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Social variation in intensifier use: constraint on *-ly* adverbialization in the past?[1]

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While the formation of deadjectival adjuncts by means of *-ly* suffixation is regular in the mainstream varieties of English today (*they sing* Adj-*ly*), that of intensifying word modifiers is much less so (*they sing* Adj-*ly*/Ø *well*). Both categories are typically more variable in many social and regional varieties, in which zero-form adverbs dominate. This article studies the extent to which grammatical and social conditioning played a role in the choice of the form of deadjectival intensifiers between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, before the era of normative grammar. The results indicate that some of the trends of social embedding identified in Present-day English can indeed be observed in the past, but also that the *-ly* suffix was clearly less grammaticalized four hundred years ago than it is today.

1 Introduction

In Present-day English the principal ways of forming new adverbs are suffixation by means of *-ly* and *-wise*, and zero derivation (conversion). Diachronic studies show that the *-ly* suffix has become increasingly productive over time: it is now capable of forming degree modifiers and sentence adverbs, and can even be applied to present participles and stative adjectives (Kjellmer 1984; Nevalainen 1997; Swan 1997; Killie 2000). Developments such as these can be viewed as indicators that the *-ly* suffix is becoming fully productive and is close to qualifying as an inflectional suffix; in fact, some researchers argue that this is already the case (Marchand 1969; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik 1985: 1556; Baayen & Renouf 1996). In this sense, we can talk about *-LY* ADVERBIALIZATION as a process of GRAMMATICALIZATION.

Despite its high productivity, however, *-ly* suffixation has not been implemented to the same extent in all adverb categories. Intensifiers continue to be a particularly heterogeneous class, containing a number of suffixless deadjectival adverbs such as *bloody*, *pretty*, *real* and *very*. Previous research shows that in Present-day English the choice between *-ly* and zero-derived intensifiers such as *real* and *really* varies regionally (Kortmann & Schneider 2006), and can be affected by social and stylistic factors (Macaulay 1995, 2002; Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan 1999: 564; Tagliamonte & Ito 2002; Ito & Tagliamonte 2003). In this article I will discuss the

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extent to which the spread of *-ly* to intensifiers was socially determined rather than regulated solely by linguistic constraints in the past. It is noteworthy that what looks like free variation is also commonly attested with the choice of intensifier form in earlier English (Peters 1994: 284).

The terminology I use mostly follows that of Quirk et al. (1985). The term MODIFIER refers to the basic syntactic function of adverbs that modify adjectives and other adverbs, and thus operate at the level of constituents rather than at the clause level. When intensifiers assume a Verb(-Phrase) modifying role they are classified as SUBJUNCTS (Quirk et al. 1985: 583). Subjuncts have a syntactically subordinate role compared with other sentence elements, including ADJUNCTS, which fulfil clause-level functions as adverbials. On this adverbial cline, subjuncts fall between modifiers and adjuncts. We may assume that *-ly* suffixation spread from its typical context of adjunct formation via subjuncts to modifiers (Nevalainen 1994; Nevalainen & Rissanen 2002).

This study sheds light on the process of *-ly* adverbialization and its social embedding in a set of intensifiers drawn from a socially stratified corpus, the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003; Raumolin-Brunberg & Nevalainen 2007). I will focus on the period from the fifteenth to the late seventeenth century tracing the history of a set of dual-form intensifiers the zero forms of which were condemned by eighteenth-century normative grammarians. The pairs to be analysed consist of *exceeding/exceedingly*, *excellent/excellently*, *extraordinary/extraordinarily*, *extreme/extremely*, *full/fully* and *marvellous/marvellously*. They all function as AMPLIFIERS, and scale the meaning of the modified element upwards from an assumed norm (Quirk et al. 1985: 445). The study includes the *-ly* and zero-form instances of these intensifiers in both subjunct and modifier functions.

In the eighteenth century, suffixless adverbs in general, and intensifiers in particular, were condemned by prescriptive grammarians. Robert Lowth (1764: 94), one of the household names of eighteenth-century prescriptive grammar, denounced collocations such as *excellent well*, *extreme elaborate* and *marvellous graceful*.[2] As Sundby, Bjørge & Haugland (1991: 200–3) illustrate, eighteenth-century grammars branded suffixless intensifiers as 'improper', 'inelegant', 'absurd', 'unidiomatic' and 'ungrammatical' or simply 'bad'. The fact that such proscriptions arose suggests not only linguistic variation but also social differentiation. Appeals to notions such as 'improper' and 'inelegant' imply SECOND-ORDER INDEXICALITY, attaching to the use of these forms a social evaluation of their users (Milroy 1999).

Analysing extralinguistic factors, such as writers' socio-economic status and regional background, may provide evidence of the degree to which *-ly* suffixation has been implemented across the social spectrum over time. If a grammaticalization process fails to apply to some significant sections of the language community, extralinguistic determinants can lead to dialect differentiation, and give rise to variety grammars with grammaticalization histories of their own. Some such variety grammars will

[2] For the rise of the eighteenth-century prescriptive tradition in England, see Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2000).

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be addressed in section 3, after a more comprehensive discussion of processes of adverbialization from the perspective of grammaticalization in section 2. I will present my material in section 4 and, in section 5, the results I obtained, both quantitative and qualitative. Section 6 will relate them to present-day variation within a wider framework, referring to notions such as social layering in grammaticalization and comparative sociolinguistics (Tagliamonte 2001).

2 Adverbialization as grammaticalization

Before tackling *-ly* adverbialization in its syntactic and social contexts, we need to specify the extent to which this process of adverb formation qualifies as a process of grammaticalization, indexing a lexical item for a particular syntactic function. In Nevalainen (1997) I presented diachronic evidence to argue that English now has a *more grammaticalized* adverb category than it had in the past, basing my argument on the view that grammatical categories are inherently scalar. It is traditionally held that adverbs constitute an open class and can therefore be considered content words. However, if we position adjectives and adverbs on a continuum between form and content words, *-ly* adverbs are the more grammaticalized category of the two precisely because they are derived from adjectives. Moreover, *-ly* adverbs are atypical content words in that few of them can be inflected for comparison.

Bringing the issue down to the morphological level, we may ask whether *-ly* adverbialization is a WORD-FORMATION process in English. After all, it meets several criteria usually set for inflectional systems. The suffix itself has minimal semantic content, and so fulfils the requirement of generality associated with inflectional elements. It is highly productive: in Modern English, it is possible to form adverbs from practically all adjectives by means of the *-ly* suffix. Killie (2000) shows how *-ly* adverbs have begun to be formed from stative adjectives such as colour terms in the last two centuries (cf. Kjellmer 1984). There is also a good deal of evidence showing how the suffix has become more productive over time, capable of forming sentence adverbs and intensifiers, for instance (Nevalainen 1997; Swan 1997; for a summary, see Brinton & Traugott 2005: 132–6). As Swan (1997) demonstrates, in this respect English differs from other Germanic languages such as German and Norwegian, whose adverb marking and functional range are considerably more limited.

Moreover, the complex ways in which the multiple functions of English adverbs are described by grammars such as Quirk et al. (1985) suggests that there are item-specific processes of grammaticalization of *-ly* adverbs (Nevalainen & Rissanen 2002). This means that adverbialization does not constitute a simple inflectional process in English, but that *-ly* suffixation and zero derivation can also be diachronic processes: not all adverbial functions are available to all adverbs at all times. The adverb category resembles pronouns and prepositions in that it contains subcategories such as focusing subjuncts and intensifiers whose membership cannot be augmented at will (Nevalainen 1991; Peters 1994; Macaulay 2006). Although these adverbial subcategories may be less stable over time than those of pronouns, for instance, their members may be

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interpreted as grammatical elements which have become more grammatical; as such they are not the typical products of inflectional processes.

One way to settle the apparent conflict between the productivity of the *-ly* suffix and these closed-class adverbs is to consider adverbialization as a staggered process. I suggested in Nevalainen (2004: 25–6) that the inflectional analysis gives an adequate description of the productivity of *-ly* adverbialization with regard to the adverbial function of adjuncts, and of manner adjuncts in particular. Considering *-ly* suffixation from this angle, adverbialization is not only *adverb formation*, but also *adverbial formation* in terms of clause-level functions. This process, presented in Pattern I, applies to the vast majority of adjectives at any given time. However, as it is still gaining ground in the mainstream varieties of Present-day English, it falls into the transitional area between derivation and inflection. Brinton & Traugott (2005: 93) place it towards the productive end (G3) of their cline of grammaticality (G1–G3).

Pattern I:	adj 1	→	adv-*ly* 1
	adj 2	→	adv-*ly* 2
	. . .		. . .
	adj n	→	adv-*ly* n

Pattern I maximizes the productivity of *-ly*, suggesting that adverbs in their typical adverbial functions are formed from adjectives and continue to have regular correspondences with their adjectival bases. This pattern is of course not restricted to *-ly* suffixation, but is also followed by suffixless or zero forms in those varieties in which they are productive (on the spread of zero forms, see section 3).

Pattern II suggests two more complex scenarios, both of them attested with intensifiers, and with *-ly* and zero adverbs alike. The first, IIa, depicts adjectival polysemy giving rise to an adverbial function (adv 1b). It can be illustrated by the adjective *pretty*, whose sense 'fair' gives rise to senses such as 'fair-sized' and 'considerable', which are the likely source of the modifier *pretty* (*pretty good*) (Nevalainen 2004: 23).

Pattern IIa:	adj 1a	→	adj 1b	→	adv 1b
Pattern IIb:	adj 2a	→	adv 2a	→	adv 2b

In the second scenario, IIb, the connection between a derived adverb (adv 2b) and its adjectival base (adj 2a) is obliterated after the first adverb (adv 2a) acquires new senses and functions. The modifiers *fair* and *fairly* (*fairly soon*) illustrate this pattern: the highly polysemous adjective *fair* was the source of the Old and Middle English adverb *fair*, which also developed intensifying senses ('completely', 'fully', 'quite'), which it did not share with the adjective. Sense developments like this, typical of intensifiers, produce adverbial homonymy (Peters 1994: 269; Nevalainen & Rissanen 2002: 378). They are also attested for *fairly*, which coexisted with *fair* for centuries (Nevalainen 2004: 21–2). I will assume a similar synonymous relationship for the suffixless and suffixed amplifiers that I will analyse in this study.

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Adverbs which assume grammatical specializations as degree modifiers, for example, may be accounted for in terms of grammaticalization. Brinton & Traugott (2005: 136) position them midway along their cline of grammaticality (G1–G3), in the semi-productive closed-class category G2. However, diachronic processes that involve the replacement of a suffixless adverb by the corresponding *-ly* form may simply count as evidence for the further grammaticalization of the *-ly* suffix, as in Pattern III:

Pattern III:	zero-adv 1 / adv-*ly* 1	→	adv-*ly* 1
	zero-adv 2 / adv-*ly* 2	→	adv-*ly* 2

I suggested above that *-ly* adverbs are a more grammaticalized category than adjectives because they are formed from adjectives. This is also the case with zero adverbs, which in Middle English succeeded the Old English (OE) adverbs ending in *-e*. The concomitant rise of the *-lich(e)* suffix created a dual-form system, discussed in 3.2, below, which may be described in terms of what Hopper (1991: 22) calls LAYERING in grammaticalization. The more recent layer was periphrastic: the adverbial suffix goes back to OE *lice* 'body', 'likeness', and its reduced form *-ly* has retained its morphological distinctiveness. The older layer now consists of morphologically opaque zero adverbs. These demonstrate what Hopper (1991: 22) calls PERSISTENCE: despite the overwhelming productivity of the more recent layer, the older one need not disappear. Parallel resources may also give rise to alternative grammars, as to some extent appears to be the case in English adverb formation.

3 Evidence for variety grammars in adverb formation

3.1 Present-day variation

Kortmann & Schneider's general survey of varieties of English (2006) gives an overall picture of the spread of suffixless adverbs, both degree modifiers (*that's real good*) and other deadjectival adverbs (*he treated her wrong*), in 46 regional varieties of English around the world. In 29 of these varieties, suffixless deadjectival adverbs are pervasive, and in 10 others they are very frequent. As for degree modifiers, the overall proportion of zero forms is similarly high: they predominate in 27 out of the 46 varieties and are very frequent in another 8.

According to this survey the varieties that favour zero forms in both cases include colloquial American English, urban African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Newfoundland English, East Anglian English, Northern British English, Irish English, Welsh English, New Zealand English and a number of other regional (first- and second-language) varieties, including English-based creoles. By contrast, those with the lowest scores of zero adverbs of both kinds include South-Eastern and South-Western British English, Australian English, white South African English and Singapore English; in none of them are zero forms pervasive.

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This survey appears to reflect the different histories of the varieties, both in demographic terms and in terms of prescription. Tagliamonte & Ito (2002: 259) refer to the founder principle, noting that 'American English was undoubtedly predisposed by its founders to develop from a stage of frequent use of the zero adverb.' They also suggest that the influence of linguistic prescriptivism on adverb form was not so strong in the United States as it was in England. Both demographic factors and social sanction no doubt contribute to the variety differences reported in the Kortmann & Schneider survey.

Evidence for social differentiation in adverb use also emerges in research on regional varieties. Macaulay's Scottish data (1995, 2002), collected from Ayr and Glasgow, indicate that *-ly* adverbs are not characteristic of lower-class speech to the same extent as they are of middle-class speech. Middle-class speakers used suffixed forms in the adverb classes studied, including intensifiers, twice as frequently as working-class speakers. A similar pattern was found even for single-form intensifiers such as *very*, which Macaulay (2002: 404) observes is almost categorically a middle-class word in his data. He attributes these findings to a stable difference in speech styles between these social classes (a notion also discussed by Cheshire 2005).

Ito & Tagliamonte (2003) similarly find that educated informants use intensifiers more than the uneducated in their Northern English data from York. However, they also note the rapid rise of *really* at the expense of *very* among young and middle-aged informants, while the suffixless intensifier *real* is found to mark less-educated male speech (Tagliamonte & Ito 2002). Using corpora of standard English, Lorenz (2002) similarly argues for an increase in the use of *really* as an adjective modifier in British English over the last few decades, a tendency also found in Canadian English (see Tagliamonte this issue).

Genre sensitivity in intensifier use is amply in evidence in Present-day English. Biber et al. (1999: 564) find that 'conversation uses a wider range of common intensifiers than academic prose', and that American and British English conversation 'have a similar profile of frequency except that *so*, *totally*, *really* and *real* are more common in AmE', and that '*bloody* and *absolutely* are more common in BrE'. The material they analysed comes from a corpus that represents the standard varieties of American and British English.

However, relatively rapid turnover is documented in popular intensifiers. Tagliamonte & Roberts (2005) report that in the long-running TV series *Friends*, the typical North American intensifier, *really*, was taken over by *so*, especially in the speech of female speakers, between 1994 and 2002. However, as suggested by the Scottish adolescent data reported by Macaulay (2006), popular trends do not necessarily override local usages. The top three intensifiers used by the Glasgow working-class adolescents Macaulay recorded in 1997 were, in this order, *pure*, *dead* and *so*. In his 2004 data, the group identity marker *pure* had retained its position, but *so* had surpassed *dead* in popularity. However, Macaulay found a gender difference in the use of *pure*: it was much more frequent in girls' speech than in boys'.

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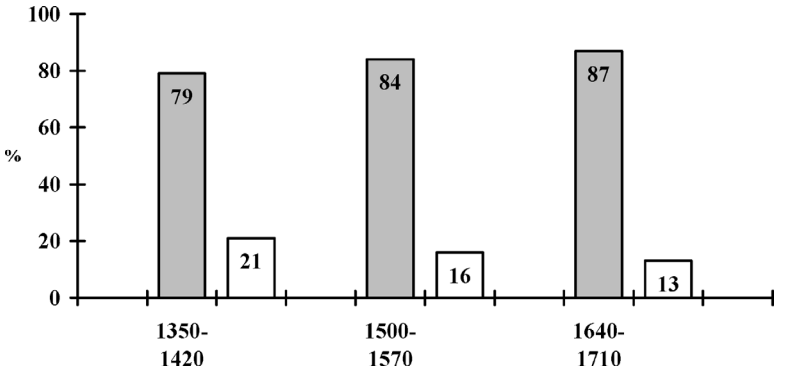


Figure 1. Relative frequencies of suffixed (grey) and suffixless (white) adverb types in Late Middle and Early Modern English in the *Helsinki Corpus* (based on Nevalainen 1997: 162)

3.2 Dual-form adverbs in the history of English

The status of English suffixless adverbs has changed over the centuries. Some of them, such as *hard* and *soft*, go back to Old English, where they were formed by means of the adverbial suffix *-e*. After the levelling of word-final morphology in the course of Middle English, which obliterated the adverbial suffix *-e*, many adverbs were formed by means of zero derivation. However, by this time suffixation by *-li(che)*/*-ly(che)* had already become the main means of adverb formation. My study of the multigenre *Helsinki Corpus* (Nevalainen 1997) indicates that the overall number of suffixless adverb types was reduced even further in the course of the Late Middle and Early Modern English periods. This trend is shown in figure 1.

Table 1 gives a ranked list of the ten most frequent suffixless adverbs in three subperiods of the *Helsinki Corpus* (Nevalainen 1997: 174). Only items with attested dual morphology are listed. The table shows that *full* heads the list in the period from 1350 to 1420, but comes only seventh in the first Early Modern English subperiod, 1500–1570, and drops out of the list altogether in the third, 1640–1710.

Table 1 suggests that *very* replaced *full* as the most popular intensifying word modifier in Early Modern English, just as *full* had taken over from *swiþe* in Middle English (Méndez-Naya 2003: 386). The other frequent Middle English intensifier and focusing subjunct, *right*, remained in the Early Modern English top ten throughout the period. As table 1 shows, a new suffixless intensifier, *pretty*, surfaced in the last subperiod, 1640–1710. The popular Present-day English intensifier *real(ly)* only started to spread in Late Modern English, however.

A large number of less frequent intensifiers, both suffixed and suffixless, were introduced in the Early Modern period. In his corpus-based study, Peters (1994: 286) finds that letters with private or emotional content show the highest frequencies of amplifiers, and boosters in particular, which denote a high point on a scale. Although he observes that new boosters are common in the letters of accomplished writers, he

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Table 1. The ten most frequent suffixless adverbs in three periods in the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (Nevalainen 1997; absolute frequencies)

Period/rank order	1350–1420	1500–70	1640–1710
1.	**FULL** (253)	**VERY** (174)	**VERY** (424)
2.	**RIGHT** (202)	EVEN (96)	EVEN (69)
3.	LONG (56)	LONG (90)	LONG (63)
4.	ALONE (32)	**RIGHT** (71)	STILL (52)
5.	MOST (30)	STILL (38)	JUST (39)
6.	SORE (24)	SORE (23)	PRETTY (31)
7.	STILL (24)	**FULL** (18)	ALONE (26)
8.	EVEN (23)	NEAR (18)	NEAR (20)
9.	LATE (17)	ALONE (17)	**RIGHT** (20)
10.	NEAR (17)	LIKE (17)	MOST (17)

comes to the general conclusion that personal letters are not setting fashionable trends in creating boosters.

Peters (1994: 272) also studied the *OED* record from the Late Middle English period on, and found that the first attestations of boosters often occurred in dramatic dialogue, political and religious polemics, handbooks and instructive prose (especially for Latinate, 'hard-word' boosters), travel literature, and from the early eighteenth century onwards, in magazines and newspapers. Generic trends in intensifier use have also been traced back to Middle English in medical texts (Pahta 2006).

Little research is available on the social embedding of intensifier use in earlier English. The generic trends referred to above say something about the first dating, and therefore potential actuation of new boosters, but little about their diffusion in the language community. My exploratory study sets out to analyse the use of a set of dual-form intensifiers by different social groups before the era of normative grammar. As noted in section 1, prescriptive grammarians condemned the use of zero adverbs in the eighteenth century. Normative grammars proscribed the intensifier use of items such as *exceeding*, *excellent*, *extraordinary*, *extreme*, *full* and *marvellous*. These proscriptions suggest not only linguistic variation, i.e. the actual use of suffixless forms, but also social stratification of this use. 'Improper', 'inelegant' and similar judgements listed by Sundby et al. (1991: 200–3) imply second-order indexing, attaching to linguistic forms a social evaluation of their users. I therefore also expect to find social variation in their use in the previous centuries.

4 Material and method

The set of intensifiers I analysed for this study consists of six of the dual-form adverbs whose short forms are cited in *A Dictionary of English Normative Grammar 1700–1800* (Sundby et al. 1991) as having caught the critical attention of eighteenth-century normative grammarians: *exceeding(ly)*, *excellent(ly)*, *extraordinary(ly)*, *extreme(ly)*,

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full(y) and *marvellous(ly)*. These particular adverbs were selected because of their overall frequency in the data studied.

My material comes from the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC), compiled by the Historical Sociolinguistics team in Helsinki. It covers the period from c.1400 to 1800. The focus of this study is on the prenormative period, Late Middle and Early Modern English before 1680, which is covered by the 1998 version of CEEC. With its Supplement, this part of the corpus consists of some three million words produced by nearly 800 writers representing mostly upper and middling social ranks, but also containing original material from the social lower ranks of the period. The number of women writers is about 20 per cent of the total in each subperiod.[3] A search of the corpus returned a total of 1,020 instances of the six dual-form adverbs (including all the spelling variants of the lexemes).

The linguistic variable I constructed for this study makes a distinction, using the terminology of Quirk et al. (1985), between the modifier and subjunct functions of adverbs. It is based on previous research, which suggests that there is a basic syntactic difference in the use of suffixed and suffixless intensifiers in earlier English (Ungerer 1988: 261–3; Nevalainen 1994: 245–6; Peters 1994: 284–5). Zero intensifiers favour adverb and adjective heads, and so typically function as word modifiers. By contrast, intensifying *-ly* adverbs tend to occur with verbal and participial heads, and thus function as subjuncts. This form–function specialization is illustrated by the six pairs of adverbs in (1) to (6).

(1) (a) The bride was maried in her haire that hung downe long, with an **exceding rich** coronet on her head (which the King valued the next day at a million of crownes). (1613, John Chamberlain; I, 424, CEEC)

(b) . . . the Palsgrave mounted upon a high bounding horse, which he managed so like a horsman, that he was **excedingly commended** and had many showts and acclamations of the beholders, (1613, John Chamberlain; I, 424, CEEC)

(2) (a) He hath a daughter, a civill well-disposed and discreete young mayde: who works very well and playes **excellent well** of the virgenols; (1647, Unton Dering; II, 129, CEEC)

[3] For the CEEC corpora, see Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 43–9) and Raumolin-Brunberg & Nevalainen (2007). The corpus suite currently consists of five subcorpora, two of them (2 and 5) published through the ICAME and Oxford Text Archives:

1. *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC), 1998 version, c.1410–1681, 2.7 million words, 96 letter collections, 778 informants.
2. *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler* (CEECS), c.1410–1681, 450,000 words, 23 letter collections, 194 informants. Published.
3. *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Supplement* (CEEC Supplement), c.1410–1681, c.340,000 words, 11 letter collections, c.60 informants (in progress).
4. *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension* (CEECE), 1681–1800, c.1.85 million words, c.70 letter collections, c.270 informants (in progress).
5. *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (PCEEC), c.1410–1681, c.2.2 million words, 84 collections, 666 informants. Published.

For this study, I have included subcorpus 1 in its entirety, and the Factory collection, about 200,000 words of merchant letters, from subcorpus 3.

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Table 2. Absolute numbers and frequency/100,000 words of the dual-form adverbs, by century

Period	Suffixless	per 100,000 words	Suffixed	per 100,000 words
15th century	121	29.9	35	8.7
16th century	92	9.8	137	14.6
17th century	249	15.9	386	24.6
Total	462	15.9	558	19.2

(b) . . . I beleeve none of them; unlesse it bee that of my Lady Newport which I must confesse is soe like her, that if it bee not true twas at least **Excellently fancyed**. (1654, Dorothy Osborne; 142, CEEC)

(3) (a) I have good content here in all things, but I find it **extraordinarye chargeable** for one who would live in good fashions (you told me so much before I came). (1627, Thomas Coppin; I, 32, CEEC)

(b) . . . but in mine I yett amongst many others observe this one passage, that hee that doth nott **extraordinarily love** Venus will never prove a good soldier under mars. (1642, Henry Oxinden; I, 286, CEEC)

(4) (a) I came the later, the way beeing hard for a stranger to hitt, the myles long, and a cuntry so **extreame foule**, that I think winter is to be found heer at Midsummer. (1615, John Holles; I, 61, CEEC)

(b) . . . I confesse I **disdaine extreamly** to thinke, such a thing as the Chamberlaine should indanger to putt the Marshall to the worse. (1632, Thomas Wentworth; 307, CEEC)

(5) (a) My Sister and her Family were well last night, and **full glad** I am that you are so, hoping that one post or two more will put an end to your absence from home. (1679, Samuel Pepys; 79, CEEC)

(b) But of this, you shall not need to take notice to his family, for I have not yet **fully acquainted** him with my intentions herein. (1679, Samuel Pepys; 143, CEEC)

(6) (a) . . . the newes and every materiall point, which vppon the reding his Grace well noted vn to the Quenys Grace and all other abowt hym who were **mervelouse glad** to here it. (1524, Thomas More; 312, CEEC)

(b) Mr Howard **meruelusly incendyth** the Kyng ayenst the Scottis: by whos wantone meanys hys grace spend*yth* mych money, and ys more dyssposyd to ware than paxe. (1511, Thomas Wolsey; 54, CEEC)

5 Findings

5.1 Overall trends

A number of empirical generalizations can be made on the basis of the corpus data. First, the spread of the *-ly* suffix over time is evidenced in the normalized frequencies of the adverbs. Table 2 gives the frequencies of the six suffixed and suffixless adverbs in three centuries (in this and subsequent tables, the seventeenth century extends until 1680). We can see that in the fifteenth century the suffixless forms were on average much more frequent per 100,000 words than in the next two centuries. Suffixed forms

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Table 3. Modifier function (all data); percentage of suffixless forms

Period	Suffixless (% of total)	Suffixed	Total
15th century	113 (97%)	3	116
16th century	84 (87%)	13	97
17th century	227 (72%)	87	314
Total	424	103	527

Table 4. Subjunct function (all data); percentage of suffixed forms

Period	Suffixless	Suffixed (% of total)	Total
15th century	8	32 (80%)	40
16th century	8	124 (94%)	132
17th century	22	299 (93%)	321
Total	38	455	493

pick up in the course of time, but do not reach the fifteenth-century average of the suffixless ones.

The most interesting general result is that head type continues to correlate with the form of dual-form adverbs throughout the Late Middle and Early Modern period. Table 3 presents the distribution of suffixed and suffixless intensifiers in the modifier function, that is, with adjectival and adverbial heads. Although the relative proportion of suffixed adverbs increases during the three centuries studied, the basic system remains in place throughout the period: the modifier function is clearly associated with zero-forms, and these occur in 72 per cent of the cases even as late as the seventeenth century. These figures imply that the vast majority of the writers in the corpus use zero intensifiers in the modifier function.

To complete the overall picture, let us compare the information in table 3 with that in table 4. Table 4 summarizes the frequencies of suffixed and suffixless forms in the subjunct function, that is, with verbal and participial heads. In this function, the use of the suffixless form is greatly reduced between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, from 20 per cent to a mere 6 per cent of the cases, as the suffixed form becomes increasingly predominant. Not unexpectedly, the *-ly* suffix continues to spread in its preferred verbal contexts. The answer to my research question would thus appear to be that grammatical rather than social conditioning was the primary factor in deciding the choice of adverb form at the time.

We shall see, however, that the diachronic changes suggested by tables 3 and 4 are partly adverb-specific, in that the use of some intensifiers picks up while that of others recedes. But, significantly, the overall trend of increased use of *-ly* with modifiers can be also traced to the individual adverbs. This finally gives us a handle on linguistic innovators – people and groups of people who promoted the use of *-ly*

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intensifiers – making it possible to assess the role played by social factors in this process of change over time.

5.2 Lexical developments

For some writers, a search of the corpus returns minimal pairs of amplifiers, such as *exceeding(ly)* in (7), *excellent(ly)* in (8) and *full(y)* in (9). Cases like this suggest relatively free variation between the two morphosyntactic options at a given point in time, or at least for certain individual informants. However, I would argue that these overlapping cases may also be indicative of changes in progress in a given dual-form adverb.[4]

(7) (a) I am **exceeding sorry** the strangurie is become soe afflictive unto you. (1653, Thomas Browne; 285, CEEC)
(b) Butt I am **exceedingly sorry** for the death of that worthy honest gentleman Dr Jaspar Needhame, and the colledge will have a great losse of him. (1679, Thomas Browne; 136, CEEC)

(8) (a) I blese god we be all very well in health and thy father most **exelent well** even every way: god howl*d h*im so for ever . . . (1626, Katherine Paston; 96, CEEC)
(b) I doe like this striffe (if I maye so cal it) **excelently well**. for in this kinde the more we striue the. better we agree. (1626?, Katherine Paston; 90, CEEC)

(9) (a) And many thynges haue there syns in this greate matter growne i*n* questyon wherin I neyther am suffycyently learned in *the* law nor **full enfurmed** of the facte . . . (1534, Thomas More; 536, CEEC)
(b) . . . that it may lyke yow at such oportune tyme or tymys as your wisedom may fynde, to helpe that his Highnes may by your goodnes be **fully enformed** of my true faithfull mynde . . . (1534, Thomas More; 500, CEEC)

Let us turn to the profiles of the individual adverbs and, proceeding in chronological order, begin with *full(y)*. Table 5 indicates that *full* was typically used as a modifier in the fifteenth century, occurring in 97 per cent of the modifier instances of this dual-form adverb, whereas *fully* was the form associated with the subjunct function (occurring in 78 per cent of the subjunct cases). As in earlier periods, the subjunct function was a good deal less common than the modifier in the fifteenth century (Méndez-Naya 2004). The situation changed quite rapidly as the subjunct *fully* gained momentum in the following century, and became the principal form–function combination for this dual adverb in terms of frequency of occurrence.

We know from previous studies that this process coincided with the rapid expansion of *very* in the modifier function in the sixteenth century (see table 1, above). A functional division obviously took place, promoting the subjunct and demoting the modifier function of this dual-form adverb. In the seventeenth-century data, nearly half of the instances of *full* (18 out of 39) also assumed the subjunct function.

[4] There is a good deal of collocational overlap in the use of the six adverb pairs. They frequently modify items such as *glad*, *good*, *ill*, *well*, *much*, *pleased*, *satisfied* and *sorry*. No one item appears to be associated solely with semantically positive or negative heads (see also Peters 1994).

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Table 5. *Full/fully* (percentages of the modifier and subjunct functions, respectively)

Period	*full* (modifier)	*full* (subjunct)	*fully* (modifier)	*fully* (subjunct)
15th century	113 (97%)	8	3	29 (78%)
16th century	29 (81%)	8	7	90 (92%)
17th century	21 (81%)	18	5	142 (89%)
Total	163	34	15	261

Table 6. *Marvellous/marvellously* (percentages of the modifier and subjunct functions)

Period	*marvellous* (modifier)	*marvellous* (subjunct)	*marvellously* (modifier)	*marvellously* (subjunct)
15th century	0	0	0	3
16th century	37 (88%)	0	5	16 (100%)
17th century	2	0	0	3
Total	39	0	5	22

Table 7. *Exceeding/exceedingly* (percentages of the modifier and subjunct functions)

Period	*exceeding* (modifier)	*exceeding* (subjunct)	*exceedingly* (modifier)	*exceedingly* (subjunct)
15th century	0	0	0	0
16th century	12 (100%)	0	0	6 (100%)
17th century	101 (80%)	3	25	49 (94%)
Total	113	3	25	55

A more extreme case of an intensifier losing its popularity is that of the modifier *marvellous*, shown in table 6. Peaking in the sixteenth century (and popular in Shakespeare), the use of the modifier plummets in the seventeenth century, the less popular subjunct *marvellously* following suit. This arrest of development may be connected with the gain in currency of other Latinate items at the time, in particular *exceeding(ly)* and *extreme(ly)*.

Table 7 shows how the use of the modifier *exceeding*, in particular, picks up in the seventeenth century, and the modifier use of the *-ly* form *exceedingly* follows the same pattern. I will return to these processes below.

Table 8 indicates a very similar trend for the dual adverb pair *extreme* and *extremely*. The main difference between *exceeding(ly)* and *extreme(ly)* is the higher frequency of the suffixed form *extremely* in both modifier and subjunct functions. The modifier use of the *-ly* form in this dual adverb is in fact proportionately the highest of all the items investigated.

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Table 8. *Extreme/extremely* (percentages of the modifier and subjunct functions)

Period	*extreme* (modifier)	*extreme* (subjunct)	*extremely* (modifier)	*extremely* (subjunct)
15th century	0	0	0	0
16th century	4 (80%)	0	1	11 (100%)
17th century	67 (59%)	0	46	89 (100%)
Total	71	0	47	100

Table 9. *Extraordinary/extraordinarily* (percentages of the modifier and subjunct functions)

Period	*extraordinary* (modifier)	*extraordinary* (subjunct)	*extraordinarily* (modifier)	*extraordinarily* (subjunct)
15th century	0	0	0	0
16th century	2	0	0	1
17th century	21 (78%)	0	7	7 (100%)
Total	23	0	7	8

Table 10. *Excellent/excellently* (percentages of the modifier and subjunct functions)

Period	*excellent* (modifier)	*excellent* (subjunct)	*excellently* (modifier)	*excellently* (subjunct)
15th century	0	0	0	0
16th century	0	0	0	0
17th century	15 (79%)	1	4	9 (90%)
Total	15	1	4	9

Tables 9 and 10 show the frequency of occurrence of the dual adverb pairs *extraordinary*/*extraordinarily* and *excellent*/*excellently*, both recent and relatively infrequent in the seventeenth century. However, both have the *-ly* modifier alternative, thus lending support to my argument concerning the generalization of the *-ly* suffix in this function.

If we examine the three most frequent amplifier pairs in the seventeenth century, we find varying degrees of morphological overlap in modifier use, but much less in the subjunct function. Table 11 shows that *full/fully* and *exceeding/exceedingly* have the least overlap as modifiers, while *extreme/extremely* has the most. It is noteworthy that *full*/*fully* is the least frequent of the three as a modifier.

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Table 11. Functional distribution of three common dual-form amplifiers in the seventeenth century

Adverb	Zero modifier	*-ly* modifier	Zero subjunct	*-ly* subjunct
full/-ly	21 (81%)	5 (19%)	18 (11%)	142 (89%)
exceeding/-ly	101 (80%)	25 (20%)	3 (6%)	49 (94%)
extreme/-ly	67 (59%)	46 (41%)	0 (0%)	89 (100%)

Table 12. Use of *full* and *fully* according to gender in the fifteenth–seventeenth centuries; number of occurrences (N) normalized to 100,000 words (Freq.)

	Women		Men	
Adverb forms	N	Freq.	N	Freq.
full 15th c.	26	*39.1*	95	*28.1*
full 16th c.	4	*7.0*	33	*3.8*
full 17th c.	9	*2.8*	30	*2.4*
fully 15th c.	3	*4.5*	29	*8.6*
fully 16th c.	2	*3.5*	95	*10.8*
fully 17th c.	21	*6.5*	126	*10.1*

5.3 Sociolinguistic correlations

As we saw in section 3.1, above, studies on Present-day English suggest that lower-social-status groups use intensifiers, and suffixed intensifiers in particular, less than higher-status groups, and that there are gender differences in intensifier use. I will test whether these arguments hold for the most frequent dual-form intensifiers in my data, *full*/*fully*, *exceeding*/*exceedingly* and *extreme*/*extremely*, and begin with their distribution by gender, shown in tables 12 and 13. To make it possible to estimate the degree of social embedding of the *-ly* suffix, both the modifier and subjunct functions of the adverbs are included in these analyses, which are based on adverb form.

Table 12 summarizes the gender distribution of *full* and *fully* over the three centuries. It documents the declining frequency of *full*, and the increase in that of *fully* over time. However, despite the systematic variation in the normalized frequencies – proportionally, women more often use *full* and men *fully* in each period – there is no statistically significant difference between male and female writers in the use of either form in any of the periods.[5]

Only the seventeenth century allows an adequate comparison between male and female usage of the two other adverb pairs, *exceeding*/*exceedingly* and

[5] In this and subsequent tables, statistical significance is inferred using the chi-square goodness-of-fit test and taking into account proportional differences in sample sizes. The significance level is set at 5 per cent; in most cases where the measured differences are significant, *p* is in fact smaller.

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Table 13. Use of *exceeding(ly)* and *extreme(ly)* according to gender in the seventeenth century; number of occurrences (N) normalized to 100,000 words (Freq.)

	Women		Men	
Adverbs	N	Freq.	N	Freq.
exceeding	24	*7.4*	80	*6.4*
exceedingly	13	*4.0*	61	*4.9*
extreme	27	*8.3*	40	*3.2*
extremely	72	*22.2*	63	*5.0*

extreme/*extremely*. Table 13 presents both the absolute and normalized frequencies (per 100,000 words). Differences in the use of *exceeding* and *exceedingly* are too small to be statistically significant. By contrast, those in the use of *extreme* and *extremely* prove to be highly significant: women use both adverbs, but especially the suffixed one, much more than men. The figures in table 13 include one particularly heavy user of *extremely*, Dorothy Osborne (see section 5.4, below). Excluding her from the total lowers women's normalized frequency of *extremely* to 13.5, but does not alter the statistical significance of the gender difference. To summarize so far: only one of the three adverb pairs shows a statistically significant gender difference.

Table 14 presents the break-downs by social status and century of the frequencies of *full* and *fully*. The social status hierarchy in Late Medieval and Early Modern England is discussed in Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 136–8). In this analysis, I separate out the nobility (including royalty), the upper gentry (including the upper clergy) and the lower gentry (including the lower clergy), which make up the upper ranks, as opposed to professional people and wealthy merchants (middle ranks) and the lower ranks (other ranks below the gentry).[6]

With both *full* and *fully*, the distributional differences between the social ranks are statistically significant in the fifteenth century but not in the sixteenth, and only those of *fully* are significant in the seventeenth century (see also figures 2 and 3). The fifteenth-century data suggest clear social stratification, with the highest ranks using *full* proportionally more than the rest, and the lowest literate ranks using it the least. However, as the absolutely most frequent users of *full* are professional men, who occupied a middling position in the English social hierarchy at the time, these results imply that there is no one-to-one correspondence between high social rank and the frequency of intensifier use. The correlation may be stylistically motivated: professional men commanded the legal and other special registers typical of the written

[6] The word counts of the nobility vary from 10 to 25 per cent of the total in the three centuries; those of the upper gentry from 18 to 32 per cent; the lower gentry from 11 to 32 per cent; professionals from 8 to 15 per cent; and merchants from 15 to 20 per cent. Largely illiterate, the lower ranks contribute from 1 to 4 per cent of the total data in the three periods (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 45–9).

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Table 14. Use of *full* and *fully* according to social rank; number of occurrences (N) normalized to 100,000 words (Freq.)

	Nobility		Upper gentry		Lower gentry		Middle ranks Professionals		Middle ranks Merchants		Lower ranks	
Adverbs	N	Freq.	N	Freq.	N	Freq.	N	Freq.	N	Freq.	N	Freq.
full 15th c.	18	*42.4*	23	*31.4*	30	*22.8*	34	*54.3*	14	*17.4*	2	*14.8*
full 16th c.	9	*3.7*	13	*4.3*	3	*2.3*	4	*5.5*	4	*2.3*	4	*11.6*
full 17th c.	6	*2.0*	9	*1.8*	8	*2.1*	3	*2.3*	13	*5.6*	0	*0*
fully 15th c.	8	*18.8*	2	*2.7*	8	*6.1*	4	*6.4*	9	*11.2*	1	*7.4*
fully 16th c.	33	*13.6*	32	*10.5*	9	*8.4*	11	*15.2*	11	*6.3*	1	*2.9*
fully 17th c.	28	*9.2*	30	*6.0*	52	*13.5*	19	*14.4*	16	*6.9*	2	*9.6*

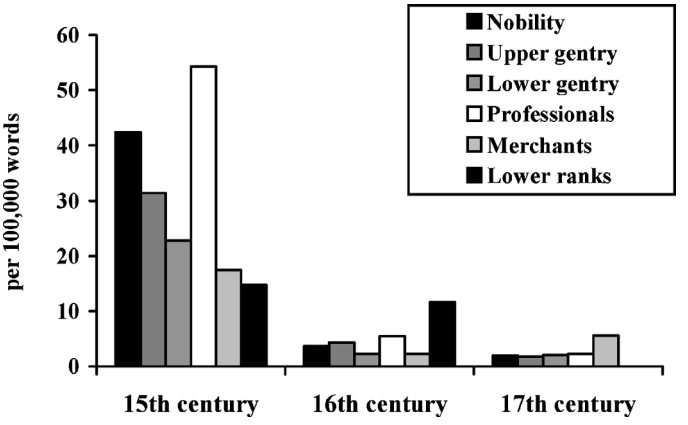


Figure 2. Use of *full* according to social rank per 100,000 words

communication of the nobility and the upper gentry in the fifteenth century. Professional clerks and secretaries were often also responsible for composing their employers' personal letters.[7]

Moving on to *fully*, the notion of hierarchical social embedding is only partially supported, as merchants come second after the nobility in the use of *fully* in the fifteenth century. The comparison is, however, biased by the low overall frequency of this form in the Late Middle English data.

According to table 14, these social status differences realign in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the intensifier *fully* is generalized. Table 14 and figure 3 show the popularity of the suffixed form *fully* among the nobility in the fifteenth century,

[7] The occupations of the fifteenth-century professionals in the CEEC include agent, bailiff, clerk, coroner, legal adviser and secretary. For different kinds of secretarial letter, see Nevalainen (2002).

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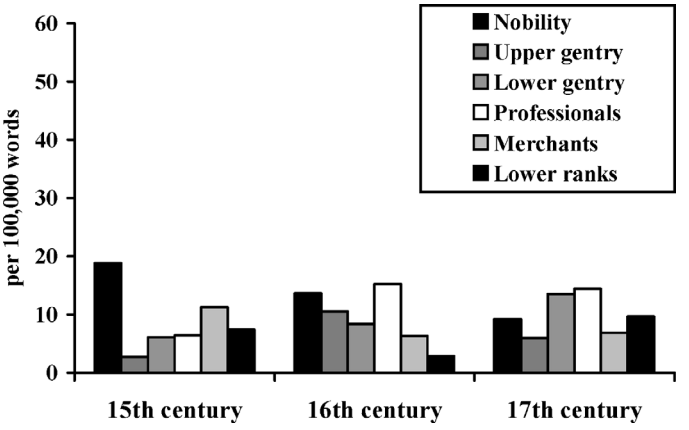


Figure 3. Use of *fully* according to social rank per 100,000 words

Table 15. Use of *exceedingly* and *extremely* according to social rank in the seventeenth century; number of occurrences (N) normalized to 100,000 words (Freq.)

	Nobility		Upper gentry		Lower gentry		Professionals		Merchants	
Adverbs	N	Freq.	N	Freq.	N	Freq.	N	Freq.	N	Freq.
exceeding	18	*5.9*	24	*4.8*	39	*10.1*	10	*7.6*	12	*5.2*
extreme	28	*9.2*	24	*4.8*	9	*2.3*	3	*2.3*	3	*1.3*
exceedingly	7	*2.3*	19	*3.8*	37	*9.6*	8	*6.1*	3	*1.3*
extremely	42	*13.9*	66	*13.3*	17	*4.4*	7	*5.3*	3	*1.3*

but suggest a social crossing-over in the sixteenth century, with the professionals and lower gentry as the most frequent users of the suffixed form in the seventeenth century.

In order to be able to assess the degree of social embedding of relatively more innovative forms, I analysed the use of *exceeding/exceedingly* and *extreme/extremely* in the seventeenth century. As with *full* and *fully*, I based this analysis on the form of the adverb, including both modifier and subjunct functions. It is worth noting that the data in table 15 come from precisely the same set of people as in table 14. The lower ranks only contribute to *exceeding* (a single instance, equivalent to 4.8/100,000 words); this is not shown in table 15, but is included in figure 4.

The social differences in the distribution of *exceeding* are not statistically significant, but those of *extreme*, *exceedingly* and *extremely* are. These findings remain significant even if the single most frequent individual user of *extremely*, Dorothy Osborne, is excluded from the upper-gentry figures, which reduces the normalized frequency of that rank to 6.6 per 100,000 words (figure 5).

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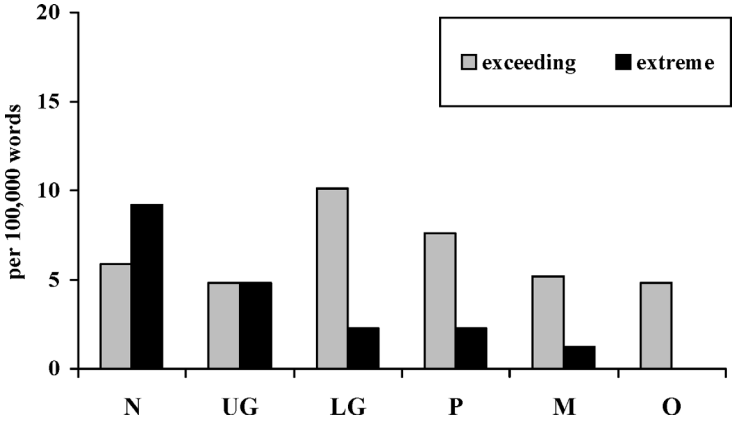


Figure 4. Seventeenth-century use of *exceeding* and *extreme* according to social rank per 100,000 words (N = nobility, UG = upper gentry, LG = lower gentry, P = professionals, M = merchants, O = other ranks below the gentry)

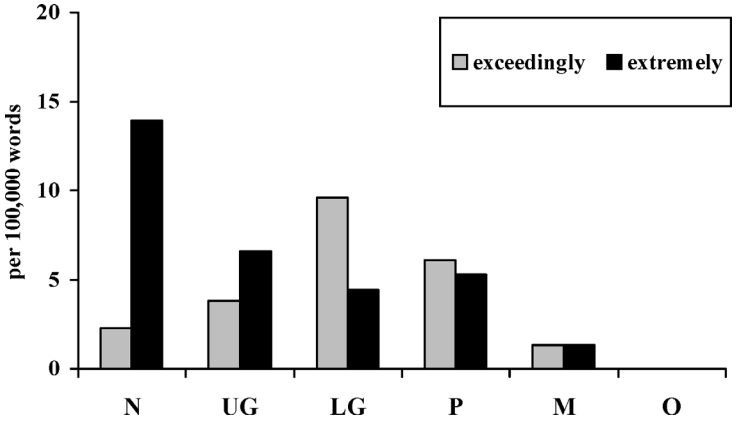


Figure 5. Seventeenth-century use of *exceedingly* and *extremely* according to social rank per 100,000 words (N = nobility, UG = upper gentry, LG = lower gentry, P = professionals, M = merchants, O = other ranks below the gentry)

The overall distributions of the four adverbs show that the literate social ranks used all of them in the seventeenth century. However, the figures suggest different preferences depending both on social status and the adverb. Except for *extreme*, professional people are among the frequent users of all these intensifiers but, in contrast to the situation with *full*, they do not make up the group of most frequent users for any of them. *Extreme* and *extremely* are promoted by the highest social ranks, women in particular (table 13); the suffixed form *extremely* is more popular than the suffixless one. By contrast, *exceeding* is used quite evenly across the social spectrum, whereas *exceedingly* is favoured by the

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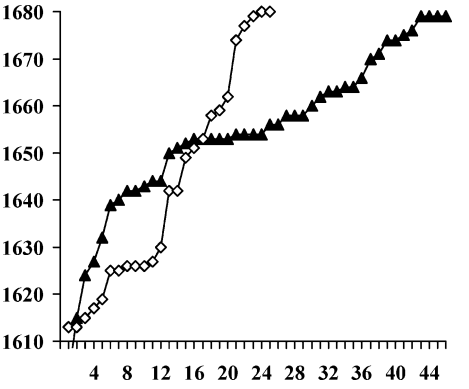


Figure 6. Incidence of *exceedingly* (white) and *extremely* (black) as modifiers in the seventeenth century

lower gentry and professional men. It is much less frequent among the merchants and other ranks below the gentry than the suffixless form.

With some minor modifications, the same pattern is repeated with the modifier use of the two adverbs. As table 11 shows, *exceedingly* is not in general particularly frequent as a modifier; this new function is quite evenly spread across the social scale (c. 2.2/100,000 words) except for the nobility, who do not use the adverb much in either of its functions. The contrast between the uppermost ranks and the lower gentry, in particular, is repeated for the modifier function of *extremely*: representatives of the nobility promote it (5.6/100,000 words), while those of the lower gentry use it rarely, and merchants or the other ranks below the gentry show no attestations of this use at all in the corpus.

5.4 Diffusion of -ly *modifiers*

A closer analysis of the diffusion of the incoming *-ly* modifiers reveals major adverb-specific differences. As shown by table 5, *fully* does not gain ground as a modifier in the seventeenth century (five modifier instances).[8] *Exceedingly* is more frequent (25 modifier instances), and its diffusion takes place at a slow pace throughout the eighty years of the seventeenth century studied. *Extremely* is the most frequent of the three adverbs in the modifier function (46 instances); it also advances throughout the century but gains momentum in the second forty-year period, from 1640 to 1680. Figure 6 plots the two suffixed modifiers, *exceedingly* and *extremely*, with the number of instances per year indicated on the x-axis.

[8] Moreover, some of the seventeenth-century instances of *fully* are atypical modifiers in that they modify an adverbial (a prepositional phrase) rather than an adjective or another adverb, as in (i) *I am in my particular judgment fully of opinion, that* . . . (1676, Samuel Pepys; 44, CEEC).

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As shown by table 13, the modifier *extremely* was promoted by women, who ranged from Lady Arabella Stuart, Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia and Lady Anne Conway to Winifred Thimelby, an English nun in Louvain, and Dorothy Osborne, the daughter of the royalist lieutenant-governor of Guernsey. Dorothy Osborne (1627–95), later Lady Temple, particularly favoured the incoming form. Two instances of her use of *extremely* are illustrated in (10). In our past research on the CEEC, Dorothy Osborne has emerged as the uncontested leader of several ongoing processes of change (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 217). In sociolinguistic terms, she can be identified as an outlier; she even demonstrates a degree of social nonconformity, which is associated with the leaders of linguistic change in the modern world (cf. Labov 2001: 516–18).

(10) (a) S[r]
if there were any thing in my Letter that pleased you I am **extreamly glad** on't, 'twas all due to you, and made it but an equall retourne for the sattisfaction yours gave mee; (1653, Dorothy Osborne; 3, CEEC)
(b) I am **extreamly sorry** that your letter miscaryed but I am confident my B: has it not; as cunning as hee is, hee could not hide it soe from mee, but that I should discover it some way or other; (1653, Dorothy Osborne; 117, CEEC)

As Dorothy Osborne wrote her letters to her future husband, Sir William Temple, they were more colloquial than the average personal letter in the CEEC. However, most *-ly* modifiers in the corpus also come from letters written to family members and close friends. There is therefore no direct evidence to suggest that the use of the suffixed form would have been a conscious change from above in terms of social awareness. As we saw in examples (7)–(9), a preference for the *-ly* form in one modifier does not predict innovative use of suffixed modifiers in general. In (11), Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia places her amplifiers on a strength scale: *extremely* (here used as a subjunct) is obviously less strong to her than the zero modifier *monstrous*.

(11) Amongst my Neeces maides Culpeper is a great woman with her, my Lo: Culpepers daughter as madd as she, I can assure you I **loue** her **extremelie**, as well as her Aunt doth but not so fonde, for she is **monstrous fonde** of her;
(1659, Elizabeth of Bohemia; 122, CEEC)

It is, however, worth pointing out that suffixed modifiers are notably absent from the correspondence of the lower ranks in the seventeenth century. One of the reasons for this may be the relative scarcity of material from these largely illiterate ranks in the CEEC. By contrast, there is a fair amount of data produced by wealthy merchants engaged in foreign trade. Suffixless modifiers occur in their letters, as do suffixed subjuncts, but suffixed modifiers do not. Taken together with what we know from later periods, this negative evidence could be indicative of a wider pattern of use: differences in social status are revealed by the maintenance of the traditional system based on functional differentiation in adverb form.[9]

[9] These findings are supported by the eighteenth-century material in the CEEC Extension. The 50,000-word subcorpus of the correspondence of the Clift family, children of a Cornish miller, contains only three instances

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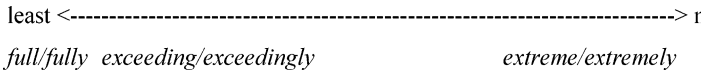


Figure 7. Degree of morphological overlap in modifier use

6 Discussion

The material analysed in this article clearly shows that the form of amplifiers was functionally determined in Late Middle and Early Modern English: *-ly* was preferred in the subjunct function, zero in the modifier function. There was, however, also a marked increase in *-ly* forms in the modifier function over time. The diffusion of *-ly* to modifiers may in part have been facilitated by contexts in which the verb or, more commonly, the past participle was premodified by another adverb, typically *well*. Some examples from the corpus are listed in (12).

(12) (a) **exceedingly** much recreated, **exceedingely** well pleased, **exceedingly** well stated, **excedingly** well trapped and furnished
(b) so **extreamely** cunningly and partially handled, **extreamely** well pleased, **extreamely** well-bred

Cases like these are ambiguous, with two possible syntactic interpretations: (a) the amplifier in *-ly* is modifying the participle, which is itself premodified by an adverb functioning as an adjunct; or (b) the *-ly* amplifier is modifying the premodifying adjunct. In cases like *well-bred*, the participle can also be analysed as a compound adjective, and (a) is therefore the more likely interpretation. Constructions such as those in (12) may be added to contexts paving the way for the generalization of the *-ly* suffix.

As emerges from the data discussed above, the rate at which the change progressed was to a certain extent adverb-specific. A comparison of the three seventeenth-century amplifiers analysed in this study reveals a cline of morphological overlap: *extremely* leads the change towards *-ly* suffixation in modifier use, with 41 per cent of the cases in *-ly*, while the corresponding figure for *fully* is only 19 per cent. Appearing in 20 per cent of the modifier instances of the dual-form adverb, *exceedingly* is hardly more advanced than *fully*. The cline is shown in figure 7.

The rates at which the change progresses also vary over time. The two amplifier pairs *exceeding/exceedingly* and *extreme/extremely* reveal similar overall frequencies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but their preferred functional domains are differently weighted: *exceeding(ly)* is typically a modifier, *extremely* common as a subjunct (see tables 7 and 8). The preferred form–function combinations of these adverbs may partly account for their different rates of *-ly* adoption; this is also the case with *fully*, which was specialized in the subjunct function. On the other hand, as

of the intensifiers studied in this article – six, if normalized to 100,000 words – which is lower than the figures for lower ranks in figures 2 and 3 representing the previous centuries. These are all suffixless: *full* and (two instances of) *exceeding*.

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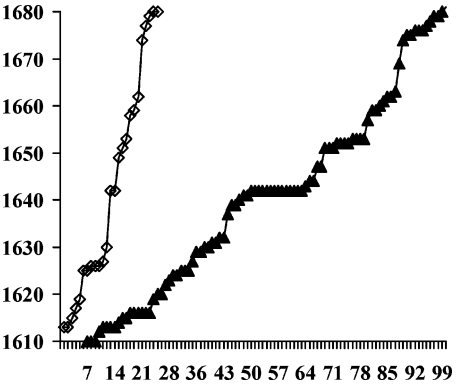


Figure 8. Incidence of *exceeding* (black) and *exceedingly* (white) as modifiers in the seventeenth century

indicated by the comparison in figure 6, the modifier *exceedingly* was more common than *extremely* in the first few decades of the seventeenth century.

Frequency of occurrence appears to play a role in the maintenance of the zero form (cf. the CONSERVING EFFECT in Bybee & Thompson 1997). Figure 8 contrasts the popular suffixless modifier *exceeding* with the rather infrequent suffixed one in the seventeenth century (the number of instances per year marked on the x-axis).

Having a firm position in the grammar of a wide section of the population in the seventeenth century, the modifier *exceeding* persisted well into the eighteenth century. In the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension* (CEECE), which continues into the eighteenth century, *exceeding* continues to be used as a common modifier, while *extremely* by far outnumbers *extreme*, providing further evidence for LEXICAL DIFFUSION as a means by which the *-ly* suffix generalized to modifiers, and thus became more grammaticalized.[10]

The data I have investigated reveal varying degrees of social focusing in *-ly* adverbialization. None of the items is restricted to any one social rank, and the zero modifier *exceeding* shows a fairly even spread across the social spectrum in the seventeenth century. However, *exceedingly* is preferred by the ranks in the middle of the social scale we have access to, the lower gentry and professionals. *Extreme* and *extremely*, by contrast, illustrate form–function combinations associated with the usage of the uppermost social ranks, women in particular, in the seventeenth century. The suffixed form *extremely* appears to be a fashionable innovation which originates in the sixteenth century and rapidly picks up both as a subjunct and as a modifier in

[10] In the 100-million-word *British National Corpus* (BNC) of Present-day English, *full* is the only one of the intensifiers studied in this article to have a tagged zero form (185 instances in all, the great majority of them in the fossilized collocation *full well*). *Very* is the most frequent amplifier (113,282 instances) in the BNC, followed by *fully* (8,795) and *extremely* (6,689). Of the rest of the intensifiers studied here, the next most frequent items are *extraordinarily* (543), *exceedingly* (400) and *marvellously* (150); *excellently* comes last, with 82 instances.

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the seventeenth century. Finally, social alignment is also subject to change over time, as with *full* and *fully*.

Overall, these findings support the generalization made by Tagliamonte (2001) that language changes across varieties are not progressing at the same rate in terms of social embedding, although they follow the same internal linguistic constraints. The generalization of the *-ly* suffix to intensifiers follows Pattern III outlined in section 2, above. However, this pattern simplifies the process in that it does not take account of the grammatical specialization of the two forms – zero forms functioning as modifiers and *-ly* forms as subjuncts – the systematicity of which is clearly borne out by the data I have discussed. This division of labour ultimately accounts for the persistence of such zero modifiers as *very* and *pretty* until the present day: their suffixed forms failed to generalize in the subjunct function, hence ruling out Pattern III.

7 Concluding remarks

The answer to the question posed in the title of this article is a qualified yes. The data I have analysed, however, also indicate that functional differentiation between zero and suffixed forms is the majority pattern with dual-form intensifiers in Late Middle and Early Modern English before 1700. The generalization of the suffixed forms to the modifier function proceeds gradually across the lexical spread of dual-form items, including the six pairs of amplifiers examined here.

In sociolinguistic terms, the model of diffusion that emerges from the data I have discussed suggests varying input from different social groups. While there are some items, such as the modifier *exceeding*, which are shared by all the literate social ranks and the two genders alike, there are others, notably the subjunct and modifier *extremely*, that are preferred by the uppermost social ranks, and by women rather than men. This variation suggests social layering in adverbialization at any given point in time. However, real-time data, as exemplified by *full* and *fully*, show that social differences in the distribution of an intensifier can also even out. The rapid turnover of intensifiers discussed in the earlier literature, on the other hand, could of course be taken as evidence for cases in which no such levelling took place.

The evidence I have presented paints a variable scenario of social focusing in *-ly* adverbialization. Despite this variability, the data suggest that the spread of *-ly* to the modifier function was not promoted by the lower end of the literate section of the language community. Although this evidence should be interpreted with caution – because of their high rate of illiteracy, the lower ranks were underrepresented in the data – these findings do not contradict the results of modern sociolinguistic studies. They also agree with surveys of regional variation in adverb form, and hence provide some backgound for the modern variety grammars discussed in section 3.1.

It should be noted that the developments I have discussed largely took place in the prenormative era. The social embedding apparent in *-ly* adverbialization may therefore go part of the way towards explaining where the normative models in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century prescriptive grammars came from: the suffixed forms associated

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with the higher status groups were taken as the norm, while the traditional usage of the lower ranks, which retained suffixless modifiers, was stigmatized. Overall, these results on *-ly* adverbialization suggest that social embedding in grammaticalization need not differ in principle from social embedding in other linguistic changes in progress.

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