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Nearly a bit angry or just so happy? – Intensifiers as contextualization cues

Nina-Maria FRONHOFFER

University of Augsburg
Applied Linguistics English
Universitätsstraße 10, 86159 Augsburg, Germany
n.fronhofer@phil.uni-augsburg.de

Obwohl sich bereits zahlreiche linguistische Arbeiten mit dem Aspekt der Intensivierung von Emotionen beschäftigt haben, fällt auf, dass die wenigsten dabei den Kontext berücksichtigen, in den spezifische Emotionskonzepte eingebettet sind. Vorliegender Artikel soll dem entgegenwirken und untersucht aus sowohl kognitiv-linguistischer als auch kontrastiver Sicht und vor allem unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Kontextes Intensivierung in Bezug auf die Emotionskonzepte AERGER / ANGER und FREUDE / HAPPINESS. Insbesondere wird doppelte Intensivierung (DI) behandelt, d.h. solche Fälle, in denen durch zwei unterschiedliche Typen von Intensitätspartikeln bzw. -adverbien intensiviert wird. Die Studie beruht auf einem vergleichbaren und ausgewogenen Korpus elizierter Erzähltexte, die von englischen und deutschen StudentInnen verfasst wurden. Die Analyse zeigt, dass DI in beiden Sprachen existiert und uni- bzw. bidirektional sein kann. Im Deutschen ist die Okkurrenz von DI häufiger und auf alle Intensivierungsarten verteilt. In beiden Sprachen sind Intensitätspartikel darüber hinaus als Kontextualisierungshinweise zu betrachten, die, abgesehen von ihrer gradierenden Funktion, eine wichtige Rolle dabei spielen, bestimmte prototypische Emotionskonzepte im Diskurs in den Vorder- bzw. Hintergrund zu stellen. Der systematische Gebrauch dieser und weiterer Kontextualisierungshinweise ist in die kognitive Struktur des Emotionsereignisses eingebettet.

Stichwörter:

doppelte Intensivierung, Emotionskonzept, Emotionsereignis, kognitive Korpuslinguistik, emergente Muster, kontrastiver Vergleich, Kontextualisierungshinweis.

1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale of the study

Intensification has received much attention in emotion research. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson (2010), for example, find cross-linguistic differences in the emotion concept of SURPRISE in English and Polish and Fellbaum & Mathieu (2014) construct emotion verb scales in their corpus-based study on particular English Experiencer verbs such as *surprise*, *fear* and *astonish*. Although these studies consider the context in which the emotion lexemes are used, they focus on internal intensification and do not take external intensification explicated in the immediate context of those lexemes,¹ e.g. by adverbial subjuncts such as *extremely* or *very*, into account. In the following two examples, however, it becomes clear that the optional use (Van Mulken & Schellens 2012) of the intensifier (2), here the booster *so*, has to be considered in the analysis since it increases the degree of the emotion

¹ For a definition of emotion lexemes, please refer to section 2.2.

displayed:

- (1) e_f_016_1 I was *annoyed* by this because [...]
 (2) e_f_033_1 I'm **so** *annoyed* right now [...]

An instance of double intensification (DI), i.e. the use of two different types of intensifiers, can be found in the following corpus example:

- (3) e_f_027_1 At first I am **just really** upset that I didn't do well.

Here, the two types of intensifiers have also to be taken into account since leaving them out, such as in *At first I am upset [...]*, would result in a differential emotion display.

In the following, I will therefore consider (1) the local context, i.e. the immediate linguistic context (5L-5R), of the emotion lexemes and take (2) the global context into account, i.e. the Emotion Event (cf. 1.3) displayed in the narratives. I hope to address in this paper the recent call for more research on emotions in context in order to overcome the "methodological flaw" of "decontextualization" (Constantinou 2014: 159) in this particular field of research.

Moreover, as emotion displays, including external intensification, can differ cross-linguistically (Wierzbicka 2009; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson 2010: 324; Cislariu 2014; Constantinou 2014), this paper's endeavour is to point out similarities and differences with respect to English and German intensification, more specifically double intensification, from a cross-linguistic perspective. Ultimately, the results will be beneficial for a wide range of applications, e.g. language pedagogy to name but one example. In contact situations, for instance, the learner's awareness of language-specific emotion displays will avoid potential misunderstandings, i.e. "different interpretations" (Gumperz 1982: 132), which tend to be seen by the participants in "attitudinal terms" (Gumperz 1982: 132). Misunderstandings might here arise through an inappropriate mapping of the native onto the foreign conversational practices (Gumperz 1992b).

However, without entering at this stage a further discussion of potential applications as well as of the question in how far the local and more global context have to be taken into account, let me introduce some basic premises that form the theoretical background of this paper.

1.2 Intensification and double intensification

Intensification is widely acknowledged to be a scalar concept (cf. Fig. 1). According to Bolinger (1972) the term intensifier, i.e. adverbial adjunct, covers both increase and decrease and the intensifier indicates "a point on an abstractly conceived intensity scale [which] may be relatively low or relatively high" (Quirk et al. 1985: 589). Quirk et al. (1985: 589) also comment on the scope of intensification when stating that the underlying scale applies "to a predicate or to some part of a predicate, such as the predication, the verb

phrase or even an item within the verb phrase." In other words, intensification can take place within a clause constituent or on the clause level (Ungerer 1988; Lorenz 1999).

Intensity scales, as already mentioned above (cf. 1.1), can also be semantically inherent in lexemes (Horn 1989; Claridge 2010):

(4) like – love – adore

(5) pensiveness – sadness – grief

Although those scales, i.e. verb, adjective and noun scales (Sheinman & Tokunaga 2009; Fellbaum & Mathieu 2014), are certainly subjects worth studying and have to be considered during the analysis, this paper does not focus on them. Instead, as already stated above, the local and global context of the emotion lexemes will play a major role.

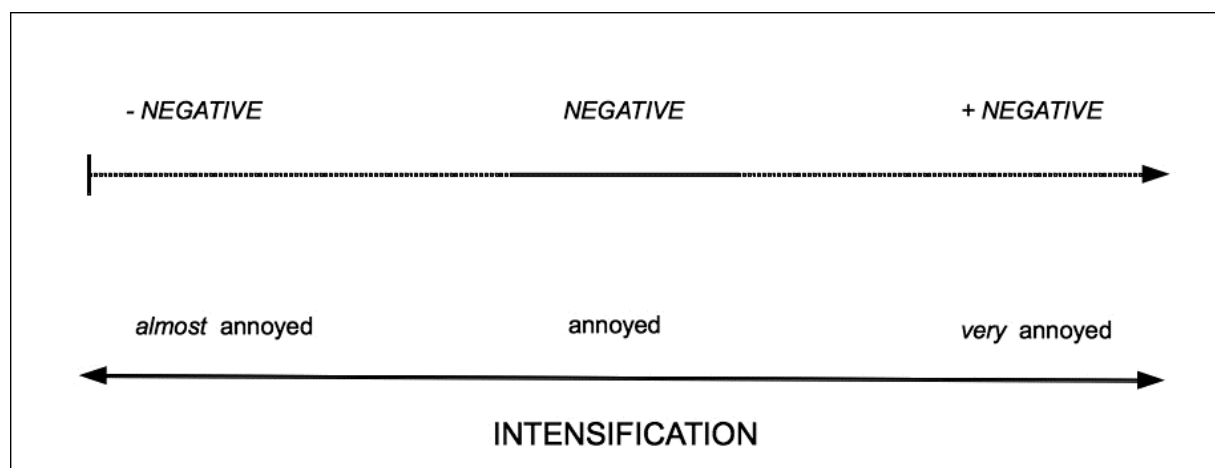


Fig. 1: Intensification by adverbial subjuncts. Here, anger lexemes (ANNOYANCE) are downgraded or upgraded.

Following Quirk et al. (1985), intensifiers can be further classified into upgraders (i.e. amplifiers: boosters and maximizers) and downgraders (i.e. downtoners: diminishers, minimizers, approximators, compromisers) and can modify either adjectives (and adjective based-adverbs) or verbs within the verb phrase (Allerton 1987). The modification of adverbs is rare² but possible. Consider the following example taken from the German data set:

(6) g_m_005_2

Dementsprechend teilen Studenten [...] nur *sehr ungern* Vorlesungsmitschriften [...]
'very reluctantly'³

Equally rare are intensifiers acting as premodifiers of determiners (*absolutely no reason*), pronouns (*absolutely nothing*) and prepositional phrases (*quite at ease*; Quirk et al. 1985; Lorenz 1999). These minor usages were not

² Adjectives are the most commonly intensified forms in language (Bäcklund 1973).

³ Translations of German examples are highlighted in this paper by simple quotation marks.

considered in this paper since it focuses on intensifiers as modifiers of emotion verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

DI (cf. example (3) above), which I define as the co-occurrence of two different types of intensifiers, has not received much attention so far. In studies where it was necessary to cope with this phenomenon from a methodological point of view, i.e. annotation procedures, (e.g. Taboada et al. 2014), often only the element with wider scope was considered in the analysis. So, in example (3), which I have presented above, only *just* would have been taken into account whereas *really* goes unannotated. In another study, which observes also the wider context, the researchers conclude that "*really* is used both as an intensifier and as a hedge" (Stenström et al. 2002: 149). The following example which they found in COLT illustrates their argumentation (Stenström et al. 2002: 149):

(7) [...] well he wasn't ugly he was *just really* gormless [...]

However, before discussing how this specific kind of intensifier use has to be analyzed and why it is a phenomenon that deserves more attention, let me first relate the topic of intensification to the study of emotion in language.

1.3 Intensification as sub-unit emotion parameter

In the context of emotions, intensification can be considered to be a sub-unit emotion parameter, i.e. a sub-unit of analysis, which has to be understood in the wider framework of Emotion Events, EEs (Langacker 1987, 1991; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson 2010). The structure of an EE is defined as the immediate contextual use of emotion lexemes and their sub-unit parameters; these can be – apart from modifiers – tenses, metaphoric and metonymic structures to name but a few (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson 2010). It is worthy to note that their use is not restricted to emotion lexemes and that different sub-unit parameters, being part of one emotion, can surface in discourse (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson 2010). This way, anger or slight anger might be displayed, i.e. different degrees of the same emotion (cf. examples 8 and 9). In this respect, intensifiers play a key role.

(8) e_f_023_1 I'm *so angry*.

(9) e_f_038_1 [...], I would be *slightly irritated* of sorts.

Emotion lexemes give access to prototypical emotion concepts (Lakoff 1987; Kövecses 2000) and activate prototypical emotion scenarios, which involve the display of certain temporal stages of an emotion, e.g. an act of retribution in the case of ANGER (Lakoff 1987: 397-405). The latter comprise agents, experiencers, causes, appraisal (value judgements) and arousal (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson 2010). When studying an emotion, e.g. the basic emotion anger, anger lexemes that activate the concept ANGER as well as subordinate concepts such as IRRITATION or RAGE should also be considered in the analysis. All in all, I assume here, following Lakoff (1987)

and Kövecses (2000), a highly complex hierarchical conceptual structure of emotions and also that different co-occurring emotion concepts may form clusters or blends (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson 2010).

1.4 Approach

As mentioned above, intensification has received much attention in emotion research (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson 2010; Fellbaum & Mathieu 2014). However, this field of research has also suffered from decontextualization, i.e. there have been many lexical approaches to the language of emotion that do not take the local and global context into account.

The present corpus-based study aims therefore at investigating emotion in context, including the local context of emotion lexemes, i.e. intensifiers, and the more global context, i.e. the Emotion Event (EE), and focuses on the specific case of double intensification (DI), with respect to the emotion concepts ANGER and HAPPINESS in English and German. It combines a

- cognitive linguistic view on emotion, drawing on frameworks set by Kövecses (2000) and Lakoff (1987) who assume a highly complex hierarchical structure of emotions,
- a cognitive corpus linguistic view – influenced by Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Dziwirek (2009) and Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson (2010), who call for a new qualitative and quantitative agenda for contrasting languages and who base their work on Langacker (1987, 1991) and
- a pragmatic (Ariel 2008) as well as interactional-sociolinguistic perspective (Gumperz 1982, 1992a, 1992b) addressing the above mentioned call for emotion research in context.

The purpose of the study is further to reveal emerging discourse patterns (Ariel 2008). The latter are regarded as being lower in frequency than "salient discourse patterns" (Ariel 2008: 188-189) but stand out because of "exceptional form-function correlations" (Ariel 2008: 188-189) or because they are "compact in expressing some complex message" (Ariel 2008: 188-189). Emerging discourse patterns may differ cross-linguistically and can be inferred by the analysis of frequencies and co-occurrences of emotion lexemes (ANGER, HAPPINESS) and their modifiers, more precisely two types of intensifiers, which co-occur with those lexemes and are part of EEs. As Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Wilson (2010: 324) state, EEs and especially sub-unit emotion parameters can be "different in different speech communities" and might therefore "serve as *tertia comparationis* in cross-linguistic analyses". As cross-linguistic differences in emotion concepts and their sub-unit emotion parameters have already been found in various languages (Wierzbicka 2009; Cislaru 2014; Constantinou 2014), I also expect to detect some with respect to the sub-unit emotion parameter of

intensification in English and German.

In the following section, I will outline how I proceeded in order to study the sub-unit emotion parameter of DI with respect to ANGER and HAPPINESS – two basic emotion concepts, a negative and positive one – in English and German (cf. 2.1), and I will comment on my methodological considerations (cf. 2.2).

2. Methodology

2.1 Corpus and study design

The corpus under investigation (cf. Table 1) consists of written personal narratives elicited from university students who are native speakers of English and German.

	English		German	
	female	male	female	male
Word types	2,762	2,957	4,210	5,104
Word tokens	28,973	24,500	30,572	30,321
Types/ tokens in positive narratives	1,858/ 14,329	1,904/ 12,060	2,707/ 15,002	3,152/ 15,079
Types/ tokens negative narratives	905/ 14,644	1,053/ 12,440	2,735/ 15,570	1,952/ 15,242
Number of participants	34	28	34	34
Number of narratives	64	56	64	64

Table 1: Corpus statistics. Gender differences with respect to intensifiers (e.g. Stenström et al. 2002) are taken into account by the gender-balanced design of the corpus.

The students were mostly undergraduates with no bilingual background (if so, they have received their entire education, both in school and at university, either in Britain or Germany). Each participant wrote his/ her narrative in response to the following two topics (approximately 500 words per topic):

- You have just received an unfair mark.
- Imagine you receive the results of a very difficult exam which a lot of students normally don't pass and you got the highest mark possible.

Most of the participants used computers to respond; some few handwritten narratives were transcribed before analysis while respecting exact wording, spelling and punctuation. The corpus was designed to be gender-balanced, topic-balanced (one positive and one negative topic) as well as counterbalanced (alternating order of the topics during the experiment) in order to avoid biased results.

The particular corpus design was motivated by the fact that the specific genre of narratives is characterized by the extended use of emotion lexemes and intensifiers, and that the experimental design allowed to control contexts.

2.2 Coding and Analysis

As the present paper centres on DI, i.e. two types of intensifiers which co-occur with ANGER/ AERGER and HAPPINESS/ FREUDE lexemes, I extracted frequency lists of such lexemes from the corpus while including only those lexemes that clearly denote emotions (Johnson-Laird & Oatley 1989). I excluded emotion-related lexemes (e.g. *tears*), figurative expressions (e.g. *I was over the moon.*), facial-bodily expressions (e.g. *smile*) and emotion-laden lexemes (e.g. *shit*) (Pavlenko 2008; Dziwirek & Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2010), since they are highly context-dependent; even when taking the context into account it was sometimes impossible to categorize them without leaving any ambiguities. Additionally, for classification and in order to avoid any skewed results, I categorized the lexemes according to Parrott's tree structure of emotions (Parrott 2001), which is used in social psychology and comprises a wide range of primary, secondary and tertiary emotions. These three possible stages of emotional or affective states involve basic (e.g. ANGER) and subordinate emotions (e.g. BITTERNESS). In the first place, I also included emotion lexemes in non-affirmative contexts, since I wanted to avoid missing certain types of intensifier use (in the following example the use of the booster, which is under the scope of negation, suggests rather the function of a downgrader; cf. Tagliamonte & Ito 2003: 264; cf. Taboada et al. 2014: 15)

(10) e_m_014_1 Realistically, I would *not* be *excessively upset or traumatised* [...]

However, in my further analysis, I only included intensifiers in co-occurrence with ANGER and HAPPINESS lexemes that were used in affirmative contexts and therefore actually function as upgraders or downgraders. The following list gives a short overview over my decisions and some special cases concerning the inclusion and exclusion of intensifiers. The main criterion for the inclusion was a functional one, i.e. the items in question clearly and unambiguously intensified, upgraded or downgraded (Quirk et al. 1985), the co-occurring emotion lexemes.

Included were:

- adverbial subjuncts (Quirk et al. 1985), e.g. *extremely angry*
- exclamatory how (Quirk et al. 1985: 591), e.g. *how frustrating*
- reduplicated intensifiers (Quirk et al. 1985: 447), e.g. *very, very pleased*
- emphasizees which clearly have a grading function (Quirk et al. 1985: 583), e.g. *really enraged*
- correlatives (Quirk et al. 1985: 941, 1000), e.g. *not only/ just ...but, the...the*

- coordinated, asyndetic elements and ellipsis (Quirk et al. 1985: 942), e.g. *I was so happy and [so] excited*.
- comparatives (Quirk et al. 1985: 467), e.g. *more than satisfied*
- focusing subjuncts functioning as boosters (Lorenz 1999: 115-116), e.g. *particularly annoying* and the German stylistic variation of *sogar* (Zifonun et al. 1997: 882) which functions as intensifier, e.g. *gar unverschämte Behandlung [...]*
- the German intensifier *einfach* (not the modal particle) (Zifonun et al. 1997: 988), e.g. *einfach frustrierend*
- intensifiers that were not under the scope of the negation (cf. Tagliamonte & Ito 2003: 264) as in the following hypothetical sentence, e.g. *If it was the case of losing marks but still passing, I wouldn't have been so annoyed*.

and

- DI by two types of intensifiers (cf. Stenström et al. 2002: 149; cf. Taboada et al. 2014: 21-22), e.g. *I'[m] just so happy [...]*.

Excluded were:

- focusing subjuncts (Quirk et al. 1985: 604), e.g. *even*
- German modal particles (Zifonun et al. 1997: 1209), e.g. *doch, einfach*
- comparatives in the sense of 'it is more accurate to say' (Quirk et al. 1985: 467), e.g. [...] *I would be more angry than upset*.
- content disjuncts (Quirk et al. 1985: 622), e.g. *natürlich ärgerte ich mich*
- additive conjuncts (Quirk et al. 1985: 635), e.g. *vor allem etwas wütend*
- repeated items that can be considered to be emphasised (Taboada et al. 2014: 10), e.g. *quälen und quälen*

In a further step and in addition to the analysis of DI occurring in the elicited corpus, I cross-checked the results in two large-scale corpora, the BNC⁴ and the DeReKo.⁵

3. Results

3.1. Frequencies and distribution of double intensification

The quantitative analysis revealed that DI exists both in English and German and with respect to ANGER and HAPPINESS. However, in comparison to

⁴ The British National Corpus (<http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>).

⁵ The German Reference Corpus (<http://www.ids-mannheim.de/kl/projekte/korpora/>) accessible over COSMAS II (<https://cosmas2.ids-mannheim.de/cosmas2-web/>).

simple intensification it seems to be a rare phenomenon.

In both languages, I only found three instances of DI with respect to ANGER (cf. Table 2), i.e. 2%,⁶ whereas simple intensification co-occurred in English with 45 anger lexemes, i.e. 28%, and in German with 63 anger lexemes, i.e. 31%. With respect to HAPPINESS DI was also rare. Only three instances of DI could be identified with English happiness lexemes, i.e. 1% in contrast to 83 instances of simple intensification, i.e. 20%.

In German, only 5 instances of DI occurred, i.e. 1%, in contrast to 139 instances of simple intensification, i.e. 27%. Tables 2 and 3 summarize the distribution and frequencies of anger (cf. Table 2) and happiness (cf. Table 3) lexemes (tokens) in the English and German corpus.

	English		German	
	tokens	relative to total	tokens	relative to total
total lexemes	162	-	199	-
intensified lexemes	48	30 %	66	33 %
- simple intensification	45	28 %	63	31 %
- double intensification	3	2 %	3	2 %

Table 2: Intensification in English and German of the emotion concept ANGER/ AERGER. The percentages of co-occurring intensifiers, i.e. intensified lexemes that are further categorized into simple and double intensification, were calculated relative to the total number of emotion lexemes.

	English		German	
	tokens	relative to total	tokens	relative to total
total lexemes	411	-	512	-
intensified lexemes	86	21 %	144	28 %
- simple intensification	83	20 %	139	27 %
- double intensification	3	1 %	5	1 %

Table 3: Intensification in English and German of the emotion concept HAPPINESS/ FREUDE. The percentages of co-occurring intensifiers, i.e. intensified lexemes that are further categorized into simple and double intensification, were calculated relative to the total number of emotion lexemes.

In the BNC, the exact same types of English DI identified in the data at hand were also very rare. *Just so happy* occurred only 0.04 instances per million words, *just really annoying/ upset*, *actually near enough/ hated* and *a little bit*

⁶ The percentages of co-occurring emotion lexemes were calculated relative to the total number of all anger or happiness lexemes (cf. Table 2 and 3).

too/ proud not at all (cf. Table 4). In the DeReKo, the frequencies of the German types of DI found in the elicited corpus were also very low and are summarized in Table 5.

	<i>just so happy</i>	<i>just really annoying/ upset</i>	<i>actually near enough/ hated</i>	<i>a little bit too proud</i>
BNC (total)	0.04	-	-	-

Table 4: Frequency ('instances per one million words') of English DI.

	<i>wirklich sehr freuen</i>	<i>so sehr freuen</i>	<i>wirklich so froh</i>	<i>so unglaublich freuen</i>	<i>wirklich schon leicht wütend</i>	<i>einfach ein wenig neidisch</i>	<i>einfach nur unglaublich freuen</i>	<i>fast ein bisschen wütend</i>
DeReKo (total)	0.09	0.0002	0.0004	0.0002	0	0	0	0.0006
written								

Table 5: Frequency ('instances per one million words') of German DI.

3.2 Types of double intensification

In my corpus, I found different types of DI categorized in Table 6. If we have a look at the distribution of these different types across the languages and concepts under discussion, we find that the Germans tend to use unidirectional DI, i.e. they use two upgraders or two downgraders, and bidirectional DI, i.e. one upgrader and one downgrader or vice versa, whereas the English only use bidirectional DI (cf. Table 7).

However, a cross-check in the BNC suggests that unidirectional DI, i.e. the use of two upgraders (UU) and two downgraders (DD), are nevertheless possible in English. Table 8 summarizes the emotion lexemes in the BNC which co-occurred with *really very*, which might be a near equivalent of the German *wirklich sehr*, and Table 9 those that co-occurred with *just a bit*, which might be considered to be analogous to German *fast ein bisschen*.

Really very occurred 1.81 instances per million words in co-occurrence with adjectives. However, *really very happy* occurred only once, rarely with other happiness lexemes and *really very* with respect to ANGER was not featured at all. I found no instances in the BNC of *nearly a bit angry* or *just a bit angry*, however, some instances of *just a bit* (0.63 instances per million [+adj], 0.15 instances per million [+verb], 0.38 instances per million [+adv]) and among them some few in co-occurrence with emotion lexemes and also with respect to ANGER (cf. Table 9).

	English	German
unidirectional (UDI)		
upgrader & upgrader (UU)	-	g_f_002_2 Ich freue mich wirklich so sehr über die 1 [...] ['really very']
downgrader & downgrader (DD)	-	g_f_012_1 Ich werde dann <i>fast ein bisschen</i> wütend, weil [...] ['nearly a bit']
bidirectional (BDI)		
upgrader & downgrader (UD)	e_f_023_2 To add to this, considering this was a subject which I'd never thought I was good at and <i>actually near enough</i> hated, [...]	g_f_027_1 Sehr enttäuscht und auch <i>wirklich schon leicht</i> wütend, [...] ['really slightly']
downgrader & upgrader (DU)	e_m_026_2 I get <i>a little bit too proud</i> when I do something I deem to be impressive.	g_m_010_2 Ich freu mich <i>einfach nur unglaublich</i> . ['just incredibly']

Table 6: Types of DI categorized into UDI, i.e. two intensifiers scaling either upwards (UU) or downwards (DD), and BDI, the first intensifier scaling upwards, the second one downwards (UD) or vice versa (DU).

	English		German	
	ANGER	HAPPINESS	AERGER	FREUDE
UU	-	-	-	X
DD	-	-	X	-
UD	X	X	X	-
DU	X	X	-	X

Table 7: Distribution of types of DI.

The two boosters *so incredibly* – perhaps comparable to the German *so unglaublich* – also occurred in the BNC, but rarely (0.3 instances per million words) and only twice in co-occurrence with emotion lexemes (*sad* and *humiliating*) which are not part of ANGER or HAPPINESS.

In order to pin down the emerging functions of the two intensifiers involved in cases of DI, it is necessary to consider the local and global context in closer detail. I exemplify this in the following section, where I present the results of the contextual analysis which also took the EE into account. I argue that in cases of DI one of the intensifiers fulfils, apart from upgrading or downgrading, yet another function.

	collocates	raw frequencies
BNC (total)	<i>exciting</i>	2
	<i>nervous</i>	2
	<i>unhappy</i>	2
	<i>anxious</i>	1
	<i>happy</i>	1
	<i>enjoyable</i>	1
	<i>pleasant</i>	1
	<i>sad</i>	1
	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	1
	<i>worried</i>	1

Table 8: Collocates of DI by *really* *very* [+adj] in English.

	collocates	raw frequencies
BNC (total)	<i>concerned</i>	2
	<i>jealous</i>	2
	<i>anxious</i>	1
	<i>disappointed</i>	1
	<i>frustrated</i>	1
	<i>grumpy</i>	1
	<i>irritating</i>	1
	<i>pissed off</i>	1
	<i>sad</i>	1
	<i>shocked</i>	1
	<i>surprised</i>	1
	<i>worried</i>	1

Table 9: Collocates of DI by *just a bit* in English.

3.3 Functions

First, let us consider one EE taken from the German corpus. A student has just received the best mark possible and talks about her emotions:⁷

(11) (g_f_002_2)

01 Ich bin *so erleichtert*. [...]

02 Ich bin **wirklich so froh** diese Klausur bestanden zu haben und dann noch so gut, das hätte ich nie erwartet.

03 Das gibt mir wirklich wieder Kraft und neuen Mut für die nächsten Prüfungen.[...]

04 Ich **freu mich wirklich so sehr** über die 1. [...]

05 Ich *freu mich so* über dieses Klausurergebnis und bin auch *etwas stolz* auf mich, [...]

01 'I am *so relieved*. [...]

02 I am **really so happy** that I have passed this exam, and then so well, I would have never expected this to happen.

03 This gives me really new strength and courage for the next exams. [...]

04 I am **really so happy** about receiving an A*. [...]

05 I am *so happy* about this result and am also *a bit proud* of myself, [...]

DI is used twice in this EE (ll. 02, 04). The emphasizeers *wirklich* ('really') and the booster (*so*) *sehr* ('very') co-occur with *froh* and *freu mich* ('happy').

Taking the whole EE into consideration, i.e. the global context in which the emotion lexemes are displayed, I argue that *wirklich* ('really') has an additional or more prevalent function to that of being an emphasizeer and does not merely have scope over the booster and the emotion lexeme (as Lorenz 1999 or Taboada et al. 2014 would analyze). *Wirklich* rather serves to foreground HAPPINESS which clusters with RELIEF (*erleichtert*, 'relieved', l. 01) and PRIDE (*stolz*, 'proud', l. 05) which are themselves upgraded (*so*, 'so', l. 01) or downgraded (*etwas*, 'a bit', l. 05). It is also worthy to note that *freu mich/ froh* ('happy') occurs three times in this short extract (ll. 02, 04, 05) adding up to this effect. The booster (*so*) *sehr* ('very') in this case of DI consequently fulfils the main grading function (upgrading).

In contrast to previous analyses, which mainly simplified DI, I assign this phenomenon the status of an emergent discourse pattern (Ariel 2008). It stands out because of its exceptional function of foregrounding (Gumperz 1992a) the prevalent emotion in a complex cluster of several emotion concepts.

In English, I found comparable examples. In line 08 of the following EE, the diminisher *just* is used together with the booster *so* in co-occurrence with the

⁷ The numbers given indicate sentence numbers and refer to the ones represented in the extracts chosen and not to the ones of the whole narrative. The words printed in bold italics highlight the instances of DI; co-occurring patterns are represented in italics. The German extracts have been translated into English.

emotion lexeme *happy* and also foregrounds HAPPINESS:

(12) (e_f_024_2)

- 01 I am *so happy* that I could scream and dance with joy in the middle of everyone [...]
- 02 It was all *too exciting*. [...]
- 03 It makes me want to do more exams so I can experience *this amazing feeling* again and again. [...]
- 04 I think the *most shocking and surprising* thing about this whole experience is that I got full marks. [...]
- 05 Everyone is *so happy and proud* of me for getting my grades. I have received many well done cards and just friendly texts. [...]
- 06 My parents are *very, very pleased* for my [sic].
- 07 They know I worked really hard to get the results that I did and they know I will continue to work hard for my next exam.
- 08 I'[m] *just so happy* that I have been able to complete an exam that is so tough that a lot of students are not normally able to pass it.
- 09 This has really given me *a boost of confidence* and also made me believe that next time I can achieve the same results and that I can pass extremely difficult exams once again.

HAPPINESS is the prevalent emotion here and clusters with EXCITEMENT (l. 02), SHOCK (l. 04), SURPRISE (l. 04), PRIDE (l. 05), CONFIDENCE (l. 09) and PLEASURE (l. 06, the latter experienced by the parents) all being part of the EE. Again, the emotion lexeme *happy* occurs two times more (l. 01, l. 05), intensified by the booster *so*.

Having now focused much on intensifiers foregrounding certain emotions, I would like to introduce the idea that the first intensifier in cases of DI can also serve as backgrounding device. In the following EE, a student who has received an unfair mark vents her feelings. She is particularly annoyed about the fact that the supervisor seems not to have read her work properly and that another student who apparently has written down the same arguments received a better grade:

(13) (g_f_012_1)

- 01 Ich bin *sehr enttäuscht*. [...]
- 02 Ich versuche Verständnis dafür aufzubringen, dass Dozenten ja sehr viel zu korrigieren haben [...], merke aber [...], dass ich auch *wirklich genervt* bin, da Dozenten ja auch erwarten, dass man wissenschaftliche Artikel sehr genau liest. [...]
- 03 Ich werde dann *fast ein bisschen wütend*, weil ich mich nicht ernst genommen fühle, [...]
- 04 *Mich nervt es* [sic] dass ich jetzt mit der Arbeit zum Dozenten gehen muss [...]
- 01 'I am *very disappointed*. [...]
- 02 I try to show understanding that lecturers have to do a lot of corrections, [...] but realize [...] that I am also *really annoyed*, as lecturers also expect you to read research papers in detail. [...]
- 03 I then get *nearly a bit angry*, because I feel that I am not taken seriously [...]
- 04 I am *annoyed* that I have to go to the lecturer now to discuss my work [...]

Fast ('nearly') and *ein bisschen* ('a bit'), two downgraders, more precisely approximators, co-occur here with *wütend* ('angry'; l. 03). However, I argue again that the analysis of *fast* ('nearly') as downgrader having scope over *ein bisschen* ('a bit') is insufficient. The prevalent function of *fast* seems to be not that of intensification but that of backgrounding ANGER. The foregrounded emotions of the cluster explicated in this EE are DISAPPOINTMENT (l. 01), intensified by the booster *sehr* ('very') and especially ANNOYANCE, which is repeated twice (l. 02 and l. 04) and emphasized by *wirklich* ('really').

In English, backgrounding a certain emotion, here by using one downgrader and one upgrader (l. 06), seems also possible. In the following EE, a student talks about his feelings after having received full marks:

(14) (e_m_026_2)

- 01 Initially, I would be in *shock*.
- 02 "How on earth did this happen?"
- 03 I would think to myself. [...]
- 04 I would probably tell a lot of people.
- 05 Back in school, I was terrible at keeping my good grades a secret; not much has changed since then.
- 06 I get **a little bit too proud** when I do something I deem to be impressive.
- 07 I've tried *to reel that in a little bit* these days, but it still sneaks out on special occasions.[...]
- 08 In the longer term, such success may not necessarily be a good thing –
- 09 I've gotten into a habit recently of doing just enough to get by, so a good grade like this might lead to *a little bit of complacency* on my part, but in general I would be *very happy* – and very lucky – if such a situation was to occur at this stage of my university career.

The approximator *a little bit* and the booster *too* co-occur here with the emotion lexeme *proud* (l. 06). Again, analysing *a little bit* as taking scope over *too proud* or as operating on the clause level seems to provide only one part of the overall picture. *A little bit* can certainly be assigned a hedging and an apologetic function – this is supported by the fact that *a little bit* is also directly repeated in the following line (l. 07), co-occurring with *to reel that in* – but I argue that it also serves to background PRIDE in the overall EE. Additionally, COMPLACENCY, an emotion closely related to PRIDE, is premodified and hedged by the quantifier *a little bit of* (l. 09). The foregrounded emotions in this cluster are therefore SHOCK (l. 01) and HAPPINESS (l. 09), the latter being intensified by the booster *very*.

In sum, DI is used both in English and German in order to foreground or background (by using a first intensifier) certain emotions in an EE which might also be intensified (by using a second intensifier). Table 10 and 11 summarize the types of DI – categorized according to those functions – that occur in the English and German corpus. Collocating emotion lexemes as well emerging patterns in the EE, in the left and right local context of DI, i.e. intensifiers and

emotion concepts, are also listed.

German seems to provide various options for foregrounding (*einfach, einfach nur, so, wirklich*), i.e. different types of intensifiers and hence types of DI (unidirectional DI and bidirectional DI), whereas in English foregrounding only seems to be possible by using a downgrader and an upgrader (DU) or vice versa (UD), more precisely *just really/ just so* or *actually near enough* (bidirectional DI). Backgrounding certain emotions is achieved in German by using two downgraders (unidirectional DI) while in English one downgrader together with one upgrader – as in the case of foregrounding – is used (DU).

function	intensifier	intensifier	collocate	emerging patterns in the EE	
foregrounding	just	really	annoying	really	ANNOYANCE
	just	really	upset	-	-
	just	so	happy	so	HAPPINESS
				too	EXCITEMENT
				most	SHOCK
				most	SURPRISE
				very	PLEASURE
backgrounding	a little bit	too	proud	(a boost of)	CONFIDENCE
				-	SHOCK
				(a little bit of)	COMPLACENCY
				very	HAPPINESS

Table 10: Foregrounding and backgrounding in English.

In the next section, I will discuss my overall findings, the rarity of DI, the existing types and emerging functions. I will further argue that intensifiers can be assigned the status of contextualization cues (Gumperz 1982, 1992a), a term stemming from interactional sociolinguistics.

function	intensifier	intensifier	collocate	emerging patterns in the EE	
foregrounding	wirklich	unglaublich	freue mich	(ein gewisser)	STOLZ
	wirklich			ganz schön	ÜBERRASCHUNG
	fast	ein wenig	neidisch	-	AERGER
	wirklich	unglaublich	freu mich	echt	BEGEISTERUNG
				riesig	FREUDE
				so	STOLZ
				etwas	ENTSPANNUNG
		(so) sehr	freu(e) mich	so	ERLEICHTERUNG
		so	froh	so	FREUDE
				etwas	STOLZ
backgrounding		schon leicht	wütend	sehr	ENTTÄUSCHUNG
				umso	WUT
		ein bisschen	wütend	sehr	ENTTÄUSCHUNG
				wirklich	VERÄRGERUNG

Table 11: Foregrounding and backgrounding in German.

4. Discussion

When considering the quantitative results of this study, first of all, the fact that DI seems to be a rare phenomenon, the relatively small size and nature of the corpus under investigation, i.e. in comparison to other large-scale corpora (e.g. the BNC) or with respect to genre (I have only investigated personal narratives), has to be taken into account. However, when I cross-checked instances of English DI analyzed in this paper in the BNC, I found the low frequencies corroborated (cf. 3.1). Furthermore, *just really* only occurred four times in co-occurrence with other emotion lexemes (*frightened, happy, like* (2x)). *Actually near enough* and *a little bit too* did not occur with any other emotion lexemes than *hated* or *proud*.

The same applies to German. In the DeReKo the exact same types of DI discussed in this paper are non-existent or at least very rare (cf. 3.1). *Fast ein bisschen, einfach nur unglaublich/ so unglaublich* and *einfach ein wenig* occur only seldom with other emotion lexemes (e.g. *enttäuscht*).

So all in all, DI, especially with respect to ANGER and HAPPINESS, can rightly be called a rare phenomenon. This is why we might assign this phenomenon the status of a marked configuration (Givón 1993), which is per definitionem rare, more complex and therefore more effortful to process

(Fetzer 2011). We can further assume if two types of intensifiers are used despite their complexity, that this is not arbitrary, but "communicatively functional and meaningful" (Fetzer 2011: 259).

The qualitative results, first of all the claim that there are different types of DI in English and German and that the English do not use unidirectional DI, was only partly confirmed by further corpus research. In the BNC, I found instances of two upgraders (*really very*, cf. 3.2). However, *really very happy* occurred only once in the BNC, rarely with other happiness lexemes and *really very* with respect to ANGER was not featured at all (cf. 3.2). *Incredibly so* was not found with respect to ANGER or HAPPINESS (cf. 3.2). So, all in all, the use of two upgraders in English is mostly non-existent with respect to ANGER and HAPPINESS but seems in general possible with other emotion lexemes. Nearly the same applies to the use of two downgraders in English (cf. 3.2). It is non-existent with respect to HAPPINESS, and possible but rare with respect to ANGER and other emotion lexemes.

In conclusion, we can say that cross-linguistic differences concerning different types of DI in English and German and with respect to ANGER and HAPPINESS do exist. However, further qualitative and especially quantitative analyses that investigate the phenomenon of DI also with respect to further emotion concepts are needed.

In the contextual analysis two possible functions of DI emerging in the EE were identified. I claimed that the first intensifier serves as foregrounding or backgrounding device with respect to a certain emotion concept, whereas the second one is used to intensify the co-occurring emotion lexeme. In this respect, intensifiers, especially the first one in cases of DI, can be considered to be – apart from being sub-unit emotion parameters – contextualization cues (Gumperz 1982, 1992a), a term stemming from interactional sociolinguistics.

Contextualization cues

serve to highlight, foreground or make salient certain phonological or lexical strings vis-à-vis other similar units, that is they function relationally and cannot be assigned context-independent, stable, core lexical meanings. Foregrounding processes, moreover, do not rest on any one single cue. (Gumperz 1992a: 232)

Such cues trigger inferential processes and contribute to the signalling of contextual presuppositions (Gumperz 1982, 1992a). The qualitative analysis showed that such contextualization cues, i.e. the first intensifier in cases of DI, exist in English and German and that they pattern with further cues, emotion concepts, activated by emotion lexemes. Hereby, one emotion concept is foregrounded or backgrounded, i.e. signalled to be prevalent or not in a cluster of co-occurring emotion concepts explicated in the EE.

As we have seen in the analysis of emerging types of DI, the nature and combination of the cues fulfilling those functions may differ cross-linguistically. These different "contextualization conventions" (Gumperz 1992b: 51)

displayed by the two speech communities in question may lead to differences in interpretation or even misunderstandings (Gumperz 1982). This might be even more the case, as contextualization cues are "habitually used and perceived but rarely consciously noted and almost never talked about directly" (Gumperz 1982: 131).

All in all, DI is a rare phenomenon and the different types identified in this study differ cross-linguistically. Moreover, intensifiers are in cases of DI multifunctional; they are, apart from being sub-unit emotion parameters, contextualization cues and therefore play a crucial role in contextualization processes. This is certainly one of the reasons why the phenomenon of DI deserves more attention in research, especially in studies focusing on the sub-unit emotion parameter of intensification.

5. Conclusion

This contrastive study has shown that the phenomenon of DI is clearly not one which is easy to tackle, but should be systematically included in studies on emotions and their sub-unit parameters since the identified patterns of use and the occurrences of different types of DI (bidirectional DI and unidirectional DI) suggest cross-linguistic differences in English and German.

What became also clear is that the local and global context plays a decisive role in the analysis. Only by taking it into account was it possible to pinpoint emerging functions. This underlines again the importance of discursive approaches and that the recent call for research in context in the field of emotion research (Beger & Jäkel 2009; Constantinou 2014) is more than justified.

However, further contrastive studies on DI with respect to various emotion concepts are needed. This would allow to identify and further quantify language-specific, emerging and salient contextualization cues and patterns (Gumperz 1992a; Ariel 2008) not only with respect to ANGER and HAPPINESS.

The awareness of such patterns might ultimately contribute to a better understanding and a more successful communication between different speech communities (Gumperz 1992b). As misunderstandings, i.e. "different interpretations" (Gumperz 1982: 132), might arise when "contextualization conventions of [the] native society are mapped onto the conversational practices in the host language" (Gumperz 1992b: 51), the results of this study should be implemented e.g. in language pedagogy. The explicit teaching and awareness-raising of language-specific emergent and frequent patterns, e.g. the rare use of unidirectional DI in English, which seems additionally to be restricted to certain emotion concepts, can certainly avoid potential misunderstandings in contact situations.

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