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Intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives: “dead tired”, “real good”.

Adverbiá homonymné s adjektívami vo funkcii intenzifikátorov: „dead tired“, „real good“.

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Pod'akovanie

Rada by som pod'akovala PhDr. Markéte Malej, Ph.D. za ochotu, cenné rady a pripomienky, ktoré mi pri vypracovaní mojej bakalárskej práce poskytla.

Abstract

The objective of the present thesis is to analyze 15 intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives. The focus is on simple intensifying adverbs only and incorporates an analysis of in what context and under which circumstances these intensifiers are used. Attention was paid to frequency of occurrence, collocation restrictions, type of text and differences between British and American English. The intensifiers were sourced from grammar books, dictionaries, websites and from English native speakers' suggestions, and explored using the *British National Corpus* and the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*.

Abstrakt

Cieľom tejto práce je analýza 15-tich adverbií homonymných s adjektívami vo funkcii intenzifikátorov. Pozornosť je zameraná len na jednoduché adverbiá. Práca preskúmala v akom kontexte a za akých podmienok sa tieto modifikátory používajú. Pri popise bola pozornosť venovaná frekvencii výskytu, kolokačným obmedzeniam, typu textu a rozdielom medzi britskou a americkou angličtinou. Intenzifikátory boli získané z gramatík, slovníkov, internetových zdrojov a z odporúčaní ľudí, ktorých rodným jazykom je angličtina. Pri výskume sa využili korpusy *British National Corpus* a *Corpus of Contemporary American English*.

List of abbreviations

ACAD - academic

ADJ - adjective

AdjP - adjective phrase

ADV - adverb

AdvP - adverb phrase

AmE - American English

BrE - British English

BNC - *British National Corpus*

COCA - *Corpus of Contemporary American English*

CONV - conversation

FICT - fiction

NEWS - newspapers

OALD - *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*

OED - *Oxford English Dictionary*

pmw – frequency per million words

SVA - clause type composed of subject, verb, adverbial

SVOA - clause type composed of subject, verb, object, adverbial

WEUD - *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*

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1 Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to analyze intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives. Since intensifying adverbs can occur in British as well as in American English, regional differences in their frequency, style and collocation can be expected.

The theoretical part of the thesis starts with a general description of adverbs and gradually narrows its approach to focus on simple intensifying adverbs that are homonymous with adjectives modifying another adjective, such as *dead tired* or *real good*. Due to the nature of the task, a number of English grammar textbooks are consulted, more specifically: *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (1999) and *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (2003) by D. Biber et al., *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny* (1994) by L. Dušková et al., *A Communicative Grammar of English* (1975) by G. Leech and J. Svartvik., *A University grammar of English* (1975) and *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985) by R. Quirk et al. and finally *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (2002) by R. Huddleston and G. K. Pullum et al. In addition to the grammar books, *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* (2001) will also be referred to.

The empirical part of the thesis provides an analysis of 15 intensifiers homonymous with adjectives, the chapter being divided into two parts. The first part contains a group of intensifiers that are already described in the grammar textbooks or dictionaries. The properties of these intensifiers (their frequency, distribution, collocations, etc.) were explored using two corpora of British and American English, the *British National Corpus* and the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*, respectively. The second part comprises relatively new intensifiers that are not described in the grammar books used nor in corpora but are mentioned in journal articles, some dictionaries, online sources or suggested to the author by native speakers.

2 Theoretical background

Among other traditional word classes, adverbs stand out as “nebulous and puzzling” (Quirk et al., 1985: 438). It is due to their strong diversity and numerous subtypes that it is so hard to define adverbs as a homogenous class. An adverb is thus rather “an item that does not fit the definitions for other word classes” (Ibid.).

Nevertheless, adverbs can still be distinguished on a syntactical, semantic and morphological level. Syntactically, an adverb can act as the head of the Adverb Phrase. The syntactic characteristic also involves the syntactic functions of the Adverb Phrase. When discussing semantic features of adverbs, the main focus will be on the degree function. Finally, adverbs can also be classified from a morphological point of view where comparison of adverbs may be taken into account although the emphasis in this thesis will be on the form of adverbs.

2.1 Adverbs on a syntactical level

Adverbs can be distinguished on a syntactic level according to whether or not they are integrated into sentence structure. If an adverb is integrated into sentence structure, either as an obligatory or an optional sentence element, it can either complement a verb (“*The material washes easily*”) or modify an adjective or another adverb (“...*a dimly visible object*”, “*too soon*”) (Dušková et al., 1994: 156)). If an adverb is not integrated into sentence structure, it can either have a modal or a connective function. For instance:

- *Curiously, this work remained unnoticed until quite recently.*
- *Nevertheless it can serve as an illustration of the procedure in question.* (Ibid.)

2.1.1 Adverbs as adverbials

Adverbs, however, can also be divided on a syntactical level according to the type of syntactic function. There are two types of syntactic function. First, there are adverbs that are clause elements themselves. These are called adverbials:

- *I think she'll be married shortly.*
- *Possibly the Wesleyan Church tolerated outside unions unofficially, in a way that the Anglican Church did not.* (Biber, et al., 1999: 538)

2.1.2 Adverbs as modifiers

The second syntactic function describes adverbs integrated into an element of the clause. These adverbs function as modifiers, such as:

- *I am almost positive she borrowed that off Barbie!*
- *First, health service managers must be able to price their services reasonably accurately for trading purposes. (Ibid.)*

The same adverbs used as modifiers in one sentence can behave as adverbials in another and vice versa. A good example of such adverb flexibility and heterogeneity can be the adverb *surprisingly*. For instance, while in sentence A, *surprisingly* operates as an adverbial, it functions as a modifier in sentence B:

A. *Surprisingly, the choked voice resumes.*

B. *This apparently complicated expression for pull-out torque gives the surprisingly simple characteristic shown in Fig 5.8. (Ibid.)*

When dividing adverbs syntactically into adverbials and modifiers, it is important to stress, that “an adverb need have only one” of these functions (Quirk et al, 1975: 125). Some adverbs can, however, belong to both classes. Such example could be the adverb *just*. On the one hand, *just* can be classified as a focusing adjunct, more specifically, a limiter:

- *You can get a B grade just for that answer. (Ibid.: 213)*

On the other hand, *just* can also function in a modifying role, modifying adjectives: “[...] it may be possible to distinguish another class of adjective modifiers called emphasizees, which add to the force (as distinct from the degree) of the adjective: ‘*That’s just impossible*’” (Quirk et al., 1985: 447). In this thesis, the focus will fall on adverbs that act as modifiers.

Although adverbs can serve as modifiers of various word-classes (Leech et al., 1975: 309), in this thesis, our attention will be turned to adjective modifiers only.

2.1.3 Adverbs as adjective modifiers

Indeed, “one of the primary functions of adverbs is to modify adjectives” like in the following examples varying in their register (Biber et al., 1999: 544):

- *I’m rather partial to parsnips. (CONV)*
- *I was utterly, hopelessly, horribly glad. (FICT)*
- *He is a deeply sick man. (NEWS)*

- *This is slightly larger than the calculated value.* (ACAD) (Ibid.)

Adverbs can further be distinguished according to whether they premodify adjectives or postmodify them. The majority of modifying adverbs precede the adjective they modify, yet certain adverbs must occur in a postmodifying position after the adjectives (Ibid.: 545). For instance:

- *Down came the dry flakes, fat enough and heavy enough to crash like nickels on stone.* (FICT)
- *That seems so long ago.* (FICT) (Ibid.)

However, it might be hard to distinguish between postmodifiers and adverbials sometimes, just like in the following example:

A. *Several preparations are available commercially.* (ACAD)

B. *Several preparations are available to us commercially.* (Ibid.)

While in sentence A, the word *commercially* acts as an adverb modifying an adjective (*available*) in a postmodifying position, in sentence B, *commercially* functions as an adverbial and can be thus separated from the adjective (Ibid.). From now on, this thesis will focus only on adverbs placed before the adjectives that they modify.

2.2 Adverbs on a semantic level

Adverbs modifying adjectives “can be used with virtually any of the semantic functions that they have in clause structure” (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 582). There can be up to 16 different semantic functions of adverbs modifying adjectives according to Huddleston and Pullum. These are: category of manner, act-related, special location, temporal location, duration, aspectuality, frequency, serial order, degree, reason, concession, condition, domain, modality, evaluation and finally, speech act-related category (Ibid.: 583). Yet:

the degree function, however, is by far the most common [category] and in AdjPs and predicative AdjPs it is virtually the only possibility apart from that of the focusing adverbs *only*, *even*, etc. Moreover, degree modifiers are found in AdjP and AdvP structure much more frequently than in clause structure, because verbs are less readily gradable than adjectives and adverbs. (Ibid.: 583)

At the same time, however, the primary meaning for some degree adverbs has to do with manner, with the degree meaning secondary, as in:

- *They behaved dreadfully.* (MANNER)
- *I'm dreadfully sorry.* (DEGREE) (Ibid.)

2.2.1 Degree adverb, intensifier

“Adverb + adjective pairs in conversation have a single type of modifier, i.e. a degree adverb” (Biber et al, 1999: 545). Degree adverbs such as *quite, real, really, too, pretty* and *very* are “especially common” (Ibid.). In case an adverb premodifies an adjective, “most commonly, the modifying adverb is a scaling device called an intensifier” (Quirk et al., 1985: 445).

The term ‘intensifier’ is a “distinct lexical category” used in modern grammar books to describe certain degree modifiers that “combine with adjectives and adverbs but not verbs” (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 585). It is argued that this classification

“cannot be regarded as an improvement on the traditional analysis, however, for the number of [such adverbs] is very small in comparison with the total number of items that can function as degree modifier in the structure of AdjPs and AdvPs: there is no basis for making a primary category distinction here.” (Ibid.)

The usage of ‘intensifier’ as a functional term is further disputed. It is believed that there is no improvement on the traditional ‘degree modifier’ because although there are many degree adverbs that indicate a relatively high degree, there are others that do not manifest it: “It is semantically inappropriate to apply the term ‘intensifier’ to the modifiers in phrases like *moderately cool, slightly unusual, barely noticeable*, etc.” (Ibid.)

On the other hand, some grammarians acknowledge that an adverb may premodify an adjective and, most commonly, the modifying adverb is an intensifier (Quirk et al., 1975: 127) and by the repetition of “attributive degree intensifiers” an intensifying effect can be achieved: *very, very good* (*extremely good*) (Ibid.: 132). The term ‘intensifier’ is, however, “not limited to indicating an increase in intensity; [it] indicates a point on the intensity scale which may be high or low” (Ibid.: 214).

The term ‘intensifier’ is also used in order to describe a special type of adverbial which “does not introduce an independent semantic element into the semantic sentence structure but marks

only the degree of intensity of action or the quality expressed by an adjective” (Dušková et al., 1994: 465, transl. I.D.)¹. Intensifiers are classified as a subclass of adverbials of measure. Adverbials of measure are divided into three subcategories: adverbials of measure proper, verb intensifiers and, finally, adjective and adverb intensifiers (Ibid.: 465).

Furthermore, intensifiers differ from other types of adverbials since they “never function as a constitutive clause element, but they are always optional dependent elements which merely modify their superordinate clause element” (Ibid.).

While some intensifiers can intensify not only an adjective and an adverb but also a verb, others intensify adjectives and adverbs exclusively. Such adverbs include the intensifiers *very*, *pretty* and *too* (Ibid.: 466):

- *I am very grateful to you.*
- *He gave a fairly good performance.*
- *Don't be too strict with them. (Ibid.)*

A similar set of intensifiers can be used for both adjectives and adverbs, e.g. *fairly*, *pretty* and *rather* (Quirk et al., 1985: 446). For example, while in sentence A, *pretty* intensifies the adjective *tall*, in sentence B, *pretty* intensifies the adverb *fast*:

- A. *She is pretty tall.*
- B. *She drives pretty fast. (Ibid.)*

2.2.2 Adjective intensifiers

Adjective intensifiers attempt to provide an answer to the question “how?” as in “*How important is it? – It is extremely important*” or “*How well do you know her? – I know her very well*” (Dušková et al., 1994: 466). The position of an intensifier before an adjective it intensifies is firm with the exception of the intensifier *enough*. This intensifier is placed behind an adjective: *Is it warm enough?* (Ibid.)

2.2.3 Amplifiers

Two classes of adjective intensifiers can be distinguished, namely: amplifiers and downtoners.

¹ „Intenzifikátory tvoří zvláštní typ příslovečného určení lišící se od všech ostatních typů tím, že do sémantické struktury věty nezavádějí samostatný sémantický prvek, nýbrž jen označují stupeň intenzity (popř. kvantitu) slovesného děje nebo kvality vyjadřované adjektivem.“

Amplifiers “scale upwards from an assumed norm” meaning ‘absolutely’, ‘completely’ (Quirk et al., 1985: 445-6). For instance: *extremely dangerous*, *highly intelligent*, *absurdly fussy*, *too bright* (Ibid.), *awfully safe*, *perfectly awful*, *dead serious* and so on (Biber et al., 2003: 210):

A. *New York’s an awfully safe place.* (FICT)

B. *And Carl was perfectly awful.* (FICT)

C. *He is dead serious all the time.* (CONV)

In sentence A, the amplifier *awfully* does not mean ‘in an awful way’ but it rather implies ‘very’ or ‘extremely’. In sentence B, *perfectly* suggests a metaphorical sense of ‘completely’. In the last sentence C, the amplifier *dead* loses its literal meaning altogether (Ibid.)

Amplifiers can be used for adjectives that refer to a quality that has values on a scale. Consequently, in “*John is English*,” the adjective *English* does not allow amplifiers if it refers to *John’s* nationality, but allows amplifiers if it refers to *John’s* behaviour: “*John is very English*” (Quirk et al., 1973: 132).

2.2.4 Downtoners

On the other hand, downtoners, also called diminishers (Biber et al., 2003: 210), have the opposite effect on the adjective they precede. Downtoners are defined as intensifiers with a “lowering effect, usually scaling downwards from an assumed norm” meaning ‘fairly’, ‘rather’ (Quirk et al., 1985: 445-6). For instance: *fairly small*, *hardly noticeable*, *barely intelligible*, *rather late*, *almost impossible* (Ibid.).

Still, there are intensifiers that can belong to both classes, for example the intensifier *quite*. In the sentence: “*She’s quite right*,” *quite* functions as an amplifier, meaning ‘absolutely’, ‘completely.’ Yet, in the sentence: *That’s quite good*; *quite* functions as a downtoner, meaning ‘fairly’, ‘rather.’ In American English, however, *quite* in the second sentence has the sense of ‘very’ and thus is still considered an amplifier (Ibid.: 446).

Additionally, adjective intensifiers *fairly*, *pretty* and *rather* behave as downtoners, yet they are each used in a different manner. First, *fairly* can modify an adjective indicating

“a desirable quality. If we feel comfortable in a warm room, we can intensify the adjective by saying *It’s fairly warm in here* [‘warm enough’], whereas *rather warm* implies that the room is warmer than we desire (‘too warm’). We would usually say

fairly clean but *rather dirty* to denote, respectively, a desirable and an undesirable quality.” (Ibid.)

Second, *pretty* is the intensifier most informal out of the three and just like the intensifier *rather*, it can be used in a favourable as well as unfavourable sense: *pretty clean/ dirty*. Third, *rather* stands out from *fairly* and *pretty* as it can intensify comparative (*rather better*) or *too*-constructions (*rather too small*), certain noun phrases implying adjectival qualities (*rather a pity*) and finally, *rather* can intensify certain verbs (*It rather annoys me*). Yet, such constructions are not possible with intensifiers *fairly* or *pretty* (**fairly better*, **fairly too small*, **pretty a pity*, **It pretty annoys me*) (Ibid.).

Moreover, *rather* varies its position in relation to the indefinite article. Unlike *pretty* or *fairly*, *rather* can take a position before as well as after the indefinite article. That means both examples, “*a rather difficult task*” and “*rather a difficult task*” are acceptable. However, to say: **fairly/ *pretty a difficult task* would be grammatically incorrect (Ibid.).

Similarly, the downtoners of adjectives in the absolute degree, *a bit* and *a little* “can only occur in predicative position and with adjectives with ‘unfavourable’ meaning and an implication of ‘more than wanted,’” (Ibid.: 447) like in the following example:

- *The weather’s a bit (too) hot.*
- **The weather’s a bit lovely.* (Ibid.)

The distribution of amplifiers and downtoners can depend on whether the effect of the modified adjective is positive or negative. For example, *fairly* and *entirely* occur in “positive context: *He felt fairly well*. Yet, *rather*, *utterly*, *a bit*, *a little* occur in negative contexts: *He felt rather poorly*” (Dušková et al., 1994: 467). *Pretty* appears synonymous with *fairly*. Additionally, when considering whether the context is positive or negative, *pretty* appears neutral (Ibid.).

Downtoners are related to hedges, stance adverbs such as *kind of* or *sort of*, that convey imprecision (Biber et al., 2003: 212). That means that downtoners can “indicate that the modified item is not being used precisely” (Ibid.). For instance, *cold* is not a completely accurate description of *a start*:

- *A slightly cold start gave way to wonderful contrasts of feelings.* (NEWS)
(Ibid.)

2.2.5 Emphasizers

Alongside amplifiers and downtoners, a third class of adjective modifiers can be determined. This group is called ‘emphasizers’ since they “add to the force (as distinct from the degree) of the adjective” (Quirk et al., 1985: 447). For example:

- *She has a really beautiful face.*
- *That’s just impossible. (Ibid.)*

Gradability of adjectives can also be expressed by modification by intensifiers conveying the degree of intensity of the adjective: *very tall*, *extremely useful*. While amplifiers and downtoners can modify gradable adjectives, *emphasizers* and some *downtoners*, for example *almost*, *nearly*, *pretty* and *far from*, can also occur with non-gradable adjectives, such as *empty* or *non-Christian*:

- *Mr Deane’s glass is almost empty. (Biber et al., 2003: 210)*
- *He is definitely/virtually/*more/*very non-Christian. (Quirk et al., 1973: 132)*

Unlike intensifiers, *emphasizers* co-occur with nongradable adjectives, usually with the same effect: *You are certainly welcome*. In addition, the *emphasizer* *indeed* takes a pre- or postposition, just like some intensifiers:

- *The play was indeed excellent.*
- *The play was excellent indeed. (Ibid.)*

Yet, the function of most *emphasizers* matches that of *disjuncts*, as in:

- *I’m frankly surprised at your behaviour. [emphasizer]*
- *Frankly, I’m surprised at your behaviour. [disjunct] (Ibid.)*

Interestingly, *disjuncts* are prone to become intensifiers as in the following: *surprisingly good*, *incredibly beautiful* (Ibid.: 448).

2.3 Adverbs on a morphological level

Having discussed intensifying adverbs modifying adjectives, the focus in the remainder of this thesis will be narrowed down to simple adverbs that function as intensifying adverbs modifying adjectives. In order to do that, morphological classification of adverbs needs to be

taken into account. Biber et al. distinguish four different types of adverbs on a morphological level: simple adverbs, compound adverbs, adverbs derived by suffixation and finally, fixed phrases (Biber et al., 1999: 539). Quirk et al., however, divide adverbs into three groups “of which two are closed classes (simple and compound), and one is an open class (derivational)” (Quirk et al., 1985: 438).

2.3.1 Simple adverbs

Simple adverbs are not derived from another word and they can also sometimes be used as another part of speech undergoing conversion, for example the adverbs *fast* and *long*, *down* and *round* or *today* and *tomorrow*. While *fast* and *long* can both be used as an adverb or an adjective, *down* and *round* can function as either an adverb or a preposition, and finally *today* and *tomorrow* can be used as both adverbs as well as nouns (Biber et al., 1999: 539).

2.3.2 Compound adverbs

Some simple adverbs originally come from compound adverbs when the meaning of the two individual parts has got lost. Compound adverbs combine two or more elements into a single word, for instance: *anyway* (*any* + *way*), *nowhere* (*no* + *where*) (Biber et al., 1999: 539). Some compound adverbs, especially the ones consisting of *here-*, such as *hereafter*, *herewith* and so on, are typical of judicial language (Dušková et al., 1994: 162).

2.3.3 Derivational adverbs

The third class of adverbs contains derivational adverbs. Most derivational adverbs are derived from adjectives, including participial adjectives, by the suffix *-ly*, for example: *odd* ~ *oddly*, *interesting* ~ *interestingly* (Quirk et al., 1985: 438). Adverbs with the suffix *-ly* occur frequently in all registers, even including rare and unusual adverbs:

- *You're doing spiffily.* (CONV) (Biber et al., 1999: 539)
- *Twenty-six patients with Barret's columnar lined lower oesophagus were diagnosed by endoscopic documentation of the squamocolumnar junction being circumferentially more than 3 cm above.* (ACAD) (Ibid.: 540)

Some adverbs are derived from adjectives which end in the suffix *-ly* (*weekly*, *fatherly*) and thus undergo zero derivation and form adverbs of the same form as the original adjectives. Although the *-ly* suffix is very productive, there is a number of other suffixes used to form

adverbs, for example: *-wise (clockwise)*, *-wards (northward(s))*, *-ways (sideways)*, *-fashion (meeting-fashion)*, *-style (French-style)* (Dušková et al., 1994: 160) and so on (see also Marchand, 1969: 229-358).

2.3.4 Fixed phrases

To complete the morphological division of adverbs, there is a fourth class of adverbs represented by fixed phrases. These adverbs can never change their form and more importantly, the meaning of individual component words has disappeared. *Of course*, *kind of* and *at last* all belong to this group (Biber et al., 1999: 540).

2.3.5 Style distribution

Simple adverbs as well as adverbs formed by *-ly* suffix make up the majority of adverbs. In academic prose around 55 per cent of adverbs are derived by the suffix *-ly*. Here they function either as stance adverbials, denoting the writer's attitude as well as commenting on the likelihood of an idea (A), or they describe a process or a state (B), or they act as modifiers (C). In fiction, derived adverbs with *-ly* form "give an apt and lively description of events" (D) (Ibid.: 541).

A. *Obviously* this is an overstatement. (ACAD)

B. The solubility decreases *rapidly* as the temperature falls. (ACAD)

C. The paper by Donchin et al. is a *particularly* good methodological critique of research in this area. (ACAD)

D. All three adults giggled *easily* and at everything, *absentmindedly* fingering small silver spoons. (FICT) (Ibid.)

Simple adverbs, on the other hand, dominate conversation. In conversation over 60 per cent of adverbs are simple adverbs (Ibid.: 540). Simple adverbs can function as adverbials or modifiers. As adverbials simple adverbs can specify position and direction (*back*, *near*, *under*) (Quirk et al., 1985: 438) or time and place (*now*, *soon*, *still*). Then simple adverbs can function as modifiers, for instance *very*, *rather*, *quite* and *pretty*:

- *It's quite* nice yeah yeah. (CONV)

- *That's pretty* good. (CONV) (Biber et al., 1985: 540)

Compound adverbs, such as *sometimes*, *anyway* or *maybe*, denote vague meanings or are informal terms in conversation and in fiction. Additionally, in fiction, compound adverbs indicate location, such as *inside* or *upstairs*:

- *I went upstairs uneasily and knocked on his door.* (FICT) (Ibid.: 542)

Fixed phrases are more frequent in conversation and academic prose than in other registers like fiction or news. The particular phrases that are used in conversation and in academic prose differ significantly though. In conversation phrases such as *sort of*, *kind of*, *at least* or *as well* are used. Academic prose employs foreign phrases, especially Latin abbreviations (*i.e.*, *e.g.*, *etc.*) as well as linking adverbials (*in general*, *in particular*) (Ibid.).

2.4 Simple intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives

After discussing adverbs that are modifying, intensifying and simple, the final focus will now turn to those adverbs that fulfill such criteria and are also homonymous with adjectives in form. For more clarity, see Figure 1.

First, it seems essential to define the homonym as “a word the same as another in sound and spelling but different in meaning, as chase ‘to pursue’ and chase ‘to ornament metal’” (WEUD, 2001: 916). The term ‘homonymy’ can also describe “a good number of adverbs that are identical in form with adjectives” in non-standard discourse in particular (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 567) as in:

- *It's a real gem.* (ADJ)
- *That's real nice of you.* (ADV) (Ibid.)

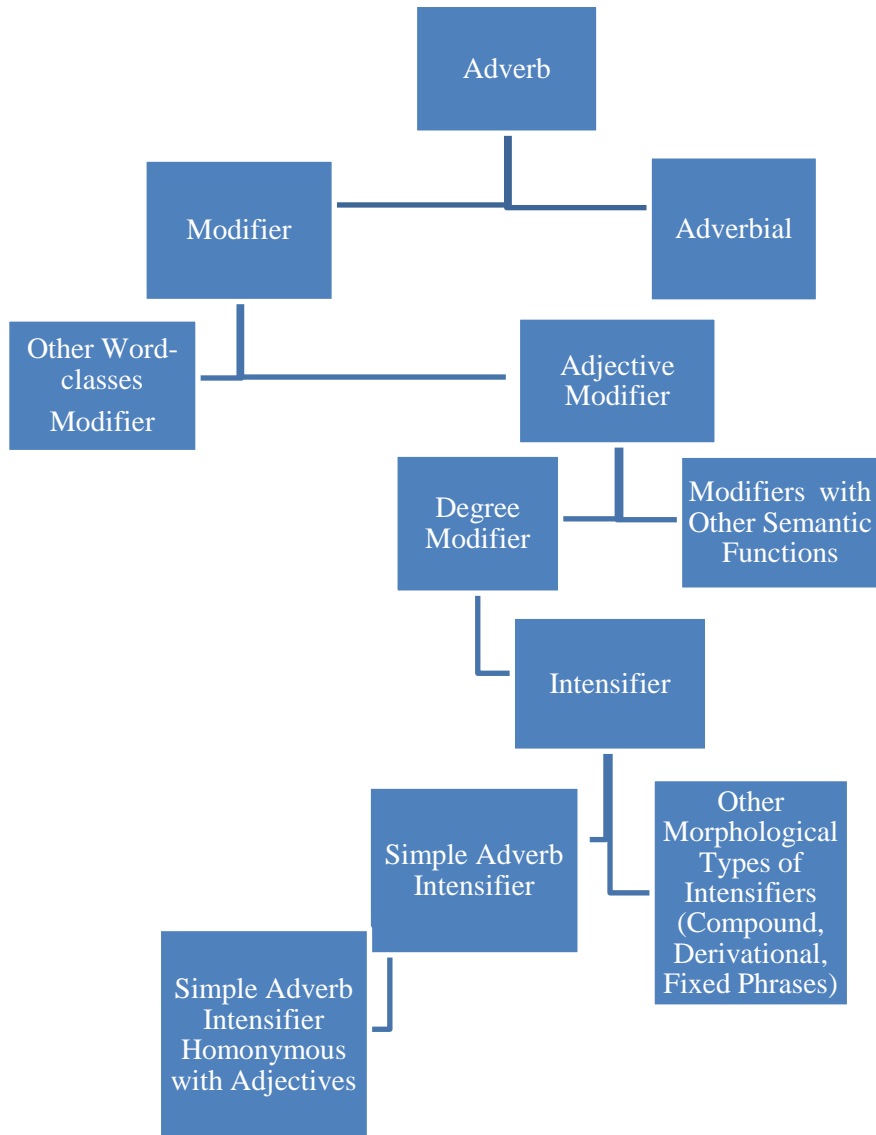


Figure 1: Hierarchical analysis of intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives as presented in the thesis

2.4.1 Style restrictions

The use of *real* in the sentence *That's real nice of you* is restricted to a very informal style while other styles would use *really*. (Ibid.)

The difference between an adjective and adverb is, however, not always very clear. There are adjective-adverb pairs which have “little if any difference in meaning,” (Ibid.: 568) such as: *clean, flat, sure, plain, right* and etc. which all have adverb counterparts in *-ly*. For example:

- *Are your hands clean?* (adjective)
- *The thief got clean away.* (adverb)

- *The boat moved cleanly through the water.* (derivational adverb)²

The adjectives homonymous with adverbs *dead, pretty, far, still, jolly, well* can be found as adverbs in, for instance:

- *You're dead right.*
- *We had a jolly good time.*
- *It's pretty dangerous.* (Ibid.)

Adverbs can, indeed, have identical form with adjectives, especially in informal situations when the *-ly* suffix of a more formal and accepted adverb is ignored: “From a prescriptive point of view, this use of the adjective form is often stigmatized as non-standard” (Biber et al., 1999: 542). Some adverbs with the same form as adjectives behave as intensifying modifiers, such as the modifier *real*. In this case, *real* replaces the “more prescriptively correct” adverb *really* (Ibid.). For example:

- *It came out real good.* (CONV) (Ibid.)

The majority of people prefer to use the adverb *really* instead of *real* or *awfully* instead of *awful* especially in formal speech:

- *She's really nice.*
- *That was awfully good.* (Quirk et al., 1985: 446)

However, in an informal style, intensifiers without the *-ly* suffix such as: *real nice, awful good, plain silly, mighty helpful* or *icy cold* can be used (Ibid.):

- *It was an icy cold day.* (Dušková et al., 1994: 159)

Still, adverbs with and without the *-ly* suffix are not freely interchangeable. For example, the adverb *mighty* occurs as a pre-head modifier of adjectives, for instance: *mighty impressive*. Yet, *mightily* is mostly found as a postmodifier to a verb, as in:

- *He labored mightily against the elements.* (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 569).

² “Clean,” 6.7. 2013, *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* <<http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/clean>>.

Interestingly, the same speaker may alternate between a derived adverbial modifier (*really*) and a simple adverb homonymous with an adjective (*real*) in relative closeness. Both intensifiers can even be found within one sentence, such as in the following example:

- *I have a really good video with a real good soundtrack.* (AmE CONV) (Biber et al., 1999: 544)

Also, some informal amplifiers such as *bloody* or *damn* that conversational speakers use are “taboo words which can be offensive in some contexts.”

- *You're stupid, you're bloody stupid!* (CONV)
- *I got that speeding ticket and now I'm making damn sure I don't speed.* (CONV)
(Biber et al., 2003: 210)

2.4.2 Dialect restrictions

Intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives are not only restricted by style, they seem to prevail in a specific dialect: “The usage [of such adverbs] is widespread, particularly in colloquial AmE” (Biber et al., 1999: 542). Indeed, a different distribution between spoken BrE and AmE and their usage of such adverbs seems to be present. The adverb *real* is rarely used as a modifier of adjectives in spoken BrE since the adverb *really* appears more common in that role. The preference for the adverb *really* in BrE conversation is shown in corpus findings. While *real* occurs only once per million words, *really* occurs 17 times per million words (Ibid.: 543).

On the other hand, a different distribution is found in spoken AmE. Although *really* is “extremely common” (Ibid.) in informal AmE, *real* in spoken AmE is almost as frequent as *really* in spoken BrE. The corpus findings reveal that the adverb *really* occurs 29 times per million words and the adverb *real* appears 14 times per million words (Ibid.).

2.4.3 Adjective restrictions

Despite the fact that both British and American spoken English use *really* as well as *real* with a variety of different adjectives, there seems to be a clear preference for certain collocations. The four most common adjectives modified by the adverb *really* are adjectives *good*, *nice*, *bad* and *funny* appearing over 20 times per million words:

- *This looks really good this little... thing.* (BrE CONV)
- *But he's always, he's always making really funny comments.* (BrE CONV)
- *You couldn't tell from looking at him but he was driving a really nice car.* (AmE CONV)
- *The alternative is to live with my parents which I know is a bad idea, a really bad idea.* (AmE CONV) (Ibid.)

The adverb *real* can also intensify a wide range of adjectives. However, it, too, shows an inclination towards intensifying specific adjectives. The adjectives *good*, *nice*, *hard*, *bad*, *big* and *easy* are the most common collocates in spoken AmE present over five times per million:

- *It would have been real bad news.* (AmE CONV)
- *That's one of the real hard things...* (AmE CONV)
- *She's a real nice girl.* (AmE CONV) (Ibid.)

Considering intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives overall, the most frequent collocation in both AmE and BrE is *pretty good* with over 100 entries per million words. This is followed by *real good* and *real quick* both with more than 20 hits per million words in AmE conversation. BrE favours the adverb *really* in the intensifying function, with *really good* and *really nice* occurring 50 and 20 times per million words respectively (Ibid.).

Most adverbs are not limited to a specific set of adjectives they can modify. However, certain amplifiers are liable to such adjective restrictions and can only modify a small set of lexical items (Quirk et al., 1985: 447), for example:

- *He was dead (= 'absolutely') drunk.* (Leech et al., 1975: 193)

It seems it is always *dead drunk*, never **dead intoxicated*. Similarly, while *dead tired* exists, **dead exhausted* does not. Intensifying adverb *fast* tends to modify the adjective *asleep* and *wide* tends to modify the adjective *awake*, making *fast asleep* and *wide awake* fixed collocations (Quirk et al., 1985: 447).

While some intensifying adverbs can modify only certain adjectives, other adverbs are restricted and cannot modify a certain set of lexical items. For instance *sure* and *surely* cannot premodify another premodifying adjective. In contrast, other intensifying adverbs such as *real* or *really* are not restricted in this way:

- *She's a real(ly) nice girl.*
- *She's a *sure(ly) nice girl.* (Ibid.: 446)

2.4.4 Verb restrictions

Finally, the intensifying adverb *sure* is further limited by a verb restriction. *Sure* can only occur after the verb *be* and no other verb. Thus:

- *She's sure nice.* <esp. AmE>
- **She looks sure nice.* (Ibid.: 447)

After style, dialect and adjective restrictions, verb restrictions thus conclude formal limitations that apply to intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives.

3 Material and method

For the purposes of this thesis, 15 intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives will be analysed: *clean, damn, darn, durn and dern, dead, extra, plumb, real, canny, dumb, geet, great, proper* and *pure*.

The thesis will examine simple adverbs only. Compound or derived intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives as defined in *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-Formation* by H. Marchand are to be excluded from the study. For instance, adverbs derived by suffixes such as *-ful (awful), -ed (damned), -ing (barking),* or *-y (mighty)* as well as some compound adverbs (*downright*) will not be dealt with.

The target adverbs have been chosen by the author of the thesis based on her individual preference. The sources of the selected adverbs vary from grammar books such as *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language (dead, real)* and *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language (clean, damn, extra)*, to dictionaries, such as OED (*durn* and *dern*) and WEUD (*darn*), to online websites (*dumb*,³ *geet* and *proper*,⁴ *plumb*,⁵ *pure*⁶) and finally, to native speakers' suggestions (*canny* and *great*⁷).

The properties of the 15 intensifiers in the English language will be explored using the *British National Corpus* (accessed through *bncweb.lancs.ac.uk* and *corpus.byu.edu*) and the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (accessed through *corpus.byu.edu*). In order to verify the existence of the intensifiers as well as to identify the collocations of the intensifying adverbs, the following query ADV _AJ0 in BNC and ADV [j*] in COCA will be used.

After entering the queries in both corpora, the frequency breakdown will first be analyzed. As a result of a difference in size of both corpora, the comparison between BNC and COCA will be based on frequency per million words (pmw). For easier manipulation, frequency

³ "The Latest in Teen Slang: So Ill, So Fly, So Salty," 10.12. 2012

<<http://www.thefastertimes.com/parents/2010/02/12/the-latest-in-teen-slang-so-ill-so-fly-so-salty/>>.

⁴ "Intensifiers: dead cool / proper cool / really cool / very cool?" *Department of Linguistics, Queen Mary University of London* 7.3. 2013 <<http://linguistics.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/english-language-teaching/intensifiers-dead-cool-proper-cool-really-cool-very-cool/>>.

⁵ "Old Southern Slang," 5.3. 2013 <<http://everything2.com/title/Old+Southern+Slang>>.

⁶ "Scottish Slang," 5.3. 2013 <<http://www.scotster.com/forums/scottish-jokes-humour/Scottish-Slang.1575.html>>.

⁷ A personal interview was conducted with Mr Vaughan (20 December 2012) and an internet chat interview was carried out with Mr Thompson (27 May 2013). Both interviewees are native English speakers, university educated and belong to the middle class. They are both currently working in post-secondary education.

breakdown will be accessed through *corpus.byu.edu* using *chart display* while opting for *show* section. The same *chart display* will further be used in the analysis of the collocation and style frequency.

After frequency breakdown, collocations will be taken into account. Primarily adjective restrictions and collocation frequency in each corpus will be scrutinized. The main focus, however, will be on examining semantic roles of intensified adjectives which will be based on Biber et al.'s classification of semantic categories of adjectives in *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. It divides adjectives into two major semantic categories: descriptors and classifiers. Descriptors are further divided into five categories, namely colour descriptors, size/ quantity/ extent descriptors, time descriptors, evaluative/emotive descriptors and finally miscellaneous descriptors. Classifiers are divided into three groups: relational/ classificational/ restrictive classifiers, affiliative classifiers and finally topical/ other classifiers.

Next, the distribution of the intensifier in spoken and written BrE and AmE will be considered. The focus will be on the frequency in spoken and written style with occasional emphasis on frequency of more specific written styles (e.g. fiction, magazines, newspapers).

Lastly, the difference between an adjective phrase with a derived adverbial modifier (*really*) and a simple adverb homonymous with adjective (*real*) will be analysed where possible by comparing sample sentences. Also, the semantic differences between the intensifier when used as an adverb (*dead right*) and when used as an adjective (*dead man*) will be observed.

Occasionally problematic, however, is whether an intensifier modifies an adverb or adjective. For example, the word *serious* in *It's just a cameo, but he played it dead serious* (COCA) seems ambiguous. It is unclear whether *serious* functions here as an adjective, either as an object complement or subject complement, or as an adverb. Thus, it is unclear whether *dead* modifies an adjective and the example should be included in further analysis or whether *dead* modifies an adverb in which case the example should be excluded from further analysis. *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny* interprets this sentence as SVOA with *serious* functioning as an adverb (Dušková, 1994: 507). However, it appears that when *dead* is used as an intensifier, it has clear collocational restrictions that do not, it seems, distinguish whether the word intensified by *dead* is an adjective or an adverb. Except for the aforementioned sentence, the word *serious* functions clearly and exclusively as an adjective in all the rest of the examples in both BNC and COCA, indeed. Mostly, *serious* as the head of

adjective phrase follows a copular verb in both corpora and thus functions as a typical subject complement.

Another difficulty arises with sentences such as *I'm real American* (COCA) where *real* can be considered either an intensifying adverb or a modifying adjective depending on the context. The problematic sentences will, however, be included when determining frequency pmw due to their relatively low density in each corpus. The resulting sums are within the margin of error.

The analysed intensifiers will be divided into two groups. The first group (4.1) will include adverbs that have been described in grammar books or dictionaries and their occurrence can be verified in BNC and COCA. These established intensifiers will be studied in detail. The second group (4.2) will then briefly introduce adverbs which are relatively new in their usage as intensifiers and are often specific to a certain region. These marginal intensifiers thus cannot be supported by either grammar textbooks used or corpora.⁸ Yet they can be found in some dictionaries (*Urban Dictionary*, *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*) and/or in journal articles focussing on intensifiers. Their analysis will further lean on websites as well as firsthand consultations with native speakers.

Finally, the list of adverbs in both groups, 4.1 and 4.2, will be presented in alphabetical order to assure clarity and transparency. The only exception will be intensifiers *durn* and *dern*, the alternative forms of *darn*, which will be discussed directly following the intensifier *darn*.

⁸ The only exception will be the intensifier *great*, which can be found in COCA but only in a single example.

4 Analysis

At first, the chapter will introduce quantitative and qualitative data based on BNC and COCA for 9 chosen intensifiers described in secondary literature: *clean*, *damn*, *darn*, *durn* and *dern*, *dead*, *extra*, *plumb*, *real*. Afterwards, the chapter will continue by further presenting 6 marginal intensifiers which are not listed in the grammar books used but can be found in some dictionaries and/or in papers focussing on intensifiers. Except for one (*great*), they are not attested in the corpora used in the present thesis. They are as follows: *canny*, *dumb*, *geet*, *great*, *proper* and *pure*. Their sources were online websites and native speakers' suggestions.

4.1 Established intensifiers

4.1.1 *Clean*

The intensifier *clean* occurs very rarely and only in limited collocations. It is an adverb of degree meaning 'wholly', 'entirely' and 'absolutely' and it occurs mainly with such adjectives that express opposition in nature or tendency, diametrical difference, extreme unlikeliness or even antagonism. For example: *contrary*, *contradictory*, *different*, *other*, *otherwise*, *impossible*, *wrong* or *daft*.⁹ There is only one instance of *clean* as an intensifier in BNC:

/1/ *In 1532, he again revealed the drift of his thinking by informing parliament that the clergy's oath of allegiance to the pope was 'clean contrary to the oath that they make to us'.* (BNC) Here, *clean* intensifies the gradable, stative and descriptive adjective *contrary*. *Contrary* describes *the clergy's oath of allegiance to the pope* as reverse and contradictory to the proposition given to the parliament.¹⁰

Clean is also found very scarcely in COCA, counting only two examples in the corpus:

/2/ *Within the last two weeks he seems to have gone clean daft....* (COCA)

/3/ *LaPorte pointing his gun up into that tree by the boucan and shooting a manitou clean dead.* (COCA)

In /2/, *daft* expresses a diametrical difference in nature, reversal in behaviour. Just like the adjective *contrary* in /1/, *daft* is also a gradable and stative descriptor which occurs in a

⁹ "Clean," 5.4. 2013, *Oxford English Dictionary* <<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.is.cuni.cz/view/Entry/47063?rskey=fK9MQU&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid>>.

¹⁰ "Contrary," 5.4. 2013 <<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-thesaurus/contrary?showCookiePolicy=true>>.

predicative function. *Clean* in sentence /3/ then expresses totality. *Clean dead* here thus means *totally, absolutely dead*.

All three examples, in BNC as well as in COCA, appear in written style only.

4.1.2 *Damn*

The adverb *damn* is a clipped form of *damned*¹¹ which is described as: “extremely, very, absolutely” (WEUD, 2001:504). *Damn* as an intensifier of adjectives is found in both BNC and COCA. However, it is 1.72 times more frequent in AmE than in BrE per million words.

	BNC		COCA		ratio COCA/BNC
	total	frequency (pmw)*	total	frequency (pmw)*	
<i>damn</i>	247	2.58	2061	4.44	1.72

* pmw=frequency per million words

Table 1: Frequency of the intensifier *damn* followed by an ADJ in BNC and COCA

Damn is also treated as a “swear word that people use to emphasize what they are saying: *damn good / clever / lucky*: [...] *I am damn sure she had no idea*” (OALD, 2003:292). It can, indeed, be offensive in some contexts (2.12). In BrE, the adverb appears 2.6 times more often in spoken samples (per million words) than in written texts of BNC. On the other hand, *damn* occurs more frequently in written language in COCA. The difference between written and spoken usage here is surprising and yet quite apparent as *damn* occurs almost twice as often in written texts per million words than in spoken AmE. In written texts it is used most frequently in the domain of fiction.

	BNC				ratio spoken/written
	spoken	frequency (pmw) spoken	written	frequency (pmw) written	
<i>damn</i>	67	6.72	247	2.58	2.6

Table 2: Frequency of intensifier *damn* in spoken and written BrE

¹¹ “*Damn*,” 5.4. 2013, *Oxford English Dictionary* <
<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.is.cuni.cz/view/Entry/47063?rskey=fK9MQU&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid>>.

	COCA				ratio spoken/written
	spoken	frequency (pmw) spoken	written	frequency (pmw) written	
<i>damn</i>	196	2.05	1865	4.02	1.96

Table 3: Frequency of intensifier *damn* in spoken and written AmE

In both corpora, the most frequently used collocation with the adverb *damn* is the adjective *good*. For a more detailed analysis of the first five most frequent collocations with the adverb *damn*, see Table 4.

	BNC	frequency (pmw) BNC	COCA	frequency (pmw) COCA
1.	Good	0.78	Good	1.19
2.	Sure	0.23	Sure	0.33
3.	Great	0.1	Lucky	0.13
4.	Silly	0.09	Fine	0.10
5.	Fine	0.08	Close	0.10

Table 4: Most frequent collocations of the intensifier *damn* in BNC and COCA

Damn as an intensifier forms a high number of collocations with *good*. *Good* functions mostly as an adjective¹² that is either in attributive (A *damn* *good fighter*. - COCA) or predicative function (*I was damn good* - COCA).

The adverb *damn* is also classified as an amplifier and refers to the quality of the adjective (2.2.3) such as in this case:

/4/ *That's a good idea, a damn good idea.* (COCA)

Damn here intensifies the stative adjective *good*. It seems that all intensified adjectives in BNC and COCA follow this pattern and *damn* intensifies only stative adjectives. There is, however, a variety between inherent and non-inherent intensified adjectives. Most of the collocates do seem to have an inherent semantic relation with the head noun, just like *good* in

¹² In the sentence: *You know damn good and well if that boy thought I cheated on him, he would not be with me today.* – COCA, the adjective *good* is used in a syntactical position where it can be interpreted as an adverb but yet it is still intensified with the adverb *damn*. The sentence type would be then interpreted as SVA.

sentence /4/. Yet, occasionally, *damn* intensifies a non-inherent adjective *good* ([...] *he's a damn good actor* - COCA).

Moreover, *damn* as an amplifier can modify gradable adjectives (2.2.5) like in sentence /4/. There is only one non-gradable adjective modified by *damn* in COCA and that is *American*. Yet, in the sentence: *Keep your damn American dollars [...]*, *damn* seems to function as an adjective rather than an adverb and that is why this collocate can be discarded.

Semantically, the adjective *good* in /4/ is a descriptor expressing evaluation. Other adjectives intensified by *damn* manifest other semantic classes, too, such as emotions (*sad*), size/ quantity/ extent (*big*), state of mind (*set*) and physical state (*sick*). However, there seems to be a prevalence of evaluative adjectives with *damn* in both corpora which can also be seen in Table 4. All collocates in Table 4 express evaluation, except for *close* in COCA which expresses extent.

Collocations with *damn* can further be semantically divided into positive and negative in meaning. It appears that the intensification is not unidirectional and that both classes, positive and negative, are included in the process. Pairs such as *easy – difficult*, *good – bad*, *fast – slow* and so on can thus be found. This shows that *damn* in its emphatic meaning covers a wide range of adjectives.

Yet, there are collocates occurring only in one dialect. For example, the adjective *dishy*¹³ can be seen intensified by *damn* only in BNC:

/5/ *Actually, I have to say he's damn dishy.* (BNC)

On the other hand, the expression *damn skippy*¹⁴ can only be found in COCA:

/6/ *JUNO: Well, I'm not ready to be a mom. MAC: Damn skippy, you're not!* (COCA)

4.1.3. Darn

Darn as an intensifier relates to the adverb *darned* which is defined as “very, extremely, remarkably” (WEUD, 2001: 507) as well as “intensely”.¹⁵ *Darn* as an intensifier of an adjective occurs in COCA 10 times more often than in BNC.

¹³ *Dishy* – “good-looking, attractive, hot. BrE slang.” (“Dishy,” 5.4.2013 <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=dishy>>).

¹⁴ *Skippy* – “to be right on something or to say I heard you on that one. Usually said as *damn skippy*.” (*Skippy*, 5.4.2013 <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=skippy>>).

	BNC		COCA		ratio COCA/BNC
	total	frequency (pmw)*	total	frequency (pmw)*	
<i>darn</i>	13	0.14	655	1.41	10.07

Table 5: Frequency of the intensifier *darn* followed by an ADJ in BNC and COCA

Darn is used as a “mild swear word, instead of saying *damn*” (OALD, 2003: 294). It is used in informal styles, especially in slang¹⁶ and spoken English (OALD, 2003: 294). The corpus based data analysis confirms this. In BrE *darn* as an intensifier is used almost twice as often in spoken English than in written texts. The same results can be seen in AmE where *darn* as an intensifier is used almost 3 times more often in spoken than in written English.

	BNC				ratio spoken/written
	spoken	frequency (pmw)* spoken	written	frequency (pmw)* written	
<i>darn</i>	2	0.2	11	0.11	1.82

Table 6: Frequency of intensifier *darn* in spoken and written BrE

	COCA				ratio spoken/written
	spoken	frequency (pmw) spoken	written	frequency (pmw) written	
<i>darn</i>	246	2.57	409	0.88	2.92

Table 7: Frequency of intensifier *darn* in spoken and written AmE

In BNC just as in COCA, the most frequently used collocation with the adverb *darn* is the adjective *good*. Other frequent collocations with *darn* are very similar to the collocations found with the intensifier *damn* in both corpora:

	BNC	frequency (pmw) BNC	COCA	frequency (pmw) COCA
1.	Good	0.05	Good	0.56
2.	Sure Hard ¹⁷	0.02	Sure	0.06

¹⁵ “Darn,” 5.4. 2013, *Oxford English Dictionary*

<<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.is.cuni.cz/view/Entry/47329?rskey=MFo75b&result=5&isAdvanced=false#eid>>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Both *sure* and *hard* occur twice in BNC and their frequency pmw is thus the same.

3.			Close	0.06 ¹⁸
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Table 8: Most frequent collocations of the intensifier *darn* in BNC and COCA¹⁹

Just as *damn*, *darn* also seems to intensify *good* most frequently. It functions mainly as an adjective either in attributive ([...] *we're doing a darn good job [...]* - BNC) or predicative function ([...] *they were darn good.* - COCA). *Darn* seems to function as an amplifier, scaling upwards from an assumed norm of the quality of the adjective (2.2.3):

/7/ *That's a darn good margarita, Ari.* (COCA)

Darn in this sentence intensifies the adjective *good* which is stative, gradable and inherent. It appears that *darn* intensifies only stative, gradable and mostly inherent adjectives. There are only very few examples of non-inherent adjectives with *darn*, such as here:

/8/ *As if getting paid to kiss Hudson weren't enough, he's also a darn good golfer.* (COCA)

Finally, just as *damn*, *darn* also prefers the intensification of collocates expressing primarily evaluation and again, a wide range of adjectives undergo intensification, including antonyms like *cheap – expensive* or *funny – serious*.

4.1.4 *Durn, Dern*

Durn and *dern* are forms of the adverb *darn* and reflect its regional pronunciation (WEUD, 2001: 608). *Durn* can be scarcely found in both BNC and COCA,²⁰ occurs only in written style and is always followed by stative, gradable and inherent adjectives that are either evaluative (*good, smart*) or quantity descriptors (*heavy*):

/9/ *Ah is jist too durn heavy fer it. Shucks!* (COCA)

Dern is even rarer in the corpora. There are no examples found in BNC and only 2, *dern sure* and *dern glad*, are present in COCA, both restricted to written style. The modified adjectives are both descriptive, but while *sure* would show evaluation, *glad* rather expresses feelings:

¹⁸ Although the frequency pmw 0.06 is the same for both *sure* and *close* in COCA, the number of occurrences for the adjectives in the corpora differs, with 28 examples found for ADJ *sure* and 26 examples for ADJ *close*.

¹⁹ Table 8 shows the most frequent collocates with at least two occurrences in each corpus.

²⁰ *Durn* is attested only once in BNC (*his durn bad luck*), and five times in COCA (*durn smart/ruthless/little/heavy/good*).

/10/ *Thompson comes off as a halting, humble, accidental celebrity who's really just dead glad to be here.* (COCA)

4.1.5 *Dead*

When *dead* behaves as an intensifier, its usage is limited by collocational restrictions. It seems that the collocational restrictions do not have to distinguish between the word classes of the intensified words and thus *dead* can intensify an adjective or an adverb. For example, *dead* modifies the adverb *straight* in sentence A as well as the adjective *straight* in sentence B:

A. *With a passenger on board, it flew dead straight.* (COCA)

B. *Through the window we see a dead straight road stretching to infinity.* (COCA)

Next, the word *serious* in *dead serious* behaves as an adjective in all instances in BNC and in all instances in COCA except one.²¹ It is thus safe to say, *dead serious* is a collocation where *dead* intensifies the word *serious* that functions as an adjective. The same can be said about the collocation *dead keen*. *Keen* functions as an adjective in all instances in both corpora and thus *dead* is used as an intensifier in collocation with *keen* that functions clearly as an adjective.

Similarly, in *dead flat*, *flat* functions in most cases as an adjective. It is either in an attributive position (sentence /11/) or in a predicative position (sentence /12/) and refers to the quality of the subject, *roads* in /11/ and *the hinterland of the coast* in /12/.

/11/ *Dead flat roads, muddy and turgid streams, pavement puddled by rain and slick with mud from farm fields.* (COCA)

/12/ *But from New Jersey all the way round to Texas, the hinterland of the coast is dead flat and the beaches stretch for many miles.* (BNC)

Many collocates with *dead*, such as *tired*, *drunk*, *right* or *wrong* prefer to take a predicative position only. They can also be gradable (*calm*) as well as non-gradable (*square*). *Dead* is also one of the amplifiers that is restricted to a small set of lexical items. This means that *dead* can be found in BNC and COCA in collocations with certain adjectives but not with others. For instance, *dead* intensifies the adjective *drunk* in both corpora but not the adjective *intoxicated*.

²¹ "It's just a cameo, but he played it dead serious." Source: COCA. See chapter 3, Material and method.

Similarly, *dead* intensifies the adjective *tired* in both BNC and COCA, but it never precedes the adjective *exhausted* in either corpus (2.4.3).

After further analyzing the first 10 most frequent collocates in BNC and COCA, it is apparent, that semantic fields of collocations with *dead* in both corpora overlap. BNC as well as COCA contain words expressing evaluation (4 times in BNC, 3 times in COCA), emotions (4 times in BNC, once in COCA), colours (once in BNC, once in COCA) and miscellaneous which “cover many other kinds of characteristics” (Biber, 2003: 197). The only significant difference seems to be in the expression of feelings. British speakers use *dead* to intensify adjectives expressing feelings more than their American counterparts.

	BNC		COCA	
1	Easy	evaluative	Wrong	evaluative
2	Right	evaluative	Serious	miscellaneous
3	White	colours	Set	miscellaneous
4	Funny	emotive	White	colours
5	Set	emotive	Tired	miscellaneous
6	Boring	emotive	Quiet	evaluative
7	Keen	emotive	Drunk	miscellaneous
8	Straight	miscellaneous	Silent	miscellaneous
9	Good	evaluative	Calm	emotive
10	Lucky	evaluation	Right	evaluative

Table 9: Most frequent collocates with *dead* and their corresponding semantic classes

Finally, there is a clear semantic difference between *dead* used as an adverb (*dead right*) and *dead* used as an adjective (*dead man*). In the latter, *dead* modifies *man*, it describes the head noun and attaches a certain quality to it. *Dead* in *dead right*, on the other hand, functions as an amplifier losing its literal meaning altogether. *Dead right* actually means *absolutely, completely right*. (2.2.4) Thus *dead* does not describe *right*, it merely amplifies the degree of the adjective.

4.1.6 *Extra*

Extra originated by shortening of the word extraordinary. As an adverb, *extra* amplifies an adjective beyond its ordinary degree (WEUD, 2001: 685). In both corpora, *extra* seems to prevail in commercials, advertisement and endorsements, such as here:

/13/ *Extra Dry Sparkling Wine* £6.90 *Very pale in colour with a dry delicate flavour that disappeared quite quickly in the mouth.* (BNC)

That means *extra* mainly intensifies adjectives that evaluate products. This first group of collocates is the largest in both corpora; however, there are some interesting differences between American and British speakers. The most frequently used collocate with *extra* in COCA is the adjective *virgin*, used in the phrase *extra virgin olive oil*. It is found in COCA 10 times more frequently than in BNC. It could be interesting to point out here that BNC is the older one out of the two corpora and none of its texts is more recent than 1993. COCA, on the other hand, is still added to today. In fact 99% of entries of the collocate *virgin* come with a rising tendency after the year 1993 which might possibly indicate an increasing focus on the benefits of extra virgin olive oil over the years.

	BNC		COCA		ratio COCA/BNC
	total	frequency (pmw)	total	frequency (pmw)	
<i>Extra virgin</i>	11	0.12	569	1.23	10.25

Table 10: Frequency of the intensifier *extra* followed by the adjective *virgin* in BNC and COCA

Another interesting difference between BNC and COCA when using the amplifier *extra*, would be the unusually large number of food related collocates in American English. At first, both corpora use the collocate *dry* for *champagne* and *hot* to describe *food*. The British use *hot* mostly for the Indian specialty *curry*²² and Americans use *hot* to describe *sauce* and *salsa*, popular in the US thanks to the influence of Mexican cuisine.²³

Then however, COCA goes even further and describes a wide range of food related collocates intensified by *extra*. Besides *virgin*, there is *spicy*, *sour*, *sweet*, *creamy*, *crunchy*, even *firm* for *tofu*, *moist* for *turkey* and *rich* for *flavour*. All these collocates are completely missing in BNC.²⁴

A second substantial group of collocates in both corpora expresses physical states such as: *vigilant*, *careful*, *cautious* or *gentle*. They usually appear when giving advice ([...] *you've got*

²²“A History of Curry,” 8.4. 2013 <<http://www.indepthinfo.com/curry/history.shtml>>.

²³ “The hot sauce [...] is indigenous to Mexico.” (“Mexican Food History: A Melding of Cultures,” 8.4. 2013 <<http://www.streetdirectory.com>>) Salsa is a “Mexican cuisine appetizer.” (“Traditional Mexican Dishes,” 8.4. 2013 <<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/traditional-mexican-dishes.html>>)

²⁴ Both corpora use collocate *large* to describe pieces of clothing equally as often (BNC with frequency 0.3 pmw, COCA with frequency 0.25 pmw) and it is the second most frequent collocate in both BNC and COCA.

to be really careful, very, very careful, *extra* careful [...] - COCA) and only rarely occur in attributive position ([...] *extra* vigilant supervision [...] - COCA).

Although the individual collocations in BNC and COCA differ, the frequency of *extra* followed by an adjective per million words is almost the same in both corpora:

	BNC		COCA		ratio COCA/BNC
	total	frequency (pmw)	total	frequency (pmw)	
<i>extra</i>	599	6.27	2581	5.56	1.13

Table 11: Frequency of the intensifier *extra* followed by an ADJ in BNC and COCA

4.1.7 *Plumb*

The noun *plumb* is a small lead weight tied to a string used for measuring, a masons' and carpenters' tool for establishing a true vertical by pointing downright to absolute centre.²⁵ This notion of "exact measurement" led to the extended sense of the de-nominal adjective *plumb* "downright, absolute, thorough, utter."²⁶ As an adverb, *plumb* is used as an intensifier with the meaning "completely, downright."²⁷ "She was plumb mad. You're plumb right" (WEUD, 2001: 1489) and is sometimes spelled as *plump*, *plunk* or *plum*.²⁸

Nowadays, it is primarily a North American colloquialism and in modern usage often occurs in negative contexts.²⁹ This is supported by corpus analysis. *Plumb* as an intensifier is indeed found only in written style in COCA and appears chiefly with negative descriptors such as *awful*, *wrong*, *sick*, *nasty*, *disgusted*, *bad*. The descriptive adjectives are mostly evaluative and predicative. The most frequently used collocate with *plumb* is, however, the emotive descriptor *crazy*:

/14/ And his parents were going plumb crazy with worry and fear. (COCA)

Plumb is also used as an intensifier in descriptions of the physical state of fatigue. Dictionaries suggest the use of the phrase *I'm plumb (or plum) tuckered out*,³⁰ *plumb worn*

²⁵ "Re: Plum crazy or not???" 22.7. 2004. 29.6. 2013

<http://www.phrases.org.uk/bulletin_board/33/messages/394.html>.

²⁶ "Plumb," 29.6.2013, *Oxford English Dictionary*

<<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.is.cuni.cz/view/Entry/146047?rskey=sFrn6q&result=4#eid>>.

²⁷ "Plumb," 29.6. 2013 <<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=plumb>>.

²⁸ "Plumb" < <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=plumb>>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "Plumb," 29.6. 2013 *Webster's Dictionary* <<http://www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/plumb>>.

*out*³¹ and *plumb exhausted*:³² The collocation *plumb worn out* can be found in COCA under an alternative spelling *plum*:

/15/ *But frankly, there's a point when you're just too plum worn-out to be wowed anymore.*
(COCA)

On the contrary, *plumb exhausted* and *plumb tuckered out* are missing in the corpora but are used in spite of sounding old-fashioned to today's speakers:³³

No 'B-feature' western from the 1930s and 1940s was complete without Gabby Hayes³⁴ being 'plumb tuckered out.' [...] 'Tuckered out' is rarely seen alone. People are 'plumb,' 'clear,' 'well-nigh' or, as in the earliest example that I've found, 'prodigiously,' 'tuckered out.' That example is from the Wisconsin Enquirer, April 1839: "*I reckoned to have got to the tavern by sundown, but I haven't - as I'm prodigiously tuckered out.*" *Plumb tuckered out* is somewhat later and the first example I have is from The Atlantic Monthly, November 1871, in a story called Wayside Pikes: *She then informed me that the first time she had mounted the colt he had nearly bucked her to pieces; he had jumped and jounced till she was plum tuckered out before he had given up.*³⁵

Based on the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA), the intensifying use of *plumb* occurs most frequently between the 1890s and 1920s (when its frequency reaches 3.6 occurrences per million words (5.4 pmw if variant spellings are included) (ex. /16/):

/16/ *The trouble with that horse was he used to belong to a one-legged man, and got so accustomed to the feel of a one-legged man on him that he was plumb foolish between two legs.* (COHA, The Duke Of Chimney Butte, 1920)

4.1.8 Real

In early use, *real* was "properly an adjective qualifying the following phrase (*good turn*, etc.),

³¹ "Plumb," 29.6. 2013 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/plumb>>.

³² "Plumb-, Plumbo-, Plumbi- +," 29.6. 2013 <<http://wordinfo.info/unit/1705/ip:10/il:P>>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ American western actor, "best known for playing funny unkempt old codgers." "Cowboy Sidekick George Gabby Hayes rounds up celebrity birthdays today," *May 7*, 27.6. 2013 <<http://www.examiner.com/article/cowboy-sidekick-george-gabby-hayes-rounds-up-celebrity-birthdays-today-may-7>>.

³⁵ G. Martin, "Tuckered Out," 27.6. 2013 <<http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/tuckered-out.html>>.

and only later apprehended as an adverb qualifying the adjective ('good', etc.)³⁶. As an adverb, *real* is used as an intensifier (= very) with an immediately following adjective or adverb, such as *real nice*, *real slow*; *real soon* (Burchfield, 2004: 655):

/16/ *I dunno their names and stuff, but they're real nice.* (BNC)

The intensifying function of *real* was originally just regional, *real* as an intensifier occurred especially in Scottish and Irish English, in northern part of England, and in the United States. *Real* as an intensifier only subsequently became a colloquial expression.³⁷ Bechtel in his *Slips of Speech* from the late 19th century still complains that *real* is often carelessly and “often incorrectly used as an adverb [in the sense of *very*], especially by schoolgirls; as, “I think he is *real* mean” (Bechtel, 1895: 18).

Analyzing examples in both corpora, the ambiguity between *real* used as an adverb and *real* used as an adjective soon arises. For instance, the sentence *When biscuit-tin bashing gets boring, lend your toddler a real musical instrument for a treat* (BNC) suggests that the treat will be a musical instrument that is genuine, actual, authentic. The sentence does not imply that the treat will be an instrument which is very musical. In the sentence, *real* modifies the whole noun phrase *musical instrument* and not only the adjective *musical*. *Real* here then functions as a modifying adjective and not as an intensifying adverb. *Real* behaves similarly in front of other non-gradable topical classifiers besides *musical* such as *national*, *financial*, *historical* or *economic* in both corpora.

On the other hand, in /17/ the speaker describes the *lot* as very, extremely bad. The speaker does not question genuinity of the *bad lot*. Here, *real* functions as an adverb intensifying the descriptive adjective *bad*. In both corpora, *real* intensifies mostly descriptors which are gradable, stative and belong to various semantic categories, such as evaluative/emotive (/17/), size/quantity/extent (/18/), time (/19/) and miscellaneous (/20/):

/17/ *A real bad lot, these fellas.* (BNC)

/18/ *I killed [her] twelve months ago and I buried her deep, real deep.* (COCA)

/19/ *We were just a real young team, a lot of rookies and role players.* (COCA)

³⁶ “Real,” 25.5. 2013, *Oxford English Dictionary* <
<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.is.cuni.cz/view/Entry/158926?rskey=TtMWnf&result=3&isAdvanced=false#eid>>.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

/20/ *My hands are real cold cos I lost my gloves and my fingers won't work proper — they're all sort of numb.* (BNC)

Sometimes however, without context present, it is difficult to distinguish whether *real* behaves as an adverb and hence intensifier or an adjective and hence modifier of a noun phrase in front of descriptors:

/21/ *I can't really say I have any real deep friendships.* (COCA)

/22/ *Little black cameos of urns and weeping women all mounted in real old gold.* (BNC)

/23/ *SO THIS IS A REAL OLD ENGLISH INN.* (BNC)

/24/ *Ron Jr. said he had some childhood fistfights but “was never in any real big trouble.”* (COCA)

Still, *real* prefers to intensify mainly gradable descriptors. Nevertheless, some intensifiers, including *real*, can also on occasion precede classifiers, namely affiliative classifiers (2.2.3) and relational / classificational/ restrictive classifiers as seen in examples /25/ and /26/:

/25/ *Sonja looks real different without all her make up.* (BNC)

/26/ *I think what you're seeing in West Virginia tonight, it's likely that you're going to see something real similar in Kentucky next week.* (COCA)

Bechtel in his *Slips of Speech* points out that the grammar of sentences with *real* as an intensifier will be improved by substituting *really* for the word *real* (Bechtel, 1895: 18). Even today, the intensifier *real* is still considered “non-standard or at best very informal in England, but more acceptable in Scotland and in America. The standard adv. in most contexts is, of course, *really*” (Burchfield, 2004: 655).

Both adverbs, *real* as well as *really*, function as intensifiers, *real* meaning “very, extremely”³⁸ and *really* defined as “very, thoroughly.”³⁹ They mostly appear in similar contexts, as in /27/ and /28/:

³⁸ “Ibid.”

³⁹ “Really,” 4.6. 2013, *Oxford English Dictionary*

<<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.is.cuni.cz/view/Entry/158946?rskey=nvoPQe&result=3&isAdvanced=false#eid>>.

/27/ *You've got a real nice place here,' Antonio commented appreciatively, nodding his head in approval. (BNC)*

/28/ *I got to the door, turned, and said, "Emma has a really nice place here." (COCA)*

They can even occur in the same sentence (2.4.1):

/29/ *He says: well, OK, but get your skates on, sister, because I'm real keen on this someone I'm expecting, so being this really obnoxious kind of a female, she decides to kill his chances.' (BNC)*

Occasionally, there is, however, a semantic difference between the simple adverb (*real*) and the corresponding adverb formed by the suffix *-ly* (*really*) when modifying an adjective. The adverb *real* functions only as an intensifier. The adverb *really*, apart from being an intensifier, can also mean "in reality, in fact, actually."⁴⁰ This meaning is illustrated by the following examples:

A. *But is Len really dead ... or in a Siberian mine? (BNC)*

B. *[Romeo] thought Juliet was really dead, so he came here to kill himself. (COCA)*

In sentences A and B, *really* does not function as an intensifier. Neither does *real* function as an intensifier in a similar context. In sentences C and D, *real* is an adjective modifying a noun phrase (*dead person, dead body*) and describing an actual physically existing object:⁴¹

C. *A floater is a real dead person and hopefully most of us will never find one. (COCA)*

D. *Seeing a real dead body is nothing like the movies. (COCA)*

The frequency breakdown reveals striking similarities between intensifiers *real* and *really* and their usage in each corpora. *Real* and *really* are used with semantically similar adjectives in BNC as well as in COCA. In BNC, the semantic fields of the collocations of both intensifiers overlap almost completely, containing words expressing mainly evaluation (3 times with *real*, 3 times with *really*), miscellaneous characteristics (once with *real*, once with *really*) and other characteristics (time with *real*, size with *really*). Even the first two most frequent collocates are the same for both intensifiers.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Real."

	BNC <i>real</i>		frequency pmw (<i>real</i>)	BNC <i>really</i>		frequency pmw (<i>really</i>)
1	Good	evaluative	1.00	Good	evaluative	8.8
2	Nice	evaluative	0.49	Nice	evaluative	3.97
3	Hard	miscellaneous	0.44	Bad	evaluative	2.16
4	Bad	evaluative	0.36	Big	size	1.54
5	Old	time	0.32	Important	miscellaneous	1.46

Table 12: Most frequent collocates with *real* and *really*, their corresponding semantic classes and frequencies in BNC

In COCA, the semantic choice for collocates of *real* and *really* is identical (3 times evaluative, 2 times miscellaneous). The adjective *good* is the most frequently used collocate for both intensifiers in COCA, matching the results in BNC.

	COCA <i>real</i>		frequency (pmw) <i>real</i>	COCA <i>really</i>		frequency (pmw) <i>really</i>
1	Good	evaluative	2.98	Good	evaluative	11.5
2	Quick	miscellaneous	1.87	Hard	miscellaneous	4.81
3	Hard	miscellaneous	1.27	Important	miscellaneous	4.26
4	Bad	evaluative	1.04	Bad	evaluative	3.47
5	Nice	evaluative	0.91	Nice	evaluative	2.92

Table 13: Most frequent collocates with *real* and *really*, their corresponding semantic classes and frequencies in COCA

The frequency pmw for *real* and *really*, however, differs significantly. The intensifier *really* occurs more frequently than *real* in both corpora. For example, the most frequently used collocate *good* is intensified by *really* 8.8 times more often pmw in BNC and almost 4 times more often pmw in COCA than by *real*. The collocation *real good* is used almost 3 times more often in COCA than in BNC.

Moreover, in British English *really good* as well as *real good* are most frequently used in spoken language. *Really good* is then also often found in magazines, while *real good* is then frequently found in fiction.

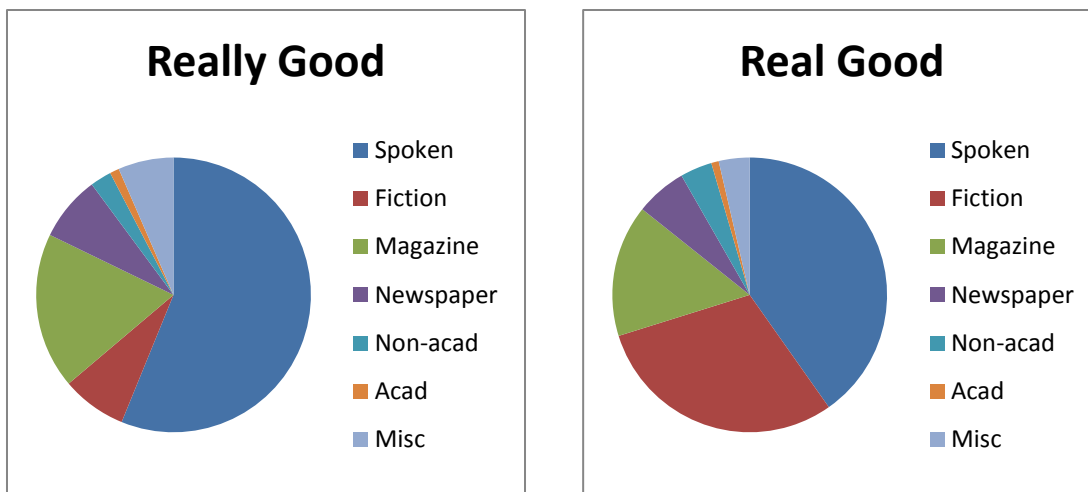


Figure 2: Proportional representation of *really good* and *real good* in BNC according to style distribution frequency pmw

On the other hand, AmE uses *really good* in spoken style approximately equally as often as in written style. Americans employ *real good* primarily in spoken style and in the domain of fiction, just like the British. See Figure 3:

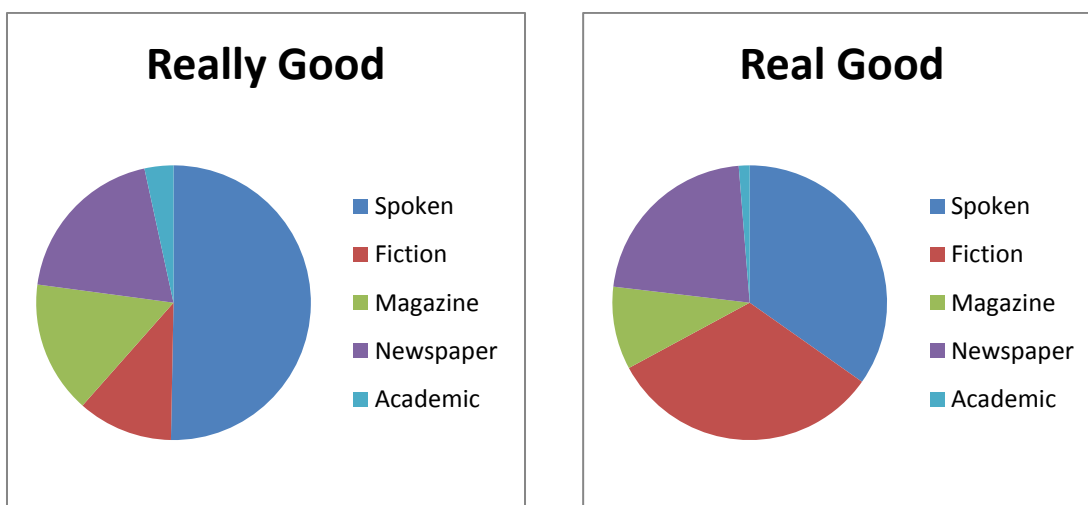


Figure 3: Proportional representation of *really good* and *real good* in COCA according to style distribution frequency pmw

Overall, *real* and *really* when modifying an adjective are used mostly in their intensifying function as adverbs and their adjectival collocates are similar. Yet, in both varieties the intensifier *really* constitutes the more frequently used option. In AmE, however, the intensifier *real* is used relatively more frequently than in BrE. For example, the most frequently used collocate in both corpora, *real good*, appears in COCA 3 times more often (pmw) than in BNC. Just like one hundred years ago when American linguist Bechtel frowned

upon the usage of the intensifier *real* in the English language, the BNC data⁴² today show that the aversion towards the intensifier *real* among the English still pertains.⁴³

4.2 Marginal intensifiers

4.2.1 *Canny*

Canny as an intensifier is “beginning to be used” especially in North East England⁴⁴ meaning “quite or rather. *Thats canny good. She's canny dead.*”⁴⁵ Its usage as an intensifying adverb is “certainly evident on *MySpace* and *Bebo*,⁴⁶ with no apparent restrictions on the semantic domains of the adjectives it collocates with: *the one you sent me was canny good like; it was canny cold like; Durham is canny shit.*”⁴⁷

4.2.2 *Dumb*

The word *dumb* seems to be “the new ‘very’ (*It's dumb cold out today*).”⁴⁸ As an intensifier, *dumb* seems to be a New York form of slang meaning ‘extremely’ and is synonymous with intensifiers ‘mad’ and ‘hella.’⁴⁹ It modifies descriptive adjectives that denote miscellaneous characteristics (*cold, expensive, loud*) and extent (*long*):

/30/ *Me: How long would it take to get from Co-op City to Fordham Road on the 12?*

Young Minority NYers: Dumb long, yo.

/31/ *Damn that's dumb expensive.*⁵⁰

4.2.3 *Geet*

The word *geet*⁵¹ as an intensifier is, just like *canny*, regionally restricted and serves as a “marker of regional identity” of Tyneside.⁵² In 2010, Michael Pearce,⁵³ a Senior Lecturer in

⁴² In British English (BNC) the intensifier *real* is used most frequently in spoken texts, by young working class speakers (15-24 years old, DE social class).

⁴³ When asked about the reasons behind his preference for *really* instead of *real* in his speech, university teacher and English native speaker Mr Thompson exclaimed: “I want that extra syllable!” (C.A. Thompson, Internet Chat Interview, Prague, Czech Republic. 27.5. 2013).

⁴⁴ “Really,very/dead/so interesting? How to intensify in Tyneside,” 30.6. 2013 <<http://linguistics-research-digest.blogspot.cz/2011/11/reallyverydeadso-interesting-how-to.html>>.

⁴⁵ “Canny,” 30.6. 2013 <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=canny>>.

⁴⁶ Social networking sites where users create their own personal profile and talk to other members via posts.

⁴⁷ “Canny.”

⁴⁸ “The Latest in Teen Slang: So Ill, So Fly, So Salty.”

⁴⁹ “Dumb,” 30.6. 2013 <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=dumb>>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

English Language at the University of Sunderland, looked at all the publicly available web pages of social networking sites *MySpace* and *Bebo* which contained the terms *geet* or *git* “with a reference to one of four places in the north-east [of England]: Sunderland, Newcastle, Durham and South Shields. He collected 150 examples of *geet/git* and found that it is used in four main ways; to intensify an adverb, to intensify an adjective, as a discourse marker or as a quotative.”⁵⁴ Pearce found out that about 50 per cent of the total uses of *geet/git* accounted for the intensifying function. Most of adjective intensifiers expressed evaluation denoting judgment and were positive (*good, canny, interesting*) while the rest belonged to a miscellaneous semantic domain (*cold, hard, drunk*):

/32/ *your songs on here are geet good*

/33/ *ur git hard as owt!!!*⁵⁵

Pearce further stresses that the intensifier *geet/git* has been in use in the north-east part of England since the 1960s. Because of its relatively recent addition to the group of intensifiers, Pearce believes that it might be interesting to follow its, and the word *canny*'s, progress over the next years.⁵⁶

4.2.4 *Great*

The intensifier *great* is defined as ‘very’ and ‘in a great degree.’⁵⁷ It is the only intensifier among the marginal intensifiers discussed in the thesis that can be found in the corpora. COCA gives one single example in which the intensifying function of the adverb *great* is emphasized by the preceding intensifier *really*, both intensifying the same ADJ *good*:

/34/ *A redesigned' 02 Camry coming this fall “is really, really, really good. Great good,” says analyst Hall, who's had a preview. (COCA)*

⁵¹ pronounced /gi:ʔ/ or /grɪʔ/ the final consonant is almost always realized as a glottal stop. “‘It isn’t geet good, like, but it’s canny’: a new(ish) dialect feature in North East England,” M. Pearce, (2011) *English Today* 107, Vol. 27, No. 3, p.3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁵⁴ “I’m geet excited,” 29. 6. 2013 <<http://linguistics-research-digest.blogspot.cz/2011/11/im-geet-excited.html>>.

⁵⁵ “‘It isn’t geet good, like, but it’s canny’: a new(ish) dialect feature in North East England,” p. 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵⁷ “Great,” 1.7. 2013 *Oxford English Dictionary* <

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.is.cuni.cz/view/Entry/81104?rskey=XwHX0S&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>>.

4.2.5 *Proper*

The word *proper* functions as an intensifier especially in British English. It is defined as ‘completely’ (*he’s proper stupid*)⁵⁸ or ‘really’ and ‘very’ (*I’m proper hungry* (sic), *This food is proper good, I was proper tired after spending the day out*)⁵⁹

4.2.6 *Pure*

As shown by Ronald Macaulay (Macaulay, 2006) Glasgow adolescents use *pure* as an amplifier mainly for evaluative purposes, with either positive (*pure brilliant, pure gorgeous*) or, more predominantly, with negative effect such as here:

/35/ *This is pure embarrassing*

/36/ *We sound pure stupid on that.*

/37/ *I was in a pure bad mood with him.*⁶⁰

The majority of adjectives (89%) are predicatives (*he’s pure lovely*) and only very occasionally are in an attributive position (*makes a pure bad noise don’t it?*).⁶¹

Macaulay argues that with the gradual decrease in usage of the intensifier *very* over time and with the low frequency of amplifiers derived by *-ly* in the speech of Glasgow adolescents, there was a vacuum in which there were no standard degree words to perform the intensifying function:

Since adolescents are often assumed to “exaggerate rather than modulate” (Paradis, 2000:147), it is to be expected that they will need some way in which to emphasize items in their speech. Peters (1994:271) pointed out that “it is a well-known fact that among degree adverbs, it is the [amplifier] class which has the highest degree of fluctuation.” He also claimed that “[amplifiers] frequently function as symbols of group identification” (1994:271).⁶²

⁵⁸ “Proper,” 1.7. 2013, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/proper>>.

⁵⁹ “Proper,” 1.7. 2013 <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=proper>>.

⁶⁰ R. Macaulay, “Pure grammaticalization: The development of a teenage intensifier,” *Language Variation and Change*, Vol. 18, 2006, p. 270-2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 276.

The intensifier *pure* seems to fulfill this function⁶³ although Macaulay wonders whether *pure* as an intensifier will disappear as the adolescents become adults.

⁶³ Glasgow adolescents also use a new degree adverb *heavy* (*he's heavy stupid ain't he*). Macaulay points out it is too soon to decide whether the use of *pure* will be affected by it. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

5 Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to analyze 15 intensifying adverbs homonymous with adjectives while paying attention only to simple intensifying adverbs that modified another adjective. The examined intensifiers were divided into two groups. The first one provided a detailed analysis of 9 intensifiers already established in grammar books and dictionaries and their occurrence was confirmed by the data found in BNC and COCA. The second group contained 6 marginal intensifiers based on online material sources and native speaker's suggestions' and served as a window to a more contemporary trend in the usage of intensifiers in the English language.

The first 9 intensifying adverbs discussed were as follows: *clean*, *damn*, *darn*, *durn* and *dern*, *dead*, *extra*, *plumb* and *real*. The focus of the analysis was especially on their dialect, style and collocational preferences.

The analysis of dialect restrictions of the 9 intensifiers showed that the frequency (pmw) of all analyzed intensifiers was higher in AmE than BrE. The frequency of intensifiers in the two corpora ranged from almost the same (*extra*) to 10 times higher in COCA than in BNC (*darn*). The analysis thus confirmed the hypothesis presented earlier in the practical part of the thesis which suggested that intensifiers are primarily used in American English (2.4.2).

Contrary to the initial expectations (2.4.1), however, no clear overall preference of the intensifiers for spoken style could be determined. The data were inconclusive. For example, *clean*, *durn*, *dern* and *plumb* all appeared in written style only. However, their appearance in corpora was sporadic and thus their style preference might not have been a decisive factor in the results. On the other hand, even the style analysis of the intensifiers with relatively high frequency (pmw), such as *darn* or *damn*, provided an ambiguous rather than definite conclusion. While both *darn* and *damn* occurred more often in spoken style in BNC, the results were different for each intensifier in the AmE corpus COCA. *Darn* occurred more often in spoken AmE while *damn* was attested more frequently in written AmE.

Still, every one of the 9 intensifiers displayed certain collocational preferences. For instance, the intensifiers *damn*, *darn* and *real* chose to modify adjectives that were mainly gradable, stative and inherent and found in both predicative and attributive positions. Interestingly, all three intensifying adverbs modified an evaluative adjective *good* with the highest frequency.

On the other hand, the intensifying adverbs *clean*, *extra* and *plumb* placed much stricter restrictions upon the adjectives they modified. For example, *clean* modified mostly adjectives denoting opposition, *extra* intensified mainly adjectives evaluating products and describing a physical state and *plumb* modified especially negative adjectives and adjectives describing fatigue.

Finally, the intensifier *dead*, rather than displaying a preference for a semantically delimited group of adjectives, seemed to be restricted to a small set of lexical items, some of them being *easy*, *right*, *wrong*, *drunk*, *serious*, *white* or *tired*. This affirmed the previous assumptions that *dead* modified only a small group of lexical items (2.4.3).

In addition to this, the thesis considered a semantic difference between *dead* used as an adjective (*dead man*) and *dead* used as an adverb (*dead right*). While in the first example, *dead* attached a certain quality to the head noun, *dead* in *dead right* lost its literal meaning, amplifying the degree of the adjective *right*.

The thesis also dealt with the semantic difference between the simple adverb (*real*) and the corresponding adverb formed by the suffix *-ly* (*really*) when modifying an adjective. The analysis showed that while the adverb *real* functioned only as an intensifier, the adverb *really*, apart from being an intensifier, could also mean ‘in fact’ as in: *But is Len really dead ... or in a Siberian mine?* (BNC)

The second group of intensifiers introduced 6 marginal intensifiers *canny*, *dumb*, *geet*, *great*, *proper* and *pure*. It was found that most of them were regionally restricted, *canny* and *geet* were used especially in North East England, *dumb* in New York, USA and *pure* in Glasgow, Scotland, all functioning as markers of local group identity.

Taking into account the results of the analysis of both groups of intensifiers, it is evident that old intensifiers, such as *plumb*, do not disappear from usage but rather remain present.⁶⁴

Yet, there is abundant variation and constant change in the set of intensifiers and new regional forms, such as *geet* or *pure*, are being introduced. While some might condemn intensifiers,

⁶⁴ K Barnfield and I. Buchstaller, “Intensifiers in Tyneside: Longitudinal developments and new trends. English,” *World-Wide* 31 (3) (2010): 252-287.

even call them inelegant (Bechtel, 1895, 47),⁶⁵ the results of the thesis clearly indicate that they are a perennial feature of the English language.

⁶⁵ “Purity of diction is a garden of slow growth even under the most favorable conditions, and the unrestrained indulgence in slang is like scattering seeds of the vilest plants among the choicest flower” (Bechtel, 1895, 9).

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7 Résumé

Témou tejto bakalárskej práce sú adverbiá homonymné s adjektívami vo funkcii intenzifikátorov: *dead tired*, *real good*. Keďže adverbiá vo funkcii intenzifikátorov sa vyskytujú v britskej i americkej angličtine, dá sa očakávať, že sa budú líšiť svojou frekvenciou, štýlom a kolokáciami. Práca sa zaoberá iba jednoduchými adverbiami, z analýzy sú teda vyradené adverbiá zložené a odvodené ako i ustálené adverbialne frázy.

Práca sa skladá z niekoľkých častí. Po krátkom úvode (1) nasleduje teoretická časť, ktorá popisuje adverbiá a postupne vymedzuje svoje zameranie na jednoduché adverbiá homonymné s adjektívami vo funkcii intenzifikátorov, ktoré modifikujú adjektívum. Charakteristika adverbii je založená na ich rozdelení zo syntaktického (2.1), sémantického (2.2) a morfológického hľadiska (2.3). Tie sú podrobne rozobraté s prihliadnutím na viaceré významné anglické gramatiky.

Rozdelenie adverbii na syntactickej úrovni sa tak medzi iným opiera o *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (1999) Bibera a kol., ktorá delí adverbiá na príslovkové určenia a modifikátory. Pozornosť bakalárskej práce je potom zameraná výlučne na modifikátory a to na modifikátory adjektív (2.1.3).

Následne je venovaná pozornosť sémantickej rovine adverbii, ktorá sa opiera o *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985). Tu je dôležitý R. Quirkov a kol. popis modifikátorov adjektív ako intenzifikátorov (2.2.1).

Nakoniec z morfológického hľadiska sa adverbiá na základe už spomínanej *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (1999) delia na adverbiá jednoduché, zložené, odvodené a ustálené adverbialne frázy. Bakalárska práca sa však bude v nasledujúcich kapitolách sústreďovať len na adverbiá jednoduché (2.3.1). Z analýzy sú teda vyradené odvodené alebo zložené adverbiá, tak ako sú definované v H. Marchandovej *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-Formation*.

Posledná otázka, ktorej sa práca venuje, je homonymia adverbii s adjektívami.

Na záver sa teoretická časť práce venuje štýlovým a nárečovým obmedzeniam skúmaných adverbii, popisuje najfrekvencovanejšie kolokácie a stručne charakterizuje obmedzenia v použití sloviess, po ktorých daná príslovka nasleduje. Práca na základe sekundárnej literatúry

zistuje, že skúmané adverbiá homonymné s adjektívami vo funkcii intenzifikátorov sa najčastejšie objavujú v hovorovom štýle (2.4.1), v americkej angličtine (2.4.2) a najčastejšie používaným kolokačným spojením ako pre britskú tak i pre americkú angličtinu je *pretty good* (2.4.3).

Po teoretickej časti nasleduje kapitola zaoberajúca sa metodológiou práce (3). Skúmaných bolo 15 adverbií, ktoré pochádzajú z rôznych zdrojov, presnejšie z dvoch gramatík, *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* a *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, zo slovníkov OED a WEUD, ďalej z internetových zdrojov a nakoniec z odporúčaní ľudí, ktorých rodným jazykom je angličtina. Zastúpenie jednotlivých adverbií a ich vlastností bolo skúmané pomocou britského národného korpusu BNC (prístupného z *bncweb.lancs.ac.uk* a *corpus.byu.edu*) a z korpusu súčasnej americkej angličtiny COCA (prístupného z *corpus.byu.edu*)

Práca podrobne rozoberá frekvenciu skúmaných intenzifikátorov v oboch korpusoch ako aj ich kolokácie. Pozornosť je venovaná predovšetkým sémantickým roliam modifikovaných adjektív, pričom sa opiera o Biberovu a kol. klasifikáciu sémantických rolí adjektív v *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Nakoniec sa práca pozerá na rozdiely vo frekvencii adverbií v hovorom a písomnom štýle ako v britskej tak i v americkej angličtine.

Empirická časť bakalárskej práce predstavuje výsledky výskumu a je rozdelená na dve podkapitoly. Prvá podkapitola (4.1) obsahuje intenzifikátory popísané v gramatikách, druhá zas zahŕňa tie, ktoré sa v použitých gramatikách nenachádzajú (4.2). Intenzifikátory v oboch podkapitolách sú zoradené podľa abecedy. Jedinú výnimku tvoria adverbiá *durn* a *dern*, ktoré nasledujú za adverbium *darn* ako jeho varianty. Analytická časť práce sa postupne zameriava na jednotlivé intenzifikátory, sleduje ich výskyt v BNC a COCA, rozlišuje ich kolokačné spojenia a porovnáva rozdielnu frekvenciu hovorového a písomného štýlu u vybraných adverbií jednak v britskej a jednak v americkej angličtine. Táto časť práce sa sústredila prevažne na javy typické pre jednotlivé adverbiá. Pri relatívne menej frekventovaných intenzifikátoroch ako napríklad, *clean* alebo *durn*, práca rozoberala hlavne sémantiku modifikovaných adjektív. Pri relatívne frekventovanejších intenzifikátoroch, ako *damn* alebo *real*, bola pozornosť venovaná aj frekvencii výskytu, štýlu či najpoužívanejším kolokáciám.

Podkapitola 4.1 zistila, že intenzifikátor *clean* sa spája hlavne s adverbiami vyjadrujúcimi kontrast, protiklad. Nasledujúce intenzifikátory *damn* a *darn* fungovali ako zosilňovače a oba modifikovali prevažne kvalitatívno-hodnotiace adjektíva, pričom najfrekventovanejším bolo adjektívum *good*. Adverbiá *durn* a *dern* sa zase vyskytovali v oboch korpusoch striedmo a to hlavne v písomnom štýle ako varianty intenzifikátora *darn*. Intenzifikátor *dead* sa spájal s malým počtom lexikálnych jednotiek, ako napríklad: *easy*, *wrong*, *right*, *tired*, *set* alebo *serious*. V oboch korpusoch *dead* intenzifikoval prevažne kvalitatívno-hodnotiace adjektíva (*easy*, *right*, *wrong*). V britskej angličtine sa však adverbium *dead* využívalo častejšie na intenzifikáciu citovo zafarbených adjektív než v americkej angličtine. Intenzifikátor *extra* najčastejšie modifikoval adjektíva hodnotiace produkty. V americkej angličtine sa dokonca veľmi často spájal s hodnotením potravín, napr. *extra sour*, *sweet*, *crunchy* či *extra virgin*, ktoré sa v COCA vyskytovalo až 10-krát častejšie ako v BNC. Ďalej nasledovalo adverbium *plumb*, ktoré sa vyskytovalo prevažne v americkej angličtine v negatívnom kontexte s adjektívami ako napr. *wrong*, *sick*, *bad* alebo s adjektívami popisujúcimi fyzickú únavu.

Obširnejšia analýza adverbia *real* porovnávala intenzifikátory *real* a *really*. Takisto ukázala, že adverbium *real* modifikuje vo väčšine prípadov adjektíva vyjadrujúce hodnotenie a v neposlednom rade poukázala na frekvenciu výskytu kolokácie *real good* v písanom a hovorovom štýle.

Podkapitola 4.2 sa potom venovala okrajovým intenzifikátorom *canny*, *dumb*, *geet*, *great*, *proper* a *pure*, ktoré sú relatívne nové a ešte nepopísané v použitých gramatikách. Analýza zistila, že jednotlivé intenzifikátory sú typické pre určité regióny, napr. *pure* sa vyskytuje hlavne v Glasgowe (Škótsko), *dumb* zase možno nájsť zväčša v New Yorku (USA).

Poslednou časťou práce je záver (5), ktorý zhŕňa získané poznatky. Tie zväčša ilustrujú rozdiely medzi britskou a americkou angličtinou v používaní intenzifikátorov a potvrdzujú očakávaná z teoretickej časti. Z výskumu vyplýva, že hoci frekvencia intenzifikátorov je v oboch angličtinách zväčša rozdielna, intenzifikátory sú stálou súčasťou anglického jazyka.