PLENTY TOO MUCH CHINESE FOOD: VARIATION IN ADJECTIVE AND INTENSIFIER CHOICE IN NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

by

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B.A., Kansas State University, 2009

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Modern Languages
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2012

Approved by:

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2012

Abstract

Adjective use and intensification by native speakers of English has been the subject of much study, yet intensification strategies used by non-native speakers have received relatively less attention. The present study compares adjective use by five native English speakers with that of five English L2 speakers at Kansas State University in order to describe in detail how learner patterns of use differ from those of native speakers living in the same community. From conversational data, adjectives were extracted and analyzed for linguistic features such as adjective class, and use of intensification. Results quantify how the non-native speakers have access to a smaller set of adjectives than native speakers, and how those sets differ. Interestingly, the L2 speakers intensify their adjectives at a higher rate than native speakers, again employing a smaller set.

The types of adjectives used by the two groups differed in significant ways, with native speakers using more precise, contextually-specific evaluative adjectives such as *crappy*, *elite*, *retarded*, and *obsessed*, while non-native speakers used more generic adjectives such as *happy*, *nice*, *long*, and *famous*. The generalized nature of these adjectives, as well as the smaller number of lexemes at the non-native speakers' disposal, may account for the increased rate of intensification shown by the non-native speakers. Specifically, the depth and complexity of meaning required for conversational interaction is more often handled by native speakers via a variety of specialized adjectives, while non-native speakers must rely more on adjective intensification in order to convey subtle differences in meaning. These results help us better understand how advanced learner language compares to native use. Implications for English language teaching include, but are not limited to, new insight into the types of adjectives taught for conversational English, explicit teaching of intensification strategies, and teaching learners how to construct compound adjectives.

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List of Common Abbreviations

COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English
KSULC	Kansas State University Learner Corpus
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non-native Speaker

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the people who, through their guidance, patience, and inspiration, enabled and encouraged me to complete this thesis. Without them, this thesis would not have been possible. These people have shown me the greatest kindness and understanding, and I am incalculably richer for their help and their company.

Daniel Aguilar-Rodrìguez, Rebecca Archer, Emma Betz, Kevin Coleman, Mary T. Copple, Thomas Dunn, Donna Potts, Leta Smith, Kendra Staley, and Mustafa Zewary.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

It is fairly easy for a person to distinguish between a native speaker (NS) and a non-native speaker (NNS) of their own language. Many linguistic cues can suggest that someone is using their second language, an obvious example being accent. Accent is certainly not the only way to distinguish NS speech from NNS speech, however. Word choice and differences in syntax can also play a role in the perception of such differences. Describing difference and variation in the speech of English language learners can aid the understanding of how people learn English, as well as suggest instructional strategies for English language teachers. In this way, variationist linguistics can inform discussion of Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Pedagogy. By describing specific ways learner language differs from that of native speakers, the present study hopes to contribute to an understanding of how people learn and use the English language.

This study will focus on intensifiers that boost (by denoting a high point on a scale) or maximize (by denoting the upper extreme of a scale) the quality described by the adjective. These intensifiers have also been referred to as "amplifiers" by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985). Example (1) shows an adjective modified by a booster, and example (2) shows the use of a maximizer.

(1) yah I know the coffee in Vietnam is *really good* but I don't know how to drink coffee (265. Mary Hanh, 8933)

(2) he was like this is like *completely unnecessary* (311. John File, 7071)

Adjective intensification is a productive area in which to compare native and learner use as native use has been extensively described by linguists engaged in corpus-based, variationist research. While it was previously thought that intensifier use was confined primarily to the speech of women and "ladies' men," (Stoffel, 1901), more recent studies have shown that, in general, NSs of English, regardless of sex, intensify over a quarter of their adjectives in speech (Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003; Tagliamonte, 2008; Tagliamonte & Roberts, 2005).

From a linguistic perspective, adjective intensification is interesting because of the rapid changes in speakers' choice of intensifiers. Several in-depth variationist studies that make use of the sociolinguistic interview method for data collection (Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003; Tagliamonte, 2008) have been conducted regarding the use of adjective intensifiers by NSs, but comparatively little has been learned about NNSs' use of adjective intensifiers. While ESL instruction seeks to equip learners with native-like command of English, it seems that this aspect of the language is neglected in explicit instruction in the ESL classroom. However, due to the prevalence of adjective intensification in the American entertainment media (Tagliamonte & Roberts, 2005) and in spoken English in both Britain and North America (Ito & Tagliamonte 2003, Tagliamonte 2008), it is possible that English L2 speakers at K-State have enough contact with adjective intensifiers in their daily interactions that they have internalized the established patterns of use.

Adjectives are an important facet of language. By modifying nouns, adjectives give language immense variety and complexity. In order to achieve a more complete view of what the English language is and how it operates, and to come to a better understanding of how people learn English, it is useful to investigate adjectives and their use in intensification in discourse. This study will confine itself to investigating possible differences in adjective and intensifier use between NSs and NNSs of English at Kansas State University.

Research Questions

1. Do NSs of English at Kansas State University intensify adjectives in dyadic interaction?
2. Do NNSs of English at Kansas State University intensify adjectives in dyadic interaction?
3. Is there a difference in frequency of intensification observable between NNSs and NSs of English at Kansas State University?
4. Is there an observable difference in the number of adjectives used by NNSs and NSs in dyadic interaction?

Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that NNSs will use fewer adjective types than NSs due to a smaller amount of experience with English than NSs. It is also hypothesized that NNSs of English will employ common boosters, such as *very*, *really*, and *so*, at higher overall rates due to this smaller

adjective inventory, but will produce fewer intensifier lexemes than NSs of English, as found by Rescki (2004). Further, it is hypothesized that NNSs of English will use fewer maximizer lexemes (e.g. *ultimately*, *completely*, *totally*) than NSs, as well as use maximizers at a lower overall rate than NSs because they have had less exposure to these terms (Rescki 2004). Thus, it is hypothesized that, while both NSs and NNSs of English at Kansas State University may intensify adjectives at similar rates within the norms established by previous research, intensification strategies will differ across groups.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter presents a brief review of how the members of the intensifier class are currently undergoing rapid change in the speech of native speakers of English. Most of the research deals solely with native speaker data, a notable exception being Rescki (2004). Though this is a synchronic study, it is useful to look at previous diachronic research in order to situate the current findings within a larger picture of language use and change.

Different intensifiers have been entering and leaving English since the Old English period (Tagliamonte 2008). Change in the use of intensifiers has been ascribed to the fact that they are used to differentiate utterances from a perceived norm or to add novelty to utterances (Ito & Tagliamonte 2003, Tagliamonte 2008), and can thus 'wear out' more quickly than other types of words, necessitating further innovation in the form of new intensifiers. The fact that intensifiers undergo such rapid change makes them a fruitful subject for variationists. By analyzing how different factors (e.g., social factors such as sex, age, or native language of a speaker, or linguistic factors, such as adjective type) affect the choice of intensifier—or indeed the choice to use an intensifier at all—, we can reach a greater understanding of linguistic change, as well as of how people learn and use the English language.

The three most commonly used intensifiers in American English today are *very*, *really*, and *so* (Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005). Tagliamonte and Roberts trace various changes that occur in the usage of the most common and quickly expanding intensifier, *so*, by examining transcripts from the popular American television show, *Friends*. Even during the short period of time that the show aired (1994-2002), a pattern of expanding use of *so* can be seen. While it began as an intensifier used primarily by women, by the sixth season, the sex of the speaker was no longer

the determining factor in its usage, but rather the quality of the adjective it was used to intensify. Specifically, it came to intensify adjectives describing emotional states (Tagliamonte & Roberts, 2005). Though the study relied on language data that was not comprised of spontaneous, natural speech, but rather data derived from television show transcripts, the findings are generally aligned with other data collected using sociolinguistic interviews (Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003; Tagliamonte, 2008).

Ito & Tagliamonte (2003) show that, even in a conservative British dialect, the York dialect, intensifier selection is changing. They trace the history of the most common intensifiers, *very* and *really*, back several hundred years in order to describe how these words came to be intensifiers. They show how both words underwent delexicalization, moving from a context in which they appeared with modal verbs, expressing the truthfulness of the activity, to collocating with adjectives in order to raise intensity.

Ito & Tagliamonte (2003) study these rapid changes in intensifier use by examining stratification in intensifier usage, based on age, an analysis of change in apparent time. They broadly sampled the speech of people in York, England. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 91 years old (273). By taking speech samples from this broad age-range, the researchers were able to view intensifier usage in cross section, so to speak, without having to spend a century collecting data. Their results were striking because they showed a rapid change in intensifier preference. Speakers below the age of 35 are more likely to use *really*, while those above the age of 35 prefer *very*.

This study also examined various factors that influenced the choice of intensifier, including sex of the speaker, adjective type (dimension, physical property, color, human propensity/emotion, age, value, speed), and position in the sentence (attributive *v*. predicative). Results show the more recent intensifier, *really*, generalizing and spreading to different contexts of use. This is interesting because language change is usually considered an immensely slow process. This study, as well as others (Tagliamonte, 2008; Tagliamonte & Roberts, 2005) provides a different picture of language change, showing that, in the realm of adjective intensifiers, shifts in preference can occur in the span of a generation.

An exception to the research about intensifier use by native speakers of English is Rescki's (2004) study, which compares written English by non-native speakers and English spoken in academic settings by native speakers. Recski compares EFL writing from seven

national subcorpora from the International Corpus of Learner English (Brazilian, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, Polish, and Spanish) with the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English in order to examine frequent collocations. According to his findings, boosters occur more frequently than maximizers in both corpora, and boosters tend to collocate with gradable adjectives (e.g., *quite well*) while maximizers tend to collocate with non-gradable adjectives (e.g., *completely different*). He also finds that non-native speakers use more intensifiers in recurrent collocations than native speakers. Rescki's study focuses on discovering the most frequent collocations used by English language learners. Recski concludes that "it would seem to be clear that intensifiers, like other lexical items, are learned not as representatives of word classes or as lexemes in isolation, but in association with other words. Thus, collocational studies of this kind can serve to deepen existing descriptions in textbooks, grammars and dictionaries," (p. 223). Ideally, the language produced by students would closely resemble that spoken by their native speaker peers. One possible reason for the apparent deficiency in instruction concerning this aspect of the language is a focus on formal English, which discourages the use of adjective intensifiers (Recski 2004). While understanding formal English is important for successful academic writing, spoken English is of equal importantance for communication, and displays more adjective intensification than academic written English (Recski 2004). Various studies have put the rate of adjective intensification between 22% and 38% in spoken English (Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003; Tagliamonte, 2008; Tagliamonte & Roberts, 2005). Due to its prevalence in spoken English, adjective intensification is a significant aspect of the language, and thus worthy of attention in research and the classroom.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The purpose of the present study is to explore specific differences in adjective and intensifier use between NSs and NNSs of English. This study uses interactional data obtained through sociolinguistic interviews with Kansas State University students. Utilizing a usage-based framework, this study seeks to broaden the understanding of how people learn and use English, and in doing so, to discover implications for improved English language instruction. This chapter is divided into three sections, providing information about the participants in the study, the methods of data collection, and how the data was extracted and coded for analysis.

Participants

Since this study focuses on language pattern differences between native speakers and learners, participants were divided into two groups. They consisted of: (i) a control group of five native English speakers (M=2, F=3 NSs) who were born and raised in Kansas, and (ii) five non-native speakers of English (M=1, F=4 NNSs) who were enrolled in University classes at the time of the interviews. Participants ranged from 18-23 years in age. They were recruited for the study from the author's social circle. Table 3.1 shows the distribution of the two groups by age and native language. All of the NNS participants represented in the data were actively enrolled in regular university classes at the time the study took place, meaning that they had been judged by the university to be sufficiently competent in English to be successful as regular university students (as opposed to participating in an intensive English language program). This judgment was based on scores from an in-house test administered by the University or on TOEFL (Test Of English as a Foreign Language) scores.

Table 3.1 Social Variables Age and Native Language by Speaker

Age-Language	English	Mandarin	Spanish	Vietnamese
18			1	
19				1
21	3	2		
22	1	1		
23	1			

Data collection

Participants were informed that they would be participating in a study focusing on how people use and learn English. This lack of detail minimized the likelihood that participants would consciously chang their speech patterns in order to meet perceived expectations for the study. Written information concerning their rights as participants was given to them, and their rights and the nature of the study were explained to them by the researcher, who also conducted the interviews. They were asked to sign an acknowledgment of informed consent and they received a debriefing form with further details about the purpose of the study after the data were collected.

Sociolinguistic interviews were conducted with the participants. The sociolinguistic interview format was chosen because, while it does not equate to free and natural speech or

conversation, it does tend to elicit narrative and description (Labov, 2006). In addition, it constitutes spontaneous speech, providing ample possibility for adjective intensification, as well as a range of the working vocabulary of the participants. The interviews were recorded using digital audio recording software, and transcribed and coded for analysis. Audio data was transcribed according to the conventions for representing spoken discourse outlined by Du Bois (2011), without phonetic transcription. All data is archived on a personal computer hard drive, and a data hosting website with privacy controls suitable for sensitive data storage. The researcher will maintain custody of the consent documents, and will store digital copies online indefinitely.

Participants were assigned a four digit random number to identify them. In order to further protect their identities, and the identities of people who were discussed in the interviews, pseudonyms were given to all people named in the interviews, with the exception of celebrities such as Willie Nelson or Mao Zedong.

Data extraction and coding

Exclusions

Following Ito & Tagliamonte (2003), the present study was limited to adjectival heads that can be intensified. Superlatives (e.g., 'the best part'), comparatives (e.g., 'the better choice'), and negative contexts (e.g., 'The food wasn't so great.') were excluded, as the first two are comparative in nature, and the third, although intensified, occurs less frequently and with different meaning. Constructions with *all*, as in (3) were excluded.

(3) the weather's *all* weird and dreary (593. Jill Nox,9237)

It is not clear that *all* functions as an intensifier for *weird* and *dreary* in this context. In a similar fashion, when *really* precedes a hedge or a down toner, before the adjective it modifies, as in (4), the token has been excluded.

(4) um and it's got like the really nice crisp white waves and it's *really kinda* greenish it's weird (683. Jill Nox, 9237)

In this case, *really* might be more equivalent to *actually*.

All adjectival phrases that allow for intensification (except for the types mentioned above) were extracted for analysis. This includes adjectives without any intensifier (zero intensifiers), as seen in (5).

(5) yah that's Ø *cool* sounds good to me (170. Mary Hanh, 8933)

For the NS group, data extraction began at turn 100. This was to remove tokens that occurred during the initial phase of the interview, when the informant might be nervous or acutely aware of being interviewed. Unfortunately, this procedure was not able to be replicated for the NNS group, because this group produced fewer adjectives overall. Therefore, the entire transcripts of the NNS group were mined for adjectives. In all, 499 adjectives were extracted from NS speech, and 501 adjectives from NNS speech.

Adjective Type

Coding of adjectival phrases was done according to various semantic categories (Dixon, 1977). However, two more categories were necessary to distinguish: GROUP AFFILIATION, and AMOUNT. Each of these categories will now be briefly described and examples presented. The first category, AGE, includes terms used to describe chronological age, as in (6) and (7):

(6) so if you have like *new* arguments or something that you want to surprise people with you you're gonna save it for one tournament or the other (290. Breana March, 3576)

(7) but she just like a little kid I don't know I guess because when I came here everybody looks *very grow[n] up* and they talk *grow[n] up* and they have a job when they high school but we don't (196. Mary Hanh, 8933)

There were eleven instances of AGE adjectives present in the corpus, including four lexemes: *grow(n) up, new, old, young*.

The second category, COLOR, was quite rare; just one instance of a color adjective

appeared in the data, in (8):

(8) ... cause it's just like all salt water it's completely salt water it's very very salty the sand is like *pure white* it's really cool like.... (685.Jill Nox, 9237)

DIMENSION adjectives refer to physical size. Examples from native English speakers and English learners are presented in (9) and (10) respectively. DIMENSION adjectives were fairly frequent in the data (see Table 3.2).

(9) I mean very- he's got like this *huge* ego and it drives me crazy (469. Mary Scott, 5589)

(10) hmm she's so nice mmhmm yah every time when I saw her we chatted for a *long* time (466. Amy Xin, 5227)

HUMAN PROPENSITY/EMOTION was the second largest adjective class. These adjectives describe emotional states such as *angry* or *pleased*, or states of being that cannot realistically be used to describe inanimate objects, such as *charismatic* or *addicted.* One hundred and six (N=106) different adjectives appeared a total of two hundred and six times. Examples for native English speakers and English learners are presented in (11) and (12) respectively. Table 3.2 lists examples of HUMAN PROPENSITY/EMOTION adjectives that appeared in the corpus and the token count for this class.

(11) she's still *adorable* and *nerdy* (465. Mary Scott, 5589)

(12) yah we're *friendly* so (98. Isabel Flores, 3551)

Table 3.2 Adjective Class Examples

Adjective Class	*Most frequent members*	*Total N*
VALUE	*good, crazy, different, funny, fun, hard, weird, stupid, cool, important*	583
HUMAN PROPENSITY/ EMOTION	*nice, excited, busy, smart, impressed, jealous, rude, happy, frustrating*	206
DIMENSION	*big, little, long, huge, gigantic, short, wide, large*	84
PHYSICAL PROPERTY	*spicy, salty, clean, far, cold, organic, sweet*	70
AMOUNT	*much, high, many, few*	32
AGE	*young, new*	11
GROUP AFFILIATION	*Chinese, suburban, computer-nerdy*	8
SPEED	*fast, quick*	5
COLOR	*white*	1

The PHYSICAL PROPERTY category includes adjectives that describe states of being that are not specific to human beings. This category includes adjectives describing temperature, distance, texture, time, among others. Thirty-five adjectives were coded as PHYSICAL PROPERTY adjectives, accounting for seventy tokens. Example (13) is from a native English speaker, and (14) from an English language learner. Interestingly, *spicy* occurs three times more frequently than the other higher frequency adjectives in this category. Most of the tokens of *spicy* are from the NNS group, as food was a topic that came up more frequently in the conversations with the NNS group than with the NS group. This topic effect is an important note, since *spicy* is not a highly frequent adjective in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies 2008).

(13) well my bag was *really really full* (310. Breana March, 3576)

(14) it's *very hot* there (32. Jim Wei, 1319)

SPEED adjectives describe the rate of motion, change, or activity of a noun. There were five occurrences of SPEED adjectives in the data, with only two adjectives appearing. Examples from NSs and NNSs are presented in (15) and (16) respectively.

(15) cable's so expensive you can learn to live without it *pretty quick*
though especially with like Hulu and Netflix (343. Mary Scott, 5589)

(16) it's *very fast* (493. Ann Wu, 0925)

VALUE adjectives, the most frequent adjective class, was comprised of ninety-nine different adjectives. These adjectives are used to describe people or things by means of subjective judgement on the part of the speaker. Words such as *good, bad, cool, funny, okay* and *pathetic* fit into this category. With five hundred and eighty-three tokens, that class accounts for just over half of all the adjectives in the corpus. Examples (17) and (18) present usage by native English speakers and English learners respectively.

(17) I uh heard this *funny* story about Willie Nelson (350. Derek Hart, 8887)

(18) yah I think America has its own *very advanced* business strategy um
their business experience and it has the most of five hundred fortune companies (72. Amy Xin, 5227)

The AMOUNT category was added to the categories proposed by Dixon because these adjectives differ from adjectives of PHYSICAL PROPERTY. In the examples below, they do not refer to physical objects, but rather ideas or actions. It is comprised of seven different adjectives, including *much, high,* and *many.* In all, there were thirty-two tokens in this class. Examples for native English speakers and English learners are found, in context, in (19) and (20) respectively.

(19) that's awesome . . yah cause I mean it takes *so much* work (731. Jill Nox, 9237)

(20) uh the north only the north I traveled around the north *very much* but I don't go to the south

very recently (260. Jim Wei, 1319)

Lastly, the category GROUP AFFILIATION was created because adjectives like *Chinese, suburban,* and *computer-nerdy* could not reliably be placed into the categories proposed by Dixon (1977). Adjectives describing political affiliation, nationality, ethnicity, or membership in a group are not physical or emotional states. This class is comprised of eight different adjectives, with one token each. See (21) and (22) for NS and NNS examples, respectively.

(21) I don't know my whole family is kind of *very computer-nerdy* (459. Mary Scott, 5589)

(22) yes yes that that is exac- yah yah so uh maybe you can go to the
Hunan you know Hunan? yah it's just in aggieville and you can order some some dishes and it's *very* like- like *Chinese* food (239. Ann Wu, 0925)

Adjective Type will be discussed further in the results chapter, as significant differences were found between the two groups' choice in Adjective Type and how they intensified those adjectives.

Adjective Position

Adjectives were coded for their syntactic position. Attributive adjectives, which occur in the noun phrase, were rare in the data. Predicative adjectives, which occur in the verb phrase, accounted for 98.2% (N=982) of the adjectives in the corpus. It is interesting to note that the NNS group used twice as many attributive adjectives as the NS group, but scarcity of data does not allow for reliable conclusions about the patterns of use.

Table 3.3 Adjective Position

Attributive	***18***
NS	6
NNS	12
Predicative	**982**
NS	493
NNS	489

Coding for adjective position was a straightforward process with a few exceptions. Examples of these problematic cases are presented in (23), (24), and (25).

(23) yep yep so are- you're planning on graduating in December? That's fun. *Awesome*. (539. Jill Nox, 9237)

In this case *awesome* was coded as predicative, as the subject and verb are implied, and, at any rate, the adjective is certainly not attributive. Also in (24), the pronoun *it* and the verb *is* are implied in the utterance:

(24) *way better* (349. Mary Scott, 5589)

Each of the previous instances qualifies as verbless assessments because the subject and verb are not present, but are implied in the utterance. There were a total of 15 verbless assessments found in the data. Due to their greater similarity to predicative adjectives, they were collapsed into the predicative category. However, in (25) *big* in the phrase *the big things* was coded as attributive because it is a separate utterance, which can be heard in the short pause between *like that* and *the big things*. In addition, *big* occurs within a noun phrase.

(25) oh they they like um meet new students and uh organize some small uh small activity like basketball games or something and the CSSA usually organize the activities like Spring Festival yah something like that the *big* things (52. Ann Wu, 0925)

Since predicative position was overwhelmingly preferred, most of the results reported in the following chapter characterize predicative usage of adjectives.

Adjective Coding

Two hundred and seventy-two different adjectives occurred in the corpus. The ten most frequently occurring adjectives in the corpus are shown in Table 3.4 The less frequent adjectives were collapsed into a single category as there was not enough data to make reliable observations

about these adjectives. See Appendix B for a complete list of adjectives. The ten most frequent adjectives generally correspond with the highly frequent adjectives found in the COCA, but accurate comparison between the COCA and the KSULC is difficult because the usage in the KSULC is quite different than that reflected in the COCA. Two significant examples of this difference are *cool* and *crazy*. The KSULC is comprised of data from speakers between the ages of 18 and 23, and consists of unscripted, informal sociolinguistic interviews. The spoken data from the COCA is made up of unscripted interviews taken from television and radio broadcasts (Davies 2008). The people appearing in these interviews are generally older, and because they are broadcast, their speech likely represents a more formal register than that found in the KSULC. This means that usage of these two words differs considerably between the two corpora. In the KSULC, no tokens of *cool* are of the semantic class PHYSICAL PROPERTY, denoting temperature. Instead, all of the *cool* tokens are evaluative, denoting a meaning that is comparable to *good*, *exciting* or *interesting*. Of the tokens of *crazy*, only two were of the class HUMAN PROPENSITY/EMOTION (26), while the rest were evaluative, and were seemingly analogous to *cool*, as in example (27). Adjectives like these, where there is a marked difference in meaning, are not easily parsed in the COCA, making it difficult to compare overall frequency of usage.

(26) that's so annoying like that would drive me crazy (239. Mary Scott, 5589)

(27) right yah it's cool it's crazy that's wild I had no idea about that (341. John File, 7071)

Table 3.4 Most Frequent Adjectives

Adjective	*Token Frequency*
good	95
cool	50
crazy	49
different	42
hard	37
nice	29
big	28
weird	28
funny	27
fun	25

Intensifier Coding

A complete list of intensifiers found in the data can be found in Table 3.5. As can be seen, there are instances of reduplication of intensifiers, as well as two different intensifiers being used together. Initially, these were coded as separate collocations, e.g., *really so* received a different code than either *really* or *so*. This coding scheme was later changed because of the relatively few instances of compound intensification. Instead, compound intensifiers were collapsed into the category of the final intensifier in the string. Thus, *really so* was coded as *so*.

Table 3.5 Adjective Intensifiers by Speaker Group

Intensifier	***Total***
completely	3
definitely	1
extremely	1
fucking	8
incredibly	3
literally	1
plenty too	1
pretty	28
pretty pretty	1
pure	1
quite	1
real	1
really	115
really fucking	1
really really	12
really really really	1
really so	1
Adjective reduplication	3
so	96
so fucking	2
super	1
too	34
totally	7
very	85
very very	8
very very very	1
way	1
way way	1
zero	581
Grand Total	**1000**

Grammatical Person

Grammatical person (1p, 3s, etc.) was coded based on the subject of the phrase in which the adjective was uttered. In (28), *this* was coded as 3s.

(28) so students have even commented on her Farmville cause they can see her window and they're like ha she's playing that game and stuff and we're like fuck like *this* looks *really bad* (215. John File, 7071)

Table 3.6 shows the distribution of grammatical person. Third person singular is by far the most common subject expressed for both groups. In fact, grammatical person patterns similarly across the groups, except that the NNS group had more than twice the amount of unexpressed subjects that the NS group had. This may be due to their ongoing acquisition of obligatory subject marking in English.

Table 3.6 Grammatical Person

Grammatical Person	***NS***	***NNS***	***Total***
1st Singular	52	50	102
2nd Singular	27	26	53
3rd Singular	330	275	605
1st Plural	15	22	37
2nd Plural	0	3	3
3rd Plural	44	57	101
Unexpressed	31	68	99

Subject Expression

The expression of the grammatical subject of each utterance was coded as fitting into one of four categories: Noun, pronoun, verbless assessment, and zero/subject not expressed. Table 3.7 compares subject expression between the two speaker groups. Interestingly, though both groups strongly prefer pronouns to nouns, the NNS group used twice as many full nouns as the NS group. This finding is not central to the study, so further discussion will be omitted in the results chapter.

Table 3.7 Grammatical Subject

Grammatical Subject	*NS*	*NNS*	*Total*
Verbless assessment	3	12	15
Noun	46	103	149
Pronoun	416	335	751
Zero/subject not expressed	34	51	85

Chapter 4 - Results

This Results Chapter is divided into two main parts. The first will describe differences in adjective use between the two groups as those shed light on intensifier use, while the second will deal specifically with adjective intensification. Adjective choice and usage is important for understanding differences in intensification rates and strategies. Usage by the two groups reflects significant differences in adjective types preferred and the number of lexemes used. In terms of adjective intensification, differences in both intensifier lexemes and intensification rate will be discussed. It is important, however, that these differences across groups do not overshadow the fact that the similarities in overall usage are greater than the differences. This suggests that the NNSs who participated in this study are highly proficient speakers of English and have internalized many speech patterns. The differences in usage between the two groups do clearly indicate that the speech of these proficient NNSs is not equivalent to that of NSs in particular details, and this study seeks to delimit specific differences in adjective and intensifier use. Knowledge of such differences will have valuable implications for English language teaching, which will be taken up in Chapter 5.

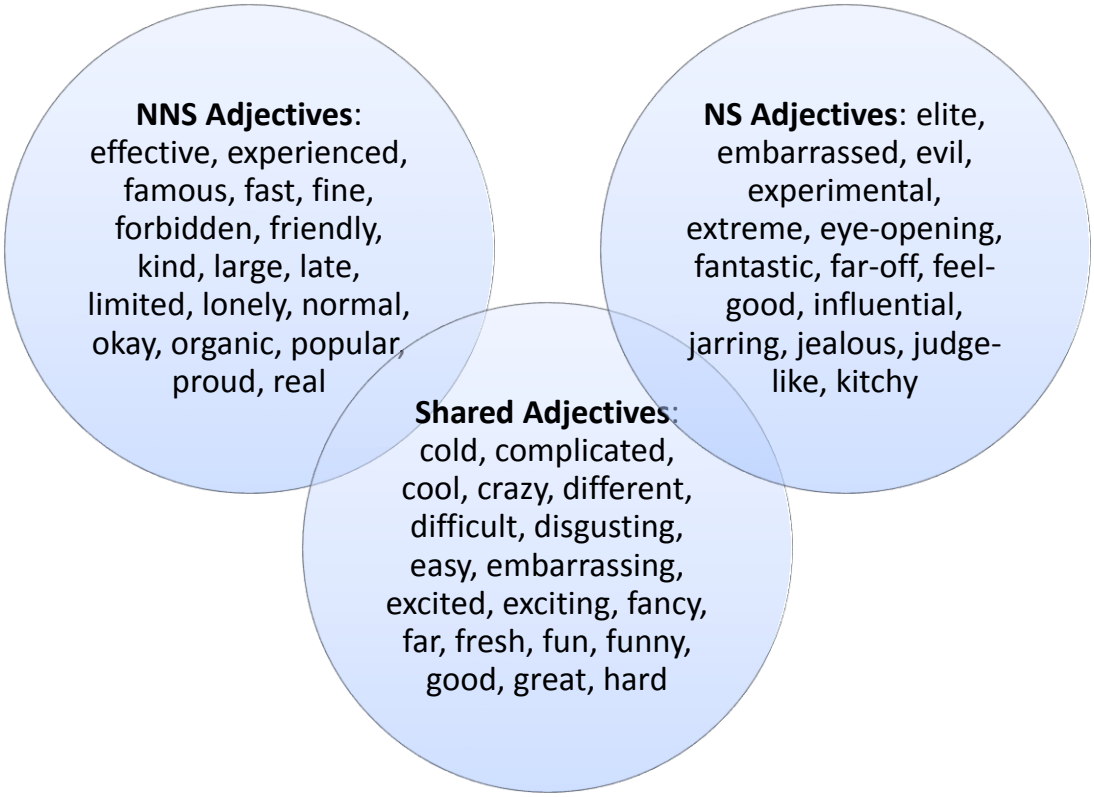
Adjectives

The NS group used more adjective lexemes than the NNS group; that is, they employ a larger inventory in interaction. The NS group used 194 different adjective lexemes out of 499 tokens, while the NNS group produced 138 out of 501 tokens. Within those numbers, considerable overlap is seen, as 59 adjectives appeared in both groups' speech. Thus, the NSs in this study used almost twice as many "unique" adjectives than the NNS. This reflects their access to a larger lexicon, allowing greater range of meaning for the NSs, possibly providing greater

subtlety or precision in communication. Figure 4.1 shows a sample of the adjectives used by each group. See Appendix B for a complete list of all adjectives used, arranged by speaker group and adjective type. Two relatively rare, yet notable phenomena are entirely group specific: adjective reduplication as an intensifier strategy is unique to NNSs, and is discussed in the section on intensifiers below; the production of compound adjectives are unique to NSs. Lexemes such as *far-off* or *feel-good* function as adjectives but are more complicated structures. In the case of *feel-good,* only one of the component words is normally an adjective, while the other usually is a verb. NSs show their mastery of English when they use such complex structures, because they transform other types of words into adjectives for purposes of specific description, as in (29). It is not clear that speakers must construct compound adjectives from separate units, but their infrequency suggests that NNSs might have limited experience with such constructions.

(29) everybody goes and it's like a really sort of feel-good celebration of the community (286. Breana March, 3576)

Figure 4.1 Adjectives by Speaker Group

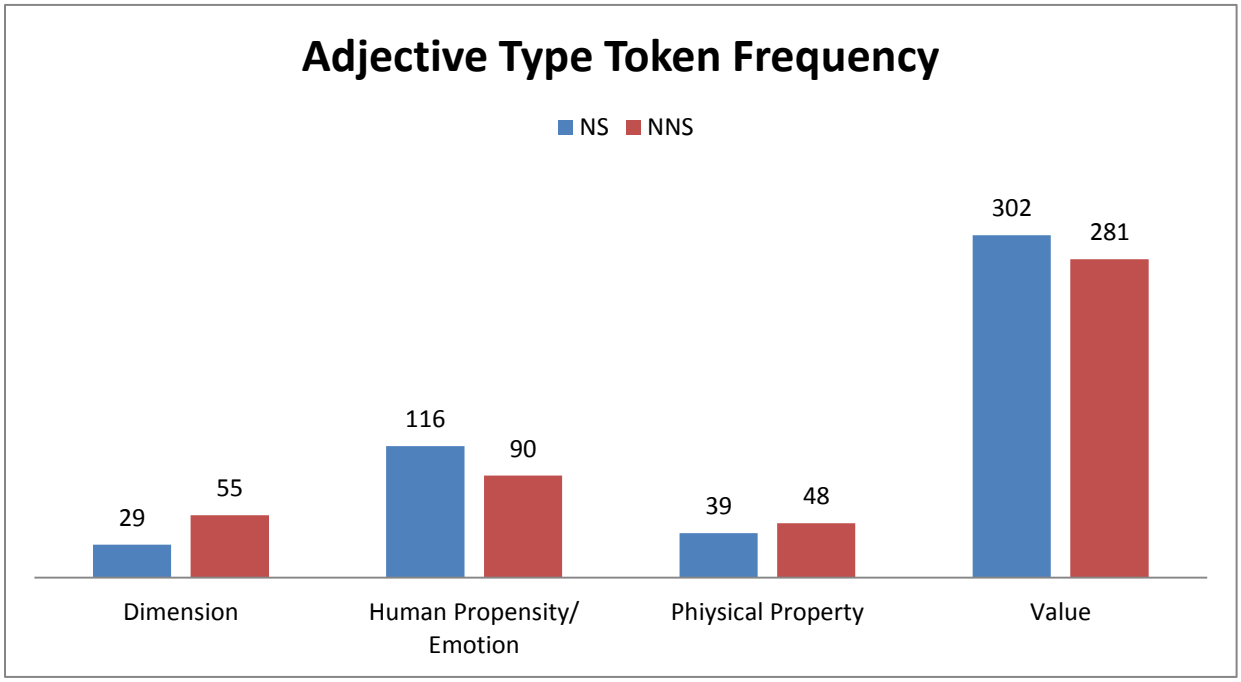


Adjective Type

Group differences are also apparent when examining adjective type. The NNS group used more adjective tokens of DIMENSION, AMOUNT, and other PHYSICAL PROPERTIES. On the other hand, the majority of the VALUE and HUMAN PROPENSITY/EMOTION adjective tokens were supplied by the NS group. See Figure 4.2 for the overall token frequency of Adjective Types by speaker group. Overlap does exist between the two groups, but preference for particular adjective types is apparent. This finding shows that differences in NNS and NS speech are not merely a *quantitative* matter (i.e., that NNSs have fewer adjectives at their disposal), but that there are noticeable *qualitative* differences in the speech of the two groups. Specifically, NSs used more abstract, less tangible adjectives, specifically adjectives of HUMAN PROPENSITY/EMOTION and VALUE, while NNSs spoke using more concrete, measurable adjectives. This observation is not

unexpected, since more advanced speakers of any language are better able to deal in the abstract than less advanced speakers (ACTFL, 2012). The fact that the NS group was more likely to use evaluative or emotional adjectives than the NNS group points to specific limitations in the vocabularies of NNSs. These classes are of importance, as evidenced by the fact that they are by far the most frequently used types of adjectives by the NSs. Readers should recall that all of the NNS participants represented in the data were actively enrolled in regular university classes at the time the study took place, meaning that they had been judged by the university to be competent enough in English to be successful as regular university students. However, as can be seen in figure 4.2, their use of adjectives differs from the NS group. This highlights how NNSs that are deemed 'proficient enough' will still speak systematically differently than NSs, and such patterns suggest areas of focus for continued language development. By exploring these differences, English language teaching can be improved in order to better meet the needs of advanced students.

Figure 4.2 Adjective Type Token Frequency for the Four Most Frequent Classes



While NNSs led NSs in token frequency for PHYSICAL PROPERTY and DIMENSION adjectives, this finding is misleading. NSs actually led in lexical types in PHYSICAL PROPERTY, producing 10 more lexemes than the NNS. NNSs produced more lexical types in only one

category, DIMENSION, where they led by one lexeme, as shown in table 4.1. In addition, the lexical type counts for the VALUE and HUMAN PROPENSITY/ EMOTION classes show that NSs produced significantly more lexemes in these classes than NNSs. This shows that, while NNS speech contains a comparable frequency of use of adjectives, the NNSs are actually relying on fewer lexemes than the NSs and using those lexemes at a higher frequency. This view into NNS vocabulary shows that NNSs' breadth of productive capacity is much less than that of NSs.

Table 4.1 Lexical Types Produced

	NS	*NNS*
DIMENSION	7	8
HUMAN PROPENSITY/ EMOTION	76	47
PHYSICAL PROPERTY	30	20
VALUE	75	55
TOTAL	**188**	**130**

Further evidence of this difference between the two groups can be seen in the particular adjectives used by speakers in the two groups. While the NNSs used adjectives that were precise, many of the adjectives used by this group were semanitcally generalized, such as *happy*, *mad*, *normal*, *okay*, and *popular*. (29) and (30) show examples by NNSs.

(29) @@@ yah every time I when I call them I say oh I have a good news to tell you always make my mom *happy* (104. Amy Xin{5227})

(30) so if some of the American people maybe somebody say oh Mao is bad maybe someone will say oh Mao is *okay* but I think what they really think is no (610. Jim Wei{1319})

On the other hand, the NS group used a variety of adjectives that were near synonyms of these words, but were more specialized, such as *feel-good*, *aggressive*, *tedious*, and *charismatic*. (31) and (32) show examples by NSs.

(31) everybody goes and it's like a really sort of feel-good celebration of the community (286. Breana March, 3576)

(32) it's good it gets you through a lot of tedious computer work ya know (366. Derek Hart, 8887)

This section has shown that differences exist between the two groups' use of adjectives. The next section will show further differences in adjectives intensification, as well as how adjective choice and intensifier choice interact.

Adjective Intensifiers

Rates of Intensification

There are also marked differences in the use of intensifiers between the two groups. The NNSs use a smaller set of intensifiers than the NSs, but they intensify their adjectives more frequently. Specifically, the NNS group had an intensification rate of 44.3% (N=222/501), while the NS group intensified 39.4% (N=197/499) of their adjectives. It is reasonable to assume that NNSs intensify their adjectives to a greater degree due to their more limited vocabulary in both adjectives and intensifiers. In other words, they are trying to accomplish the same interactional work as the NSs, but with fewer tools. Since the NNSs have fewer adjectives at their disposal, they rely on intensification more to denote degrees of those adjectives, while a NS might employ a more specialized, specific adjective rather than an intensifier. This picture of an English language learner's vocabulary also sheds light on their communication strategies. While NSs might deploy more specialized adjectives and adjective intensifiers, allowing them to choose more carefully when intensification (and which intensifier) is needed, the NNSs employ different, yet effective strategies, such as reduplication of adjectives, in order to communicate a range of meanings effectively in English. Reduplication of adjectives occurred rarely in the data (3 times), but it does effectively intensify the adjective, as in (33).

(33) yah which is *easy easy easy* class (60. Mary Hanh, 8933)

There is a notable difference in the rate of intensification among the ten most frequently occurring adjectives in each respective group. Not all of these frequent adjectives are used by both NSs and NNSs and the rates of intensification differ considerably, as can be seen in table 4.2. From this data, it can be seen that NNSs are not only using a smaller set of intensifiers, but

also that their intensification is highly concentrated among a set of highly frequent adjectives, suggesting a heavy reliance on well-established collocations.

Table 4.2 Intensification of Adjectives by Adjective Lexeme Frequency

NS			***NNS***		
Adjective	N*	%	Adjective	N*	%
much	5/5	100%	much	14/14	100%
frustrating	4/5	80%	hard	21/27	77.8%
hard	7/10	70%	long	6/8	75%
cool	16/29	55.1%	fun	6/10	60%
stupid	8/15	53.3%	funny	6/10	60%
different	8/16	50%	nice	6/10	60%
bad	4/10	40%	good	30/65	46.2%
nice	6/19	31.6%	bad	6/14	42.9%
funny	5/17	29.4%	different	8/26	30.8%
good	6/30	20%	crazy	7/30	23.3%

*N= # intensified/ total

Intensifier Lexemes

Turning to specific intensifier lexemes, differences are readily apparent in the choices made by the two groups. For NSs, *really* is the most frequently used intensifier, while *very* is preferred by NNSs. Examples (34) and (35) show differing preference in intensifier for the adjective *nice* for a NS and NNS, respectively.

(34) oh ok that'd be cool that'd be *really nice* you could go almost anywhere (129. Mary Scott, 5589)

(35) I think it's a *very nice* city (224. Jim Wei, 1319)

A NNS is twice as likely to use *very* as a NS is (NNS= 66 vs. NS= 28). As noted in Chapter 2, *very* is the oldest intensifier, tracing back to the beginning of the Early Modern English Period (c.1550) (Tagliamonte & Roberts2005). The emerging variant, *so*, is popular across both groups. *So* is a close second to *very* for the NNS group, marginally surpassing their use of *really*. Coincidentally, *very* is usually the intensifier explicitly taught to English language learners, which might explain its lower use of *really* (see Table 4.3). Interestingly, the data suggests that the NS and NNS groups are converging on *so* as a preferred innovative intensifier.

As seen in Table 4.3, *so* shows the least variation between the two groups out of the three most common intensifiers.

Table 4.3 Distribution of most frequent intensifier lexemes

	NS		*NNS*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
very	28	17%	66	30%
so	43	26%	55	25%
really	77	43%	51	24%
too	3	2%	31	14%
pretty	15	9%	14	6%

The cases of *pretty* and *too* are more complex as they are not used primarily for intensification purposes. *Pretty* was used at similar rates by the two groups. This is interesting because *pretty* can also be used as a compromiser and is thus different than the core intensifiers reported above. Example (36) shows *pretty* used as an intensifier, while (37) shows *pretty* used as a compromiser. Example (37) was not taken from the data extracted from the KSULC, as compromiser uses were excluded from the study. Pragmatic context is key in determining how *pretty* is used, and in determining its inclusion or exclusion from this study. Ambiguous cases were excluded. The two examples below have enough context to demonstrate both functions of *pretty.*

(36) so that exam is *pretty important* actually it's the most important exam in the life (47. Amy Xin, 5227)

(37) The kid is *pretty good* at kite surfing or wakeboarding but what's the big deal? (CNN News, 2011, COCA)

This ambiguity might mean that pretty's contexts of use are different than the other intensifiers, and *pretty* is not in direct competition with them. Based on the present study, it is not clear why the usage of *pretty* is so similar between the groups while the other intensifiers show marked variation. Further study of *pretty*'s specific contexts of use is necessary. In contrast, the

patterns of use for *too* are noticeably dissimilar across groups. The NNS group used *too* as an intensifier ten times more frequently than the NS group. It is possible that the NNSs view *too* as a strong intensifier, intending it to do the work of a maximizer while for the NSs, it connotes excess or undesirability. In these data, the NNSs use *too* in contexts which are clearly positive and not excessive or undesirable, as in (38), while the NSs rarely do so.

(38) I can eat what I want to eat ‘cause there are plenty too much Chinese food and only for the Chinese people not the American type (418. Jim Wei, 1319)

Of the intensifiers identified in the study, ten of them are produced solely by the NS group. The NNS group chooses from a much more limited set of intensifiers. In fact, the NNS group used no native-like maximizers in the study, relying primarily on boosters and *too*. A complete list of the intensifiers employed by each group appears in Table 4.4. Note the number of maximizers that appear in the NS list, offering a much wider range of expression by the NSs.

Table 4.4 Distribution of Intensifiers by group

Intensifier Lexeme	*NS*		*NNS*	
	N	%	N	%
really	77	39.3%	51	23%
very	28	14.3%	66	29.7%
so	43	21.9%	55	24.8%
too	3	1.5%	31	14%
pretty	15	7.7%	14	6.3%
real			1	.45%
quite			1	.45%
fucking	11	5.6%		
totally	7	3.6%		
completely	3	1.5%		
incredibly	3	1.5%		
way	2	1%		
definitely	1	.5%		
extremely	1	.5%		
literally	1	.5%		
pure	1	.5%		
reduplication of adjective			3	1.6%
TOTAL	196		222	

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

This study shows that the speech of the NNSs and NSs in the present data displayed some similar trends in use of intensifiers, and in choice of adjectives, but differences are also apparent. Analysis of these differences can enhance our understanding of what constitutes identifiably 'non-native' speech. In addition, the findings of this study can aid teachers of English as a second/foreign language, because these specific differences between the speech of NSs and NNSs can motivate instructional choices. This chapter will summarize the important findings, and then present implications for teaching the English language.

The four hypotheses that motivated this research were confirmed by the data. NSs had a different range of adjectives in their vocabulary, as well as a different range of adjective intensifiers. This confirms the first and fourth hypotheses: NNSs of English used common

boosters, such as *very*, *really*, and *so*, at higher overall rates, but produced a smaller variety of intensifier lexemes than NSs of English. NSs of English also produced a smaller range of adjective lexemes than the NS group. In terms of the language acquisition process, this observation can be explained by positing that the NNSs are still acquiring lexemes, and that they have significantly fewer lexemes than NSs. Instead, NNSs rely on the fewer lexemes, but use them more frequently. This repetition of a few adjectives and intensifiers is thus characteristic of language in development. On the other hand, the NNSs displayed higher rates of intensification than the NSs. This confirms the third hypothesis: although both NSs and NNSs of English at Kansas State University employ intensifiers, intensification strategies differed across groups. NSs used both boosters and maximizers, and to a small extent, compound adjectives. While the use of compound adjectives does not constitute intensification, it may be that NSs use of compound adjectives met their specific communicative needs in a particular circumstance and therefore they did not need to use intensifiers. NNSs did not use any maximizers; instead, their intensification was confined to using boosters, and, at times, reduplication of adjectives. This finding confirms the second hypothesis: reduplication of intensifiers was used by both groups.

The two groups also displayed many similarities in their use of language. Several factors that were investigated were found not to differ significantly between the two groups. These factors include adjective position, grammatical person, and subject expression. The fact that these factors were not significant in shaping linguistic choice reaffirms the fact that the NNSs who participated in this followed patterns generally consistent with NSs' use of English. This is an important finding, because it shows that native fluency is not requisite for successful interaction in a language, and that learners can effectively communicate their ideas.

These findings have significant implications for teaching English as a second or foreign language. The differences in adjective choice between the two groups suggest that, though English language learners are learning English, it is not necessarily the same English that is spoken by NSs. The field of English language teaching can therefore benefit from this study and other usage-based studies in order to better prepare language learners for the patterns they will encounter in the authentic target language. Usage-based linguistics studies can assist instructors in developing instructional strategies and materials in a way that many other branches of linguistics cannot, since it deals explicitly with linguistic production. By integrating findings obtained from such research into instruction, educators can utilize authentic language data for a

variety of classroom applications: as examples of language that come from the real world of people using language to fulfill communicative need, as opposed to contrived examples that may not be found outside the classroom; or as guides to measuring the effectiveness or authenticity of examples, assessments, or texts and materials. These findings can make instructors (and learners) more aware of language patterns that are driven by context, genre, or other factors. More broadly, usage-based research can give educators a deeper understanding of how language is used and help educators remain up-to-date with the innovations and changes in the language which they teach. Teachers of subjects other than English language can also benefit from these types of studies. Though the NNSs in this study were all enrolled in regular university classes, their language was more restricted than that of the NSs. Teachers at the university level will encounter international students whose English language abilities do not identically match those of NSs. Teachers might benefit from taking this into account in determining classroom expectations and lesson planning. Specific examples might include considering how language ability might affect performance in group activities, or decisions about what level of grammatical precision is required for a term paper, or if more emphasis is placed on ideas and content.

Along with noting differences in choice in Adjective Type, this study also found that NNSs who participated in this study used no compound adjectives. This specific construction might prove very useful to English language learners, as it can be used to communicate very specific meanings. Compound adjectives, as noted above, combine lexemes of different classes, for example, an adjective and preposition in the case of *far-off,* or a verb and an adjective in case of *feel-good* in a way that creates a novel meaning that is not apparent in its constituent parts. Not only does this type of construction readily lend itself to specificity, it also allows for linguistic creativity in a way that intensification does not: one can create novel compound adjectives more easily than one can create new, recognizable intensifiers. The present study suggests that NNSs make up for their relative lack of adjectives by intensifying more frequently. While this strategy is effective for scaling the qualities denoted by adjectives, it still lacks some of the subtlety and complexity that comes with a larger vocabulary. By learning how to successfully construct compound adjectives, language learners can use words already in their vocabulary in order to create new meanings. The use of compound adjectives as a strategy, by combining the vocabulary NNSs already have at their disposal, can enhance the range of meaning a NNS has at their disposal without the need to find the ‘perfect’ or ‘correct’ adjective

in the dictionary. By combining their working vocabulary with the ability to circumlocute, NNSs can create compound adjectives to suit their communicative needs. By learning this strategy, learners may feel less stress about finding the correct word to meet their communicative needs. With this decrease in stress might come increased fluidity and ease of production. It is beyond the scope of this study to confirm this possibility, but language educators might benefit from additional study of how compound adjectives are formed and deployed in discourse.

Finally, more attention to intensification in the classroom might prove helpful to learners. While this study found that NNSs generally observe the same trends in intensification strategies as NSs, they still prefer the older intensifier *very,* whereas NSs prefer the more recent intensifier *really.* Perhaps more importantly, NNSs in this study used no maximizers. This shows a significant gap in lexicon that should not be neglected by language teachers. Though NNSs appear to have their own unique strategy, adjective reduplication, it is not a substitute for the appropriate use of maximizers. Incorporating findings from usage-based studies, such as the present study, into textbooks, other course materials, and instruction will allow teachers and learners to better match current trends in language. As noted in Chapter 2, intensifiers tend to pass in and out of favor much more quickly other types of words. It is important for learners to be instructed in the current usage of a language, just as it is important for teachers to use up-to-date teaching strategies and methods which reflect the best practices of the profession. Incorporating research from usage-based linguistics into the classroom can keep language instruction relevant and able to meet changing educational needs and expectations. The impetus for this research has been to improve the understanding of how people use and learn English with the expectation that such a growth in understanding will further improve the quality of instruction for those seeking to learn and use the English language.

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Appendix A - Data Collection Forms

Acknowledgement of Consent

Informed Consent Form

Use of intensifying strategies with adjectives

ID#

APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT:

You are invited to participate in a project that looks at how people speak English. My name is Robert Dunn and I am a graduate student in the Modern Languages department. There will be 35-40 participants in this study.

If you decide to participate in this study, I will record a conversation with you in English and ask you some questions about your experiences in school and your everyday life. **The recording should take around one hour** if you decide to participate in this study.

Any **risks** (i.e. physical, psychological, social, or legal) involved in this study are minimal and are comparable to risks in everyday life. Since the conversation is about topics that interest you, you may talk about your family or your daily life and may feel uncomfortable with having your conversation recorded.

There is **no cost** to you for participating **nor** will you receive **any payment** for your participation in this study. However, this project hopes to provide you with an indirect benefit by contributing to our knowledge of how English is spoken and what instructional techniques are perceived as useful. If you would like to receive a copy of the results of the project at no cost, you may contact me at the phone number or e-mail address provided below.

Please note that **any information obtained by this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission**. More specifically, all recordings as well as computer files will be coded so that no personally identifying information is on the label or the file name. Any transcription of the recording will use code names and numbers. No personally identifying information will be included in the transcriptions of your speech, thus your anonymity will be ensured. All materials will be kept in a secure place such as a locked file cabinet; all data files will be stored on a computer that requires password access. All recording during this research project and photocopies of data collected and transcribed will be used for research and data analysis purposes only. The data files will not be released to anyone, including other researchers, without your written permission (you can give your consent to this below). You have the right to review the recording and the transcript of recorded interaction in which you participate, and you have the right to prohibit disclosure of any portions of the recording or transcript.

Following analysis, **the recordings will be kept in a secure place for possible further research purposes**. In the future, very brief excerpts of the tapes and transcripts might be used for research publications if you give your consent to this below. All data used for these purposes will be coded to ensure the protection of your identity.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with me or Kansas State University. **You are under no obligation to participate in this study.** You are free to (a) discontinue participation in the study at any time, (b) request that the recorder be turned off at any time during the recording, and (c) request that an already recorded session be destroyed and thus excluded from the study.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described. You understand that this project is for research. You also understand that you are free to withdraw your consent at any time and stop participating at any time after signing this form without explanation and without consequences (without penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which you may otherwise be entitled). Your signature below also acknowledges that you have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

If you have any **questions on this study** now, please ask me. If you need additional information later, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach me at: Modern Languages, 005 Eisenhower Hall, Manhattan, KS, 66506; Tel.: (785) 770-7159, E-mail: rld5995@ksu.edu. Should you have any **questions regarding your rights as a research subject**, you can contact: Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224 *or* Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

You may keep a copy of this same form.

_____

Name of Participant

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator Date

Please answer the following questions by checking a response and by signing your initials:

I grant the investigator permission to **share with other researchers** in the field excerpts of the transcribed data, and recording.

[ ] yes [ ] no _____

Initials

I grant the investigators permission to use excerpts of the **recordings** at professional meetings and in professional publications. Any name or place references will be changed.

[ ] yes [ ] no _____

Initials

Demographic Survey

Demographic Survey

IRB# 5793

ID#

Age:

Male / Female

Undergraduate student / Graduate student

Are you enrolled in the ELP?

What is your native language?

Debriefing Form

Debriefing

Dear Participant:

Thank you very much for your participation in this study. Please note that you have the right to withdraw from this research project even after the study is completed. You can request that the data in which you are involved not be used.

When signing the consent form, you were informed that this study focuses on second language use. The research focus was given in very broad terms so that knowledge about the specific details of what we are investigating would not influence your behavior in conversation. The **precise nature of the study** is to see how English language learners use adjective intensifiers (e.g., *so, really, very, completely,* etc.). By looking at this data, I hope to see how being around native English speakers affects the speech of English language learners.

If you have further questions at this time, you may ask them now. My email address is robertlowelldunn@gmail.com. Thank you once again for your help in completing this project.

Appendix B - Lists of Adjectives

Total adjectives and frequency

Adjective	***Token Freq.***	expensive	4	grow(n) up	2
good	95	far	4	helpful	2
cool	50	fast	4	involved	2
crazy	49	happy	4	nervous	2
different	42	hilarious	4	nuts	2
hard	37	horrible	4	old	2
nice	29	new	4	organic	2
big	28	rude	4	poor	2
weird	28	sad	4	popular	2
funny	27	scary	4	retarded	2
fun	25	terrible	4	revered	2
bad	24	advanced	3	scared	2
much	19	awful	3	separate	2
stupid	17	boring	3	serious	2
little	16	close	3	sick	2
spicy	15	disgusting	3	similar	2
interesting	13	exciting	3	sorry	2
great	12	famous	3	specific	2
long	12	glad	3	strange	2
huge	11	interested	3	strong	2
easy	10	mad	3	surprised	2
small	10	many	3	sweet	2
awesome	9	positive	3	terrified	2
excited	8	salty	3	tired	2
important	8	shy	3	useful	2
busy	7	traditional	3	wasted	2
difficult	7	true	3	wild	2
high	6	uncomfortable	3	worth it	2
smart	6	young	3	abandoned	1
cheap	5	annoying	2	abusive	1
clean	5	crappy	2	active	1
complicated	5	easily	2	addicted	1
friendly	5	embarrassing	2	adorable	1
frustrating	5	evil	2	aggressive	1
hot	5	fancy	2	amazing	1
neat	5	fresh	2	anglophilic	1
cold	4	gigantic	2	angry	1

appealing	1	easy easy easy	1	limited	1
assessable	1	effective	1	lofty	1
awkward	1	elevated	1	lonely	1
badass	1	elite	1	long termed	1
basic	1	embarrassed	1	loud	1
beautiful	1	experienced	1	low	1
better	1	experimental	1	miserable	1
broad	1	extreme	1	misty	1
broke	1	eye-opening	1	modest	1
change	1	fantastic	1	much much	1
chaos	1	far off	1	nerdy	1
charismatic	1	feel-good	1	noble	1
Chinese	1	few	1	noisy	1
classic	1	fine	1	normal	1
clever	1	flat	1	nowhere	1
commercial	1	flooded	1	obligated	1
communal	1	fluent	1	obsessed	1
competitive	1	folksy	1	okay	1
computer-nerdy	1	forbidden	1	open	1
concentrated	1	fortunate	1	paranoid	1
conflicting	1	full	1	pathetic	1
confused	1	genius	1	phenomenal	1
conventional	1	grateful	1	pissed off	1
corporate	1	gross	1	pleased	1
country	1	healthy	1	pop	1
crazy crazy	1	hometown	1	proficient	1
creepy	1	ignorant	1	proud	1
crowded	1	imaginative	1	public	1
crumbling	1	impressed	1	quick	1
cute	1	in to trying	1	real	1
cutthroat	1	incredible	1	realistic	1
dangerous	1	individual	1	recently	1
deep	1	influential	1	relaxed	1
delicious	1	isolated	1	relevant	1
democracy	1	jarring	1	resonant	1
destroyed	1	jealous	1	rewarding	1
differently	1	judge-like	1	rich	1
dirty	1	kind	1	ridiculous	1
disciplined	1	kitchy	1	romantic	1
diverse	1	lacking	1	rootsy	1
diversity	1	laid back	1	rusty	1
east	1	large	1	safe	1
		late	1	salt water	1

scenic	1	successful	1	useless	1
separated	1	talkative	1	varied	1
shellshocked	1	tedious	1	vocal	1
short	1	tempting	1	wealthy	1
significant	1	thankful	1	wet	1
simple	1	thoughtful	1	white	1
smartly	1	tight	1	wide	1
soon	1	tough	1	windy	1
stable	1	tradition	1	withdrawn	1
stern	1	ugly	1	wrong	1
stuffy	1	underground	1		
suburban	1	unnecessary	1		

Adjectives by speaker group

Adjectives used by NS	*Adjectives used by both NS and NNS*	*Adjectives used by NNS*
Abusive, adorable, aggressive, anglophilic, annoying, appealing, assessable, awkward, badass, better, broke, charismatic, classic, clever, commercial, communal, computer-nerdy, concentrated, conflicting, conventional, corporate, country, crappy, creepy, crowded, crumbling, cutthroat, deep, destroyed, differently, disciplined, elevated, elite, embarrassed, evil, experimental, extreme, eye-opening, fantastic, far-off, feel-good, few, flat, flooded, fluent, folksy, fortunate, frustrating, full, genius, gigantic, glad,	Awesome, awful, bad, big, boring, cheap, clean, close, cold, complicated, cool, crazy, different, difficult, disgusting, easy, embarrassing, excited, exciting, expensive, fancy, far, fresh, fun, funny, good, great, hard, high, horrible, hot, huge, important, interested, interesting, little, long, many, much, nervous, new, nice, poor, positive, rude, sad, scary, smart, spicy, strange, strong, stupid, surprised, sweet, true, wasted, weird, worth it	Abandoned, active, addicted, advanced, amazing, angry, basic, beautiful, broad, busy, change, chaos, Chinese, competitive, confused, crazy-crazy, cute, dangerous, delicious, democracy, dirty, diverse, diversity, easily, east, easy-easy-easy, effective, experienced, famous, fast, fine, forbidden, friendly, grow(n)-up, happy, helpful, hometown, individual, involved, isolated, kind, large, late, limited, lonely, long-

grateful, gross, healthy, hilarious, ignorant, imaginative, impressed, in-to-trying, incredible, influential, jarring, jealous, judge-like, kitchy, lacking, laid-back, lofty, loud, miserable, misty, neat, nerdy, noble, noisy, nowhere, nuts, obligated, obsessed, old, paranoid, pathetic, phenomenal, pissed-off, pleased, pop, proficient, public, quick, relevant, resonant, retarded, revered, rewarding, rich, ridiculous, rootsy, rusty, safe, salt-water, salty, scenic, separate, serious, shell-shocked, sick, significant, simple, soon, sorry, stern, stuffy, suburban, talkative, tedious, tempting, terrible, terrified, thankful, tight, tough, ugly, uncomfortable, underground, unnecessary, useful, vocal, wealthy, wet, white, wide, wild, windy, withdrawn		termed, low, mad, modest, much-much, normal, okay, open, organic, popular, proud, real, realistic, recently, relaxed, romantic, scared, separated, short, shy, similar, small, smartly, specific, stable, successful, thoughtful, tired, tradition, traditional, useless, varied, wrong, young
TOTAL: 135	TOTAL: 59	TOTAL: 79