**A corpus-based analysis of ongoing change in the adjective amplifier systems of Hong Kong, Indian, and Philippine English**

This study focuses on one of ongoing change in adjective amplifiers (*very*, *really*, *so*, etc.) in Hong Kong (HKE), Indian (IndE), and Philippine English (PhiE)based on data from the International Corpus of English.

While previous research on changes in amplifier systems has successfully applied multivariate methods and unearthed intricate interdependencies and highly systematic trajectories of change in inner circle varieties of English (e.g. D’Arcy 2015; Tagliamonte & Denis 2014), only few studies (e.g. Fuchs & Gut 2016) have analysed ongoing change in adjective amplification in Asian varieties of English. The current study adds to existing research in focusing on change in adjective amplification in HKE, IndE, and PhiE.

One of the most consistent findings in previous research on changes in adjective amplification in informal spoken discourse has been the replacement of very by really. The present study uses Conditional Inference Trees to assess if this trend holds true for HKE, IndE, and PhiE and if the underlying factors that drive this change in inner circle varieties are also at work in these Asian English varieties.

The analysis shows that the amplifier systems of HKE and IndE are very stable and amplifier choice in these varieties is determined predominately by intra-linguistics factors (adjective type, syntactic context, semantic category). In contrast, the amplifier system of PhiE shows notable signs of ongoing change which is driven predominately by social factors (age and gender of speakers).

The results indicate that during stasis and initial stages of change, language-internal factors determine amplifier choice while social factors become more important once changes have reached mid-range. The paper argues that once certain variants (*really* and *so*) gain social meaning, it is this social meaning (the association with specific social groups) drives and accelerates change as speakers want to associate with social groups that carry covert prestige.

**References**

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