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

Author:

Martin Schweinberger\*

The University of Queensland

Address: School of Languages and Cultures, Gordon Greenwood Building, Union Road,

The University of Queensland, St Lucia, QLD 4072, Australia

Phone: +61 7 3365-6374

Email: [m.schweinberger@uq.edu.au](mailto:m.schweinberger@uq.edu.au)

ORCID: 0000-0003-1923-9153

\*corresponding author

**Abstract**

This study uses a corpus-based approach to analyse ongoing change in the adjective amplifier systems in Hong Kong (HKE), Indian (IndE), and Philippine English (PhiE) based on data from the *International Corpus of English* (ICE). 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 have analysed ongoing change in adjective amplification in Asian varieties of English (e.g., Fuchs & Gut 2016). One of the most consistent findings in previous research on changes in adjective amplification in 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. Moreover, the present study aims to ascertain if the effect of social and linguistic factors differs according to the stage of change with language -internal factors governing initial stages of change and language-external social factors gaining importance during later stages of change. 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 a mid-range change and is driven predominately by social factors (age and gender of speakers). The results thus do indeed 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.

**Keywords**

Corpus of Oz Early English (COOEE), Text Mining, Corpus Linguistics, Keyword extraction, Network Analysis, Topic Model

**Author bionotes**

Martin Schweinberger is Lecturer in Applied Linguistics in the School of Languages and Cultures at the University of Queensland, Director of the Language Technology and Data Analysis Laboratory, and Associate Professor II in the AcqVA Aurora Center at the Artic University of Norway, Tromsø. His research focuses on statistical modelling and visualization of linguistic data, language variation and change, and acquisition of and variability in language use.

1. Introduction

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.

1. Previous research
2. Data and Methodology

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1. Results

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1. Discussion

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1. Outlook

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