

C-Smile, COCA, and BNC: A Focus on Amplifiers and Adjective Collocations

YAZID BASTHOMI

*Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra,
Universitas Negeri Malang
Indonesia*

NURENZIA YANNUAR

*Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra,
Universitas Negeri Malang
Indonesia
nurenzia.yannuar.fs@um.ac.id*

UTAMI WIDIATI

*Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra,
Universitas Negeri Malang
Indonesia*

RAHMA MARTININGTYAS

*Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra,
Universitas Negeri Malang
Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

In order to explicate a specific message from statements, amplifiers mostly collocate with particular lexical items referring to evaluation, judgment, or attitude. Using six types of amplifiers consisting of absolutely, completely, entirely, fully, totally, and utterly, the research intends to elicit kinds of adjective collocation that follow each of the amplifiers. Three different corpora of non-native and native speakers of English are used in order to see the common pattern of amplifiers and their collocations as well as to compare their use in different contexts and among users of English. The results show that the collocations are varied in the sense that each corpus provides a number of adjectives in which some of them are similar to the ones occurring in the other corpora and some others only occur in a particular corpus. Specific evaluations of amplifiers viewed from their adjective collocations fall under three basic categories of positive, negative, and neutral values. By investigating and comparing amplifiers and collocations used in non-native and native academic writings, the findings of the present study point to the fact that each amplifier constitutes specific evaluations.

Keywords: amplifiers; adjective collocations; academic writing; native speakers; non-native speakers

INTRODUCTION

Amplifying words in English are prominent and favorable to form a credible and plausible language (Xiao & Tao 2007). For specific reasons, the amplifiers are helpful to grasp attention, add exaggeration, and promote a particular interest, which then becomes a natural strategy for writers to show their attitude through a set of devices functioning as highlights or emphases. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985) devoted the term ‘amplifiers’ thoroughly and accurately in a whole chapter and described them as having a broad concern with semantic category of degree. They specifically indicated that amplifiers are not simply a means of intensifying expression; rather, they point to a two-way direction implying either relatively high or relatively low evaluation of meaning.

Previous studies have documented that there are some amplifiers which have become a trend in general uses of amplifiers in English. Wittouck (2011) and Wachter (2012) investigated variance of amplifiers in order to find the rationale for the use of frequently used

amplifiers such as *very*, *really*, *so*, *bloody*, *absolutely*, *completely*, *highly*, etc. Wittouck (2011) eventually confirmed that amongst various emergences of sentence intensification in English, a different type of amplifiers is employed in order to explicate a specific idea.

Using morphological patterns, the categories of amplifiers are split into delexicalised amplifiers and amplifiers embedded to a particular lexical item which is usually in the form of adjectives (Wachter 2012). In line with the aforementioned view, Wittouck (2011) pointed out that some amplifiers are constructed by delexicalised or single words including *very*, *so* and *too*, and others are embedded to adjective patterns such as *absolutely*, *perfectly*, *highly*, *greatly*, and so forth.

Wachter (2012) also specified the functions of each category of amplifiers. He reported that the first category functions differently from the other. The following sentences, 'Maria is *very* beautiful' and 'Maria is *perfectly* beautiful' imply that though both seem to carry the same function of amplification, adverbial amplifiers, such as *perfectly*, *completely* and *highly* are marked to occur with particular collocation, and overtly to describe the sentence evaluation. In contrast, the word *very* is categorised as a delexicalised item since it is independently able to create a particular meaning.

Despite their frequent use, amplifiers like *very*, *so*, *too*, and *really* are somehow considered slightly less advanced than amplifiers with adjectives embedded (Ito & Tagliamonte 2003, Tagliamonte 2008), in the sense that *very* and *really* do not have a scale to evaluate the whole meaning of a sentence (Wachter 2012). Besides, delexicalised amplifiers are commonly used to the extent of amplification in general adjectives without depicting writers' specific attitude or providing clear evaluation. *Very* was a prototypical amplifier in English, yet, it is now common and on the rise in American English usage (Biber et al. 2005). In other words, *really* and other types of delexicalised amplifiers frequently occur in a general context.

In spite of being used less frequently than delexicalised amplifiers like *very*, *so* and *too*, amplifiers with specific adjectives embedded can add expressivity to what is being described (Lorenz 1999). Amplifiers like *highly*, *awfully* and *greatly* provide clearer contexts, and are considered beneficial for conveying writers' actual intention. In particular, Partington (2004) testified that amplifiers like *completely* or *absolutely* tend to occur with positive collocation adjectives, such as *capable*, *happy*, *healthy*, *correct*, and *good*. Wachter (2012) noted that amplifiers can show a positive image like *perfectly*, *absolutely* and *pretty*, while some like *awfully* and *terribly* denote negative image; and others like *fully* and *greatly* have neutral values.

Due to such views, it can be inferred that amplifiers with adjectives embedded can add particular meanings of the sentences described by collocating or referring to specific words. It can be assumed that delexicalised amplifiers are more neutral and favorable than adverbial amplifiers which can bring out positive, negative, or neutral values. Such amplifiers, then, turn from something new and rare to be an interesting category of amplifiers to study. It is taken as not only an expressivity of writers' interpersonal message, but also as a subject of a number of collocational points of view as well as semantic values. Adverbial amplifiers with adjectives embedded, hence, have a prominent rhetorical role especially in written academic language.

By using six selected amplifiers, *absolutely*, *completely*, *entirely*, *fully*, *totally*, and *utterly* taken from Skobrankova (2006), this research aims to study and compare the use of amplifiers and collocations in Indonesian academic writings compared to native English academic writings. Skobrankova (2006) found that the six amplifiers had high occurrences in written register and constitute different evaluations, including positive, negative, and neutral values. In addition, each is viewed as being synonymous, having fairly similar connotative meaning, yet achieving a distinctive frequency of usage. As the present research involves

different subjects, it employs a corpus comparative base where three different corpora are utilised to extract relevant data. Specifically, the investigation is conducted on a non-native corpus, C-SMILE (Corpus of State University of Malang Indonesian Learners' English), and two large native corpora as representations of native English use of amplifiers – Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) and British National Corpus (BNC).

The findings of this study can enrich the empirics of the use of amplifiers and their collocations in particular for learners of English as a foreign language. The study will complement previous studies interested in writing produced by L2 learners of English (Kim & Yoon 2014, Flores & Yin 2015). Practically, the present study can also benefit learners of English as a foreign language since it is able to enhance personal awareness related to how to use the amplifiers as well as the collocations correctly. Misconceptions or misunderstanding of a certain type of amplifier and its collocation can result in non-natural sentence production and inappropriate interpretation of the information being delivered.

METHOD

This is a corpus-based study, specifically utilising electronically encoded texts. Some may describe a corpus-based method as a more quantitative methodology because it uses frequency information about occurrences of particular linguistic phenomena (Baker 2006). However, we argue that a corpus-based study practically involves a quantitative as well as a qualitative approach (Biber et al. 1998).

Lu (2010) posits that to facilitate application of a large set of syntactic complexity measures of interest to large-scale corpus data, it is clearly necessary to develop computational tools that can automate analysis of syntactic complexity in second language production using those measures. In other words, statistical data obtained through quantitative technique help provide ideas and patterns based on evidential bases. Likewise, a qualitative method is valuable to reveal the analyses and description based on contextual and pragmatic concern. This research uses frequency profiling (Rayson & Garside 2000), in which a non-native corpus represented by C-SMILE will be compared to two native corpora: COCA and BNC. C-SMILE is a corpus of the State University of Malang containing about 2.1 million data in total, which is considerably a small-numbered corpus compared to COCA with 450 million data and BNC with 100 million data. Similar to COCA and BNC, C-SMILE also contains data varied in some disciplines, subsections, academic years, methods, and so forth. The corpus is composed of undergraduate theses and articles based on the theses.

The instruments used in this study include three kinds of corpora and software to support the calculation and text analysis of corpus data. COCA and BNC are freely accessible at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/> and <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>. Data was also collected from C-SMILE using a concordancing software, AntConc 3.2.4w that comprises several tools to create concordances and to investigate concordancing plot, file view, word list, collocations, keyword list and other options for text analyses (Wiechmann & Fuhs 2006).

Selected results taken from all corpora under study are listed in Table 1. The analysis covers comparison of collocations occurring in both non-native and native corpora. The six chosen amplifiers from the three corpora were analysed in terms of their collocations and their specific evaluation involving positive, negative, or neutral values. These values are applied based on the personal judgment of the researchers, as nonnative speakers when perceiving adjectives in certain contexts (Szabó 2001).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

ADJECTIVE COLLOCATIONS FOLLOWING SELECTED AMPLIFIERS IN C-SMILE, COCA, BNC

Adjective collocations featuring the selected amplifiers seen from the three corpora under study are listed as follows. Table 1 shows the most frequently collocated words to a particular amplifier, ranked based on their frequencies.

TABLE 1. Adjective Collocations Tagged along Amplifiers in Academic Written Discourse taken from C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC

Kinds of Amplifier	C-SMILE	COCA	BNC
absolutely	good real lovely wrong smooth related needed necessary impossible different	necessary essential certain sure true critical right crucial clear vital	essential necessary clear sure privileged certain right central free fundamental
completely	different relevant absent natural easy insane ignorant dependent essential true	different new free independent dependent absent unknown voluntary true successful	different new random accurate reliable free satisfactory successful independent normal
entirely	different wrong suitable pointless original new fulfilled fixed	different new possible clear consistent appropriate dependent absent successful free	new different clear dependent consistent independent satisfactory free absent possible
fully	involved independent successful proficient commercial capable automatic accomplished	aware human developed functional operational integrated certified consistent conscious automated	aware developed fledged independent turbulent effective acceptable conscious operational qualified
totally	different unfamiliar similar wrong responsible predictable perfect opposite obvious impossible	different blind new dependent absent independent unacceptable free unrelated wrong	different dependent symmetric new inadequate unacceptable absent independent inappropriate blind
utterly	ugly needed	different dependent	different unable

foreign	unable	free
unconscious	devoid	disgraceful
	unknown	impossible
	foreign	intolerant
	false	irrelevant
	arbitrary	unknown
	irrelevant	inaccessible
	useless	unreasonable

The table shows that the variety of collocation reflects a primary interest that one amplifier in one corpus may be associated with the same adjective collocations in the other corpora. For example, *absolutely*, presented in Excerpt 1, in C-SMILE (1) collocates with *necessary* which is similar to that found in COCA (2) and BNC (3).

Excerpt 1

- (1) ...students perceived picture sequences as **absolutely necessary** technique for the next writing activity.
- (2) It seems **absolutely necessary** for the younger generation in this country to comprehend that American culture is not...
- (3) In such circumstances it is **absolutely necessary** that the school should have an admissions policy of some kind in order to...

Table 1, however, shows that *absolutely + necessary* in C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC comes in different ranks. In C-SMILE, it occurs only within the lower rank, while it gets the first place in COCA and the second rank in BNC. Nevertheless, *necessary* is generally regarded as a specific collocation following *absolutely* as it occurs in all three corpora.

In other cases of collocations following *absolutely*, the number of the same adjectives in COCA and BNC is higher than that in COCA and C-SMILE or in BNC and C-SMILE. To put it in percentages, *absolutely* in C-SMILE has 10% similarity, shown by *necessary*, while *absolutely* in both COCA and BNC have 60% similarity, collocating with *necessary*, *essential*, *certain*, *sure*, *right* and *clear*. In spite of these figures as presented in Table 1, the dissimilarity of adjective collocations following *absolutely* found in C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC are mostly in line with Skobrankova's (2006) inference that the most frequent collocations of *absolutely* in academic register include *necessary*, *essential* and *clear*.

A similar situation also occurs in the following types of amplifiers. *Completely* collocates with *different* in C-SMILE, and with *new*, *different*, *free*, *independent*, and *successful* in COCA and BNC. To put it in percentages, or *completely* in C-SMILE has shown only 10% similarity; while in both COCA and BNC it covers 50% similarity. As proposed by the previous study of amplifiers in academic register, *completely* mostly collocates with *free*, *different*, and *new* (Skobrankova, 2006).

Entirely in C-SMILE only comes in eight collocations in total, in which one of them, *different*, is the same collocated adjective as that found in COCA and BNC. Corresponding to previous occurrences, the results of collocation of *entirely* in the COCA and BNC even reach a 80% similarity, as shown by *different*, *new*, *possible*, *clear*, *dependent*, *consistent*, *absent*, and *free*. Again, it highlights similar results found by Skobrankova (2006), which noted that the most used adjectival phrases with *entirely* are *entirely different*, *entirely new*, and *entirely clear*.

Comparable to that case, *totally* collocates only with *different*, covering 10% similarity, while 60% similarity of its adjective collocations is found in COCA and BNC, specified by *different*, *new*, *dependent*, *absent*, *independent*, and *unacceptable*. The present study is in line with Skobrankova's (2006), as it notes that the most common adjectives collocating with *totally* are *different*, *new*, *dependent*, and *inadequate*.

The amplifier *fully* does not have a single identical collocation in all the three corpora. Some particular collocations can only be found in two corpora, either C-SMILE or BNC,

shown by *independent*, or COCA and BNC, shown by *aware*, *developed*, *operational*, and *conscious*. However, the number of the same adjective collocations across corpora is higher in COCA and BNC than in C-SMILE, shown by 40% similarity. Besides, the result of adjective collocations following *fully* in COCA and BNC are partly aligned with Skobrankova's (2006) finding which concluded the most commonly used adjectives for *fully* in academic register include *aware*, *fledged*, and *developed*. In that case, C-SMILE offers distinctive results as compared to the previous study and its counterparts in the present study, COCA and BNC.

Lastly, *utterly* in C-SMILE only comes in four collocations, in which only one of them, *foreign*, is the same as that found in the COCA and BNC. The collocation results in COCA are 30% the same as collocations found in BNC, shown by *different*, *unknown* and *irrelevant*. Also, one of the collocation results of COCA and BNC, *different*, is the same as that in the previous study (Skobrankova 2006) inferring *different*, *impossible*, *disgraceful*, *free* and *unable* are the most frequent adjectives collocated with *utterly*. Similar to *fully*, adjective collocations of *utterly* found in C-SMILE does not come in line with the findings in COCA and BNC as the native use of amplifiers as well as conceptual bases taken from the recent previous study in similar concern conducted by Skobrankova (2006).

SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS OF ADJECTIVE COLLOCATIONS FOLLOWING SELECTED AMPLIFIERS IN THE THREE CORPORA

Variance of adjective collocations presented in Table 1 brings further comparative issue of amplifiers used in C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC. The relevant issue here is that individual collocation brings definable semantic set (Sinclair 1987 in Louw 2000) and displays apparent prosody (Zhang 2010). In this case, adjective collocations following each amplifier occur in quite different evaluations. Specifically, amplifiers form a particular behavior by collocating with positive, negative or neutral words.

Due to the fact that such evaluations of words are sometimes not so precise even to a native speaker's intuition (Partington 1998), there are considerably no specific and exact criteria for grouping the words into specific evaluations. In other words, inference of evaluative meaning mostly lies on writer's point of view. Besides using such an orientation, corpus data are also a precise help to reveal statistical tendency (Partington 1998) and generally to become proof of certain evaluations, more particularly the evaluations of adjectives following each type of selected amplifiers.

Categorisations of adjective evaluations following each amplifier as well as their statistical occurrences are shown by the following figures.

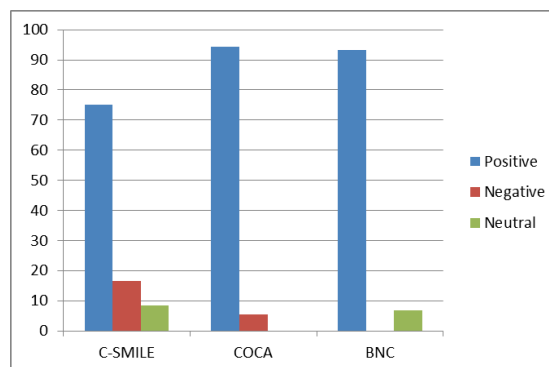


FIGURE 1. Evaluation Categories of Adjective Collocations following “Absolutely” in Academic Written Discourse of C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC

The adjective evaluations are categorised into positive, negative, and neutral senses. Figure 1 displays that *absolutely* in C-SMILE is dominantly followed by adjectives with positive evaluations. Negative adjectives come within 16.17% and neutral adjectives only have 8.33% occurrences. Both are much lower than the positive evaluation shown by its 75% of overall adjective occurrences in C-SMILE.

Similarly, *absolutely* in COCA is employed more by positive adjectives than by negative ones, shown by distant gaps that positive adjectives almost reach 95%, while the other 5% signify negative adjective occurrences. Such a result shows that *absolutely* in COCA is not linked to neutral meanings or intent as it is not followed by any neutral adjectives at all. Also, positive evaluative meaning of adjectives following *absolutely* in BNC occurs at a very high percentage, reaching 94% of whole adjective occurrences. In contrast to the occurrence of adjective evaluations in COCA, *absolutely* in BNC does not indicate any negative meanings. Rather, it has more than 6% of neutral adjectives. Overall, adjective collocations in the three corpora are dominated by positive evaluation. However, compared to COCA and BNC which overlook one adjective evaluation category, adjective collocations following *absolutely* in C-SMILE generally cover all the three categories of adjective evaluations.

Kennedy (2003) reports that *absolutely* bonds with hyperbolic adjectives which relate to emotive and judgmental senses, such as brilliant, filthy, wonderful, good and popular. Partington (1998) also infers that *absolutely* displays an instinct to collocate with strong and superlative words, such as delighted, intolerable and appealing to show subjective expressions. The ideas of judgmental and hyperbolic adjectives occurring in native and non-native academic writings are hence considerably true. Even if non-native academic writings present a lower number of collocation similarity than native English writings, both still contribute relevant types of collocations functioning to show subjectivity. Representative samples taken from both native and non-native English academic writings are illustrated as follows.

Excerpt 2

- (1) The translation of stamp out itself is **absolutely wrong**. Note the phrase stamp it out which was then translated into *mencap*... (C-SMILE) → *negative evaluation*
- (2) ...brings positive idea towards the product that the product is natural and **absolutely good** for skin. (C-SMILE) → *positive evaluation*
- (3) ...stems from the need to make decisions without **absolutely certain** knowledge and without understanding that belief and evidence ate separate entities that must be... (COCA) → *positive evaluation*
- (4) I am **absolutely sure**; my science supports the view that there will be this particular disaster occurring... (COCA) → *positive evaluation*

Looking at the other collocations of *absolutely* (see Table 1), the results from native corpus indicate that *absolutely* also carries another characteristic besides expressing hyperbolic and judgmental expression (Partington 1998, Kennedy 2003) such as *crucial*, *essential*, *necessary*, which is certainty as shown by *right*, *sure*, *certain*, and *true*. The relevant samples are provided in Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3

- (1) This acknowledgement is **absolutely essential**, for without it no mental act which they perform, however well... (BNC) → *positive evaluation*
- (2) Although the question may seem clumsier for it, it is **absolutely necessary** to give a genuine choice, and even though it may sound stilted to... (COCA) → *neutral evaluation*
- (3) All of the teacher educators involved in this study believe that engagement in reflection is **absolutely crucial** to the professional development of teachers... (COCA) → *positive evaluation*

After the typical characteristics as shown by the adjectives in Excerpt 2 and 3, there appears a positive, negative, and neutral evaluation, which then leads to an understanding that *absolutely* brings particular tendency to modify either favorable or unfavorable context (Partington 1998). According to the classification of collocations (see Appendix 1), *absolutely* typically occurs with positive collocations. Negative collocations do appear even if only in a very small percentage, yet they belong to non-native English.

In spite of the positive evaluation of *absolutely*, its collocations somehow constitute emotive expression which make it less representative in academic writings. Instead, they can be more suitable to use in conversation or spoken register. Skobrankova (2006) also surmises that *absolutely* predominates spoken language although mostly collocates with positive adjectives.

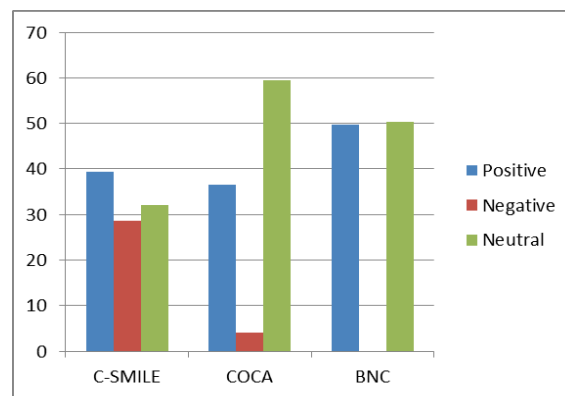


FIGURE 2. Evaluation Categories of Adjective Collocations following “Completely” in Academic Written Discourse of C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC

Figure 2 shows that *completely* employed in all the three corpora is often followed by either positive or neutral adjectives than the negatives ones. Positive adjectives (almost 40%) following *completely* in C-SMILE has the highest occurrence compared to negative adjectives, which only comes in 28%, and neutral adjectives, which has a slightly lower percentage than positive adjectives and comes in 32% occurrence.

Completely in COCA also varies all the three kinds of evaluation, covering positive, negative, and neutral. The percentage of each evaluation is, yet, a bit different from *completely* in C-SMILE as positive adjectives comes in more than 36%, while negative adjectives appears in 4%, and neutral adjectives dominantly occur in almost 60% occurrence of the entire adjective collocations.

Different from the evaluations of adjective collocations appearing in the two corpora, adjectives following *completely* in BNC only cover two kinds of evaluations, positive and neutral. Also, the percentage is nearly balanced from one evaluation to another as positive adjectives occur more than 49% and neutral adjectives reach more than 50% occurrences. In summary, adjective collocations of *completely* in C-SMILE cover similar evaluations to adjectives in COCA, including positive, negative, and neutral. Yet, the evaluation result from C-SMILE is different from adjective evaluations in COCA and BNC. *Completely* in C-SMILE is dominated by positive adjectives, while in COCA and BNC, it comes often with neutral adjectives.

Summarising the adjective collocations following *completely* both in native and non-native academic writings, as noted earlier, *completely* mostly collocates with *free*, *new*, and *different* which belong to positive and neutral evaluations. However, those adjectives are considered too common and have the potential to appear in other amplifiers as well. Partington (1998) documented that *completely* tends to co-occur with words expressing

‘absence’ and ‘change’, such as *empty, forgotten, changed, different, unaware, and lacking* which mostly have negative values. For example, in the sentence ‘The woman in the picture is completely forgotten’, or ‘I am completely unaware that you came before me’, a sense of negative feeling can be observed. Classification of whether a particular adjective is positive, negative, or neutral is principally based on one’s personal interpretation. The knowledge of using and interpreting collocations lies behind the knowledge of general vocabulary (Leśniewska 2006). There is no clear rule to be taught as it is more into intuitive and contextual matters.

However, the present findings taken from native English academic writings show the opposite results as the adjectives mostly fall under the category of positive, negative and neutral evaluations. To see detailed contexts, some relevant samples randomly chosen are presented in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4

- (1) We know that sociobiology is *not completely true* for the same reason we know that history has not ended. (COCA) → *positive evaluation*
- (2) ...Although these treatments are *not completely successful* because of the degenerative nature of dementia, the aim is to retain or... (BNC) → *neutral evaluation*
- (3) ...being restrained by this form of response to the women's movement, is *not completely accurate*, however. There are women holding positions of influence in adult education who... (BNC) → *neutral evaluation*

In spite of having positive, negative or neutral collocational patterns, this cannot be a reason to consider that *completely* is inclined to amplify positive or neutral meaning since there are some ‘no’ items following the adjective-amplifiers phrases, denoting that *completely* is not necessarily used to modify neither positive or neutral, nor negative evaluation. Disregarding the word ‘no’ in the excerpts, the adjectives following *completely* seem to stand in between positive or neutral and negative evaluation. It can happen because *completely* is essentially a quantitative amplification in nature (Bäcklund 1973) which provides justification for every context. Overall, the results of *completely* and its collocations in non-native academic writings point to a distinctive pattern as the adjective collocations of *completely* are fairly distributed in all evaluations.

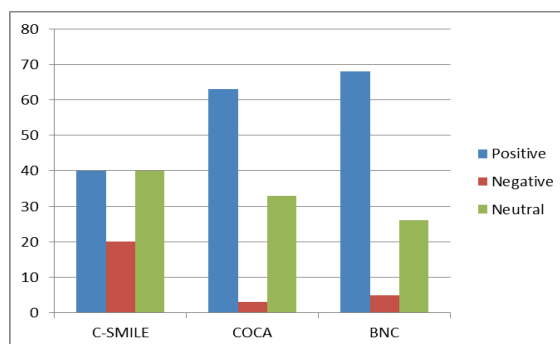


FIGURE 3. Evaluation Categories of Adjective Collocations following “Entirely” in Academic Written Discourse of C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC

Adjective collocations following *entirely* in the three corpora cover all kinds of evaluations positive, negative and neutral (Figure 3). In spite of that, each corpus presents a different percentage denoting the dominant evaluation of adjective collocations used. In C-SMILE, *entirely* is followed by positive and neutral adjectives in the same percentage, 40%. It, thus, only has 20% of negative adjectives.

Entirely in COCA is dominantly attached to positive adjectives, shown by more than 63% occurrences. In the next place, neutral adjectives follow *entirely* in more than 33%,

while negative adjectives only cover about 3% of the overall adjective collocation occurrences. Similar to this situation, *entirely* in BNC also mostly collocates with positive adjectives, specified by more than 68% occurrences. In the second place, *entirely* comes with neutral adjectives in almost 26% occurrences. Also, negative adjectives following *entirely* only occur in about 5% occurrences. In comparing the three corpora, the results of adjective evaluations in C-SMILE create different patterns from adjective evaluations in COCA and BNC. *Entirely* in C-SMILE fairly collocates with positive and neutral adjectives, while in COCA and BNC it mostly occurs with positive adjectives.

In conclusion, *entirely* in native academic writings collocates with both positive and neutral adjectives. However, in non-native usage, *entirely* occurs with neutral adjectives as well. It is apparent from the discussion above that native English writers tend to specify the use of *entirely* only in positive contexts, while non-native English writers do not seem to be familiar with the context and specific function of *entirely*.

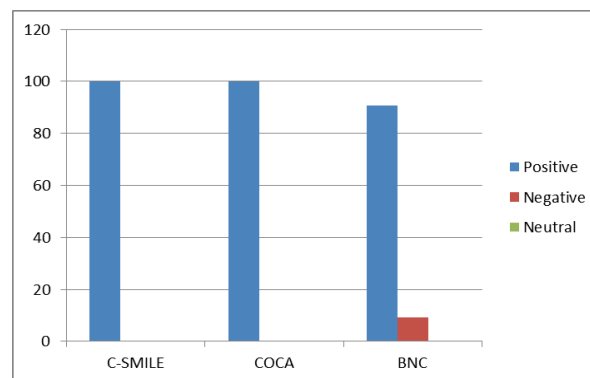


FIGURE 4. Evaluation Categories of Adjective Collocations following “Fully” in Academic Written Discourse of C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC

Unlike the previous amplifiers which occur in more than one adjective evaluation, adjective collocations of *fully* dominantly positive evaluation. As shown in Figure 4, adjective collocations following *fully* in C-SMILE are all in positive evaluation. Similarly, in COCA, all adjectives are also positive. Despite the fact that the adjectives are varied and they occur in different percentages (see appendix 4), they are regarded as positive adjectives. Yet, positive adjectives following *fully* in BNC cover more than 90%, and negative adjectives are in about 9%. By those statistical values, adjective evaluation in C-SMILE constitutes the same occurrences as in COCA, while in BNC they still include a small number of negative adjectives. In all occurrences, the three corpora do not cover any negative adjective collocations of *fully*.

Fully is meant to be in a gradable condition in which the criteria are in exact state and functioned to purely add intensity to a sentence without considering any hyperbolic trend (Quirk et al. 1985), for example poor-moderate-rich, hot-warm-cold, good-fair-bad, and expensive-reasonable-cheap. Relevant samples supporting this point are specified in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5

- (1) Far from being insipid, fence-sitting or unduly critical, **fully effective** graduate student is able to choose, to believe and to act with...(BNC) →positive evaluation
- (2) ...and the measure was widely seen as blocking rather than facilitating a transition to **fully independent** status. (BNC) →positive evaluation
- (3) ...as postnominal non-restrictive qualifiers, the single adjective is also **fully acceptable** to English grammar. (COCA) →positive evaluation

Despite the notion that *fully* does not follow any hyperbolic issue to mark a certain belief (Quirk et al. 1985) and only modifies a sentence based on exact standards, it is not that *fully* can clearly modify a particular intent without considering any context. Specific and measurable criteria, shown in Excerpt 5, are provided in order to define the sense of quantitative in amplifier *fully*. Again, the results of collocation variance show that *fully* exclusively collocates with positive adjectives, lacks a sense of emotiveness and keeps its original function of amplifier which is to add intensity of a certain object to the fullest extent by expressing primary facts only (Skobrankova 2006).

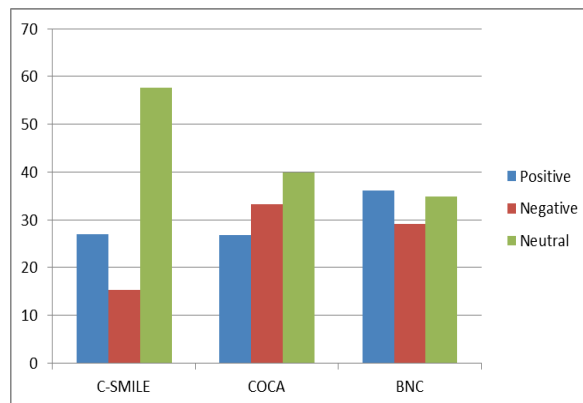


FIGURE 5. Evaluation Categories of Adjective Collocations following “Totally” in Academic Written Discourse of C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC

Figure 5 pictures all distributions of adjective evaluation following *totally* in the three corpora. Each corpus covers all kinds of adjective evaluation, positive, negative, and neutral. Despite the display that the percentage of each adjective evaluation in the three corpora is not in significant gaps, the rank of evaluations denoting the dominance of a particular valuation in every corpus is very much noticeable. However, each corpus shows different dominance of adjective evaluation.

In C-SMILE, *totally* is followed by more than 26% of positive adjective collocations, attached to 15% of negative adjectives, and dominantly collocated with neutral adjectives shown by more than 57% occurrences. In other words, the major evaluation of adjective collocations in C-SMILE is positive. Similarly, neutral adjectives following *totally* in COCA has the highest percentage implying the dominant evaluation of *totally* in American academic written discourse. Unlike C-SMILE which comes with positive adjectives in the second rank of dominant evaluation, the second-highest adjective evaluation in COCA includes negative evaluation. Then, the positive adjective evaluation occurs the least in only 26%.

Collocations of *totally* in BNC, however, are dominated with positive evaluation, shown by 36% occurrences. Neutral adjectives come in more than 34% and negative adjectives appear in about 29% occurrences. Generally, the distributions of adjective evaluation in BNC are relatively balanced. It covers all three evaluations with around 2 to 5% differences of each adjective evaluation. Despite the fact that neutral adjective collocation in all corpora are less varied than the positive and negative adjectives, C-SMILE and COCA has neutral evaluation dominating the entire adjective collocations of *totally*. And adjectives following *totally* in BNC mostly occur in positive evaluation.

Looking at the categorised evaluation of adjective collocations following *totally*, the results partially refute Kennedy’s (2003) and Skobrankova’s (2006) inferences pointing out that *totally* is highly associated with negative collocations. The present results taken from native English academic writings signify that *totally* can associate with positive, negative and

neutral adjectives, although negative adjectives stand in the highest rank compared to the positive and neutral adjectives. This can be attributed to semantic shifting which happens in that a product of collocations, in this regard following amplifier, is less consistent and likely to change by its contexts (Zhang 2010). Some samples representing neutral and positive evaluations of *totally* and its collocations are illustrated in Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6

- (1) I should wish to go and see some country **totally different** from what I have been used to, such as Turkey, where religion. (COCA) → *neutral evaluation*
- (2) It really was a **totally different** approach, and it did include the greater opportunities that gifted children need... (COCA) → *neutral evaluation*
- (3) ...psychoanalysis was like a religion in my circles. It opened up **totally new** insights into the inner world because he made me aware of the existence of... (COCA) → *positive evaluation*

Different from native English use, non-native academic writers use more neutral than negative adjectives to collocate with *totally*. This phenomenon is basically related to non-native writers' mastering pragmatic and semantic functions, which then leads them to be inaccurate when associating a word with semantic evaluation (Zhang 2009).

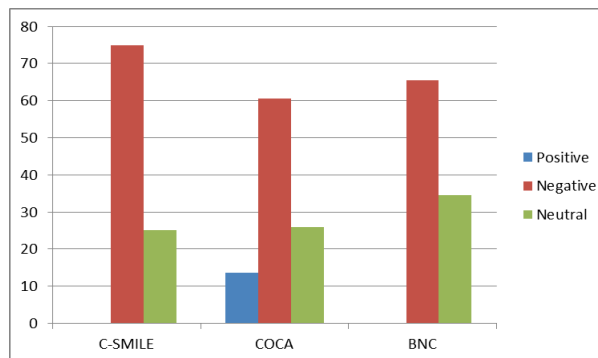


FIGURE 6. Evaluation Categories of Adjective Collocations following “Utterly” in Academic Written Discourse of C-SMILE, COCA, and BNC

In spite of occurring in the lowest frequency, *utterly* still contributes all kinds of evaluations in most corpora. Types of adjective collocation in C-SMILE are not varied, but they are almost fairly spread in all evaluations. Adjective collocations in C-SMILE are dominated by negative evaluation, specified by 75% occurrences, while neutral adjectives only come in the other 25% occurrences.

Negative evaluation in COCA also has the highest dominance of adjectives following *utterly*, shown by more than 60% occurrences. Unlike positive and negative adjective occurrences in C-SMILE which are exactly balanced in percentage, neutral adjectives in COCA occur higher than the positive adjective. Neutral evaluation of adjectives appears in almost 26%, while the positive adjectives only occur in 13%.

BNC, as shown in Figure 6, provides different results as it has no positive adjectives. The dominating evaluation is the negative adjective amounting to more than 65% of occurrences, while the neutral adjectives in BNC occur in about 34%. To compare the results of the three corpora, adjective collocations in C-SMILE are similar to those found in BNC. COCA, on the other hand, contributes different results, for it has positive evaluation of adjective collocation. In short, *utterly* in the three corpora are all dominantly followed by negative adjectives; yet, in COCA, it also occurs with positive adjectives even though it is shown in a small percentage.

Bäcklund (1973) adds that *utterly* is the strongest intensifier in English and has expressive emotions carried to the extreme (Excerpt 7).

Excerpt 7

- (1) ...behavior and life choices are dictated by standards and values that can seem **utterly foreign** in a world as rapidly changing as our own. (COCA) → *negative evaluation*
- (2) ...his debilitating and obtrusive behavior in the mold of “the superfluous man, “**utterly useless** to society...(COCA) → *negative evaluation*
- (3) ...she may be highly permissive about behavior towards visitors and yet **utterly intolerant** when it comes to toileting...(BNC) → *negative evaluation*

The modifiers following *utterly* are all in extreme judgment. Although the context in every sentence contains rational reasons basing particular conditions, such as being ugly, foreign, false, unable, useless, and intolerant, there is still emotive sense given by the writers when amplifying those conditions. Moreover, such strong expressive words are supportive to the basic concept of *utterly* which is to express intensity without giving any extenuation, doubt, or reserve.

In relation to that, *utterly* mostly comes in negative associations, shown by its high percentage of negative adjectives. This finding is also recognised by Quirk et al. (1985) who found that *utterly* is freely used to amplify words such as hate, disagree, detest, and despise. In other words, expressions like lovely, acceptable, good, suitable, etc are not likely to occur together with *utterly*.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Adjective collocations following each amplifier found in one corpus are mostly similar to the other collocations following the amplifiers in the other corpora. In comparative proportion, the number of adjective collocations found in C-SMILE is much smaller than in COCA and BNC. In other words, the adjectives found in COCA and BNC are more varied than that found in C-SMILE. The types of adjectives in COCA and BNC are also mostly similar, while the adjectives in C-SMILE only contribute a low percentage of similarity.

In the overall review of categorisations of adjective collocations, *absolutely* mostly collocates with positive adjectives, *completely* with neutral and positive adjectives, *entirely* with positive adjectives, *fully* with positive adjectives, *totally* with neutral adjectives, and *utterly* with negative adjectives. However, the figures of each amplifier and collocation combination, in some points, show different results between the non-native uses and native uses.

The uses of amplifiers and their collocations are, accordingly, regarded as problematic especially in the case of non-native English writers. The native competence of using amplifier and collocation is basically intuitive and natural (Howarth 1998, Leśniewska 2006). Viewing the overall data and analysis, differences of amplifier and collocation uses that occur in C-SMILE imply a possible understanding regarding the less fortunate situation of non-native English users as they are not closely engaged to a native environment where such natural and intuitive competences develop.

This study has been concerned with and limited to a contextual analysis in which the evaluation of each collocation and amplifier counts on every single condition and situation in sentences. As a result, the evaluation of every combination of amplifier and its collocation may differ from one sentence to another because, again, every sentence analysed here does not necessarily have similar contexts. As noted earlier, the nature of using amplifier and collocation is very intuitive, resulting in an understanding that different interpretations and evaluations are likely to occur.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported with a grant provided by the State University of Malang's LP2M (Research and Development Center) and DIKTI (Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture, the Republic of Indonesia). The research has also been made possible with the help of three research assistants: Ida Ayu Shitadevi, Lely Tri Wijayanti, and Nuan Ifga Guswenda.

REFERENCES

- Bäcklund, U. (1973). The collocation of adverbs of degree in English. PhD Dissertation. Uppsala University.
- Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. London: Continuum.
- Basthomi, Y., Yannuar, N., & Widiati, U. (2013). *C-SMILE. Corpus of State University of Malang Indonesian Learners' English*. Available at State University of Malang Indonesia.
- Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Reppen, R. (Eds.). (1998). *Corpus linguistics: Investigating language structure and use*. Cambridge University Press.
- Biber, D., Stig J., Leech G. & Quirk, R. (2005). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Davies, M. (2004-) BYU-BNC. (Based on the British National Corpus from Oxford University Press). <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>
- Davies, M. (2008-) The corpus of contemporary American English: 450 million words, 1990-present. <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>
- Flores, E.R. & Yin, K. 2015. Topical structure analysis as an assessment tool in student academic writing. *3L: Language Linguistics Literature, Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*. 21(1),103-115.
- Howarth P. (1998): Phraseology and second language proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*. 19, 24-44.
- Ito, R. & Tagliamonte, S. (2003). Well weird, right dodgy, very strange, really cool: Layering and recycling in English intensifiers. *Language in Society*. 32, 257-279.
- Kennedy, G. (2003). Amplifier collocations in the British National Corpus: Implications for English language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*. 37(3), 467-477.
- Kim, Y. & Yoon, H. 2014. The use of L1 as a writing strategy in L2 writing tasks. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*. 14(3), 33-50.
- Leśniewska, J. (2006). Collocations and second language use. *Studia Linguistica, Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis* 123, pp. 95-105.
- Lorenz, G. (1999). *Adjective intensification: Learners versus native speakers: A Corpus Study of Argumentative Writing*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Louw, B. (2000). Contextual prosodic theory: bringing semantic prosodies to life. In C. Heffer, H. Sauntson and G. Fox (Eds.) *Words in context: A tribute to John Sinclair on his retirement* (pp. 48-94). Birmingham: ELR Discourse Analysis Monograph No 18 [CD-ROM publication].
- Lu, X. (2010). Automatic analysis of syntactic complexity in second language writing. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*. 15(4), 474-496.
- Partington, A. (1998). *Patterns and meanings. Using corpora for English Language research and teaching*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Partington, A. (2004). Utterly content in each other's company: Semantic prosody and semantic preference. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*. 9(1). 131-156.
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English Language*. Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- Rayson, P. & Garside, R. (2000). *Comparing corpora using frequency profiling*. Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK.
- Skobrankova, K. (2006). Six English intensifying adverbs. Thesis. (Online), (http://is.muni.cz/th/75314/ff_b/Diplomka.pdf), accessed on Feb 4, 2014.
- Szabó, Z.G. 2001. Adjectives in context. In I. Kenesei & R. M. Harnish (Eds), *Perspectives on semantics, pragmatics, and discourse: A festschrift for Ferenc Kiefer* (pp. 119-146), John Benjamins Publishing Company: Amsterdam/ Philadelphia.
- Tagliamonte, S. (2008). So different and pretty cool! Recycling intensifiers in Toronto, Canada. *English Language and Linguistics*. 12(2), 361-394.
- Wachter, A. R. (2012). *Semantic prosody and intensifier variation in academic speech*. M.A Thesis. University of Michigan, Athens, Georgia.

- Wiechmann, D. & Fuhs, S. (2006). Concordancing software. *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistics Theory*. 2(1), 109-130.
- Wittouck, H. (2011). A corpus-based study on the rise and grammaticalisation of intensifiers in British and American English. Masters Dissertation. Universiteit Gent, Belgium.
- Xiao, R. & Tao, H. (2007). A corpus-based sociolinguistic study of amplifiers in British English. *Sociolinguistic Studies*. 1(2), 241-273.
- Zhang, C. (2010). An overview of corpus-based studies of semantic prosody. *Asian Social Science*. 6(6), 190-194.
- Zhang, W. (2009). Semantic prosody and ESL/EFL Vocabulary Pedagogy. *TESL Canada Journal*. 26(2), 1-12.