text{always} \quad \text{AdvP} \quad \text{AdvP}
\]

\[
\text{always} \quad \text{Adv} \quad \text{Adv} \quad \text{always}
\]

\[
\text{always} \quad \text{Adv} \quad \text{Adv} \quad \text{always}
\]

Is there an upper limit to this hopping?
(10)  
  a. Frankly, I don’t care much for it.
  b. [ I don’t care much for it ] \_i, frankly \_i.

(11)  
  a. Fortunately, he had evidently had his own thoughts on the matter.
  b. Fortunately, he had [ had his own thoughts on the matter ] \_i evidently \_i.
  c. [ He had evidently had his own thoughts on the matter ] \_j fortunately \_j.
  d. [ He had [ had his own thoughts on the matter ] \_i evidently \_i ] fortunately \_j.

(12)  
  a. He was once perhaps brave.
  b. He was once [ brave ] \_i perhaps \_i.
  c. He was [ perhaps brave ] once \_j.
  d. He was [ [ brave ] perhaps \_i ] once \_j.

(13)  
  a. Since then, they haven’t usually any longer always cleaned well.
  b. * Since then, they haven’t usually any longer [ cleaned well ] always.
  c. Since then, they haven’t usually [ always cleaned well ] any longer.
  d. Since then, they haven’t [ any longer always cleaned well ] usually.
  e. Since then, they haven’t [ [ always cleaned well ] any longer ] usually.

Seems like there might be something here, to be worked out more…