Tatiana Peredrienko
Ekaterina Balandina
South Ural State University
Lenin Street, 76, RU-454080 Chelyabinsk
orcid.org/0000-0001-8747-3692
peredrienkoti@susu.ru
orcid.org/0000-0002-1360-7413
balandinaes@susu.ru

THE INTENSIFIER *ОЧЕНЬ* IN RUSSIAN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

The category of intensity is a complex entity that allows expressing the emotions of a person, his evaluation of phenomena and have an impact on a reader. That is the reason for this category to become the focus of attention for many linguists. However, the verbalization of intensity in different types of discourse is not the same. The purpose of the article is to study the category of intensity in Russian academic discourse via studying the functioning of the intensifier *очень*. The research material was obtained from scientific articles presented in Russian open access journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. The corpus constructed of selected articles was analysed by means of Lancaster University software. The attention was paid to the application of various measures used in corpus linguistics to identify the nature of relations between different collocates. The analysis allowed to present the grammatical features of the intensifiers in academic discourse, to consider their collocations by the example of the intensifier *очень*, and to propose the model for describing linguistic phenomena using corpus-based studies.

1. Introduction

People tend to intensify the most significant characteristics of objects, as well as mitigate the least important ones which they would not want to draw attention to. Any deviation from the norm does not go unnoticed and receives the

evaluation reflected in language. Thus, intensity is one of the basic categories characterizing human consciousness via language. The essence of the category is the expression of additional quantitative and qualitative characteristics of an object. That is why intensity and means of its verbalization attract the attention of linguists.

1.1. The category of intensity and intensifiers

Intensity is broadly defined as a change in the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of an object in any direction (increase or decrease) (Bally 2001; Quirk et al. 1998). Interpreting intensity some linguists indicate only an increase in the characteristic (Labov 1984; Biber 2003). To determine the negative degree of increase, scientists use the term deintensification (Benzinger 1971).

In Russian linguistics, intensity was studied by I. I. Turanskiy, V. V. Bezrukova and others (Turanskiy 1990: 29; Bezrukova 2004: 48; Egorova 2009: 224). This category is still the focus of attention of many researchers. At present one of the relevant topics in linguistics is the speech influence (manipulation), which is expressed by various linguistic categories, including intensity. The term 'manipulation' typically refers to programming or reprogramming of somebody's beliefs, desires, and other mental states (Noggle 2018). A variety of lexical means called intensifiers are used to verbalize the category of intensity and the manipulation in the language.

The authors use intensifiers to mark the most significant moments of reasoning and to emphasize or level the features inherent in the described objects. Therefore, the intensity is characterized by evaluation and further manipulation. In most cases, the authors use the intensifiers to make the audience perceive the features in the way they wanted to characterize them for readers.

Scientists offer various definitions of intensifiers, which are consistent with a broad or narrow understanding of the category. Intensifiers are the words for enhancing the meaning of a message (Benzinger 1971: 5), explicit amplification means (Rodionova 2005: 159), the means of creating an extraordinary degree of intensity (Turanskiy 1990: 29) and synonyms for steps on the intensity scale (Bezrukova 2004: 48).

In the article, the broad understanding of intensity and intensifiers is accepted. Intensity is considered as a language category reflecting a person's evaluation of characteristics when they deviate from neutrality (Bradac et al. 1979: 31). So, intensifiers are linguistic units that contain the seme of intensity and help to increase or decrease the meaning of a characteristic.

1.2. Academic discourse

Intensifiers are used in various types of discourse. The purpose of this article is to study the category of intensity through the functioning of the intensifier *очень* in Russian academic discourse. This discourse is associated with a specific area of human activity - the receipt and transfer of scientific knowledge. In this discourse not only the results of scientific research are presented but also the author's position is expressed. So, academic discourse is defined as a product of thinking and interaction in the academic environment (Hyland 2009; Khutyz 2018).

Academic discourse is characterized by the requirements of scientific style: informational content, logical evidence, terminology, the accuracy of facts, objectivity, lack of excessive emotionality (SESRY 2006). That is why it seems interesting to consider the functioning of the evaluative and subjective categories of intensity in academic discourse.

1.3. The classifications of intensifiers

The intensifiers have been studied to a great extent in linguistics but the classification of them still varies. Intensifiers can be classified according to the degree of intensity, their function and their delexicalization. Bolinger distinguished 4 classes according to the position on the intensifying scale: boosters (upper part of a scale), moderators (middle of a scale), diminishers (lower part of a scale), minimizers (lower end of a scale) (Bolinger 1972).

Quirk and Greenbaum identified three semantic classes focusing on functions: emphasizers, amplifiers and downtoners. The latter two were further divided into subclasses. Maximizers, denoting the upper extreme of the intensity, and

boosters, indicating a higher degree of the modified characteristic, were included in amplifiers. Downtoners comprised approximators (a low degree), diminishers (a lower degree) and minimizers (the lowest degree) (Quirk and Greenbaum 1976).

Intensifiers can be classified into two groups according to the degree of their delexicalization. The first group includes intensifiers that are used as functional words. These intensifiers have largely lost their lexical meaning and became "semantically bleached" (Pavić Pintarić and Frleta 2014: 34). The second group is constantly updated with new words which are the result of the cognitive process of metaphorization and obtaining a new lexical meaning. The mechanism of intensifiers formation is implemented by transferring contents from the sphere of emotions in the sphere of linguistic semantics. The transfer affects only the feature of 'intensity', which is presented in the structure of the emotional state. Thus, the cognitive mechanisms of intensifiers formation are reduced to a complex transformation of meanings from the "sphere of emotional intensity into the sphere of semantic intensity" (Jing-Schmidt 2007: 433).

In Russian language, there is a large number of intensifiers that are used as functional words. The intensity seme is fixed in their lexical meanings. Examples of such intensifiers are the adverbs of the measure and degree group: *очень, почти, совсем, слишком, весьма, немного, едва, достаточно, сильно, гораздо, чрезвычайно, значительно, исключительно, крайне, чуть-чуть, чересчур, изрядно, еле-еле* and so on. Let's look into the frequency distribution of intensifiers in Russian National Corpus (288 727 494 tokens) and offer the description of their functioning in academic discourse through the most popular one (RNC). The obtained data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the intensifiers in RNC

очень	379 361
почти	155 124
совсем	140 017
слишком	65 473
весьма	63 673
немного	54 356
едва	53 237
достаточно	44 714
сильно	44 623

гораздо	36 084
чрезвычайно	20 942
значительно	19 079
исключительно	17 614
крайне	16 680
чуть-чуть	7 689
чересчур	4 812
изрядно	2 630
еле-еле	1 298

1.4. The intensifier *очень*

Russian adverb *очень* takes the leading position and is widely used. The specifics of this intensifier meaning can be identified by referring to the etymology. According to M. Fasmer's etymological dictionary this word is derived from the word *'око'* (Fasmer 1986). P. Ya. Chernykh believes that *очень* derived from the Old Russian word *'очути́ти'* having the meaning *'notice, see'* (Chernykh 1994). So, the primary meaning of *очень* is *noticeable* and collocations of this word with other ones emphasize that the features are obvious and cannot be overlooked.

The modern meanings of *очень* are no longer connected with its primary meaning but the seme of intensity continues to focus the attention on the feature of the word which the studied intensifier collocates with. The word *очень* has the meaning *to a very high degree* (Ozhegov and Shvedova 1999), and it is used as an amplifier for the degree of a quality to a large extent (Efremova 2000). S.E. Rodionova notes that *очень* also indicates the speaker's emotional unindifference to the subject of a message (Rodionova 2005: 159). But the constant usage of intensifiers reduces their pragmatic effect and they may lose their expressiveness and become functional words presenting only the degree of a quality. The same happened with *очень* which did not acquire several new meanings during its evolution.

2. Materials and methods

In recent years, the use of corpora has yielded fruitful results in linguistic research as it allows scientists to investigate data on empirical rather than intuitive grounds (Kong 2013). However, there is still no unified theory for analysis as well as no structured procedure of organizing a corpus linguistic study. The lack of clarity gives scientists great flexibility to experiment and employ corpus linguistics in a variety of situations and contexts (McEnery and Gabrielatos 2006). So, the study of language based on corpus analysis makes it possible to investigate different language aspects as well as various collocational and other recurrent patterns associated with specific lexical item across a corpus (Kim 2014).

To organize the research Russian Academic Corpus of Humanitarian Sciences was constructed. The articles for the Corpus were compiled from open access journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. Therefore, a large collection of samples belonging to the most valuable scientific databases makes the whole corpus qualitative, quantitative and representative. The constructed Corpus consisting of 1517318 tokens allows to open a new field of study in Russian academic discourse that is to track the main scientific trends through linguistic artifacts in big data. The software employed was LancsBox (Brezina et al. 2015), a software package for the analysis of language data and corpora, which provides scientists with a wide range of opportunities to investigate trends and patterns in different languages and to visualize the received data.

3. Results

3.1. Structural patterns and grammatical functions

The intensifier *очень* is qualified as an adverb according to morphology, but now it is frequently used as a function word that has the range of different collocates. The more a linguistic item is grammaticalized, the more it collocates with a variety of words. The study of the main structural patterns for this intensifier in academic discourse allows to understand and describe its grammatical functions.

The most common structural pattern is *очень + adjective* (196 cases / 50.5%), where the second component can be used in its full (*очень интересный/ очень интересное/ очень интересная/ очень интересные*) or short form. Adjective in short form can have a zero ending in the masculine singular (*очень интересен*), the ending -*a* (*очень интересна*) for feminine and -*o* (*очень интересно*) for neuter gender. Ending -*ы* (*очень интересны*) is used in the plural of all genders. Let's study the examples taken from the Corpus.

(1) *Во многом благодаря этим исследованиям родилось очень известное в гуманитаристике направление – феминистская литературная критика, которая основным своим предметом рассмотрения сделала женское письмо.*

(2) *Выставка была очень популярна и просуществовала гораздо дольше, чем планировалось.*

In the first (1) example, the analyzed intensifier is used with the full neuter singular adjective *известное*. In the given sentence, the combination of *очень + full adjective* possess an attributive function and characterise the main subject *направление*. In the second example (2), the intensifier stands near the short form of the feminine singular adjective *популярна* and together they perform the function of the predicate with the clip. Thus, the structural pattern *очень + adjective* can perform two main functions in a sentence: the predicate with the clip (85 cases / 43.4%) and the attributive function (111 cases / 56.6%).

The second structural pattern is presented by the combination of *очень* with various adverbs (159 cases/ 41%).

(3) *В большинстве случаев трансляция успешного опыта взаимодействия отдельных связок на весь кластер не производится или производится очень медленно.*

(4) *Перестройка и экономические реформы сказались на судьбах усадеб, которые еще продолжали существование в виде санаториев, детских домов и школ: освобожденные для последующей реставрации, они очень быстро оказались покинуты – за неимением средств, и остались на произвол грабителей.*

In the examples (3), (4), the intensifier is combined with the adverbs *медленно / быстро* and is used to characterize the verbs *производится* and *оказались покинуты* respectively. In this structural pattern, *очень* performs the function of the adverbial modifier of manner as it indicates the quality of the action or the way it is performed.

The attention should be given to the position of the intensifier relative to the verb. In (3) example, *очень* follows the verb and in academic discourse, we can see 58 cases / 36% of such position. In (4) sentence the intensifier precedes the verb that turns to be more typical for the Russian academic language (104 cases / 64%).

Less frequent patterns common for Russian academic discourse are:

очень + verb = 27 cases / 7%.

(5) *Избранная специальность очень нравится студентам медицинского, архитектурного, сельскохозяйственного профилей обучений.*

очень + participle = 2 cases / 0.5%

(6) *У студентов очень развито чувство коллективизма.*

очень + pronoun = 5 cases / 1%

(7) *Потом началась школа, и неформальное домашнее чтение сменилось формальным, которое очень многие маскируют как насильственное.*

(8) *Данная тенденция затрагивает очень многих.*

Examples (5), (6) illustrate the function of intensifier in the sentence as an adverbial modifier of a manner similar to the one that was explained in the case of *очень + adverb* structure. While the structural pattern *очень + pronoun* performs the function of the subject of a sentence (7) or the object as in example (8).

If we refer to the position of *очень* within the whole sentence, we can state that it is mostly used in the middle position; however, we can come across 5% of cases when *очень* takes the initial position. In this situation, the structural pattern in 100% is *очень + adverb*.

(9) *Очень заметно желание респондентов жить в стабильном и предска-
зуемом обществе с действующими законами.*

3.2. Collocation network of *очень* (right span)

While analyzing the overall usage of the lexical item within the Corpus we can
also examine the collocation network which is understood as a relationship be-
tween collocates and textual macrostructure (Phillips 1989). So, collocation net-
works have the potential to provide researchers with an insight into important
lexical connections (Brezina et al 2015). The GraphColl presented below shows
the most frequent co-occurrences of *очень* within the right span 1 (R span),
and frequency 3≥. As a result, 27 collocates around the nod are obtained. The
strength of collocation is indicated by the position of collocate to the node – the
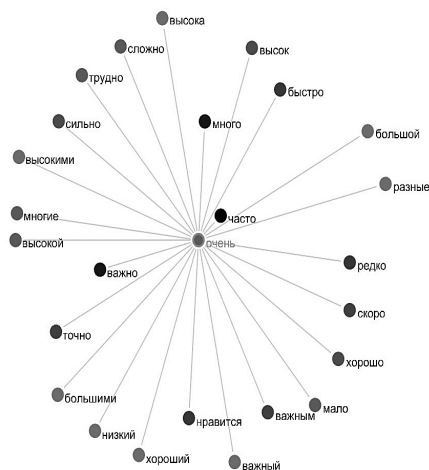closer it is, the more strongly they are associated.

Figure 1: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to the frequency (R span 1;
frequency 3≥)

Let's move beyond the collocates to explore the connectivity between *очень*
and various collocates at different levels of the collocational relationship. The
most frequent collocates of the analysed node, that constitute the first group,
are *часто* (19), *важно* (12), *много* (12) (the numbers in parenthesis indicate

the frequency of the collocations). Two collocates *часто, много* are adverbs, while the collocate *важно* can be used both as an adverb or the short form of the neuter singular adjective. The second group is presented by collocate with the frequency 7 – 6: *быстро* (7), *нравится* (7), *редко* (7), *важным* (6), *скоро* (6), *точно* (6). In this group the majority of the collocates are also adverbs, however, it is interesting to view the verb *нравится* in this list, as it constructs the less frequent structural pattern with *очень*. The third group includes the collocates with the frequency 5 – 4: *высок* (5), *сильно* (5), *хорошо* (5), *высокой* (4), *мало* (4), *многие* (4), *сложно* (4), *трудно* (4). A lot of words that can be used both as adverbs or short forms of the adjectives, depending on the sentence where they are used, are here: *высок* (5), *сильно* (5), *хорошо* (5), *мало* (4), *сложно* (4), *трудно* (4). Another important element of this group is the pronoun *многие* (4) that tends to be the most frequent pronoun in its forms *многих, многими, многим* that coincides with *очень* in discourse. The fourth group that is presented mainly by the full adjectives consists of the less frequent collocates with the statistics 3: *большими* (3), *большой* (3), *важный* (3), *высока* (3), *высокими* (3), *низкий* (3), *разные* (3), *хороший* (3).

However, frequency doesn't always mean that the node and the collocate have a tight collocational relationship. It means that if we take any collocation and compare the frequency of the node, frequency of the collocate and frequency of the collocation within the whole Corpus we can conclude that their inherent dependence doesn't coincide with the frequency. Therefore, to analyze the dependence of *очень* in academic discourse, we should refer to the association measure that is called mutual information (MI).

Table 2 and Figure 2 illustrate the observed frequency of co-occurrence with *очень* that differs from the expected one. The first position is occupied by the collocate that in the previous GraphCall analysis was included in the third group of less frequent words that come just after *очень*. However, if we take into consideration the overall frequency of the collocate *высок* (18) and the frequency of the collocation *очень высок* (5) we can see that every fourth collocate *высок* co-occurs with the analysed intensifier. Examples (10) and (11) illustrate the use of the collocation *'очень высок'*.

(10) *Для всех типов программ и направлений подготовки уровень интерквартильной вариации (IQR) также очень высок по отношению к медиане распределения.*

(11) *Учитывая, что государственный долг очень высок в развитых экономиках, мы можем говорить об угрозе глобальной финансовой стабильности.*

Table 2: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to MI (R span 1, frequency 5≥)

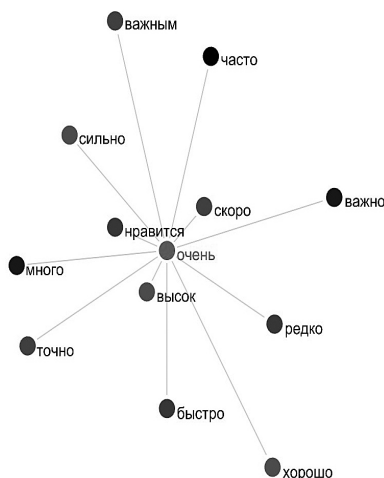| №	Collocate	MI	Frequency of the collocation	Frequency of the collocate
1	высок	10.081	5	18
2	скоро	9.870	6	25
3	нравится	9.829	7	30
4	редко	8.627	7	69
5	быстро	8.469	7	77
6	сильно	8.393	5	58
7	много	8.156	12	164
8	точно	7.990	6	92
9	часто	7.841	19	323
10	важно	7.779	12	213
11	важным	7.304	6	148
12	хорошо	7.121	5	140

Figure 2: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to the MI statistic (R span 1; frequency 5≥)

In contrast, the collocates constructing the most frequent co-occurrence with *очень* occupy the intermediate position in the list of MI measure, that demonstrates the diversity of their links with other words. Thus, in academic discourse, *очень* forms the most frequent collocations with lexical units: *высок, нравится, скоро*; and the rarest collocations with the words: *хорошо, важно / важным, часто*. Anyway, the received results can be quite surprising, if we analyze the MI as a simple co-occurrence frequency for the node *часто* within the left span 1 (L span) demonstrated in Table 3, where on the first place is *очень* followed by such words as *довольно, наиболее, как*.

Table 3: The co-occurrence of the node *часто* according to the MI statistic (L span 1, frequency 5≥)

№	Collocate	MI	Frequency of the collocation	Frequency of the collocate
1	очень	7.841	19	389
2	довольно	7.663	6	139
3	наиболее	6.983	18	668
4	как	3.148	14	7416

The shown data make us turn to the cubed version of the MI statistic – MI3 (R span 1, frequency 5≥). MI3 measure gives more weight to observed frequencies and gives high scores to collocations which occur relatively frequently in Corpus in contrast to the MI statistic which tends to highlight the exclusivity of the collocational relationship.

Table 4: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to MI3 (R span 1, frequency 5≥)

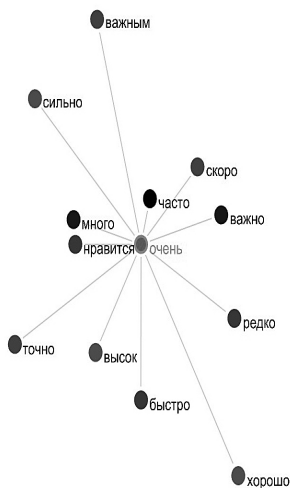| №	Collocate	MI3	Frequency of the collocation	Frequency of the collocate
1	часто	16.337	19	323
2	нравится	15.444	7	30
3	много	15.326	12	164
4	скоро	15.040	6	25
5	важно	14.949	12	213
6	высок	14.724	5	18
7	редко	14.242	7	69
8	быстро	14.084	7	77
9	точно	13.160	6	92
10	сильно	13.036	5	58
11	важным	12.474	6	148
12	хорошо	11.765	5	140

Figure 3: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to the MI3 statistic (R span 1; frequency 5≥)

The comparisons of Figures 2 and 3 let observe the parallel between the graphs because both measures (MI and MI3) come from the same statistic family. However, the results received with the MI3 statistic have some particular differences in the core compared with the data produced with MI. The look at the first four positions allows to notice that the first and the third positions are taken by the most frequent collocates *часто* and *много*, which were not placed on the top of the MI list. At the same time, the verb *нравится* keeps its place, while the collocate *высок* has lost its leading position and has slipped to the middle. These changes are explained by the fact that uncommon collocates that are placed on the top of a MI list are pushed down by more typical collocates. Within the collocates that take the intermediate positions and the ones that stand at the bottom, some variations can be seen. For example, the word *важно* has significantly increased its index, while in cases of *редко, быстро, сильно* we can observe the drop. The only positions that have remained stable are occupied by the collocate *важным* and *хорошо*.

Now let's shift the emphasis from symmetrical node-collocate dependence (i.e. consider the co-occurrence of the node and the collocate as one probability) to asymmetrical one. For this purpose we refer to another statistic metric – Delta P.

Delta P is a directional measure that provides focus on assessing whether both directions within the collocation are equally predictive (Schneider 2018).

Table 5: Node co-selecting *очень* vs collocate co-selecting according to Delta P (R span 1)

№	Collocate	Statistics	Bi Statistics
1	часто	0.048642	0.058623
2	много	0.030748	0.073070
3	важно	0.030715	0.056205
4	нравится	0.017979	0.233318
5	редко	0.017953	0.101408
6	быстро	0.017948	0.090862
7	скоро	0.015411	0.239987
8	точно	0.015367	0.065160
9	важным	0.015330	0.040446
10	высок	0.012844	0.277769
11	сильно	0.012818	0.086179
12	хорошо	0.012644	0.035625

Figure 4: Node-collocate dependence of *очень* according to Delta P (R span 1)

Table 5 and Figure 4 show that the node and the given collocates have mutual relations as there are no negative figures in the BiStatictics column. The most symmetrical relations are typical for the collocate *очень часто* selected as the one that possesses the greatest tightness and coherence according to the MI3 statistics. The second layer of relations is presented by the collocations *очень важно, очень хорошо, очень важным* when the difference in Delta P-value is 0.022981≥ and ≤0.02549. The third layer includes the collocations with the Delta P difference 0,42322≥ and ≤0,83455: *очень много, очень редко, очень быст-*

ро, очень точно, очень сильно. The most asymmetrical relations are viewed in such collocations as *очень высок, очень нравится, очень скоро* where the differences in Delta P values equal 0.215339≥. In Figure (4) the connections are illustrated by arrows. The closer the connection is, the closer the arrows are to the words. The asymmetric arrangement of the arrows indicates an asymmetric connection. Therefore, we can conclude that the application of various statistic measures allow to illustrate the connectivity of the intensifier *очень* within the right span 1 in several dimensions, to concentrate attention on some vital aspect of the analysed collocation network and display all its peculiarities and variations of usage.

3.3. Collocation network of *очень* (left span)

Now it's time to analyze the collocates that stand in the left span 1 position. The GraphCall (Fig. 5) indicates the words with frequency 3≥ that come together with *очень*.
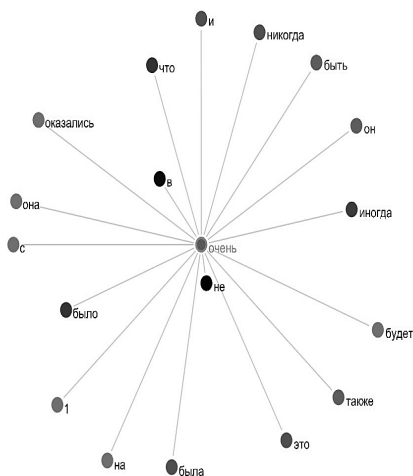

Figure 5: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to the frequency (L span 1)

The majority of the collocates, according to Figure 5, belongs to the group of functional words, the most frequent of which are: *не* (20), *в* (14); less frequent *что* (8), *и* (5), *это* (5) and the least frequent collocates *также* (4), *на* (3), *с* (3).

The second large group is presented by verbs *было* (8), *была* (5), *быть* (4), *бу-дет* (3), *оказались* (3). Basing on the verb list the two main tendencies can be highlighted. On the one hand, the verb *быть* in its various forms is considered to be the most popular and on the other hand, the verbs in their past forms *было* (8), *была* (5), *оказались* (3) prevail other infinitive *быть* (4) and future *будет* (3) structures. Besides, we can view two adverbs *иногда* (7), *никогда* (5) that take the left position in contract to various adverbs that traditionally follow *очень* and the pronouns *он* (4), *она* (3) as well as the numeral *1* (3) which frequency is not so high. If we refer to the MI and MI3 statistic and start to analyze the strength of the node – left collocate relations within the span 1 some differences that are illustrated in Tables 6, 7 and Figures 6, 7 can be seen.

Table 6: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to MI (L span 1, frequency 5≥)

№	Collocate	MI	Frequency of the collocation	Frequency of the collocate
1	иногда	7.78	7	124
2	никогда	7.25	5	128
3	была	4.73	5	733
4	было	4.59	8	1289
5	не	3.17	20	8660

Table 7: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to MI3 (L span 1, frequency 5≥)

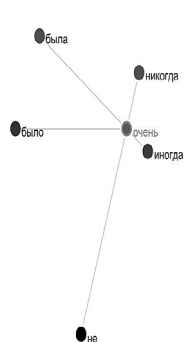| №	Collocate	MI3	Frequency of the collocation	Frequency of the collocate
1	иногда	13.39	7	124
2	никогда	11.89	5	128
3	не	11.81	20	8660
4	было	10.59	8	1289
5	была	9.37	5	733

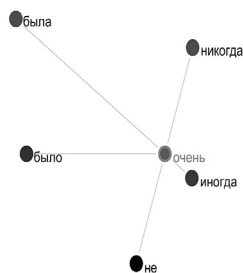Figure 6: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to MI (L span 1, frequency 5≥)

Figure 7: The co-occurrence of *очень* according to MI3 (L span 1, frequency 5≥)

At the same time, the received data show that although the frequency of the adverb group is not so high in comparison with functional words and verbs, their relations with *очень* are the most strong. Also, the analyzed intensifier has appropriate co-occurrence with the past forms of the verb *быть*: *была, было*; while the tightness of the node with the functional words is not so visible except for the particle *не* that turns *очень* that maximizes features to the intensifier *не очень* that minimizes them. The highlighted results are also verified by the directionality of relations that is calculated by Delta P measure. The node-collocate dependence of *очень* according to Delta P (L span) is presented in Table 8 and Figure 8.

Table 8: Node co-selecting *очень* vs collocate co-selecting according to Delta P (L span 1)

№	Collocate	Statistics	Bi Statistics
1	не	0.0457167	- 0.0034189
2	было	0.0197208	0.0053611
3	иногда	0.0179177	0.0563744
4	что	0.0151472	- 0.0044737
5	никогда	0.0127723	0.0389814
6	была	0.0123734	0.0063411
7	в	0.0113355	- 0.0248966
8	это	0.0110243	- 3.28427E-5

Figure 8: Node-collocate dependence of *очень* according to Delta P (L span 1)

On the one hand, the received data show that within the left span 1 we can highlight the group of collocates with the one-side relationship: *не, что, в, это.* It means that these collocates presuppose the co-occurrence of the node, while the usage of the node in the sentence doesn't assume mutual relations with the mentioned words.

On the other hand, there are other groups, which are characterized by more or less symmetrical relations. The intensifier *очень* has the strongest connection with the group of adverbs *иногда, никогда*, however, from the side of the adverbs, this co-occurrence is less firm. By contrast, the verbs *была, было* tend to attract the node to a greater degree, while the node has not so visible co-occurrence with these collocates. Figure 8 presents all these connections graphically.

All the applied measures present the connectivity that exists between the intensifier *очень* as it doesn't occur in isolation, but constitutes a part of a complex system of semantic relationships which ultimately reveal its meanings and the structure of the whole corpus.

3.4. The meaning of *очень* and its synonymic row

In some cases, the meaning of intensifiers depends on the context which they occur in. Their connotation can be modified by linguistic units they collocate with. The incorrect usage of them may change the meaning of a sentence. Such difficulties may arise with *очень* which can be both a maximizer and a minimizer. *Очень* enhances the meaning of a lexical unit with the seme of intensity acting as a maximizer. In cases of amplification of the minimum specified characteristics, *очень* becomes a minimizer. If we consider the frequency of use *очень* in

the function of a maximizer and a minimizer in academic discourse, the ratio is 91% to 9%. This intensifier is used as a maximizer in Corpus in 352 cases and as a minimizer in 36 cases accordingly. Examples (12) and (13) demonstrate the use of *очень* as a minimizer.

(12) *Аспекты индустриализации, специфика социалистического города в сфере водоснабжения, пользования, отведения* <u>*очень мало*</u> *освещаются в литературе.*

(13) *Также следует подчеркнуть, что экономические причины* <u>*очень редко*</u> *фигурировали отдельно от других мотивов переезда.*

The words *'мало'* and *'редко'* have the meanings 'немного, недостаточно' and 'иногда, нечасто' (Ozhegov, Shvedova 1999). So, these words used in the examples indicate the insignificant amount and the minor frequency of characteristics. And *очень* amplifying the lexical units with the inconsiderable manifestation of the characteristics becomes a minimizer. The use of *очень* allows to increase expressivity of the sentences.

The desire of people for evaluation, reflection of emotions and manipulation by drawing attention to certain characteristics, leads to the process of intensifier usage and their updating. The unexpected intensifiers add expressivity to what is being said. That is why the class of intensifiers is constantly replenished to add new emphasis to the expression.

The adverb *очень* has a large group of synonyms, which differ both stylistically and expressively. The synonymic row *очень* has over 30 words: *весьма, безгранично, бесконечно, крайне, невыносимо, необыкновенно, непомерно, разительно, сильно, страшно, ужасно, в высшей степени, адски, донельзя, дюже, вконец, колоссально, неимоверно, непроходимо, несказанно, чрезвычайно, больно, далеко, много; на диво, невообразимо, чудовищно, вовсю, на чем свет стоит; вельми, зело* (Abramov 1999).

However, not all of these words can be used in academic discourse. The lexical units labeled *'colloquial'* (*дюже, донельзя, вконец, непроходимо,* etc.) and labeled *'outdated'* (*вельми, зело, на диво,* etc.) cannot be used in academic discourse due to the stylistic requirements for this type of discourse. The words *ужасно, страшно, адски, чудовищно* are not used in academic discourse because of their expressivity. These words gradually acquired the grammatical

meaning of intensification but the seme of *'terror'* is still significant in their meaning.

Therefore let's study the lexical units which are used in academic discourse. The most frequent synonyms of *очень* (frequency 100≥) that we can highlight based on academic Corpus are *весьма, крайне, исключительно*. To organize the comparison within the synonymic row, we refer to the Russian National Corpus, which serves here as a referential one.

Table 9: Frequency distribution of *очень* and its synonyms

Words	Absolute frequency (Academic corpus)	Relative frequencies (Academic corpus)	Absolute frequency (RNC)	Relative frequencies (RNC)
очень	389	256	379361	1313
весьма	204	134	63673	220
крайне	136	89	16680	57
исключительно	123	81	17614	61

Absolute or sometimes it is called raw frequency is considered to be the most forthright statistic as it presents the number of all occurrences of a particular word in a corpus. The relative frequency that is calculated according to the formula given below can help to compare the general usage of the chosen intensifiers in the Russian National Corpus and Academic one:

$$\text{relative frequency} = \frac{\text{absolute frequency}}{\text{number of tokens in corpus}} \times \text{basis for normalization}$$

For calculation, we have taken one million as the basis for normalization, which is treated as an accepted baseline in corpus linguistics. Thus, we received the data, which show that the usage of the intensifier *очень* in the academic discourse is limited that can be explained by the main features of the analyzed discourse that tends to meet the requirements of scientific style. As for the distribution of the intensifier *весьма* the difference is less visible, while in the case of *крайне* and *исключительно* we notice an opposite tendency when the number of all occurrences in the academic corpus is higher than in the general one.

Through the GraphCall let's analyze the interconnections between the most frequent synonyms of *очень* in the academic discourse.
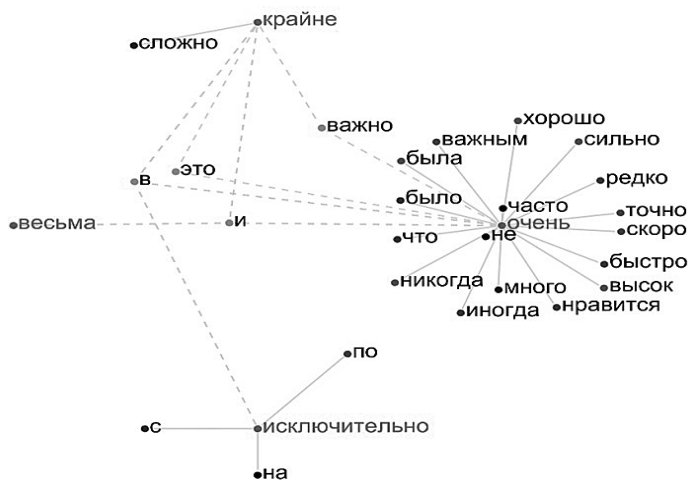
Figure 9: Interconnections between the synonyms (frequency 5≥)

Figure 9 demonstrates that in the academic discourse the synonyms of the analyzed intensifier have a clear distinction in usage. Most of their links are limited by functional words which they have asymmetrical relations with. The only interconnection is illustrated by the word *крайне* that constructs collocation with the right collocate *важно*. Thus, we can conclude that in the academic discourse the intensifier *очень* has its usage niche that is hardly substituted by its synonyms.

4. Conclusion

The intensifiers are a special semantic group that can transmit a wide range of communicative-pragmatic meanings and intentions of a user, to emphasize the most relevant information and to express evaluation. The study of the functioning of the intensifiers in language allows understanding the cognitive mechanism of human consciousness. Intensifiers are used in all types of discourse but the most interesting is to consider the evaluative and subjective category of intensity in a logical, objective and unemotional discourse.

The numerous group of intensifiers is combined by a common meaning 'the large degree of a characteristic' and the intensifier *очень* with the meaning '*to a*

very high degree' occupies the leading position in terms of frequency distribution and compatibility. The studied intensifier is qualified as an adverb according to morphology, but it is frequently used as a function word. The grammatical characteristics of it can be understood via the study of its main structural patterns in academic discourse.

The most common structural patterns that are typical for the analyzed intensifier are *очень + adjective* and *очень+adverb*. The frequency of these constructions is mainly explained by the lexical peculiarities of the analyzed word that tends to highlight a quality degree that is normally expressed in the Russian language through various adjectives and adverbs. The co-occurrence of the intensifier with both full and short adjectives allows to select two main functions that '*очень*' can perform within the sentence when it stands just before the adjective: the predicate with the clip and the attributive function. When the analyzed word comes together with adverbs, it generally fulfills the function of the adverbial modifier of manner as it indicates the quality of the action.

Less frequent patterns that can be seen in Russian academic discourse are *очень + verb*, *очень + participle*, *очень + pronoun*. In these cases, *очень* is used not only in the function of adverbial modifier but also as a subject and object of the sentence when it occurs with the pronoun. The general position of the intensifier within the sentence is intermediate. Although, there are some sentences when *очень* takes the initial position. In such situations, the analyzed word tends to stand with the adverb.

The co-occurrences of *очень* within the right span 1 was illustrated by the four groups of collocates depending on their frequency. The most common are *часто* (19), *важно* (12), *много* (12) that constitute the first group; and *быстро* (7), *нравится* (7), *редко* (7), *важным* (6), *скоро* (6), *точно* (6) that represent the second one. All the words mentioned in the list above belong to the classes of adjectives, adverbs and verbs that construct the most typical patterns with the examined intensifier.

However, frequency doesn't always mean that the node and the collocate have a tight collocational relationship. Thus, to demonstrate the diversity of links that exist between *очень* and its right collocates we refer to MI and MI3 statistics. The data produced with MI and MI3 showed that *очень* has very strong relations

not only with the most frequent words from the first and the second groups of frequency list but also possesses tight connections with such word as *высок*, which quite often stands with the analyzed intensifier in Russian academic discourse. At the same time a directional measure Delta P indicated the existence of mutual relations between the node and its right collocates, among which the relations between *очень* and *часто* are the evenest.

The analysis of the left collocates showed the domination of various functional words that go before the intensifier *очень*: *не* (20), *в* (14), *что* (8), *и* (5), *это* (5). However, such collocations as *в очень, что очень, и очень* and etc. are not characterized by symmetrical mutual relations. The only functional word that was indicated through MI and MI3 is *не*, although it also has one-side relations with the examined intensifier. In contrast, *очень* has the strongest symmetrical relations with the group of adverbs *иногда, никогда* and verbs in the past form *была, было* that are less frequent in comparison with various prepositions and conjunctions.

As a result of the laws of language development, the class of intensifiers is constantly replenished and the intensifier *очень* enlarges its synonymic row. However, not all of the words from this row can be used in academic discourse due to stylistic requirements. The most frequently distributed intensifiers in academic discourse are *весьма, крайне, исключительно*. However, within discourse, they have little interconnections as each word has its peculiarities of usage.

Thus, the intensifiers are important for different spheres of communication as they help to convey our thoughts and emotions more reliably. The functional potential of intensifiers is great as they can reveal the relationship between human thinking and language. `Therefore, the problems associated with intensifiers are multidirectional and deserve further study to better understand the process of intensification in language and its reasons better.

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Pojačivač *očen'* u ruskom akademskom diskursu

Sažetak

Kategorija intenziteta složen je entitet koji dopušta izraziti čovjekove emocije, njegovo vredovanje fenomenā, a koji ima utjecaja na čitatelja. To i jest razlog da je kategorija intenziteta bivala žarište pozornosti mnogih jezikoslovaca. Međutim, verbalizacija intenziteta u različitim tipovima diskursa nije ista. Svrha je ovoga članka analizirati kategoriju intenziteta u ruskom akademskom diskursu proučivanjem funkcioniranja intenzifikatora *očen'*. Materijal za istraživanje dobiven je iz znanstvenih članaka objelodanjenih po ruskim časopisima otvorena pristupa, a indeksiranih u bazama Scopus i Web of Science. Korpus sastavljen od odabranih članaka analiziran je softverom Sveučilišta Lancaster. Posebnu pomnju autori su upravili na primjenu različitih mjera koje se rabe u korpusnom jezikoslovlju da bi se identificirala narav odnosa među različitim kolokatima. Provedena analiza omogućila je da se prikažu gramatičke vlastitosti intezifikatorā u akademskom diskursu, da se razmotre njihove kolokacije na primjeru intenzifikatora *očen'* i da se predloži model istraživanja jezičnih fenonema služeći se korpusnojezikoslovnim istraživanjem.

Keywords: intensity, intensifier, academic discourse, corpus-based study
Ključne riječi: kategorija intenziteta, intenzifikator, akademski diskurs, korpusno utemeljena studija