



## A VARIATIONIST ANALYSIS OF DEGREE ADVERBS AND ADJECTIVES IN COOKING SHOWS

Mariana Hernández Hernández (Hebei Normal University)<sup>1</sup>  
[mariana.herez@outlook.com](mailto:mariana.herez@outlook.com)

**RESUMO:** Este artigo apresenta uma análise de como os chefes de cozinha reproduzem identidades de classe e gênero através da seleção de variantes. O corpus se deriva dos 3,704 adjetivos usados por 12 chefes durante 20 horas de programas de cozinha. Seguindo a classificação de Johnston, Rodney e Chong (2014), os chefes foram classificados em cinco personas culinárias (masculinas: chefe artesão, gastro-sexual, ambientalista; femininas: pin-up e caseira). As duas variáveis estudadas foram 1) advérbios intensificadores (e.g., *really great*, *pretty sticky*) e atenuadores (e.g., *a bit cold*, *a little different*) modificando adjetivos, e 2) adjetivos modificáveis (e.g., *nice*, *beautiful*). Se usou análise multivariada para medir correlações linguísticas (posição sintática e tipo de adjetivo) e sociais (gênero e país), assim como análise qualitativa. A taxa de intensidade (29 %) e os intensificadores mais frequentemente usados (*really*, *very* and *so*) que foram encontrados nos resultados são similares aos encontrados em estudos anteriores sobre advérbios intensificadores (e.g., Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003; Tagliamonte, 2008; Tagliamonte & Roberts, 2005). Os seguintes resultados foram diferentes aos anteriores: (1) a construção *nice and* (que inclui *lovely and* e *good and*) apareceu no quarto lugar, no qual geralmente aparece outra variante (e.g., *pretty* ou *absolutely*); (2) os advérbios atenuadores apareceram bem distribuídos, e parecem estar marcando controle culinário; (3) os advérbios intensificadores que terminam em *-ly* pareceram indicar masculinidade.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Adjetivos. Advérbios intensificadores e atenuadores. Variação linguística. Programas de cozinha.

**ABSTRACT:** This paper presents an analysis of how food celebrities reproduce gender and class identities through variant choice. The corpus (3,704 adjectival heads) is derived from 20 hours of televised cooking shows from twelve food celebrities from Canada, England, and the USA. They were classified in five gendered culinary personas (male: chef-artisan, gastro-sexual, environmentalist; female: pin-ups and homebodies), based on Johnston, Rodney and Chong's categorization (2014). The two linguistic variables that are the focus of this paper are 1) degree adverbs preceding adjectives: intensifiers (e.g., *really great*, *pretty sticky*) and attenuators (e.g., *a bit cold*, *a little different*), and 2) gradable adjectives (e.g., *nice*, *beautiful*). Multivariate analysis was used to measure linguistic (syntactic position and adjective type) and social (gender, country) correlations, as well as qualitative analysis. The intensification rates (29 %) and the three most frequently used intensifiers (*really*, *very* and *so*) found in the results were similar to those found in previous intensifier studies (e.g., Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003; Tagliamonte, 2008; Tagliamonte & Roberts, 2005). The following results were different from previous findings: (1) the *nice and* construction (which included *lovely and* and *good and*) appeared in the fourth place, which is usually taken by another variant (e.g., *pretty* or *absolutely*); (2) attenuators were well distributed, and they seemed to mark culinary control; and (3) *-ly* intensifiers seemed to indicate masculinity.

**KEYWORDS:** Adjectives; Degree adverbs; Linguistic variation; Cooking shows.

<sup>1</sup> Master of Arts in Linguistics from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Master of Arts in Hispanic Studies from Western Michigan University. Spanish and English teacher at Hebei Normal University.



## 1 Introduction

The present paper is based on the results from my master's thesis project in which I explored the cooking shows genre, which had not been addressed –to my knowledge– by intensifier studies (e.g., ITO & TAGLIAMONTE, 2003; TAGLIAMONTE, 2002, 2008; TAGLIAMONTE & ROBERTS, 2005), or by linguistic studies that focused on the food genre (e.g., COTTER, 1994; FREEDMAN & JURAFSKY; 2011; JURAFSKY, CHAHUNEAU, ROUTLEDGE & SMITH, 2014; LAKOFF, 2006; PARADIS & EEG-OLOFSSON, 2013). I analyzed two linguistic variables: (1) intensifiers and attenuators; e.g.:

Intensifiers:

(1.1) “Bread is *absolutely magical*.” [Michael Smith]

(1.2) “This part in between [oyster] is *pretty* and *leafy* and *very edible*.” [Laura Calder]

Attenuators:

(1.3) “the amount of enjoyment I get from eating supper in bed is *almost shameful*.” [Nigella Lawson]

(1.4) “[...] we’re gonna be careful because it’s *kind of heavy*.” [Tyler Florence]

and (2) gradable adjectives; e.g.:

(1.5) Because in the pursuit of happiness *beautiful* things are going to happen in this bowl.” [Jamie Oliver]

(1.6) “a playful menu of light, but *decadent* treats [Giada de Laurentiis]

in the genre of cooking shows from England, Canada, and the USA.

This paper consists of five sections. In section 1, 2 present a summary of the theoretical background on which I supported my methodology and analysis. In section 3, I explain the methodology that I used to classify and code the variables and the extra-linguistic factors (gender and country). In section 4, I present my results and analysis. In



section 5, I discuss the results further. Finally, in section 6, I offer a summary and a conclusion.

## 2 Theoretical background

### 2.1 *Cooking shows and food celebrities*

Although there are many types of cooking shows (e.g., instructional/traditional, travel, contests), I only analyzed the traditional type, in which a food celebrity teaches the viewers how to cook. Despite the rapid shift in values and tastes, this type of program continues to be popular, perhaps because it has achieved to portray cooking as a lifestyle, as a self-expression and a way of acquiring cultural capital (COLLINS, 2008, in NACCARATO & LEBESCO, 2012). An important figure in this portrayal is the food celebrity.

In their study, Johnston, Rodney and Chong (2014) analyzed 98 cookbooks by 44 celebrity chefs and found seven gendered culinary personas. According to the authors, personas are ‘collectively’ created (e.g., by marketing experts, designers, TV producers, etc.) to “resonate with consumers” (p. 3). Interestingly, the authors observe that food celebrities may not be aware of the mechanisms involved in the construction of their personas.

Culinary personas were found to portray and reinforce social hierarchies, a traditional gendered division of labor and other stereotypical gender patterns. For female culinary personas, their culinary creativity and authority lies on their ability to make domestic cooking effortless, quick, delicious, stylish and sensual, in some cases. Homebodies (e.g., Rachel Ray, Ree Drummond) are practical. Their cooking does not require precision, complexity or sophistication, and they are allowed to use ready-made ingredients (e.g., canned, frozen ingredients). They focus on quotidian concerns such as budget and time constrains, and their discourse is characterized by a casual and often humorous style. On the contrary, home stylists (e.g., Martha Stewart, Ina Garten) and pin-ups (e.g., Nigella Lawson, Giada de Laurentiis) prepare foods that reflect an upper-



class status. Their cooking is concerned with sophistication, beauty and sensual pleasure, in the case of pin-ups.

Male chefs reinforce the association of men with professional roles traditionally considered for men, such as the genius-artist (e.g., chef-artisan), the skilled artisan (e.g., gastro-sexual) and the knowledgeable scientist-expert (e.g., the maverick) (p. 13). Chef-artisans (e.g., Emeril Lagasse, Mario Batali) prepare foods that require precision, technicality, and even artistry. They always link themselves with the professional kitchen. Mavericks (e.g., Ted Allen, Mark Bittman), also conform with traits traditionally described as masculine professions, such as science, research-based journalism, etc., which helps them gain distance from the home kitchen. Gastro-sexuals (e.g., Jamie Oliver, Tyler Florence), like metro-sexuals, reject ‘some’ traditional masculine features by adopting ‘some’ behaviors traditionally considered feminine. For example, gastro-sexuals embrace the domestic kitchen and nurturing others, but they signal their masculinity through making allusion to their professional kitchens, business endeavors, and their roles as professional chefs. Self-made (man) personas (e.g., Jeff Henderson) place emphasis on their rise from poverty –usually with no previous formal training– thanks to their culinary skills. Because this element is central to their nature as ‘self-made’ characters, their recipes display craftsmanship. Although this culinary persona can be potentially portrayed by male and female chefs, the authors observed that only one female chef (i.e., Gina Neely) depicted the self-made role.

Lastly, male chefs, especially white male chefs, are found to have a greater range of personas to choose from, with more fluidity and more mobility between the home and the professional kitchen. Male chefs are also more likely to depict class mobility or gender transgressive behaviors (e.g., gastro-sexuals) than women. The authors conclude that, although culinary personas have “some agency to shape their self-presentation” (JOHNSTON et al., p. 20), they still reproduce, reinforce and naturalize status (class, gender, professional, cultural, etc.) inequalities. By so doing, they limit the categories that certain groups of people (e.g., women, people of color) can occupy.

## 2.2 Dixon's semantic classification of gradable adjectives

As previous studies, I used Dixon's classification of adjectives to code the gradable adjectives in my corpus. (In Section 2, I explain how I modified it to better reflect the cooking shows genre.) Dixon's (DIXON, 1977, pp. 1-62; DIXON & AIKHENVALD, 2004, pp. 3-5) semantic categories are the following:

- DIMENSION<sup>2</sup>: *big/little, large/small, etc.*
- PHYSICAL PROPERTY: *hard/soft, heavy/light, rough/smooth, etc.*
- COLOR, which includes eleven basic terms (e.g., *black, red, white*) and hyponyms (e.g., *scarlet, reddish, greeny*)
- HUMAN PROPENSITY: *jealous, happy, kind, clever, etc.*
- AGE: *new, young, old, etc.*
- VALUE: *good, bad, proper, lovely, etc.*
- SPEED: *fast, quick, slow, etc.*
- POSITION: *near, far, etc.*

## 2.3 Degree adverbs

Degree adverbs can convey three degrees of intensification: high, medium and attenuated. Degree adverbs like *very, really, so* and *-ly* adverbs, such as *extremely* and *completely*, are considered to be of high intensification. *Rather* and *fairly*, of medium intensification, and *quite* and *pretty* can be either of high or medium intensification depending on the context or intonation. *Almost, somewhat, -ly* adverbs like *slightly* and *moderately*, and the periphrases *kind of* and *sort of* express attenuated intensification.

To simplify a quantitative/variationist analysis, I grouped degree adverbs in two major classes: *intensifiers* (high and medium intensification) and *attenuators*.

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<sup>2</sup> Capital letters are used henceforth to represent the different adjectival semantic categories.

#### 2.4 Collocation patterns

The degree of delexicalization of degree adverbs delimits to a great extent which type of adjectives they can modify. As a rule, the more delexicalized a degree adverb is, the more widely it can combine with adjectives. This is why a degree adverb like *very*, which is completely delexicalized, can collocate with virtually any adjective, while *awfully*, which has not lost its lexical content entirely, cannot.

As Partington explains, “delexicalization and width of collocation [...] are probably one and the same” (1993, p. 183). In his view, “one word or group of words almost automatically ‘calls up’ another specific word or phrase, or at least, it constrains the speaker to the choice of one of a limited set of possibilities” (ibid., p. 186). In other words, collocations between degree adverbs and adjectives are predictable, to a certain extent, depending on the degree of delexicalization of the degree adverb. For example, *absolutely* mainly collocates with adjectives that, like *absolutely* itself, also convey a heightened sense; e.g., *enchanting*, *shocking*, *appalling* (ibid., p. 187). Other examples of common collocations are the following: *So* and *really* collocate more frequently with emotional adjectives (e.g., *jealous*, *glad*) than with non-emotional adjectives (e.g., *important*, *small*) (TAGLIAMONTE & ROBERTS, 2005; TAGLIAMONTE, 2008); *-ly* adverbs are more frequently used in an abstract or subjective sense, while *zero* adverbs are more so in a concrete or objective sense (TAGLIAMONTE & ITO, 2002, p. 254).

However, linguistic factors do not account for all collocations. For instance, *very* has been found to occur more frequently with emotional adjectives, but only among male speakers (TAGLIAMONTE & ROBERTS, 2005), and *pretty*, among 20- and 30-year-olds (TAGLIAMONTE, 2008). This suggests that there are social aspects at play that influence collocation behaviors, and degree adverb and adjective choice among speakers. In the next two sections I present some of the social correlations observed by previous studies.

### 2.5 Social aspects related to degree adverbs

Several studies (e.g., DÍAZ-GONZÁLEZ, 2014; ITO & TAGLIAMONTE, 2003; KROCH, 1995; MACAULAY, 2002, 2005; TAGLIAMONTE, 2008; TAGLIAMONTE & ROBERTS, 2005) have observed correlations between degree adverbs and social aspects (e.g., gender, age, class). In her corpus, based on Jane Austen's novels, González-Díaz (2014) noticed that Austen employed *quite* as an instrument of socio-stylistic variation and linguistic gendering among characters. In contemporary English, *so* seems to indicate young femininity (TAGLIAMONTE & ROBERTS, 2005; TAGLIAMONTE, 2008); *pretty*, 'young masculinity,' and *really* is the preferred intensifier among young people (13-29-year-old group), especially among young women (TAGLIAMONTE, 2008).

In his sample of speakers, Macaulay (2002, 2005) noted that *very* and *quite* were more frequently used by middle-class speakers than by working-class informants, and that *very* had slightly higher rates in female speakers of the former group. He also discovered that social class and gender triggered quantitative and qualitative differences in the use of *-ly* adverbs. In general, middle-class speakers used *-ly* adverbs significantly more frequently than working-class speakers did (up to twice times more). Furthermore, middle-class male adults used more *-ly* adverbs than their female counterparts. The kind of *-ly* adverbs used was also different depending on the social class. For instance, middle-class speakers used 74 different *-ly* adverbs while the working-class only used 37 different forms.

Finally, Tagliamonte and Ito (2002) found that education level rather than class provided the most consistent pattern distinguishing *-ly* and *zero* adverb usage. Less educated men used the *zero* form more frequently. Interestingly, the more educated the male speakers were, the more likely they were to pattern with female speakers (ibid., p. 252). Nevertheless, all speakers used the *zero* variant at some point in the conversation.



## 2.6 Social aspects related to adjectives

Just as degree adverbs have social correlations, adjectives do too. For example, Kroch (1995) sees the frequent use of intensifiers and of certain kinds of adjectives, such as augmentative (e.g., *large, serious*) and hyperbolic (e.g., *outstanding, enormous*) among upper-class men as part of the same linguistic behavior, which he further relates to a broader social behavior. He interprets this behavior as a projection of a “sense of entitlement,” caused by male speakers’ power and wealth (p. 40). For him, using “strong emphasis in conversation” reflects “greater self-confidence and authority” (p. 41). In another study, Macaulay (2002, 2005) finds a similar class distinction. He observes that middle-class speakers use more adjectives than working-class speakers, and he also notices that the quality of the adjectives used vary depending on the speaker’s social class. Middle-class speakers used more evaluative adjectives (VALUE and HUMAN PROPENSITY) and “uncommon” adjectives (e.g., *horrendous, hellish, chauvinistic*) than working-class speakers who mainly used “simple words of approval or disapproval” (e.g., *good, bad, nice*).

## 3 Data and Methodology

The corpus is formed of 3,704 adjectival heads from traditional/instructional cooking shows from three online sources: The Foodnetwork.ca, BBC Two, and YouTube. The sample of speakers comes from twenty hours of speaking time from twelve Anglophone food celebrities, stratified by gender, country and culinary persona, following Johnston, Rodney and Chong’s classification (2014)<sup>3</sup>. (Table 1).

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<sup>3</sup> The environmentalist is the only persona that is added to the existing ones in Johnston et al. (2014).



**Table 1. Classification of speakers into culinary personas**

Gender	Culinary persona	Food celebrity	Country
Female	Homebody	Anna Olson	Canada
		Jo Pratt	England
		Ree Drummond	USA
	Pin-up	Laura Calder	Canada
		Nigella Lawson	England
		Giada de Laurentiis	USA
Male	Chef-artisan	Michael Smith	Canada
		Emeril Lagasse	USA
	Gastro-sexual	Chuck Hughes	Canada
		Jamie Oliver	England
		Tyler Florence	USA
	Environmentalist	Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall	England

### 3.1 Linguistic variables

In this study I only included degree adverbs that modifying *adjectival heads* in order to have a homogeneous base on which to perform multivariate analysis and to be able to compare my results to those of previous intensifier studies (e.g., ITO & TAGLIAMONTE, 2003; TAGLIAMONTE & ROBERTS, 2005; and TAGLIAMONTE, 2008). However, unlike previous studies, which only quantified intensifiers (*really, very, so, etc.*), I also quantified attenuators (*a little, a (little) bit, a (tiny) bit, kind of, sort of, etc.*), considering that cooking and food preparation implies a language of measures and quantities.

I coded adjectives considering two factors: their syntactic position and their semantic type. I considered three syntactic positions: *attributive, predicative* and *the...* (which appeared to block intensification).

Attributive prenominal position:

(3.1) “I’m gonna knock up a **really** punchy and delicious Asian style dressing.” [Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall]

Attributive post-nominal position:

(3.2) “And they can take something *humble* like a tin of sardines and make it regal.”

[Laura Calder]

Predicative position:

(3.3) “And the tarragon is *very fresh*.” [Giada de Laurentiis]

Predicative position (in elliptical sentences where the verb is implied):

(3.4) “*Crispy* outside and *fluffy* inside.” [Jamie Oliver]

*The..:*

(3.5) “I want *the fresh* warmth of ginger.” [Nigella Lawson]

Gradable adjectives served as a quantifiable denominator, even in cases where they were not preceded by a degree adverb:

(3.6) “This is a *good hot* pan.” [Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall]

Based on previous studies on intensifiers (Hazenbergh, 2012; Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003; Tagliamonte & Roberts, 2005; Tagliamonte, 2008), I excluded the following:

Comparatives and superlatives:

(3.7) “What could be a *simpler* sauce than melted butter?” [Laura Calder]

Fixed expressions:

(3.8) “And you’re *good to go*.” [Jo Pratt]

(3.9) “there’s nothings more simple than a *good ol’* pasta bake” [Ree Drummond]

Adjectives in unclear syntactic contexts, such as:

(3.10) “*Beautiful!*” [Chuck Hughes]

Interrogative utterances:

(3.11) “And, boy, does that look *fantastic*?” [Emeril Lagasse]

Negative statements:

(3.12) “It’s *not overpowering*.” [Giada de Laurentiis]

(3.13) “*Nothing complicated* about it.” [Ree Drummond]

### 3.2 Proposed semantic classification of gradable adjectives

Like previous variationist studies (e.g., ITO & TAGLIAMONTE, 2003; TAGLIAMONTE, 2008; TAGLIAMONTE & ROBERTS, 2005), I used Dixon's eight semantic categories of adjectives as a foundation (DIXON, 1977, pp. 1-62; DIXON & AIKHENVALD, 2004, pp. 3-5). I also added two subgroups of adjectives to capture sociocultural aspects of food: HEDONIST and TASTE adjectives, and I regrouped Dixon's categories into three major groups: one for evaluative (+abstract) qualities, another for general (+concrete) qualities, and a third group for the special forms.

Group I (evaluative [+abstract] qualities) included five subcategories: GOOD/BAD VALUE, TASTE, HEDONIST VALUE, HUMAN PROPENSITY, and other evaluative adjectives. I grouped as GOOD/BAD VALUE (VALUE henceforth) adjectives positive value adjectives, such as *good*, *healthy*, *nutritious* as well as negative value adjectives, such as *bad*, *sinful*, *malevolent*, etc. Previous studies (e.g., TAGLIAMONTE, 2008) have coded good/positive adjectives apart from bad/negative ones. Nevertheless, I chose not to considering that negative evaluation of food in cooking shows is limited, as chefs aim to portray food/recipes/cuisine in an appealing manner. For example, the adjectives *awful* and *terrible* never appeared in the corpus. The tendency towards 'positivity' is not exclusive of the cooking shows genre, but of other genres too: reviews of restaurants, book, movies, hotels, etc. (JURAFSKY et al., 2014). In fact, the positive bias in language is common across languages (ROZIN, BERMAN & ROYZMAN, 2012). I classified as TASTE adjectives, those that related to the beautiful and the ugly (e.g., *beautiful*, *ugly*), considering that judgments of taste encompass both. HEDONIST VALUE included adjectives like *decadent*, *indulgent*, etc., and HUMAN PROPENSITY adjectives that apply to higher animals (DIXON, 1982).

Group II (general [+concrete] qualities) comprised seven subgroups: DIMENSION (adjectives of size, weight, or extent, such as *big/little*, *large/small*, *long/short*, *tall/short*, *wide/narrow*, *deep/shallow*); PHYSICAL PROPERTY (e.g., *soft*, *silky*, *crunchy*, *sweet*, *salty*); COLOR (e.g., *black*, *pinkish*, *greeny*); TIME (e.g., *new*,

*young, old, recent, early, late*); SPEED (e.g., *quick, fast, slow*) and POSITION (e.g., *low, high*); and other adjectives expressing other general qualities.

Group III included special forms like: *-ing* and *-ed* adjectives (e.g., *amazing, amazed*), compound adjectives (e.g., *lipstick-red*), and temporary state adjectives (e.g., *asleep, alone*), which did not occur in the corpus.

Finally, polysemous adjectives such as *sweet, hard, sharp, dark* and *light* were classified within Evaluative Qualities (Group I) or General Qualities (Group II), depending on the semantic context where they were used.

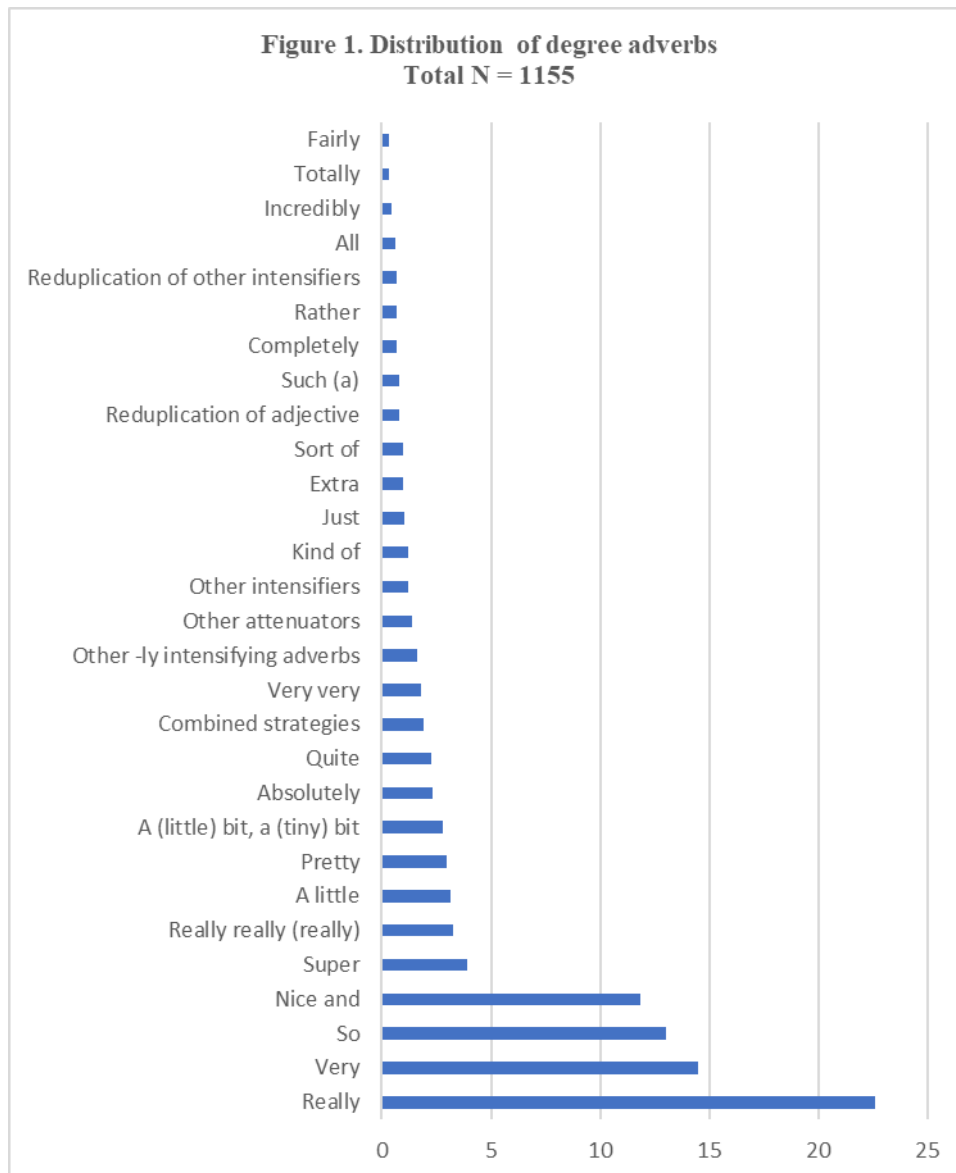
#### 4 Results and analysis

The intensification rates fell within the average range that has been reported by previous studies, which is 22-36 %. The three most frequently used intensifiers in the corpus (*really, very* and *so*) coincided –although the order varies– with those of previous studies (ITO & TAGLIAMONTE, 2003; TAGLIAMONTE, 2008; TAGLIAMONTE & ROBERTS, 2005).

**Table 2. Overall distributions**

	N	%
All degree adverbs	1155 / 3704	31
Intensifiers	1046 / 3595	29
Attenuators	109 / 2658	4

Unlike previous studies, in my corpus it is the *nice and (good and/lovely and)* construction that takes the fourth place of preference after *so* (see Figure 1).



As for attenuators, *a little* is the most frequently used attenuator, which contrasts with the most frequent attenuator in Hazenberg's study (2012): *kind of*. Overall, attenuators were not the least used degree adverbs in the corpus; for example, *completely* and *totally* occupied a lower position than even the least used attenuator, which was *sort of* (see Figure 1).

*Nice* was the most frequently used adjective (see Table 3), and VALUE adjectives were most likely to be preceded by a degree adverb.

**Table 3. Most frequently used adjectives  
in the corpus**

Frequency	Adjective	Semantic subgroup
>200	<i>nice</i>	TASTE (I)
>100	<i>good</i>	VALUE (I)
	<i>little</i>	DIMENSION (II)
	<i>delicious</i>	TASTE (I)
	<i>great</i>	Other Ev. Adj. (I)
	<i>beautiful</i>	TASTE (I)
>50	<i>lovely</i>	TASTE (I)
	<i>simple</i>	Other Ev. Adj. (I)
	<i>perfect</i>	Other Ev. Adj. (I)
	<i>easy</i>	Other Ev. Adj. (I)
	<i>hot</i>	PHYSICAL P. (II)
	<i>big</i>	DIMENSION (II)

#### 4.1 Multivariate analyses of degree adverbs

*Really* and *very* were favored among attributive adjectives, and *so*, among predicative adjectives. *Very* was unsurprisingly the preferred variant among English chefs (cf. VAN HERK, 2009), *so* was the preferred variant among Canadians, and *really* did not present any statistically significant correlation with regard to nationality. -*ly* intensifiers had direct correlations with the masculine gender in general. *Really* is the preferred intensifier of gastro-sexuals and homebodies, and it is used very infrequently by chef-artisans. *Very* is dramatically favored among pin-ups and drastically disfavored by gastro-sexuals and homebodies. *Very* is also preferred by chef-artisans, while *so*, by homebodies, chef-artisans and the environmentalist.

**Table 4. Multivariate analyses of intensifiers *really*, *very* and *so* vs. all degree adverbs**

<b>Really</b>				<b>Very</b>				<b>So</b>			
Corrected Mean = 0.193				Corrected Mean = 0.126				Corrected Mean = 0.060			
Log Likelihood = -501.797				Log Likelihood = -437.360				Log Likelihood = -365.829			
Total N = 1131				Total N = 1131				Total N = 1131			
Syntactic position	N	%	FW	Syntactic position	N	%	FW	Syntactic position	N	%	FW
Attributive	118	43.1	0.72	Attributive	52	19	0.59	Predicative	149	17.4	0.73
Predicative	143	16.7	0.42	Predicative	115	13.4	0.47	Attributive	1	273	0.04
		<i>Range</i>	30			<i>Range</i>	12			<i>Range</i>	69
<b>Adjective type</b>				<b>Adjective type</b>				<b>Adjective type</b>			
TASTE	72	47.1	0.75	Other Ev. Adj.	76	21.4	0.63	VALUE	31	31.6	0.82
VALUE	39	39.8	0.7	Special forms	13	16.9	0.52	Special forms	13	16.9	0.59
Other Ev. Adj.	84	23.7	0.55	TASTE	17	11.1	0.46	Other Ev. Adj.	54	15.2	0.56
General Q. Adj.	61	13.6	0.38	General Q. Adj.	55	12.3	0.46	TASTE	18	11.8	0.54
Special forms	5	6.5	0.22	VALUE	6	6.1	0.29	General Q. Adj.	34	7.6	0.34
		<i>Range</i>	53			<i>Range</i>	34			<i>Range</i>	48
<b>Culinary persona</b>				<b>Culinary persona</b>				<b>Culinary persona</b>			
Gastro-sexual	108	35	0.67	Pin-up	74	25.2	0.7	Homebody	43	17.9	0.63
Homebody	61	25.4	0.52	Chef-artisan	30	15.3	0.58	Chef-artisan	34	17.3	0.55
Pin-up	53	18	0.47	Environmentalist	13	14.1	0.42	Environmentalist	9	9.8	0.52
Environmentalist	18	19.6	0.46	Homebody	22	9.2	0.38	Pin-up	36	12.2	0.46
Chef-artisan	21	10.7	0.28	Gastro-sexual	28	9.1	0.37	Gastro-sexual	28	9.1	0.4
		<i>Range</i>	39			<i>Range</i>	33			<i>Range</i>	23
<b>Gender</b>				<b>Gender</b>				<b>Gender</b>			
Female	114	21.3	[-]	Female	96	18	[-]	Female	79	14.8	[-]
Male	147	24.6	[-]	Male	71	11.9	[-]	Male	71	11.9	[-]
		<i>Range</i>	N/A			<i>Range</i>	N/A			<i>Range</i>	N/A
<b>Country</b>				<b>Country</b>				<b>Country</b>			
Canada	37	12.7	[-]	England	60	16.5	0.59	Canada	59	20.3	0.63
England	90	24.8	[-]	USA	69	14.5	0.47	USA	57	11.9	0.48
USA	134	28.1	[-]	Canada	38	13.1	0.43	England	34	9.4	0.42
		<i>Range</i>	N/A			<i>Range</i>	16			<i>Range</i>	21

Overall, gastro-sexuals had the highest rates of intensification and chef-artisans, of attenuation. In fact, their linguistic behavior coincides with what their culinary personas intend to convey. For example, since chef-artisans usually prepare foods that require precision, technicality, and even artistry, it is not surprising that they use attenuators to express it.

**Table 5. Multivariate analyses of intensifiers and attenuators vs. not modified adjectives**

<b>Intensifiers</b>				<b>Attenuators</b>			
Corrected Mean = 0.083				Corrected Mean = 0.023			
Log Likelihood = -2096.299				Log Likelihood = -417.509			
Total N = 3595				Total N = 2658			
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FW</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FW</b>
<b>Adjective type</b>				<b>Adjective type</b>			
VALUE	153	46.1	0.68	General Q. Adj.	77	6.8	0.74
Special forms	70	32.6	0.54	Special forms	9	5.8	0.71
Other Ev. Adj.	339	31.7	0.53	Other Ev. Adj.	21	2.8	0.52
General Q. Adj.	384	26.7	0.48	VALUE	1	0.8	0.24
TASTE	153	23.3	0.42	TASTE	1	0.2	0.08
		<i>Range</i>	26			<i>Range</i>	66
<b>Culinary persona</b>				<b>Culinary persona</b>			
Gastro-sexual	290	32.2	0.54	Chef-artisan	28	6.3	0.64
Pin-up	265	29.9	0.51	Pin-up	35	5.3	0.56
Environmentalist	85	27.9	0.5	Environmentalist	9	3.9	0.52
Chef-artisan	173	29.3	0.49	Gastro-sexual	23	3.6	0.5
Homebody	233	25.5	0.46	Homebody	14	2	0.36
		<i>Range</i>	8			<i>Range</i>	28
<b>Country</b>				<b>Country</b>			
USA	444	38.2	0.61	USA	42	5.5	0.6
England	347	28.5	0.5	Canada	37	3.7	0.47
Canada	255	20.9	0.4	England	30	3.3	0.46
		<i>Range</i>	57			<i>Range</i>	14

#### 4.2 Multivariate analyses of adjectives

As shown in Table 6, most culinary personas slightly favored evaluative adjectives, with the exception of pin-ups.



**Table 6. Evaluative vs. General Adjectives**

<b>Group I: Evaluative Adjectives</b>				<b>Group II: General-Quality</b>			
Corrected Mean = 0.568				Corrected Mean = 0.432			
Log Likelihood = -2167.577				Log Likelihood = -2167.577			
Total N = 3187				Total N = 3187			
<b>Culinary</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FW</b>	<b>Culinary</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FW</b>
<b>persona</b>				<b>persona</b>			
Gastro-sexual	527	59.9	0.53	Pin-up	427	50.4	0.57
Chef-artisan	352	59.9	0.53	Homebody	362	41.5	0.48
Homebody	510	58.5	0.52	Chef-artisan	236	40.1	0.47
Pin-up	420	49.6	0.43	Gastro-sexual	353	40.1	0.47
<i>Range 10</i>				<i>Range 10</i>			

When testing HEDONIST and TASTE adjectives against other adjectives, TASTE adjectives were equally favored by gastro-sexuals and homebodies, while HEDONIST V. adjectives were preferred by pin-ups and homebodies, that is, by female speakers in general. Chef-artisans avoided both types of adjectives.

**Table 7. TASTE and HEDONIST V. adjectives vs. the rest of Evaluative adjectives**

<b>TASTE</b>				<b>HEDONISM</b>			
Corrected Mean = 0.318				Corrected Mean = 0.432			
Log Likelihood = -1113.101				Log Likelihood = -2167.577			
Total N = 1809				Total N = 1809			
<b>Culinary</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FW</b>	<b>Culinary</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>FW</b>
<b>persona</b>				<b>persona</b>			
Gastro-sexual	205	38.9	0.58	Pin-up	34	8.1	0.84
Homebody	198	38.8	0.58	Homebody	10	2	0.55
Pin-up	102	24.3	0.41	Gastro-sexual	4	0.8	0.31
Chef-artisan	79	22.4	0.38	Chef-artisan	2	0.6	0.26
<i>Range 20</i>				<i>Range 58</i>			

## 5 Discussion

Although further research and larger data is necessary to further support the following, I attributed some of the patterns found to the nature of the cooking shows genre itself; for example, the high rates of the *nice and* construction, and the good distribution of attenuators in the spectrum of degree adverbs in the corpus. Some other patterns can be seen as simply reproducing and reinforcing existent stereotypical gender sociolinguistic patterns; for instance, the higher usage rates of *-ly* among male speakers or the higher rates of HEDONIST VALUE adjectives among female chefs that seek to depict themselves as sexually attractive.

### 5.1 *Nice and* and its association with physical and dehumanized entities

*Nice and* occupied a prominent place (fourth) in the spectrum of the intensifiers used in the corpus (see Figure 1), but its collocation patterns were very restricted, given that it is a form that is not fully delexicalized. It was the preferred variant to modify PHYSICAL P. (see Table 8) and COLOR (see Table 9) adjectives, thus, physical entities.

**Table 8. Contrastive distribution of *really*, *very*, *so*, and *nice and* and pre-modifying PHYSICAL P. Adj.**

In predicative and attributive position					Only in predicative position			
Total N = 227					Total N = 189			
	<i>really</i>	<i>very</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>nice and</i>	<i>really</i>	<i>very</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>nice and</i>
N	49	44	27	107	28	31	27	103
%	21.6	19.3	11.9	47.1	14.8	16.4	14.3	54.5

**Table 9. Contrastive distribution of *really*, *very*, *so*, and *nice and* pre-modifying COLOR Adj.**

In predicative and attributive					Only in predicative			
Total N = 17					Total N = 15			
	<i>really</i>	<i>very</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>nice and</i>	<i>really</i>	<i>very</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>nice and</i>
N	2	2	0	13	1	1	0	13
%	11.7	1.57	0	76.5	6.7	6.7	0	86.7

Although I lack evidence from other studies, the patterns mentioned in the previous paragraph make me believe that the *nice and* construction is probably preferably used to emphasize the physicality of things (see 5.1-5.3) rather than their intangibility (see 4.4), and that such circumscription originates in the fact that *nice*, *lovely* and *good*, which constitute each of the three variants, are not fully delexicalized.

*Nice and* + PHYSICAL P. Adj.

(5.1) “it’s [chocolate] *lovely and smooth*” [Jo Pratt]

(5.2) “ricotta salata is been pressed until is *nice and firm*” [Tyler Florence]

(5.3) “Once we get that [the milk] *good and hot...*” [Emeril Lagasse]

*Nice and* + Evaluative Adj.

(5.4) “or they [cheesecakes] can be *nice and formal* depending on what’s your occasion” [Ree Drummond]

One last thing to consider is that several collocations of the *nice and + negative adjective* type may happen, but with a sarcastic undertone (e.g., *nice and difficult*, *nice and shameful*, *nice and disgusting*)<sup>4</sup>, or may be used differently from dialect to dialect or among younger generations of speakers.

<sup>4</sup> As one of my colleagues indicted, prosody and other language cues (e.g., gestures) may have a key role in the interpretation of the *nice and* + adjective as intensifier versus an adjective + adjective structure.

## 5.2 Attenuators as culinary gradators and markers<sup>5</sup> of culinary control

Attenuators appeared to have been used as markers of culinary control or culinary capital<sup>6</sup> by chef-artisans, who are identified by Johnston et al. (2014) as the group of chefs who cook dishes that require precision and artistry. On the other hand, homebodies, who have a utilitarian approach to cooking with little complication or precision (JOHNSTON et al., 2014, p. 9), are the group of chefs the least likely to use attenuators and intensifiers.

Of course, using attenuators to mark culinary control should not be interpreted as a dichotomy where more attenuation means ‘more culinary expertise’ and less attenuation, ‘amateur culinary knowledge.’ To me, attenuating is simply another strategy that chefs may or may not use to indicate their culinary control.

Finally, attenuators also served to justify the semi-authenticity of a dish or recipe. Contrast, for example, sentences (5.5) and (5.6) with (5.7)

(5.5) “And now, for something *a little Asiatic*: oysters with my friend Ivan’s special sauce.” [Laura Calder]

(5.6) “We’re gonna start by making a simple *sort of English* style batter.” [Emeril Lagasse]

(5.7) “But next I’m going to get *very French* with a tin of sardines.” [Laura Calder]

## 5.4 -ly intensifiers and their connection with masculinity

As in Macaulay’s study (2002, 2005), where -ly intensifiers served to mark masculinity and a (more) privileged class, in my corpus, -ly intensifiers (among which *absolutely* represented 50 %) also contributed (linguistically) to the distinction of speakers as masculine culinary personas (see Table 10), and by extension, perhaps male chef’s membership in a more privileged culinary class than female chefs. As observed

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<sup>5</sup> I use the term *marker* without any allusion to the meaning it is given in stylistic variation analyses.

<sup>6</sup> The concept of *culinary capital* derives from Bourdieu’s concept of *cultural capital* (1984), which is a symbolic asset (speech, skills, credentials, tastes, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings, etc.) that confers status and power to those who possess it and display it.

in the analysis of Johnston et al. (2014), male chefs, especially white male chefs, do have more privileges than other clusters of people (e.g., women, non-white men, etc.). For example, they have access to a greater number of culinary roles than female chefs, they enjoy greater mobility between the home and the professional kitchen than women, as well as greater class mobility and gender fluidity (e.g., gastro-sexuals).

**Table 10. Distribution  
of *-ly* by gender**

Total N = 63		
Gender	N	%
F	18	28.6
M	45	71.4

## Conclusion

Similar to the results of other intensifier studies (ITO & TAGLIAMONTE, 2003; TAGLIAMONTE, 2008; TAGLIAMONTE & ROBERTS, 2005), the three most frequently used intensifiers in the corpus were *really*, *very* and *so*. However, unlike the variants that typically take the fourth place (e.g., *pretty* and *absolutely*), it was the *nice and* construction (which includes *good and* and *lovely and*) that took the fourth place in my corpus. The behaviors of this variant seemed to have been purely motivated by linguistic factors, and more noticeably, by its status as a non-fully delexicalized form. Attenuators appeared to have had very specific functions in the corpus; for instance, they were used to provide nuanced descriptions of food (e.g., consistency, color, flavor) and to show culinary control. Male chefs seemed to have depicted their masculine culinary supremacy with the highest rates of *-ly* intensifiers as a group, and, chef-artisans, indicated their culinary control with the highest rates of attenuators. Lastly, while previous studies have used Dixon's semantic classification of gradable adjectives, I have shown that this classification can be modified and adapted to study specific



language genres. I have also illustrated how variationist analysis can be utilized to help decode social and class identities.

## Abbreviations and acronyms

Adj.: adjective; Ev.: evaluative; FW: factor weight; P: property; Q: qualitative; V: value

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