

This document is downloaded from DR-NTU, Nanyang Technological University Library, Singapore.

Title	Intensifiers as stance markers : a corpus study on genre variations in Mandarin Chinese
Author(s)	Lim, Ni-Eng; Hong, Huaqing
Citation	Lim, N.-E., & Hong, H. (2012). Intensifiers as stance markers: A corpus study on genre variations in Mandarin Chinese. <i>Chinese Language and Discourse</i> , 3(2), 129-166.
Date	2012
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10220/19172
Rights	© 2012 John Benjamins Publishing. This is the author created version of a work that has been peer reviewed and accepted for publication by <i>Chinese Language and Discourse</i> , John Benjamins Publishing. It incorporates referee's comments but changes resulting from the publishing process, such as copyediting, structural formatting, may not be reflected in this document. The published version is available at: [Article DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/cld.3.2.01lim].

Intensifiers as Stance-Markers: A Corpus Study on Genre-Variations in Mandarin Chinese *

Ni-Eng Lim and Huaqing Hong

University of California, Los Angeles / National Institute of Education, Singapore

While the study of Mandarin Chinese intensifiers has been prolific, the methodologies used have been limited to comparative and grammaticalization studies, revealing little about the discourse-pragmatic usages of individual intensifiers. Utilizing a balanced corpus composed of 15 different prototypical genres, the associative strength of 12 commonly used intensifiers in each genre was statistically determined based on their frequency distribution. The results reveal a clear preference pattern of intensifiers across a range of “written” and “spoken”-based genres. Upon the premise that the genre-preferences of intensifiers stem from matching dimensions of communicative intent/discourse context between genre and intensifier, genre-analysis was conducted to unveil the core “stances” each intensifier might possibly project. In conclusion, it is argued that genre-analysis based on empirical corpus data provides a valid alternative means to uncover seemingly “covert” aspects of language use.

Keywords: Corpus Linguistics, genre-analysis, intensifiers, stance-markers, Mandarin

关键词: 语料库语言学, 语体分析, 程度词, 立场标记, 汉语

0. Introduction

The term ‘intensifiers’ is generally used to refer to all types of modifiers that *scale the degree* of its head verb or adjective. For example, Mandarin Chinese (henceforth Chinese) intensifiers appear as left-modifiers of the head adjectival word/phrase or certain verbs of cognition (e.g. like, understand, hate), such as “*feichang* + *piaoliang* (pretty)” or “*you dian-er* + *xihuan* (like)”, where ‘*feichang*’ and ‘*you dian-er*’ scale the adjective ‘*piaoliang* (pretty)’ and verb ‘*xihuan* (like)’ to mean ‘extremely pretty’ and ‘like ... a little’ respectively. In terms of classification, Chinese intensifiers have traditionally been (and continue to be) divided into two broad categories: absolute degree adverbs [绝对程度副词] (referring to intensifiers that are relatively referent-free in their degree intensification), and relative degree adverbs [相对程度副词] (equivalent to “more”, “less” or the inflectional suffix -er in conjunction with the adjectival phrase they modify). Also, further classifications within absolute and comparative degree adverbs tend towards narrower degree delineation, in terms of higher or lower degree of intensification (Wang 1985, Zhou 1995, Zhang 1997, Han 2000). In short, degree of intensification has always figured centrally, if not exclusively, in our conception of intensifiers. On the other hand, actual practitioners and researchers of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) have often commented that such a perspective, which focuses solely on degree of intensification, is inadequate for pedagogical instruction. Notably, the biases of intensifiers towards written or spoken registers, and how particular intensifiers may impose certain mood or “stances”, have been singled out as crucial factors informing native-like selection (Xu 1998, Xu 2006, Jin 2008), but are unrecorded in instructional materials. For instance, in the commonly-used Dictionary of Modern Chinese [现代汉语

词典], the strongly written-based intensifier *shifen* (十分) is simply noted to be akin to *hen* (很) with no mention of its genre preferences, while the predominantly spoken-based *ting* (挺) is not even recorded as an intensifier.

Though the study of *stance* as a linguistic phenomenon has burgeoned in the past decade (Scheibman 2002, Fitzmaurice 2004, Wu 2004, Kärkkäinen 2006, Englebretson 2007, Yap 2011, Lim 2012), an all-inclusive definition and conception of *stance* remains elusive and complex. Furthermore, researchers have used different terminologies to cover what appears to be a variety of *stance*-related phenomenon, such as *subjectivity* (Benveniste 1971, Lyons 1981, Langacker 1985, Traugott 1995), *evidentiality* (Chafe & Nichols 1986, Willett 1988, Fox 2001), *epistemicity* (Heritage & Raymond 2005, Simon-Vandenberg 2008) or *evaluation* (Hunston & Thompson 2000). Nonetheless, the multifaceted and diverse nature of *stance* in language may perhaps be best captured generically as “*the lexical and grammatical expression of (speaker/author’s) attitudes, feelings, judgements, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message* (Biber & Finegan 1989:92)”. Given the wide acknowledgement that intensifiers do express some sort of discourse-pragmatic function over and above intensification, and that the range of these functions is still undetermined, this study use *stance* as a generic cover term to refer to the wide-ranging possibilities of speaker/author’s attitudes/feelings/moods conveyed through the choice of intensifiers during an act of evaluative judgement. Having said this, very few empirical studies have been conducted to verify register variations, or examine the possible discourse-pragmatic functions (i.e. *stances*) of different intensifiers.

This study builds upon the premise that “different genres pertain to different contexts of language use¹”, and that “members of a (prototypical) genre resemble one another in terms of conventionalized linguistic configurations in accordance with the given communicative intentions” (Jing-Schmidt & Tao 2009, pp. 33), to propose genre-analysis as a valid methodology for investigating the discourse-pragmatic functions of intensifiers. It is argued that genre-variations of specific intensifiers can offer insights into the “fitted-ness” of the intensifier’s stance-marking functions (c.f. linguistic configurations) with the prototypical discourse context (c.f. communicative intent) of the genre where the intensifier is preferentially used. Therefore, in exploration of possible stance-marking function in intensifiers, this paper reports a corpus-study on the distribution of 12 frequently used absolute degree adverbs within 15 genres. Conducting significance test on the frequencies of these intensifiers within genres, culled from representative corpuses of written and spoken Chinese, it is demonstrated that most Chinese intensifiers are generally genre-sensitive, showing significantly skewed distributional patterns with reference to specific genre-types. Hence the possible “*core stances*” for specific intensifiers is further postulated through an analysis of their genre preferences (a.k.a. genre-analysis).

The sections are as follow: §1 problematizes the current state of studies on Chinese intensifiers, and proposes genre-analysis to be a valid methodology for the question at hand. §2 introduces the corpuses used for quantitative statistical studies. §3 describes in detail the statistical method used and its rationale. §4 presents the results of our analysis on each intensifier. Finally, §5 ends with a discussion and some conclusions of our corpus-study.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Current research on Chinese intensifiers

Extant literature on the scope and categorization of Chinese intensifiers is vast, yet with little consensus, and differ in definitional criteria (see Zhao 2007, Zhang 2008 and Liu 2009). But as mentioned in the Introduction, the perception that *degree of intensification* is the core functional difference in intensifiers may have been perpetuated by its traditional use as a criterion for differentiating degree modifiers. Evidence of such a perception may be seen in comparative studies of specific intensifiers, where difference in degree of intensification is often explicitly noted as a core feature for differentiating intensifiers. For instance, Guo (1984) notes that *xiangdang* is substantially lower in its degree intensification when compared to other common degree adverbs such as *hen* and *feichang*. Lai (1995) and Shan (2004) also note the differing degree of intensification when comparing *zhen* and *hen*; while Guan (2006) and Zhang (2006) draw attention to a similar point when comparing *hen* and *feichang*. While these subtle semantic differences may be interesting, very little can be gleaned from this information in terms of how they translate into actual discourse-pragmatic usage.

Another popular method of studying intensifiers is tracing their grammaticalization process. For instance, Cao (2008), in tracing the grammaticalization pathway of *xiangdang*, suggests that it shows a strong preference to be used as a modifier for colloquially spoken words, and is used regularly in trendy web language. The intensifier *feichang* has also been analyzed via its grammaticalization process (Wu 2004, Wang 2007), focusing on how the phrasal construct meaning “out of the ordinary” developed into a degree modifier. Lu (2005, 2009) investigated the grammaticalization process of both *shifen* and *lao*. In her study of *shifen*, she claims that the booster is now predominantly used to modify cognitive verbs such as “*shifen* + *xihuan* (like) / *gandong* (touched) / *buhao yishi* (embarrassing)”. Other boosters that have been investigated under the framework of grammaticalization include *hao* (Wu 2004, Wen 2009). Most prominently, the highly grammaticized status of *hen* has been pointed out frequently in various articles, noting its productive-ness as a modifier with other grammatical constituents; as well as how *hen* often behaves only as a grammatical particle devoid of degree meaning in actual use (Shan 2004, Zhang 2006, Pei 2009). Though these studies often point out common collocates of particular intensifiers (in discussion of their grammaticalization pathways), they reveal little about how intensifiers are actually used in a variety of discourse context.

However, that is not to say discourse-pragmatic aspects of intensifiers have gone undetected. This is evinced through the high volume of research work done by Chinese language scholars in characterizing specific intensifiers, mostly grounded in comparative studies with other degree adverbs.

One aspect often mentioned is register or genre preferences. For example, Guan (2006) claims that *hen* tended towards the spoken register, whereas *feichang* tended towards the written register. Wang (2003) also believes that *hen* tended towards the spoken register more than *feichang*, and another intensifier, *shifen*. In her comparison between the three intensifiers (*hen*, *feichang* and *shifen*), Wang also concludes that intensifiers that underwent grammaticalization later (such as *hen*) will be more spoken in register, have a higher usage frequency, and a wider distributional range.

Yet there are also conflicting accounts, such as Ma's (1991) comparison of four intensifiers, namely *hen*, *ting*, *guai* and *lao*; concluding that only *hen* has a written register bias whereas the other three are preferentially used in the spoken register. It is interesting to note how this differs from the conclusions of Guan (2006) and Wang (2003), where different intensifiers were chosen for comparison with *hen*. This underscores that parameters such as being "written" or "spoken" are not discrete and stative features, but a relative concept that exist on a scalar continuum. In any case, the above claims were mostly intuitively made, and focused on a simplistic written-spoken dichotomy.

Another important discourse-pragmatic aspect frequently hinted at in various studies is the projection of particular *stances* by specific intensifiers. For example, it is claimed that the use of *zhen* conveys a *strong emotionality* typically found in exclamatory utterances, whereas *hen* is primarily found in descriptive or argumentative prose due to its *objective or neutral stance* (Lai 1995, Shan 2004). In terms of *affective stances*, Ma (1991) claims that *hen* and *ting* do not carry any "affective moods", whereas *lao* and *guai* did, with *guai* denoting a stance of "*intimacy, satisfaction, affection or mischief*", and *lao* denoting the speakers' *negative evaluation* of the predicate. Du's (2004) comparison of *duo(me)*, *tai* and *hao* employs an interesting perspective by looking at their ability to form different syntactic constituents within exclamatory sentences. He concluded that both *duo(me)* and *hao* denote *high level of affect* in their use, but differ in their *level of interactivity*; where *duo(me)* functions to elicit agreement, while using *hao* is seen as being more of a "response cry".

As much as these commendable efforts have heightened our functional understanding of specific intensifiers, they are, nonetheless, again primarily based on introspection. Even when examples were culled from actual texts, they acted as anecdotal exemplars, and not for making empirically-based arguments.

1.2. An alternate proposal

This study aims to complement the abovementioned line of investigation by empirically examining commonly used intensifiers in terms of their distribution across typical genres. By establishing significant preferences of intensifiers in particular discourse genres, it is then possible to conduct "genre-analysis" and further postulate a specific intensifier's discourse-pragmatic function, or the *stances* it may project.

The examination of how linguistic elements are distributed in different genres within large corpuses has continually yielded interesting results, adding to our understanding of language use. In his seminal work, Biber (1988) utilizes a complex but powerful method known as Multi-Dimensional Analysis (MDA), where 67 linguistic features of English were correlated and grouped into 6 core conceptual "dimensions" or functional "factors". 21 spoken and written genres were then analyzed for their degree of representative-ness of the dimensions². A direct inference from this study is that genres can be construed as prototypical categories where a set of linguistic configurations converges to express the communicative intent of its discourse context. A major part of this "communicative intent" is represented by Biber's conceptual dimensions, or functional factors that "guide" the conventionality of linguistic elements within the genres. Additionally, it can be seen that any given genre cannot be simplistically characterized by any one dimension, but is represented by the integrative outcome of a

complex multi-dimensional relationship. Consequently, it follows that patterns of language use within a genre are not the result of dimensions operating independently, but multiple possible dimensions interacting in a complex graded manner to formulate the gestalt character of a particular genre. For the purpose of this study, it is then crucial to perceive the genre-preferences of intensifiers as being generally indicative of the intensifier's congruence with the multi-dimensional profile of that genre, as opposed to attributing a specific uni-dimensional discourse-pragmatic *stance* to the intensifier. Intensifiers' *stance*, as discussed in this paper, is then necessarily multi-faceted, encompassing the varieties of dimensions that constitute a genre.

Such complexities can be seen in Biber's own work. For example, the linguistic feature "amplifier" (c.f. intensifiers) is found to constitute a strong positive loading towards indexing the dimension of "involved production". In other words, intensification is most commonly found in discourse contexts where the speaker/author's communicative intent is to display a high degree of personal involvement, most typically seen in telephone conversations (Biber 1988, pp. 101-108/129-135). As the act of intensification (i.e. modulating verbal or adjectival predicate through intensifiers) necessarily requires subjective evaluation from the speaker/author, it is unsurprising that the use of intensifiers inherently projects and profiles the speaker/author's subjective involvement into the discourse. However, the fact that certain intensifiers commonly occur in a variety of other written genres deemed to be "less subjective", or even in genres where objective-ness and distancing from the "self" is a critical concern (e.g. academic prose), points towards the variability of intensifiers in their indexing of "personal involvement" (as being a matter of degree). Or more significantly, that certain intensifiers may possess other *stances* well suited to the complex dimensions instantiated by the genre.

Since Biber (1988, 1992, 1995) et al. (1998), genre-analysis has been used extensively as a productive means of linguistic analysis (Xiao & McEnery 2005, Xiao 2009), particularly as a valid methodology for uncovering the seemingly 'covert' pragmatic factors of language use through investigation of distributions and correlations across genres. One example is Xiao & Tao's (2007) investigation of English amplifiers' usage patterns in relation to a range of sociolinguistic factors, based on the British National Corpus (BNC). Genre-analysis was used to show how women tended to significantly apply more amplifiers in the "procedural" and "informational-focused" genre of instructional writing than men. The authors then suggest that this may be associated with women's "greater emotional expressiveness and sociability" (pp. 247). Another recent example is Jing-Schmidt & Tao (2009), which argued that the collo-structural disposal constructions of *ba* and *jiang* in Mandarin contrasted in terms of subjectivity and emotionality, based on their distributional patterns across genres.

However, with regard to the investigation of Chinese intensifiers, only two studies based on empirical corpus data have been found, to our knowledge, namely by Zeng (2007) and Li (2007). Zeng conducted a gender linguistic study arguing that women used more intensifiers, based on television interviews on talk shows. Expanding the data from talk shows to television scripts and news broadcast, Li looked at twelve intensifiers (including comparative degree adverbs) selected to represent different degrees of intensification, proposing that their level of intensification can be used to explain their different syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics. These studies, however, have

several limitations. Most prominently, they are based on a highly restrictive and small group of genres, tenuously deemed representative of spoken language. Furthermore, Zeng and Li did not conduct genre-analysis per se, but simply used their data as statistical evidence or as sources for comparison between intensifiers.

By taking genres to be prototypically organized categories of linguistic conventions that work to convey the communicative intent of different discourse context, this study proposes that the *stances* of intensifiers can be reasonably postulated, through relating the intensifier's strength of association with the genres as reflective of the "fit" between the intensifier's *stance* and the various dimensions typified by different genres. A caveat to the proposed methodology has to be mentioned at this point. Though prototypical genres across languages do share some universality in their multi-dimensional profile (e.g. due to similar functional concerns, it is reasonable to assume that telephone conversations and romance fictions are always highly "involved" and "non-abstract" genres cross-linguistically, as compared to academic prose and official documents), the specific configuration a genre's dimensions, or the relative importance of a particular dimension, can differ according to the language in question (Biber 1995). Furthermore, there is yet to be an authoritative study to determine the range of meaningful dimensions in Mandarin Chinese using Biber's MDA procedure, and therefore the multi-dimensional profile of prototypical Chinese genres remains to be explicated. One notable attempt at this is Zhang's (2012) recent paper titled "*A corpus study of variation in written Chinese*". However the study did not uncover dimensions that are sufficiently granular to be useful³. In fact, Zhang himself concluded that the strongest dimension found in his study (he dubbed it the 'literate' dimension) that can account for 62.6% of all variation, "*seems to incorporate a number of Biber's dimensions that are used to distinguish both spoken and written registers*" (Zhang 2012:230). Therefore, he "*finds the basic interpretive parameters in Biber's original study (i.e. Biber's dimensions) still useful*", and that his results "*lend support to the wide applicability of the parameters*" (pp. 230-1). Given that this study utilizes the same Chinese corpus as Zhang (2012) and Jing-Schmidt & Tao (2009) to generate the genre preferences of Chinese intensifiers, the interpretive postulation of intensifiers' *stances* shall be primarily based on Biber's multi-dimensional profile of prototypical genres⁴ (as they can generally be mapped onto Chinese genres in the corpus), as well as certain genre-specific features as characterized by Zhang (2012) and Jing-Schmidt & Tao (2009).

2. Corpus Data

To investigate genre-variations, a good range of intensifiers had to be gathered while maintaining a feasible scale of investigation. To this end, 12 absolute degree adverbs were identified for analysis, namely *ting* (挺), *te(bie)* (特别), *hao* (好), *lao* (老), *guai* (怪), *duo(me)* (多(么)), *zhen* (真), *xiangdang* (相当), *feichang* (非常), *hen* (很), *po(wei)* (颇为), and *shifen* (十分)⁵. The above intensifiers were selected based on considerations of two general criteria: (1) the scope of agreement on lexical items regarded as "intensifiers", and (2) the frequency of their use. Based on Zhu (1982), Liu (1983), Zhang (2000) and Li (2001), as well as Zheng's (2006) corpus study on the frequency of Chinese intensifiers, the above 12 degree adverbs were selected as being

representative of the most commonly-used “booster-type” intensifiers in Chinese discourse⁶.

As for the corpus, two fairly large corpora of Chinese, each taken to be representative of the spoken and written registers of Chinese were used. The spoken register is represented by the CALLFRIEND Mandarin Chinese-Mainland Dialect Corpus (henceforth CallFriend), with approximately 200,000 characters in spoken data, distributed by the Language Data Consortium (LDC). This corpus consists of 60 unscripted telephone conversations, lasting between 5 and 30 minutes. For each conversation, both the caller and callee are native speakers of Mandarin Chinese from Mainland China. All calls are domestic and were placed inside the continental United States and Canada (Canavan & Zipperlen 1996). The written register is represented by the Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese (LCMC), with approximately 1 million characters in written data, distributed by the European Language Resources Association and Oxford Text Archive (McEnery & Xiao 2004). The LCMC, was designed as a Chinese match for the FLOB (Hundt, Sand & Siemund, 1998) and Frown (Hunt, Sand & Skandera, 1999) corpora of British and American English, and contains 15 different written genres including but not limited to press reports, newspaper editorials, newspaper reviews, religious texts, fiction, academic prose, skills, trades and hobbies.

CallFriend was included as a useful comparison with the written register. As such, this paper first examines the distribution of the 12 focal intensifiers within CallFriend and LCMC as an illustration of our quantitative methodology, before attempting a more fine-grained statistical investigation of genre-variation using the 15 genres in LCMC.

3. Methodology

Concordances of the 12 focal intensifiers were generated based on the two corpora. These were then individually examined to eliminate instances of non-intensifier usage. For example, *zhen* can be used in the sense of ‘being real’, or *shifen* may also literally mean ‘ten points’. Instances such as these were removed from our final token count, as they serve other semantic purposes instead of intensification. The observed and normalized frequencies of each intensifier were then tabulated, and illustrated in Table 1.

A quick comparison of the normalized frequencies across both registers show considerably skewed distribution for most intensifiers. First of all, intensifiers are found almost 3 times as much in the spoken register (83.10 per 10k characters) than in the written (25.41 per 10k characters). This is expected as it has been established that intensifiers are prevalently found in genres with “involved production”, such as telephone conversations (Biber 1988, pp. 101-108/129-135). Further evidence of this prevalence is demonstrated by the higher normalized frequency count of almost all intensifiers in the spoken register (with exception of *xiangdang*, *po(wei)* and *shifen*). Most prominent of these intensifiers are *ting* and *te(bie)* where the spoken normalized frequencies are more than 12 times that of the written. Other significant results include *hen* whose normalized frequencies in both registers are strikingly more than the others, giving strong evidence that it is indeed the most prevalent, and probably the most grammaticized, intensifier in Chinese. However, it is notable that *po(wei)* and *shifen* did not appear at all in the spoken corpus but are relatively frequent in the written register, providing strong support to

undertake the investigation of individual intensifiers on a more fine-grained discourse-pragmatic basis. Finally, *lao* and *guai* generated very few tokens in both registers.

Table 1: Distribution of Intensifiers within written and spoken registers

	Raw Frequency		Normalized Freq. (per 10k chars.)		
	CallFriend	LCMC	Spoken	Written	TOTAL
Hen	752	1441	37.60	14.41	2193
Ting	376	49	18.80	0.49	425
Te(bie)	265	99	13.25	0.99	364
Hao	89	43	4.45	0.43	132
Feichang	65	216	3.25	2.16	281
Zhen	57	135	2.85	1.35	192
Duo(me)	32	70	1.60	0.70	102
Xiangdang	15	86	0.75	0.86	101
Lao	8	6	0.40	0.06	14
Guai	3	8	0.15	0.08	11
Po(wei)	0	73	0.00	0.73	73
Shifen	0	315	0.00	3.15	315
TOTAL	1662	2541	83.10	25.41	4203

This simple methodology of examining distribution, however, met with complications when we compared intensifiers within a single register. For example, under the spoken register, *hen* has the highest normalized frequency (37.6 per 10k characters), twice that of *ting* (18.8 per 10k characters) the second highest normalized frequency, giving rise to a possible misinterpretation that *hen* shows the strongest association with the spoken register. Even when observed across registers, it seems that *hen* is twice as likely to occur in the spoken than in the written register (14.41 per 10k characters). This misleading statistical problem stems from failing to take into account two factors: (1) the relative frequencies of intensifiers in relation to each other, and (2) the registers’ own propensity to take intensifiers. For instance, *hen* has already been established as the most commonly used intensifier, hence its extremely high normalized frequency in both registers is unsurprising. And as mentioned, intensifiers generally tend to occur more in the spoken register. Therefore, the above statistical methodology cannot be reliably used as quantitative evidence for register preferences of the intensifiers.

To properly account for the above-mentioned factors, we utilized the Fisher Exact Test, which provided us with an exact p-value (significance level of association), while considering relative frequency of other intensifiers as well as register differences. While chi-square tests may also be used in this situation (as in Jing-Schmidt & Tao 2009), the Fisher Exact Test was chosen because (1) it provides us with an exact p-value indicative of “strength of association”, and (2) small sample sizes coupled with highly unequal distribution (as in Table 1) would render chi-square approximation inadequate. Example 1 shows the 2x2 contingency table used to examine the significance of association between *ting* and the two registers (in relation to the other intensifiers), given a null hypothesis.

Example 1: 2x2 contingency table for *Ting* and its correlation with written and spoken registers

	<i>Ting</i>	<i>Others</i>	TOTAL
Written Corpus	49	2492	2541
Spoken Corpus	376	1286	1662
TOTAL	425	3778	4203

Running the Fisher Exact Test on the table will give us three types of p-values as follow:

Left p-value	Right p-value	2-Tail p-value
$1.054706828680816e-108$	1	$1.054706828680816e-108$

where left p-value signifies the probability of non-association with the spoken register, and the right p-value signifies probability of non-association with the written register, given a null hypothesis. In other words, the smaller the p-value, the higher the strength of association. Therefore, the extremely small left p-value of $1.055e-108$ is strong indication that *ting* is highly preferential to the spoken register; whereas the right p-value of 1 denote an almost certainty that *ting* is not correlated at all with the written register.

Using the above statistical methodology, all 12 focal intensifiers were individually subjected to a Fisher Exact Test to obtain a left p-value (strength of association with spoken register) and a right p-value (strength of association with written register), tabulated and illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Strength of association of intensifiers with spoken and written register

	Strength of Association based on p-value*	
	Spoken	Written
Ting	$1.05471e-108$	1.00000
Te(bie)	$2.50703e-41$	1.00000
Hao	$4.46290e-11$	1.00000
Lao	0.14150	0.94606
Guai	0.87521	0.30692
Duo(me)	0.96643	0.05268
Zhen	0.99857	0.00236
Xiangdang	1.00000	$4.22419e-08$
Feichang	1.00000	$1.32873e-09$
Hen	1.00000	$2.13791e-13$
Po(wei)	1.00000	$7.33048e-17$
Shifen	1.00000	$3.74315e-73$

*where p-value<0.01 indicates significance level of at least 99%.

Compared with Table 1, Table 2 gives a clearer picture of how strongly each intensifier is correlated with the registers in relative terms. The 3 intensifiers most strongly associated with the spoken register include *ting*, *te(bie)* and *hao*; whereas the 5 intensifiers displaying strongest association with the written register include *shifen*, *po(wei)*, *hen*, *feichang* and *xiangdang*. The p-values of these intensifiers indicate an association with their respective registers at a significance level of much more than 99.99%. *Zhen* also shows a bias towards the written register, though its p-value (0.002)

indicates that the association is not as strong when compared relatively to clear written-based intensifiers such as *shifen* and *po(wei)*. *Duo(me)* is seen to be slightly preferential to the written register (p-value=0.05). Finally, *lao* and *guai* generated ambivalent results probably due to their low token counts relative to other intensifiers.

However, given the previous discussion on genres, it should be clear that a simplistic written-spoken register dichotomy is inadequate as functional explanations of language use (Tao 1999). The above results also reaffirm that the written-spoken dichotomy should not be perceived as absolute categories, but as a continuum, dependent upon an accumulation of actual discourse characteristics that are seen to be more or less “written” or “spoken”. As seen in Biber (1988), one such characteristic is the underlying dimension of “involved versus informational production”, which can generate a continuum of genres characteristic of the written-spoken distinction (pp. 128). Though this dimension is a “very strong and fundamental parameter of variation among texts in English” (pp. 115), and thereby gives credence to the use of “written-spoken” as useful labels for gross descriptions, it bears to reiterate that there are demonstrably other salient functional dimensions that work to constitute the gestalt we conceptualize as prototypically written or spoken genres. Clearly, such a perspective allows us to resolve certain problematic accounts. For instance, the discrepancy between Ma (1991) and Guan (2006)/Wang (2003) can be resolved by treating *hen* as being more “written” or “spoken” depending on what other intensifiers it is being compared with. Or Du’s (2004) comparison of *duo(me)* and *hao* can be accounted for as functioning similarly on one dimension but differently on another.

As such, we argue that genre-analysis, which produces quantifiable and comparable empirical evidence of individual intensifiers’ correlation with genres, can offer valuable insights into the possible *stances* a particular intensifier instantiates in support of the perceivable multi-dimensional profile of a specific genre. The next section will extend the above methodology to examine the 12 focal intensifiers’ correlation with 15 different genres in the LCMC individually⁷. Then a corresponding genre-analysis will be conducted to identify possible *core stances* of the intensifiers.

4. Individual intensifier’s genre preferences

To obtain Fisher Exact Test p-values for examination of intensifiers’ correlation with genres, 2x2 contingency tables based on a particular intensifier’s observed frequency with a particular genre, in relation to other intensifiers and genres (see Appendix I), have to be created. Example 2 illustrates one such table where the correlation of the intensifier *shifen* with the genre Press Editorials is tabulated.

Example 2: 2x2 contingency table for *Shifen* and its correlation with the genre Press Editorials

	<i>Shifen</i>	<i>Others intensifiers</i>	TOTAL
Press Editorials	35	70	105
Other Genres	280	2156	2436
TOTAL	315	2226	2541

Running the Fisher Exact Test on the above table similarly produced three p-values as follow:

Left p-value	Right p-value	2-Tail p-value
0.9999999979028349	8.429392268086445e-09	8.429392268086445e-09

Here, left p-value signifies the probability of no negative association with the genre, and right p-value signifies probability of no positive association with the genre, given a null hypothesis. In other words, the smaller the p-value, the higher the strength of positive or negative association. Therefore, in the case of *shifen* and its correlation with the genre of Press Editorials, its very high left p-value (near 1.00) means there is no statistical evidence to show that *shifen* is biased against (negative association) Press Editorials. However, its extremely low right p-value suggests that *shifen* is very strongly associated with, or preferentially appears (positive association) in, the genre of Press Editorials. It is crucial to note that the p-value simply signifies how much the distribution of an intensifier supports an independent hypothesis of positive or negative association. A high p-value in one type of association does not necessarily mean a low p-value in the other, or vice versa. Nor does lack of a strong positive or negative association indicate strength of association in the opposite valence. Each intensifier’s significant correlation (strong associative value) with a genre has to be taken in its own rights.

The above treatment was then extended to each intensifier’s correlation with a particular genre, whereby 180 (12 intensifiers multiplied by 15 genres) 2x2 contingency tables were created and subjected to the Fisher Exact Test for their positive and negative association p-values. The overall results are tabulated and shown in Appendix II (p-values for positive association) and Appendix III (p-values for negative association). To ensure maximal adequacy of genre-analysis, p-values of less than 0.01 (or having significance level of at least 99%) were pegged to be the threshold for critical association. These values are highlighted in bold in all tables and appendixes. Furthermore, intensifiers with comparable results are grouped into separate tables in the following sub-sections to facilitate analysis and discussion.

4.1. *Ting, Hao & Duo(me)*

Table 3 tabulates the positive and negative association p-values with all genres for *ting*, *hao* and *duo(me)*. The most notable result from this table is that the lowest p-values for all three intensifiers in both positive and negative association fall into the same genre of General Fiction and Academic respectively, with *hao* having the strongest association with General Fiction (p-value=4.081e-05) and *ting* most adverse to being associated with Academic texts (p-value=0.001). All highlighted results in this table have a significance level of at least 99.5% (p-value<0.005).

Fictional genres in general are characterized by narrative discourse interspersed with large sections of dialogue or other forms of reported speech, where the narrator or fictional characters are fore-grounded as being personally and emotionally involved in the story. Academic discourse, on the other hand, is concerned with persuasive arguments where the writer is portrayed as maximally objective and “hidden” from the process. In this sense, the genre of General Fiction and Academic text epitomizes maximal displays of emotional involvement and distancing respectively. Being most positively associated with General Fiction and most negatively associated with Academic texts, tentatively

suggest that *ting*, *hao* and *duo(me)* may be most oriented to display stances of *overt emotional involvement*.

Table 3: Strength of Association with genres for *Ting*, *Hao* & *Duo(me)**

	Positive Association			Negative Association		
	<i>Ting</i>	<i>Hao</i>	<i>Duo(me)</i>	<i>Ting</i>	<i>Hao</i>	<i>Duo(me)</i>
Press Reports	0.395	0.946	0.481	0.790	0.220	0.699
Press Editorials	0.876	1.000	0.950	0.391	0.160	0.205
Press Reviews	1.000	0.639	0.811	0.313	0.736	0.512
Religion	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.352	0.401	0.224
Skills/Trades/Hobbies	0.962	0.944	0.291	0.166	0.226	0.842
Popular Lores	0.003	0.949	0.304	0.999	0.158	0.812
Biographies/Essays	0.868	0.613	0.248	0.229	0.535	0.832
Reports & Documents	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.534	0.577	0.407
Academic	1.000	1.000	0.999	0.001	0.003	0.004
General Fiction	0.001	4.081e-05	0.003	1.000	1.000	0.999
Mystery Fiction	0.796	0.732	0.398	0.439	0.529	0.771
Science Fiction	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.389	0.437	0.258
Martial Arts Fiction	0.919	0.018	0.685	0.291	0.995	0.539
Romance Fiction	0.151	0.084	0.340	0.926	0.964	0.783
Humor	0.373	0.314	1.000	0.863	0.898	0.150

*where p-value<0.01 indicates significance level of at least 99%.

Such an interpretation corresponds well with the fact that General Fiction and Academic texts also exemplify two ends of the “involved versus informational production” and “non-abstract versus abstract” dimensions for written texts (Biber 1988). Highly involved and non-abstract production necessitates the consistent display of the subjective “self” through linguistic features such as use of private verbs, emphatic and discourse particles, whereas objective informational production of the abstract is maximally achieved by “hiding the self” through features such as agent-less passives. Furthermore, *ting* and *hao* are also noted to be amongst the top three intensifiers exceptionally preferential to the spoken register (telephone conversation) in Table 2, and that telephone conversation is known to be the most involved and non-abstract genre in Biber’s (1988) study. Additionally, *ting* also has strong positive association with the genre Popular Lores (p-value=0.003), which can also be similarly explained by the genre’s concern with subjective “story-telling” through the lens of the narrator. Examples (3a) and (3b) below provide exemplars of how *ting* and *hao* are used in the genre of General Fiction respectively.

- (3) a. 笑时，样子挺甜，挺妩媚。
xiaoshi, yangzi **ting** tian, **ting** wumei.

“When (she) smiles, (she) looks *quite* sweet, *quite* charming.”

- b. 小萼就势抱住秋仪，哇地哭出声来，嘴里喊着，我好悔，我好怕呀，
是我把老浦逼上绝路的。
xiao e jiushi baozhu qiuyi, wa di ku chu sheng lai, zuili hanzhe, wo hao hui, wo hao pa ya,
shi wo ba laopu bishang jue lu de.

“Xiao E then naturally held onto Qiuyi, and cried out loud, shouting: ‘I’m so remorseful, so afraid, it was me who forced Laopu to take his own life.’”

There is a conflicting situation, however, with *duo(me)* that tends towards the written instead of the spoken register (as seen in *ting* and *hao*), albeit with a significance level less than 95% (p-value=0.053) (see Table 2). One possible explanation is that *duo(me)* maybe a dedicated written-register intensifier for projecting stances of overt involvement. But a more probable reason for the conflict is that *duo* and *duome* are not actually synonymous (i.e. where *duo* is an abbreviation of *duome*), but constitutes two intensifiers positioned differently on the “written-spoken” continuum. Using the Fisher Exact Test to examine their individual correlation with the registers (in relation to the other intensifiers) supports this hypothesis: while *duo* is tenuously associated with the spoken register (p-value=0.183); *duome* is, on the other hand, very strongly associated with the written register (p-value=7.991e-07). A quick check showed that *duo* had relatively more instances in fictional genres, while only *duome* appeared in the genre “Skills/Trades/Hobbies” composed of procedural manuals characterized as being prototypically “written” (Jing-Schmidt & Tao 2009). Hence, a tentative conclusion is that, though both *duo* and *duome* can generally be seen to project subjectivity (hence their common association with fictional genres at a p-value of 0.003), *duome* has other strong “stances” that associates it with more “written” dimensions.

As an interim summary, the genre-analysis results demonstrate that the most probable (and possibly the strongest) stance-marking function *ting*, *hao* and *duo(me)* display is one of ***overt emotional involvement***, where the speaker/author is seen as being affectively involved in the evaluative process of intensification. However, in the case of *duo(me)*, there is evidence to suggest that *duo* and *duome* should be individually considered for their stances, as *duome* exhibits other significant discourse-pragmatic factors that skew its usage towards genres with “written” dimensions.

4.2. *Shifen, Xiangdang & Feichang*

Table 4 tabulates the positive and negative association p-values with all genres for *shifen*, *xiangdang* and *feichang*. In terms of negative association, all three intensifiers have the strongest bias against Romantic Fiction at a significance level of more than 99.5%, with *shifen* being most adverse with a p-value of 1.771e-05. Additionally, *shifen* is also significantly adverse to Biographies/Essays. In terms of positive association, the three intensifiers are more diverse in their genre preferences. Again, *shifen* show the clearest and strongest indication of associative preferences in Press Editorials with a p-value of 8.429e-09 (the lowest value in Appendix II & III), and Press Reviews (p-value=0.004). In contrast with *shifen*, *feichang* is very significantly associated with Biographies/Essays (p-value=3.292e-04), and Science Fiction (p-value=0.006). Finally, *xiangdang* is most preferred in Academic texts (p-value=0.004).

As its title suggest, Romance Fiction, in comparison with all other genres, has the distinction of being the genre most concerned with expressions of intense emotionality

(see Jing-Schmidt & Tao 2009, pp. 45). In terms of Biber’s (1988) dimensions, Romance Fiction ranks as the most “involved”, “non-abstract” and “narrative” of all written genres. While all fictional genres foreground the character’s subjectivity as a necessary condition for the display of emotions, these affective stances take center stage in Romance Fiction. One direct way of achieving the high degree of emotionality prototypical of this genre is through intensification. A quick frequency count of the number of intensifiers used within each genre (see Appendix IV) reveals that Romance Fiction utilizes more instances of intensification (57.4 counts per 10k characters) than any other genre, and almost twice as many as the average of all genres (30.25 counts per 10k characters). Given the high amount of intensification in Romance Fiction, and yet being most adverse to this genre, *xiangdang*, *feichang* and *shifen* are conceivably intensifiers that project stances extremely ill fitted to displays of highly involved emotionality, as opposed to *ting*, *hao* and *duo(me)* previously discussed.

Table 4: Strength of Association with genres for *Shifen*, *Xiangdang* & *Feichang**

	Positive Association			Negative Association		
	<i>Shifen</i>	<i>Xiangdang</i>	<i>Feichang</i>	<i>Shifen</i>	<i>Xiangdang</i>	<i>Feichang</i>
Press Reports	0.029	0.927	0.232	0.983	0.178	0.842
Press Editorials	8.429e-09	0.024	0.682	1.000	0.992	0.458
Press Reviews	0.004	0.322	0.572	0.998	0.863	0.613
Religion	0.658	0.266	0.672	0.509	0.898	0.526
Skills/Trades/Hobbies	0.818	0.030	0.307	0.258	0.988	0.783
Popular Lores	0.742	0.281	0.974	0.327	0.821	0.046
Biographies/Essays	0.995	0.977	3.292e-04	0.008	0.044	1.000
Reports & Documents	0.013	0.092	0.943	0.996	0.979	0.230
Academic	0.315	0.004	0.726	0.745	0.998	0.351
General Fiction	0.969	0.976	0.605	0.056	0.085	0.512
Mystery Fiction	0.782	0.582	0.745	0.304	0.602	0.365
Science Fiction	0.385	0.811	0.006	0.762	0.512	0.998
Martial Arts Fiction	0.056	0.810	0.923	0.967	0.374	0.145
Romance Fiction	1.000	0.999	0.998	1.771e-05	0.003	0.004
Humor	0.743	1.000	0.835	0.397	0.097	0.313

*where p-value<0.01 indicates significance level of at least 99%.

Turning now to each intensifier in this table, *shifen* generated the strongest bias against Romance Fiction, with Biographies/Essays coming in second on negative association, as well as strongest preference towards Press Editorials, with Press Reviews next in terms of positive association. *Shifen*’s adversity to the genre of Biographies/Essay can be accounted for in a similar vein to its adversity to Romance Fiction. In Jing-Schmidt & Tao (2009), the genre of biographies and essays was described as “the construal of events and expression of thoughts..... maximally subject to personal perspectives, emotions, and attitudes” (pp. 43). Inferably, personal affect and subjectivity are thus dimensions common to Romance Fiction and Biographies/Essays, incongruent with the stance projected by *shifen*. Given further that *shifen* ranked as the most “written-based” intensifier in Table 2 with an associative p-value of $3.743e-73$, it clearly stands that a primary concern in the usage of *shifen* is to be maximally non-emotional and

objective. The reason for projecting such a stance is illuminated when its stronger preferences for journalistic writings in the form of Press Editorials and Reviews are considered. Press Editorials and Reviews, as opposed to Press Reports, ostensibly have the added element of imprinting commentaries and value judgments onto their readers. An examination of the corpus data under Press Editorials and Reviews reveals that these genres are also commonly used, in the Chinese context, as doctrinal mouthpiece to exhort some ideological agenda or party line. Examples (4a) and (4b) below, culled from Press Editorials and Reviews respectively, show how *shifen* is used in these contexts.

- (4) a. 国家在发展环境保护事业中十分重视和大力支持发展环境监测工作。
guojia zai fazhan huanjing baohu shiye zhong shifen zhongshi
he dali zhichi fazhan huanjing jiance gongzuo.

“In the area of developing environmental protection, the country is *extremely* concerned with, as well as greatly supports, the process of environmental testing and surveillance.”

- b. 因此，加强党的统一领导，深入进行坚持四项基本原则、坚持改革开放、反对资产阶级自由化的教育，是十分必要的。
yinci, jiaqiang tang de tongyi lingdao, shenru jinxing jianchi si xiang jiben yuanze,
jianchi gaige kaifang, fandui zichanjieji ziyouhua de jiaoyu, shi shifen biyao de.

“Therefore, enhancing the party’s central leadership, steadfastly realizing the four basic principles, committing to economic reform, and combating the teachings of bourgeois liberalization, are all *extremely* necessary.”

As such, there is concrete evidence to suggest that *shifen* projects a core stance of **authoritative verdict**, in congruence with the needs of these genres. It is now understandable how *shifen* may also index maximal non-emotionality and objectivity, as authoritative-ness often goes hand-in-hand with being objective and composed.

The intensifier *xiangdang* is most preferred in Academic texts and most adverse to Romance Fiction. In this instance, if the threshold of significance is lowered (to at least 95%, or $p\text{-value}<0.05$), then *xiangdang* and *shifen* are observed to have highly similar genre preferences, apart from *xiangdang*’s strength of association being relatively weaker for both positive and negative preferences. Both intensifiers are seen to be most biased against Romance Fiction and Biographies/Essays (*xiangdang*’s $p\text{-value}=0.044$), while being similarly preferential to Press Editorials (*xiangdang*’s $p\text{-value}=0.024$). From this perspective, *xiangdang*’s stance can be seen as a moderated form of *shifen*’s stance, where non-emotionality and objectivity are also emphasized. In addition, *xiangdang* is also relatively preferred in the genre Skills/Trades/Hobbies ($p\text{-value}=0.030$), which consist of instructional manuals and other “procedural discourse” (Tao 1999). In Jing-Schmidt & Tao (2009), this genre’s procedural discourse is described as “an impersonal process” and “characterized by distinct precision, objectivity and authority, because the accurate description of methods and chronologically ordered processes is the primary goal of this genre” (pp. 46).

Regardless, the various positive and negative genre associations of *xiangdang* are complementary, as suppression of emotionality (c.f. aversion to Romance Fiction), together with the appearance of objectivity and being non-personal (c.f. aversion to Biographies/Essays, while preferred in Skills/Trades/Hobbies) are preconditions for persuasive argumentation and authority (c.f. preferred in Academic texts and Press

Editorials). However, given how *xiangdang* is often noted to have a lower degree of intensification than the rest of the intensifiers (Guo 1984), a stance of *tempered assertion* is proposed whereby the authors signal a certain degree of tentativeness/restraint in their evaluation. Such a stance is naturally in conflict with the exuberance of emotion needed in Romance Fiction, and well-fitted to the circumspection needed for careful academic research. Examples (5a-b) below provide two exemplars of *xiangdang* in Academic texts.

- (5) a. 男婴略多于女婴，表现出**相当**明显的数量特征（规律性）。
nanying lueduo yu nuying, biaoxian chu xiangdang mingxian de shuliang tezheng (guiluxing).

“The higher ratio of male infants to female, constitutes a *considerably* marked quantitative attribute (pattern).”

- b. 主要表现在财政困难很大，在**相当**程度上靠吃老本和借债，经济稳定发展面临着较大的困难。
zhuyao biaoxian zai caizheng kunnan hen da, zai xiangdang chengdu shang kao chilao ben he jiezhai, jingji wending fazhen mianling zhe jiao da de kunnan.

“Primarily seen in having great difficulties in the finance area, *considerably* having to depend on loans and national reserves, and greater problems in developing a stable economy”

Finally, the genre-preferences of *feichang* seem to pose an odd contradiction to our analysis. This is because *feichang*, on one hand, is seen to be ill fitted to displays of strong emotionality through its bias against Romance Fiction; on the other hand, its strongest preference is towards Biographies and Essays, which has been described above as “maximally subject to personal perspectives, emotions, and attitudes”. However, when we consider that biographies are typically narrative essays and reports on celebrated or key figures in history, written as tributes to honor a legacy, then the above contradiction can be reconciled. To accomplish the above intent, authors have to balance dual concerns: to extol the role or merit of the biographies’ central character (ostensibly a subjective task overtly involving personal perspective and emotion); and to convince readers that the events and attitudes described in the biographies are true and factual in nature (calling for displays of objectivity and non-emotional responses). This is akin to the writings of historians, which ideally should present the factual truth of the matter, but in practice cannot avoid certain degrees of perspectival evaluation. Furthermore, from Appendix II, it can be seen that *feichang* is uniquely suited to the discourse context required of Biographies and Essays, and to a lesser extent to Science Fiction; shown not only through its strong associative p-value, but that no other common intensifier in our study is statistically preferential to these two genre. In a comparative study, Zhang (2006) also notes while another intensifier *hen* is found more in literary genres (such as Romance Fiction), *feichang* is used more frequently in “popular science” text (科普语体). In terms of Biber’s (1988) dimensions, being strongly “informational” and using “covert expression of persuasion” are two parameters that best describe *feichang*’s genre preferences⁸. Hence, we suggest that *feichang* may project a stance of *objective commentary*, where the authors orient towards maximizing the “objective-ness” of judgmental opinions. Examples (6a-b) below provide two exemplars of *feichang*’s usage in Biographies and Essays.

- (6) a. 西南联大教师、学生、员工都是**非常**努力，在**非常**艰苦的条件下，大家**非常**认真念书，教学风气**非常**认真。
xinanliangda jiaoshi, xuesheng, yuangong doushi feichang nuli, zai feichang jianku de tiaojian xia, dajia feichang renzhen nianshu, jiaoxue fengqi feichang renzhen.

“The teachers, students and staff of National Southwest Associated University are all *exceptionally* hardworking, for under *exceptionally* difficult circumstances, everyone took to their studies with *exceptional* serious-ness, and the academic culture was *exceptionally* earnest.”

- b. 周恩来就把国际形势和外交政策的调查研究工作放在**非常**重要的位置。
zhou enlai jiu ba guoji xingshi he waijiao zhengce de diaocha yanjiu gongzuo fangzai feichang zhongyao de weizhi.

“Premier Zhou therefore places *exceptional* importance on international affairs intelligence and the research on diplomatic policies.”

The core stance proposed for *feichang* can also be used to coherently explain its additional preference in Science Fiction. As a distinctive form of fictional genre, Science Fiction is concerned with describing the fantastical and unbelievable, yet upholding a sense of authenticity to its description. Thus it is understandable how a stance of objective commentary projected by *feichang* fits into the communicative intent of persuading a belief in the exceptional. Examples (7a-b) below provide two exemplars of *feichang*'s usage in Science Fiction.

- (7) a. 白素忽然觉得这个小女孩竟然有着一种**非常**特别的能力。
Bai-su huran juede zhege xiao nuhai jingran youshe yizhong feichang tebie de nengli.

“Bai-su suddenly felt that this little girl had a surprising and *very* special ability.”

- b. 这事说起来也是**非常**奇特的。
zhe shi shuo qilai yeshi feichang qite de.

“This matter, in retrospect, is also *very* extraordinary.”

On a subsidiary note, the fact that the lexical roots of *feichang* etymologically stems from “*fei* (not)” and “*chang* (common)”, literally meaning “out of the ordinary” or “exceptional”, may have also contributed to its preferential use in Science Fiction.

As an interim summary, the genre-analysis proposes three subtly differing stance-marking function for *shifen*, *xiangdang* and *feichang*, even though all three intensifiers shows the highest aversion to the genre of Romance Fiction. The most probable core stance for *shifen*, *xiangdang* and *feichang* are **authoritative verdict**, **tempered assertion** and **objective commentary** respectively. All three proposed stances are in congruence with minimal display of emotionality, and at the same time specialized to the needs of their own preferred genres. Notably these intensifiers also constitute three of the top five most preferential to written genres in Table 2, re-affirming that being non-personal, objective, and projecting authority of the written word are some key dimensions of the written register.

4.3. *Zhen, Hen & Po(wei)*

Table 5 tabulates the positive and negative association p-values with all genres for *zhen*, *hen* and *po(wei)*. Compared with the previous 6 intensifiers, *zhen*, *hen* and *po(wei)* seem to exhibit much more complex correlations. Looking first at positive associations, it is noted that *zhen* and *hen* show the strongest preference for Romance Fiction with p-value=0.002 and p-value=7.182e-02 respectively. For *zhen*, it is additionally preferential in another fictional genre, General Fiction, at p-value=0.009. However, *hen* presents a puzzling picture by also being positively associated with Academic texts (p-value=0.002), which had previously been established as being incompatible with fictional genres in a core dimension (i.e. Biber’s “involved vs. Informational production” dimension). Lastly, *po(wei)* shows an almost equal preference for Press Editorials and Mystery Fiction at p-value=0.009. In terms of negative associations, *zhen* and *hen* display very strong biases through their p-values. *Zhen* is highly dispreferred in Academic texts (p-value=1.573e-06) and in procedural manuals under Skills/Trades/Hobbies (p-value=1.007e-04); while *hen* is highly adverse to Press Editorials (p-value=1.518e-04). Finally, though preferential to one fictional genre, *po(wei)* is biased against General Fiction (p-value=0.008).

Table 5: Strength of Association with genres for *Zhen, Hen & Po(wei)**

	Positive Association			Negative Association		
	<i>Zhen</i>	<i>Hen</i>	<i>Po(wei)</i>	<i>Zhen</i>	<i>Hen</i>	<i>Po(wei)</i>
Press Reports	0.162	0.949	0.519	0.905	0.071	0.664
Press Editorials	0.980	1.000	0.009	0.074	1.518e-04	0.997
Press Reviews	1.000	0.854	0.824	0.038	0.215	0.489
Religion	1.000	0.062	0.790	0.054	0.966	0.546
Skills/Trades/Hobbies	1.000	0.254	0.700	1.007e-04	0.796	0.492
Popular Lores	0.330	0.776	0.016	0.764	0.265	0.993
Biographies/Essays	0.399	0.655	0.647	0.680	0.381	0.466
Reports & Documents	1.000	0.904	1.000	0.172	0.171	0.391
Academic	1.000	0.002	0.837	1.573e-06	0.999	0.275
General Fiction	0.009	0.988	1.000	0.996	0.018	0.008
Mystery Fiction	0.169	0.728	0.009	0.903	0.331	0.997
Science Fiction	1.000	0.253	1.000	0.071	0.832	0.244
Martial Arts Fiction	0.033	0.978	0.712	0.986	0.034	0.506
Romance Fiction	0.002	7.182e-05	0.964	0.999	1.000	0.091
Humor	0.062	0.267	0.862	0.976	0.809	0.420

*where p-value<0.01 indicates significance level of at least 99%.

This sub-section shall again consider each intensifier individually. Starting with *zhen*, its results demonstrate highly significant negative association with Academic texts and Skill/Trades/Hobbies. The commonality between these two genres lies in their concern with displaying maximal objectivity and non-emotionality, especially in Skill/Trades/Hobbies. Academic texts, as described beforehand, are also concerned with persuasive argumentation where the writer is portrayed as maximally objective and “hidden” from the process. Hence, *zhen*’s aversion to these two genres suggests its tendency to exhibit stances where subjectivity and personal affect are foregrounded. Turning to its positive associations, the genres most preferred by *zhen* (Romance Fiction

and General Fiction) harmonize with the above-suggested stances. As mentioned, Romance Fiction epitomizes the highest level of emotionality, and General Fiction also supports a dimension of maximal emotional involvement, both contrary to stances of objectivity and being impersonal. Therefore, a core stance of *deep emotionality* is proposed for *zhen*. Examples (8a-b) below provide two exemplars of *zhen* in Romance Fiction, where intense emotion is projected.

- (8) a. 她真希望就像比目鱼般，永远地和他一同游到天涯海角。
ta zhen xiwang jiu xiang bimuyu ban, yongyuan di he ta yitong youdao tianyahaijiao.
- “She *really* hopes to be like a flat fish,
 and eternally swim to the ends of the earth with him”
- b. 触摸着诚子的脸,嘶哑着嗓子悄声说: “诚子,你真美,
 你真是一个天生的模特儿,我真不知道怎么感激你……。”
*chumo zhe Cheng-zi de lian, siya zhe shangzi qiaosheng shuo: “Cheng-zi, ni zhen mei,
 ni zhenshi yige tiansheng de moter, wo zhen buzhidao zenme ganji ni ……”*
- “Caressing Cheng-zi’s face, he whispered huskily: ‘Cheng-zi, you’re *really* beautiful, you really are a natural model, I *really* don’t know how to express my gratitude…….”

The genre preferences for *hen* can appear confusing at first glance. Its strong aversion to Press Editorials suggests a non-judgmental and objective dimension, yet *hen*’s equally strong (if not stronger) preference for Romance Fiction places it as a robust stance-marker of emotionality. This is further complicated by a contradictory concurrent preference for Academic texts, whose discourse context calls for non-emotional (i.e. impersonal) writing. To resolve this dilemma, two relevant points have to be recapped. Firstly *hen* is the most common, frequent and grammaticized intensifier in the Chinese lexicon and secondly intensification occurs most frequently in Romance Fiction, at almost twice the frequency of the average of all genres (see Appendix IV). Though the Fisher Exact Test was used to account for the relative frequency of *hen* in relation to all intensifiers and genres, it is contended that these two factors still “conspired” to propel the frequency of *hen* in Romance Fiction, thereby resulting in its high p-value under positive association. Furthermore, the overwhelming frequency of *hen* in various genres has often been partly credited to its high grammaticized status, where its use in actual language serves little in terms of intensification, and acts more as a grammatical particle for structural necessity (Shan 2004, Zhang 2006, Pei 2009). As such, it is proposed that *hen* instantiates a stance of *neutrality*, by which we mean to emphasize the lack of stance-marking function that facilitates *hen*’s status as a generic intensifier (or simply as a grammatical particle), as opposed to actual stance-projection of being neutral. It is now understandable why *hen* is preferred in Academic texts. In addition to *xiangdang* (used to circumspect intensification in Academic texts), by using the generic unmarked *hen*, academics are better able to portray objective-ness in arguing speculative assertions. Examples (9a-b) provide exemplars of *hen* in Romance Fiction and Academic texts respectively, where its use is seen as more for structural or stylistic considerations than for intensification.

- (9) a. “而且我觉得面容姣好倒在次要，身段好才更有女人味。你身段就很不错，很成熟，很丰满，是不是司马灵？”
erqie wo juede mianrong jiaohao dao zai ciyao, shengduan hao cai gengyou nurenwei. ni shengduan jiu hen bucuo, hen chengshu, hen fengman, shibushi Sima-Ling?”
 “Furthermore, I think having a pretty face is secondary, a good body is more feminine. Your body is (very) not bad, very mature, very full, are you Sima-Ling?”
- b. 因为课文的类型是多种多样的，理解不同类型（体裁）的课文所包括的环节很可能有所不同。
yinwei kewen de leixing shi duozhongduoyang de, lijie butong leixing (ticai) de kewen suo baokuo de huanjie hen keneng yousuobutong.
 “Because the types of prose in classroom textbooks are varied, understanding the parts included in different types (of genres) in textbooks is (very) possibly different.”

Taking *hen* to portray a stance of neutrality also works to explain its aversion to Press Editorials. As mentioned, Editorials forms of journalistic writings uses *shifen* prevalently to put across authoritative commentaries and value judgments. Using a generic and neutral *hen* for intensification would defeat such a purpose.

Lastly, a slight similarity is noted in the genre preferences and the corresponding stance analysis between *po(wei)* and *shifen* (as well as *xiangdang*), though *po(wei)* demonstrates such dimensions to a lesser effect. While *shifen* is very strongly preferential to Press Editorials (p-value=8.429e-09), *po(wei)* does so at a much lower level (p-value=0.009), suggesting that *po(wei)* may also project elements of imposing opinions. As for negative association, *shifen* is most adverse Romance Fiction (p-value=1.771e-05), suggesting a stance of being maximally non-emotional; *po(wei)*, however, is most adverse to General Fiction and again at a lower level (p-value=0.008), suggesting a lack of personal involvement or emotions as well. Prior discussion of *shifen*'s aversion to Romance Fiction was attributed to its concern to portray authority by suppressing dimensions of emotionality and subjectivity, therefore, *po(wei)*'s aversion to General Fiction may also be understood as downplaying dimensions of personal involvement and subjectivity in a bid to increase the veracity of its value judgment. As such, a core stance characterized as giving **cautionary suggestion**, is proposed for *po(wei)*, in view of its auxiliary nature to *shifen*'s stance of *authoritative verdict*. With such a stance, *po(wei)*'s additional preference to Mystery Fiction, containing detective and investigative novels concerned with the discourse of formulating suspense and anticipation, is easily understood. Through *po(wei)*'s core stance, authors are able to better utilize acute language to put across advisory or cautionary messages. Examples (10a-b) provide exemplars of such usage in Press Editorials and Mystery Fiction respectively.

- (10) a. 它说明封建迷信思想在部分农村中还颇有市场。
ta shuoming fengjian mixing sixiang zai bufen nongcun zhong hai po you shichang.
 “It illustrates that a ideology of feudal superstitions is still quite popular in certain villages.”

- b. 常常顾左右而言他，避实就虚避重就轻地绵里藏针，一般会深得女领导的欢心，就跟我国历史上颇有一些女皇就喜欢太监一样。
changchang guzuoyou er yanta, bishijiuxu bizhongjiuqing di mianlicangdao, yiban hui shende nu lingdao de huanxin, jiu gen woguo lishi shang po you yixie nuhuang jiu xihuan taijian yiyang.

“Often eluding direct questions, focusing on the insignificant or trivializing problems, usually works to greatly please female superiors, just like how *quite* a few female emperors in our country’s history favor their eunuch.”

As an interim summary, *zhen*, *hen* and *po(wei)* are analyzed as projecting core stances of *deep emotionality*, *neutrality* and *cautionary suggestion* respectively. These intensifiers also constitute the next three most “written-based” intensifiers on top of *shifen*, *xiangdang* and *feichang*, discussed in the last sub-section as projecting stances of *authoritative verdict*, *tempered assertion* and *objective commentary* respectively. While stances of *neutrality* and *cautionary suggestion* are generally in line with written register’s prototypical discourse context of objectivity and non-involvement, *zhen*’s stance of *deep emotionality* seems relatively out of place as an intensifier more preferential to the written register. Two factors work to mediate this discrepancy. From Table 2, it can be seen that *zhen* has a p-value of 0.002, which is relatively high compared to the other five intensifiers clearly preferential to written register. Secondly, while “written-based” intensifiers may not appear regularly in all written genres (Tao 1999), the same holds true in reverse, in that prototypical dimensions of written genres do not apply uniformly to all “written-based” intensifiers. In the case of *zhen*, it is easy to comprehend how a stance of *deep emotionality* cannot be prevalent in the spoken register (or at least in this paper’s spoken corpus of telephone conversation), for speakers do not work to appear passionate and fervent at all intersections of conversation. On the other hand, this dimension constitutes the core discourse concern in the written genre of Romance Fiction. Appreciably, such insights once again point towards the inadequacy of using the written-spoken dichotomy for discourse-pragmatic analysis, and the need for more fine-grained genre-analysis.

4.4. *Te(bie)*, *Lao* & *Guai*

Finally, we come to Table 6 which tabulates the positive and negative association p-values with all genres for the last 3 intensifiers *te(bie)*, *lao* and *guai*. Clearly, these three intensifiers did not exhibit any significant (dis)preference to any genre in our study, at the significance level of at least 99%. To make more tentative claims, the threshold significance level is lowered to 95% for this table, and p-values less than 0.05 underlined. With this new threshold, *te(bie)* is somewhat preferential to Reports & Documents (p-value=0.034) and Skills/Trades/Hobbies (p-value=0.049); and more adverse to Romance Fiction (p-value=0.013) and Press Editorials (p-value=0.014). Although *lao* registered a very weak preference towards General Fiction (p-value=0.049), on the whole, it can be seen that *lao* and *guai* did not show any noteworthy results even after the significance level was lowered.

The genre preferences of *te(bie)* initially present themselves as riddled with conflict. Recalling the discussion on *shifen* and *hen*, where the genres of Romance Fiction and Press Editorials have highly significant p-values on opposite sides of the associative table (see Tables 4 & 5), *te(bie)* in both genres here is somewhat significant

on the same side under negative association. The second conflict is seen when we compare *te(bie)*'s preferential genres and its overall preference within “written-spoken” registers. With preference given to genres of Reports & Documents and Skills/Trades/Hobbies, *te(bie)* relates itself to stances of precision, formality and non-emotionality as demanded by the prototypical written discourse context of official documents and procedural manuals. This seems to be in sync with aversion to Romance Fiction and Press Editorials (where its discourse calls for intense emotions or strong opinions), until we recollect that *te(bie)* ranks as being the second most “spoken-based” after *ting*, with a high significance p-value of $2.507e-41$ (see Table 2).

Table 6: Strength of Association with genres for *Te(bie)*, *Lao* & *Guai**

	Positive Association			Negative Association		
	<i>Te(bie)</i>	<i>Lao</i>	<i>Guai</i>	<i>Te(bie)</i>	<i>Lao</i>	<i>Guai</i>
Press Reports	0.783	1.000	1.000	0.368	0.668	0.584
Press Editorials	1.000	1.000	0.287	<u>0.014</u>	0.776	0.960
Press Reviews	0.406	1.000	1.000	0.804	0.868	0.828
Religion	0.341	1.000	1.000	0.851	0.881	0.845
Skills/Trades/Hobbies	<u>0.049</u>	1.000	1.000	0.978	0.672	0.588
Popular Lores	0.721	1.000	0.200	0.406	0.516	0.958
Biographies/Essays	0.072	0.388	1.000	0.955	0.879	0.140
Reports & Documents	<u>0.034</u>	1.000	1.000	0.993	0.927	0.903
Academic	0.179	1.000	1.000	0.886	0.443	0.338
General Fiction	0.954	<u>0.049</u>	0.404	0.121	0.996	0.915
Mystery Fiction	0.848	0.306	0.386	0.293	0.956	0.923
Science Fiction	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.146	0.892	0.858
Martial Arts Fiction	0.217	1.000	0.335	0.886	0.737	0.944
Romance Fiction	0.996	1.000	0.210	<u>0.013</u>	0.504	0.954
Humor	0.745	0.148	1.000	0.511	0.990	0.807

*where p-value<0.05 indicates significance level of at least 95%.

The contradictory nature of *te(bie)* led to a postulation of *te* and *tebie* being two different intensifiers, similar to the analysis of *duo(me)*. However, a Fisher Exact Test of *te* and *tebie*'s individual correlation with written and spoken registers (with the other intensifiers) shows that both lexical items are indeed strongly associated with spoken language with p-values $9.203e-18$ and $7.419e-26$ respectively. A further Fisher Exact Test was conducted to verify the register preferences of *te* and *tebie* in comparison with each other. Table 7 illustrates the 2x2 contingency table used.

Table 7: 2x2 contingency table for *Te* and *Tebie*'s correlation with written and spoken registers

	<i>Te</i>	<i>Tebie</i>	TOTAL
Written Corpus	10	89	99
Spoken Corpus	66	199	265
TOTAL	76	288	364

This test, on the other hand, turns out a significantly low left p-value of 0.001 (i.e. significance level of 99.9%), and a high right p-value of 0.9997 . As the left p-value is

small, a null hypothesis is rejected in favor of a correlation between *te* and the spoken register, or *tebie* with the written register; indicating that *in relation to each other*, *te* is clearly more preferential to the spoken register, while *tebie* is more preferential to the written register. Given that our genre-analysis is restricted to only written genres, and that there are 89 tokens of *tebie* with only 10 tokens of *te* in the written corpus, it is perhaps reasonable to say that the associative p-values in Table 6 are only reflective of *tebie* and its usage in written genres. Therefore, here is a case of *te* and *tebie* being both preferentially used in spoken discourse, but only *tebie* is seen predominantly in written language, and possibly projecting stances related to being precise, non-emotional and objective.

As there is evidence that *te(bie)* constitutes two different intensifiers, and given its relatively high p-values in relation to the other tables, it would be prudent to refrain from postulating any core stance for *te(bie)* until more investigation has been done. Similarly, the raw frequencies of *lao* and *guai* (see Table 1) are too low in both the written and spoken corpus to generate any meaningful associative p-values for analysis and are in need of further examination pending a larger corpus.

As an interim summary, it is noted that these last three intensifiers did not produce results that definitively reveal core stances even when the threshold significance level was lowered to at least 95%. For *te(bie)*, this was due to its conflicting genre and register preferences, resulting from a combined analysis of two possibly mutually independent intensifiers. As for *lao* and *guai* (which comes across as colloquial and maybe dialect-specific in their usage), their insufficient tokens across a range of genres produced inconsequential p-values as can be seen in Table 6, highlighting the fundamental dependency of statistical genre-analysis on large corpus to produce adequate numbers for analysis.

5. Conclusions

While there are a number of claims that point to various discourse-pragmatic features in the usage of intensifiers (specifically in terms of register preferences and stance-marking functions), these studies are consistently undermined by a lack of empirical results to support their arguments. Utilizing a fairly large corpus of authentic data to conduct genre-analysis, a preliminary but clear finding of this study indicates that a large number of individual intensifiers are significantly correlated with specific genre-types. Furthermore, such correlations cover a wide range of intensifiers and genres. This is taken to be a demonstration of individual intensifiers' "fittedness" to the discourse-pragmatic context of the genre in which they are used. This "fit" between intensifier and genre is not arbitrary, but stems from a congruence of *stance* instantiated by the intensifier and the communicative intent or discourse context of the genre. Therefore, possible core stances projected by intensifiers, not described in prior studies, could be postulated. While we do not claim the findings in this study to be definitive of all the discourse-pragmatic characteristics an intensifier may exhibit, the statistically significant correlations between intensifiers and genres does provide strong empirical evidence of one functional aspect influencing the use of intensifiers in everyday discourse contexts.

Based on positive and negative associative values with genres, some intensifiers exhibit a confluence of striking preferences or aversions that unambiguously indicate a

particular type of stance marking. For instance, the significantly strong preference for Press Editorials/Reviews and the equally strong aversion to Romance Fiction and Biographies/Essays of *shifen* paints a coherent picture of an intensifier that is maximally non-emotional, objective and authoritative in its dimensions. As such, there is convincing evidence that the use of *shifen* may in fact project a core stance characterized as *authoritative verdict*. Other intensifiers such as *zhen*, *feichang*, *ting*, *xiangdang* etc. show similar confluence of factors that allow strong postulation of core stances.

The provision of the above empirical evidence also lends itself to resolving a number of inadequacies and problems in traditional discourse-pragmatic analysis of Chinese intensifiers. For one, the use of large corpora and genre-analysis can now provide quantifiable evidence to either support or refute previous claims made through introspection. For example, the overwhelming usage frequency of the intensifier *hen* and its distinctive genre preferences support prior conception of *hen* as a highly grammaticized particle often devoid of any intensification meaning. On the other hand, our statistical results have conclusively shown *hen* to be primarily used in the written register relative to most other intensifiers but still less “written” than *po(wei)* and *shifen*, hence resolving conflicting and problematic accounts by Ma (1991), Wang (2003) and Guan (2006). The claims that *zhen* conveys strong emotionality (Lai 1995, Shan 2004), and that *duo(me)* and *hao* denote a high level of affect (Du 2004) has also been verified through their strong correlation to Romance and General Fiction respectively, while at the same time being averse to Academic text. The genre-analysis in this study has also uncovered some unexpected findings, such as the problem of conventionally treating *duo* and *te* as abbreviations of *duome* and *tebie*.

In summary, the findings in this paper have validated genre-analysis (through corpus study) as a viable methodology for investigating seemingly covert discourse-pragmatic linguistic phenomenon to a certain extent. Hence, the process outlined here might also be productively used to uncover other aspects of language use. As a final note, we would like to acknowledge two existing limitations of the methodology used. First is the dependence on a corpus large enough to generate sufficient tokens for viable statistical analysis. As in the case of *lao* and *guai*, neither the written nor spoken based corpora were sufficiently large to provide a sufficient number of tokens for us to determine significant genre preferences. Second is the inadequacy of an exclusively quantitative or qualitative approach. Though numbers and frequencies often work as convincing arguments, as our study shows, making sense of the correlations in genre-analysis still requires a highly qualitative interpretive analysis, albeit one which is founded on empirical quantitative results. In the end, more often than not, it is the holistic methodology encompassing both approaches that works best in explicating linguistic phenomena.

Notes

* We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their highly constructive inputs, and to Hongyin Tao and John Schumann for detailed comments and suggestions. Standard disclaimers apply.

¹ In this paper, “register” refers to the more generic usage in a written or spoken discourse context, whereas “genre” refers to the more specialized and conventionalized types of discourse, such as fiction, conversation, reports, academic texts etc.

² These dimensions can be seen as distinguishing factors different genres orient to in their discourse, namely: informational versus involved production (dimension 1), narrative versus non-narrative concerns (dimension 2), explicit versus situation-dependent reference (dimension 3), overt expression of persuasion (dimension 4), abstract versus non-abstract information (dimension 5), and on-line informational elaboration (dimension 6).

³ Zhang (2012) found only three meaningful dimensions, which he termed “literate”, “classical” and “news commentary”.

⁴ Due to space constraints, this paper is unable to detail the complex interplay of the multiple dimensions in the different genres investigated by Biber. Interested readers can refer to Biber (1988), or Biber (1992) for a brief overview.

⁵ Our initial investigation (see proceedings of IACL-16) had included the degree modifier *tai* (太) but was later eliminated due to considerations of its amorphous status as a bone fide “booster”, as opposed to being a marker of “excessive-ness”. We thank Jianming Lu for this feedback.

⁶ Quirk et al. (1985, pp. 445) uses the term “boosters” to refer to a sub-group of intensifiers that scale the degree upwards but not to its extreme end (e.g. very, quite, greatly). Henceforth, the term ‘intensifier’ will be used generally to denote the ‘boosters’ in our study.

⁷ An equivalent genre-analysis on the spoken register (CallFriend corpus) could not be conducted as the corpus consisted of only one genre (telephone conversations).

⁸ These are the only two dimensions where Romance Fiction and Biographies/Science Fiction are seen to be in opposing ends of the spectrum.

References

- Benveniste, E. (1971). Subjectivity in Language. In M.E. Meek (trans), *Problems in General Linguistics*, 223-30. Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press.
- Biber, D. (1988). *Variation across Speech and Writing*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Biber, D. (1992). The Multi-Dimensional Approach to Linguistic Analyses of Genre Variation: An Overview of Methodology and Findings. *Computers and the Humanities*, 26(5-6), 331-345.
- Biber, D. (1995). *Dimensions of register variation: A cross-linguistic comparison*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Biber, D., Conrad, S. & Reppen, R. (1998). *Corpus Linguistics: Investigating language structure and use*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Biber, D. & Finegan, E. (1989). Styles of stance in English: Lexical and grammatical marking of evidentiality and affect. *Text* 9(1), 93-124.
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S. & Finegan, E. (1999). *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. London: Longman.
- Canavan, A. & Zipperlen, G. (1996). *CALLFRIEND Mandarin Chinese-Mainland dialect*. Linguistic Data Consortium, Philadelphia.
- Cao, X.L. (2008). “相当”的虚化及相关问题 (The grammaticalization of *xiangdang* and its relevant issues). 《中国语文》 (*Chinese Language*) 4, 317-321.
- Chafe, W. & Nichols, J. (Eds.). (1986). *Evidentiality: the Linguistic Coding of Epistemology - Introduction*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Du, D.L. (2004). 与“多 (么)、太、好”有关的感叹句 (The exclamatory sentences relating to the verbs “*duo(me)*, *tai*, *hao*”). 《语言研究》 (*Studies in Language and Linguistics*) 24(3), 52-56.

- Englebretson, R. (ed.) (2007). *Stancetaking in Discourse: Subjectivity, Evaluation, Interaction*. Pragmatics & Beyond New Series 164. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Fitzmaurice, S. (2004). Subjectivity, intersubjectivity and the historical construction of interlocutor stance: From stance markers to discourse markers. *Discourse Studies* 6(4), 427-448.
- Fox, B.A. (2001). Evidentiality: Authority, Responsibility, and Entitlement in English Conversation. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 11(2), 167-192.
- Guan, M. (2006). 试谈程度副词“很”与“非常”功能的异同 (Discussing the functional difference between intensifier *hen* and *feichang*). 《语言文字运用》 (*Applied Linguistics*) 2.
- Guo, C. (1984). “相当”的副词特点 (The qualities of the adverb *xiangdang*). 《汉语学习》 (*Chinese Language Learning*) 5, 24-26.
- Han, R.Z. (2000). 现代汉语的程度副词 (Degree adverbs of modern Chinese). 《汉语学习》 (*Chinese Language Learning*) 2, 12-15.
- Heritage, J. & Raymond, G. (2005). The Terms of Agreement: Indexing Epistemic Authority and Subordination in Talk-in-Interaction. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 68(1), 15-38.
- Hundt, M., Sand, A. & Siemund, R. (1998). *Manual of information to accompany the Freiburg - LOB Corpus of British English ('FLOB')*.
- Hunston, S. & Thompson, G. (2000). *Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hunt, M., Sand, A. & Skandera, P. (1999). *Manual of information to accompany the Freiburg - Brown Corpus of American English ('Frown')*.
- Kärkkäinen, E. (2006). Stance taking in conversation: From subjectivity to intersubjectivity. *Text & Talk-An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language, Discourse Communication Studies* 26(6), 699-731.
- Jin, X.F. (2008). 绝对程度副词：对外汉语教学中的难点 (On the challenges of teaching Chinese degree adverbs to foreign learners). 《沈阳师范大学学报》 (*Journal of Shenyang Normal University*) 32(1), 170-171.
- Jing-Schmidt, Z. & Tao, H. (2009). The Mandarin Disposal Constructions: Usage and Development. *Language & Linguistics* 10(1), 29-58.
- Lai, S.P. (1999). 现代汉语副词“真”和“很”的用法辨析 (The usage of adverb *zhen* and *hen* in modern Chinese). 《北京科技大学学报》 (*Journal of University of Science and Technology Beijing*) 2, 55-59.
- Langacker, R.W. (1985). Observations and Speculations on Subjectivity. In J. Haiman (Ed.), *Iconicity in syntax* (pp. 109-150). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Li, Y.F. (2007). 程度副词句法语用特点的调查研究 (A statistical investigation on pragmatic and syntactic characteristics of degree adverb). 《汉语学习》 (*Chinese Language Learning*) 2, 36-49.
- Lim, N.E. (2012). From Subjectivity to Intersubjectivity: Epistemic Marker *Wo Juede* in Chinese. In Y. Xiao, L. Tao, & H. L. Soh (Eds.), *Studies in Chinese Linguistics in the New Era* (pp. 265-300). Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press.
- Liu, W.Q. (2009). 现代汉语程度副词的范围界定状况考察 (Research on the current definitional scope of modern Chinese degree adverbs). 《现代语文》 (*Modern Chinese*) 3, 77-79.
- Lu, H.H. (2005). 近代汉语程度副词“十分”的语法化及其特殊用法 (The grammaticalization and especial usage of modern Chinese degree adverb “*shifen*”). 《语言研究》 (*Studies in Language and Linguistics*) 25(2), 37-39.
- Lu, H.H. (2009). 近代汉语程度副词“老”的语法化 (The grammaticalization of the degree adverb “*lao*” in modern Chinese). 《语言研究》 (*Studies in Language and Linguistics*) 29(4), 97-101.
- Lyons, J. (1981). Worlds within Worlds - The subjectivity of utterance. In *Language, Meaning and Context* (pp. 220-247). London: Fontana Paperbacks.
- Ma, Z. (1988). 程度副词在表示程度比较的句式中的分布情况考察 (The distribution of degree adverbs in sentences denoting comparative degrees). 《世界汉语教学》 (*Chinese Teaching in the World*) 2, 81-86.
- Ma, Z. (1991). 普通话里的程度副词“很、挺、怪、老” (Mandarin Chinese's degree adverb *hen, ting, guai* and *lao*). 《汉语学习》 (*Chinese Language Learning*) 2, 8-13.

- McEnery, A. & Xiao, Z. (2004). The Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese: A corpus for monolingual and contrastive language study. *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC)*, 1175-1178. Lisbon.
- Pei, Y.L. (2009). 现代汉语“很”充当修饰语的偏正结构研究 (*Hen-modification structure in modern chinese*). 《汉语学习》 (*Chinese Language Learning*) 3, 52-56.
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, J. & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. New York: Longman.
- Scheibman, J. (2002). *Point of View and Grammar: Structural Patterns of Subjectivity in American English Conversation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Sha, P. (1987). 关于“相当”的词性分析 (On the categorization of *xiangdang*). 《福建师范大学学报》 (*Journal of Fujian Normal University*) 2, 74-77.
- Shan, Y.M. (2004). 副词“真”和“很”的用法比较 (A comparison of usage between adverb *zhen* and *hen*). 《汉语学习》 (*Chinese Language Learning*) 6, 68-70.
- Simon-Vandenberg, A.M. (2008). Almost certainly and most definitely: Degree modifiers and epistemic stance. *Journal of pragmatics* 40(9), 1521-1542.
- Tao, H.Y. (1999). 试论语体分类的语法学意义 (Grammatical-theoretic implications of genre taxonomies). 《当代语言学》 (*Contemporary Linguistics*) 1(3), 15-24.
- Thompson, S.A. & Mulac, A. (1991). The discourse conditions for the use of the complementizer that in conversational English. *Journal of pragmatics* 15(3), 237-251.
- Traugott, E.C. (1995). Subjectification in grammaticalisation. In S.D.S. Wright (ed.), *Subjectivity and Subjectivisation* (pp. 31-54). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wang, J. (2003). “很”、“非常”和“十分”的不对称及其原因 (The asymmetry of the characters *hen*, *feichang*, *shifen* and its cause). 《黄河科技大学学报》 (*Journal of Huanghe S&T University*) 5(4), 108-112.
- Wang, L. (1985). 《中国现代语法》 (*Modern Chinese Grammar*). Hong Kong: Commercial Press.
- Wang, S.Z. (2007). “非常”的语法化过程 (The grammaticized process of the chinese phrase “*feichang*”). 《廊坊师范学院学报》 (*Journal of Langfang Teachers College*), 23(1), 29-31.
- Wen, Z.X. (2009). 程度副词“好”及其相关句式的历史考察 (The historical research of the intensifier *hao* and its relevant sentence). 《山西大学学报》 (*Journal of Shanxi University*) 32(5), 61-65.
- Willett, T. (1988). A Cross-Linguistic Survey of The Grammaticalization of Evidentiality. *Studies in Language* 12(1), 51-97.
- Wu, R.J.R. (2004). *Stance in Talk: A Conversation Analysis of Mandarin final particles*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Wu, Z.Y. (2004a). 程度副词“非常、异常”的产生与发展 (The emergence and development of the two adverbs of degree “*feichang*” and “*yichang*”). 《古汉语研究》 (*Research in Ancient Chinese Language*) 2, 67-71.
- Wu, Z.Y. (2004b). 程度副词“好”的产生与发展 (The production and development of the degree adverb “*hao*” in chinese language). 《吉林大学社会学学报》 (*Jilin University Journal Social Sciences Edition*) 2, 59-63.
- Xia, Q.F. (1996). 程度副词再分类试探 (Re-categorizing degree adverbs). 《安庆师院社会科学学报》 (*Journal of Anqing Teachers College*) 3, 63-67.
- Xiao, R. & McEnery, A. (2005). Two Approaches to Genre Analysis - Three Genres in Modern American English. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 33(1), 62-82.
- Xiao, R. & Tao, H.Y. (2007). A Corpus-Based Sociolinguistic Study of Amplifiers in British English. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, 1(2), 241-273.
- Xiao, R. (2009). Multidimensional analysis and the study of world Englishes. *World Englishes*, 28(4), 421-450.
- Xu, J.N. (1998). 关于程度副词的对外汉语教学 (On the teaching of chinese degree adverbs to foreign learners). 《南开学报》 (*Nankai Journal*) 5, 76-80.
- Xu, J.H. (2006). 试论程度副词的对外汉语教学 (Discussion on the teaching of chinese degree adverbs to foreign learners). 《语言文字应用》 (*Applied Linguistics*) 2, 49-51.

- Yap, F.H. (Workshop Organizer). (2011). Invited Workshop on “*Stance Phenomena in Asian Languages: Typological, Diachronic & Discourse Perspectives*”. Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong. July 18th-20th.
- Zeng, W. (2007). 口语中程度副词使用的性别差异 (Gender variations in the use of degree adverbs in spoken Chinese). 《修辞学习》 (*Rhetoric Learning*) 3, 65-70.
- Zhang, G. (2008). 现代汉语程度副词研究的回顾、问题与展望 (A reflection on research in degree adverbs of modern Chinese). 《思想战线》 (*Thinking*) 34(1), 110-114.
- Zhang, G.B. (1997). 相对程度副词与绝对程度副词 (On relative and absolute degree adverbs). 《华东师范大学学报》 (*Journal of East China Normal University*) 2, 92-96.
- Zhang, Y. (2006). 程度副词“很”与“非常”差异探微 (An investigation into the difference between intensifier *hen* and *feichang*). 《北方论丛》 (*The Northern Forum*) 6, 57-61.
- Zhang, Z.S. (2012). A corpus study of variation in written Chinese. *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory*, 8(1), 209-240.
- Zhao, J. (2007). 近十年程度副词研究综述 (A summary of degree adverb research in the last decade). 《语文学刊》 (*Journal of Language and Literature Studies*) 5, 75-78.
- Zheng, Y.Q. (2006). 中介语中程度副词的使用情况分析 (Analysis of degree adverbs usage of foreign learners). 《汉语学习》 (*Chinese Language Learning*) 6, 66-72.
- Zhou, X.B. (1995). 论现代汉语的程度副词 (On degree adverbs in modern Chinese). 《中国语文》 (*Chinese Language*) 2, 100-104.

Authors' addresses

Ni Eng Lim
 Department of Applied Linguistics
 University of California, Los Angeles
 Los Angeles, CA 90095
 USA

limnieng@gmail.com

Huaqing Hong
 Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice (CRPP)
 National Institute of Education
 Nanyang Technological University
 1 Nanyang Walk, Singapore 637616

huaqing.hong@nie.edu.sg

Appendix I: Observed Frequency of Intensifiers within written Genres

	<i>Ting</i>	<i>Te(bie)</i>	<i>Hao</i>	<i>Lao</i>	<i>Guai</i>	<i>Duo-(me)</i>	<i>Zhen</i>	<i>Xiang-dang</i>	<i>Fei-chang</i>	<i>Hen</i>	<i>Po-(wei)</i>	<i>Shifen</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Press Reports	4	5	1	0	0	5	12	3	17	84	5	29	165
Press Editorials	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	8	8	41	8	35	105
Press Reviews	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	3	5	30	1	15	59
Religion	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	36	1	6	53
Skills/Trades/Hobbies	1	11	1	0	0	6	0	10	16	97	4	17	163
Popular Lores	12	9	2	0	2	9	16	11	15	145	14	30	265
Biographies/Essays	8	28	9	2	0	18	31	12	68	310	15	52	553
Reports & Documents	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	15	0	9	32
Academic	0	16	0	0	0	2	2	20	25	207	7	43	322
General Fiction	10	3	11	2	1	11	16	2	13	77	0	13	159
Mystery Fiction	2	4	2	1	1	5	11	5	11	82	10	16	150
Science Fiction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	30	0	7	48
Martial Arts Fiction	1	7	6	0	1	3	12	3	7	61	3	22	126
Romance Fiction	8	4	8	0	2	9	26	2	12	185	4	14	274
Humor	2	2	2	1	0	0	7	0	4	41	1	7	67
TOTAL	49	99	43	6	8	70	135	86	216	1441	73	315	2541

Appendix II: Strength of Positive Association with Genres (in terms of p-values)

	<i>Ting</i>	<i>Te(bie)</i>	<i>Hao</i>	<i>Lao</i>	<i>Guai</i>	<i>Duo-(me)</i>	<i>Zhen</i>	<i>Xiang-dang</i>	<i>Fei-chang</i>	<i>Hen</i>	<i>Po(wei)</i>	<i>Shifen</i>
Press Reports	0.395	0.783	0.946	1.000	1.000	0.481	0.162	0.927	0.232	0.949	0.519	0.029
Press Editorials	0.876	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.287	0.950	0.980	0.024	0.682	1.000	0.009	8.429 e-09
Press Reviews	1.000	0.406	0.639	1.000	1.000	0.811	1.000	0.322	0.572	0.854	0.824	0.004
Religion	1.000	0.341	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.266	0.672	0.062	0.790	0.658
Skills/Trades/Hobbies	0.962	0.049	0.944	1.000	1.000	0.291	1.000	0.030	0.307	0.254	0.700	0.818
Popular Lores	0.003	0.721	0.949	1.000	0.200	0.304	0.330	0.281	0.974	0.776	0.016	0.742
Biographies/Essays	0.868	0.072	0.613	0.388	1.000	0.248	0.399	0.977	3.292 e-04	0.655	0.647	0.995
Reports & Documents	1.000	0.034	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.092	0.943	0.904	1.000	0.013
Academic	1.000	0.179	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.999	1.000	0.004	0.726	0.002	0.837	0.315
General Fiction	0.001	0.954	4.081 e-05	0.049	0.404	0.003	0.009	0.976	0.605	0.988	1.000	0.969
Mystery Fiction	0.796	0.848	0.732	0.306	0.386	0.398	0.169	0.582	0.745	0.728	0.009	0.782
Science Fiction	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.811	0.006	0.253	1.000	0.385
Martial Arts Fiction	0.919	0.217	0.018	1.000	0.335	0.685	0.033	0.810	0.923	0.978	0.712	0.056
Romance Fiction	0.151	0.996	0.084	1.000	0.210	0.340	0.002	0.999	0.998	7.182 e-05	0.964	1.000
Humor	0.373	0.745	0.314	0.148	1.000	1.000	0.062	1.000	0.835	0.267	0.862	0.743

*where p-value<0.01 indicates significance level of at least 99%.

Appendix III: Strength of Negative Association with Genres (in terms of p-values)

	<i>Ting</i>	<i>Te(bie)</i>	<i>Hao</i>	<i>Lao</i>	<i>Guai</i>	<i>Duo-(me)</i>	<i>Zhen</i>	<i>Xiang-dang</i>	<i>Fei-chang</i>	<i>Hen</i>	<i>Po(wei)</i>	<i>Shifen</i>
Press Reports	0.790	0.368	0.220	0.668	0.584	0.699	0.905	0.178	0.842	0.071	0.664	0.983
Press Editorials	0.391	0.014	0.160	0.776	0.960	0.205	0.074	0.992	0.458	1.518 e-04	0.997	1.000
Press Reviews	0.313	0.804	0.736	0.868	0.828	0.512	0.038	0.863	0.613	0.215	0.489	0.998
Religion	0.352	0.851	0.401	0.881	0.845	0.224	0.054	0.898	0.526	0.966	0.546	0.509
Skills/Trades/Hobbies	0.166	0.978	0.226	0.672	0.588	0.842	1.007 e-04	0.988	0.783	0.796	0.492	0.258
Popular Lores	0.999	0.406	0.158	0.516	0.958	0.812	0.764	0.821	0.046	0.265	0.993	0.327
Biographies/Essays	0.229	0.955	0.535	0.879	0.140	0.832	0.680	0.044	1.000	0.381	0.466	0.008
Reports & Documents	0.534	0.993	0.577	0.927	0.903	0.407	0.172	0.979	0.230	0.171	0.391	0.996
Academic	0.001	0.886	0.003	0.443	0.338	0.004	1.573 e-06	0.998	0.351	0.999	0.275	0.745
General Fiction	1.000	0.121	1.000	0.996	0.915	0.999	0.996	0.085	0.512	0.018	0.008	0.056
Mystery Fiction	0.439	0.293	0.529	0.956	0.923	0.771	0.903	0.602	0.365	0.331	0.997	0.304
Science Fiction	0.389	0.146	0.437	0.892	0.858	0.258	0.071	0.512	0.998	0.832	0.244	0.762
Martial Arts Fiction	0.291	0.886	0.995	0.737	0.944	0.539	0.986	0.374	0.145	0.034	0.506	0.967
Romance Fiction	0.926	0.013	0.964	0.504	0.954	0.783	0.999	0.003	0.004	1.000	0.091	1.771 e-05
Humor	0.863	0.511	0.898	0.990	0.807	0.150	0.976	0.097	0.313	0.809	0.420	0.397

*where p-value<0.01 indicates significance level of at least 99%.

Appendix IV: Distribution of Intensifiers within Genres

	Observed Freq. of all intensifiers	Normalized Freq. (per 10,000 chars.)
Press Reports	<i>165</i>	<i>22.39</i>
Press Editorials	<i>105</i>	<i>23.20</i>
Press Reviews	<i>59</i>	<i>20.31</i>
Religion	<i>53</i>	<i>18.62</i>
Skills/Trades/Hobbies	<i>163</i>	<i>25.59</i>
Popular Lore	<i>265</i>	<i>35.84</i>
Biographies/Essays	<i>553</i>	<i>42.42</i>
Reports & Documents	<i>32</i>	<i>6.24</i>
Academic	<i>322</i>	<i>23.55</i>
General Fiction	<i>159</i>	<i>32.83</i>
Mystery Fiction	<i>150</i>	<i>37.58</i>
Science Fiction	<i>48</i>	<i>47.33</i>
Martial Arts Fiction	<i>126</i>	<i>26.72</i>
Romance Fiction	<i>274</i>	<i>57.40</i>
Humor	<i>67</i>	<i>47.35</i>
TOTAL	<i>2541</i>	<i>30.25</i>