

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Distribution of Intensifiers in Adjective and Adverb Phrases. A Corpus-based
Study.

Bc. Tereza Nýčová

Master Thesis

2018

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2016/2017

ZADÁNÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Bc. Tereza Nýčová**
Osobní číslo: **H16346**
Studijní program: **N7503 Učitelství pro základní školy**
Studijní obor: **Učitelství anglického jazyka**
Název tématu: **Distribuce intenzifikátorů v adjektivních a příslovečných frázích. Korpusová studie.**
Zadávatel: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Cílem diplomové práce je zmapování výskytu jednotlivých typů intenzifikátorů v příslovečných a adjektivních frázích v autentických anglických textech. Diplomandka na základě studia odborné lingvistické literatury detailně popíše jednotlivé skupiny intenzifikátorů, soustředí se na jejich formu, význam a funkci.

Následná analytická část bude zpracována dle principů korpusové lingvistiky, tzn. že si autorka k výzkumu zvolí jeden z reprezentativních korpusů současné angličtiny, kde se zaměří na použití jednotlivých intenzifikátorů ve vztahu k řídicímu adjektivu nebo adverbiu, bude se snažit identifikovat silné kolokace a následně se pokusí zobecnit sémantické vztahy obou částí. Případně též vezme v úvahu i vliv dalších členů v rámci fráze či širší kontext.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování diplomové práce: **tištěná**

Jazyk zpracování diplomové práce: **Angličtina**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Biber, Douglas, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech, Susan Conrad, and Edward Finegan. 1999. Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Crystal, David. 1990. A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics. 2nd ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Dušková, Libuše, Dagmar Knittlová, Jaroslav Peprník, Zdeňka Strnadová, and Jarmila Tárnyiková. 1994. Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny. 2nd ed. Praha: Academia.

Greenbaum, Sidney, and Janet Whitcut. 1993. Longman Guide to English Usage. Harlow: Longman Group UK Limited.

Huddleston, Rodney. 1993. Introduction to the Grammar of English. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Huddleston, Rodney, and Geoffrey K. Pullum. 2002. The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leech, Geoffrey, and Jan Svartvik. 1993. A Communicative Grammar of English. Harlow: Longman Group UK Limited.

Procter, Paul, ed. 1995. Cambridge International Dictionary of English: Guides You to the Meaning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Quirk, Randolph, and Sidney Greenbaum. 1996. A University Grammar of English. Harlow: Longman.

Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. 1985. A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language. Harlow: Longman Group UK Limited.

Vedoucí diplomové práce: **PhDr. Šárka Ježková, Ph.D.**

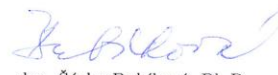
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání diplomové práce: **30. dubna 2017**

Termín odevzdání diplomové práce: **31. března 2018**



prof. PhDr. Karel Rýdl, CSc.
děkan



doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 31. října 2017

Prohlašuji:

Tuto práci jsem vypracovala samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využila, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

Byla jsem seznámena s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., autorský zákon, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Beru na vědomí, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb., o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, a směrnicí Univerzity Pardubice č. 9/2012, bude práce zveřejněna v Univerzitní knihovně a prostřednictvím Digitální knihovny Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne 30. 8. 2018

Tereza Nýčová

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor PhDr. Šárka Ježková, Ph.D. for her guidance, valuable advice and help throughout the whole process of writing this diploma thesis. I would also like to thank my family for support.

ANNOTATION

This diploma thesis analyses the distribution of intensifiers in adjective and adverb phrases in the British National Corpus. The theoretical part briefly introduces the two aforementioned types of phrases. The following sections provide a detailed overview of intensifiers, describing their history and development, factors that may influence their distribution as well as mentioning popular intensifiers in present-day English. The attention is then paid to the classification of intensifiers and to the description of individual categories. The practical part of the thesis examines and compares the occurrence of selected intensifiers in spoken and written British English, focusing on their frequency, semantic properties collocational behaviour.

KEYWORDS

occurrence, intensifiers, adjective phrases, adverb phrases, the British National Corpus

ANOTACE

Tato diplomová práce analyzuje výskyt intenzifikátorů v adjektivních a adverbiálních frázích v Britském národním korpusu. Teoretická část stručně představuje tyto dva konkrétní typy frází. Následující části poskytují podrobný přehled o intenzifikátorech, je popsána jejich historie a vývoj, faktory, které mohou mít vliv na jejich distribuci a také jsou zmíněny populární intenzifikátory v současné angličtině. Pozornost je dále věnována členění intenzifikátorů a popisu jednotlivých typů. Praktická část práce zkoumá a porovnává výskyt vybraných intenzifikátorů v mluvené a psané britské angličtině, zaměřuje se na jejich četnost, sémantické vlastnosti a kolokační vztahy.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

výskyt, intenzifikátory, adjektivní fráze, adverbiální fráze, Britský národní korpus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	10
1 Phrases in English.....	11
1.1 Adjective phrases	11
1.2 Adverb phrases.....	17
2 Intensification in English.....	20
2.1 History and the development of intensifiers	22
2.2 Popular intensifiers in present-day English.....	24
2.3 Factors influencing the distribution of intensifiers	26
3 Classification of intensifiers	28
3.1 Amplifiers	28
3.2 Downtoners	30
3.3 Emphasizers	31
4 Other approaches to the classification of intensifiers.....	34
5 British National Corpus	37
6 Analysis	38
6.1 Amplifiers	41
6.1.1 Maximizers	42
6.1.2 Boosters	52
6.2 Downtoners	59
6.2.1 Approximators	60
6.2.2 Compromisers.....	65
6.2.3 Diminishers.....	69
6.2.4 Minimizers	74
7 Conclusion.....	79
8 Resumé	83
9 BIBLIOGRAPHY	88
10 APPENDIX.....	91

LIST OF CHARTS AND TABLES

Figure 1: Delexicalization process	22
Table 1: A summary of the criteria for the division of adjectives into scalar, extreme and limit and the types of intensifiers they can be used with	36
Table 2: A list of intensifiers selected for the analysis	39
Table 3: The total number of occurrence of individual amplifiers in adjective and adverb phrases	41
Table 4: The total number of occurrence of individual downtoners in adjective and adverb phrases	60
Chart 1: Distribution of synonymous approximators <i>almost</i> and <i>nearly</i> in adjective and adverb phrases	65
Chart 2: Distribution of amplifiers and downtoners in AdjPs and AdvPs	80
Chart 3: Distribution of selected intensifiers in spoken language and academic discourse...	82

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AdjP Adjective phrase

AdvP Adverb phrase

BNC British National Corpus

Introduction

This diploma thesis focuses on the distribution of English intensifiers in adjective and adverb phrases in the British National Corpus (BNC). The aim is not only to describe the use of selected intensifiers but also to compare their occurrence in spoken and written language.

The theoretical part is based on major grammar books as well as on a number of academic articles dealing with the phenomenon of intensification. First of all, a general overview of adjective and adverb phrases is provided, focusing on their form, syntactic functions as well as classification. The following chapters are then devoted to intensifiers, which are dealt with in great detail. After defining these lexical items, the attention is paid to their development over the course of time, followed by a brief overview of popular intensifiers in present-day English, showing their unstable nature. Next, external factors which can influence the distribution of intensifiers are mentioned and, importantly, their classification into individual categories based on various effects they have is presented. The terminology as well as the categorization of intensifiers is not unanimous among authors. In this thesis, the classification as proposed by Quirk et al. is followed; however, other approaches are mentioned as well. The theoretical part is then concluded by a brief description of the BNC since it is the main source of data for the subsequent analysis.

The practical part of this thesis examines the occurrence of selected intensifiers in adjective and adverb phrases and compares their distribution in two contrasting registers included in the BNC, namely spoken language and academic discourse. Because of a large number of different intensifiers that can be used in adjective and adverb phrases, it is not possible to study the distribution of all of them; therefore, only 16 intensifiers are selected, representing each of the subcategories of amplifiers and downtoners. During the analysis, the attention is paid especially to the frequency of occurrence of the selected intensifiers, their collocational behaviour and semantic relations. In addition, the analysis aims to answer two hypotheses which are stated at the beginning of the practical part.

1 Phrases in English

1.1 Adjective phrases

The aim of this diploma thesis is to study the distribution of English intensifiers in adjective and adverb phrases. Therefore, it is essential to first define what a phrase is and then describe the two particular types in more detail. A phrase can be defined as “a single element of structure typically containing more than one word, and lacking the subject-predicate structure typical of clauses.” (Crystal 1990, 232) In English, there are different types of phrases and these different types are distinguished according to the governing lexical word which is called head of the phrase and constitutes an obligatory element. The five traditional types of phrases are: noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, adverb phrases and prepositional phrases. Each of these phrases may be accompanied by other elements but it is also possible for a phrase to contain only the head and thus consist of a single word. Given the focus of this thesis, only adjective and adverb phrases will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. Both adjectives and adverbs are word classes that are frequently found in all registers; however, adjectives occur most commonly in written registers and particularly in academic prose, whereas adverbs are most often encountered in conversation and fiction. (Biber et al. 1999, 96-97, 504)

As mentioned above, the different types of phrases in English are distinguished according to the most important lexical word of the phrase functioning as head. Therefore, it follows that adjective phrases have an adjective as head, which may be accompanied by complements or modifiers realized by words, phrases or clauses. (Biber et al. 1999, 96, 101) In other words, adjective phrases always contain an adjective as the obligatory element, which may be preceded or followed by optional elements. The class of adjectives has certain characteristic features, which will now be briefly mentioned. One of the basic characteristics of adjectives is that they can be marked for comparison and thus occur in the comparative and the superlative structure. From the syntactic point of view, adjectives can function either as noun premodifiers when used attributively, or as subject or object complements when used in predicative position. Apart from these two basic positions, however, adjectives can also be found in postpositive position and thus occur immediately after the item they modify, such as in *something useful*. When used postpositively, the adjective can usually be interpreted as a

reduced relative clause (*something useful – something that is useful*). In some cases, postposition is obligatory for certain adjectives, for instance when modifying compound indefinite pronouns or adverbs having particular endings, such as *-body, -one, -thing* or *-where*, as in *We're not going anywhere very exciting*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 60, 63, 402-403, 418) In general, however, postpositive adjectives do not occur as frequently as attributive and predicative ones (Huddleston 1993, 299). Lastly, a feature of adjectives important for the present research is that “they are gradable in meaning, that is, they can denote degrees of a given quality.” (Biber et al. 1999, 506) In other words, it means that they can be accompanied by intensifiers. Adjectives that are characterized by having all of the above mentioned characteristics are classified as central. However, some adjectives do not show one or more of the typical features of central adjectives and thus are considered to be peripheral. (ibid., 506-507)

One of the optional elements within an adjective phrase is a complement. Complementation of adjective phrases is most often realized by prepositional phrases or clauses, namely declarative content clauses, interrogative or exclamative clauses, *to*-infinitive clauses or gerund clauses. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 542, 545-546) The function of complementation is to “complete the specification of a meaning relationship which that word implies.” (Quirk et al. 1985, 65) Although adjectival complements are usually optional, certain adjectives require complementation. These are, for instance, adjective phrases that occur in a non-attributive function, as in *We were loath to accept their help*. Here, the complement in the form of the *to*-infinitive clause is obligatory since its omission would cause a change in the meaning of the head and lead to grammatically incorrect *We were loath*. It also needs to be mentioned that complements licensed by the adjectival head are considered to be direct complements. However, adjective phrases may take indirect complements as well. Indirect complements are those which are governed rather by a modifier of the adjectival head or by an inflectional ending used in comparative structures. An example of an indirect complement is: *This is still too hot to drink*., where the clausal indirect complement is governed by the modifier *too*. As far as the modification of adjective phrases is concerned, it is usually expressed by adverb phrases, determinatives, noun phrases, prepositional phrases or even relative clauses. However, the occurrence of relative clauses as modifiers in adjective phrases is not very frequent. Their usage is restricted in that they may only be used with superlatives. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 542, 547)

Adjective phrases, just like other types of phrases, fulfil various syntactic roles in a sentence. The most common roles of adjective phrases are those of a noun premodifier and subject complement, as in *He writes catchy tunes with lavish pop hooks and huge slices of melody.* and *He's totally crazy.* respectively. Furthermore, they may also function as noun postmodifiers or object complements. (Biber et al. 1999, 101) Adjective phrases may function as subject or object complements not only to noun phrases, but they may also complement finite or non-finite clauses, as in *That you need a car is obvious.* When functioning as complements of objects, an adjective phrase “often expresses the result of the process denoted by the verb.” (Quirk et al. 1985, 417) This use can be exemplified by the sentence *He pulled his belt tight.* In such cases, the result can be explicitly expressed using the verb *be.* (ibid.)

Since this thesis focuses on the occurrence of intensifiers in adjective and adverb phrases and, as Biber et al. claim, adverbs more frequently modify adjectives than other adverbs, the following section is devoted to the classification of adjectives. (Biber et al. 1999, 546) For this purpose, a model presented by Paradis is followed. In her book dealing with English intensifiers (degree modifiers in the author's terminology) of adjectives in spoken British English, Paradis describes three classes of gradable adjectives that can be accompanied by intensifiers. Her categorization is based on the model originally proposed by Allerton (1987) but she uses different terms as she finds them more appropriate. The three classes of adjectives are: scalar, limit and extreme adjectives. For better categorization, the author also establishes four criteria related to gradability of adjectives and describes the three aforementioned types of adjectives against these criteria. The first criterion concerns comparative and superlative forms, that is, if a given adjective can occur in the comparative and the superlative. The second criterion regards the structure “How x is it?” and the possibility of an adjective to be filled in the x position. The next criterion is related to whether the adjective may naturally occur in exclamatory expressions and, lastly, the author also bases her classification of adjectives with regard to the type of oppositeness of adjectives. (Paradis 1997, 48-50)

Scalar adjectives, as the term itself suggests, are associated with a scale. More precisely, they are characterized as “denoting a range on a scale.” (Paradis 2001, 5) One of the conditions that adjectives must fulfil to be regarded as scalar is comparability. In other words, scalar adjectives can form the comparative and the superlative. They can be used to compare two

referents as well as to describe two referents in terms of equality, as in *This car is as fast as that car*. Another feature of scalar adjectives is that they can be used in the structure “How x is it?” This question may naturally be used only with inherently scalar adjectives. The answer to such a question then indicates a range of degree, as in *How good is the book? – It is very good*. Next, scalar adjectives can appear in exclamations and they have equivalent antonyms. Examples of scalar adjectives that meet all the criteria are: *good, fast, long, difficult, interesting*. It needs to be pointed out that these examples as well as those that will be mentioned when discussing the two remaining adjectival categories are only illustrative examples of adjectives that are classified as scalar, extreme or limit; however, they cannot be regarded as an exhaustive list of adjectives of that particular category. (Paradis 1997, 51-53)

Next, extreme adjectives are those which “express a superlative degree of a certain feature” and may therefore be characterised as “implicit superlatives.” (Paradis 2001, 5) Extreme adjectives are similar to scalar adjectives in that they are also associated with a scale. However, the difference is that extreme adjectives can be understood as occupying outer, extreme ends on a scale. For instance, the adjectives *excellent* and *terrible* signify the extremes found on the opposite sides of the scale of merit, with adjectives such as *good* and *bad* that can be placed on the scale between them. Apart from *excellent* and *terrible*, other examples of extreme adjectives are: *huge, minute, terrific, disastrous* and *brilliant*. As regards the comparability of extreme adjectives, authors’ opinions differ. Some say that comparatives and superlatives are not possible, while others claim that such structures are all right and can be used. This diversity of opinions may be caused by the fact that extreme adjectives “already indicate a ‘fixed’ degree.” (Paradis 1997, 54-56) Further, it is rather strange to use the question “How x is it?”, normally applicable to scalar adjectives, with extreme adjectives due to their inherent characteristic of denoting the superlative degree. However, extreme adjectives, just like scalar adjectives, can be used in exclamatory expressions, such as in *How terrific!* As regards the types of oppositeness of extreme adjectives, they also have their antonymic counterparts. (ibid., 56)

Lastly, limit adjectives, as the term again suggests, denote some kind of limit. Limit adjectives are such adjectives that can be interpreted in terms of the relationship ‘either-or’. An example of an adjective that belongs to this category is the adjective *dead*, and clearly somebody is either dead or not (therefore the relationship ‘either-or’). Other examples of limit

adjectives are: *true*, *sober*, *identical*, *possible* or *sufficient*. They are “only marginally gradable” and, in fact, “their only qualification for inclusion in the category of gradables is the fact that limit adjectives can take degree modifiers, which is unusual with nongradables.” (Paradis 1997, 57, 64) An important feature of limit adjectives is that they are not normally used in the comparative and the superlative form nor in the question “How x is it?” since they are not associated with a range on a scale and they cannot be interpreted via the relationship ‘more-or-less’. Similarly, they do not appear in exclamatory expressions because they do not indicate a high or extreme point on a scale. Limit adjectives differ from scalar and extreme adjectives not only in that they do not mark a range or ultimate point on a scale but also with respect to their opposites. Scalar and extreme adjectives have their antonymic counterparts but the mode of oppositeness of limit adjectives is not based on antonymic relations. Limit adjectives “are absolute and divide some conceptual domain in two distinct parts. A limit adjective stands in a relation of true incompatibility to its opposite element.” (Paradis 1997, 58) Such a type of oppositeness is referred to as “complementarity” and thus limit adjectives are characterised as having complementary opposites. (ibid.)

It needs to be pointed out that it would be wrong to regard adjectives as exclusively scalar, limit or extreme since “there is a great deal of flexibility in the semantic make-up of adjectives, allowing for modifications.” (Paradis 1997, 59) Some adjectives are relatively stable in their interpretation while others are more indeterminate between different readings and prone to contextual modulation during which the mode of construal of certain adjectives may be shifted. For instance, the adjective *true*, which would normally be classified as a limit adjective when used in isolation and thus conceptualized as ‘either-or’ (something is either true or not), may take on a scalar reading. The different interpretation is made obvious when an intensifier which is not normally associated with that particular class of adjectives is used, such as in *very true*. The presence of the intensifier *very* suggests a scalar reading rather than the biased limit reading, which is normally associated with the adjective *true*. The intensifier thus helps to determine the interpretation of the adjective. In general, such “contextual modulation seems to be more common in the direction from limit to scalar, e.g. *sober* > *fairly sober*”, which is understandable since “it is probably easier to disregard existing limits than to create *ad hoc* boundaries.” (Paradis 1997, 59, 61) Such contextual modulations also concern non-gradable adjectives, which may, under certain circumstances, get an interpretation of being gradable, for instance *very Swedish* or *very married*. Again, however, “they require

clear contextual clues to get a different interpretation” because normally such adjectives are unequivocally characterized as non-gradable. (Paradis 1997, 161)

1.2 Adverb phrases

Adverb phrases are phrases which have an adverb as head. The class of adverbs is very heterogeneous, which makes it “the most nebulous and puzzling of the traditional word classes.” (Quirk et al. 1985, 438) Many adverbs may have different meanings and thus context is often important for the determination of their semantic categories. In fact, adverbs functioning as premodifiers “can be used with virtually any of the semantic functions that they have in a clause structure.” (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 582) They can express a variety of semantic categories, which can be seen in the categorization presented by Huddleston and Pullum, for instance, who mention up to sixteen semantic functions that adverbs can perform (2002, 583). Biber et al. describe only seven main categories and mention others that are not so frequent, such as adverbs of means or adverbs of purpose. The seven main categories are: place, time, manner, degree, additive/restrictive, stance and linking adverbs. (Biber et al. 1999, 552-558) Given the focus of this thesis, only the degree function will be dealt with, which is, as Huddleston and Pullum state, also the most common of the above mentioned categories. (2002, 583)

From the morphological point of view, three types of adverbs can traditionally be distinguished. These are: simple adverbs, compound adverbs and derivational adverbs. Simple and compound adverbs belong to closed word classes, whereas derivational adverbs represent an open class. (Quirk et al. 1985, 438) Simple adverbs are those which are not created by any derivational affixes nor by combining more elements together (although some in fact originally started as compounds but the independent meaning of the individual elements forming the compound is lost); thus, they are just single words. Compound adverbs, on the other hand, are characterized by putting together two or more elements to form a single item. As regards derivational adverbs, the majority are formed from adjectives by adding the *-ly* suffix to the base form of an adjective. This suffix is very productive since unusual and rare adverbs ending in *-ly* may be found in both spoken and written texts, including expository registers, as in *Every 20 minutes or so, the play guffawingly alludes to the non-arrival of some long-ordered calculators*. Sometimes, adverbs are derived by the process of zero derivation from adjectives that already have the *-ly* suffix. (Biber et al. 1999, 539) In addition, although less frequently, other derivational suffixes may be used to form adverbs from other word

classes, such as *-wise*, *-ways*, *-ward(s)*, *-style*, or *-fashion* (Quirk et al. 1985, 438). Apart from simple, compound and derivational adverbs, another category of fixed phrases used as adverbs can be distinguished, such as *of course* or *at last*, which have a fixed form and the independent meaning of their individual elements is gone. Concerning the distribution of adverb forms across registers, corpus findings by Biber et al. reveal that simple adverbs and derivational adverbs with the *-ly* suffix are the most frequently used types of adverbs. However, there are distributional differences in that in conversation simple adverbs are employed much more often than *-ly* adverbs while the opposite is true for academic prose, where *-ly* adverbs prevail. Even though many of the simple adverbs in conversation function as adverbials usually denoting time or place, adverbs functioning as intensifiers also often occur, for instance *very*, *rather*, *quite* or *pretty*. In academic prose, *-ly* adverbs perform many roles, one of which is that of modifiers of adjectives or adverbs. (Biber et al. 1999, 540-541)

Adverb phrases are similar to adjective phrases in that they may also be accompanied by modifiers and complements; however, it is not as frequent as with adjective phrases because only a few adverb phrases may be accompanied by complements or modifiers. (Biber et al. 1999, 103; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 570) Adverb phrases may take direct complements only if the adverb is created by the suffix *-ly* and such complements are usually realized by prepositional phrases, as in *The duel solves disputes independently of abstract principles of justice*. As opposed to adjective phrases, adverb phrases cannot be complemented by clauses. Nevertheless, there is an exception to this rule as it is possible for the adverbs *directly* and *immediately* to be complemented by declarative content clauses, as in *He came to see me directly he got the letter*. On the other hand, adverb phrases, just like adjective phrases, can take indirect complements in the form of clauses or prepositional phrases, as in *She spoke so softly that I couldn't make out what she said.*, where the complementation is directed by the modifier *so*. As regards modification within adverb phrases, it is again similar to that of adjective phrases since it can also be expressed by adverb phrases, determinatives, noun phrases, prepositional phrases or relative clauses. The same rule regarding the fact that modification by relative clauses can be used only with superlatives applies for adverb phrases as well. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 571-574)

Regarding the syntactic functions of adverb phrases, they are most commonly found either as modifiers in adjective or adverb phrases or as clause elements and thus functioning as

adverbials. Although less frequently, adverb phrases may also function as modifiers in noun phrases, prepositional complements (usually related to place or time) or premodifiers in prepositional phrases. It is possible for the same adverbs to be used as modifiers as well as adverbials, as in *This apparently complicated expression for pull-out torque gives the surprisingly characteristic shown in Fig 5. 8.* and *Surprisingly, the choked voice resumes.* In the role of modifiers, adverbs are more frequently found when modifying adjectives rather than other adverbs. They usually precede the adjective but in some cases they can also occur in postmodification. The position after the adjective is obligatory for the adverbs *enough* and *ago* but other adverbs may occur in postmodification as well. As premodifiers of adjectives, adverbs are more frequently found in conversation than in academic prose, although in academic prose there is a greater diversity as regards the combination of adverbs and adjectives. (Biber et al. 1999, 102-103, 538, 545-546, 549)

To conclude this section about adverb phrases, it should be mentioned that the classification of adjectives into scalar, extreme and limit as presented by Paradis may be applicable to adverbs that are derived from adjectives as well. Thus, they can also be divided into these three classes but the description of individual categories will not be given here again.

2 Intensification in English

Intensification is a linguistic process frequently employed in language since “it is a vehicle for impressing, praising, persuading, insulting, and generally influencing the listener’s reception of the message.” (Partington 1993, 178) The devices used to mark intensification are called intensifiers, which Méndez-Naya defines as “linguistics elements which convey the degree or the exact value of the quality expressed by the item they modify.” (2008, 213) Another definition that nicely summarizes the nature of intensifiers is found in the Cambridge international dictionary, where an intensifier is described as “a word, esp. an adverb or adjective, which has little meaning itself but is used to add force to another adjective, verb or adverb.” (Procter 1995, 740) It follows from this definition that intensifiers can be expressed not only by adverbs, which is the most frequent realization, but also by adjectives, as in *utter nonsense* (Méndez-Naya 2008, 213). Other less frequent forms of realization are, for example, noun phrases such as *a bit* or *a great deal* or phrasal fragments such as *sort of* or *kind of*; however, this thesis deals only with intensifiers in the form of adverbs because it is their most typical realization. (Nevalainen and Rissanen 2002, 360; Quirk et al. 1985, 591) Although the term itself suggests that intensifiers are used to strengthen the meaning of certain elements, it does not mean that they are associated only with an increase in intensity as they can be used to scale the intensity of an element down as well (Quirk et al. 1985, 589-590). To strengthen the meaning of an expression even more, intensifiers can be repeated, as in *terribly, terribly difficult* or their repetition may be combined with polysyndeton, as in *immensely hairy and immensely aged and immensely drunk* (Paradis 1997, 10).

Intensifiers have been the focus of many studies and many linguists have recently examined their development and distribution, often taking into account the role of social and contextual factors. However, the terminology concerning intensifiers differs since in literature one can come across various terms. For instance, Biber et al. (1999) use the term “degree adverbs”, Cocea (2015) prefers the term “intensifying adverbs”, Paradis (1997) talks about “degree modifiers” while Quirk et al. (1985) refer to them as “intensifiers.” It seems obvious why some linguists should choose the label “degree modifier” since, as has already been mentioned above, one of the two primary syntactic functions of adverbs is that of a modifier of adjectives or other adverbs and, moreover, intensifiers are related to the semantic category

of degree. (Nevalainen and Rissanen 2002, 361; Quirk et al. 1985, 589) Huddleston and Pullum are among the authors who use this term. They claim that it is not semantically appropriate to label modifiers in expressions such as *moderately cool* or *slightly unusual* as intensifiers since in such phrases the modifier does not intensify the meaning of the adjective but its effect is rather the opposite, that is, it lowers the intensity of the element. For this reason they find the term “degree modifier” more appropriate and talk about intensifiers only when the modifier increases the intensity of a given word. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 585) In this thesis, however, the terminology proposed by Quirk et al. is followed and therefore the term intensifier is used to refer to expressions that strengthen the meaning as well as to those that have a rather lowering effect on the element they modify.

From the syntactic point of view, intensifiers never function as constitutive elements of a sentence structure but they are dependent items modifying a superordinate sentence element (Dušková 1994, 465). Thus, as already stated in the definition of intensifiers provided above, they have little meaning on their own as they are only used to add emphasis to a particular element (Procter 1995, 740). Dušková says that intensifiers can be divided into two groups: adjectival (and adverb) intensifiers and verbal intensifiers. Most expressions intensifying adjectives or adverbs may also intensify verbs; however, some are used exclusively to intensify either adjectives or adverbs, such as *very*, *pretty*, *fairly*, *too* and some others whose usage is restricted to a small number of adjectives. (Dušková et al. 1994, 465-466) Although intensifiers may also be used to modify verbs, they are typically associated with gradable clause elements and therefore they are most often used with adjectives and adverbs (Nevalainen and Rissanen 2002, 362).

Many linguists view intensifiers as important devices that speakers use for social and emotional expression (Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 258). They are related to hyperbole because, as Partington says, “intensification is a direct indication of a speaker’s desire to use and exploit the expression of hyperbole.” (1993, 178) Since intensifiers are connected with the emotional expressions of speakers or writers, it means that the particular intensifiers used to carry the evaluation of intensity by the speaker/writer are often subjective (Athanasidou 2007, 557). One of the characteristic features of intensifiers is the fact that they are susceptible to change as old forms quickly become insufficient and new, more effective forms are established by speakers (Stoffel in Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 258).

2.1 History and the development of intensifiers

Intensification is considered to be an important and productive process in the English language especially from the point of view of lexical and semantic change. The elements which are used for intensification are subject to change and renewal over the course of time. This tendency goes back to the Old English period and happens ever since. (Núñez Pertejo 2017, 66) The reason for the continuous change is that once an intensifier is accepted and frequently used by speakers, it loses its force and originality and, therefore, tends to be replaced by new ones (González-Díaz 2008, 221). In addition, one of the reasons intensifiers undergo semantic changes is that speakers always try to use novel and original expressions that would get the attention of their audience and make their speech interesting (Peters in Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 257). Strong words which are frequently used among speakers in almost any situation and become too familiar gradually begin to lose their strength, which causes that new, stronger words need to be found to fulfil its function of adding emphasis (Robertson in Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 259).

New intensifiers go through the process of grammaticalization, more specifically delexicalization. Delexicalization refers to “the reduction of the independent lexical content of a word, or group of words, so that it comes to fulfil a particular function.” (Partington 1993, 183) The following figure illustrates the delexicalization process used with intensifiers as summarized by Tagliamonte and Roberts (2005, 285, figure 2).

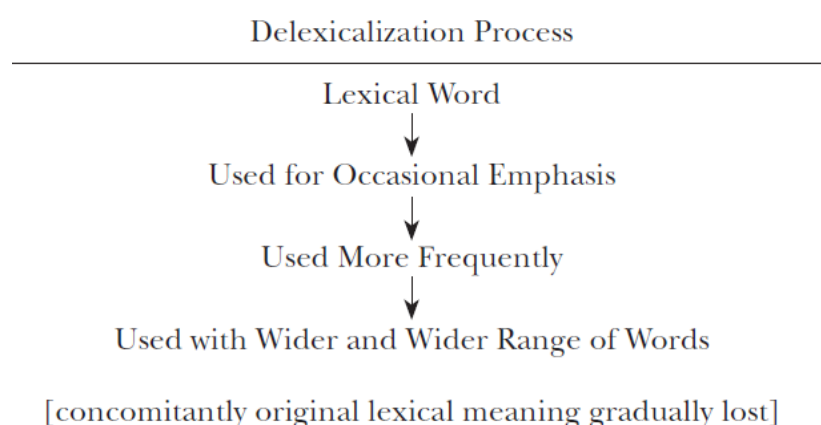


Figure 1: Delexicalization process

To sum up, the originally lexical word is initially used to highlight the quality of an adjective or adverb. Then, not only does it begin to be used more often for intensification, but it is also used with more adjectives than before. As an intensifier becomes more delexicalized, it loses its original restrictions on which adjectives or adverbs it can be used with and it begins to be employed more often and in more situations and thus becomes less effective. (Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005, 284) The last stage in the delexicalization process is considered to be when an adverb begins to be used with predicative adjectives and its original meaning is completely gone (Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 261, 271). There is also a close relationship between the intensifier's extent of delexicalization and collocational patterns. In general, "the more delexicalized an intensifier, the more widely it collocates." (Partington 1993, 183) A prototypical example of a delexicalized item is *very*. It occurs with a wide range of adjectives and adverbs and has almost no independent lexical meaning on its own (ibid.). Its role nowadays is solely to express intensification while its original lexical meaning of "true" has been lost (Breban and Davidse 2016, 221). Another sign of delexicalization is that items which were originally associated with negative connotations are now used with those having neutral or even positive connotations. For example, the intensifier *awfully*, which was originally used in relation to terror or dread now collocates with adjectives denoting both negative and positive collocations. Therefore, the collocational behaviour of *awfully* suggests that the delexicalization process is almost complete. A similar intensifier, *terribly*, which in its original sense also implied terror or dread, is considered to be less delexicalized than *awfully* since it is still slightly preferred with negative adjectives, although it can occur with adjectives of positive connotation as well. (Partington 1993, 183-184) Méndez-Naya also points out the link between delexicalization and collocational patterns and says that "diffusion and collocation with emotional/non-emotional adjectives is a good indication of the status of an intensifier along the delexicalization path." (2008, 217)

An example may be provided to support the claim that the intensifier system changes and develops in the course of time. During the 12th century the word *swibe*, which meant "strong", was popular but its meaning changed to intensifying "extremely" or "very". After the mid-13th century its popularity gradually decreased and other intensifiers became preferred, such as *well*. After some time, even *well* began to be used less and less often and *full* was used instead, which was, however, gradually replaced by *right*. Moreover, from the very beginning, the choice of intensifiers was also influenced by regional differences. For instance, when

swipe was in decline, the popular intensifier in the South and South Midlands of England was *well* while in the North and North Midlands, during the same time period, another intensifier was used most frequently, and that was the intensifier *full*. (Mustanoja in Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 259-260)

To conclude this section on the history and development of intensifiers, it needs to be pointed out that although new intensifiers are constantly being established, the old ones do not have to necessarily vanish from the language. Some intensifiers that appeared in Old English can still be found in Modern English. This is connected with a long-term layering and recycling of intensifier forms. (Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 263, 277)

2.2 Popular intensifiers in present-day English

Competition of intensifiers as attested in earlier stages of English continues in present-day English as well. Many studies on the distribution of intensifiers in different varieties of English show that *really* and *very* are among the most frequently used and stable intensifiers. One of such studies is that carried out by Ito and Tagliamonte who focused on contemporary British English. They examined the distribution and popularity of intensifiers in the area of York in the northeast of England. The findings reveal that the three most commonly used intensifiers are: *very*, *really* and *so*. In fact, the intensifier *very* comprises 38% of all the intensifiers used by speakers of all age categories in York. (Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 264-266) This is very interesting since *very* first appeared in an intensifying function already in the 15th century (Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005, 288). The intensifier *really* occupies the second place as to the number of occurrences and together with *very* they comprise 69% of all the intensifiers used. In contrast, *so*, which is the third most frequently used intensifier, occurs only in 10% of all the instances. However, its frequency is still relatively high compared to other intensifiers used by speakers in York. It needs to be pointed out that in their research Ito and Tagliamonte focused only on those intensifiers that strengthen the meaning of an element, that is, to maximizers and boosters. (Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 258, 264-267)

The results from the aforementioned study correspond to the research carried out by Tagliamonte herself, in which she also studied the use of intensifiers but this time focusing on

Canadian English in the city of Toronto. Although not representing British English, this study is mentioned here as well because it provides an interesting insight into the intensifier system as used in a different variety of English and it also shows how social factors contribute to the distribution of intensifiers. The study yields similar results as that by Ito and Tagliamonte from the area of York in showing the prevalence of the intensifiers *very* and *really*. These two particular intensifiers appeared to be the most commonly used intensifiers by speakers in Toronto. However, there is a difference between the two varieties of English in that the most frequently used intensifier in Toronto is *really*, followed by *very* and *so*. (Tagliamonte 2008, 365, 367-368) Therefore, as can be seen, the intensifier *so* has a similar overall frequency in both varieties. Although it is the third most frequent intensifier in both York and Toronto, there is a striking difference in the rate of occurrence. In the area of York, the intensifier *so* comprises only 10% of the overall distribution and is thus far behind *very* and *really* with respect to their number of occurrence. (Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 266) In contrast, in Toronto English *so* takes up 6% of the overall distribution and its rate is almost the same as that of *very*, which comprises little less than 7%. These results suggest that although *very* is still frequently used in Toronto English, its popularity is beginning to decrease and it may soon be replaced by the incoming form *so*. (Tagliamonte 2008, 368-369) Regarding the usage of different intensifiers with respect to sex of speakers, this study reveals that *pretty* is beginning to be popular among the youngest male speakers while *so* is gaining in popularity among the youngest females. Tagliamonte also focused on contextual factors, showing that *really* has no preference for either emotional or non-emotional adjectives, while *very* more often collocates with non-emotional adjectives and the emerging intensifier *so* is slightly preferred with emotional adjectives. (2008, 380-383)

As can be seen, the intensifiers *very* and *really* have established a strong position in the language and, although their first usage as intensifiers goes back to the 15th and 17th century respectively, they are still among the most popular and frequently used intensifiers in present-day English (Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005, 288). However, the results from these studies show that *very* is favoured most often by older generations of speakers but it is not used much among younger speakers. As Tagliamonte says, such findings “echo many contemporary studies of intensifiers which show that *very* is waning while *really* is dominant.” (Tagliamonte 2008, 388) In addition, the studies of contemporary intensifier systems discussed above also

show that *so* is slowly gaining in popularity, thus suggesting that it may soon replace both *very* and *really* and become the new widely used intensifier.

2.3 Factors influencing the distribution of intensifiers

In the previous chapters, it was mentioned that the use of intensifiers may differ depending on regional differences, sex or age of speakers. In fact, such social factors often influence the distribution of intensifiers and their role has thus been the focus of many linguists in the past years. Apart from sex or age, other external factors such as the level of education or social groups may also play a role. To show the influence of such factors, the above mentioned studies are discussed here again since they provide an important insight into how the distribution of individual intensifiers may differ especially with respect to sex and age of speakers.

Sali Tagliamonte, who studied the intensifier system of Toronto English at the turn of the 21st century, found out that age has a significant influence on the distribution of intensifiers. The two most frequently occurring intensifiers, *really* and *very*, are preferred by different age groups. *Very* is most often used by speakers over 50 years old but its popularity decreases among younger speakers, especially those younger than 30. On the contrary, the intensifier *really* shows an increasing tendency from older to younger speakers with its most occurrences found among speakers between 20 to 29 years old. The intensifier *so* is then most commonly used by the youngest generation of speakers, that is, those aged 13 to 29. The speakers between the age 30 and 49 favour both *very* and *really* to pretty much the same extent. As regards the use of intensifiers in dependence on gender, the study reveals that there are differences in the use of intensifiers by males and females in that the intensifier *pretty* begins to be a favourite intensifier used by the youngest generations of males, while the intensifier *so* emerges to be very popular with young females. These findings thus suggest that older generations prefer the well-established, delexicalized intensifier *very*, while younger generations tend to use more recent and developing intensifiers. (Tagliamonte 2008, 372, 384) The same pattern can be observed in York English, confirming that different age groups prefer different intensifiers. The analysis of the intensifier system in York with respect to age yields the same results in that *very* is most often used by older speakers, especially those older

than 35 years, but its occurrence rapidly decreases among younger speakers, who prefer *really*. (Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 267) Overall, these findings show that age plays an important role in the distribution of intensifiers since older generations of speakers tend to favour different intensifiers than younger speakers.

Regarding the use of intensifiers with respect to sex, many authors claim that intensifiers are associated especially with women. This tendency can be observed from the middle of the 18th century and some authors even label certain intensifiers as purely feminine expressions. (Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 260) To exemplify this claim, Lord Chesterfield, an influential politician of the 18th century, pointed out that it was women who first began to use the expression *vastly* in its new, intensifying sense (Jespersen in Ito and Tagliamonte 2003, 260). The view that some intensifiers are promoted mainly by women appears in more recent literature as well. Authors such as Stoffel or Lakoff claim, for instance, that the intensifier *so* is characteristic of female speech. (in Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005, 284) Results from the aforementioned studies actually provide evidence in favour of such a claim since *so* appeared to be used most often by women. One of the reasons women use intensifiers generally more often than men is that they are more emotive and thus often use such expressions as to convey their emotions (Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005, 289). Concerning women's language in general, researches have provided a list of features that are characteristic of their speech, including, among others, more frequent use of intensifiers and adjectives which "helps others to understand women's feelings and ideas more clearly, an obvious necessity for effective communication." (McEdwards 1985, 40, 42)

3 Classification of intensifiers

Not only does the terminology concerning intensifiers differ, but their division into separate categories also varies. Quirk et al. distinguish two main types of intensifiers: amplifiers and downtoners (1985, 445). Paradis, on the other hand, uses a different categorization. She divides intensifiers into totality modifiers and scalar modifiers (Paradis 1997, 28). Furthermore, Biber et al. distinguish between amplifiers, or intensifiers, and diminishers, which they also refer to as downtoners (1999, 554-555). In this thesis, the classification proposed by Quirk et al. will be followed on account of a comprehensive description of individual categories. The following chapters describe each category of intensifiers in more detail.

3.1 Amplifiers

Quirk et al. distinguish two main categories of intensifiers, based on their property of either strengthening or weakening the meaning of the item they apply to. These two categories are called amplifiers and downtoners. (Quirk et al. 1985, 445) Apart from indicating a certain degree of intensity, amplifiers and downtoners are used as fillers, providing speakers with more time to plan what they want to say, and they are also used “to assert epistemic meaning associated with speakers’ level of confidence in the truth of their assertions.” (Kennedy 2003, 469)

Amplifiers are intensifying devices that “scale upwards from an assumed norm”, such as in *a very funny film*, in which the quality of the film is strengthened due to the intensifier *very* (Quirk et al. 1985, 445). The category of amplifiers includes many intensifiers which can modify adjectives as well as adverbs. Examples of amplifiers are: *absurdly, awfully, deeply, entirely, extremely, highly, perfectly, terribly, too, totally* or *unbelievably*. As can be seen, many of the amplifiers are formed from corresponding adjectives by adding the *-ly* suffix. Amplifiers may be used with adjectives and adverbs on condition that the modified elements are gradable in meaning. However, they may also be used with non-gradable adjectives, such as in *John is very English.*, if the adjective refers to the behaviour of the referent or to the

racial background. Then, it refers to a quality which can be viewed in terms of a scale and thus amplified. (Quirk et al. 1985, 445, 469-470)

The class of amplifiers can be further divided into maximizers and boosters. However, the division of amplifiers and downtoners into individual subclasses should be seen only as a guide, showing the various semantic roles intensifiers may perform, because “the varying effects of intensifiers represent a semantic gradient, which is obscured by a clear-cut division into classes.” (Quirk et al. 1985, 590) As will be seen further on, some intensifiers have intensifying as well as softening effects and, in addition, speakers can choose from a large number of different intensifiers, some of which are synonymous (Biber et al. 1999, 564). The role of maximizers is to express the highest possible degree and they thus refer to the upper end of a scale. The following intensifying expressions fall into this category: *absolutely, altogether, completely, entirely, extremely, fully, perfectly, quite, thoroughly, totally, utterly*, and *most* in its intensifying meaning. Boosters, on the other hand, are used to express a high degree. The difference between maximizers and boosters is that boosters indicate only a high point on a scale, not an extreme one. A feature that is common for both maximizers and boosters, although it applies especially to boosters, is that they represent open classes; therefore, new items may be added to the subclasses and replace older forms that are becoming ineffective. (Quirk et al. 1985, 590) Both maximizers and boosters are said to be open classes, however, Cocea claims that the class of maximizers contains a relatively limited set of items while “the ability of rapid change and recycling of different forms is a typical feature of boosters.” (2015, 154) Intensifying expressions classified as boosters are: *badly, bitterly, deeply, enormously, far, greatly, heartily, highly, intensely, much, severely, so, strongly, terribly, violently, well* or exclamatory *how* (Quirk et al. 1985, 591). Although Biber et al. do not distinguish individual subclasses of amplifiers, they also take into account the fact that amplifiers can express various degrees of intensity, some indicating a range on a scale, others denoting the ultimate point on a scale (1999, 554-555).

As far as the distribution of amplifiers across different registers is concerned, Biber et al. state that in conversation there is a wider range of amplifiers compared to academic prose, including many informal amplifiers that are not normally found in academic genres, such as *bloody*, which is especially frequent in BrE conversation, *damn, incredibly* or *terribly*. Academic prose, however, more frequently employs the amplifiers *entirely, extremely, fully*,

highly and *strongly*. Three particular amplifiers occur with a similar overall frequency in both conversation and academic prose. These are: *very*, *so* and *too*. They collocate with a wide range of adjectives but in conversation there is a preference for *very* to modify general positive adjectives, as in *That sounds very good*. (Biber et al. 1999, 564-566)

3.2 Downtoners

Downtoners have the opposite function when compared to amplifiers in that they “have a generally lowering effect, usually scaling downwards from an assumed norm.” (Quirk et al. 1985, 445) Downtoners, since they are considered to be softening elements that reduce the intensity of an adjective or adverb, are often related to hedges (Kennedy 2003, 469). Just like amplifiers, the category of downtoners includes a large number of items, examples of which are: *almost*, *barely*, *fairly*, *hardly*, *nearly*, *pretty*, *quite*, *rather* or *somewhat* (Quirk et al. 1985, 445).

Downtoners can be divided into four groups, namely approximators, compromisers, diminishers and minimizers (Quirk et al. 1985, 597). While Quirk et al. treat diminishers as a subcategory of downtoners, Biber et al. view them as one of the two main categories of intensifiers (degree adverbs in their terminology). They use the terms diminishers and downtoners to describe one and the same category. (Biber et al. 1999, 555) As regards the individual groups of downtoners, approximators “serve to express an approximation to the force of the verb, while indicating that the verb concerned expresses more than is relevant.” (Quirk et al. 1985, 597) Although Quirk et al. describe downtoners (and amplifiers) especially in relation to verbs, the same rules can usually be applicable to adjectives and adverbs as well. Common approximators include expressions such as *almost*, *nearly*, *practically*, *virtually* or *as good as*. Compromisers are characterized as slightly reducing the effect of the element they modify and they include items such as *quite*, *rather*, *enough*, *sufficiently* or *more or less*. Next, diminishers are intensifying devices such as *mildly*, *partly*, *partially*, *quite*, *slightly*, or *somewhat*, which “scale downwards and roughly mean ‘to a small extent’”. (Quirk et al. 1985, 597-598) Diminishers usually premodify adjectives that have a negative connotation, such as *tired*, *expensive* or *difficult*, and their main function when used with such adjectives is to moderate the negative property of such an adjective. Adjectives of positive content are not usually combined with diminishers and when used with neutral adjectives, such as *long* or

short, diminishers imply a non-desired excess. Neutral adjectives “have no internal end-point. The end-point is inferred by the diminisher, and they get an interpretation of excess by implication.” (Paradis 2000, 2) This can be evidenced in the sentence *That skirt is a bit short to wear at work.*, where the use of the diminisher *a bit* indicates that the skirt is “a bit too short.” (ibid.) Lastly, the category of minimizers can be defined as expressing the lowest possible degree and, in fact, they can be viewed as the opposites of maximizers. They include intensifiers such as *barely*, *hardly*, *little* or *scarcely*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 597-598)

In academic prose, a wider range of downtoners can be found compared to conversation. They modify various adjectives in academic prose, out of which the adjective *different* is frequent. Some collocations “have to do with marking the extent of comparison between two items”, as in *slightly smaller* or *somewhat lower*. (Biber et al. 1999, 566-568) In addition, “specifying the amount of difference appears to be an important function for degree adverbs in academic prose.” (ibid., 568) One specific downtoner occurs much more frequently in academic prose than in conversation, and that is the downtoner *relatively*, which also implies comparison, as in *However, the morphology is still relatively simple*. (ibid.)

3.3 Emphasizers

In addition to amplifiers and downtoners, Quirk et al. distinguish another class of elements that can modify adjectives. These are called *emphasizers*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 447) Emphasizers differ from amplifiers and downtoners in that they “underscore the writer’s/speaker’s conviction about the word or phrase used, as in *a really good speaker* – rather than modifying the notional point of reference on a scale” and they also “add more to the *interpersonal* aspects of the text.” (Peters 2004, 285) Another difference is that *emphasizers* can be used with non-gradable adjectives as well, such as in *You are certainly welcome.*, but their effect in such cases is often close to intensifiers. *Emphasizers*, just like intensifiers, usually precede the element they modify, however, *indeed* can occur both in premodification and postmodification, as in *The play was indeed excellent.* or *The play was excellent indeed.* Due to their capacity to occur with non-gradable adjectives, *emphasizers* may be used with a larger number of items than amplifiers and downtoners expressing degree.

Examples of elements classified as emphaziers are: *really, indeed, just, certainly, frankly, actually, surely, clearly* or *obviously*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 447, 469, 583)

As can be seen from the many examples provided above, speakers and writers have at their disposal a large number of intensifiers to modify adjectives and adverbs. It has been suggested that the use of intensifiers is influenced not only by register but also by gender, age or other factors. In addition, some intensifiers are similar and interchangeable without changing the meaning of the utterance, as in *It's totally different.*, where the maximizer *totally* can be replaced by *completely* without effecting the meaning. However, in some cases the choice is more restricted. (Biber et al. 1999, 564) For instance, the downtoners *pretty, fairly* and *rather* have similar meanings and may seem to be interchangeable but their usage is different. *Pretty* is the most informal downtoner of all three. It can occur with adjectives and adverbs denoting both positive and negative properties, for instance *pretty clean* but also *pretty dirty*. *Fairly*, on the other hand, usually premodifies adjectives or adverbs denoting “a desirable quality”. (Quirk et al. 1985, 446) For example, if a room is warm enough, neither cold nor hot, and the temperature makes people feel comfortable, it can be said that *It's fairly warm in here.*, whereas using the intensifier *rather* would imply a different meaning (that it is too warm in the room and it is not pleasant). *Rather*, just like *pretty*, can intensify adjectives of favourable as well as unfavourable qualities. However, it is different from the two intensifiers in that it can modify an adjective in the comparative form. Furthermore, *rather* can be used with “certain noun phrases denoting adjectival qualities”, such as *rather a pity*. (ibid.) There are other restrictions on the use of particular intensifiers related to the semantic class of the adjective they modify. For instance, the intensifiers *fairly* and *entirely* occur in positive contexts but *rather, utterly* and *completely* are more frequent with adjectives of negative connotations. (Dušková et al. 1994, 467) Similarly, *utterly* and *perfectly* are usually used with adjectives denoting negative evaluation and positive evaluation respectively while *most* as an intensifier is preferred with subjective adjectives rather than with objective ones. (Quirk et al. 1985, 469)

Concerning the premodification of adjectives and adverbs in comparatives, amplifiers such as *much* or *very much* are often used, both for inflected and periphrastic forms of the comparative, as in *The job was (very) much easier than I thought*. Other intensifiers that can modify comparatives are, for instance, *somewhat, rather*, intensifying noun phrases such as *a*

great/good deal, a lot or a good bit. On the other hand, premodification of superlatives is realized by *very* for non-periphrastic forms but the same intensifier cannot normally be used with periphrastic superlatives, which are modified by expressions such as *far (and away), by far or ever.* (Quirk et al. 1985, 472-474)

In addition, although intensifiers may be divided into two distinct categories, some elements may function as both amplifiers and downtoners, depending on the element they modify and contextual factors. An example of an intensifier showing such a dual membership is *quite*, which can be used as an amplifier meaning “absolutely” or “completely”, as in *She’s quite right.*, or it can function as a downtoner, such as in *That’s quite good.*, where the intensifier can be interpreted as “fairly” or “rather”. (Quirk et al. 1985, 446)

4 Other approaches to the classification of intensifiers

Although this thesis follows Quirk et al. and their classification of intensifiers, there are other approaches and other models of classification which differ from that of Quirk. It has already been mentioned that Biber et al. divide degree adverbs into amplifiers, also called intensifiers, and diminishers, which are also referred to as downtoners. (1999, 554-555). In her work, Paradis comments on Allerton (1987) who distinguishes scalar modifiers, telic modifiers, absolute modifiers and differential modifiers. (Allerton in Paradis 1997, 24-25) Paradis then summarizes the main differences between the classification of intensifiers by Allerton and Quirk et al. She says that Allerton's classification differs in that he divides intensifiers on the bases of "various semantic features that correspond to the names of the groups" and the four categories are not interrelated, while Quirk et al. distinguish individual categories according to the intensifying effects of the elements. (Paradis 1997, 24-25) She further compares the two models of classification and points that Allerton's category of scalar modifiers contains Quirk et al.'s boosters, diminishers, compromisers and minimizers. Telic modifiers correspond to approximators and minimizers while absolute degree modifiers are the same as Quirk's maximizers. The last category distinguished by Allerton, differential modifiers, deals with modifiers of comparatives, which are also mentioned by Quirk et al. but not as a separate category of intensifiers. An important difference between these two models is, however, that Allerton takes into account adjectives that can collocate with the particular types of intensifiers. (Paradis 1997, 25)

Paradis, who also prefers the term degree modifier, approaches intensifiers from yet another perspective. Taking into account the models presented by Quirk et al. as well as Allerton, she distinguishes two main types of degree modifiers. These are totality modifiers and scalar modifiers. (Paradis 1997, 26-28) Scalar modifiers "indicate a range on a scale of the gradable property expressed by the adjective they modify and are in that respect unbounded." (Paradis 2001, 3-4) Among others, they include items such as *very*, *terribly* or *fairly*. On the other hand, totality modifiers, such as *completely*, *absolutely* and *almost*, "relate to a definite and precise value of the property" and are considered to be bounded. (ibid.) Each category then includes intensifiers which have reinforcing as well as attenuating effects on the item they modify. Therefore, scalar modifiers are further categorized into boosters, which have a

reinforcing effect, and moderators and diminishers, which function as attenuators. Totality modifiers contain reinforcing maximizers and attenuating approximators. As can be seen, Paradis distinguishes the same categories as Quirk et al. except for her moderators, which, however, correspond to Quirk's category of compromisers. (Paradis 1997, 27-28)

In the chapter dealing with adjective and adverb phrases, three classes of adjectives were described. The individual classes can also be viewed in terms of scalarity or totality because "some gradable adjectives are associated with a definite boundary, or totality, e.g. *identical*, *true* and *dead*, while others are unbounded and conceptualized according to a scale, *long*, *good*, *fast*." (Paradis 2000, 2) Regarding the combinations of intensifiers with particular adjectives, Paradis emphasizes that there should be a harmonious relationship between the intensifier and the adjective it modifies. Scalar degree modifiers are thus usually used with scalar adjectives since both express a range on a scale. Extreme adjectives cannot be usually combined with modifiers typically used with scalar adjectives because extreme adjectives indicate an extreme point on a conceived scale while scalar modifiers express a range on a scale, not the ultimate point. Therefore, extreme adjectives are used with a different set of intensifiers, most often with reinforcing totality modifiers, that is, with maximizers. (Paradis 2001, 4-5) Extreme adjectives are compatible with maximizers since "the function of the maximizers is to reinforce the extreme position of the adjectives" and both denote the ultimate point (Paradis 1997, 56-57). Examples of extreme adjectives premodified by reinforcing totality modifiers are: *absolutely excellent* and *totally brilliant*. Similarly, limit adjectives are not normally combined with scalar degree modifiers but they are used with totality modifiers instead, as in *perfectly true* or *completely dead*. (ibid., 56, 58) Because limit adjectives are absolute, they are not associated with a scale. If the adjectives *dead/alive* are taken as examples, there is no point putting them on a scale because if somebody is alive, it logically follows that s/he is not dead. (Paradis 2001, 6)

The following table summarizes the categorization of adjectives and the types of intensifiers they combine with.

Defining features	Scalar adjectives	Extreme adjectives	Limit adjectives
Comparison	yes	yes/no	no
'How x is it?'	yes	no	no
'How x!'	yes	yes	no
Oppositeness	antonymy	antonymy	complementarity
Degree modifiers	Scalar modifiers	Totality modifiers	Totality modifiers
	boosters	maximizers	maximizers
	moderators	+ <i>most</i>	approximators
	diminishers		

Table 1: A summary of the criteria for the division of adjectives into scalar, extreme and limit and the types of intensifiers they can be used with. (taken from Paradis 1997, 62, table 3-2)

5 British National Corpus

The practical part of this thesis focuses on the distribution of intensifiers in adjective and adverb phrases in authentic English texts. For this purpose, the British National Corpus was selected as the basic source of data for examining the intensifiers' use. Therefore, before moving to the analysis itself, a brief description of the corpus is provided.

The British National Corpus, or BNC, is a large electronic corpus containing texts from various genres. The corpus was initiated by Oxford University Press and the material for the corpus was collected in the period between the 1980s and early 1990s. (<https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>) In total, the British National Corpus contains 100 million words and the various genres, representing both spoken and written English, include fiction, magazines, newspapers or academic papers. The written part of the corpus comprises 90% of all the materials and contains texts such as extracts from newspapers, journals, academic papers, popular fiction, published as well as unpublished letters, memoranda or school and university essays. The spoken part, which comprises 10%, provides, among others, “orthographic transcriptions of unscripted informal conversations”, business and government meetings, radio shows, telephone conversation and other spoken materials recorded in different contexts. (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/>)

The British National Corpus, as the name itself suggests, focuses only on British English, although words from other languages or varieties may be encountered in the corpus as well. The corpus does not deal with the historical development of British English but aims at providing a representative sample of texts produced in the late 20th century. As mentioned above, the corpus does not focus on one particular genre or subject matter but contains a variety of texts that come from various subject fields, genres and registers. Concerning the written part of the corpus, “samples of 45,000 words are taken from various parts of single-author texts.” (<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/>) Texts that are shorter or texts by various authors are not only sampled but provided in full extent. The reason for sampling longer texts is that it “allows for a wider coverage of texts within the 100 million limit, and avoids over-representing idiosyncratic texts.” (ibid.)

6 Analysis

The present analysis is concerned with the distribution of selected intensifiers in adjective and adverb phrases. The aim of the analysis is to examine not only the frequency of particular intensifiers and differences in use but also their collocational behaviour as well as semantic relations of the collocating items in order to confirm two hypotheses stated for this thesis. The first hypothesis is that intensifiers are more often used in spoken language than in academic discourse since they are often associated with hyperbole and may be used to give speakers more time to think about what to say. The second hypothesis, based on Quirk et al., is to confirm that the intensifier *utterly* tends to modify adjectives of negative connotation while a member of the same class, *perfectly*, shows an opposite preference and collocates with positive adjectives. (Quirk et al. 1985, 469)

Since there is a large number of various intensifiers speakers can choose to strengthen or weaken the effect of an adjective or adverb, it is obviously not possible to study the distribution of all of them. Therefore, the analysis focuses only on selected items representing various levels of degree. When selecting intensifiers for the present analysis, one of the major grammar books was consulted, namely that by Quirk et al., because they provide a comprehensive list of intensifiers belonging to each subcategory. It needs to be mentioned that the attention is paid only to the two contrasting categories of amplifiers and downtoners. Emphasizers are not taken into account because they are different from the two examined categories in that they do not have to modify only gradable elements and they are not primarily concerned with expressing degree. The analysis focuses only on intensifying devices that can strengthen or soften the meaning of an element they modify. The procedure when selecting particular intensifiers was thus as follows. All examples of amplifiers and downtoners as presented by Quirk et al. were noted down, comprising of 47 amplifiers and 38 downtoners of various types. However, not all of them are examined. Only those realized by adverbs were taken into account, thus, for example, excluding intensifiers such as *a great deal*, *a bit*, *in part*, *in the least* or *kind of*. In addition, some particular intensifiers were left out because of their nature. Thus, *quite* was excluded from the search because it is “a particularly problematic word” and it is usually very difficult to determine its function since it can act as an amplifier as well as downtoner and when functioning as a downtoner it can express various levels of degree. (Paradis 1997, 18) *More* and *most*, although listed as intensifiers by Quirk et

al., were also excluded because their most common role is to mark the comparative and superlative. After excluding such items, a list of 56 intensifiers was created, including both amplifiers and downtoners. Then, all of these intensifiers were divided into individual subclasses of amplifiers and downtoners and checked in the British National Corpus. To represent equally those intensifiers that add to the intensity as well as those that lower the intensity of a word, the same number of amplifiers and downtoners was chosen, that is, 8 intensifiers from each category, amounting to the total number of 16 intensifiers examined in this thesis. The particular intensifiers were chosen according to their frequency and specificity. In other words, from each subcategory of amplifiers, the two most widely used intensifiers were selected. In addition, two specific intensifiers, either with respect to their frequency of occurrence, distribution across registers or collocational patterns, were chosen, thus amounting to 4 maximizers and 4 boosters. The same procedure was followed with downtoners, however, only two intensifiers were chosen here from each subcategory, that is, one intensifier which is the most frequent and one intensifier in some respect specific or unique. Therefore, as has been mentioned above, a list of 16 intensifiers in total was comprised. The following table presents the selected intensifiers which are to be analyzed:

AMPLIFIERS		DOWNTONERS			
Maximizers	Boosters	Approximators	Compromisers	Diminishers	Minimizers
Extremely	Very	Almost	Enough	Slightly	Hardly
Absolutely	Too	Nearly	Rather	Somewhat	Barely
Perfectly	Highly				
Utterly	Severely				

Table 2: A list of intensifiers selected for the analysis.

In addition, the analysis aims to compare the distribution of individual intensifiers in two different registers, namely spoken language and academic discourse. The spoken section of the BNC contains almost 10 million words while academic discourse contains over 15 million words (<https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>). These two particular genres were chosen because of their contrasting nature. There are obviously many differences between spoken and written language and these differences play a role in the distribution of intensifiers as well. As will be seen, spoken language differs from academic discourse with respect to the distribution of

particular intensifiers and it also shows different preferences for the combinations of intensifiers with adjectives and adverbs. Academic genre is specialized and thus contains different intensifiers than spoken language, in which many informal and familiar expressions that are not normally found in an academic setting are used. (Biber et al. 1999, 25) In addition, as mentioned earlier, intensifiers are not only used as a means of increasing or reducing the intensity of particular elements, they also function as fillers in spoken language. (Kennedy 2003, 469) Another reason for comparing the distribution of intensifiers in these two genres is that spoken language, and conversation in particular, contains more intensifiers than academic prose, which, in contrast, shows greater diversity as to the combinations of intensifiers modifying adjectives and adverbs (Biber et al. 1999, 25, 545).

The following sections provide a detailed analysis of individual intensifiers, beginning with those increasing intensity, that is, amplifiers. The discussion of a particular intensifier always starts with a general overview of its distribution and particularities and then proceeds to firstly analyse its occurrence in adjective phrases and afterwards to its occurrence as a modifier in adverb phrases. Tables showing the 10 most frequent adjectival and adverb collocations are given in the Appendix and they are listed in the order in which they appear in the work.

6.1 Amplifiers

Amplifiers are intensifying devices that add to the strength of an element they modify. They can be divided into maximizers, which denote the highest possible degree, and boosters, which express high intensity. From each subcategory of amplifiers, 4 representative members were selected for the present analysis. The following table shows the total number of hits for each amplifier.

		AdjPs		AdvPs	
Amplifier		Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Maximizer	Extremely	387	1066	52	48
	Absolutely	806	207	77	12
	Perfectly	231	323	38	48
	Utterly	26	79	0	1
Booster	Very	14852	9202	5275	2178
	Too	2489	2301	1050	1010
	Highly	156	1668	3	10
	Severely	13	122	3	22

Table 3: The total number of occurrence of individual amplifiers in adjective and adverb phrases

As can be seen, the booster *very* dominates the whole category of amplifiers, showing the highest overall frequency of all the selected amplifiers. When comparing the distribution of amplifiers in adjective and adverb phrases, the table clearly shows that amplifiers are more frequently found as modifiers of adjective phrases. In fact, none of the amplifiers is more frequent in adverb phrases. On the contrary, some of the amplifiers are virtually absent as modifiers of adverbs, for instance *utterly*, *highly* or *severely*. The table also shows that the particular amplifiers differ with respect to their occurrence in either spoken language or academic discourse. For instance, while the boosters *very* and *too* are more typical of spoken language, the other two boosters, *highly* and *severely* are more frequent in academic discourse.

The following sections describe the distribution of individual amplifiers in more detail, focusing on their frequency, differences in occurrence in spoken language and academic discourse, collocational patterns and semantic relations. Each subcategory always starts with a discussion of the most frequently occurring intensifiers and then proceeds to those intensifiers which are in some respect specific. For each intensifier, a table showing the 10 strongest adjectival and adverb collocations was created and listed in the Appendix. Since it is not possible to analyse all collocations, only the 10 most frequently modified adjectives and adverbs are chosen and dealt with in greater detail, although other interesting or unusual combinations can also be commented upon.

6.1.1 Maximizers

Maximizers are intensifying devices that convey the highest possible intensity. They are characterized as having a strongly reinforcing effect and they are often used as a way of exaggeration. Their effect is much stronger than that of boosters as they serve to intensify the meaning of the element they modify as much as possible. From this category, the maximizers *extremely* and *absolutely* were selected for the present analysis due to their widespread occurrence and then the maximizers *perfectly* and *utterly* are analysed because of their specific distribution and collocational behaviour.

Extremely

The first maximizer to be analysed is *extremely*, which was selected for the present analysis because of its widespread occurrence. Its frequency of occurrence is the highest not only in comparison with the other maximizers examined in this thesis but also of all the maximizers presented by Quirk et al. However, there is a striking difference between the two syntactic functions in that *extremely* is very often used as a premodifier of adjective phrases but its occurrence as an adverb premodifier is relatively low. As an adverb premodifier, it does not occur in more than 52 instances in either spoken language or academic discourse. More precisely, in spoken language there are exactly 52 instances of *extremely* modifying an adverb while in academic discourse there are 48 instances so the difference in distribution between the two registers is negligible. Thus, these results suggest that *extremely* is preferred with

adjectives rather than adverbs. Unlike adverb premodification, there is a striking difference between its distribution as an adjective premodifier in spoken language and academic discourse. In spoken language, *extremely* is found in 387 instances while in academic prose it premodifies adjectives in 1066 instances. These findings correspond to those by Biber et al, who claim that *extremely* more often occurs in academic discourse rather than spoken language (1999, 565).

As regards its occurrence in adjective phrases, *extremely* combines with a relatively large number of different adjectives in both registers. The strongest collocation is *extremely difficult*, which is prevalent in spoken language as well as in academic discourse. Other frequent collocations are *extremely important*, *extremely useful* and *extremely complex*, all of them occurring more than 30 times. In both registers, *extremely* almost exclusively collocates with typically scalar adjectives, such as *good*, *high*, *low*, *difficult*, *important*, *large* or *cold*. In fact, all of the 10 most common collocations in spoken and academic register are with scalar adjectives except for *rare*, which is a limit adjective. This tendency to modify especially scalar adjectives is manifested in other, less frequent collocations. It is interesting to point out that while *extremely* is considered a maximizer by Quirk et al., Paradis lists it among boosters, thus indicating that sometimes there is little difference between the intensifying force of the two categories. (Paradis 2000, 3) Apart from being typically scalar, majority of the adjectives most frequently modified by *extremely* are common adjectives of usually neutral connotation.

The distribution of *extremely* as an adverb premodifier is slightly higher in academic discourse, where it occurs in 52 instances, however, the difference between the registers is not very big. The strongest adverb collocation in spoken language is *extremely well*, which comprises more than half of the overall occurrence, namely 65%. All other adverbs combine with *extremely* only exceptionally. The same situation can be found in academic discourse, where the strongest collocation is also *extremely well*, although its frequency is lower, and most of the remaining adverbs modified by *extremely* in academic discourse occur only once. In both registers, but especially in spoken language, *extremely* premodifies almost exclusively derived adverbs ending in the *-ly* suffix. In fact, 73% of all the adverbs modified by *extremely* in spoken language are derived adverbs with the *-ly* suffix. In academic discourse, such adverbs comprise 56% of all the adverbs modified by *extremely*. Corresponding to the tendency of *extremely* to modify especially scalar adjectives, the majority of the adverbs are

derived from scalar adjectives as well, apart from *rapidly* which comes from the extreme adjective *rapid*.

An interesting occurrence of *extremely* is found in academic discourse, where it premodifies *fast*. Although *fast* is tagged as an adverb, and in fact often functions as an adverb, it occurs in a sentence where it is explicitly stated that *extremely fast* is an adjective phrase:

(1) *However, the whole adjective phrase extremely fast is a co-constituent with cars of the noun phrase extremely fast cars; and the latter joins the verb phrase crash violently to form the highest construction, the sentence.*

Since the other 3 instances of the combination *extremely fast* occur in the same context, describing the same thing, they are also classified as adjectives. The last instance in which *fast* is premodified by *extremely* is then correctly tagged as an adverb.

Similarly, *long*, *scarce* and *high* are also used as adjectives, not as adverbs:

(2) *Medicine is different from most other professions not by virtue of the length of training (which is extremely long), or the depth of knowledge but by its code of behaviour and by its concern with people, rather than buildings, structure or accounts.*

(3) *Since published sources for instrument makers are extremely scarce the French archives provide the best (and perhaps the only) opportunity for new research on the Hotteterres.*

(4) *Some of the patients samples showed extremely high sICAM-1 concentrations with up to 1.700 ng/ml while only few did not differ from the control group.*

Absolutely

The next maximizer to be examined is *absolutely*. It is the second most frequently occurring maximizer in the BNC. Although it is very often used as an intensifier in adjective phrases, its occurrence as an adverb premodifier is relatively low, especially in academic discourse. The analysis of *absolutely* has proved that it is more typical of spoken language, thus indicating

that it is an informal intensifier often used by speakers to highlight the meaning of an element. When compared to *extremely*, there can be observed some interesting facts with respect to their distribution. Whereas *extremely* is much more often used in academic discourse and may thus be considered a formal intensifier, *absolutely*, on the other hand, is characteristic of spoken language and is thus more informal.

Starting first with adjective phrases, *absolutely* more often occurs in spoken language, as mentioned above. More precisely, in spoken language there are 806 instances of *absolutely* premodifying adjectives while in academic discourse there are only 207 instances. *Absolutely* is specific in that in spoken language it often collocates with extreme adjectives. Among the 10 most frequent adjectival collocations in spoken language, 4 of these adjectives are extreme. These are: *brilliant*, *wonderful*, *marvellous* and *gorgeous*. In academic discourse, none of the most frequently collocating adjectives are extreme. One explanation of such an occurrence may be that speakers in spontaneous conversation often tend to exaggerate and combine intensifiers expressing the highest possible degree of intensity with extreme adjectives, which are inherently superlative in its meaning. Extreme adjectives found in spoken language are also very expressive and they convey speaker's emotions and attitude, such as in:

(5) *He said the beaches were absolutely gorgeous!*

Generally, extreme adjectives are very common in spoken language while in academic discourse they occur only exceptionally, thus indicating that formal registers tend to avoid such strong, emotive words.

The strongest adjectival collocations are *absolutely right*, *absolutely clear*, *absolutely brilliant* and *absolutely sure*. All these collocations are found in spoken language, where *absolutely* is used much more frequently. In academic discourse, due to its lower occurrence, *absolutely* does not form any particularly strong bonds with its adjectives. As mentioned above, extreme adjectives are virtually absent in academic discourse. All of the most frequently modified adjectives belong to the category of limit adjectives, which also often combine with *absolutely* in spoken language. In fact, among the 10 strongest collocations, there is not a scalar adjective collocating with *absolutely* in either register. Scalar adjectives are also infrequent among other, less frequently modified adjectives.

The analysis of *absolutely* as an adverb premodifier is rather problematic due to a large number of coding errors in the BNC. When searching for the adverb collocates of *absolutely*, the list of results yielded many words, although they were not all adverbs. For instance, the strongest collocation in spoken language is *absolutely right*, however, *right* in many cases functions as an adjective, such as in the following example:

(6) *No you're absolutely right, it might all be wrong, it might be totally misconceived*

The second most frequently premodified adverb is *so*, which is correctly tagged as an adverb and usually its role is to refer to the previous utterance and thus functioning as a response marker.

(7) *The reservoir now, you are saying, is clear? (SP:PS5XS) Absolutely so.*

A combination worth noticing is *absolutely completely*, where *absolutely* is used together with other intensifiers. In the following example, the intensifier *absolutely* does not premodify the adverb *completely* but it is a case of multiple intensification, where 3 maximizers are combined to strengthen the meaning of the following adjective as much as possible. Such a sequence of intensifiers indicates that speakers like to exaggerate and often combine several intensifiers for such a purpose:

(8) *I want something really that's not absolutely completely dead plain.*

Another incorrectly tagged adverb is *no*. Although *no* may function as an adverb, in all the examples found in the BNC it is followed by a noun and thus functions as a determiner, as in:

(9) *Absolutely no doubt, that that wasn't part of the plan.*

All the instances mentioned so far occur in spoken language. In academic discourse, however, there are also some coding errors. The list of results yielded 11 different adverb collocates of *absolutely* but only 4 of these really function as adverbs. These are: *alone*, *blamelessly*, *deliberately* and *nowhere*. Many of the other words tagged as adverbs are adjectives or determiners, such as in:

(10) *No sociological research is likely to produce absolutely clear cut answers.*

Here, *clear* is tagged as an adverb probably because of the missing hyphen in the *clear-cut*. After excluding instances such as these, it is revealed that *absolutely* is not very frequent as a premodifier in adverb phrases and does not form any strong adverb collocations since many of the combinations occur only exceptionally.

Perfectly

This particular maximizer was selected because of its associations with exclusively positive adjectives. Among the most frequent collocations, there is not a single adjective which would have a negative connotation. As far as the distribution of *perfectly* across the two registers is concerned, it is more common in academic discourse than in spoken language. *Perfectly* occurs more frequently in this register when premodifying adjective as well as adverb phrases. Although *extremely* is much more common than *perfectly* as a modifier of adjective phrase in both registers, these two maximizers occur in exactly the same number of occurrences in academic discourse when functioning as adverb premodifiers. Otherwise, *extremely* is generally more commonly used as a modifier than *perfectly*.

Perfectly is an intensifier which shows a strong preference for positive adjectives. Some adjectives premodified by *perfectly* are neutral, such as *normal*, *valid*, *proper* or *clear*; however, there is not a single adjective among the 10 most frequently modified that would have a negative connotation. This preference to combine with positive adjectives is found in both registers and is evident when looking at other, less frequently modified adjectives, which are not listed in the table provided in the Appendix. In fact, in spoken language *perfectly* is found as a modifier of 64 different adjectives and only 2 of these adjectives are clearly negative. These are: *silly* and *bad* and *blunt*. In academic discourse, out of the 102 adjectives combining with *perfectly*, only 2 have negative connotations. One of these adjectives, when intensified, may sound ironic:

(11) *A general definition -- apart from a perfectly trivial nominal definition, such that truth is whatever is the case, or whatever true propositions express -- can not be provided; nor, strictly speaking, is it needed.*

Instead of using a more neutral adjective such as *simple*, the speaker chose to use the adjective *trivial*, which, in combination with the maximizer *perfectly*, sounds ironic.

Generally, therefore, *perfectly* prefers to modify positive or neutral adjectives. Its absence as a modifier of adjectives denoting negative connotations is rather logical since it would be strange to say, for instance, *perfectly unhappy* or *perfectly disgusting*. Therefore, these results confirm the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the analysis that *perfectly* combines with adjectives of positive connotations. As regards the types of adjectives, *perfectly* most often modify limit adjectives, although scalar adjectives are not infrequent either. Interestingly, the strongest collocations in spoken language are with typically scalar adjectives while in academic discourse *perfectly* most often premodify limit adjectives. In spoken language, *perfectly* most strongly collocates with the adjectives *honest*, *happy* and *good*, while in academic prose it most frequently modifies the adjectives *possible*, *normal* and *acceptable*. The number of occurrences of the strongest collocations in both registers is very similar. For instance, *perfectly honest*, which is the most common collocation in spoken language, occurs in 26 instances and *perfectly possible*, which is the most common combination in academic discourse, occurs in 28 instances. Except for the adjective *good*, which combines with *perfectly* as often in spoken language as in academic discourse, the most frequently collocating adjective in spoken language is virtually absent in academic language. *Honest* occurs with *perfectly* in 26 instances in spoken language while in academic discourse this adjective is used only once in combination with *perfectly*. The second most frequently collocating adjective in spoken language, *happy*, does not appear in academic discourse at all, thus indicating that the collocations *perfectly honest* and *perfectly happy* are typical of spoken language where they convey speaker's attitudes. The fact that *perfectly* often premodifies scalar adjectives is interesting since, according to Paradis, maximizers do not naturally combine with scalar adjectives because of their different modes of construal. Maximizers denote the upper end of the scale while scalar adjectives are used to refer to a range on a scale. As Paradis says, scalar adjectives, since they are associated with a range on a scale, "select scalar degree modifiers, i.e. boosters (*very*), moderators (*fairly*) and diminishers (*a*

bit). The function of scalar modifiers is to specify a subsection of the range of the adjective in question.” (Paradis 1997, 63) Thus, it can be seen that the classification of adjectives and intensifiers is not always clear-cut and unambiguous and some adjectives are more indeterminate between different readings.

Concerning adverb premodification, the occurrence of *perfectly* in this syntactic function is relatively scarce. In spoken language, there are only 36 instances of *perfectly* premodifying adverb phrases while in academic discourse the distribution is slightly higher, occurring in 47 instances. The collocational behaviour of *perfectly* is interesting in that in both registers it forms a rather strong collocation with the most frequently modified adverb while the rest of the adverbs usually combine with *perfectly* only once. This most often premodified adverb is the same in both registers and it is the adverb *well*, as in:

(12) *That the strategy's working perfectly well.*

Majority of the adverbs premodified by *perfectly* are derived from adjectives which, again, have mainly positive or neutral connotations. In academic discourse, there is a problem with tagging since the adjective *reasonable* is listed among the adverbs combining with *perfectly*. In fact, the list of results for adverb collocates includes both *reasonable* and *reasonably*, however, *reasonable* is clearly an adjective:

(13) *His view that letting children run in and out of busy airports smartly avoiding the traffic is perfectly reasonable depends upon a conception of a child which is far narrower than even the sex divide.*

Another problem is with the adverb *round*, which occurs twice in the same context:

(14) *You don't have to do it perfectly round because the earth isn't perfectly round.*

As can be seen, although *round* is tagged as an adverb, it functions as an adjective.

Utterly

The last maximizer to be analysed is *utterly*, which is specific in two respects. Firstly, as a modifier of adjective phrases, it collocates almost exclusively with adjectives having negative associations, thus differing significantly from *perfectly*, which, on the contrary, tends to modify adjectives of positive connotation. Secondly, *utterly* is not used as a modifier of adverb phrases either in spoken language or in academic discourse. There is only a single occurrence of *utterly* modifying an adverb in academic discourse. In fact, *utterly* is rarely used as a premodifier of adjective phrases as well. In spoken language, there are only 26 instances of *utterly* in the syntactic function of an adjective premodifier while in academic discourse there are 79 instances. It follows from this observation that, although generally infrequent, *utterly* is preferred in a more formal style and mainly with negative adjectives.

As usual, the distribution of *utterly* in adjective phrases is first discussed. As a premodifier of adjectives, *utterly* is more often found in academic discourse than in spoken language. The two registers differ with respect to adjectives modified by *utterly*. In spoken language, *utterly* most often combines with the adjective *disgraceful* while in academic discourse the strongest collocation is *utterly different*. There are, however, no strong bonds since *utterly* does not collocate with any of its adjectives more than 7 times. In spoken language, the majority of the combinations occur only once. What these registers have in common is that in both spoken language and academic discourse *utterly* shows a strong tendency to premodify negative adjectives. Although determining the semantic content of an adjective is often subjective since some people may perceive the given adjective as having negative connotations while others view it neutrally or even positively and context is often important, the majority of the adjectives in both registers can be said to have negative associations, apart from neutral adjectives such as *valid* or *different*. In most cases, the negative connotation of an adjective is expressed by a negative prefix, such as *-un*, *-dis*, *-in* or *-im*. This tendency of *utterly* to combine mainly with negative adjectives is found with other, less frequently modified adjectives as well. However, there are also instances, although exceptional, where *utterly* premodifies exclusively positive adjectives, such as *fantastic* and *brilliant*, as in the following example, where the speaker uses *utterly* to express how he feels and how good the news is:

(15) *Who else have we got missing? Paul (SP:FMCPUSUNK) (unclear) (SP:PS1SL) Sounds utterly brilliant thank you very much for that news Darren.*

Although there are positive adjectives combining with *utterly*, they are only exceptional and thus these findings support the second hypothesis, based on observation stated in Quirk et al., that *utterly* premodifies especially negative adjectives. Concerning the types of adjectives, *utterly* most often modifies limit adjectives, such as *different*, *impossible*, *unable*, *unstable*, *inaccessible* or *unknown*, thus confirming that limit adjectives typically combine with maximizers. Interestingly, however, the most frequent collocation in spoken language is with the extreme adjective *disgraceful*, as in:

(16) *But I thought the reply was abs-- I thought it was utterly disgraceful!*

Although extreme adjectives can also naturally combine with maximizers, these types of adjectives are found rather exceptionally in both registers. Other examples of extreme adjectives premodified by *utterly* are: *overwhelming*, *ridiculous*, *fantastic* and *brilliant*.

As regards *utterly* functioning as an adverb premodifier, it has already been stated that it is virtually absent in this syntactic function. In spoken language there is not a single occurrence of an adverb premodified by this maximizer. In academic discourse, it is found in only one instance where, however, *utterly* cannot be classified as an adverb premodifier.

(17) *Their answers may support the defence of justification -- although rarely as dramatically as football manager Tommy Docherty, a libel plaintiff who collapsed so utterly under cross-examination that he was subsequently prosecuted for perjury.*

In this particular example, *utterly* does not function as a premodifier of the adverb but it modifies a verb. *Utterly*, which is itself premodified by the booster *so*, is related to the verb and indicates the degree of the collapse. *Utterly* is used to add to the force of the verb. In other words, it serves to intensify the meaning of the verb, thus suggesting how serious the collapse was. Because of its absence in this syntactic function, it can be said that *utterly* is not natural as a premodifier of adverb phrases. In fact, the occurrence of *utterly* as an adverb premodifier in other registers included in the BNC is also only exceptional.

6.1.2 Boosters

Boosters, just like maximizers, have a reinforcing effect on the item they modify, however, they are not so strong. They intensify the meaning but do not express the highest possible degree. The class of boosters includes a large number of items, but only 4 boosters are analyzed in this thesis. *Highly* and *severely* were selected because of their specific distribution and semantic relations while *very* and *too* were chosen because of their widespread occurrence.

Very

The first booster to be analysed is *very*. After what has been stated in the theoretical part of this thesis, it is not surprising that it is an extremely widespread intensifier frequently used in both spoken language and academic discourse. Its distribution far exceeds all other intensifiers studied in this thesis. *Very* is most frequently used in spoken language as a premodifier of adjectives, where its total number of occurrence is 14 852. Compared to other intensifiers, which usually do not occur in more than thousand examples, many of which do not exceed the limit of 500 occurrences, *very* proves to be the most frequent and universal intensifier of all.

As a premodifier of adjectives, *very* is dominant in both registers, however, it is much more frequent in spoken language. Its total number of occurrence indicates that it is a common intensifier frequently employed in everyday speech. It combines with more than thousand different adjectives and forms really strong adjectival collocations. The strongest collocation in spoken language is *very good*, which occurs in 1959 instances. Other strong adjectival collocations are: *very nice*, *very difficult*, *very important* and *very small*. In academic discourse, the distribution of *very* is similar in that it modifies a large number of adjectives and forms strong adjectival collocations, the most frequent being: *very different*, *very important*, *very large* and *very difficult*. Therefore, as can be seen, in both spoken language and academic discourse *very* most often collocates with common adjectives often encountered in language. In addition, majority of the strongest collocations are with typically scalar

adjectives. Many of the adjectives have neutral connotations but adjectives of clearly positive associations such as *good*, *nice*, *happy* or *useful* are also common.

When looking at the 50 most frequently modified adjectives in both registers, most of them are scalar. Limit adjectives are also sometimes premodified, however, extreme adjectives occur only exceptionally in combination with *very*. Interestingly, the adjective *British*, which is typically classified as non-gradable, is also found to be modified by *very* in academic discourse, thus showing that non-gradable adjectives may get a gradable reading in a given context, especially when accompanied by intensifiers. Since intensifiers are naturally compatible with gradable adjectives only, when used with an intensifier, non-gradable adjectives get a scalar reading, such as in:

(18) *Noblesse oblige (privilege entails responsibility) is a foreign phrase but it embodies a very British concept.*

However, it should be pointed out that in most of the instances *very* is part of a film's title, such as in:

(19) *Surely when we turn to such a blatantly political film as A Very British Coup, it should be a different story.*

As far as adverb premodification is concerned, *very* is again more frequent in spoken language, however, its distribution as an adverb premodifier is widespread in both registers. The strongest adverb collocations are *very well*, *very much*, *very often* and *very quickly*. In academic discourse, *very* is most often used with the adverbs *much*, *often* and *well*. Concerning the combination *very much* frequently found in spoken language, in majority of cases *very much* is part of the phrase *thank you very much*. This is true for spoken language, however, in academic discourse, where *very much* accounts for the most frequent combination, the phrase *thank you very much* does not occur at all. An instance of *very* modifying the adverb *much* in academic discourse is:

(20) *But I doubt very much whether there are any claims now outstanding which are not statute-barred, in respect of children stillborn before 22 July 1976 or any children born*

before that date, who are locked in litigation with their mothers over whether the mother tasted alcohol or followed a diet other than that recommended by the current phase of medical opinion during pregnancy.

Many of the most frequent collocations are with adverbs derived from adjectives by adding the *-ly* suffix to the base form of the adjective. In fact, in spoken language, 62 adverbs out of the 100 most frequent are derived from adjectives, while in academic discourse the proportion is even higher. Therefore, these results suggests a strong inclination of *very* to modify adverbs ending in *-ly* suffix.

Too

As expected, the booster *too* is an extensively used intensifier in both adjective phrases and adverb phrases. The differences in the number of occurrence between spoken language and academic discourse are not significant, suggesting that *too* is a universal booster used both in spontaneous, informal language as well as in more formal settings. Although the difference is rather negligible, *too* occurs more often in spoken language than in academic discourse with both adjectives and adverbs.

As far as adjective phrases are concerned, *too* is slightly more frequent in spoken language, where it occurs in 2489 instances. It modifies a large number of various adjectives and forms some particularly strong collocations. The strongest adjectival collocations in spoken language are *too bad*, *too big*, *too late*. The combination *too bad* is characteristic of spoken language since in academic discourse the adjective *bad* is not premodified by *too* as often as it is in spoken language, occurring in only 5 instances. In academic discourse, the most frequently modified adjectives are: *small*, *great* and *late*. What these registers have in common is that *too* most often combines with basic adjectives often used language. This tendency to combine with adjectives of common core is also displayed when looking at other, less frequently modified adjectives. In addition, majority of the most often modified adjectives are scalar adjectives of neutral connotation. In each register, however, there is one extreme adjective found among the 10 strongest collocations. In spoken language, it is the adjective *hot*, while in academic discourse it is the adjective *great*.

When compared to adjective phrases, the occurrence of *too* as a modifier of adverbs is almost half as low in both registers. Still, however, it is one of the most frequently used adverb premodifier, combining with a large number of adverbs. *Too* shows a strong preference for simple adverbs since there are only 3 derived adverbs and no compound adverbs among the 10 most frequent adverb collocations. All of the derived adverbs can be classified as scalar because they derive from scalar adjectives, except for the adverb *readily*, which derives from the limit adjective *ready*. Interestingly, most of the frequently modified adverbs in spoken language are also often modified in academic discourse, thus showing that *too* is most compatible with common adverbs in informal as well as more formal settings.

Highly

The distribution of *highly* is markedly imbalanced since there is a high disproportion between the two syntactic functions performed by *highly* as well as the two individual registers. *Highly* is one of the intensifiers that Biber et al. claim to be more frequently found in academic discourse than in spoken language (1999, 565). This is proved to be true because in spoken language there are only 159 instances of *highly* when functioning as an adjective and adverb modifier while in academic discourse *highly* is extremely common, occurring in the total number of 1678 instances (as an adjective as well as adverb premodifier). These findings thus indicate that *highly* is a formal intensifier used especially in academic register. Its distribution as an adjective premodifier in academic discourse is extremely high not only when compared to other maximizers examined in this thesis but also when compared to all the maximizers mentioned by Quirk et al.

Regarding the syntactic function of an adjective premodifier, there is a striking difference in the distribution of *highly* across the two registers. Whereas in spoken language *highly* occurs in only 156 instances, in academic prose its occurrence is more than 10 times higher. These findings indicate that *highly* is typical of formal registers and is not very frequently used in spoken language either as a premodifier of adjective or adverb phrases. In academic discourse, *highly* combines with 518 different adjectives, although many of these combinations occur only once. The strongest collocation is *highly significant*, *highly selective* and *highly complex*, all found in academic discourse. In spoken language, *highly* most frequently modifies two antonymic adjectives *unlikely* and *likely*, thus indicating that in

spoken language *highly* is most often used to express probability. Between the two registers there is not only a difference in the number of occurrence but also in the collocational bonds since many of the adjectives most often premodified by *highly* in academic discourse, such as *selective*, *complex* and *variable*, occur in spoken language only once. *Highly* most strongly collocates with adjectives that are scalar, although limit adjectives such as *selective*, *skilled* or *flammable* also occur and in spoken language there is one extreme adjective, *delighted*, modified by *highly*. However, extreme adjectives only exceptionally combine with *highly* since among all the adjectives modified by *highly* in either spoken language or academic discourse there are just few extreme adjectives, which do not form any strong bonds with *highly*, for instance *disgusted* or *disgusting*.

As far as adverb phrases are concerned, *highly* is used only exceptionally in this syntactic function and its occurrence is low in both registers. In spoken language, there are only 2 adverbs that are premodified by *highly* while in academic discourse it combines with 8 adverbs. It needs to be mentioned that the automatic search for the combination of *highly* + adverb in spoken language yielded 3 different adverbs, namely *highly*, *likely* and *together*. However, the adverb *highly*, although correctly tagged as an adverb, functions as an adverb of degree, that is, as an intensifier, and it is therefore a case of double intensification. In the following example, the booster *highly* is repeated to add even greater emphasis to the fact that the information is illegal:

(21) *Except that this is highly highly illegal information*

In addition, concerning the combination *highly likely*, there is a coding error in the BNC. Although tagged as an adverb, *unlikely* functions as an adjective:

(22) *Good example in ninety two (pause) if Harlow council had been a whole er whole council election in nineteen ninety two (pause) it's highly likely the Conservatives would have taken control*

None of the adverbs found in spoken language occur in academic discourse. However, what these two registers have in common is that *highly* does not form a strong collocation with any of the adverbs because all of the combinations occur only once, except for *highly*

significantly, which is found in 2 instances. In academic discourse, most of the adverbs premodified by *highly* are derived from adjectives of the corresponding form, except for the simple adverbs *both* and *enough*. When combining with the adverb *enough*, *highly* does not premodify the adverb but it is in fact the adverb *enough*, functioning as a compromiser, which modifies the adverb *highly*, more specifically, it postmodifies it:

(23) *Except for marine products, the few goods that polar regions yield are seldom valued highly enough to offset the high costs and risks of exploiting them.*

Here, the compromiser *enough* postmodifies the adverb *highly* and is used to indicate that the few goods are seldom valued sufficiently high to offset the high costs and risks of exploiting them. All in all, *highly* is not used as an intensifier in adverb phrases, where its occurrence is very low in both spoken language and academic discourse. On the other hand, *highly* is very frequently used to intensify the meaning of adjectives, especially in academic discourse. Its occurrence as a modifier of adjectives in spoken language is relatively low, thus indicating that speakers prefer other intensifiers to *highly* in spontaneous conversation.

Severely

The last member of the booster category to be examined is *severely*. Although its frequency of occurrence is not very high in either register, there is a particularity associated with this intensifier. The occurrence of *severely* is specific in that it tends to modify adjectives related to health. More specifically, *severely* especially combines with adjectives describing poor health or bad physical or mental condition. Regarding its distribution, *severely* is 9 times more common in academic discourse, where it occurs in 122 instances when modifying adjective phrases and in 22 instances when modifying adverb phrases. Overall, *severely* is most preferred in academic register as an adjective premodifier.

To begin with the discussion of adjectival collocations, *severely* most often collocates with adjectives describing poor health or physical condition. The only exceptions among the ten most frequent collocations are the adjectives *increased*, *deficient*, *limited*, *literary*, *impaired* and *disadvantaged*. Although the adjective *impaired* can also express health problems, in the

two instances found in academic discourse *impaired* is used in the sense “damaged”. In both instances, the adjective occurs in the context of medicine or science, as in:

(24) *However, additional genetic or environmental factors leading to more severely impaired cell function are likely to be necessary for the development of non-insulin dependent diabetes.*

Generally, however, the adjectives premodified by *severely* have rather strong negative connotations, even if they are not related to the topic of health. The only adjective that could be thought of as having a more neutral connotation is *increased*. However, when looking at the context the adjective occurs in, it can be seen that it has a negative association as well:

(25) *it would include also that half a million pounds charging increased (pause) charging severely increased charges for home help care.*

In academic discourse, this tendency to modify adjectives describing poor physical or mental health is also displayed, although not so strongly. There are, among others, adjectives such as *subnormal*, *undernourished*, *symptomatic*, *impoverished* or *injured*. Even if they are not directly related to poor health, many of the adjectives modified by *severely* are negative. The strongest collocation in both spoken language and academic discourse is *severely disabled*, followed by *severely ill* and *severely handicapped* found in academic discourse. Given the low frequency in spoken language, the most common collocation, *severely disabled*, comprises 39% of the total number of occurrence. As far as the distribution of *severely* in academic discourse is concerned, it modifies a wider range of adjectives than in spoken language and its overall frequency is higher, however, majority of the combinations with adjectives do not occur more than once and thus, except for *disabled* and *ill*, do not account for any strong collocations.

As regards the premodification of adverb phrases, *severely* is very rarely used in this syntactic function. In spoken language, *severely* premodifies only two adverbs, namely *mentally* and *yet*. Again, *severely* modifies an adverb related to poor health, as in:

(26) *Very costly business all this, but it's infinitely preferable than having a severely mentally retarded child.*

Here, the booster *severely* premodifies the adverb *mentally*, which, in turn, premodifies the adjective *retarded*. *Severely* adds to the intensity of the whole phrase, meaning “to a high degree”. The adverb *mentally* specifies that the disability is related to mind. Concerning the second adverb modified by *severely* in spoken language, *yet*, it in fact functions as a conjunction and not as an adverb as tagged in the BNC. Although it can act as an adverb, *yet* functions as a conjunction in the following instance, connecting two parts of the utterance:

(27) *This plaque and this tower and museum, we have dedicated it as a memorial to those days when you suffered severely yet still struck your targets.*

Therefore, in this example, the intensifier *severely* does not modify the following adverb but it modifies the verb *suffer*, intensifying the meaning of the verb.

In academic discourse, *severely* is found as a premodifier of adverb phrases in 22 instances. It forms the strongest combination with the same adverb as in spoken language. The other two adverbs premodified by *severely* are *visually* and *physically*, as in:

(28) *A constellation of social difficulties has also been found to characterise parents who severely physically abuse their children.*

In this example, the adverb *physically* specifies what kind of abuse the children suffer. The booster *severely* is then used to point out that the physical abuse is very serious.

To sum up, it is evident that *severely* is a very specific intensifier and is used only in specific contexts. Thus, due to its rather unique nature, its overall occurrence as a premodifier of adjective or adverb phrases is very low. It is more preferred in academic discourse than in spoken language but even in this register its occurrence is insignificant.

6.2 Downtoners

The class of downtoners can be further divided into four subclasses distinguished according to the attenuating effect of their members. Downtoners can be characterized as reducing the intensity of an element they modify. Some downtoners can express the lowest possible degree while others have only a slightly softening effect. From the category of downtoners, 2 particular intensifiers from each of the four subclasses were chosen. Firstly, the attention is paid to approximators, which are viewed as having the least reducing effect of the four subclasses.

		AdjPs		AdvPs		
		Downtoner	Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Approximators	Almost		138	822	224	1322
	Nearly		47	147	145	146
Comparatives	Enough		868	931	1065	606
	Rather		845	1383	238	553
Diminuters	Slightly		367	529	124	176
	Somewhat		75	663	23	197
Minimizers	Hardly		25	233	60	72
	Barely		3	43	1	4

Table 4: The total number of occurrence of individual downtoners in adjective and adverb phrases

As can be seen from the table, even the most frequently occurring downtoners do not reach such a high overall frequency as many of the amplifiers. Interestingly, apart from *enough*, all of the downtoners are more commonly found in academic discourse.

6.2.1 Approximators

The first subclass of downtoners to be examined is the class of approximators. They have an attenuating effect and “indicate that the denoted adjective falls short of the expected limit.”

(Paradis 2000, 2) Two synonymous approximators were selected for the present analysis, namely *almost* and *nearly*. Moreover, *almost* has also the highest occurrence.

Almost

It is not surprising that *almost* is the most frequently occurring member of the approximator group since it is very often used in language. In fact, its frequency far exceeds that of all other approximators. Interestingly, its usage in spoken language and academic discourse shows that *almost* is much more typical of formal, written language rather than spoken language. *Almost* is also specific in that when functioning as an adjective premodifier its occurrence is 6 times higher in academic discourse than in spoken language and the same is true when modifying adverbs. To be more specific, as an adjective premodifier, it is found in 138 instances while academic prose contains 822 instances of *almost* modifying adjectives. On the other hand, when premodifying adverb phrases, the total number of occurrence in spoken language is 224 whereas in academic prose it is 1322.

As mentioned above, there is a considerable difference between the two registers when *almost* modifies adjectives. In spoken language, *almost* occurs in 138 instances whereas in academic discourse its frequency is 6 times higher, occurring in 822 instances. The strongest adjectival collocation is *almost impossible* and dominates both registers.

(29) *There are new oil fields off the American west coast, but environmental restrictions have made exploration and development almost impossible.*

In this example taken from spoken language, *almost* indicates that exploration and development is not completely impossible but it will be very difficult due to environmental restrictions.

Other strong adjectival collocations are all with limit adjectives: *almost identical*, *almost complete*, *almost certain* and *almost total*. In fact, limit adjectives prevail in both registers, thus confirming that limit adjectives are most compatible with approximators (or maximizers). Among the most frequent adjectival collocations in spoken language, there are only two instances of scalar adjectives, *flat* and *universal*, otherwise all adjectives modified

by *almost* belong to the category of limit adjectives. In academic discourse, all of the most frequently collocating adjectives are limit. When checking less common combinations of this approximator with adjectives, there was identified one interesting collocation. Among all the adjectives modified by *almost* in spoken language, there is one occurrence of the combination *almost daily*. The word *daily* is tagged as an adjective, although it in fact functions as an adverb:

(30) *At the same time new places have been exerted on the countryside almost daily.*

The approximator *almost* is used to point out that although new places have not in fact been exerted every day, they have been exerted very often. *Daily* is thus an adverb expressing frequency. It is also worth noticing that although *almost* modifies a large number of different adjectives, especially in academic discourse, majority of the combinations occur only once or twice and thus, apart from the strongest collocation such as *almost impossible*, *almost identical*, *almost complete*, *almost certain*, *almost total* and few others, *almost* does not form any strong bonds with its adjectives.

Concerning adverb premodification, *almost* is extremely common in academic discourse in this syntactic function. There is a striking difference between the two registers: in spoken language, *almost* premodifies adverbs in 224 instances while in academic discourse it occurs in 1322 instances. The strongest adverb collocations are: *almost certainly*, *almost entirely*, *almost always* and *almost exclusively*. The collocations *almost certainly* and *almost entirely* predominate in both spoken language and academic discourse. In addition, all of these strongest collocations appear in more than 100 instances, thus indicating a particularly strong bond between the intensifier and its adverb. Majority of the most frequent collocations are with derived adverbs formed from mainly limit adjectives by adding the suffix *-ly*. In both registers, *almost* frequently premodifies the comparative construction *as* + adjective/adverb + *as* used to describe things or people, such as in:

(31) *To try and explain this one is almost as bad as to try and explain Hegel erm my ignorance is even more crying in this case than in the other.*

Nearly

Nearly is synonymous with *almost* and it could thus be expected that the distribution of these two approximators will be similar. It is true that both of them more frequently premodify adverbs rather than adjectives and both are more often used in academic discourse, there is, however, a striking difference in their frequency. The occurrence of *nearly* is much lower than that of *almost* and the difference in their distribution is especially significant in academic discourse, where *almost* appears much more frequently, both when modifying adjective phrases as well as adverb phrases. Nevertheless, both *almost* and *nearly* show a tendency to modify limit adjectives. In fact, some of the adjectives that frequently collocate with *almost* are found to be often premodified by *nearly* as well, such as the adjectives *ready*, *right*, *identical*, *complete* or *equal*, thus indicating that the two approximators are, in some cases, interchangeable. For instance, in the following sentence, *nearly* can be replaced by *almost* without changing the meaning:

(32) *Well your tea's nearly ready, that's why I asked you.*

However, the approximators are not always interchangeable since the adjective *impossible*, which forms the strongest collocation with *almost* in both registers, does not appear in spoken language at all and in academic discourse there is only one single occurrence of the combination *nearly impossible*. Unlike *almost*, *nearly* differs with respect to its strongest collocation in spoken language and academic discourse. In spoken language, it most often modifies the adjective *ready* while in academic discourse the most frequent collocation is *nearly contiguous*. Interestingly, the most common collocation in spoken language, *nearly ready*, does not occur in academic discourse at all. Similarly, the adjective *new*, which ranks as the second most frequent adjectival collocation in spoken language, is not once premodified by *nearly* in academic discourse.

Apart from *nearly ready*, there are no strong adjectival collocations in spoken language. In most cases, *nearly* combines with its adjective only once. In academic discourse, *nearly* modifies a wide range of adjectives but still there are no particularly strong combinations. The most frequent collocations are *nearly contiguous*, *nearly complete* and *nearly rectangular*. As has been mentioned, *nearly* often modifies limit adjectives, especially in spoken language.

However, there are also 2 extreme adjectives, namely *perfect* and *spectacular*, combining with *nearly* in spoken language. As regards academic prose, the occurrence of *nearly* in this particular register is very specific in that it often collocates with adjectives describing shape, such as *rectangular*, *square*, *pentagonal* or *triangular*, which would normally be seen as non-gradable. It shows that the classification of adjectives into either gradable or non-gradable is not always clear-cut and many adjectives perceived as non-gradable can get a gradable meaning since “adjectives show a great deal of flexibility with respect to gradability. They readily take on a different reading vis-à-vis gradability.” (Paradis 1997, 64) In spoken language, there is not a single adjective describing shape that would be modified by *nearly*, thus indicating that this tendency is characteristic especially of a formal, academic setting.

Concerning adverb premodification, the distribution of *nearly* is specific in that its frequency is the same in both registers. In spoken language, *nearly* occurs in 145 instances as an adverb premodifier while in academic prose it occurs in 146 instances. Such a corresponding frequency of occurrence in two different registers is very rare. However, spoken language differs from academic discourse with respect to the most frequently modified adverbs. In spoken language, the strongest collocation is *nearly there*, which comprises 25% of the overall frequency, whereas in academic discourse *nearly* is most often used with the adverb *always*, comprising 49% of the total number of occurrence. The most significant difference between the two registers is that the most frequently modified adverb in spoken language, *there*, does not combine with *nearly* in academic discourse at all, where other adverbs, especially those derived from adjectives, are more common in combination with *nearly*. In both registers, *nearly* is often found as a premodifier in the structure *as ... as*, used to compare persons or things, such as in:

(33) *Sue's mum's little and fat, nearly as tall as she's (laughing) broad.*

Overall, *nearly* is an approximator more often modifying adverbs rather than adjectives. As an adverb premodifier, it occurs as often in spoken language as in academic discourse. Although the total number of occurrence is the same, in spoken language *nearly* combines with a wider range of adverbs.

To conclude the analysis of approximators, a chart is provided to show the differences in distribution between the synonymous approximators *almost* and *nearly*.

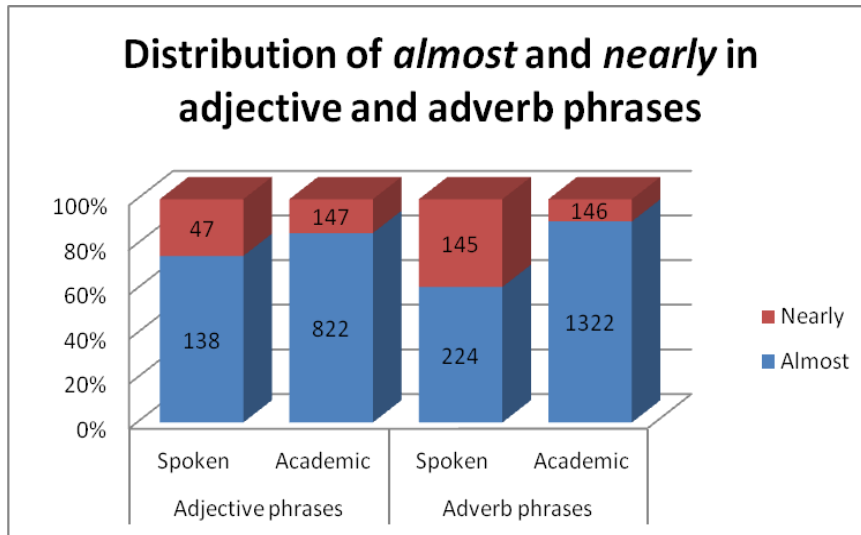


Chart 1: Distribution of the synonymous approximators *almost* and *nearly* in adjective and adverb phrases.

6.2.2 Compromisers

The category of compromisers includes such intensifying devices which soften the meaning of the element they modify. However, their reducing effect is not as strong as that of diminishers and minimizers. From this class, *enough* was selected not only because it is the most frequent compromiser but also because it differs from all the other intensifiers studied in this thesis in that it only occurs in postmodification.

Enough

The first compromiser to be analysed is *enough*, which differs from all other intensifiers in that it occurs in postmodification. Apart from this distinctive feature, *enough* was also selected for the present analysis because it is the most frequent compromiser, collocating with a wide range of adjectives and adverbs. It is very common both as a modifier of adjective

phrases and as a modifier of adverb phrases. However, it is interesting that when *enough* postmodifies adjectives, it is more frequent in academic discourse while when modifying adverb phrases it is much more preferred in spoken language. More specifically, as a postmodifier of adjectives, the total number of occurrence is 868 in spoken language and 931 in academic discourse. When postmodifying adverbs, *enough* occurs in 1065 instances in spoken language while its occurrence in academic discourse is almost twice as low.

The compromiser *enough* most frequently modifies typically scalar adjectives, such as *good*, *bad*, *small*, *old* or *long*. The strongest collocations are all with scalar adjectives: *good enough*, *big enough* and *large enough*. Among the 10 most commonly modified adjectives, only 2 adjectives can be classified as limit. These are the adjectives *sure*, found in spoken language, and *clear*, found in academic discourse. Many of the collocations are with neutral, basic adjectives frequently employed in language. This tendency to combine with adjectives of common core can be observed when looking at other adjectives often combining with *enough*, for instance *true*, *bad*, *high*, *long*, *happy*, *young* or *small*. As mentioned, *enough* usually combines with scalar adjectives. Exceptionally, extreme adjectives are found to be postmodified by *enough*, for instance the adjectives *hot*, *great* or *severe*. In majority of cases, the adjectival phrase *severe enough* occurs in the field of medicine, such as in:

(34) *Another, quite separate, reason why the idea of watertight categories of psychosis has never seemed very plausible to psychologists stems from the difficulty of defining the outer boundaries of insanity and the existence of so-called 'borderline' disorders that carry the overall flavour of schizophrenia or manic-depression, but which are not severe enough to meet the diagnostic criteria for either.*

Here, *enough* postmodifies the adjective *severe* and it is used to reduce the meaning of the adjective, indicating that the disorders are not so severe as to meet the diagnostic criteria.

Concerning the modification of adverb phrases, there is a relatively big difference in the distribution of *enough* in spoken and academic register. In spoken language, *enough* postmodifies adverbs in 1065 instances while its occurrence in academic prose is almost half as low. Interestingly, when searching for the adverb collocates of *enough* in spoken language, the list of results states *fair* as the most frequently postmodified adverb. It is a fixed phrase most often used as a response marker. The adverb *right* is used in a similar way. Unlike

spoken language, both *fair enough* and *right enough* are very infrequent in academic discourse, thus revealing that these fixed phrases are used especially in informal language. What is common for both registers, however, is that majority of the strongest collocations are with simple adverbs. In addition, many of the adverbs most frequently postmodified by *enough* in spoken language account for the most frequently modified adverbs in academic discourse as well.

Rather

The overall distribution of *rather* is relatively high, especially in academic discourse. It forms strong adjectival as well as adverb collocations in both registers. *Rather* is often said to modify especially negative adjectives and adverbs, such as *lazy* or *badly* (Dušková 1994, 467; Alexander 1995, 137). Although some collocations with adjectives that may imply negative associations occur, such as *difficult*, *limited*, *crude* or *sad*, this tendency is not confirmed as the most frequently premodified adjectives are basically neutral or even positive such as *nice*, *good* and *funny*. In fact, the strongest adjectival collocation in spoken language is with a positive adjective. When looking at the less frequently occurring collocations not listed in the table, *rather* modifies some negative adjectives but they are not prevalent.

As regards the premodification of adjectives, *rather* is more frequently used in academic discourse, where it occurs in 1383 instances while spoken language contains 845 instances of *rather* premodifying adjectives. The strongest adjectival collocations are *rather different*, *rather nice* and *rather similar*. The combination *rather different* is the strongest collocation in academic prose and the second most frequent collocation in *spoken language*. Interestingly, the most frequent and strongest adjectival collocation in spoken language, *rather nice*, does not occur in academic discourse at all. This indicates that the common adjective *nice*, which is rather vague in meaning, is typical of spoken language rather than formal, written discourse.

According to Paradis, *rather* most often combines with scalar adjectives, although limit adjectives are also sometimes premodified (1997, 87). An analysis of the 10 most frequently modified adjectives confirms this claim since the majority of them belong to the category of scalar adjectives but *rather* collocates with limit adjectives as well, for instance *special*, *different* or *limited*. When searching for the adjectival collocates, the list of results included

like, although it does not function as an adjective. In academic discourse, it is used as a preposition to imply “similar to”, as in:

(35) *Fiction, then, is rather like architecture or plumbing -- a necessary art.*

On the other hand, in spoken language *like* functions as a gap filler, indicating that the speaker does not know what to say next, although in some instances it is used as a preposition as well, just like in academic prose. An example of *like* serving as a gap filler is:

(36) *Need for power is is one of things, it's rather like erm (unclear) need for achievement or something like that.*

Similar to the function of an adjective modifier, the occurrence of *rather* premodifying adverbs is also more frequent in academic discourse than in spoken language. Again, there is a problem with the grammatical tagging in the BNC since *more* and *less* are listed as the most frequently collocating adverbs in both registers. However, in many cases *more* is used to form the comparative form of the adjective and thus *rather* functions as a premodifier of the following adjective phrase, such as in:

(37) *Dearlove (1979) seeks to develop a rather more sophisticated analysis in his discussion of reorganization, but his conclusion is similar.*

Nevertheless, there are also many instances in which the adverb *more* is used to form the comparative form of the following adverb, as in:

(38) *The third view of the company is one which has prevailed in the academic literature rather more forcefully than in company law doctrine itself.*

Similarly, *less*, which is listed as the second most frequently premodified adverb, is also in majority of cases related to the following adjective and thus *rather* premodifies the adjective phrase, not an adverb phrase, as in:

(39) *Soviet strategy had in fact been much more reactive and rather less successful than this picture tended to suggest.*

Because *more* and *less* are very often related to the following adjective and *rather* is then used as a premodifier of an adjective phrase, they are not listed in the table of the most frequent adverb collocations provided in the Appendix. After excluding *more* and *less*, one of the most frequently modified adverbs in both spoken language and academic discourse is *differently*, formed from the adjective *different*, which is also among the most frequently modified adjectives in both registers.

6.2.3 Diminishers

Diminishers, as the term itself suggests, diminish the intensity of the element they apply to. Unlike minimizers, they do not reduce the effect of an adjective or adverb to its absolute minimum but they still have a rather strong attenuating effect. The class of diminishers contains a number of intensifiers, although only 2 of them were selected for the present study and will be now analysed.

Slightly

The first representative member of the class of diminishers to be analysed is *slightly*. It was selected because its occurrence is higher than that of all other diminishers. *Slightly* more often occurs in adjective phrases, although its occurrence as a premodifier of adverb phrases is also relatively high compared to other intensifiers such as *highly*, *severely* or *hardly*, to mention just a few. With respect to the two registers examined, *slightly* is more typical of academic discourse, where it is more frequently used as an adjective as well as adverb premodifier, however, the difference between spoken language and academic discourse is not any significant, especially for adverb phrases. The distribution of *slightly* is interesting in that in both spoken language and academic discourse there is always a very strong adjectival as well as adverb collocation and the difference in the number of occurrences between the strongest collocation and the second most frequent collocation is relatively big.

Firstly, the attention is paid to *slightly* modifying adjectives. In spoken language, there are 367 instances of *slightly* in this syntactic function while in academic discourse the occurrence is higher, more precisely 529 instances. The strongest adjectival collocation is *slightly different*, which dominates both registers. As can be seen from the analysis of intensifiers so far, the adjective *different* is very common and strongly combines with many intensifiers. The difference between the first and the second most frequent collocation with respect to the number of occurrences is noticeable especially in spoken language, where the strongest collocation *slightly different* occurs in 129 instances while *slightly bigger*, the second most frequent collocation, occurs only in 12 instances. In fact, in spoken language, the adjectival phrase *slightly different* comprises almost one third of the overall number of occurrences, that is, 35%. In academic discourse, the second most frequent collocation is *slightly higher*, followed by *slightly lower* and *slightly larger*. When looking at the most frequent adjectival collocations, it is evident that *slightly* almost exclusively premodifies adjectives in the comparative form. This is true for both registers. These findings are interesting because Quirk et al. present a list of intensifiers that are common as modifiers of adjectives in the comparative, however, *slightly* is not included in this list at all. (1985, 473)

Since the most frequent collocations are with adjectives in the comparative form, they are classified as scalar because only scalar adjectives can indisputably form the comparative and the superlative form. The strongest collocation is with the adjective *difficult*, which is usually classified as a limit adjective. However, since *different* belongs among limit adjectives that do not have a strong bias and “dwell in the borderland between scalarity and absoluteness”, it is often very difficult to determine the class of adjectives it belongs to. (Paradis 1997, 87) Apart from *different*, majority of the most frequently modified adjectives are typically scalar adjectives, such as *high*, *low*, *large*, *good*, *big* or *small*. Interestingly, the scalar adjective *bigger*, which is the second most often modified adjective in the spoken language, does not occur in academic discourse at all. In spoken language, there are 12 instances of this combination, such as in:

(40) *So why they did it Well why they did it is clear er to make slightly bigger hall, but why they took the risk they did is not so clear.*

Slightly premodifies the adjective *bigger*, which is in the comparative and relates to size, and its role is to explain that they did it because they needed a hall that would be just a little bit bigger than the previous one.

When modifying adverb phrases, *slightly* is more common in academic discourse, where it appears in 176 instances. The strongest collocation, *slightly more*, dominates both registers. However, this combination is again problematic in that in some cases, *more* is used to form the comparative of the following adjective and thus *slightly* functions as a modifier of adjective phrase, whereas there are also occasions in which *more* precedes adverb and *slightly* is then correctly marked as an adverb premodifier, as in:

(41) *Mind you the shit I used to get away with at school, you know, just winding the teachers up and like generally taking the piss, I'd always pay attention and I'd always, always get good marks but somehow I think they seem to take pissing about slightly more seriously here.*

In both registers, *slightly* often combines with the adverb *differently*, derived from the adjective *different*, which proved to be the most frequently premodified adjective in spoken as well as academic register and supports what has been mentioned above that the adjective *different* is very widespread and tends to be modified by a large number of different intensifiers.

In spoken language, there are 3 instances in which the intensifier *slightly* is repeated for emphasis. In the following example, the speaker repeats the diminisher *slightly* to indicate that the thing is burned just a little bit but to such a small extent that it is almost imperceptible. In addition, the speaker repeats *slightly* so as to avoid offending someone by saying that it is slightly burned.

(42) *Can you smell that? Whatever it is. Wonderful! (SP:PS101)Slightly slightly burned.*

Somewhat

The distribution of *somewhat* is specific in that it occurs 9 times more frequently in academic discourse than in spoken language regardless of whether it functions as an adjective premodifier or adverb premodifier. In spoken language, it occurs less frequently than *slightly*

but academic discourse prefers *somewhat* to *slightly*, both when modifying adjectives as well as adverbs. The diminisher *somewhat* is listed by Quirk et al. among intensifiers that can modify comparative adjectives, which is confirmed by the distributional analysis since in both registers there are a few adjectives in the comparative that are frequently accompanied by *somewhat*. However, the proportion of comparative adjectives modified by *somewhat* is not very high. On the other hand, *slightly*, which is not mentioned at all by Quirk et al. when dealing with comparatives, is much more frequent as a premodifier of comparative adjectives. (Quirk et al. 1985, 473)

Beginning with adjectival premodification, *somewhat* is more frequently used in academic discourse, where it combines with a large number of adjectives. In contrast, there are only a few adjectives modified by *somewhat* in spoken language and most of these combinations occur only once. As a result, there are no particularly strong adjectival collocations in spoken language. The most frequent combination is *somewhat different*, which occurs in 7 instances. In academic discourse, the adjective that forms the strongest collocation with *somewhat* is also *different*, just like in spoken language, however its frequency of occurrence is much higher. Generally, *somewhat* tends to modify scalar and limit adjectives to almost the same extent, except for *greater*, which is an extreme adjective. When looking at all the adjectives premodified by *somewhat* in spoken language, there is one interesting example, in which *somewhat* modifies the extreme adjective *hilarious*:

(43) *And actually we've had a very full report from the auditors which makes extremely interesting and somewhat hilarious reading.*

This is an example of syndetic coordination, where two adjective phrases, both containing an intensifier, are linked by the conjunction *and*. In the first phrase, the adjective *interesting* is premodified by the maximizer *extremely* while *hilarious* is premodified by the diminisher *somewhat*, thus combining two intensifiers of contrastive nature. The meaning of the scalar adjective *interesting* is emphasized by the maximizer *extremely* while the effect of the extreme adjective *hilarious* is reduced by the diminisher *somewhat*.

As mentioned above, the strongest adjectival collocation in academic discourse is the same as in spoken language, that is, *somewhat different*, followed by *somewhat similar* and *somewhat*

higher. In both registers, *somewhat* is frequently found as a modifier of two antonymic pairs of adjectives, namely *different – similar* and *high – low*. Since the diminisher *somewhat* is more frequent in academic discourse, there is also a wider range of adjectives, although most of them occur with *somewhat* only exceptionally. Generally, *somewhat* means “to some extent”, which can be exemplified by the sentence:

(44) *They also attempt to explain the difference in terms of theme/rheme, though their explanation is somewhat different from Halliday's.*

Here, the predicative adjective *different* is premodified by *somewhat*, which indicates that the explanation is different to some extent from that of Halliday, although not very much.

It has been mentioned that *somewhat* is one of the intensifiers that can be used to modify adjectives in the comparative form. The analysis of the adjectival collocations in the BNC has proved this to be true, although the occurrence of comparative adjectives is rather low. In spoken language, *somewhat* combines with 58 different adjectives and only 8 of these adjectives are in the comparative. Since *somewhat* is more frequently used in academic discourse, there is therefore a higher proportion of comparative adjectives, however, the number is again not any significant. Out of 329 adjectives collocating with *somewhat*, only 30 are in the comparative.

As regards the premodification of adverb phrases, there is again a striking difference in the number of occurrences with respect to the two registers examined. In spoken language, *somewhat* is used in 23 instances while in academic prose it premodifies adverbs in 197 instances. Therefore, it can be concluded that *somewhat* is a formal intensifier which, as a result, is not used very often in speech and informal settings. The most frequent adverb collocation in both registers is *somewhat differently*, however, it does not form a particularly strong collocation in either spoken language or academic discourse since there are only few instances of this combination. In fact, in spoken language *somewhat differently* is found in only 2 instances, one of which is:

(45) *Mm. (SP:PS291) doing blood tests but er we're going to treat you somewhat differently.*

Interestingly, the most common adverb collocation in both registers is *somewhat differently*, where the adverb derives from the adjective of the corresponding form, *different*, which ranks as the most frequently modified adjective in both spoken language and academic discourse as well. Generally, *somewhat* is infrequent in spoken language as a modifier in adverb phrase since most of the combinations occur only exceptionally. In academic discourse, the situation is not much different. Although *somewhat* is more frequently used as an adverb modifier in academic discourse, most of the combinations are again rather rare.

In spoken language, there is a rather unusual and unexpected combination *somewhat now*. Although *now* is an adverb, the diminisher *somewhat* in this particular instance does not relate to the adverb *now* but serves as a postmodifier of the preceding verb:

(46) *Thankfully fashions have changed somewhat now.*

It is also worth noticing that, especially in academic discourse, *somewhat* combines with mainly derived adverbs. In addition, in both registers *somewhat* often modifies two adverbs of opposite meanings, namely *later* and *earlier*.

6.2.4 Minimizers

The class of minimizers contains intensifying devices which have the most attenuating effect on the element they modify. They serve to express the lowest possible degree and as such can be viewed as having the opposite effect to that of maximizers. Even though there are only few intensifiers belonging to this category and the frequency of all is relatively low, two representative members were selected. These are the minimizers *hardly* and *barely*.

Hardly

Even though its occurrence is higher than that of other minimizers, *hardly* is still rather infrequent in adjective and adverb phrases. When modifying adjectives, there is a relatively big difference between its occurrence in spoken language and academic discourse. In spoken

language, hardly occurs in only 25 instances whereas in academic discourse its total number of occurrence is 233. When modifying adverb phrases, hardly does not show any preference for either spoken language or academic discourse since its distribution is very similar in both registers.

As far as adjective premodification is concerned, there is a rather noticeable difference between spoken and written registers. In spoken language, the occurrence of hardly is rather exceptional and therefore does not form any strong collocations. In speech, it most often modifies the scalar adjective surprising, accounting for 8 occurrences in the entire register. All of the other adjectives are modified by hardly only exceptionally. On the other hand, in academic discourse, hardly is most often used with the same adjective as in spoken language, however, this combination occurs in academic discourse much more often. In fact, the collocation hardly surprising comprises 48% of the overall number of occurrence. Interestingly, these two registers do not differ with respect to the second most frequent combination either, which is hardly likely. With its 21 instances, this combination occurs more often in academic discourse. Concerning the types of adjectives, hardly prefers to combine with scalar or limit adjectives. Out of the all adjectives that are premodified by hardly, irrespective of the two registers, only 2 of them are extreme. These are: remarkable and impressive.

When examining all the adjectives that combine with hardly in academic discourse, there is one interesting occurrence and that is with the combination hardly square. Although square is often used as an adjective, in this particular context it is clearly a verb and thus it is incorrectly tagged in the BNC:

(47) *But whatever the real significance of the plan's extra-dramatic aspects, they hardly square with any talk of a " scholar's conscience ".*

As regards the occurrence of hardly in adverb phrases, there are only a few adverbs that combine with this minimizer. In both registers, the strongest collocation is hardly ever, which comprises 73% of the overall occurrence of hardly as an adverb premodifier in spoken language. Apart from this combination, there are very few adverbs that are premodified by hardly and their occurrence is only exceptional. In academic discourse, hardly is used with a wider range of adverbs but its distribution is still very low.

Barely

The last minimizer and at the same time the last intensifier in general to be examined is *barely*. The frequency of *barely* is very low in both syntactic functions as well as in both registers. It is more commonly used as a premodifier of adjective phrases rather than adverb phrases and, when functioning as an adjective premodifier, there is a difference in occurrence between the two registers. In spoken language, *barely* modifies only 3 adjectives, namely *able*, *credible* and *inaudible*. No strong collocations can be identified since there is always only a single occurrence of each of the combination. In academic discourse, the overall frequency is slightly higher, although again there are no strong collocations given the fact that none of the adjectives combine with *barely* more than 4 times. Out of the adjectives premodified by *barely* in spoken language, only 1 of them occurs in academic discourse. It is the adjective *able*, which also once combines with *barely* in academic register, but it is not listed among the 10 most frequent collocations in the table. Moreover, although the adjective *inaudible* does not occur in academic discourse, its opposite, *audible*, is premodified by *barely* in academic discourse, occurring in 2 instances.

The distribution of *barely* in spoken language is very scarce, thus indicating that *barely* is not used as a modifier of adjectives in informal language. It has been mentioned that in spoken language, *barely* combines with only 3 adjectives. An example of the use of *barely* is:

() *Accused number eight, as Mrs Mandela will be known for the duration of the trial, muttered barely inaudible replies to the magistrate who made sure she was following the proceedings.*

The minimizer *barely* premodifies the attributive adjective *inaudible*, which belongs to the category of limit adjectives. *Barely* is used to indicate that the replies to the magistrate were uttered so quietly that they were very difficult to hear. *Barely* thus emphasizes how inaudible the replies were, strengthening the meaning of the adjective.

In academic discourse, *barely* modifies 33 different adjectives, out of which the limit adjective *distinguishable* occurs in most instances. Generally, however, there are again no strong collocations since most of the combinations of *barely* with adjectives occur only once.

There is a preference for modifying limit adjectives, although scalar adjectives also occur, such as *significant*, *detectable*, *perceptible* or *noticeable*. As already mentioned, *barely* most often premodifies the adjective *distinguishable*, as in:

() *For what it is worth, my view is that the student of political science is exposed to a wide range of somewhat superficial opinions, most of them barely distinguishable from the prejudices daily expressed in newspapers.*

Here, the speaker uses the minimizer *barely* to indicate that most of the opinions are really hard to distinguish from prejudices daily expressed in newspapers. *Barely* has a negative effect on the adjective it modifies, in this case meaning “almost impossible to distinguish”. In this utterance, there is another intensifier used, namely the diminisher *somewhat*, which premodifies the attributive adjective *superficial*, belonging to the category of scalar adjectives. Overall, the distribution of *barely* indicates that it is a very infrequent intensifier, which is virtually absent in spoken language as a premodifier of adjectives. It is more typical of formal registers, where, however, its occurrence is also very low.

Regarding adverb premodification, the distribution of *barely* is even rarer. Its occurrence in both registers is only exceptional, thus indicating that *barely* is an intensifier that does not naturally modify other adverbs. In neither spoken language nor academic discourse does it occur in more than 4 instances. In fact, its occurrence as a premodifier of adverb phrases is very scarce in all the sections of the BNC. In spoken language, there is only one single occurrence of *barely* premodifying an adverb, more specifically an adverb of place:

() *Twenty three. (SP:PS0GM) Twenty four. (SP:PS0GU) Twenty five for two. (SP:PS0GM) Thirty. (SP:PS0GV) One for two (pause) ooh that's a thirty eight (SP:PS0GM) Barely there. (SP:PS0GV) (unclear) (SP:PS0GU) (laughing) Sixty two? (SP:PS0GT) (laughing) No, no! (SP:PS0GM) (laughing) Ten! (SP:PS0GV)*

This example is taken from spontaneous conversation. As can be seen from this expanded context, the conversation is based on elliptical and incomplete answers, making it difficult to distinguish any semantic relations between the sentence elements.

In academic prose, *barely* is found to modify the adverbs *audibly*, *enough* and *even* but it does not combine with any of these adverbs more than once. The adverb *audibly* belongs to the category of derived adverbs formed from adjectives by adding the suffix *-ly*. Interestingly, the opposite of the adjective it derives from, *inaudible*, is premodified by *barely* in spoken language. Concerning the other two adverbs, the combination *barely enough* is worth pointing out because, in the given example, *enough* is rather a pronoun, meaning “sufficient amount”:

() *Since the total grain harvest proved to be a mere 52 per cent of what it had been in 1913, even the least affected areas had barely enough.*

Generally, although the occurrence of *barely* is very rare and it is not possible to draw any conclusions from such a scarce distribution, it is more preferred in formal, written registers rather than spoken language. Moreover, *barely* almost exclusively functions as a modifier in adjective phrases, where, however, its occurrence is also very infrequent.

7 Conclusion

The phenomenon of intensification is an area of language that has been the focus of many studies. Especially in recent years, thanks to computerized corpora, linguists and scholars have investigated the development, distribution and function of intensifiers in English. Even though intensifiers are well recognized and discussed in literature, there is not uniform terminology or classification of intensifiers. As a result, one can come across terms such as degree adverbs, degree modifiers or intensifying adverbs. In this thesis, however, the terminology used by Quirk et al. is followed. Therefore, intensifiers are considered to be those elements that increase as well as lower the intensity of an element they modify. The aim of this diploma thesis is then to examine the distribution of intensifiers in adjective and adverb phrases. For this purpose, the BNC was selected as the main source of data. The thesis is structured into two parts: theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part begins by describing adjective and adverb phrases. The attention is paid especially to their form, syntactic functions and classification. For categorization of gradable adjectives, a model proposed by Paradis is followed, distinguishing between scalar, limit and extreme adjectives. The same classification is considered to be applicable also to adverbs which are derived from adjectives, most often by adding the *-ly* suffix to the base form of an adjective. The subsequent sections are then devoted to the phenomenon of intensification. Firstly, a general overview of intensifiers is provided, including two definitions which summarize their nature. Afterwards, the history of intensifiers, their development and changes in the intensifier system are described because one of the characteristic features of intensifiers is their unstable and competitive nature. Once an intensifier becomes accepted and widely used, its intensifying function is weakened and the particular intensifier tends to be replaced by other expressions that better convey the necessary effect. Many studies focusing on the contemporary system of intensifiers show that new intensifiers are promoted especially by young people, who are more innovative and wish to capture the attention of their audience by using unusual and novel expressions. These studies also prove that external factors such as regional variation, age or sex of speakers influence the distribution of particular intensifiers. After discussing these factors, the classification of intensifiers is provided. Two major classes of intensifiers can be distinguished, namely amplifiers and downtoners. When discussing these two classes in more detail, particular intensifiers belonging to each category are provided. Since there is

not a unanimous opinion as to the classification of intensifiers, the attention is also paid to other approaches to the categorization of intensifiers. The theoretical part is concluded by introducing the BNC as it is the main source of data for the subsequent analytical part.

The practical part of this thesis focuses on the distribution of selected intensifiers in adjective and adverb phrases. Because there is a large number of intensifiers that can be used to either strengthen or weaken the meaning of adjectives and adverbs, a list of 16 intensifiers was created, equally representing both amplifiers and downtoners. The distributional analysis of selected intensifiers reveals that amplifiers are used much more often than downtoners, thus indicating that speakers tend to use those expressions that add to the intensity of a given word. When comparing the use of selected amplifiers and downtoners in adjective and adverb phrases, it is clearly seen that both classes of intensifiers more often occur as modifiers in adjective phrases. While amplifiers unambiguously prevail in adjective phrases, downtoners do not show such a strong preference for modifying adjective phrases. The following chart summarizes these findings.

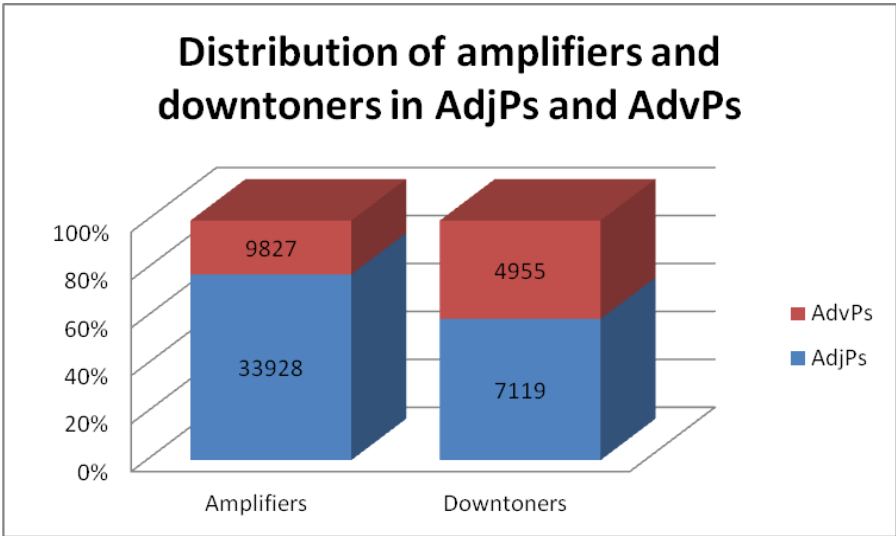


Chart 2: Distribution of amplifiers and downtoners in AdjPs and AdvPs

Obviously, these results are not fully conclusive since this thesis examines only a small number of amplifiers and downtoners. However, these findings correspond to those by Biber et al., who claim that intensifiers are more often used as modifiers of adjectives rather than adverbs. (1999, 546)

The analysis also reveals that even though certain intensifiers belong to the same group and thus have the same reinforcing or attenuating effect on the element they modify, their usage differs and, from the semantic point of view, they tend to modify different elements. Thus, the maximizer *perfectly* shows a preference for modifying positive adjectives while a member of the same category, *utterly*, tends to collocate especially with adjectives that have negative associations. These findings corroborate the second hypothesis which was to confirm the restrictions on the use of intensifiers mentioned by Quirk et al., who claim that *perfectly* naturally collocates only with positive adjectives while *utterly* collocates with negative adjectives. Similarly, the booster *severely* most often modifies adjectives associated with poor health or bad physical/mental condition. Therefore, the use of such intensifiers is more restricted than the use of others, such as *very*, *too* or *extremely*, which combine with a wide range of different adjectives having positive, negative or neutral connotations. In fact, *very* has the highest overall frequency of all the intensifiers. These findings are not very surprising given its level of delexicalization, first attested use as an intensifier and its widespread occurrence, as discussed in the theoretical part. The second most frequent intensifier is *too*, which is again not very surprising because it is a common adverb often employed in everyday language.

One of the aims of this thesis is to compare the distribution of selected intensifiers in two contrasting registers, namely spoken language and academic discourse, which also served as the basis for the other hypothesis stated for this paper. The hypothesis is to confirm that intensifiers are more often used in spoken language than in academic discourse. As evident from the following chart, speakers really tend to use intensifiers more often in spoken language than in academic discourse, however, the difference in occurrence between the two registers is not very significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that intensifiers are used to pretty much the same extent in spoken as well as written language but these conclusions should be taken with caution given the relatively small sample of investigated items.

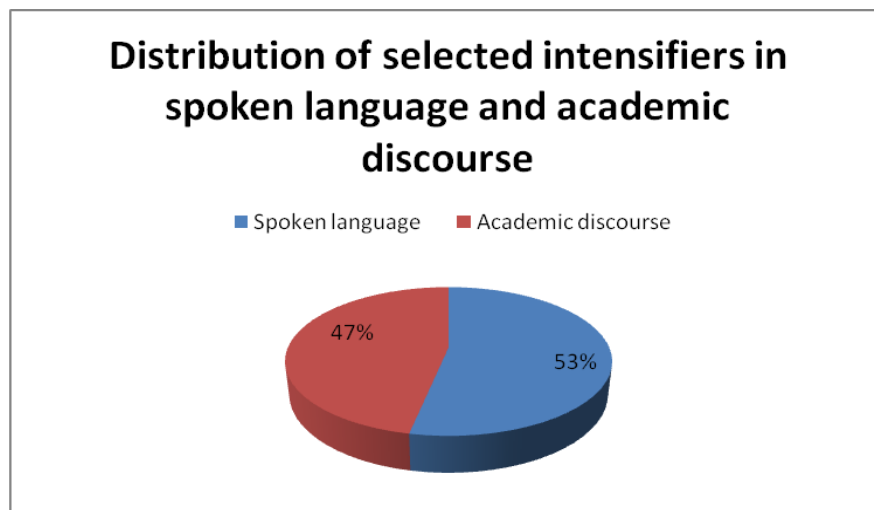


Chart 3: Distribution of selected intensifiers in spoken language and academic discourse

To conclude, it should be mentioned that certain intensifiers tend to modify the same adjectives or adverbs irrespective of register. Thus, for instance, the intensifier *almost* forms the strongest collocation with the adjective *impossible*, which ranks as the most frequently modified adjective in both registers. Similarly, *extremely* most often collocates with the adjective *difficult*. Interestingly, the intensifiers most often modify the adjective *different*. In fact, considering all of the most frequently modified adjectives in both registers, *different* comprises 22% of the overall occurrence.

8 Resumé

Tato diplomová práce zkoumá výskyt intenzifikátorů v adjektivních a adverbiálních frázích v autentických anglických textech. Jelikož se jedná o korpusovou studii, byl pro dané účely zvolen Britský národní korpus, který obsahuje přes 100 milionů slov reprezentujících britskou angličtinu konce 20. století a který zahrnuje jak mluvený, tak a psaný jazyk. Cílem práce je popsat výskyt zvolených intenzifikátorů a určit, která přídavná jména a příslovce tyto intenzifikátory nejčastěji modifikují, tedy identifikovat silné kolokace. Dále si práce klade za cíl porovnat výskyt ve dvou odlišných registrech, a to v mluveném jazyce a akademickém diskurzu, neboť registr je jedním z faktorů, které mohou ovlivnit výskyt intenzifikátorů. Analýza výskytu intenzifikátorů by pak měla potvrdit či vyvrátit dvě hypotézy stanovené pro tuto práci. První hypotéza se týká právě rozdílu ve výskytu vybraných intenzifikátorů v mluveném jazyce a akademickém diskurzu a předpokládá, že v mluveném jazyce se bude objevovat více intenzifikátorů než v jazyce psaném. Jedním z důvodů pro tuto hypotézu je to, že mluvčí často používají intenzifikátory, aby zdůraznili své tvrzení, a často vykazují sklon k přehánění. Dále se dá předpokládat, že v mluveném jazyce bude repetice intenzifikátorů častější, než v akademickém prostředí. Druhá hypotéza, stanovená pro tuto práci, se vztahuje k jednotlivým intenzifikátorům a má potvrdit, že intenzifikátor *perfectly* se pojí zejména s pozitivními adjektivy, zatímco intenzifikátor *utterly* modifikuje zejména adjektiva, která mají negativní konotaci. Tato hypotéza je založena na tvrzení obsaženém v jedné z největších a nejzákladnějších gramatik anglického jazyka, tedy *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*.

Práce je rozdělena na dvě části, a to na část teoretickou a praktickou. Teoretická část nejprve vymezuje pojem fráze a její strukturu a dále popisuje adjektivní a adverbiální fráze, které si jsou svou skladbou dosti podobné, nicméně liší se, mimo jiné, například svými syntaktickými funkcemi. Nejběžnější syntaktickou funkcí adjektivních frází je funkce přívlastku, kdy adjektivum premodifikuje podstatné jméno, a funkce doplňku podmětu po sponových slovesech. Dalšími funkcemi jsou postmodifikace substantiva či doplněk předmětu. Naopak adverbiální fráze mohou mít buď funkci příslovečného určení, nebo operují jako modifikátory v adjektivních či adverbiálních frázích. Kapitola zabývající se adjektivními frázemi poskytuje také klasifikace přídavných jmen, které je možno rozdělit do tří kategorií. Jedná se o adjektiva

skalární, extrémní nebo limitující. Stejná klasifikace může být aplikována v rámci příslovčí, ale pouze pro ty příslovce, které jsou odvozeny od přídavných jmen.

Následující kapitoly se pak detailně věnují procesu intenzifikace, který je v anglickém jazyce hojně využíván. Nejprve jsou uvedeny dvě definice, které vymezují, co to vlastně intenzifikátory jsou a jaká je jejich funkce. Jedná se o lexikální prostředky, zejména příslovce či přídavná jména, které zdůrazňují význam slova, které modifikují. Nicméně se nejedná vždy nutně o zesílení intensity, ale intenzifikátory zahrnují i ty výrazy, které snižují intenzitu daného slova a mají spíše zmírňující účinek. Toto je jedním z důvodů, proč mnozí autoři odmítají pojem intenzifikátor a preferují jiná označení pro tyto lexikální prostředky, neboť tvrdí, že není sémanticky správné pojmem intenzifikátor označovat i ty výrazy, které snižují intenzitu daného slova a zastávají názor, že intenzifikátory pouze přidávají na intenzitě. V odborné literatuře se tedy objevují různé terminologické pojmy, nicméně tato diplomová práce pracuje s pojmem intenzifikátor, jež zahrnuje jak výrazy stupňující intenzitu, tak i výrazy snižující intenzitu slova, které modifikují. Po krátkém představení a objasnění pojmu intenzifikátor následuje kapitola pojednávající o historickém vývoji intenzifikátorů a je popsán proces „delexikalizace“, jimž intenzifikátory procházejí. Jedná se o proces, při kterém jednotlivé výrazy ztrácejí svůj původní lexikální význam a začínají výhradně plnit určitou gramatickou funkci, tedy v případě intenzifikátorů funkci zdůraznění. Míru delexikalizace lze posoudit podle toho, zda daný intenzifikátor modifikuje predikativní či atributivní přídavná jména, jaký je rozsah kolokací a zda se daný intenzifikátor pojí s pozitivně či negativně hodnotícími přídavnými jmény. Vývoj a změny v systému intenzifikace uzavírá kapitola představující nejčastěji užívané intenzifikátory v současné angličtině, jimiž jsou intenzifikátory *very*, *really* a také intenzifikátor *so*, který postupně získává na popularitě.

Dále je pozornost věnována faktorům, které mohou ovlivnit výskyt intenzifikátorů, jako například věk mluvčích, jejich vzdělání, pohlaví či zeměpisná oblast. Obecně panuje názor, že ženy používají intenzifikátory častěji než muži neboť právě ženy jsou více emotivní a mají tendenci používat expresivní výrazy a svá tvrzení přehánět. Následující kapitoly se již věnují klasifikaci intenzifikátorů, které lze podle jejich povahy a funkce rozdělit do dvou hlavních skupin, a to na tzv. „amplifiers“ a „downtoners“. První skupina obsahuje intenzifikátory, které stupňují intenzitu slova směrem nahoru, kdežto „downtoners“ snižují intenzitu slova. Stejně tak jako neexistuje jednotná terminologie, tak neexistuje ani jednotná klasifikace

intenzifikátorů. Z tohoto důvodu zmiňuje teoretická část i další přístupy ke členění intenzifikátorů, které se v literatuře objevují. Celou teoretickou část pak uzavírá kapitola popisující zvolený korpus současné angličtiny, tedy Britský národní korpus.

Praktická část se zabývá analýzou vybraných intenzifikátorů v adjektivních a adverbiálních frázích. Porovnává nejenom jejich výskyt, ale zabývá se i silnými adjektivními a adverbiálními kolokacemi a popisuje sémantické vztahy mezi vybranými intenzifikátory a přídavnými jmény či příslovci, se kterými se pojí. Výskyt jednotlivých intenzifikátorů je také popsán z hlediska jejich distribuce v mluveném a psaném jazyce. Jelikož není možné se detailně zabývat výskytem všech intenzifikátorů, neboť existuje celá škála prostředků, které mají různě zesilující či zmírňující efekt, byl pro účely této práce vytvořen seznam 16 intenzifikátorů reprezentujících jednotlivé kategorie. Zastoupeny jsou tedy jak intenzifikátory, které mají zesilující účinek, tedy tzv. „amplifiers“, tak i ty, které snižují intenzitu daného slova a označují se jako tzv. „downtoners.“ Při výběru konkrétních intenzifikátorů byla jako hlavní zdroj použita publikace *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, neboť v této diplomové práci je použito členění intenzifikátorů právě tak, jak jej uvádí Quirk a kol., a také proto, že tato gramatika poskytuje poměrně komplexní seznam intenzifikátorů, které spadají do jednotlivých podkategorií.

Výsledky analýzy ukázaly, že nejčastěji používaným intenzifikátorem ze všech zkoumaných je intenzifikátor *very*. Vzhledem k tomu, co bylo uvedeno v teoretické části práce ohledně historie a stupni delexikalizace tohoto intenzifikátoru, není toto zjištění nijak překvapující. Druhým nejčastějším intenzifikátorem je *too*, běžně se objevující jak v mluvené, tak v psané angličtině a pojící se s velkým množstvím přídavných jmen i příslovcí. Co se týče jednotlivých skupin intenzifikátorů, analýza odhalila, že je více využíváno prostředků, které zvyšují intenzitu a zdůrazňují význam slova, které modifikují, tedy „amplifiers“. Tyto zesilující prostředky převažují zejména v adjektivních frázích, kde je jejich použití nejčastější. Nicméně „downtoners“, které se nevyskytují tak často, modifikují adjektivní i adverbiální fráze v poměrně stejném rozsahu. Ačkoliv převažují v adjektivních frázích, není u nich rozdíl tak výrazný. Z těchto výsledků je tedy patrné, že intenzifikátory obecně se běžně používají zejména ve spojitosti s přídavnými jmény. Co se týče jejich výskytu v mluveném a psaném jazyce, bylo prokázáno, že vybrané intenzifikátory lehce převažují v mluveném jazyce, nicméně rozdíl mezi jejich výskytem v mluveném jazyce a akademickém diskurzu je velmi

nepatrný. Přesněji řečeno, podíl intenzifikátorů v mluveném jazyce a akademickém diskurzu je 53% ku 47%. Tyto výsledky tedy potvrzují první hypotézu, která předpokládala, že intenzifikátory jsou častější v mluveném jazyce. Nicméně díky malému vzorku intenzifikátorů je nutné brát tyto závěry s rezervou.

Kromě obecných závěrů týkajících se výskytu intenzifikátorů v mluveném a psaném jazyce a také v adjektivních a adverbálních frázích bylo prokázáno, že použití jednotlivých intenzifikátorů se liší i v závislosti na tom, jaké výrazy modifikují. Analýza odhalila, že ačkoliv intenzifikátory, které patří do stejné kategorie a mají tak stejný účinek, se vyskytují v jiném prostředí a modifikují jiná přídavná jména či příslovce. Například intenzifikátor *perfectly*, který patří do kategorie tzv. „boosters“ a zdůrazňuje tak význam slova, ke kterému se pojí, i když jeho účinek není tak silný jako účinek intenzifikátorů označovaných jako tzv. „maximizers“, vykazuje tendenci modifikovat zejména přídavná jména, která mají pozitivní nebo neutrální konotaci. Naopak *utterly*, které patří do stejné skupiny intenzifikátorů a má tak stejný účinek jako *perfectly*, modifikuje výhradně přídavná jména opačného významu, tedy ta, která mají negativní konotaci. Tyto výsledky potvrzují i druhou hypotézu, která byla založena na tvrzení Quirka a kolektivu a měla prokázat, že tyto dva konkrétní intenzifikátory se používají ve zcela odlišných situacích.

Analýza také mimo jiné ukázala, že určité intenzifikátory jsou charakteristické pro neformální jazyk, jako například *absolutely*, *very*, *too* nebo *enough*, kdežto jiné intenzifikátory jsou typické pro formální registr, například *highly*, *almost* nebo *rather* které převažují v akademickém diskurzu. Konkrétně výskyt intenzifikátoru *highly* stojí za povšimnutí, neboť se používá téměř výhradně k modifikaci přídavných jmen, kdy se v této syntaktické funkci vyskytuje mnohem častěji v akademickém diskurzu než v mluveném jazyce. Lze tedy říci, že *highly* se přirozeně pojí pouze s přídavnými jmény a jeho výskyt jako modifikátor přídavných jmen je mnohem častější v akademickém diskurzu v porovnání s mluveným jazykem.

V neposlední řadě přináší analýza zajímavé poznatky týkající se silných kolokačních vztahů mezi jednotlivými intenzifikátory a přídavnými jmény či příslovci, se kterými se pojí. Jedním z nejčastěji modifikovaných přídavných jmen je *different*, které tvoří silné kolokace s poměrně velkým počtem intenzifikátorů. Toto přídavné jméno tvoří 22% z celkového počtu nejčastěji modifikovaných přídavných jmen v mluveném i psaném jazyce. Velký podíl na

tomto výsledku má skupina tzv. „diminishers“, kdy oba zkoumané intenzifikátory nejčastěji modifikují právě přídavné jméno *different* a to jak v mluveném jazyce, tak v akademickém diskurzu. Tyto výsledky tak korespondují se zjištěním Bibera a kolektivu uvedeným v teoretické části práce, kteří uvádí, že intenzifikátory, které snižují intenzitu daného slova, tedy tzv. „downtoners“ se nejčastěji pojí právě s přídavným jménem *different*.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Alexander, L. G. 1995. *Longman English Grammar*. Harlow: Longman Group.
- 2) Athanasiadou, Angeliki. 2007. "On the subjectivity of intensifiers." *Language Sciences* 29 (4): 554-565.
- 3) Biber, Douglas, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech, Susan Conrad, and Edward Finegan. 1999. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.
- 4) Breban, Tine, and Kristin Davidse. 2016. "The history of *very*: the directionality of functional shift and (inter)subjectification." *English Language and Linguistics* 20 (2): 221-249.
- 5) British National Corpus (BYU-BNC). Brigham Young University. Accessed May 10, 2018. <https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>.
- 6) British National Corpus. 2009. "What is the BNC?" University of Oxford. Accessed May 10, 2018. <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml>.
- 7) Cocea, Carmen. 2015. "Intensifying Adverbs in English and Romanian." *Philologica Jassyensia* XI (1/21): 153-163.
- 8) Crystal, David. 1990. *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- 9) Dušková, Libuše, Dagmar Knittlová, Jaroslav Peprník, Zdeňka Strnadová, and Jarmila Tárnyiková. 1994. *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny*. 2nd ed. Praha: Academia.
- 10) González-Díaz, Victorina. 2008. "Recent developments in English intensifiers: the case of *very much*." *English Language and Linguistics* 12 (2): 221-243.
- 11) Huddleston, Rodney. 1993. *Introduction to the Grammar of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 12) Huddleston, Rodney, and Geoffrey K. Pullum. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 13) Ito, Rika, and Sali Tagliamonte. 2003. "*Well weird, right dodgy, very strange, really cool*: Layering and recycling in English intensifiers." *Language in Society* 32 (2): 257-279.

- 14) Kennedy, Graeme. 2003. "Amplifier Collocations in the British National Corpus: Implications for English Language Teaching." *TESOL Quarterly* 37 (3): 467-487.
- 15) McEdwards, Mary G. 1985. "Women's Language: A Positive View." *The English Journal* 74 (3): 40-43.
- 16) Méndez-Naya, Belén. 2008. "Special issue on English intensifiers." *English Language and Linguistics* 12 (2): 213-219.
- 17) Nevalainen, Terttu, and Matti Rissanen. 2002. "Fairly pretty or pretty fair? On the development and grammaticalization of English downtoners." *Language Sciences* 24 (3-4): 359-380.
- 18) Núñez Pertejo, Paloma. 2017. "Terrific-looking creatures and terrific, funny guys: On the historical development of English terrific." *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies* 55: 65-85.
- 19) Paradis, Carita. 1997. *Degree modifiers of adjectives in spoken British English*. (Lund Studies in English; vol. 92). Lund: Lund University Press.
- 20) Paradis, Carita. 2000. "It's well weird. Degree modifiers of adjectives revisited: the nineties." In *Corpora galore: Analyses and techniques in describing English*, edited by John M. Kirk, 147-60. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- 21) Paradis, Carita. 2001. "Adjectives and boundedness." *Cognitive Linguistics* 12 (1): 47-64.
- 22) Partington, Alan. 1993. "Corpus Evidence of Language Change: The Case of the Intensifier." In *Text and Technology: In Honour of John Sinclair*, edited by Mona Baker, Gill Francis, and Elena Tognini-Bonelli, 177-192. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- 23) Peters, Pam. 2004. *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 24) Procter, Paul, ed. 1995. *Cambridge International Dictionary of English: Guides You to the Meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 25) Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Harlow: Longman Group UK Limited.
- 26) Tagliamonte, Sali A. 2008. "So different and pretty cool! Recycling intensifiers in Toronto, Canada." *English Language and Linguistics* 12 (2): 361-394.

- 27) Tagliamonte, Sali, and Chris Roberts. 2005. "So weird; so cool; so innovative: The use of intensifiers in the television series *Friends*." *American Speech* 80 (3): 280-300.

10 APPENDIX

Extremely

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Difficult (47)	Difficult (141)	Well (34)	Well (13)
Good (31)	Important (60)	Quickly (4)	Fast (5)
Important (31)	Useful (34)	Hard (2)	Quickly (4)
Valuable (12)	Complex (33)	Highly (1)	Long (3)
Helpful (8)	Rare (30)	Nice (1)	Closely (2)
High (6)	Valuable (23)	Persuasively (1)	Rapidly (2)
Expensive (6)	Low (22)	Badly (1)	Scarce (1)
Interesting (6)	High (22)	Critically (1)	Seriously (1)
Large (6)	Common (18)	Effectively (1)	Short (1)
Cold (5)	Unlikely (18)	Efficiently (1)	Slow (1)

Absolutely

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Right (72)	Essential (16)	So (5)	Alone (2)
Clear (28)	Necessary (15)	Literally (1)	Blamelessly (1)
Brilliant (27)	Clear (13)	Never (1)	Deliberately (1)
Sure (23)	Sure (9)	Adamantly (1)	Nowhere (1)
Wonderful (22)	Certain (6)	All (1)	
True (21)	Privileged (6)	Anywhere (1)	
Certain (21)	Central (5)	Definitely (1)	
Essential (21)	Right (5)	Everywhere (1)	
Marvellous (17)	Vital (4)	Factually (1)	
Gorgeous (13)	Free (4)	Firmly (1)	

Perfectly

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Honest (26)	Possible (28)	Well (24)	Well (32)
Happy (16)	Normal (18)	Round (2)	Just (3)
Good (14)	Acceptable (18)	Alright (2)	Adequately (2)
True (14)	Good (13)	Cheerfully (1)	Readily (2)
Clear (13)	Valid (13)	Competently (1)	Reasonable (1)
Reasonable (12)	Proper (10)	Correctly (1)	Reasonably (1)
Acceptable (9)	Capable (9)	Generally (1)	Alone (1)
Normal (9)	Clear (9)	Obviously (1)	Appropriately (1)
Alright (7)	Consistent (9)	Properly (1)	Happily (1)
Capable (6)	True (9)	Rightly (1)	Legally (1)

Utterly

AdjPs		AdvPs
Spoken	Academic	Academic
Disgraceful (3)	Different (7)	Under (1)
Impossible (2)	Unable (3)	
Unforgivable (2)	Inaccessible (2)	
Unreasonable (1)	Impossible (2)	
Unsatisfactory (1)	Unknown (2)	
Unstable (1)	Unreasonable (2)	
Useless (1)	Free (2)	
Valid (1)	Disgraceful (2)	
Wasteful (1)	Alien (2)	
Wrong (1)	Intolerant (2)	

Very

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Good (1959)	Different (663)	Well (950)	Much (200)
Nice (763)	Important (324)	Much (825)	Often (181)
Difficult (569)	Large (323)	Often (396)	Well (166)
Important (559)	Difficult (289)	Quickly (209)	Clearly (78)
Small (249)	Small (288)	Carefully (121)	Far (76)
Interesting (240)	Similar (270)	Long (119)	Recently (58)
High (201)	High (270)	Hard (105)	Largely (57)
Happy (190)	Low (216)	Briefly (93)	Rarely (54)
Big (181)	Limited (157)	Far (72)	Closely (53)
Strong (164)	Useful (140)	Clearly (66)	Carefully (51)

Too

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Bad (349)	Small (109)	Long (160)	Often (170)
Big (143)	Great (77)	Far (141)	Far (131)
Late (124)	Late (75)	Late (116)	Long (60)
High (70)	Large (70)	Much (100)	Easily (56)
Hot (67)	Low (68)	Early (58)	Well (35)
Small (62)	High (67)	Fast (44)	Soon (29)
Good (57)	Easy (57)	Often (43)	Closely (26)
Long (55)	Difficult (53)	Hard (41)	Late (25)
Busy (53)	Remote (41)	Well (39)	Much (24)
Sure (50)	Narrow (34)	Loud (25)	Readily (24)

Highly

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Unlikely (16)	Significant (73)	Likely (1)	Significantly (2)
Likely (6)	Selective (46)	Together (1)	Socially (1)
Effective (5)	Complex (44)		Specifically (1)
Successful (5)	Variable (35)		Statistically (1)
Critical (4)	Critical (33)		Unequally (1)
Skilled (4)	Unlikely (32)		Creatively (1)
Improbable (3)	Successful (30)		Emotionally (1)
Flammable (3)	Relevant (26)		Enough (1)
Competitive (3)	Sensitive (25)		
Delighted (3)	Desirable (24)		

Severely

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Disabled (5)	Disabled (26)	Mentally (2)	Mentally (10)
Depressed (2)	Ill (18)	Yet (1)	Visually (7)
Handicapped (2)	Handicapped (7)		Physically (5)
Ill (1)	Depressed (5)		
Increased (1)	Defective (4)		
Malnourished (1)	Deficient (3)		
Disadvantaged (1)	Disadvantaged (3)		
	Limited (3)		
	Retarded (3)		
	Impaired (2)		

Almost

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Impossible (20)	Impossible (62)	Certainly (48)	Certainly (313)
Certain (16)	Identical (55)	Entirely (17)	Entirely (184)
Ready (5)	Complete (44)	As...as (16)	Always (135)
Inevitable (5)	Certain (36)	Immediately (15)	Exclusively (106)
Right (3)	Total (31)	Exactly (10)	Invariably (86)
Sure (3)	Universal (30)	Exclusively (10)	As...as (57)
Unthinkable (3)	Inevitable (20)	Always (10)	Completely (46)
Identical (3)	Continuous (13)	There (8)	Immediately (35)
Universal (2)	Equal (11)	Completely (6)	Totally (31)
Flat (2)	Constant (10)	Totally (5)	Universally (30)

Nearly

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Ready (11)	Contiguous (10)	There (36)	Always (71)
New (4)	Complete (9)	Always (30)	As... as (22)
Full (3)	Rectangular (9)	As ... as (23)	Twice (7)
Asleep (3)	Equal (6)	Twice (6)	All (4)
Black (2)	Identical (6)	Over (4)	Far (2)
Right (2)	Central (5)	Half (4)	Parallel (2)
Perfect (2)	Square (4)	Down (4)	Perfectly (2)
Normal (1)	Pentagonal (4)	Now (2)	Twofold (2)
Opposite (1)	Triangular (4)	Automatically (1)	Uniformly (1)
Spectacular (1)	Contemporary (3)	Anyway (1)	Vertically (1)

Enough

AdjP		AdvP	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Good (150)	Large (97)	Fair (320)	Long (66)
Big (112)	Strong (67)	Long (105)	Far (39)
Old (60)	Good (41)	Near (57)	Well (31)
Bad (49)	Small (35)	Far (42)	Often (26)
Strong (37)	Wide (31)	Right (38)	Interestingly (18)
Lucky (19)	Simple (26)	Well (38)	Fast (18)
Funny (18)	Clear (26)	Just (36)	Naturally (17)
Large (16)	Important (24)	Funnily (33)	Hard (15)
Sure (16)	Flexible (18)	Interestingly (29)	Oddly (13)
Warm (16)	Big (17)	Hard (28)	Curiously (12)

Rather

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Nice (47)	Different (191)	Well (18)	Better (14)
Different (41)	Similar (36)	Better (10)	Differently (11)
Good (25)	General (19)	Then (6)	Well (10)
Interesting (17)	Low (18)	Quickly (5)	Surprisingly (9)
Large (14)	Difficult (17)	Differently (5)	Then ()
Difficult (12)	Limited (16)	Badly (5)	Oddly (7)
Strange (12)	Vague (16)	Heavily (4)	Loosely (6)
Surprised (10)	Small (14)	Reluctantly (4)	Later (5)
Special (10)	Crude (14)	Strangely (2)	Vaguely (5)
Odd (9)	Complex (12)	Suddenly (2)	Slowly (5)

Slightly

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Different (129)	Different (134)	Differently (10)	Differently (15)
Bigger (12)	Higher (46)	Down (6)	Later (10)
Higher (12)	Lower (24)	Further (4)	Earlier (3)
Larger (9)	Larger (21)	Up (7)	Faster (2)
Better (9)	Later (14)	Slower (2)	Harder (2)
Smaller (6)	Curved (12)	Easier (2)	Slower (2)
Longer (5)	Better (11)	Faster (1)	Southwards (1)
Younger (5)	Greater (9)	Specially (1)	Upwards (1)
Wider (4)	Smaller (9)	Closer (1)	Midradially (1)
Shorter (4)	Negative (8)	Hard (1)	Further (1)

Somewhat

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Different (7)	Different (76)	Differently (2)	Differently (9)
Larger (3)	Similar (23)	Earlier (2)	Later (7)
Similar (3)	Higher (18)	Later (2)	Surprisingly (7)
Lower (2)	Arbitrary (14)	Longer (1)	Earlier (4)
New (2)	Lower (13)	Cheekily (1)	Ironically (3)
Higher (2)	Ambiguous (10)	Forbiddingly (1)	Independently (2)
Surprised (2)	Uncertain (9)	Nearer (1)	Grimly (2)
Surprising (2)	Unusual (9)	Now (1)	Erratically (2)
Unfortunate (2)	Surprising (8)	Quickly (1)	Arbitrarily (2)
Unusual (2)	Greater (8)	Slowly (1)	Misleadingly (2)

Hardly

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Surprising (8)	Surprising (111)	Ever (44)	Ever (34)
Likely (2)	Likely (21)	There (2)	Surprisingly (č)
Plain (1)	Possible (10)	Even (1)	So (2)
Possible (1)	Necessary (5)	Early (1)	Yet (1)
Surprised (1)	Adequate (4)	Never (1)	Politically (1)
Used (1)	Sufficient (4)	Perhaps (1)	Rationally (1)
Visible (1)	Visible (3)	Physically (1)	Better (1)
Appropriate (1)	Able (3)	Then (1)	Anywhere (1)
Available (1)	Fair (3)		As ... as (1)
Buoyant (1)	Distinguishable (3)		Further (1)

Barely

AdjPs		AdvPs	
Spoken	Academic	Spoken	Academic
Able (1)	Distinguishable	There (1)	Audibly (1)
Credible (1)	Detectable (3)		Enough (1)
Inaudible (1)	Visible (2)		Even (1)
	Perceptible (2)		
	Significant (2)		
	Audible (2)		
	Intelligible (2)		
	Interactive (1)		
	Involved (1)		
	Justifiable (1)		