

## On the Rise and Diffusion of New Intensifiers: *This* and *That* in Some Asian Varieties of English

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The intensifiers *this* and *that* acquired their intensifying function as a result of a grammaticalization process by means of which deictic demonstratives became degree adverbs with the meaning “to this or that extent, so much, so.” The phenomenon spread in the early nineteenth century as a typical resource of spoken English, and since then these intensifiers have found a niche in the written domain by imposing a scalar construal on adjectives for which scale is not the default. Even though these intensifiers are observed in practically all the varieties of English around the world, they predominate in American English, with its use in all the other inner circle varieties lagging well behind. In the outer circle varieties, the construction is also subject to some geographical preferences. The present article has two objectives: to evaluate the role and distribution of *this* and *that* as intensifiers in selected Asian varieties of English and to analyze the lexicosemantic structure of their right-hand collocates in terms of word class and mode of construal. The study demonstrates, firstly, the existence of different stages of grammaticalization of *this* and *that*, the latter having a wider repertoire of collocates; and secondly, an ongoing process of colloquialization and Americanization of the phenomenon, which is contributing to its growing diffusion in the outer circle varieties of English. The evidence comes from the Indian, Hong Kong, Singaporean and Philippines components of the *Corpus of Global Web-based English*.

Keywords: boundedness; corpus linguistics; deixis; intensifiers; *this* and *that*; world Englishes

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Sobre la creación y difusión de nuevos intensificadores:  
*this* y *that* en algunas variedades asiáticas del inglés

Los intensificadores *this* y *that* adquirieron su función como tales como resultado de un proceso de gramaticalización que propició la evolución desde su función deíctica original hasta la adverbial con el significado de “en esta medida, hasta ese punto, tanto, tan.” La difusión de esta construcción tuvo lugar a principios del siglo diecinueve como un recurso típico del inglés hablado y desde entonces ha encontrado su nicho en el inglés escrito incluso con adjetivos no concebidos inicialmente como graduables. Aunque el fenómeno se observa en prácticamente todas las variedades del inglés, predomina notablemente en inglés americano de entre las variantes que conforman el denominado *inner circle* mientras que su uso fluctúa significativamente según el ámbito geográfico en las variantes del *outer circle*. El presente estudio tiene dos objetivos: analizar la función y distribución de estos intensificadores en algunas variedades asiáticas del inglés y estudiar la estructura léxico-semántica de los colocados desde el punto de vista de la clase de palabra y la naturaleza del colocado. El estudio confirma, por un lado, un distinto nivel de gramaticalización de *this* y *that* como resultado del mayor repertorio de colocados de *that* como intensificador y, por otro, un proceso de coloquialización y americanización del fenómeno que contribuye a su creciente difusión en las distintas variedades del inglés. Los datos del estudio proceden de los componentes de la India, Hong Kong, Singapur y Filipinas del *Corpus of Global Web-based English*.

Palabras clave: limitación; lingüística de corpus; deixis; intensificadores; *this* y *that*; variedades del inglés

## I. INTRODUCTION

The grammaticalization of intensifiers is often the result of primary grammaticalization, which leads to their development down the cline, from adjectives or adverbs with a potential degree reading to proper degree words (Hopper and Traugott 2003, 122; Paradis 2011, 252), as in the cases of *very* (ME *verray* “true, truly”), *quite* (ME *quite* “free, clear”), *fairly* (OE *fæger* “fair, clean”) and *pretty* (OE *prættig* “cunning, crafty”). In other cases, the degree meaning develops as a result of secondary grammaticalization, whereby already grammaticalized elements acquire an intensifying function in light of their implicit connotations of quantification. This development is commonplace in many languages and is the input for the latest generation of new degree adverbs. The intensifier *all* is a prototypical example of this type of grammaticalization, having developed from a determiner to a degree modifier as a result of its quantifier use (Bolinger 1972, 47-48; Buchstaller and Traugott 2006, 350).<sup>1</sup> *Rather* also stems from its preferential senses in expressions like *I would rather do*, which show a development from “an original adjunct into a subjunct and conjunct, and eventually into a modifier of adjectives and adverbs” (Bolinger 1972, 98-101; Rissanen 2008, 345; Gergel 2009, 2016).

The intensifiers *this* and *that* constitute another example of secondary grammaticalization with their development from determiners to adverbs of degree, as shown in (1) and (2):

- (1) I never had a coconut milk drink this refreshing and light. (SgE, *The One with St Betty: A Sunday Roast Lesson*)
- (2) My personal observation is as an idol group they're not that prolific yet. (PhilE, *Back2Gaming*)

Degree modifiers share semantic properties with the collocating item and, in the case of *this* and *that*, their semantics makes them suitable for modification of degree as a result of two important features, deixis and comparative potential, which are necessary for scalar readings and modifiers (Diessel 2006, 463-89; König and Umbach 2018, 285-328). Their intensifying use stems from the deictic, contrastive and comparative potential of demonstratives, which turned them into “here” and “there” adverbs, thus becoming manner or degree deictics via the following pathway (Calle-Martín 2019, 154):

- (3) a. *this* DEM + PROXLOC “this far place, as far as this” > *this* ADV “this far”  
 b. *that* DEM + DISTLOC “that far place, as far as that” > *that* ADV “that far”

<sup>1</sup> The cline from a demonstrative to an intensifier is also illustrated in the development of English *such* and Dutch *zulk* (Ghesquière and van de Velde 2011, 765-97).

*That* acquired its adverbial status before *this*. According to the *OED*, the first recorded use of the adverb *this*—“in this way or manner, thus”—goes back to 1420 and to ca. 1460 with the meaning “to this extent or degree, as much as this,” while the first attested examples of the adverb *that* date to ca. 1450. However, in the case of *that*, earlier instances have been traced back to the second half of the fourteenth century, which confirms that it acquired its adverbial status approximately one hundred years before *this* (Calle-Martín 2019, 156). It was originally associated with expressions of quantity like *as much as that* (4), *as far as that*, *as long as that*, eventually developing into proper degree expressions like *that much* (5), *that far* and *that long*.

- (4) For thys holy seruyce he sayd that ys deuoutly songe of religious people in erthe pleasyth god as moche as that, that ys done of aungels before hys hyghe maiestie in heuen. (*The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, ca. vii, c. 1450)
- (5) Wherefore he was right hevvy, and toke hir in his armes, as he that moche hir loved, and axed whi she made soche sorowe. (*Merlin or the Early History of King Arthur*, chapter iv, c. 1450-1460)

Their distribution has, however, been erratic since then. Their definite spread did not take place until the last quarter of the twentieth century, in American English (AmE) in particular and initially restricted to particular collocates—*much*, *far* and *long*—though later with a wider variety of adverbs and adjectives (Calle-Martín 2019, 157).

The only competitor of *this* and *that* in the category of boosters is the intensifier *so*, which often shares the same semantic value. The *OED* states that there are differences between them, in the sense that the intensifier *that* is “more definite than *so*, as indicating the precise amount” (*OED* 2000a, 2000b). The booster *so*, like other English intensifiers, is considered to have two referential expressions, traditionally known as the strong and the weak forms of *so*. The strong form is referential and appears in the focus position, redirecting the listener’s attention by means of a pointing gesture, while the *weak* form is deaccented and refers to an item the listener’s attention is already oriented to (Bosch 1983; Castroviejo-Miró 2011, 86).<sup>2</sup> Even though *this* and *that* seem to be surpassing the strong deictic use of *so* in some American dialects in examples such as *John is this tall*—with the speaker gesturing to indicate the particular dimension involved (Castroviejo-Miró 2011, 86)—the dominant role of *so* in these environments cannot be underestimated today as it is even found to be on the rise in AmE and Canadian English (CanE) (Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005; Tagliamonte 2006, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> The intensifier use of German *so* is discussed by Carla Umbach and Cornelia Ebert, who understand this intensifier as an occurrence out of the blue, without an actual demonstration, gesture or antecedent (2009, 153-68).

In spite of the increasing frequency of *this* and *that* in recent decades, they have not achieved the frequencies of other intensifiers like *very* and *so*. Today they are a typical resource of spoken English requiring a referent in the here and now shared by both speakers. In the written domain, they are preferred in the less formal types of writing, fiction in particular, followed by magazine and newspaper materials (Calle-Martín 2019, 169). Even though the phenomenon is observed in practically all varieties of English around the world, it has an uneven distribution; it predominates in AmE while its use in all the other inner circle varieties lags well behind.<sup>3</sup> Among the outer circle varieties, these intensifiers are also subject to some geographical preferences. This article evaluates their distribution in selected varieties of English by examining their different trends in terms of colloquialization—as in Philippines English (Collins 2015a)—and their growing Americanization—both in American-based varieties, such as Philippines English, and British-based varieties, such as Indian English (Sedlatschek 2009). The hypothesis underlying this study is that *this* and *that* are undergoing development from deictic demonstratives to intensifying adverbs, and that their frequency in a specific English variety indicates how far the development has progressed. The present article begins by analyzing the role and distribution of these intensifiers in selected Asian varieties of English and then goes on to study of the lexicosemantic structure of their right-hand collocates in terms of their word class and mode of construal—boundedness versus unboundedness.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The source material comes from the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* (GloWbE; Davies 2013). Developed by Mark Davies at Brigham Young University, the corpus contains 1.9 billion words from 340,000 websites in twenty different English-speaking countries. The corpus material was compiled in December 2012 and consists of a random selection of web pages and blogs. Even though the inner circle varieties are more amply represented—British English (BrE) and AmE in particular—the outer circle varieties are also represented by substantial amounts of material—Tanzanian English being the smallest sample, though still with more than thirty-five million words. The dimension and number of varieties included in the GloWbE corpus makes it a valuable source for the study of cross-linguistic variation in present-day English.

This study investigates the use and distribution of *this* and *that* as intensifiers in four different varieties of Asian English (AsE)—Indian English (IndE), Singapore English (SgE), Hong Kong English (HKE) and Philippines English (PhilE). IndE has been chosen as an example of South AsE while HKE, SgE and PhilE are taken as examples of South-East AsE. Table 1 shows the total number of tokens of each of the four components in the corpus.

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<sup>3</sup> See Braj B. Kachru for a detailed description of his traditional Three Concentric Circles Model of the different varieties of English (1985, 12-13).

TABLE 1. Word-count of the GloWbE components

GloWbE component	General	Blogs	Total
IndE	68,032,551	28,310,511	96,430,888
SgE	29,229,186	13,711,412	42,974,705
PhilE	29,758,446	13,457,087	43,250,093
HKE	27,906,879	12,508,976	40,450,291

These four varieties of AsE represent different stages in the development of English. According to Braj B. Kachru's three-circles concept of world English (1985, 12-13), AsEs belong to the outer circle where English is used as an "institutionalized additional language" and acts as the primary language in certain domains such as higher education, administration and culture (Kachru 2005, 15). Edgar W. Schneider's Dynamic Model assumes the existence of an underlying uniform process driving the formation of the postcolonial varieties of English, conceived as a progression of five characteristic stages—formation, exonormative stabilization, nativization, endonormative stabilization and differentiation (Schneider 2007, 21-32; Mesthrie and Bhatt 2008, 32-36). IndE, HKE and PhilE are well advanced in the process of nativization and already moving towards the fourth phase, endonormative stabilization (Schneider 2007, 140; Setter et al. 2010, 116). SgE, in turn, has already progressed well into this phase, or is even at the beginning of the fifth one, having become a native/first language for much of its society. The different origin and status of English in these varieties, together with the different developmental stage in Schneider's Dynamic Model each one finds itself in, make them ideal for the present study.

These varieties have also been purposively chosen to assess whether the growing diffusion of these intensifiers responds to a British or an American influence. While IndE, HKE and SgE all emerged from the expansion of the British Empire, PhilE is a product of twentieth-century US colonial expansion, which resulted in the intense and rapid spread of the language in the Philippines at the turn of that century (Schneider 2007, 140). The phenomenon is found to be more frequent in AmE than in the other inner circle varieties (Calle-Martín 2019, 153) and its higher occurrence in PhilE might be interpreted as a consequence of the American provenance of this variety (Hunt 1956, 117-30; Fuchs 2017, 64-87; Gonçalves et al. 2018).

The corpus is POS-tagged with the CLAWS 7 POS-tagger, which facilitates analysis not only by lemma but also by part of speech, has a user-friendly interface and presents the results in an attractive way.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, this study does not rely entirely on the corpus tags owing to some internal problems with the online version

<sup>4</sup> CLAWS (*Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System*) was developed at the University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language (UCREL), University of Lancaster (Garside 1987, 30-41; Garside and Rayson 1997, 179-93).

of the corpus. Specifically, searching for the adverbial function of *this* and *that* yielded a limited number of instances while other relevant occurrences were unfortunately left out, thereby offering a rather imprecise image of the phenomenon in these varieties of English. For the sake of accuracy, the study relies on the whole set of occurrences of *this* and *that* followed by adjectives and adverbs with the search phrases “this/that \_j\*” and “this/that \_r\*” respectively.

*This* and *that* are high-frequency function words in English and the output required manual disambiguation to discard instances where they do not strictly have an intensifying function, as in cases where the adjective or adverb is not the head of the phrase—*That easy access to weapons had been identified as a reason for violence*—object clauses—*I think that fortunately one of the great things [...]*—or sequences—*this/that also, this/that only* and other similar combinations. The disambiguation process thus trimmed down the corpus to a total of 12,043 instances including both deictic and anaphoric uses of the two intensifiers, 2,016 with *this* and 10,027 with *that*.

### 3. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The analysis of a morphosyntactic construction in the outer varieties of English must necessarily begin with an overview of its distribution in the inner circle varieties in order to evaluate any likely influence, either from BrE or AmE. Figure 1 presents the frequency of the intensifiers *this* and *that* followed by adjectives and adverbs in BrE, AmE and CanE. As can be seen, the phenomenon predominates in AmE, followed at a considerable distance by CanE and BrE, both with a similar occurrence. The higher incidence of *that* over *this* may be associated with their different use in the demonstrative paradigm (Calle-Martín 2019, 164). *That* is used noncontrastively to denote any object irrespective of its proximity, which makes it “the unmarked member of the demonstrative paradigm in that it has a wider incidence of use and is produced earlier on in ontogeny when compared to *this*” (West 2014, 29; italics in the original; see also Clark 2009, 94). In the same fashion, *that* also seems to have been the pioneer in terms of intensifying function in light of its higher incidence compared with *this*. Figure 1 also shows that *this* co-occurs more frequently with adverbs while *that* accepts a higher number of adjectives. *That*, unlike *this*, shows evidence of being more advanced in the collocating spectrum, as it is more prolific with a higher number of adjectives than *this*.

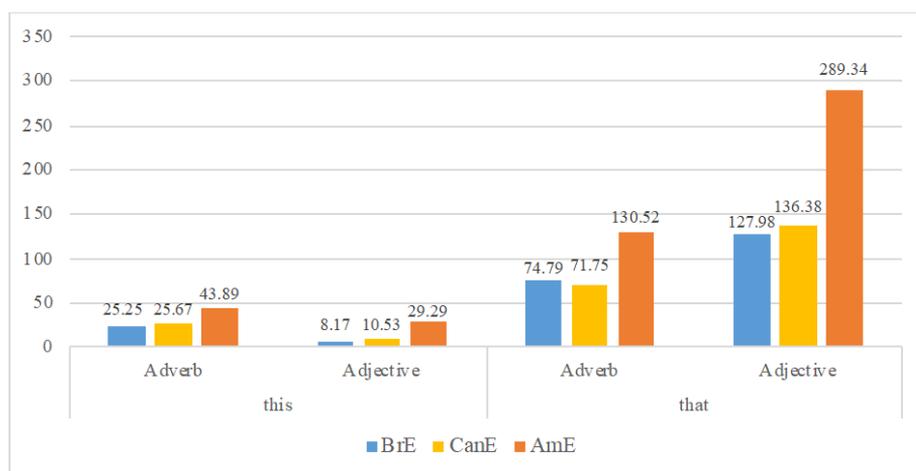
FIGURE 1. Collocates of *this* and *that* across inner circle varieties of English (n.f.)<sup>5</sup>

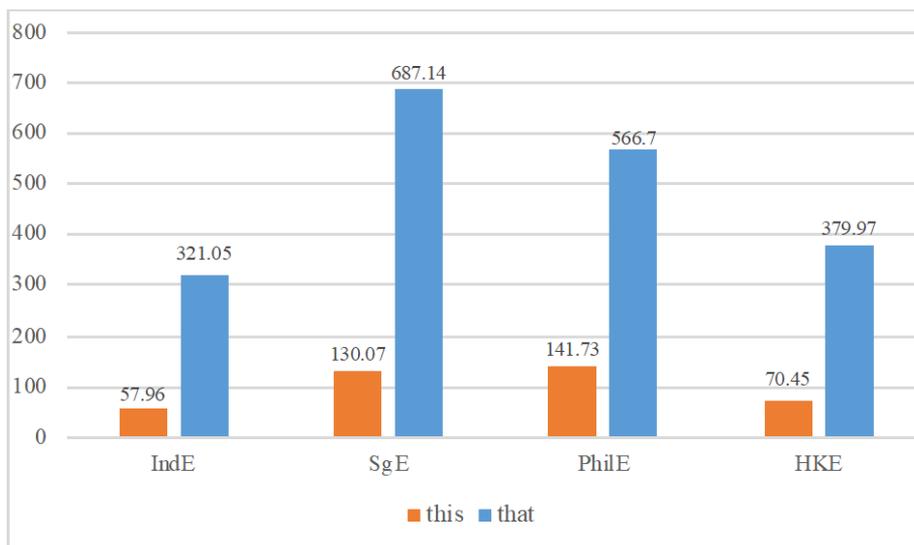
Figure 2 shows the distribution of the phenomenon in the Asian varieties surveyed. The difference between *this* and *that* is considered significant—<sup>2</sup> 31.894,  $p < 0.0001$ . HKE and IndE present the smallest number of instances—70.45 and 57.96 instances, respectively, of *this* and 379.97 and 321.05 instances of *that*. IndE is often considered to be a rather conservative variety, often conforming to BrE practices and impervious to many morphosyntactic innovations (Sedlatschek 2009, 25-26; Calle-Martín and Romero-Barranco 2014, 136). This is the result of the rather different imprint of English in the territories examined. India was under the rule of the British Empire from 1765 until its independence in 1947, a period of nearly 200 years that eventually resulted in English achieving the status of an associate official language in the country alongside Hindi (Gargesh 2006, 94). In contrast with the other Asian varieties, “the syntax of Indian English, as opposed to [its] phonology and lexis, is said to conform most to standard British English” (Saijala 2009, 39). SgE and PhilE, on the other hand, present the highest frequency—respectively, 130.07 and 141.73 instances of *this*, and 687.14 and 566.7 instances of *that*.<sup>6</sup> The high distribution of these intensifiers in PhilE is logically explained as being the result of US colonial expansion in the twentieth century, since they were proliferating in AmE at the time and were therefore imported into the Philippines, where they have preserved a notable role since then. SgE, as mentioned above, is moving into the phase of differentiation—the fifth phase—so it is already in the process of becoming a native/

<sup>5</sup> The figures in this study have been normalized to 10,000,000 for comparison—normalized frequency (n.f.).

<sup>6</sup> In a previous study, the distribution of the split infinitive in these varieties of English was examined and the same ranking was obtained: SgE and PhilE were found to lead the adoption of this construction while IndE emerged as the most reluctant (Calle-Martín and Romero-Barranco 2014).

first language for much of its society (Schneider 2007, 153-61) and according to some recent studies has a certain proneness to morphosyntactic innovation (Seoane and Suárez-Gómez 2013, 20-21; Seoane 2017, 118).

FIGURE 2. Distribution of *this* and *that* in the outer varieties of English surveyed (n.f.)

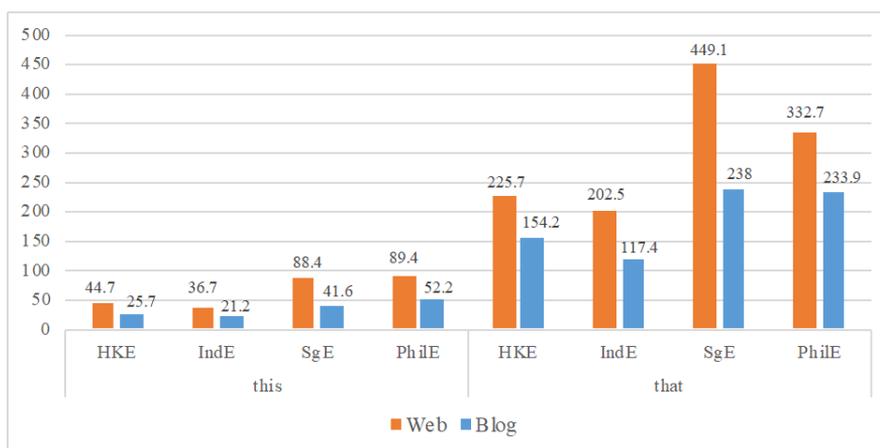


The data allow us to establish a connection between the inner and outer varieties of English. The data in HKE and IndE, for instance, practically correlate with those in BrE and CanE, while the incidence in PhilE and, to a lesser extent, SgE approximate that in AmE. This suggests that the diffusion of these intensifiers can hardly be explained in terms of the differing developmental stages of the varieties. HKE and IndE on the one hand, and SgE and PhilE on the other, present two different sides of the coin, with a rather constrained distribution in the former pair and a more substantial one in the latter. The substrate language may also be rejected as the underlying source for the spread of *this* and *that* in Asia in view of the absence of a similar process of grammaticalization—from demonstratives to degree words—in the corresponding substrate languages—Hokkien, Malay and Mandarin in SgE, Cantonese in HKE, Tagalog in PhilE and Hindi in IndE.

The rise of the intensifiers *this* and *that* in these varieties, in our opinion, is the result of joint forces. The first is colloquialization, defined as the increasing acceptance in writing of colloquial features close to spoken language (Mair 2006, 88; Leech et al. 2009, 20; Collins 2013, 289). These intensifiers are strongly associated with spoken English as a result of their implicit deictic component requiring some shared knowledge between the speakers involved. As mentioned above, the

GloWbE contains material from web pages and blogs. With the necessary caveats, web pages are taken to represent more formal writing for general purposes, in most cases commercial, which requires a more elaborate, complex type of prose. Blogs, in contrast, display a less formal, spontaneous kind of writing, often consisting of ego-documents or group discussions on a particular topic, which implies a less elaborate, simpler type of prose. Figure 3 shows the frequency of *this* and *that* according to the type of text.

FIGURE 3. Distribution of *this* and *that* across text types (n.f.)



As can be seen, *this* and *that* used as intensifiers predominate in web pages, which display a more formal type of writing. It is difficult to understand, however, exactly why they appear with such frequency in the more formal text type. It might, on the one hand, suggest the existence of an active process of colloquialization, as exemplified by (6) and (7). On the other, it could also be due to the fact that web pages facilitate anaphoric relations and the majority of the degree modifiers in our data are precisely anaphoric.

(6) I certainly don't think he became this successful simply by being an armchair investor and neither should you. (SgE, *Crei-Academy.com*)

(7) The latter though is not really that feasible since most people want to treat their prized horses the best they can. (PhilE, *Todayissues.com*)

The second force is Americanization. Many varieties of English worldwide have progressively lost their original ties with Britain. The growing interest in American culture, in turn, has brought the adoption of the American linguistic variety. Various studies have investigated the level of Americanization of varieties of English

worldwide, especially as regards spelling and vocabulary (Awonusi 1994; Modiano 1996; Collins 2009; Fuchs 2017). In the particular case at hand, the influence of BrE on the diffusion of the intensifiers *this* and *that* is hard to substantiate given their frequency in the Asian varieties under scrutiny which, in some cases, is even higher than in BrE. BrE influence is also rejected in view of the history of these intensifiers because, after their erratic distribution in Early Modern English, there was a rebirth in AmE at the beginning of the nineteenth century, followed by their definite spread in the last quarter of the twentieth century (Calle-Martín 2019, 160-64). AmE has pioneered the use of the degree meaning of *this* and *that* since then, both in terms of frequency and of the variety of collocates. Their prominent role in AmE, therefore, is as a convincing argument in favor of Americanization as a key force when it comes to their diffusion in the four AsE varieties examined here. In addition, web pages have been described “as a text-type where American forms are preferred” (Gonçalves et al. 2018, 2) and the same can be said of blogs. Since the corpus used for this study contains materials extracted from these two types of text, it stands to reason that the high frequency of *this* and *that* as intensifiers is the result of the influence of AmE. The distribution of these intensifiers in other diatopic corpora—e.g., the *International Corpus of English*—is erratic and their prominent role in the online material of GloWbE may be indicative of the transfer of this American feature to other varieties of English. As far as *this* is concerned, its occurrence in web material is found, in some cases, to double that in blogs, particularly in PhilE and SgE. PhilE, for instance, presents 89.4 and 52.2 instances in web pages and blogs, respectively. The intensifier *that* presents a similar state of affairs, with both PhilE and SgE once again standing out as the varieties where this intensifier is most frequent—PhilE has 332.7 and 233.9 occurrences of *that* in, respectively, web pages and blogs, and the difference is even more marked in SgE, which has 449.1 and 238 instances, respectively.

#### 4. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

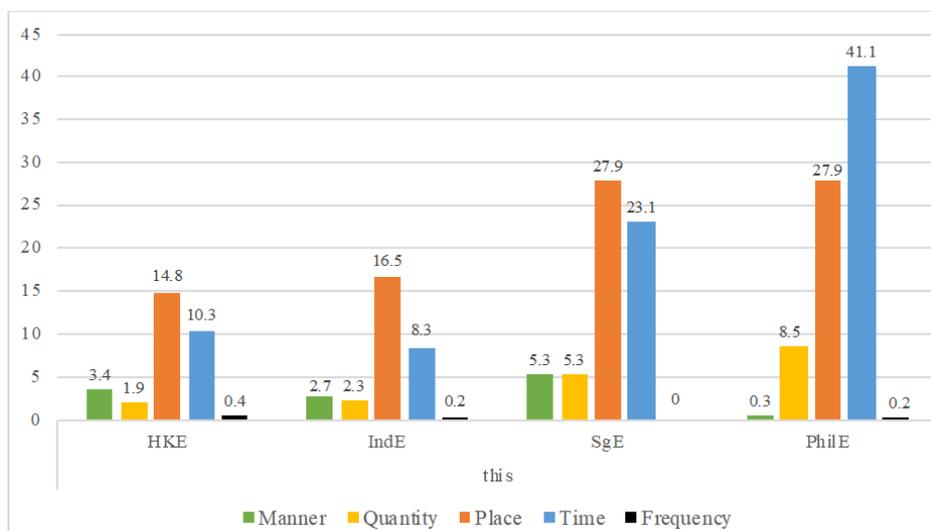
##### 4.1. Adverbial Collocates

*This* and *that* as intensifiers, as mentioned above, are found to collocate more strongly with adverbs, at least in the early stages of grammaticalization. Figure 4 shows the types of adverbial collocates for *this*. As may be seen, *this* overwhelmingly combines with adverbs of place in all the varieties with the single exception of PhilE, where adverbs of time outnumber adverbs of place. The preference for adverbs of place derives from the recurrent use of *far* and *close*—as in (8) and (9)—the former in particular as a potential indicator of relative proximity.<sup>7</sup> Adverbs of manner, quantity

<sup>7</sup> In expressions like *this/that far*, *far* is overwhelmingly used in our data as an adverb of place. In some cases, however, it denotes a time reference, for example in *If you have waited this far to buy a house and I will try not to think that far ahead*. Irrespective of their implicit reference, all *far* instances have been classified as adverbs of

and frequency occur sporadically. The other adverb types are limited to sporadic combinations with the adverbs *long*, *early*, *late*, *much* and *well* for the expression of time, quantity and manner (10), respectively. It seems, therefore, that the use of *this* in combination with adverbs is limited to these fixed collocations and that it has not expanded beyond these uses.

FIGURE 4. Classification of adverbial collocates with *this* (n.f.)



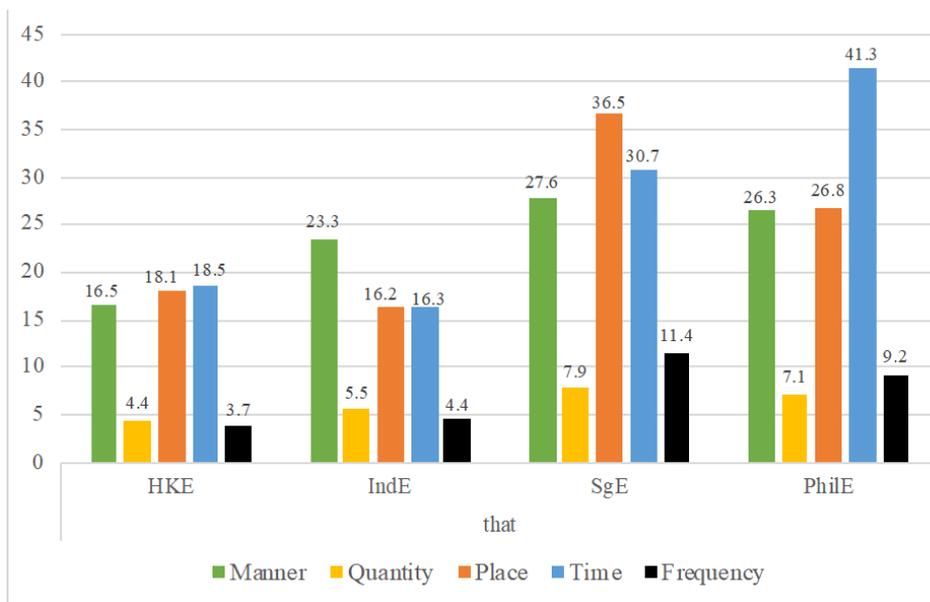
- (8) It took a lot of courage to get this far, it would take even more to go further. (IndE, *The Wrongway Legacy: Generation Five*, Part Four)
- (9) I'm glad that I am this close to nature but usually a beautiful ambiance such as this gives urges of sadness. (PhilE, *Sullivan's Creek at ANU: A Drifter off to See the World*)
- (10) I'd like to thank you for creating such an astounding website! There are but few websites that does it this well. (SgE, *Who is more professional, a doctor or pilot*)

*That* presents a different state of affairs insofar as it collocates with a higher number of adverb types (figure 5). The results show that it is preferred with adverbs of time as a result of the prominent use of *long*, *early* and *late* in this context—41.3 occurrences in PhilE,

place in this study in view of the fuzzy limits between the two readings in some cases. As far as the adverb *close* is concerned, the *OED* also refers to the blurred line between predicative uses of the adjective and the adverbial uses into which they gradually develop, and when used as an adverb, “*closely* is now preferred in ordinary prose” (*OED* 2000c). In view of the absence of *closely* in intensifying positions, *close* has been classified with an adverbial function in this study.

30.7 in SgE, 18.5 in HKE and 16.3 in IndE. Next, if compared with *this*, *that* frequently collocates with adverbs of place—as a result of the frequent use of *far*—quantity—e.g., *much*—and frequency—e.g., *often*, *frequently*. Adverbs of manner in combination with *that* deserve special attention, the list including not only *well* and *bad* but also a number of *-ly* adverbs, such as *badly*, *clearly*, *commonly*, *easily*, *perfectly*, *quickly*, *slowly* and *seriously*—as in (11) and (12)—which all occur infrequent in combination with *this*.

FIGURE 5. Classification of adverbial collocates with *that* (n.f.)



(11) He's never seen someone cry that much before. (SgE, *Faith*, Episode 22)

(12) We eventually hooked up for lunch and slowly a relationship began to blossom. Okay, maybe not that slowly. (PhilE, *Our Story*)

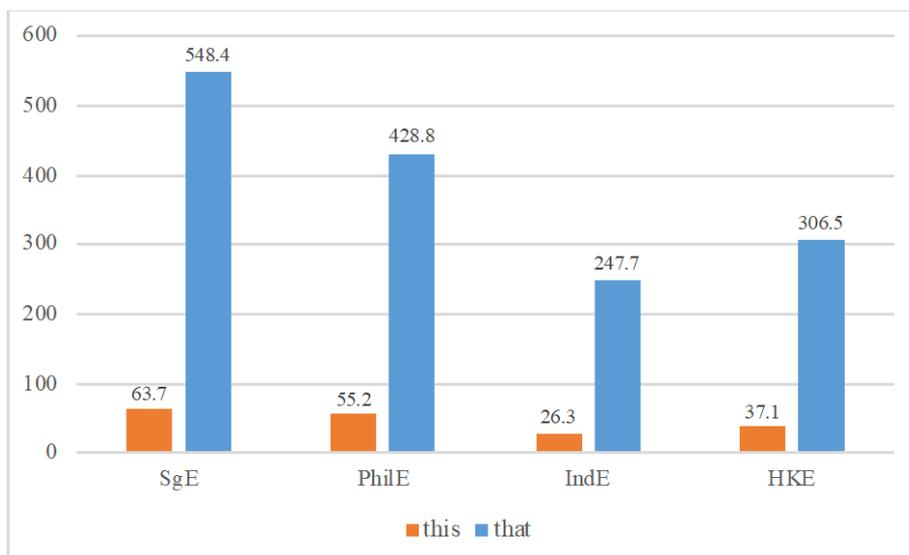
The differences between *this* and *that* can be explained in the light of their respective stages of development in the English varieties examined here. *This* seems to be still in an incipient stage, restricted almost exclusively to combinations with the three prototypical adverbs *far*, *much* and *long* given the prominent deictic component of these intensifiers in the early stages of grammaticalization, as a sign of persistence. The high incidence of place adverbial collocates with *this* in PhilE is associated with their American origin, which has surely paved the way for their quicker adoption compared with their constrained distribution in the British-based varieties. *That*, in

turn, displays a larger inventory of collocates, appearing in combination, in decreasing order of frequency, with adverbs of time, place and manner, followed by those of frequency and quantity, which may be taken as evidence of a more advanced stage of grammaticalization. As regards the rate of occurrence of *that*, there is also variation across the varieties, with HKE and IndE lagging behind the other two with only a very limited set of adverbs found in very particular contexts. SgE and PhilE, on the other hand, are at a somewhat more advanced point in the grammaticalization continuum, which accounts for the greater collocational scope of *that* and the higher diffusion of this intensifier in these varieties.

#### 4.2. Adjectival Collocates

This section analyzes the types of adjectival collocates in the light of Carita Paradis's model of degree modifiers and adjectives (2000, 147-60; 2001, 50-53; 2008, 218), an approach that has been successfully applied to the study of other intensifiers in English (Méndez-Naya 2007; Calle-Martín 2014, 2019). According to Paradis, adjectives can be classified as gradable and nongradable. Nongradable adjectives "are typically categorizing and resistant to the main criterion of gradability" (2001, 51), while gradable adjectives are divided into three categories: scalar adjectives—conceptualized in terms of more or less and denoting an open-ended scale; e.g., *long*, *short*—extreme adjectives—representing the ultimate point of a scale; e.g., *excellent*, *terrible*—and limit adjectives—conceptualized in terms of either/or; e.g. *dead-alive*, *true-false*. Paradis proposes a framework on the assumption that combinations of degree modifiers and adjectives are predictable if both fall within the same domain of gradability. She classifies gradable adjectival meanings into bounded—as in *dead*—and unbounded—e.g., *short*—meaning types. The former type comprises both extreme and limit adjectives as items denoting a precise value of the property involved, while the latter includes scalar adjectives, which prototypically represent a range within a scale (Paradis 2008, 317-43). Degree modifiers represent either a scalar construal or a totality construal in the sense that scalar modifiers harmonize with unbounded adjectives—*fairly good*—while totality modifiers combine with bounded items—*almost identical*.

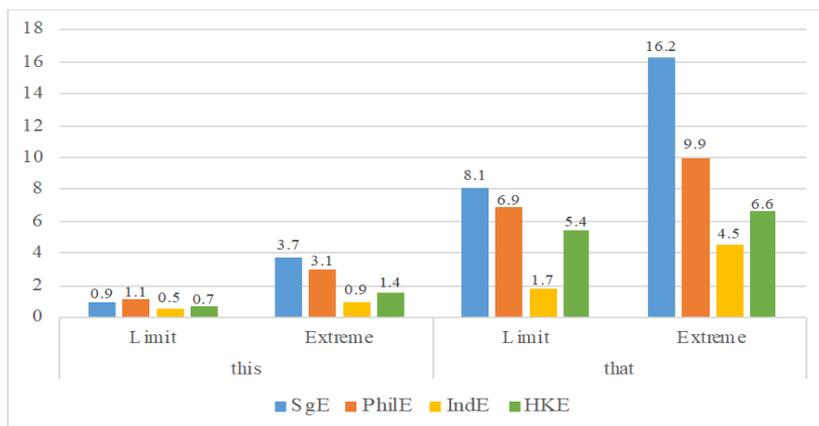
The intensifiers *this* and *that* are conceived to have a scalar construal and, as such, prototypically combine with unbounded adjectives. Figure 6 shows the distribution of *this* and *that* in combination with unbounded adjectives; as can be seen, the unbounded construal mode predominates with the intensifier *that*. SgE and PhilE present the highest incidence, followed by HKE and IndE. Examples (13) and (14) show the use of the intensifier *that* in combination with the unbounded adjectives *big* and *sad*.

FIGURE 6. Distribution of unbounded adjectives with *this* and *that* (n.f.)

(13) I got the feeling that the kingdom wasn't that big? (PhilE, *The Coming of the Dragon*)

(14) Don't get me wrong. My life is not that sad. (IndE, *I'm Not Ashamed of My Past*)

The distribution of bounded adjectives with *this* and *that* (figure 7) demonstrates that a scalar construal may be imposed on adjectives for which scale is not the default interpretation—limit and extreme adjectives. A recent study has found that the acceptance of a bounded mode of construal is already a fact in AmE, where the phenomenon occurs with limit adjectives such as *blind* or *integrated*, extreme adjectives like *grand* or *huge* and, more importantly, nongradable adjectives such as *interchangeable* (Calle-Martín 2019, 166–69). In contrast, the results in figure 7 tentatively corroborate that the Asian varieties surveyed here are, to some extent, still reluctant to adopt a bounded mode of construal, with only sporadic instances in our data. The negligible use of limit and extreme adjectives in combination with the intensifiers *this* and *that* points to the incipient status of these collocates in AsE, although SgE and PhilE are again the varieties pioneering their use. The adoption of the bounded mode of construal has clearly been initiated in combination with extreme adjectives, instances of limit adjectives lagging well behind. As far as *that* is concerned, there are 16.2 and 8.1 occurrences of extreme and limit adjectives, respectively, in SgE; 9.9 and 6.9 in PhilE; 6.6 and 5.4 in HKE; and 4.5 and 1.7 in IndE. (15) and (16) exemplify the use of *that* with unbounded adjectives.

FIGURE 7. Distribution of bounded adjectives with *this* and *that* (n.f.)

(15) As such, I won't be that available for additional work (SgE, *Basil Market*)

(16) But their presence and their work were not that obvious (PhilE, *Treasuring Christ Pb*)

Contrary to what is the case in AmE (Calle-Martín 2019, 166-69), in the varieties of English studied here the intensifiers *this* and *that* have not yet completely reshaped their mode of construal to favor the adoption of collocates that are not strictly in the same domain of gradability. Indeed, they are found more frequently in an unbounded mode of construal and, therefore, are situated at different stages along the grammaticalization cline. The process of mode of construal expansion is pioneered by the intensifier *that*, which makes sense in view of its higher incidence in the demonstrative paradigm, and it starts in SgE and PhilE, where the phenomenon is most diffused, followed by HKE and IndE as the more conservative varieties.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This article has examined the use of the intensifying function of *this* and *that* in SgE, PhilE, HKE and IndE as representatives of AsE, paying particular attention to the quantitative dimension of the phenomenon and the qualitative analysis of the right-hand collocates. The intensifying function of *this* and *that* is the result of a process of secondary grammaticalization involving a development from determiners to adverbs of degree which, in the case of *that*, has been traced back to the middle of the fourteenth century. Their deictic component and their comparative potential turned these determiners into degree deictics suitable for scalar readings. The analysis here is based on the corpus of GloWbE, which provided material for a diatopic study of the four representatives of AsE, and has led to the following conclusions.

First, the use of *this* and *that* as intensifiers in the selected inner circle varieties of English confirms its predominance in AmE, followed at a considerable distance by CanE and BrE. In addition, further consideration rules out the influence of BrE in view of the more constrained distribution of the phenomenon in BrE than in the Asian varieties surveyed here, even in those that are BrE-based such as SgE and PhilE in particular. The diffusion of *this* and *that* in the four varieties of English examined here, then, is conceived as a result of an ongoing process of Americanization combined with a tendency toward colloquialization. Colloquialization is justified in view of the higher incidence of the phenomenon in web pages, taken as a more elaborate type of writing. Americanization is explained in view of the development of the intensifiers *this* and *that* in the history of English. After their origin in Middle English and virtual disappearance in Early Modern English, they rose again in AmE at the beginning of the nineteenth century and became a characteristic feature of this variety of English. Their prominent role in AmE provides the input for their increasing use in other varieties of English worldwide, and the Asian varieties have all made room for this new paradigm of intensifiers, albeit with differing levels of acceptance. SgE and PhilE lead the adoption of the new forms, in contrast to the conservative attitude of HKE and IndE. The high distribution of the two intensifiers in PhilE is explained by the American origin of this variety as a result of twentieth-century US colonial expansion. *This* and *that* as intensifiers entered the Philippines when they were already on the rise in AmE, their notable role having continued since then. On its part, SgE is in the phase of differentiation—the fifth phase—and has achieved the status of a native/first language for much of its society; in addition, it is a variety that stands out for its proneness to morphosyntactic innovations.

Second, *this* and *that* favor particular types of collocates. As far as adverbs are concerned, *this* mostly combines with adverbs of place while *that* freely accepts adverbs of place, time, quantity, frequency and manner. *That* has become the unmarked member of the pair and, as a result, is somewhat more advanced than *this* in the grammaticalization cline, which leads to its combination with a wider inventory of adverbs. The constrained distribution of *this* has resulted in a slower process of grammaticalization, which explains the preferential use of collocates with *far*, *long* and *much*. The adjectival heads validate this state of affairs. As prototypical members of the intensifier paradigm, *this* and *that* typically combine with scalar adjectives and with a small number of adjectives with a bounded mode of construal. This points to their incipient status in the four varieties of English studied here insofar as they have not yet reshaped their mode of construal to accept collocates that are not in the same domain of gradability, especially when compared to AmE.<sup>8</sup>

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