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A Discourse Based Typology of Intensifiers

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Abstract

This thesis proposes a revision of current definitions, as well as historical sources for intensifiers. In the existing literature (Bolinger 1972, Altenberg 1990, Biber et al. 1999, Quirk et al. 1985, Bardas 2008), only the objective function of intensification is discussed. But subjective intensification is very common as well, and I suggest that it should constitute part of the definition of the function of intensifiers.

I first propose a modified definition, based on natural discourse data, whereby intensifiers have three main functions; the first are two objective and the third is subjective: (1) objectively upscaling a linguistic meaning (2) restoring as an ad hoc interpretational linguistic meaning which has gone through a process of weakening by discourse use and (3) expressing a speaker's subjective stance or commitment.

Next, I discuss the semantic sources from which intensifiers grammaticize. The literature (Heine and Kuteva 2002) only recognizes two sources for intensifier grammaticization: 'Bad' and 'Truth'. My discourse analysis of English, Hebrew and Russian intensifiers includes the 'Truth' source Heine and Kuteva mention, deconstructs 'Bad' into two sub-sources: 'Extreme State of Affairs' and 'Unbelievable' and reveals four additional sources: 'Quantity', 'Totality', 'End of Scale' and 'Rhetorical'.

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Chapter 1

Intensifiers – An Overview

Chapter 1 provides the theoretical background for this thesis: I introduce and problematize existing definitions, as well as potential diachronic sources for intensifiers.

The chapter is organized as follows: in §1 I present existing definitions for intensifiers. In §1.1 I explain the problem with the existing definitions, and introduce an initial attempt at a new definition, on which I elaborate in the next chapters of the thesis. In §1.2 I discuss the existing typological description for the semantic fields intensifiers are said to evolve from and raise questions regarding how complete it is.

1.1 Previous Definitions

In most articles in which intensifiers are discussed, the question regarding what constitutes an intensifier is not discussed in detail. Descriptions of the function of intensifiers are usually brief and vague. Most likely, researchers assume it is self-evident what intensifiers are and what they do. However, as I show below, defining intensifiers is not a trivial matter, therefore, I will problematize common assumptions about them which might have thus far seemed self-evident.

Bollinger (1972:17) defines an intensifier as "any device that scales a quality whether up or down or somewhere between the two". Bollinger refers to intensifiers as "degree words" without separating them from down-toners. This definition is widely quoted in later works about intensifiers, where similar definitions are adopted.

Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999), on the other hand, make a distinction between amplifiers and downtoners ("diminishers") in their articles. Amplifiers are degree adverbs which increase the intensity of what is being said and downtoners "scale down the effect of the modified item". These definitions seem quite appropriate in many cases, for example, when the intensifier 'scales up' the meaning of the expression it modifies:

1. "Watch out! This knife is **really** sharp!"
(April 5, 2013)

The use of an intensifier in this case is clearly meant to express the fact that the mentioned knife is sharper than the normal sharpness which we would expect of a regular knife. On a scale of Extreme Sharpness vs. Extreme Bluntness, we would expect a regular knife to be of medium sharpness (certainly not blunt, but not extremely sharp), as in fig. 1:

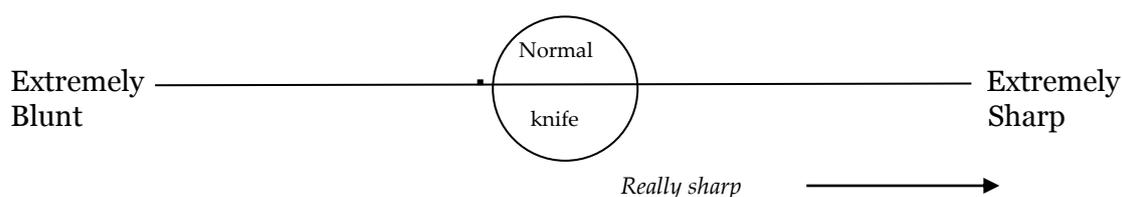


Figure 1: Sharpness scale

Saying that a knife is 'really sharp' can easily be seen as moving the 'sharpness' point up the scale, closer to the extreme point. Many similar examples which fit the definitions above can be found in natural discourse.

Other researchers develop the 'scaling up' notion further. Another canonical work, widely cited in research on intensifiers, is Quirk et al. (1985: 589-591), who divide intensifiers to amplifiers and downtoners:

"Amplifiers scale upwards. They are divided into (a) MAXIMIZERS, which can denote the upper extreme of the scale, and (b) BOOSTERS, which denote a high degree, a high point on the scale. ...The distinction between maximizers and boosters is not a hard and fast one. ...Speakers vary in the extent in which they give a seriously hyperbolic reading to the maximizer. The tendency to use the maximizer for merely a high degree is especially great for attitudinal verbs such as *detest*"

Quirk et al.'s account offers a better description than the previously mentioned ones, since in addition to elaborating on what it means to 'boost' or 'move up a scale', they also mention the connection to attitudinal verbs; this issue is absent in most accounts and is something I will later refer to in my own analysis of intensifiers.

Xiao and Tao (2007) accept Quirk et al.'s definition (1985) but add that "The degree thus expressed is of a subjective nature as it reflects and indexes the attitude of the speaker or writer". This is an important addition which seems to me as a good starting point when trying to think about the nature of intensifiers and intensification; I would like to elaborate on it in my definition proposal.

It is important to note that the research papers mentioned above did not set out to get to the meaning of intensifiers. Conversely - The authors assume existing definitions because their focus lay in specific discourse (Bollinger (1972), Quirk et al. (1976, 1985)) and/or sociolinguistic (Tagliamonte (2003) and Xiao and Tao (2007)) use.

In Bardas (2008:25) there is an attempt to examine the meaning of intensification in more detail:

"Absolutely, completely, entirely, perfectly and totally belong to the category of amplifiers, and even more precisely they are all maximizers. Their main function is to scale the modified words upwards. Their function

is to impress, to persuade the listener and, generally, to express a strong belief about the modified word" (emphases added)

I find this a better attempt at characterizing the act of intensification in that it gives intensification a motivation, and describes the effects of using it in an utterance. However, the notion of 'scaling upwards' is still not thoroughly explicated and remains slightly vague.

Additional accounts of intensifiers' use were given as part of the description of different social groups, mainly women and other groups which are considered 'socially weak', as Lakoff (1973: 50) refers to them:

"The language of the favored group, the group that holds the power, along with its non-linguistic behavior, is generally adopted by the other group, not vice-versa. In any event, it is a truism to state that the 'stronger' expletives are reserved for men, and the 'weaker' ones for women."

I will not dwell on sociolinguistic aspects of intensifier use in this thesis since it is not so relevant to the aspect I would like to focus on in relation to intensifiers. However, some information regarding these theories and descriptions will be given in the next section as base to my own analysis.

1.2 Definition Problematization

Bollinger and others do not elaborate on what it means to 'scale a quality up', others also do not explain how this boosting/scaling up is done exactly; how the relevant scale is calculated and where on this scale we place the un-intensified 'norm'.

Nonetheless, intuitively, the descriptions mentioned above do seem to apply in many cases of intensifier use in natural discourse. In cases like (2), it does seem that the speaker means that these ideas are a lot dumber than the usual 'stupidity' one might mean when referring to an idea as stupid and that he

thinks that it is highly recommended, more than the usual recommendation, that these articles should not be created.

2. List of **really, really, really** stupid article ideas that you **really, really, really** should not create
(<http://tinyurl.com/ozao4c>)

This use of intensification can easily be viewed as moving a value up on a scale, since there are different levels of stupidity (all of which are within the semantic meaning of *stupid*).

If we refer to intensification as moving up a scale, we will need to discuss how relevant scales are constructed and whether this description actually fits all cases where intensifiers are used. If we take instances like 'very true', where does 'scaling upwards' lead us? Assuming the scale is as follows:



Figure 2: Truth "scale"

'True' is already the maximal point. What does *very true* mean, then? Is it more than the meaning of 'true'? Should a different scale be used? Or maybe *very true* is meant to express a speaker's strong commitment, but to the same degree of truth that *true* would indicate on its own? Perhaps the speaker saying just *true* alone would trigger a weakened meaning, weaker than the maximal/lexical *true*?

It seems that the intensification function cannot be summed up as simply scaling up an objective scale and a more nuanced account is needed for what it does in cases like *very true*.

There are additional cases in which the generalization about intensifiers moving a meaning up on a scale seems insufficient or even incorrect:

3. **Be'emet aval be'emet** še- ein li tluna axat afilu

Really but really that isn't to-me complaint one even

'I **really** don't have even a single complaint'

(<http://www.hapisga.co.il/post/9838>)

In this case, not having any of something is not scalar; it is a quantificational reference to a zero and there cannot be less than that on a scale. Since the use of intensification is completely grammatical here it must have another function, which cannot be explained by Bolinger's definition and requires a more elaborate definition.

This type of utterance might appear as a strong assertion rather than intensification. This is reasonable and should be taken under consideration when constructing a new definition for what intensifiers do. If we were to remove *be'emet aval be'emet* from (3), we would still get a sentence with an assertion of truth. The basic content of the proposition is *ein li tluna* ('I don't have a complaint'), to that, the speaker adds *axat aflu* ('even one') which is an assertion regarding the basic content being true. The speaker does not even have the minimal number (one) of complaints. On top of that, the speaker adds *be'emet aval be'emet* which seems to simply strengthen their stance regarding the truthfulness of the proposition's basic content.

Here's another example:

4. le- tsa'arxa ve-le- tsa'ari, ha-snif ha-palestina'i kayam **me'od**
for-your-regret and-for-my-regret the-branch the-Palestinian exists very
'Unfortunately for you and for me, the Palestinian branch very much exists'
(<http://tinyurl.com/ohq32nt>)

In this case, with a predicate like *Kayam* ('exists'), there is no available scale, since the predicate is binary. The speaker's intention in this utterance is rather clear – describing the Palestinian branch as something they and the interlocutor are extremely not pleased with. However, the description of scaling up a meaning does not seem to fit with what has been explicitly said.

In addition, this utterance would carry the same meaning even without the use of the word *me'od* ('very'); this means that it must have a different role in this utterance (and other similar utterances).

Like in the case of *very true*, examples (3) and (4) above show that referring to intensifiers as modifying scales, whether pre-existing ones or ones that are constructed ad-hoc, does not encapsulate their effect and is an insufficient definition because it misses an important aspect of intensifier use. Consider the following:

5. To be honest, here's why I **really** hate analytics and big data
(<http://tinyurl.com/bx4t9fn>)

6. I **really** love your designs
(<http://tinyurl.com/b9ywmb5>)

As demonstrated in (5) and (6), we often use strong expressions and even extreme expressions in our everyday life. It is not uncommon to hear a speaker saying s/he '*hates*' something, when in reality their emotion is not so strong.

I suggest that often such strong language is a clear exaggeration meant to express a strong subjective stance, rather than an objectively strengthened meaning. It seems hard to believe that in (6) the speaker loves the designs more than if s/he would have just said *I love your designs*; the function of the addition of the intensifier is not so much to scale the semantic meaning of *love* upwards, as it is to show the speaker's strong commitment to her utterance. The same applies to (5), where the speaker would still hate the things he mentioned, even without using an intensifier. In (5) the use of *to be honest* in the beginning of the utterance already moves us towards an interpretation of the intensifier as a subjective marker of stance and/or commitment.

I propose that frequent exaggerated use, even of relatively strong items, such as *hate*, creates a weakened meaning of the lexical item, *hate*, for example. In

order to convey the original, rather strong literal meaning, speakers revert to using intensifiers ('*I really hate her with all my heart*').

I suggest that when using expressions like *really hate* or *very true*, speakers do not necessarily enhance the linguistic meaning of *hate/true* on a scale of hatred/truth. Instead, they might be doing one of the following two things – 1) express strong commitment to their claim; 2) try to prevent the natural weakening of the literal meaning which is the result of frequent use of the word or frequent overstatements.

These are discourse functions we must account for in addition to the well-recognized enhancement on a scale. While they have been ignored by the literature on intensifiers, I believe they are crucial for a full definition of the functions intensifiers fulfill.

I am proposing that intensifiers have 3 functions:

1.
 - a. A literal, objective upscaling of the linguistic meaning. *Very good* is objectively (also) stronger than *good*.
 - b. An upscaling of the commonly ad hoc discourse interpretation triggered by linguistic expressions, when this interpretation is weaker than the linguistic meaning. *Very good* means something similar to 'good', since *good* by itself would have been adjusted to a lower value.
2. Express a speaker's strong stance, which confers strength on the proposition as a whole. *Very good* means the speaker is highly invested in the utterance.

The literature I have reviewed focuses on function (1a), while I would hereto like to focus on functions (1b) and (2) as well.

I therefore propose that a new account for what intensifiers **actually** do is needed. Such an analysis must be based on naturally occurring discourse examples.

My thesis is an attempt to lay the groundwork for such an account by investigating the use of intensifiers in natural discourse. I would like to reach a generalization that will describe the different features, functions and typology of intensifiers, using a proper investigation of intensifiers' sources and natural discourse usage.

We now move to an introduction to the second aspect here examined, the diachronic/typological sources of intensifiers.

1.3 Typology

An investigation of the etymological sources of intensifiers and their grammaticization processes can provide insights regarding their discourse and cognitive function.

Heine and Kuteva (2002) argue that intensifiers evolve from expressions belonging to the semantic fields of either 'truth' or 'bad'. Indeed, these sources can account for many intensifiers, such as:

7. She's **really** beautiful

(<http://tinyurl.com/mxrf58j>)

8. I'm **terribly** sorry but this needs to be said

(<http://tinyurl.com/mm4rd26>)

However, there is a variety of intensifiers which do not seem to fit into these two categories, such as the following:

9. hi **ma-ze** metuka

she (is) **what's this** sweet

She's **so** sweet

(<http://tinyurl.com/khwcyri>)

10. Nursing made **incredibly** easy

(<http://tinyurl.com/mw3qggd>)

The intensifier in example (9) is originally the WH expression *ma-ze* (*what's this*), and in (10) the intensifier is an adverb derived from an adjective expressing astonishment; both do not fit into the semantic fields Heine and Kuteva mentioned. The existence of additional source expressions calls for an expansion of the number and nature of the semantic categories that may evolve into intensifiers. The semantic sources of intensifiers can firstly be used as clues to reconstructing the path of grammaticization of intensifiers. But in addition, they can testify to the end-meaning/function of intensifiers. Since speakers don't mobilize forms randomly when they wish to convey new functions, these source expressions must stand for aspects of intensification, and can thus help us uncover the many aspects of intensification.

1.4 Summary

Previous definitions of intensifiers and their function account for many cases of intensifier use in natural discourse; however, as I have demonstrated, these definitions do not account for other and all cases. A revised definition of what intensifiers are is needed— one which will include not only the objectively scalar intensification aspect of the intensifier function, but also the discourse function of expressing a higher commitment to what is said. I would like to explore the nature of intensifiers by examining natural discourse examples. Care will be taken to refer to intensifiers which have evolved from very many different sources, so as to revise the typological claims, as well as to reach a more thorough understanding of the function of intensifiers.

In the following chapters of this thesis I will introduce additional categories for intensifier sources and provide grammaticization paths for some of these categories. This will allow me to arrive at a more comprehensive definition of the function of intensifiers in natural discourse.

Chapter 2

Functions – Strengthening and Stance

In the previous chapter I have presented the functions of intensifiers as follows:

1.
 - a. A literal, objective upscaling of the linguistic meaning. *Very good* is objectively (also) stronger than *good*.
 - b. An upscaling of the commonly ad hoc discourse interpretation triggered by linguistic expressions, when this interpretation is weaker than the linguistic meaning. *Very good* means something similar to 'good', since *good* by itself would have been adjusted to a lower value.
2. Express a speaker's strong stance, which confers strength on the proposition as a whole. *Very good* means the speaker is highly invested in the utterance.

My suggestion is that historically speaking, (1a) and (1b) are the initial functions of intensifiers. Function (2) has grammaticized out of a pragmatic implicature conveying subjective stance strengthening. Initially it only

accompanied the objective strengthened meaning, but through frequent use, it turned into an encoded part of intensifiers' meaning/function.

In other words, first there was the grammatical strengthening option, in examples like:

11. This tree is **very** tall

This strengthening simply means that the predicate in the utterance is stronger for the subject of the proposition, than for other similar subjects this predicate can be used on. This is function (1a). Later, the strengthening widened its modification scope and could also modify predicates in subjective propositions:

12. This walk is **very** difficult

In this case, the strengthening modifies a predicate which is used in a subjective manner. The walk is difficult for the speaker; it could be a short walk which all other people around the speaker do not find difficult.

Once the subjective use of intensifier came to into being, an implicature could be generated based on it: a speaker must strongly feel about this predicate if s/he is strengthening it. Since most of the utterances with subjective strengthening would have the same propositional content as the same sentences without strengthening, the strengthening conveys the speaker's strong feeling regarding that predicate. I suggest that this conversational implicature is then grammaticized, and becomes one of the bona fide functions of intensifiers. For example:

13. The Forever Home Project: Decorating a **Completely** Empty Space
(<http://tinyurl.com/lbfogbo>)

The addition of the intensifier in this proposition does not objectively or subjectively strengthen the predicate *empty*. Emptiness is a gradable predicate with a closed upper scale (Kennedy 2007). This means that once something is *empty*, it cannot be objectively emptier. An interpretation where

the space is **subjectively** emptier also does not seem plausible; what would that mean exactly?

The only remaining interpretation available is that the strengthening is of stance, the speaker stressing his/her commitment to the proposition. Support for this interpretation can be found in the title of the article this example was taken from (example 13 is part of the sub-title):

14. Our 5 step process for designing an empty space

(<http://tinyurl.com/lbfogbo>)

This title article obviously refers to the same space, once as *empty* and another time as *completely empty*. This means that the difference between the two is not of upscaling a predicate, but the speaker's stance.

Later on, I believe, new intensifiers could start off with function (2), by analogy. The function of subjective intensification already existed, and speakers could simply add new intensifiers for that purpose. Once there were new intensifiers which serve as subjective strengtheners, they could also be used for objective intensification; since all intensifiers share the ability to be used for both functions.

The more existing grammaticized intensifiers become bleached (Traugott 1988, Sweetser 1988, Bybee 2003), the higher their frequency gets and the longer they are used in discourse. 'Bleaching' means that the intensifier loses its strength and has a weakened meaning. Once that occurs, the intensifier cannot perform its objective, strengthening function, and there is a need for new intensifiers to be employed. New intensifiers, naturally, convey stronger stances than the stances of the older, bleached intensifiers. Since they are novel forms that are less familiar and less worn out, and they carry a stronger effect.

New intensifier forms can start off with function (2) of intensifiers, since it is a more pragmatic function, which is easier to cancel. Only when the frequency of the innovative intensifiers rises and they become fully grammaticized as intensifiers – do they also get the (1a) and (1b) functions.

The last claim is contradictory to the accepted assumption regarding the unidirectional of grammaticization – from objective to subjective (Traugott and Dasher 2002). However, it does seem motivated when we examine the use of intensifiers in natural discourse.

In this chapter I will review existing definitions for the function of intensifiers in more detail, elaborate on the Problematization of these definitions and suggest my own account of intensifiers' function in natural discourse.

2.1 Predicate strengthening

Strengthening predicates is the most prominent feature of intensifiers. Within this type of strengthening, we can identify two sub-types of intensification.

2.1.1 Objective Strengthening

When the intensifier operates objectively on a predicate it moves it higher on a scale. We can see this effect in (11) below:

15. Elyport Tower Building: New Way to Build a **Very** Tall Building
(<http://tinyurl.com/neha45f>)

In this example, we see a description of a construction method which enables the construction of buildings higher than the conventional 'tall buildings', meaning – these new buildings are objectively taller. On a scale, regular buildings can appear as the following:

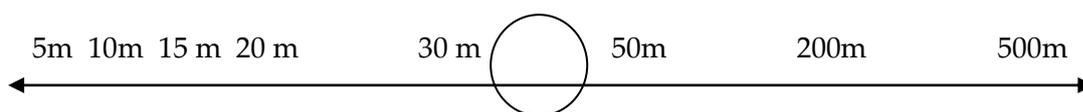


Figure 3: Regular Building Height

Then an objectively *very tall* building would appear further along the scale. The intensifier simply moves the predicate along a scale in an objective manner; that is, 'X is more P than other objects that are also P'.

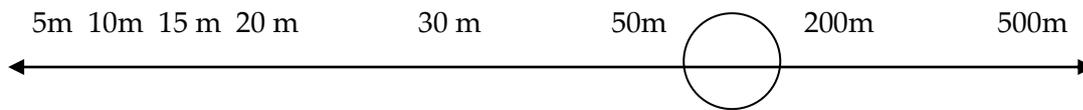


Figure 4: Tall Building Height

2.1.2 Strengthening Weakened Predicates

In natural discourse, predicates often get adjusted to a lower value than their full/dictionary meaning. The reason for that can be frequent use, or the fact that speakers automatically adjust what they understand as hyperbolic or overstated utterances. For example:

16. **All** the townspeople are asleep

(Lasersohn 1999)

In this example, the interlocutor usually understands that the speaker does not refer to each and every one of the townspeople, but makes a general claim.

The strengthening operates on a weakened predicate, i.e. a predicate whose meaning in discourse is weaker than its original meaning. Weakening (or *bleaching* (Traugott 1988, Sweetser 1988, Bybee 2003)) occurs to predicates in frequent use.

For example:

17. I am happy for you

One can utter (17) without meaning that s/he is feeling happiness and bliss, as compared to a happy person who has won the lottery, is on a great vacation abroad or anything of this sort. In this case, the speaker's intention can be that what they heard seems positive to them and they approve of it. It seems apparent that this weakening must have taken place due to speakers' perception of the original use of this relatively strong expression as an

overstatement, since the reasonable state of affairs imagined by the hearer does not match the strong predicate chosen by the speaker.

In these cases of weakened predicates, we can say that the weakening process moves them along a scale in the opposite direction of where intensifiers move predicates.

Original:



Figure 5: Happiness, original

Weakened in discourse:

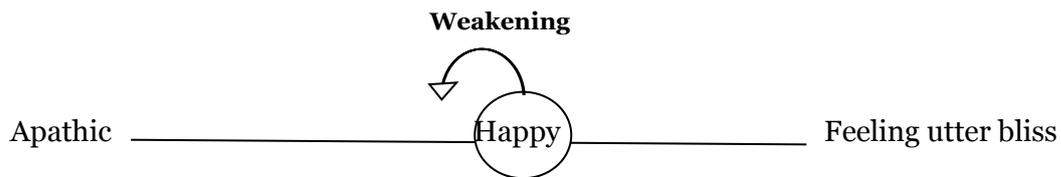


Figure 6: Happiness weakened with use

What intensification does in these cases is bring the predicate close, or back to its original place on the scale; strengthening its discourse interpretation, rather than its original use.

18. I am **really happy** for you

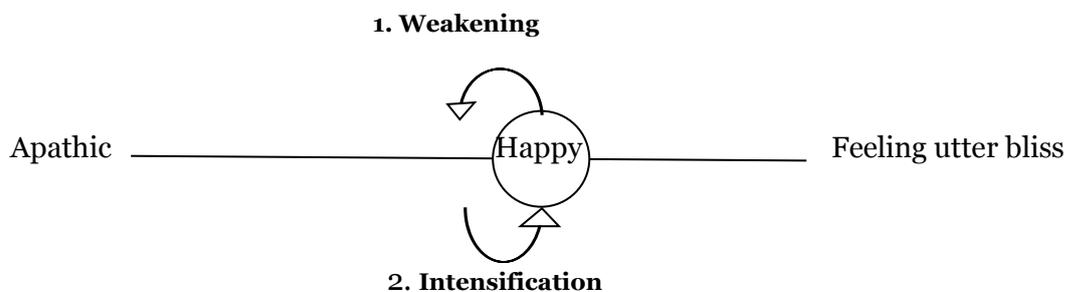


Figure 7: Happiness with intensification

The act of the intensifier is basically the same as in the previous case, where the predicates are not weakened. However, the result is different. With the weakened predicates, we basically get the original predicate meaning or something close to it and not a predicate stronger than the original meaning of the predicate.

Intensifiers work as strengtheners on these two kinds of predicates, and this definition is the only one found in the literature (Bollinger 1972, Quirk et al. 1985, Alternberg 1990, Biber et al. 1999).

2.1.3 Problem – Predicate Not Strengthened

A further examination of intensifier use in natural discourse presents us with examples where the predicate does not undergo strengthening:

19. Very nice hotel in a **very** dead downtown

(<http://tinyurl.com/qgzpb9f>)

20. Very nice hotel in a dead downtown

'Death' is a binary concept. One can either be dead or not be dead (excluding zombies, of course); in the case of (19) the intensifier *very* does not strengthen the predicate *dead* and it remains the same as in (20) – without the intensifier. There still is strengthening in the utterance. However, it is actually of the speaker's stance; his/her commitment to the truthfulness of the predicate/utterance. One may object that *dead* in (19) is in fact interpreted as a graded adjective, say with the meaning of 'boring', which can, then, be objectively strengthened. But this is clearly not the case in (21):

21. We see that Gale has been shot through the eye and he is **very** dead

(<http://tinyurl.com/ob8jv52>)

22. We see that Gale has been shot through the eye and he is dead

In (21) for sure the intensifier does not strengthen the predicate, which is already at the edge of a scale. The intensifier does add to the speaker's stance, however, which it strengthens. I propose the function of *very* in (19) is no different.

A scale showing a predicate being strengthened is not useful in these cases like it was with (18). We need another way to express the strengthening that does take place in such utterances, since these are common uses of intensifiers.

2.2 Stance Strengthening

Du Bois (2007) defines stance in the following manner:

"Stance is a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field"

In cases like (18), we do feel that there is strengthening. However, the scale showing a predicate being strengthened does not express the strengthening that takes place. This strengthening feels subjective, rather than objective. The event the speaker describes is not different than the same event without an intensifier; the difference is in the speaker's attitude towards it. In some cases, then, the subjective strengthening is implied by the use of an intensifier, and is an addition to an objective strengthening:

23. You have to be careful, **bloody** careful. It's so easy to unlock a door by magic, but in public you have to remember to take out the key and lock it back up again...

(<http://tinyurl.com/lc99rk2>)

In other cases like (19) and (21), an objective strengthening is impossible or irrelevant - since they are binary predicates, and the subjective strengthening of stance is the only effect of the intensifier.

This type of subjective strengthening is a pragmatic result of the originally semantic/coded strengthening meaning an intensifier bears. First the intensifier affects predicates by strengthening them objectively; i.e. making them objectively stronger than the same predicates described without an intensifier. Very often, such an objectively strengthened predicate is accompanied by a subjectively strong stance (interest in the topic, conviction about the point made, a strong wish to persuade the hearer, etc). A more general concept of strengthening may then become the coded meaning of an intensifier, which is why it can later be used to subjectively strengthen the speaker's utterance.

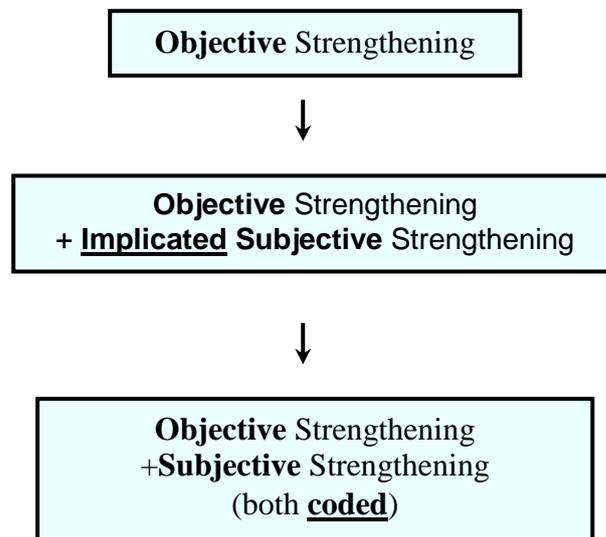


Figure 8: Unidirectional grammaticization

It is worth noting that subjective strengthening can have a wider scope than that of the encoded scope of the strengthened predicate. Since the speaker is more involved in the proposition, his use of the intensifier can modify non-scalar predicates or simply appear as exaggerations which cannot be understood literally.

This is how I suggest that the intensifiers grammaticized from objective to subjective strengthening through the generation of pragmatic implicatures, gradually becoming part of the very meaning of the intensifier. The process is

described by Traugott and Dasher (2002) and others as a "unidirectional grammaticization" shift, i.e., a shift that can change from some form or meaning X to another, Y, but not in the other direction, from Y to X. A very common unidirectional change observed by Traugott (1988) shifts an objective (and concrete) meaning into a subjective (and metaphoric) one. According to Traugott, a change from a subjective to an objective meaning is hardly ever attested.

2.2.1 Two Scales

To express this double strengthening effect, we will need to add another scale – a stance scale, which will operate in parallel to the predicate strengthening scale.

In the case of (19), the scales would be as follows:

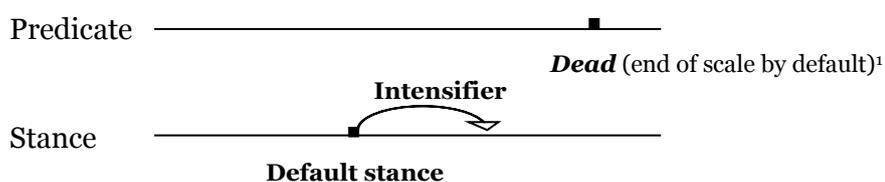


Figure 9: *Dead* in (19) - two scales

In the case of (21), we get an identical set of scales:

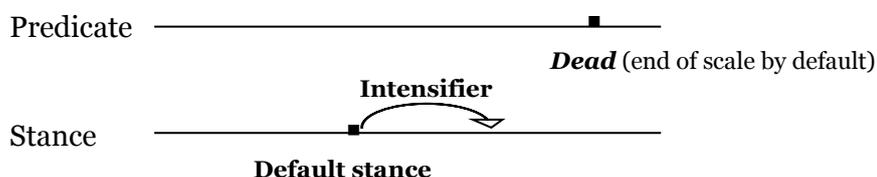


Figure 10: *Dead* in (21) - two scales

In the case of (18), the strengthening also seems only to affect the stance scale. In addition, it does not seem as if the same utterance without the intensifier

¹ There might also be some objective strengthening in this case. However, I believe that a speaker can produce such an utterance without comparing a specific dead town to others and mainly wants to strengthen their stance.

would be a description of a situation where the interlocutor should be less careful.

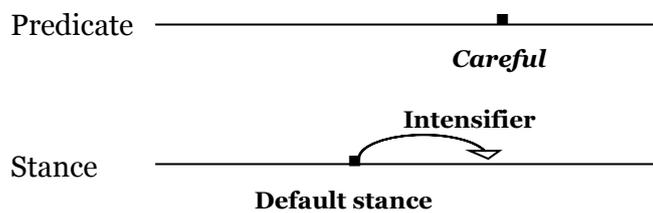


Figure 11: *Careful* in (23) – two scales

Even though *careful* is not the edge of the scale and is not a binary predicate (which seem to be more resistant to objective strengthening), it appears to stay put on the scale.

Having two scales allows us to express all intensifier functions – both the predicate strengthening (whether it is a contextually weakened predicate or not), and the stance strengthening. We can use the two scales when checking the effect of intensifiers in all examples, even when the intensification only affects predicate or stance.

2.2.2 Stance-Only Strengthening

We have established two types of strengthening:

- Objective – the strengthening of a predicate. It can be a predicate becoming stronger than its original meaning; or a predicate which has been weakened in discourse moving closer to its original meaning.
- Subjective – a strengthening of stance alone, in which the predicate does not seem to be strengthened.

A likely explanation for the evolution of the subjective type of intensification is a process of grammaticization of pragmatic implicatures into a coded meaning. This grammaticization has enabled the co-existence of these two scales, so the intensifier effect is later on either objective, or subjective, or

both. Had the subjective meaning not been coded, we would not be able to see examples like (21), where the intensification is subjective only.

2.3 Symbiotic Scales – "Backwards" Grammaticization

Traugott and Dasher (2002) describe grammaticization as a unidirectional process, moving from objective to subjective meanings, but typically not the other way around. With respect to the grammaticization process of intensifiers this means that a new intensifier must first function as an objective strengthener. Only after establishing its intensifier status – being used as an objective strengthener in discourse – and following its grammaticization into a fully fledged intensifier, will it be able to shift to intensifying subjectively as well.

This analysis of the grammaticization process (as displayed in figure 8 above) seems to fit the specific process of intensifier grammaticization where we have a clear division of objective versus subjective uses. Having the objective, more literal, use of intensifier precede the subjective, more stance-expressing, use seems like a reasonable and suitable analysis. However, when we examine instances of new intensifier use in natural discourse, we often encounter examples which may lead us to re-consider this analysis.

Similarly to predicates, intensifiers too may get weakened/bleached with time and frequent use in discourse. For that reason newer (or less frequent) intensifiers are stronger stance-wise (subjectively). The fast rate with which intensifiers get weakened/bleached and new ones arise testifies to the subjective nature of intensification. Subjective meanings need to be renewed more often. However, this proposal must be left to future research.

In Hebrew, for example, *mamaš* (*really*) is a relatively older intensifier, very frequently used in discourse; *xaval al ha-zman* (literally: 'it's a shame to waste the time') is a newer intensifier (Ariel, 2008), whose effect is mainly strengthening of the subjective kind:

24. hu **mamaš** gavo'a

He's *mamaš* tall

25. hu gavo'a še **xaval al ha-zman**

He's tall that *xaval al ha-zman*

Several Hebrew speakers with whom I have consulted noted that the person described in (25) should be taller than the one described in (24), which suggests that newer intensifiers are stronger than older ones. Speakers are able to say which is stronger, but not to explain whether the difference in strength is objective or subjective.

I suggest that in the case of (24) and (25) the difference is actually only in stance. *Mamaš*'s subjective aspect has been weakened by frequent use and, though it does strengthen the predicate objectively, it does not contain any special stance features. *Xaval al ha-zman*, due to its relative newness, is mainly effective as a subjective strengthener, expressing the speaker's commitment to the predicate and the utterance. The fact that the speaker chooses to use a newer intensifier also adds the effect of subjective strengthening. Also note that (24) is stronger than *hu meod gavo'a* 'He is very tall' (to my judgement), *meod* 'very' being an even older intensifier. The strength of any intensifier is relative to the strength of other existing intensifiers (further discussion in §3).

Another example where a newer intensifier is interpreted as stronger is:

26. Hainu šikorim **me'od**. Lo **retsax**, aval **me'od**.

we+were drunk **very** not **murder**, but **very**

'we were very drunk, not insanely drunk, but very'

(Private conversation, 19.12.13)

We see that the speaker uses two intensifiers, one must be stronger than the other; otherwise the utterance would be infelicitous. *Me'od* is an older intensifier which has weakened with use, and *retsax* is a newer one, which is therefore subjectively stronger. To interpret this utterance the interlocutor must create an ad-hoc scale of drunkenness and place *retsax* above *me'od* on that scale – as both objectively and subjectively stronger.

Following Ariel 2010 (176-179), we can use what Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005) describe as a 'concessive repair' in order to interpret what we see in (26). They describe concessive repair as "a two-part constructional schema which English conversationalists deploy for the retraction of their own overstatements and exaggerations. The schema invokes a 'stronger than/weaker than' scale, which allows speakers to concede exceptions but at the same time preserve the essence of their initial description" (p.256). Similarly, the speaker in (26) makes a statement: *hainu šikorim me'od* then makes a concession: *lo retsax*, this puts both intensifiers on a scale, where *me'od* is lower than *retsax* and *retsax* is stronger than what the speaker wishes to express. Then the speaker concedes with what Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson refer to as a 'revised statement': *aval me'od*, this statement is not explicitly revised, since it is the same *me'od* the speaker initially used; however, putting it in an ad-hoc scale with *retsax* clarifies its status as a less strong, and pragmatically *me'od* is revised. The objective strength of the newer intensifier is achieved through implicature, due to the concessive repair construction, which forces an ad-hoc scale (Ariel (2010, Pp. 176-179)). I believe that the initial strengthening the newer intensifier encodes – is only the subjective kind.

This type of structure can actually be used to test pairs of intensifiers in order to check which is stronger. According to (24) and (25) *xaval al ha-zman* is stronger than *mamaš*. If we place both in a concessive repair structure as in (26), we see that only when the stronger intensifier is posited as the 'concession' the utterance is felicitous:

- i. Hu **mamaš** gavo, lo gavo **xaval al ha-zman**, aval **mamaš**
gavo
He (is) **mamaš** tall, not tall **xaval al ha-zman**, but **mamaš**
tall
- ii. ???Hu gavo **xaval al ha-zman**, lo **mamaš** gavo, aval
He (is) tall **xaval al ha-zman**, not **mamaš** tall, but

gavo **xaval al ha-zman**
tall **xaval al ha-zman**

Older intensifiers are still functional as objective strengtheners; even when their subjective strengthening is weakened/bleached, which is why it is reasonable to recruit new intensifiers for expressing a stronger stance. I suggest that new intensifiers encode a strong stance and via implicature – objective strength as well. The fact that a speaker chooses to use a newer intensifier rather than an older one, in itself implies that it is subjectively stronger and that the older, more common, way to express strengthening is simply insufficient.

As the frequency of these new intensifiers rises, the implied objective strengthening becomes an encoded part of the meaning and the intensifier fully grammaticizes. When reaching the same point as intensifiers that started their way as objective strengtheners the subjective strengthening meaning is added via implicature.

The objective and subjective strengthening are functions shared by all grammaticized intensifiers. With frequent use a new intensifier which was added for subjective strengthening (and objective strengthening via implicature) becomes more frequent. It then continues grammaticizing until it becomes a full fledged intensifier and can then be used for all intensifier functions – both objective and subjective strengthening.

The description given in this chapter is of two grammaticization processes; in which grammaticization can occur both from objective to subjective meaning (as I have shown in §2.1 and §2.2) and I suggest the possibility of an alternative path - from subjective to objective meaning (as shown in this section). Both paths yield the same result – grammaticized intensifiers that have both the objective and subjective strengthening coded in their meaning.

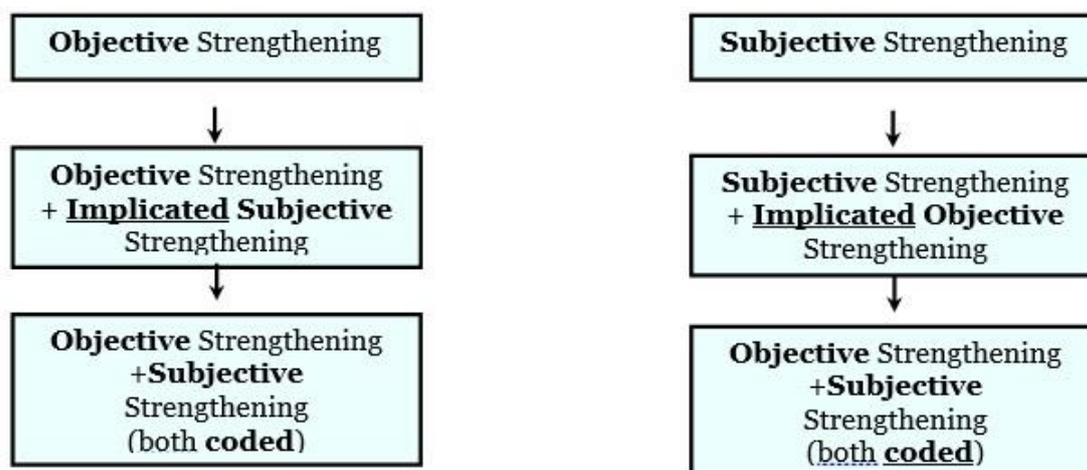


Figure 12: unidirectional and 'backwards' grammaticization

Chapter 3

Semantic Sources

In the previous chapter I have suggested an analysis of the function of intensifiers in natural discourse, based on natural discourse examples. In this chapter, I examine the variety of semantic sources from which intensifiers grammaticize. This is a further examination of the function of intensifiers in natural discourse in that I make an attempt to arrive at generalizations about the discourse motivations behind the use of intensifiers from a different perspective.

Using data collected from Hebrew, English and Russian – I conclude that there are many more sources which languages mobilize in creating intensifiers than those described by Heine and Kuteva (2002). I will show that the following semantic sources have been functional in all three languages: truth, quantity, totality, end of scale, extreme state of affairs, unbelievability and rhetoric. This, along with my suggestions regarding their grammaticization paths, is a step towards understanding their role in discourse and properly describing the typology of this phenomenon.

3.1 Intensifier Sources in the Literature

Locating the semantic sources of intensifiers is a first step towards tracing the grammaticization steps for intensifiers and using them to make claims about the nature of intensifiers. The semantic sources that give rise to intensifiers are useful in understanding the function of intensifiers in natural discourse.

3.1.1 Heine and Kuteva (2002)

Heine and Kuteva (2002) present recurrent source/target pairs of expressions involved in grammaticization processes attested in the languages of the world. They describe intensifiers as a target which often evolves from the following two sources:

- True/Real
- Bad

These sources are supported by many examples of intensifiers we encounter, such as the following, where truth expressions are used to intensify the predicates in (27) and (28), and negative expressions in (29) and (30):

27. She's **really** good at explaining the material

(<http://tinyurl.com/pva94y8>)

28. I **honestly** don't think Miley Cyrus' video of the song "Wrecking Ball" was that bad.

(<http://tinyurl.com/ldzpk2l>)

29. Rak be-Kfar Saba kar **retsax?**
only in Kfar Sabar cold **murder**

'Is it extremely cold only in Kfar Saba?'

(<http://tinyurl.com/odaqz45>)

30. Work is **dreadfully** boring, but pays well

(<http://tinyurl.com/jvwc6um>)

There are, however, additional examples of intensifiers, which do not fit into these categories. I will discuss these in the next section.

3.1.2 Additional Data

Here are some examples of intensifiers which do not fit into the semantic categories specified by Heine and Kuteva (2002):

31. She's **quite** a diva

(<http://tinyurl.com/n53olrh>)

32. Eize frayerim, **še xaval al ha-zman**

What suckers that it's-a-shame on the time

'What big-time suckers!'

(<http://tinyurl.com/ok8q23h>)

33. I received a **totally** unfair feedback

(<http://tinyurl.com/ow9looz>)

34. Miskena, hi betax **maze** sovelet

Poor (fm.sg), she probably whatis suffering

'Poor thing, she's probably really suffering'

(<http://tinyurl.com/ndoh8ye>)

These examples present expressions which function just like the intensifiers in §3.1.1 in that they strengthen the meaning of the predicate they modify and express the speaker's subjective stance. However, the expressions in (31), (32), (33) and (34) do not fit into the 'Bad' and 'Truth' categories proposed by Heine and Kuteva as semantic sources for intensifiers.

3.2 Additional Sources

Having examined numerous natural discourse examples of intensifier use, both online and in naturally occurring discourse, I am able to offer a new set of categories which may give rise to intensifiers. The purpose of my research is

to map out which types of words are prone to be grammaticized into intensifiers. My hope is that we can also learn about the discourse functions of intensifiers based on the source categories I have observed. My categories include the Truth and Bad categories mentioned by Heine and Kuteva, but I divided up the Bad category into two categories in my mapping (the End of Scale and Extreme State of Affairs categories).

The data include examples from Hebrew, English and Russian. The reason for checking several languages is my attempt to arrive at generalizations about the sources of intensifier which are potentially universal, rather than language-specific.

In the next sections (§3.2.1 – §3.2.7) I present the new, richer classification I am proposing. This list of intensifiers includes a few examples for each source category, but is not exhaustive. No doubt additional examples can be found in all three languages. However, I believe that the list of categories faithfully describes the relevant sources for intensifiers in the three languages under discussion.

Note that the classification of source categories is not made according to the earliest etymological source that can be identified, but rather, according to the literal meaning the source expression had immediately preceding the grammaticization into an intensifier. What I am interested in are the semantic categories speakers may mobilize for expressing intensification, thereby potentially adding a new intensifier into the lexicon. For example: *taxles*' original meaning is 'purpose' (from the Yiddish, which in turn borrowed it from the Hebrew *taxlit* 'purpose'). However, when *taxles* was borrowed back to Hebrew from Yiddish its meaning was already changed. It had come to mean something along the lines of 'how things really are' or 'the true essence' of what it modifies. Only the latter meaning is relevant to my classification: It is this meaning that enabled the recruitment of the expression for intensification purposes.

The intensifier *very* in English is such an example. I have chosen to put it in the Quantity category. The reason for choosing the Quantity category is that in Hebrew this item grammaticized to an intensifier from quantity related meaning and I assume that like in the other cases where there is a very similar word in different languages – it will belong to the same category in all languages; or at least that has been the case with the intensifiers I have checked in Hebrew, Russian and English. *Very* can probably also be put in the truth category, since its origin is Latin *veritas* ('truth'), going through the French *vrai* ('true') and borrowed to English. However, within English it did not serve as a truth marker at any point, which means that its grammaticization process in English did not stem from a Truth meaning - I choose not to put it in the Truth category since it did not grammaticize (in English) from a truth-related item. This can be debated, and possibly altered with further thought on how exactly we wish to define a source of a grammaticization process and how far we would like to go with the word etymology.

On the other hand, I was unable to find uses of *very* in a non-intensifier meaning in English; which means that it might have actually been borrowed from French (or another language) where it is used as a truth marker, directly to function as an intensifier. The grammaticization into an intensifier might have already occurred in French. That would mean that it does belong in the Truth category. I will leave this matter open.

3.2.1 Truth

Heine and Kuteva mention this concept as one of the sources for intensifiers. The examples they present are from Hungarian (*igaz* 'true', *igaz-án* 'really') and *Baka* (*ko* 'truly', 'really'). In the table below there are several examples from Hebrew, English and Russian as well.

Hebrew	English	Russian
mamaš	real	реально 'really'
Aškara	literally ²	в натуре 'in nature'
Taxles	actually	Собственно 'own'
be'emet	really	в самом деле 'in the actual case'

Truth markers are used in discourse in the following manner:

35. **Honestly**, I don't know which is scarier

(<http://tinyurl.com/nnsupmd>)

36. **Trust me**, it's not a good look

(<http://tinyurl.com/qyhufjo>)

In these examples, the truth marker is used to express a speaker's strong stance; similarly to one of the intensifier functions I have discussed in Chapter 2. The speaker adds them to an utterance to convince the interlocutor that the utterance contains true, reliable information.

I propose that this type of discourse use may constitute a pre-intensifier stage. In the examples above, the truth marker conveys both its original meaning and some stance strengthening. Once the stance strengthening becomes the truth marker's discourse function, the road to grammaticization as an intensifier is short.

37. Al tenasu et ze ba-ba'it, ze **aškara** mesukan

Don't try that at-home, it(is) **aškara** dangerous

'Don't try that at home, it's **actually** dangerous'

(<http://tinyurl.com/n8bwv5e>)

² This intensifier does not seem to originate in the same truth related semantic meaning. However it does seem to function, or currently (synchronically) have a very similar meaning to *actually* and practically the exact same meaning as its parallels in Hebrew and Russian (Israel, 2002).

38. Five things that **really** smart people do

(<http://tinyurl.com/b522ttv>)

In the examples above, we see fully grammaticized intensifiers from the Truth category. These grammaticize from a marker that expresses the speaker's stance and commitment to the predicate, to a strengthener which can also be used objectively. The fact that the members of this category are initially used as subjective strengtheners - markers of stance, makes them good candidates for grammaticization into intensifiers.

3.2.2 Quantity

The items in this category grammaticized from the semantic domain of quantity. These items reference partial or entire sets/sums. The ability to use a quantity item over a predicate, especially with items referring to an entire set (like *all*) allows speakers to strengthen their stance/commitment to an utterance; or to simply objectively strengthen the predicate they are discussing.

Like in the case of *very*, which is located in the Truth category due to its meaning that preceded its intensifier meaning, I have decided to put *me'od* 'very' in the Quantity category. In the current state of Modern Hebrew, *me'od* does not have a non-intensifier literal meaning, it only serves as an intensifier. However, in some idioms like *be-xol me'odi* ('in my entirety') – it is used in its literal, original meaning – entirety.

Although Heine and Kuteva 2002 do not list quantity and superlative forms as sources for intensifiers, a hint for how this type of source may have entered a grammaticization process of intensifier creation can be found in their book. Heine and Kuteva (2002) describe 'all' expressions as a source for superlatives and cite examples from Amharic, Hamar and Teso. In their examples, *all* combined with a comparative element, turns into a superlative:

Amharic (Ultan 1972:134)

39. *Kə - hullu yamral.*

from- all he:is:handsome

‘He is the most handsome of all.’

(Heine and Kuteva, p.36)

In the categories presented in this chapter, we can see that both quantity and superlative expressions can serve as sources for the intensifier target.

Hebrew	English	Russian
kol kax	all	весь 'all'
me'od	very	очень 'very'
dai	quite	весьма 'somewhat'
-	plenty	-

The process Heine and Kuteva describe above might be a preliminary step for these sources towards the intensifier target. Once the quantity marker *all* is grammaticized into a superlative it gains strength, modifying beyond its original lexical meaning (strengthening), but maintaining that meaning as well. *All* gains the ability to make the predicate it modifies a much stronger one. This process probably occurs via explicature. The speaker refers to everyone in the set that the subject of the utterance in (39) belongs to, and says that the subject is the most handsome in the set. If he's the most handsome in the set, he must be very handsome.

Using the quantifier *all* with a comparative utterance is a way to express a superlative meaning, which is why *all* and similar expressions can later grammaticize to intensifiers, just like other types of superlative expressions.

Similarly, in English, *all* first serves to refer to the entirety of something, as in:

40. My roommate is a slob. **All** the dishes are dirty and who the hell uses 7 spoons in one day?!?!?

(<https://vine.co/v/hiq77euwBod>)

A later development is the option to use *all* without actually referring to the entirety of something, but just to strengthen the predicate it modifies – a hyperbolic use (even though, in many cases – the literal interpretation of *all* is also available):

41. Four Lost Decades: Why the American Politics is **all** messed up.

(<http://tinyurl.com/l5wmwhn>)

Superlatives and intensifiers function in a similar manner. Both strengthen the predicates which they modify. Superlatives strengthen modified predicates to the edge of a scale; intensifiers can strengthen predicates on a scale, possibly moving them to the edge of a scale (but not necessarily), or strengthen the speaker's stance.

When an 'all' expression becomes a superlative, it assumes one of the intensifier functions – strengthening on a scale. This step is not yet a recruitment of *all* as an intensifier, but it makes it a candidate for future grammaticization to an intensifier.

We can observe another possible grammaticization path in Heine and Kuteva's book, we see examples where *one* can be grammaticized into meaning *some*, in examples from Basque, Lezgian, Tamil and others. For example:

Yagaria (Renck 1975: 73)

42. yo' bogo-ko' hano-d-i-e
house one- RES exist-PAST-1:SG-IND
'there is only one house.'

43. yale bogo
 people one
 'some people'

(Heine and Kuteva, p.225)

The grammaticization we see here is not into an intensifier. However, it is of a similar type. First *bogo* denotes the exact number 'one', later it gets an enhanced discourse meaning; moving from meaning 'one', as in 'exactly one' to meaning 'some'. This type of grammaticization is similar to the first step quantity words like *all*, *plenty* etc. undergo on their way to become intensifiers.

3.2.3 Totality

Hebrew	English	Russian
legamrei	completely	-
bixlal	totally	вообще 'in general'
laxalutin	fully	полностью 'fully'
Kol (kax)	all	весь 'all'

First, I would like to note that the expressions all appear both in the Quantity and Totality tables. The reason is that the semantic meaning of these expressions is compatible with both category definitions. It refers both to a large quantity, as in:

44. What are **all** these people waiting in line for?

(<http://tinyurl.com/ky5s83n>)

In addition it has a totality meaning, similar to the meaning of *completeness* for example:

45. Senate GOP: Shutdown isn't **all** bad

(<http://tinyurl.com/lbyt4nb>)

In the example above, the speaker uses *all* together with the predicate *bad* to modify a singular referent – *shutdown* which blocks the quantity interpretation we see in the previous examples. In this case *all* is used in the meaning of *entirely/completely*. These two uses of *all*, which seem to precede the intensifier use of *all* are the reason I have included *all* in both the Quantity and Totality categories. The members of the quantity group later grammaticize into intensifiers and display a uniform behavior:

46. She's **totally** a badass

(<http://tinyurl.com/pl33vcl>)

47. I'm **plenty** happy with mine

(<http://tinyurl.com/okc269b>)

The fact that *all* is compatible with both Quantity and Totality categories is not accidental. There are parallels between the Totality category and the Quantity category. In the quantity category we have different expressions referring to numerosity and *all* is simply the extreme case – the entire content of a group; or, in its weaker, natural discourse use, a large quantity/amount/percentage. The intensifiers in the Totality category are all parallel to *all* (from the Quantity category) in the sense that it refers to a quantity. In the case of the Totality category – all tokens have a similar original meaning as *all* (the entire content of a group). The Totality category consists of tokens with a meaning similar to *all* a meaning of completeness/entirety – *totally, fully, completely* etc. In this sense – we can probably refer to the Totality category as a sub-category of the Quantity category – as it elaborates on a specific case (*all*) that we see in the Quantity category.

In §3.2.2 I have referred to a part of a possible grammaticization path with the example from Amharic where we see that *all* can acquire the superlative function. I believe that a similar process can occur to other expressions that share *all*'s meaning, i.e. the other members of the totality category.

Another possibility is that the second meaning of *all*, the completeness meaning – is a development of the numerosity meaning. These two meanings are similar, but they are not identical. The numerosity meaning of *all* must refer to a plurality; it of course refers to an entire group of referents. The use of *all* to modify a singular referent seems to be a development from the numerosity meaning, similar to the Amharic example where *all* becomes a superlative. In both cases the process we observe is of a meaning strengthening. It is possible that *all* has grammaticized from the Quantity category into the Totality category as part of the process of turning into an intensifier.

3.2.4 End of Scale

Superlatives literally describe the end of a scale, the uppermost boundary of a category. That is the case for some of the examples above, mainly 'the most' expressions. The following table contains several actual superlatives, which also function as intensifiers in certain contexts; mainly when (with a predicate they modify) figuratively describing something as located at the end of scale in order to strengthen the predication over it, not literally meaning to describe it as located at the end of a scale:

Hebrew	English	Russian
sof ha-derech	-	-
be-ofen kitsoni	radical	крайне 'extremely'
Haxi/be-yoter	The –est (the superlative suffix)	самый 'most'
Haxi še-yes/ba-olam	(the) most	самый что ни на есть 'the most there is'

This category is quite similar to the category of superlatives, which I have discussed in §3.2.2. Superlatives literally describe the end of a scale, the

uppermost boundary of a definition. That is the case for some of the examples above, mainly 'the most' expressions. In other examples we saw an extreme meaning which, with implicature, allows us to derive a similar meaning to that of superlatives:

48. A: Ken, ani kvar axrei ha- hitba'asut ha'emet. Ein ma la'asot.

Yes, I'm already after the- (being) bummed the truth. (There's) nothing to do

'yes, i'm not bummed anymore. There's actually nothing to do about that'

B: Ken, ein ma la'asot. Ze **haxi** kore. Ve-ze **haxi** yaxol

lehištanot.

Yes, (there's) nothing to do. It's the **most** happens. And it's **the most** can change

'Yes, there's nothing to do. This totally happens, and it can totally change'

(Facebook chat conversation, 2013)

The superlative in (48) cannot be understood as a regular superlative. B describes things which cannot be placed on a scale with superlatives such as 'the most'. This way B strengthens their contextual meaning. In other examples we see an extreme meaning which, with an implicature, allows us to derive a similar meaning to that of superlatives.

49. haya mamaš ta'im, ha-dag haya **sofani**

was very tasty, the fish was **lethal**

'it was very tasty, the fish was extremely good'

(<http://tinyurl.com/q34qnmr>)

It is not clear that the intensifier in this case is fully grammaticized; it is a predicate on its own, rather than a modifier of a separate predicate. There are similar examples of such intensifiers which are just strong predicates with a meaning of predicate+strengthening. For example:

50. Miss scarlet and the **killer** dress

(<http://tinyurl.com/ombksgb>)

But I believe that this is a positive intensification operator functioning as an adjective modifying the NP *dress*, meaning that the speaker thinks it is extremely pretty. We can think of predicates which can replace *sofani* and

killer in these utterances and can easily find them. *Sofani* can be replaced with *amazing*, *delicious* etc. and *killer* can be replaced with *beautiful*, *amazing* etc. However, the intensifiers used seem to have a different effect, of strengthened predication. A *killer dress* seems higher on a scale than a *beautiful dress*. The predicate that these intensifiers-to - be replace are contextually calculated by the interlocutor, in (47) to something like *very tasty* and in (48) to something like *very beautiful*, the calculated meaning necessarily consists of a predicate+intensification. It is possible that the two expressions above are not yet fully grammaticized intensifiers, but they do contain an intensification operator as we can see from their use in natural discourse. This may later pave the way for their evolution into full-fledged intensifiers. Ariel (2007b) has identified this path for *xaval al ha-zman*.

In sum, these intensifiers operate in a manner parallel to that of superlatives, by raising a predicate to the edge of a scale (conventional or ad-hoc) and thereby strengthening the importance and informativeness level of the utterance for discourse. And indeed, superlatives are a part of this category as they are the grammatical particle which represents the end of a scale and are used as intensifier in discourse (when used in exaggeration, rather than literally).

3.2.5 Extreme State of Affairs

Like the 'End of Scale' category, the intensifiers in this category would also fit into the 'Bad' category described by Heine and Kuteva. This category of intensifiers seems to also operate on a principle of exaggeration. However, unlike numerosity predicates (like the ones in the Quantity and Totality categories) and superlatives, these intensifiers mostly cannot be understood literally when used to modify an utterance:

Hebrew	English	Russian
retsax	killer	убийственный 'killer'
tilim	-	-
paxad	dreadfully	страшно 'scary (adj.)'
mapil	-	отпадный 'makes you fall'
hores	smashing	-
psixi/metamtem	Insane(ly)	обалденный
ba-teruf	insanely	потрясающий 'לולול'
nora	terribly\horribly	ужасно 'horribly'
-	-	чудовищно 'monstrously'
-	(something) wicked	Чертовски 'devilishly'
-	bloody	-
xaval al ha-zman	-	-
Xolani	sick	-
af al	fly (a bit old)	улетный 'fly'
la-mavet	to death	вусмерть 'to death' colloquial
eš	-	отжиг 'burning'
Katlani/sofani	(drop) dead	смертельно 'deadly'

For example:

51. This is **bloody** brilliant!

(<http://tinyurl.com/nle5sub>)

Using *brilliant* to describe something already displays the speaker's positive emotions regarding that thing. The addition of *bloody* cannot be understood literally under almost any circumstances and can only be understood as strengthening *brilliant*. The fact that the intensifier does not have the possibility of a literal interpretation (in which there is no intensification) might make it a more effective strengthener, since strengthening is its only effect and the utterance cannot have an interpretation where *bloody* has a literal meaning. This should be researched further.

52. **Обалденное** тесто для пиццы

Stupefying dough for pizza

'Stupefying pizza dough'

(<http://tinyurl.com/pv35exk>)

It is apparent that pizza dough cannot make its consumers dumber, so we remain with the interpretation that it is extremely good – that new words, describing extreme situations and conditions, must be used in order for the interlocutor to understand the extent of its goodness. This exaggeration strengthens the predicate which seems to be contextually implied – *good*, *delicious* etc. The literal meaning of the intensifier and its use in context create a dissonance which can only be resolved by interpreting the predicate as containing an intensifier in addition.

3.2.6 Unbelievability

'The Extreme State of Affairs' and 'Unbelievable' categories are semantically similar, but differ in the speaker's construal. The main difference between them is that the 'Unbelievable' category presents an exaggeration which the speaker construes as impossible. It can, maybe, be viewed as a development, an escalation of the 'Extreme State of Affairs' category, which was created as a

result of the speaker's desire to emphasize their commitment to an utterance, or the scalar strength of the predicate s/he discusses.

Hebrew	English	Russian
še-lo haya	-	небывалое 'unprecedented'
ein dvarim kaele	-	нечто необыкновенное 'something out of the ordinary'
haxi_še-yeš\ ba-olam ³	most	самый что ни на есть 'the most there is'
lehafli	incredibly	Неимоверно 'incredibly'
še-ze lo hegioni	unbelievably	Невероятно 'unplausible'

Examples where intensifiers from the 'Unbelievable' group appear usually have the effect of a proposition that is necessarily an exaggeration meant to make a point. For example:

53. Kerry vows '**unbelievably** small' strike on Syria
<http://tinyurl.com/mrx293l>

The intensifier in (53) adds a slightly ridiculous dimension to the speaker's utterance, which makes it sound weird. In a way, the use of the intensifier in this case practically creates the effect of a hedge which the speaker uses as a reservation, to illustrate the US government's lack of desire to strike on Syria, or to sound less threatening when speaking of such a strike. In most (or even all) cases of using these intensifiers we get utterances that are in fact a contradiction, not a mere exaggeration or an unlikely situation in the case of being understood literally. Obviously, intensifiers are lexical items which have gone through a process of grammaticization into a new category where they

³ This intensifier seems to belong to a different category which contains superlatives, maybe. However, I have decided to include it in this category due to the fact it is most often used in exaggeration, like the other intensifiers in this category. The superlative use is its literal meaning; however, I do not have a 'superlative' category to put it in. I have decided to rely on its discourse use when putting it here.

are not to be understood in their original literal meaning. However, I am now discussing the sources from which intensifiers stem; and if we look at the items in the 'Extreme State of Affairs' category, we will see that these are strengtheners which are possible states of affairs when used literally, extreme – but possible. In the 'Unbelievable' category, the lexical items can never serve as a correct depiction for any state of affairs; their literal use is not a felicitous description of any situation.

3.2.7 Rhetorical

This category contains WH expressions which have grammaticized into intensifiers. This category has not been described in the literature on Intensifiers I have previously encountered and cannot fit into the existing classification ('Bad' and 'Truth').

Hebrew	English	Russian
ma/ma ze	what a	что за 'what kind of...'
eize	-	ну и 'nu and...'
eix	how	Как 'how'

The intuition regarding this category is that it contains an altogether different type of intensifiers, which underwent a rather different path of grammaticization. A possible explanation for this intuition could be the fact that these expressions are mostly used in independent utterances which are separate from the modified predication and thus enhance it via implicature, at first, as I show below.

It is reasonable to assume that the grammaticization path of WH expressions into intensifiers passes through a rhetorical question stage, where it loses its inquisitive features (completely or partly). For example:

54. Jarvis: [Thor has just thrown a thunderbolt on Iron Man] Power to four-hundred percent capacity.

Tony Stark: **How about that!**

(The Avengers (2012), movie)

In this example Tony Stark expresses his amazement/interest/appreciation of what he has seen/has been told. Even though there is a use of a question particle, and the utterance is actually formed as a question – it is an exclamation, completely rhetorical, and does not require an answer in any context (except for 'wise guy' replies (Ariel 2002), which could refer to the literal function of the utterance – a question).

Rhetorical examples like the one above might be an intermediate stage of WH particles, which later allows them to further lose their inquisitive features and become full-fledged intensifiers, as in:

55. Ani mitga'aga'at la- mora le- sport, hi **maze** xamuda
I miss the- teacher the- sports she(is) **what.is.this** cute
'I miss the sports teacher, she's so cute'
(<http://tinyurl.com/m9aann3>)

Though smaller in number than other intensifier categories I describe in this thesis, the Rhetorical intensifiers appear in all three languages I have examined and it is reasonable to assume that this category appears in other languages and has a similar grammaticization path in all these languages. It is by far the category that involves the most complex grammaticization path from an independent utterance to a full-fledged syntactic modifier.

3.3 The Life Cycle of Intensifiers

The tables above contain only a partial list of intensifiers from the variety attested in natural languages. This large variety of sources and tokens raises the question – why are so many intensifiers needed in each language? Basically, they have the same functions in discourse as described in Chapter 2, so it's puzzling why such a large variety of forms is found. We do not normally have so many alternatives to express more or less the same function. In the next sub-sections (§3.3.1-§3.3.3) I will discuss different aspects of the intensifier system and try to answer this question.

3.3.1 Recruiting New Expressions

The phenomenon of frequent and multiple processes involving new intensifiers within the same language has been discussed in the literature. Traugott and Hopper (2008) describe the process of intensifier renewal as follows:

“A vivid example of renewal is the recent history of English intensifiers (words such as *very* in *very dangerous*). At different times in the last two centuries the following among others have been fashionable: awfully, frightfully, fealfully, terribly, incredibly, really, pretty, truly (cf. *very*, which is cognate with French *vrai* 'true') (Stoffel 1901): Even in the written language, *very* often alternates with such words as *most*, *surprisingly*, *extremely*, *highly*, *extraordinarily*. Over time, however, we can expect the choices to be reduced, owing to specialization. Intensifiers are especially subject to renewal, presumably because of their markedly emotional function. They are unusual in undergoing renewal especially frequently.” (p.122)

This description offers a glimpse into the motivation for the existence of several categories and the different frequencies of their members – some more frequent, some with a stronger intensification effect, etc. We can find support

for the suggestion that intensifiers are especially subject to renewal in several examples from Hebrew:

56. E: Az asiti kni'ya be 780 šekel
So I made (a) purchase in 780 šekels
'So i've purchased products for 780 šekels'
M: Wow! Ze **million!**
Wow! That (is a) million!
'Wow! That's a **million!**'
E: Mamaš
really
'It really is'

(Internet chat conversation 29.10.13)

This example is very interesting since it provides a clue for how expressions pattern in the beginning of their grammaticization path (into intensifiers). In this case, note that initially, *million* is only a stance strengthener, without strengthening the proposition's predicate; neither objectively nor subjectively. E explicitly mentions a specific price, and M refers to it as *a million*. Needless to say, the specific sum which E paid cannot be objectively strengthened beyond its linguistic meaning since its referent is an exact number. The strengthening can only be of M's stance, expressing M's thoughts on the price being extremely high. This example provides us with the motivation behind intensification, while not being a fully grammaticized intensifier, yet.

Though there does not seem to be a maximal limit on the amount of intensifiers in language, and additional new intensifiers can always be recruited, it seems that there is a limit on the semantic fields intensifiers can be recruited from. The reason for that is that innovations must be motivated. The literal/source meaning must first enable an ad-hoc interpretation of the target meaning in a suitable context. Only some meanings can reasonably serve as basis for an inferred intensification.

3.3.2 Bleaching

Intensifiers are quite prevalent in natural discourse, especially in young adults' speech as shown in Tagliamonte's (2008) – a corpus study which shows that for Toronto speakers, 36.1% of utterances which allow intensifiers, include intensifiers. Ito and Tagliamonte (2003:265) shows that in British English the rate of intensifier use is 24% and in American English it is 22% (Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005:287). I have not examined the rate of intensifier use in Hebrew within the scope of this thesis; however, it would be reasonable to assume that it is within the range of English intensifier use.

I have previously mentioned the phenomenon of bleaching (Traugott 1988, Sweetser 1988, Bybee 2003) – the weakening of the meaning of terms frequently used in discourse. Intensifiers are meant to strengthen either predicates or the stance of an utterance – their weakening will therefore defeat their purpose. As proof for this process occurring, we can see examples where a weakened/bleached intensifier is repeated in order to increase the intensification effect. For example:

57. Ani **mamaš mamaš mamaš mamaš** meušeret

I'm really really really really happy

(<http://tinyurl.com/nzrrgf6>)

58. Ex-Detroit Mayor Kilpatrick: 'I **really, really, really** messed up'

(<http://tinyurl.com/ne844js>)

There are additional examples like those above in natural discourse, and they support the assumption about bleaching. I have referred to two types of strengthening in §2: objective and subjective. I suggest that the bleaching process intensifiers undergo is of the subjective strengthening, while the encoded objective strengthening remains. A *very sad* person would still be sadder than just a *sad* one, but not as sad as an *insanely sad* person. *Very* is relatively bleached, while *insanely* is newer and subjectively stronger. In addition, the fact that intensifiers recycle incredibly fast (comparing to other elements in the language) would support my theory regarding only the

subjective strengthening bleaching and the objective strengthening remaining. Subjective strengthening is more dynamic and closely related with discourse; therefore it is likely to be more prone to change than the objective strengthening part of intensifiers' meaning.

Once an intensifier loses its strengthening abilities, speakers can duplicate it, thus making it stronger. As in the example above, the predicate would be weaker if the intensifier would only be used once. Reduplication would have the same effect on a newer/stronger intensifier; however this technique is mostly used to strengthen intensifiers which have already undergone some degree of bleaching.

Another option which speakers often choose is 'recruiting' new intensifiers for this function. This, I believe is the cause for the multiplicity and constant renewal of the intensifier arsenal in the lexicon. Once an intensifier has been used by speakers for a while, it starts losing its strengthening effect, as described in Keller (1994). To show interlocutors that their utterance is interesting and worth paying attention to, a speaker can recruit new expressions to express intensification which will have a stronger effect on their utterance. This strategy might be perceived as more effective than piling up intensifiers in the same utterance, since it creates an utterance which is innovative, and thus stands out more. The speaker is then seen as 'colorful'.

3.3.3 Where Do Intensifiers Go – Recycling

Since new intensifiers are constantly created and old ones lose their strength, it would be reasonable to assume that the older, weaker intensifiers simply fade away and gradually disappear from the language. While this is sometimes the case, it is not invariably so. Often enough the "abandoned" intensifiers come back into use at a later period.

Tagliamonte (2008) is a quantitative study of the English intensifier system in Toronto. Tagliamonte checked a corpus of Toronto speakers of various ages, to see which intensifiers are most common for each age group, and how common

they are. Her study shows that there is variation between sexes, but the largest variation is between different age groups. In the group of 20-29 year olds *really* is the most frequent intensifier. The 30-49 year olds have a high frequency of both *really* and *very*. For 50-91 year olds – *very* is dominant.

The dominant intensifiers among all speakers are: *very*, *really*, *so* and *pretty*. The difference between age groups is both in frequency of (general) intensifier use and preference (towards specific intensifiers, which differs for different age groups). For example – a recurrent use of *very* would mark the speaker as being over 50 years old, while a frequent use of *really* would testify to a much younger speaker. Moreover, Tagliamonte's study shows that once an intensifier is introduced into the intensifier system (i.e., it is fully grammaticized) and becomes unique to a specific group of speakers, it may recede to a lower frequency of use in the general population, or even be restricted to that age group. For example, had *very* only been popular in the 50-91 age group, it could have started disappearing altogether. But it is also popular for 30-49 year old speakers, which means that it is probably not going to disappear, or not soon. However, intensifiers can later on make a 'comeback' and become more frequent once again. As we will see next, intensifiers which lose popularity and gradually disappear may remain in reserve for future use.

Tagliamonte quotes Mair's (2004) argument regarding 'static grammaticization' whereby intensifiers which are underused or latent, remain available and can be deployed once again once the context is suitable and appropriate.

This means that an intensifier can become frequent in discourse, and then lose its effect and strength due to bleaching, and later on, once it has been seemingly forgotten– it can be employed once again. It then enjoys the status and effect of a new intensifier. If we examine Tagliamonte's table, displaying a rough overview of the history of some English intensifiers – we see that Mair's suggestion is quite plausible:

Old English	Middle English				Early Modern English			Modern English	
	12 th c	13 th c	14 th c	15 th c	16 th c	17 th c	18 th c	19 th c	20 th c
<i>swipe:</i>	—————>								
<i>well:</i>		—————>							
<i>full:</i> (2 nd to <i>swipe</i>)	1250	—————>							
			<i>right:</i>	->					
			<i>very:</i>	—————>					
							<i>so</i>	—————>	
					<i>pretty</i>	—————>			
							<i>really:</i>	—————>	

The forms *very*, *pretty*, *so* and *really*, which have appeared between the 14th and 19th centuries, have not been constantly dominant in English discourse. However they are still available to us (in different frequencies for different age groups, and with varying popularity at different times, but still a part of the lexicon). This means that intensifiers which "fall from grace", lose their strength and decrease in frequency of use, are not necessarily forever lost. They remain in the intensifier arsenal and can be brought back when the time is right and their temporary weakness is forgotten, and they de-facto function as new intensifiers. As Bybee (2003) notes, bleaching results from habituation – a lesser response to a repeated stimulus. If so, the lack of use cancels out the habituation which accompanied the frequent use.

Tagliamonte sees evidence for that in the Toronto speakers' corpus, showing that there are instances where certain infrequent intensifiers are used, but only barely so. This shows that they exist in the speakers' lexicon, but the current intensifier 'fashion' is what dictates which intensifiers will be most frequent at a given time for a certain age group.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I have presented examples of intensifier sources from three different languages: Hebrew, English and Russian and examples of grammaticization into intensifiers from additional languages as well. I assume

that the mechanism of intensifier grammaticization and recycling is universal, as it appears to be the case for the three languages I have examined. There might be additional intensifier categories in languages I have not checked, and there is more work left to be done on the full process of grammaticization into intensifiers. However, this seems to be a grammatical system employed in a similar manner by speakers of different languages. Languages reflect a speakers' communicative need to strengthen predicates and stances – since the lexicon does not offer enough alternatives neither to express degrees of predicate strengths, nor to mark the content of some utterances as important or worth noticing. These discourse motivations result in a high frequency of intensifier use, which in turn brings with it the inevitable weakening of these intensifiers due to habituation.

Once they are weakened, there are several possible routes of action:

- Using multiple intensifiers, possibly repeating the weakened ones a number of times– an option which is less preferable stylistically.
- Adding entirely new intensifiers into the lexicon from one of the categories discussed in §3.2
- Re-employing one of the intensifiers which have been popular in the past and have experienced a decrease in use due to bleaching.

I should point out that all the processes described in §3.3 occur simultaneously in language. At any given moment languages manifest the following stages of intensifiers:

- Potential intensifiers (which I predict will be members of the categories previously mentioned) used in an ad hoc manner, relying on a supportive context.
- Expressions in early stages of grammaticizing into intensifiers (mainly having the effect of stance strengthening), like Hebrew *million* for example.
- Novel grammaticized intensifiers (which have the ability to strengthen both subjectively and objectively). An example is Hebrew *eš*.

- Familiar intensifiers, which sometimes need strengthening themselves (for stance strengthening purposes, maybe less so when used to objectively strengthen predicates) – for example – *really*.
- Intensifiers which have "fallen from grace" and are lower in frequency, and therefore will probably not be used for subjective types of strengthening or by younger speakers; like English *very*).
- Intensifiers which are not employed in discourse anymore, but can return at a later time when new intensifiers will be needed (like the English *full* from the chart in §3.3.3).

This abundance of different stages an intensifier undergoes and the quick bleaching intensifiers 'succumb' to due to their relatively high frequency in discourse is probably the reason for the large number and variety of intensifiers in natural languages.

Chapter 4

Conclusions

The examination of many instances of intensifier use in natural discourse and the various semantic sources for intensifier grammaticization in English, Hebrew and Russian has been productive in creating a new, improved definition for the various ways speakers use intensifiers and in creating a new typology, elaborating on Heine and Kuteva's (2002) typology. This chapter will include a summary of the findings in this paper and an outline for future research.

4.1 Summary

In this thesis paper, I have set out to find a practical definition for intensifiers; one that is based on natural discourse and on existing definitions. The definition I have arrived at (§1.2) is based on many examples of intensifier use in natural discourse and is built on top of the existing definitions – perfecting them to also include a pragmatic element – how and why they are used by speakers. My definition includes the following function.

1.
 - a. A literal, objective upscaling of the linguistic meaning. *Very good* is objectively (also) stronger than *good*.
 - b. An upscaling of the commonly ad hoc discourse interpretation triggered by linguistic expressions, when this interpretation is

weaker than the linguistic meaning. *Very good* means something similar to 'good', since *good* by itself would have been adjusted to a lower value.

2. Express a speaker's strong stance, which confers strength on the proposition as a whole. *Very good* means the speaker is highly invested in the utterance.

The first part of the definition is compiled of existing definitions and the second part is my addition. The first did not suffice in describing the full extent of intensifier functions (as we have seen in §1.2) and the addition I made creates a better description of the different ways intensifiers are used by speakers.

Another challenge this paper has presented was creating a typology of the semantic sources for intensifier grammaticization. Based on the sources Heine and Kuteva (2002) outlined, I have examined many intensifier examples from English, Hebrew and Russian and created a new typology which applies to all three languages. The original typology contained two categories – Bad and Truth; I have found examples of the Truth category in all three languages and kept that category. In the Bad category - I found distinctions between the items that could fit into this category; thus, I have divided it to three categories: End of Scale, Extreme State of Affairs and Unbelievable (§3.2.4 - §3.2.6). In addition, I found intensifiers which grammaticized from semantic categories Heine and Kuteva (2002) do not mention – Quantity (§3.2.2), Totality (§3.2.3), and Rhetorical (§3.2.7); these categories appear in all three languages (like all other categories).

In addition, I have outlined the different stages intensifiers undergo, both in the process of grammaticization and after it (§3.3). The existence of intensifiers in all these different stages serves as an explanation for there being so many intensifiers. Mainly – new intensifiers are constantly needed to express strong stance/commitment as existing intensifiers get weakened with frequent use.

To conclude, I have reached several generalizations regarding the function of intensifiers in natural discourse and the grammaticization process of intensifiers in various languages.

- Intensifiers can be used to objectively strengthen scalar predicates, subjectively strengthen less subjective predicates or just the speaker's stance (as seen in §2).
- Intensifiers can (and do) grammaticize in the unexpected direction – from objective to subjective (§2.1.1 and §2.1.2).
- However, they can also grammaticize the other way around – from subjective to objective (§2.3).
- There is a large variety of semantic sources from which expressions can start the process of grammaticization into intensifiers, and the pool of possible intensifiers from these semantic fields is virtually limitless (§3.2).
- The frequency and variety of intensifiers in natural discourse is large, and there are more intensifiers utilized at any given moment than speakers need for the purposes of objective/subjective strengthening of predicates or stance (§3.3).
- Given the motivated connection between sources and targets here, it is quite likely that the intensifier categories I have described might be universal and occur (at least partly) in many languages which I have not discussed within the scope of this thesis.

4.2 Further Research

Further research remains to be done, both to develop and support my conclusions and to analyze issues I have not touched upon, re the use of intensifiers in discourse, their grammaticization processes and universal generalizations:

- Whether the different sources of intensifiers (like the ones I have shown in §3.2.2-§3.2.3) have a common denominator should be further

investigated, and can produce more insight in the domain of intensifier grammaticization, what enables it and the functions of intensifiers in discourse

- What motivates the search for a new expression to grammaticize into an intensifier? Is it an individual speaker desire to innovate? Or is there a collective need for new intensifiers at certain points in time?
- What can cause an old intensifier to rise in frequency and become a significant participant in the discourse after it has already been disposed of; Why not create a new intensifier instead?
- A step-by-step study of the grammaticization process of intensifiers is needed to show that the sources can indeed give rise to the targets by a set of plausible pragmatic inferences.
- The relation between the use of intensifiers and hedges in natural discourse is intriguing. Are their functions polar opposites? Is hedging an utterance the opposite function of intensifying it? Are they different actions on a commitment scale of sorts?
- Further mapping of additional types of expressions which are used for intensification is required. There are several ways for a speaker to strengthen predicates in their utterance or their stance; intensifiers are a grammatical type of expression whose function is to strengthen. However, there are additional, often more colloquial, ways of achieving this effect, for example:

- Repetition:

59. I'm **very very** familiar with this place

(<http://tinyurl.com/qzcgmb>)

- Negative Concord:

In the case of multiple negations, the strengthening use is usually referred to as 'misuse' of double-negation, which logically creates an utterance saying the opposite of what the speaker intended. I

believe that the cause for this type of 'misuse' is the desire to strengthen the effect of the negation.

60. *I don't never have no problems* (Green 2002)

To express the speaker's intention, they would have to say *I never have any problems*. However, he simply gets tangled in the multiple negations to a level beyond his ability to calculate how many negations he uttered and how many are needed to make his point. This is a common misuse of negation for the purpose of (negative) stance strengthening.

○ Prolonging of Vowels (both in speech and in writing)

61. Any be-yom aroooooooooox (in writing)

'I'm having a loooooooooong day'

(Facebook post, 29.9.13)

It's worth noting that these examples are more popular and noticeable in writing. However, they occur in speech as well. This should be tested further, however according to my observation it tends to occur less for adults and more for teens and young people

○ Intensifier Constructions

62. Ze **mamaš**, **aval mamaš** muzar

(<http://tinyurl.com/m2m8mow>)

This type of strengthening is similar to the multiplication of strengtheners which I have previously mentioned in this thesis and in this list. The syntactic structure of this type of negation is different and it seems more complex and stylistic than the simple multiplication of the same intensifier. There are several different

strengthening constructions in which different grammaticized intensifiers can be used.

- Stronger Predicates

63. 25 **killer** websites that make you cleverer

(<http://tinyurl.com/ltxgh2f>)

In this example, *killer* probably serves as replacement for another predicate expressing a positive opinion towards these websites. The use of *killer* instead of say – *great*, strengthens the speaker's stance, and might provide subjective upscaling to the 'goodness' level of these websites.

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תקציר

מטרת תזה זו הינה להציע ניסוח מחדש להגדרות הקיימות של מגבירים ושל המקורות הסמנטיים מהם הם נוצרים. בספרות הקיימת בנושא (Bolinger 1972, Altenberg 1990,) האובייקטיביות של מגבירים; אולם, בפועל הפונקציה הסובייקטיבית נפוצה גם היא. אני מציעה כי הפונקציה הסובייקטיבית צריכה להכלל בהגדרה הנוגעת לתפקודם של מחזקים בשיח.

ראשית, אציע הגדרה מחדשת של תפקודם של מגבירים בשיח, אשר מבוססת על נתוני שיח טבעי. לפי הגדרה זו למגבירים יש שלוש פונקציות מרכזיות; שתיים מהן אובייקטיביות ואחת סובייקטיבית: (1) הזזה אובייקטיבית של משמעות לשונית במעלה סקאלה, (2) שחזור של הביטוי הלשוני המקורי שנחלש על ידי שימוש חוזר בשיח, (3) הבעה סובייקטיבית של עמדה/התחייבות של הדובר למבע.

לאחר מכן, אדון במקורות הסמנטיים שמהם מגבירים נוצרים דרך תהליך גרמטיזציה. הספרות הקיימת בנושא (Heine and Kuteva 2002) מציעה שני מקורות בלבד: 'רע' ו'אמת'. הניתוח שביצעתי בדוגמאות משיח טבעי בעברית, אנגלית ורוסית מעלה ש'אמת' הוא אכן מקור סמנטי למגבירים, וכך גם 'רע', אותו אני מחלקת לשני תתי-מקורות – 'מצב עניינים קיצוני' ו'לא אמין'. על קבוצות מקורות אלה אני מוסיפה ארבע קבוצות מקורות נוספות שמצאתי: 'כמות', 'שלמות', 'קצה סקאלה' ו'רטורי'.



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החוג לבלשנות

טיפולוגיה מבוססת שיח של מגבירים

חיבור זה הוגש כעבודת גמר לקראת התואר

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על ידי:

מריה גולדשטיין

העבודה הוכנה בהנחיית:

פרופסור מירה אריאל

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