

THE ROLE OF LEXICAL INTENSIFIERS IN POPULAR SCIENCE TEXTS

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Abstract: The article explores different sorts of lexical intensifiers and their frequency in English and American popular scientific writings. There is evidence that the intensity of qualitative qualities prevails in the conversation under consideration. Lexical intensifiers' pragmatic roles are examined.

Keywords: the English Language; category of intensity; intensity scale; qualitiveness; quantitiveness; popular science; term; lexical meaning; lexical intensifiers.

In the modern world, events taking place in the field of science influence all areas of our lives. This influence is so significant that every educated person has to be aware of the news of science. Sources of scientific information are quite diverse, it can be radio programs, television programs, films, books, newspapers, Internet portals.

Popular science articles are an indispensable source of science news for most people. It is from the scientific popular magazines and Internet resources non-specialist readers learn about the latest scientific achievements and inventions, new scientific facts. Our study is based on the study English-language popular science articles from American (Discover Magazine 2014, 2015; The New York Times 2014 and others), British (New Scientist Magazine 2013, 2014; The Guardian 2014 and others) and the Australian The Australian (The Australian 2013, 2015) print media and online resources (ABC Science, Plus).

Basic the task of this type of texts is to present scientific information in an interesting and simplified form, for which many numerical means: a special composition of the text; epithets; metaphors; various types of explanations of complex terms, illustrations, attracting the reader's attention; dialogical form of presentation, etc. One of the ways to implement the pragmatic goals of scientific and popular text is the use of lexical intensives, which are the subject of this article.

The topic of intensification was studied by a number of scientists (V. I. Shakhovskiy 1978 [10], I. I. Ubin 1974 [9], I. V. Arnold 1975 [1], I. I. Turansky 1990 [5], V. V. Bezrukova 2004 [4; 5]). However, one there is no consensus on the concept of intensity, no less, most scientists recognize the close relationship of intensity and expressivity. "Exploring the problems of language amplification, scientists cannot but agree that, along with the concept of intensity, denoting an approximate quantitative assessment of quality, which is a particular manifestation of the category of quantity, which exists the concepts of expressiveness, emotiveness, emphases and figurativeness" [4, p. 8]. I. I. Turansky believes that intensity and expressive are interdependent, while the intensity is a characteristic of expressiveness: "intensity is a measure of one or another strength, measure of expressiveness, its degree, measure of emotiveness" [8, p. 6–7]. E. N. Sergeeva believes that, on the contrary, the essence

of the semantic category of expressiveness “consists in the expression of an additional semantic nuances, superimposed on the main (lexical and grammatical) meaning, or in strengthening this meaning” [6, p. 2], the category of intensity is defined in her works as “semantic category, which is based on the concept of gradation of quantity in the broadest sense of the word” [6, p. 3].

One of the first definitions of intensity was given by S. Bally, who defined intensity as the totality of all differences, reduced “to the category of quantity, magnitude, value, strength, etc. regardless of whether we are talking about specific ideas or about abstract ideas” [2, p. 202]. “Intensity as a manifestation quantity characterizes only those features that were originally but there is a degree. And gradual are not only those parametric features of objects, the differences between which are purely quantitative, but also qualitative and evaluative signs, the intensity of manifestation of which is qualitative ” [4, p. 3]. Thus, in the broadest sense of the word, the category of the intensity of is seen as an expression of the quantitative manifestation of signs of the most varied kind.

The category of intensity manifests itself at all levels of the language: phonetic, morphological (degrees of comparison adjective and adverbs), lexical (adverbs, synonymic series), syntactic (inversion, exclamatory sentences). In writing there is a graphical representation of intensity: a word can be italicised, or written in capital letters for emphasis it against the general background of the written text.

In this article, we explore the intensification in the English Language Popular Science articles at the lexical level. V. V. Bezrukova notes that “intensity at the level of the text - the ability of the author to create specific, single representations in the reader’s mind , cause in the recipient's imagination, shapes and colors, movements and sounds, tastes and smells, emotions and assessments that already live in a person’s thoughts, but still hidden behind the sound or graphic shells of it words. The need for them (in means of amplification) is justified and necessary only in the case when new representations, pictures, emotions, insufficiently known to the reader, not comparable with those already ready, and therefore, in need of some special means of description” [5, p. 190]. It is this new knowledge and facts unfamiliar to the readership encourage the authors of popular science texts often resort to the use intensifiers.

The category of intensity is considered by us in the standard model “defining - defined”, in which the defining member of the the literal phrase performs the function of an intensifier. We investigated the frequency of intensifiers in popular science discourse and studied which features are most often subjected to intense . Science posts almost always contain various numbers, statistics, special units of measurement; the concepts of quantity, size, magnitude are an important component description of scientific facts. Therefore, expressions containing such concepts are very often accompanied in popular science text intensifiers.

Quantitative characteristics of an object are present in many articles on astronomy, physics and other natural sciences. Astronomical distances and velocities are measured by quantities, which are difficult for the non-specialist to understand. Such facts are striking image of the reader, and to enhance this effect, intensifiers are used.

Our planet is ringed with more than 1,000 working satellites, plus thousands of tons of space junk, and for the most part they stay up there quite happily (New Scientist, 2013).

Numerals **hundred, thousand, million** in the plural do not give a clear understanding of the quantity of the subject, but reinforce the significance keyword, emphasizing the increase in the number (**billions of times larger, trillions of microbial passengers, millions of trees, thousands of dust grain hits**). Also, as an intensifier before a numeral, use an adjective (at a **mind-blowing** 750,000 miles a day, a **mere** 700 million light years, **some** 26,000 light-years away, **surprising** 5%, at a **whopping** 8.3 million pixels):

CMEs fire off massive clouds of charged particles at speeds that can range from relatively slow up to a mind-boggling 3,000 miles per second (about 10.8 million mph, or 17.4 km/h) (Space and NASA News, 2015).

Sometimes a small amount increases, which is typical for articles on physics or genetics, where we are talking about very small quantities ranks:

For example, a previous lab experiment showed that adding a dash of graphene to a type of polyester boosted its strength by 50 per cent, since graphene is one of the strongest known materials (New Scientist, 2014). gives the following definition: dash – a small quantity of a substance that is added to something else [11].

Thus, lexical intensives, often found when describing the size, the magnitude of the object, can enhance the perception capture both large and small quantities. Moreover, instead of specifying to a specific size in popular science texts are used adjective intensifiers extreme, huge, enormous, immense, tiny and others (**extreme** cost, **enormous** clusters, **supermassive** black hole, **huge chamber** of magma, **extensive** damage, a **tremendous** amount of gas, **tiny** satellite).

A new wave of nuclear scientists aims to build small-scale reactors that provide carbon-free power more cheaply and safely than today's huge power plants (New Scientist, 2014).

These vibrations are transferred to the cochlea in the inner ear via three tiny bones (New Scientist, 2014).

Predominantly, the role of intensifiers is played by separate adjectives, but there are also whole phrases, which contain an indication of the size of the object (the size of a **baby grand** piano):

With a few minutes and a couple of props, your brain can be convinced that one of your limbs is made of rubber or invisible, or that your whole body is the size of a Barbie doll's (Discover Magazine, 2014).

Keyword meaning can be enhanced by an intensifier in combination with adverbs expressing surprise or unusualness, unpredictability. The reader's reaction is programmed using the use of adjectives with adverbs incredibly, surprisingly, unusually, which form lexical chains with double intensification (incredibly small and fantastically strange theoretical feature, unusually compact source of radio waves):

But it is currently unclear how scientists might prove the existence of such an incredibly tiny feature of the universe (Space and NASA News, 2015).

Lead author Hilda Kabali said children younger than a year were exposed to the devices in surprisingly large numbers (The Australian, 2015).

It should be also noted, that quantitative intensification prevails in articles on physics, informatics and media technologies. This is explained by the listed sciences deal more with quantitative characteristics and data. Articles on other topics are dominated by there is a qualitative intensification. Most often, high-quality intensives are used in articles on ecology, zoology, paleontology, genetics.

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