

Ongoing Changes in the Irish Intensifier System

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New Perspectives on Irish English 4

- ▶ Synchronic quantitative corpus-based study of adjectival intensification in Irish English based on the Irish component of ICE Ireland 1.2.2 (Kirk and Kallen 2008).

- ▶
 - (1) That was \emptyset /**very** *considerate* of the guy (ICE Ireland: S1A-003\$A)
 - (2) a \emptyset /**really** *good-looking* doctor is moving down to work with them (ICE Ireland:S1A-003\$B)
 - (3) that 's an \emptyset /**absolutely** *gorgeous* photograph of you two (ICE Ireland:S1A-007\$B)

- ▶ The aim is to analyze frequency differences in the use of individual intensifiers between social groups to investigate (and interpret) ongoing changes in the Irish intensifier system.

- ▶ According to Quirk et al. (1985: 589–590), intensification is related to the semantic category of *degree* (degree adverbs) and ranges between very low intensity (downtoning) to very high (amplifiers).
- ▶ Similar to Tagliamonte (2008: 361), intensification is here understood in a narrow sense, i.e. encompassing maximisers and boosters but not downtoners.
- ▶ AMPLIFIERS
 - ▶ Maximizers (e.g. *completely*)
 - ▶ Boosters (e.g. *very much*)
- ▶ DOWNLONERS
 - ▶ Approximators (e.g. *almost*)
 - ▶ Compromisers (e.g. *more or less*)
 - ▶ Diminishers (e.g. *partly*)
 - ▶ Minimizers (e.g. *hardly*)

- ▶ Extensive research on intensifiers
 - ▶ Long tradition of research on intensification (e.g. Borst 1902; Bolinger 1972)
 - ▶ Variationist and historical research (e.g. Ito and Tagliamonte 2003; Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005; Macaulay 2006; Tagliamonte 2006; D'Arcy 2015)
 - ▶ Substantial research on intensification in Canadian (e.g. Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005; Tagliamonte 2006, 2008) and New Zealand English (e.g. D'Arcy 2015; Scandrett 2012) as well as on South African (e.g. de Klerk 2005) and British English varieties (e.g. Anderson 2006; Barnfield and Buchstaller 2010; Ito and Tagliamonte 2003; Macaulay 2006) but little research on intensification in Irish English

Stratification of intensification

- ▶ Intensification
 - ▶ Considered a major area of grammatical change in English (cf. Brinton and Arnovick 2006: 441)
 - ▶ Deemed a feature of teenage talk and is associated with young(er) speakers (Bauer and Bauer 2002; Macaulay 2006)
 - ▶ Associated with women (Stoffel 1901: 101)
 - ▶ Associated with colloquial usage and nonstandard varieties (Stoffel 1901: 122) and emotional language (Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005).

Findings of previous research

- ▶ Intensifying *really* replaces *very* (lexical replacement) (D'Arcy 2015; Tagliamonte 2008)
- ▶ In CanE, ongoing changes are accompanied by gender and age differences (apparent time construct), as well as differences in the syntactic function (predicative vs attributive), the semantic type (not yet implemented in the Irish data), and the emotional value of the modified adjective (emotional vs non-emotional) (cf. Tagliamonte 2008).

Research questions and hypotheses

- ▶ Is the IrE Intensifier system currently undergoing change?
- ▶ Do the trajectories of the changes mirror changes in other varieties of English (CanE; Tagliamonte 2008)?
 - ▶ *Really* replaces *very* (Tagliamonte 2008: 372).
 - ▶ The more frequently an intensifier is used the higher its proportion in predicative function due to delexicalization (Tagliamonte 2008: 374).
 - ▶ *So* predominantly modifies emotional adjectives rather than neutral adjectives, while *very* exhibits the reversed pattern (Tagliamonte 2008: 380–381).

Corpus data: ICE IrE

The Irish component of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE) (Kirk and Kallen 2008)

- ▶ ICE Ireland corpus was compiled and supervised by John M. Kirk and Jeffery L. Kallen (additional collaborators have been O. Lowry, A. Rooney, M. Mannion, J. Wallenberg)
- ▶ It consists of one million words (600,000 spoken and 400,000 written) representing diverse spoken and written text types (cf. next slide) with each file containing app. 2,000 words.

Mode	Conversation type	Register	Text type	Number of text files
SPOKEN (300)	Dialogues (180)	Private (100)	Face-to-face conversations	90
			Phonecalls	10
		Public (80)	Classroom Lessons	20
	Broadcast Discussions		20	
	Broadcast Interviews		10	
	Parliamentary Debates		10	
	Legal cross-examinations		10	
	Business Transactions		10	
	Monologues (120)	Unscripted (70)	Spontaneous commentaries	20
			Unscripted Speeches	30
			Demonstrations	10
			Legal Presentations	10
	Scripted (50)		Broadcast News	20
Broadcast Talks			20	
Non-broadcast Talks			10	

Data processing

- ▶ Split spoken data data into utterances
- ▶ Removal of meta information
- ▶ Part-of-speech tagging
 - ▶ PoS-tagging via the Apache OpenNLP library in R using a Maximum Entropy model
 - ▶ Problem: Accuracy of PoS-tagging not yet evaluated
- ▶ Retrieving adjectives (PoS-tag JJ) and subsequently
- ▶ Determining whether adjective is preceded by an intensifying adverb (PoS-tag RB)

Data processing

- ▶ Determining the syntactic type of adjective (predicative vs attributive (if followed by NN* tag))
- ▶ Removal of
 - ▶ negated adjectives
 - ▶ comparative and superlative forms
 - ▶ non-intensifiable forms (adj. referring to nationalities, e.g. Asian, African, etc.)
- ▶ Manual cross-evaluation of automated classification
 - ▶ Is adjective an adjective?
 - ▶ Is potential intensifier really an intensifier in the respective context?
- ▶ Sentiment Analysis (determine emotional value of adjectives)
- ▶ Adding speaker information (age, sex, etc.) (Kallen and Kirk 2008).

TextType	Age	Sex	Speakers (N)	ADJ-slots (N)	Intensifiers (N)	Percent
PrivateDialogue	19-25	female	72	1072	96	8.22
PrivateDialogue	19-25	male	8	182	8	4.21
PrivateDialogue	26-33	female	51	790	89	10.13
PrivateDialogue	26-33	male	4	48	5	9.43
PrivateDialogue	34-49	female	8	145	28	16.18
PrivateDialogue	34-49	male	6	187	18	8.78
PrivateDialogue	50+	female	14	238	18	7.03
PrivateDialogue	50+	male	9	133	7	5.00
Total			172	2,795	269	

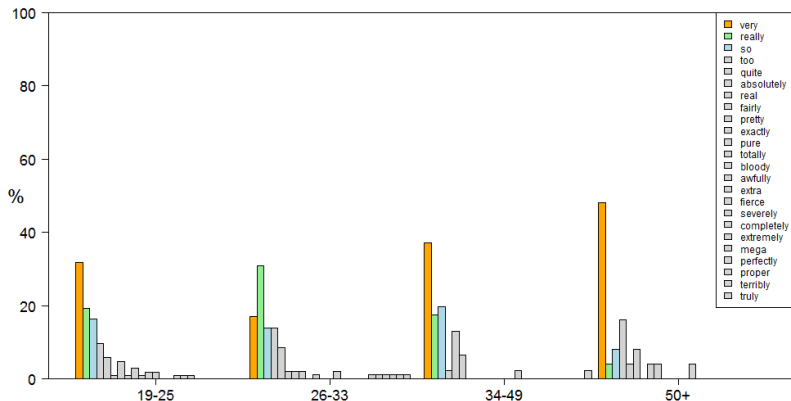
Intensifier	Freq.	% Slots	% Int.
∅ Intensification	2526	90.38	
very	78	2.79	29
really	58	2.08	21.56
so	41	1.47	15.24
too	28	1.00	10.41
quite	21	0.75	7.81
absolutely	8	0.29	2.97
real	7	0.25	2.6
fairly, pretty	4	0.28	2.98
awfully, bloody, exactly, pure, totally	2	0.35	3.7
completely, extra, extremely, fierce, mega, perfectly, proper, severely, terribly, truly	1	0.4	3.7
Total	2795	9.66 (only Int.)	100

Intensifiers: Percentages and Token Frequencies

Irish English This study	
Intensifier	% Int. (N)
very	2.79 (78)
really	2.08 (58)
so	1.47 (41)
too	1.00 (28)
quite	0.75 (21)
Other intensifiers	1.57 (43)
∅ intensification	90.38 (2526)

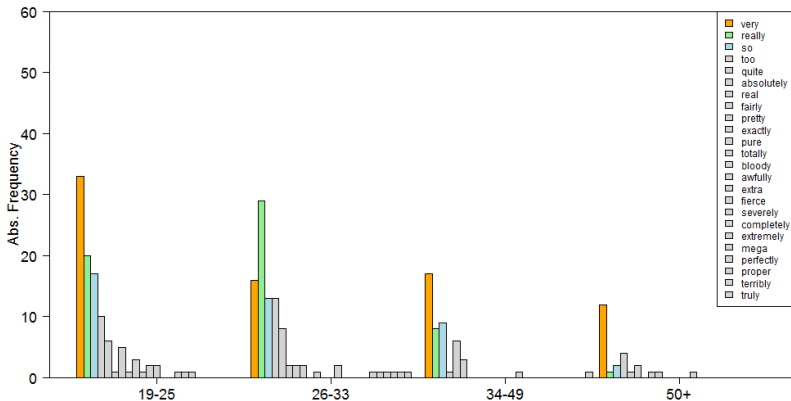
Canadian English (Toronto) (Tagliamonte 2008)	
Intensifier	% Int. (N)
really	13.0 (1282)
very	6.6 (651)
so	6.1 (599)
pretty	5.0 (497)
just	1.5 (152)
too	0.7 (71)
all	0.5 (46)
totally	0.4 (42)
completely	0.3 (26)
just really	0.2 (20)
just so	0.2 (21)
extremely	0.14 (14)
absolutely	0.1 (10)
Other intensifiers	1.4 (140)
∅ intensification	63.9 (6334)

Intensifier types by age



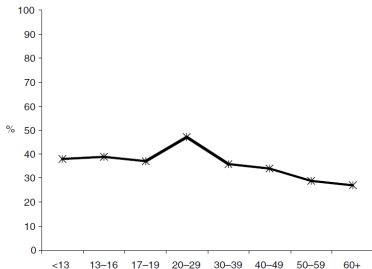
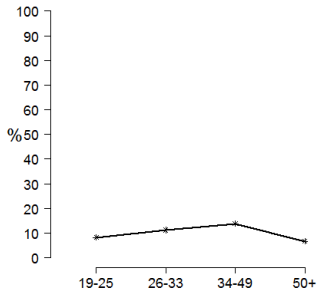
Percentages of *very* decline from old to young until there is a visible increase among the youngest cohort. The reverse

Intensifier types by age



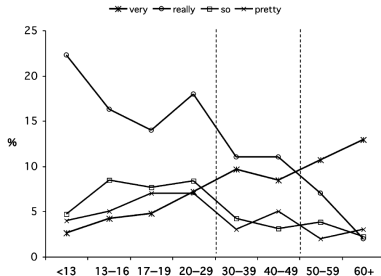
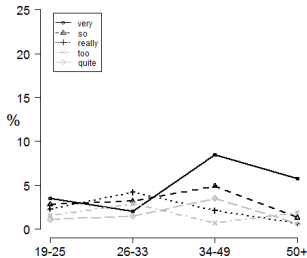
Frequency of intensifiers decreases with age (non-normalized!).

Intensifiers by Age



Neither in IrE nor in CanE is intensification particularly associated with younger speakers.

Intensifier Types by Age



Fluctuations in IrE – except for a decline in *very* – and rather clear trends in CanE – decline in *very*, rise of *really*, incoming forms *so* and *pretty*.



SYNTACTIC FUNCTION

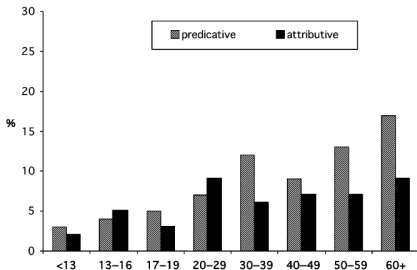
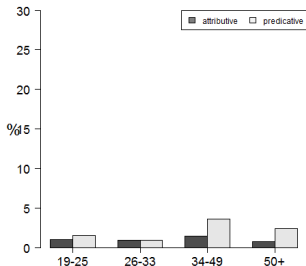
Delexicalization

Tagliamonte (2008: 373)

Delexicalization corresponds to syntactic function

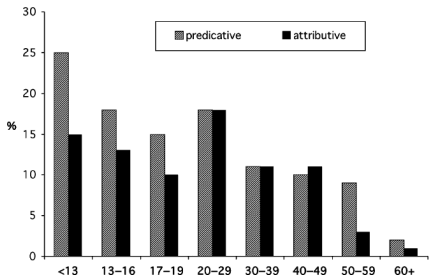
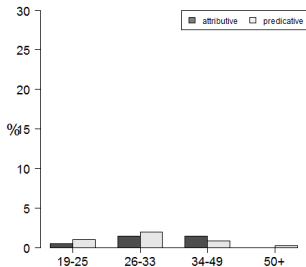
- ▶ The more delexicalized an intensifier becomes, the higher the proportion of that intensifier in predicative function
- ▶ Hypotheses
 - ▶ **VERY** should exhibit the highest proportion of predicative uses among 50+ speakers
 - ▶ **REALLY** should exhibit the highest proportion of predicative uses among 26–33 year old speakers

Intensifier Types by Age and Function: *Very*



Very is over-proportionally used with predicative function – particularly among older speakers – in both varieties.

Intensifier Types by Age and Function: *Really*



Proportion of predicative adjectives intensified by *really* higher among younger speakers.



EMOTIONAL VALUE

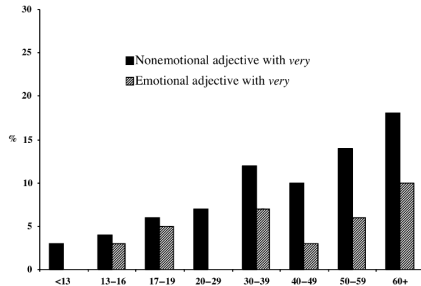
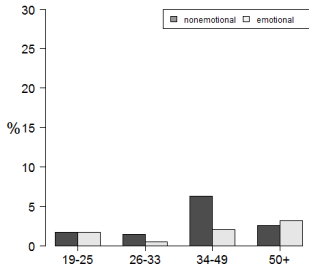
Emotion

Tagliamonte (2008: 381–383)

Delexicalization is correlated with a lack of emotional value

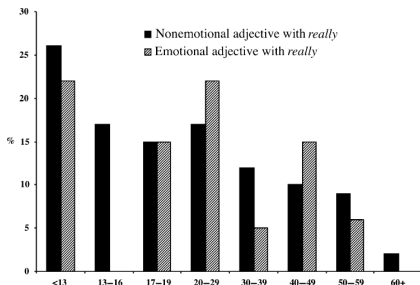
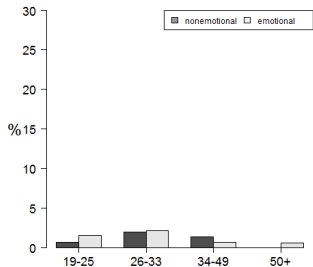
- ▶ The more delexicalized an intensifier becomes, the higher the proportion of that intensifier in non-emotional contexts
- ▶ Hypotheses
 - ▶ **VERY** should exhibit a preference for non-emotional contexts
 - ▶ **REALLY** should exhibit a preference for non-emotional contexts among older speakers and for emotional values among younger speakers
 - ▶ **SO** should exhibit a preference for emotional contexts

pred. *very* by Age and Emotional Value



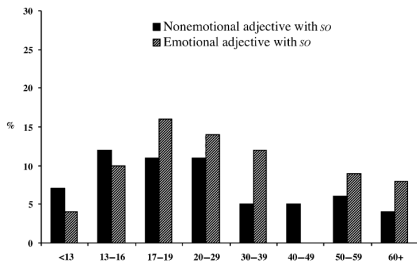
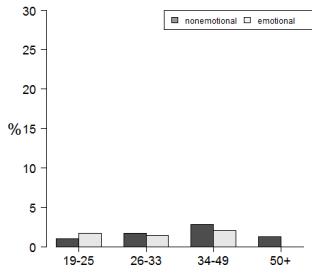
Very is not associated with nonemotional adjectives.

pred. *really* by Age and Emotional Value



Really co-occurs over-proportionally with emotional adjectives among younger speakers.

pred. so by Age and Emotional Value



So co-occurs with emotional adjectives among younger speakers but with non-emotional adjectives among older speakers..



AGE AND SEX

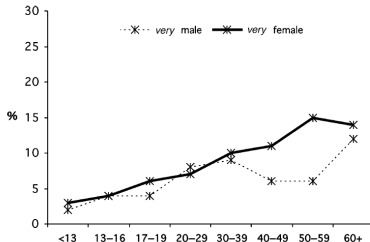
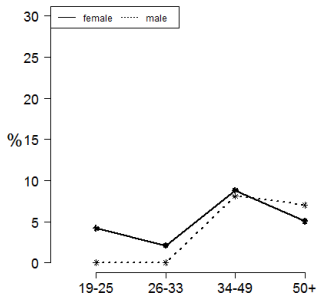
Age and Gender

Labov (1994: 279)

Innovative forms occur predominantly among younger speakers and younger women in particular

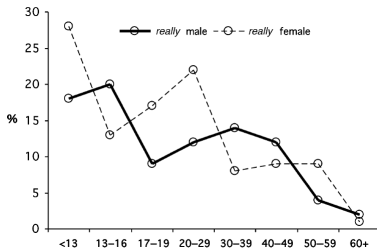
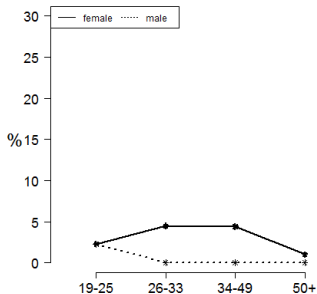
- ▶ The more innovative an intensifier is, the higher the proportion of that intensifier in the speech of younger females, while more traditional intensifiers are expected to exhibit no gender differentiation and higher proportions among older speakers
- ▶ Hypotheses
 - ▶ *Very* should be preferred by older speakers (50+)
 - ▶ *Really* should be preferred by females and younger speakers
 - ▶ *So* should be preferred by females and younger speakers

pred. VERY by Age and Sex



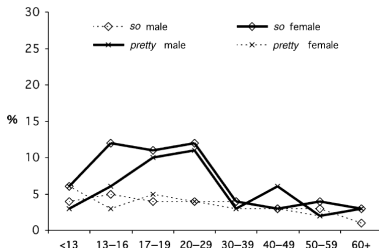
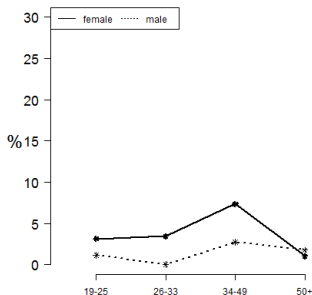
Rather clear downward trend among males but an up-swing among younger females (otherwise no visible gender difference; similar to CanE)

pred. REALLY by Age and Sex



In IrE, *really* does not appear to replace *very* as the default intensifier – no clear decrease with age.

pred. SO by Age and Sex



Other than in CanE, *so* does not appear to be an innovative intensifier on the rise in IrE.

Statistical analyses

- ▶ Mixed-effects binomial logistic regression models
 - ▶ AIC based, step-wise step-up model fitting
 - ▶ Predictors
 - ▶ fun (attributive, predicative)
 - ▶ sex (female, male)
 - ▶ emo (emotional, nonemotional)
 - ▶ age (19-25, 26-49, 50+)
 - ▶ second level interactions

Results VERY

	Group(s)	Variance	Std. Dev.	L.R. χ^2 (df1)	Sig.
Random Effect(s)	flid	0.77	0.88	8.9	<.01 **
Fixed Effect(s)	Estimate	VIF	OddsRatio	z value	Sig.
(Intercept)	-4.34		0.01	-16.05	<.001***
fun:predicative	0.76	1	2.14	3.14	<.01 **
Model statistics					Value
Number of Groups					172
Observed misses					2717
Observed successes					78
Residual deviance					692.95
R ² (Nagelkerke)					0.03
C					0.836
Somers' Dxy					0.672
AIC					698.95
Prediction accuracy					97.21%
Model LL Ratio Test		L.R. χ^2	(df2)	19.15	<.001***

Results REALLY

	Group(s)	Variance	Std. Dev.	L.R. χ^2 (df1)	Sig.
Random Effect(s)	flid	0.77	0.88	9.82	<.01 **
Fixed Effect(s)	Estimate	VIF	OddsRatio	z value	Sig.
(Intercept)	-5.13		0.01	-12.76	<.001***
emo:emotional	1.19	1.01	3.29	4.3	<.001***
age:26-49	0.84	1.04	2.33	2.43	<.05*
age:50+	-1.67	1.04	0.19	-1.55	n.s.
sex:male	-0.94	1.01	0.39	-1.64	n.s.
fun:predicative	0.43	1.01	1.54	1.54	n.s.
Model statistics					Value
Number of Groups					172
Observed misses					2737
Observed successes					58
Residual deviance					516.24
R ² (Nagelkerke)					0.093
C					0.871
Somers' D _{xy}					0.742
AIC					530.24
Prediction accuracy					97.92%
Model LL Ratio Test				L.R. χ^2 (df6)	48.06 <.001***

Results So

	Group(s)	Variance	Std. Dev.	L.R. χ^2 (df1)	Sig.
Random Effect(s)	flid	1.69	1.3	9.08	< .01 **
Fixed Effect(s)	Estimate	VIF	OddsRatio	z value	Sig.
(Intercept)	-7.14		0	-9.94	<.001***
fun:predicative	2.75	1	15.57	4.53	<.001***
emo:emotional	0.77	1	2.16	2.31	< .05 *
sex:male	-0.67	1	0.51	-1	n.s.
Model statistics					Value
Number of Groups					172
Observed misses					2754
Observed successes					41
Residual deviance					368.91
R ² (Nagelkerke)					0.146
C					0.94
Somers' D _{xy}					0.88
AIC					378.91
Prediction accuracy					98.53%
Model LL Ratio Test		L.R. χ^2	(df4)	58.69	<.001***

Summary

- ▶ Intensifiers are substantially less common in the Irish compared to the Canadian data;
- ▶ The most common types in both the Irish and the Canadian data are *very*, *really*, *so*;
- ▶ The expected upwards trend for *really* is not present in the Irish data.
- ▶ While the use of *very* decreases as speakers get younger, there is a notable upwards trend in usage among the youngest age cohort.

Discussion

Similarities

- ▶ The frequency of intensification does not show marked age differences
- ▶ Older speakers (50+) prefer *very* compared to other intensifiers
- ▶ *Very* is particularly delexicalized especially among older speakers (preference for predicative contexts);
- ▶ *Really* is becoming delexicalized especially among younger speakers (preference for predicative contexts);

Discussion

Differences

- ▶ *Really* is not replacing *very*;
- ▶ No clear incoming variants in IrE compared to CanE (*pretty, so*);
- ▶ Fluctuations in intensifiers frequencies rather than clear trends.

Conclusion

What lessons can be draw from this. . .

- ▶ Irish English intensifier system is undergoing change
- ▶ Not one form (*really*) which replaces *very* but fluctuations.
- ▶ Irish English is weird. . .

What remains to be done. . .

- ▶ Evaluation of the PoS-tagging accuracy
- ▶ Including semantic classification of adjectives
- ▶ Inspect collocation patterns

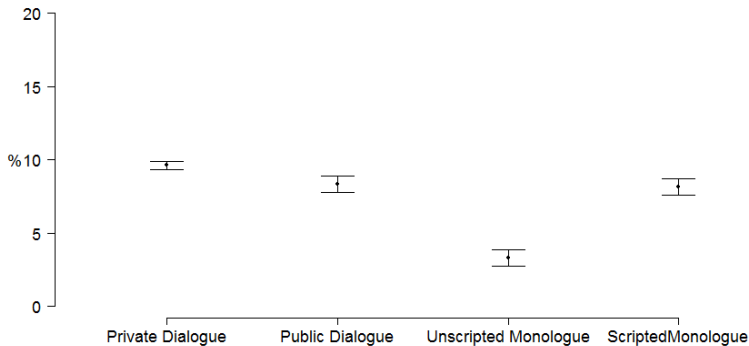
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Thank you so, very, really much!

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Intensifiers by text type



Continue with data from private dialogues only – comparable to Tagliamonte (2008).

Intensifier	Freq.	% Slots	% Int.
∅ Intensification	8932	92.72	
very	285	2.96	40.66
really	71	0.74	10.13
so	69	0.72	9.84
quite	54	0.56	7.7
too	46	0.48	6.56
fairly	19	0.2	2.71
absolutely	18	0.19	2.57
extremely	12	0.12	1.71
highly	11	0.11	1.57
pretty	10	0.1	1.43
real	10	0.1	1.43
completely, perfectly, totally, truly	6	0.24	3.44
well	5	0.05	0.71
exceptionally, particularly, profoundly	4	0.12	1.71
extraordinarily, terribly	3	0.06	0.86
awfully, bloody, exactly, fully, incredibly, proper, pure, strictly, tremendously, vastly, widely	2	0.22	3.19
beautifully, certainly, clearly, deeply, definite, enormously, especially, extra, fierce, fiercely, full, fundamentally, great, indeed, insufferably, intensely, marvellously, massively, mega, plainly, remarkably, seriously, severely, shockingly, unusually, wholly, wonderfully	1	0.27	3.78
Total	9633	7.24 (only Int.)	100