

Research Article

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“It’s way too intriguing!” The fuzzy status of emergent intensifiers: A Functional Discourse Grammar account

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Abstract: This article seeks to explore the function and linguistic status of non-central members of the class of “degree words,” focusing on specific cases in English and Spanish, namely, the English adverbs *way* and *proper*, the Spanish trendy phrase “Adj *no, lo siguiente*” and the adverb *muy*. These intensifiers will be explored in the light of the architecture of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG), specifically in relation to the levels of linguistic representation that are distinguished in this theory, mainly the Interpersonal (or pragmatic) Level (IL) and the Representational (or semantic) Level (RL) and in terms of FDG’s distinction between lexical and grammatical units. It will be shown that the various functional properties of these expressions can be easily accommodated in this theory. As intensifying devices, these expressions are represented as units specifying the Lexical Property at the RL. In addition, some of these expressions can be used with an emphatic function, pertaining to the set of pragmatic distinctions that are represented at the IL.

Keywords: intensification, emphasis, quantity, degree words, modifier, operator, grammaticalization, FDG

1 Introduction

This paper seeks to explore the function and linguistic status of non-central members of the class of degree words in English and Spanish, namely the adverbs *way*, *proper* and *bare* in English, as well as the Spanish trendy phrase “Adj *no, lo siguiente*” and the adverb *muy*. Specifically, I will try to determine whether the elements under study are lexical or grammatical and whether they must be accounted for as semantic or pragmatic units.

The term intensifier is widely used to refer to adverbs which indicate that the degree of the quality denoted by the item they modify deviates from an established norm. Several features of this class make intensification an intriguing topic. Firstly, these elements involve constant renewal and recycling, as they usually lose their effectiveness and are replaced by new ones. Dik (1989, 38–42) refers to this process as the “markedness shift”, which he explains using expressions of positive evaluation:

the expressions that we use to express that something is really very good or nice: “wonderful”, “fantastic”, “terrific”, “amazing”, “gorgeous”, all these expressions started their life as very strong, marked symbols of positive evaluation. But all of them, through overexploitation, underwent a process of inflation which made them lose much of their markedness. This explains why each new generation seems to need its own brand-new terminology for expressing positive evaluation.

Secondly, as they tend to arise from lexical sources, the path of change they undergo results in their unclear status as lexical or grammatical elements. In her study of *utterly*, Méndez-Naya (2012) outlines different

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lexical sources for degree adverbs, highlighting evaluative adverbs, such as those denoting extremes in quantity, size, depth or strength, as well as those expressing positive or negative emotions. In addition, she mentions adverbs of veracity and spatial adverbs. Méndez-Naya points out that these adverbs undergo semantic change over time, moving from the denotation of concrete meanings to the expression of more abstract meanings and that they finally develop a degree meaning. It is therefore not surprising that there is a period of time when these adverbs are a fuzzy category, half-way between the lexicon and the grammar.

Finally, intensification is a pervasive phenomenon in two different respects. Firstly, although typically associated with the category of adjectives, other parts of speech are also amenable to this type of modification. In addition, intensification not only involves modification or scaling of the property denoted by an adjective but may also reinforce or downplay the speaker's degree of commitment to the illocutionary force, that is, it functions as a semantic and pragmatic device.

This article is structured as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of the notion of intensification and its relation to similar concepts. Section 3 explores intensification in the light of the theory of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG). Firstly, an overview of the relevant notions of the theory is presented in Section 3.1. The treatment of intensification in FDG will be revised in Section 3.2. In Section 3.3, the different intensifying expressions that are explored in this article are presented. This will be followed by a proposal for their analysis using the theory of FDG in Section 3.4. This article is rounded off with a brief conclusion in Section 4.

2 Intensification and intensifiers

Intensification has been widely acknowledged to be a linguistic universal, as Whorf (1941, 145) declared as far back as eight decades ago: “To fit discourse to manifold actual situations, all languages need to express durations, intensities, and tendencies.” The set of linguistic strategies used for the expression of degree and intensity are referred to as intensifiers or “degree words” in the linguistic tradition (Bolinger 1972, 17).

In spite of its status as a primitive, intensification is not a well-defined category, which is made evident in some of the definitions provided for this notion. To give just one example of this fuzziness, the Cambridge Dictionary of Linguistics (Brown and Miller, 2013) defines intensifying adjectives as those that are “used to *intensify* or *emphasize* the meaning of a noun.” Similarly, the Cambridge Online Dictionary defines intensifiers as “adverbs or adverbial phrases that *strengthen* the meaning of other expressions and show *emphasis*.” (my emphasis). It is difficult to conceive how can one possibly “strengthen” meaning or what is meant by this, and the reference to emphasis does not help to make it clearer, though there is indeed a close relationship between intensification and emphasis. Emphasis, for its part, is defined as “a use of language to mark importance or significance, *through* either *intensity of expression* or linguistic features such as stress and intonation.” (my emphasis) (McArthur, 2022). Even though it is not clear what is meant by “intensity of expression,” the notion of intensification is suggested again, as there is indeed a close relationship between intensification and emphasis. For one thing, some expressions denoting very high degree are referred to as “emphatic,” possibly because of the emotional overtones they convey. For example, Rainer (2015, 1342–3) mentions the case of Italian suffixed adjectives with *-issimo* (cf. *bellissimo* “very very beautiful”), although he points out that, in general, the term is reserved for other functions.

Most importantly, Rainer acknowledges the close connection between intensification and emphasis in cases of what he calls “truth asseverating emphasis,” that is, “patterns which enhance the strength of the illocutionary force of a speech act” (e.g. it's *really* true) (2015, 1342). This connection comes as no surprise, since truth denoting expressions can be the source of degree ones (e.g. *very*, from French “vrai” “true”). In addition, some expressions of degree become expressions for emphasis like the Spanish suffix *-ísimo* (used to form superlative adjectives) in cases like (1).

- (1) que lo que hacemos mal nosotros es peor que el *mismísimo* Trump y todas sus medidas. [...] ‘that what we do badly is worse than Trump himself and all his measures’

The superlative suffix in (1) cannot be interpreted as expressing grading, since *mismo* is not a gradable adjective. This emphatic use seems to fall within the category of so-called SELF-intensifiers (Gast and Siemund 2006), emphatic or contrastive elements of the type of English reflexive pronouns, in appositional or adverb-like uses such as *I did this myself/I myself did this* (König and Siemund 2000).¹

Emphasis is also used in connection with the intensification of negation, such as the use of *at all*, or the emphatic suffix *nanka* in Japanese, illustrated in (2) (Rainer 2015, 1343).

- (2) takaku-nanka nai
 high-EMPH NEG
 ‘not high at all’

In general, it cannot be denied that more often than not, intensification cannot only be accounted for in terms of semantic gradeability and that the expression of degree is pragmatically-driven, as intensifiers are used by speakers to express their emotion, attitude or opinion, usually implying some kind of evaluation. This is clearly illustrated by the use of expletives or taboo words as intensifying devices, such as the examples in (3) and (4).

- (3) *fucking* marvellous (Mackenzie 2019, 62)

- (4) AM2M3 Vaya *puta* borrachera hemos cogido, ya no veo de cerca, ni de lejos, no veo na’, de na’, de na’, pero aún pienso (Roels and Enghels 2018, 134)
 ‘What a fucking drunk state we’re in, I don’t see nearby nor far, I don’t see nothing, nothing, nothing, but I still think.’

The use of expletives like *fucking* in (3) is analysed as an emphatic intensifier by McEnry and Xiao (2004), a study of the distribution of *fuck* in the British National Corpus, who found that this emphatic use of the word is the most frequently used in the corpus. Likewise, in (4), the intensifying adjective *puta* is used to “strengthen the assertion that they were really drunk” (Roels and Enghels 2018, 134).

Quirk et al. (1985, 583) treat intensifiers and emphasizees within their class of subjuncts, pointing out that the latter “have a reinforcing effect on the *truth value* of the clause or part of the clause to which they apply” (emphasis mine).² They add that, because emphasizees add to the force (as distinct from the degree) of a constituent, they do not require that this constituent be gradable. Yet, both categories are unavoidably often confused when the constituent emphasized is indeed gradable, as in the case where the adverbial functions as an intensifier. Thus, while (5a) could be paraphrased as “It is really possible that he has injured...”, in (5b), both the assertion of certainty (“It is possible that he has actually, indeed, certainly injured ...”) as well as a high degree of injury (“it is possible that he has seriously, to a severe extent injured...”) are implied.

- (5) a. He *really* may have injured innocent people.
 b. He may have *really* injured innocent people.

A close relationship also exists between intensification and quantification. In Rainer’s (2015, 1340–1) view, within the word-formation realm, this is most clearly seen in the case of so-called verbal plurality (Dressler 1968). For example, activity verbs can be intensified along dimensions such as the number of participants, duration, frequency or the size of the results. The observation that the same formal pattern (very often reduplication) is used in many languages for all, or some of these different categories can be seen as an indication that they constitute a family of related phenomena. Mathesius (1989, 408) illustrates this with the Czech prefix *na-*, as shown in (6).

¹ For an FDG analysis, see Giomi (2020, 219–20).

² This use of the term “emphasizer” by Quirk et al. (1985) differs from FDG’s use of this term. Thus, it suggests that emphasis relates to the speaker’s commitment to the truth of a proposition, which is a Representational Level concept (semantics) and not an Interpersonal Level one (pragmatics). In FDG, emphasis is dealt with at the Interpersonal Level, as shown in Section 3.2.1.2.

- (6) a. *dříti se*
 ‘to struggle’
 a.’ *nadříti se*
 ‘to struggle hard’
 b. *čekati*
 ‘to wait’
 b.’ *načekati*
 ‘to wait long’
 c. *vařiti*
 ‘to cook’
 c.’ *navařiti*
 ‘to cook a large quantity’

Rainer points out that the connection between these two categories has also been suggested by Doetjes’ (2008, 132) observation that measure phrases that indicate a large quantity in the nominal system are the source of many degree expressions that are used outside of the nominal system (e.g., *all*, *a lot*, *most*, *quite* or *somewhat*).

This latter case and the example of verbal plurality in (6) illustrate the connection between intensification and quantification and show that intensification is not limited to the expression of degree, as the specific meaning depends on the grammatical category involved. However, this link had already been acknowledged long ago by several scholars.

Sapir (1949, 123) was aware that intensification could be found across all grammatical categories:

Every quantifiable, whether existent (say house) or occurrent (say run) or quality of existent (say red) or quality of occurrent (say gracefully) is intrinsically gradable. Any two houses selected at random offer the contrast of “more” and “less” on hundreds of features which are constitutive of the concept “house”. [...] Similarly, the concept of “running”, involving, as it does, experience of many distinct acts of running which differ on numerous points of “more” and “less”, such as speed, excitement of runner, length of time, and degree of resemblance to walking, is as gradable as that of “house”. Different examples of “red” similarly exhibit “mores” and “lesses” with respect to intensity, size of surface or volume characterized as red, and degree of conformity to some accepted standard of redness. And “gracefully” is quite unthinkable except as implying a whole gamut of activities which may be arranged in a graded series on the score of gracefulness.

As argued in the preceding extract, the category of intensification will manifest in different shapes depending on the type of entity affected by it, and though it has traditionally been studied in connection with the expression of degree and therefore with adjectives, it can also be conceived from a broader perspective so as to include the expression of quantity, in both nouns and verbs.

3 Emergent intensifying devices: an FDG analysis

3.1 The theory of Functional Discourse Grammar: basic notions

In this section, I will briefly introduce the key issues that concern the analysis of the intensifying expressions explored in this article, namely, the different levels of representation proposed by the theory, the distinction between lexical and grammatical elements and the notion of frame. A few more specific aspects of the theory regarding its treatment of intensifiers will be addressed in Section 3.2. For a more thorough insight into the theory of FDG, the reader is referred to Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008), Keizer (2015) and Genee, Keizer, and García Velasco (2016).

3.1.1 FDG levels of representation

As is already well known by practitioners of this theory, FDG distinguishes four hierarchically organized Levels within the grammatical component of language, each of which including several layers.

The first of these levels is the Interpersonal Level (IL), which accounts for all pragmatic issues, that is, all formally expressed aspects of a linguistic unit with a function in the interaction between the speech act participants. The IL is organized into different layers, the highest being the Move, which may contain one or more Discourse Acts (A). Each of these contain an Illocution, the participants in the Speech Act (P_1 , P_2) and the Communicated Content (C), which contains one or more Subacts, Ascriptive (T) and/or Referential (R).

The second level is the Representational Level (RL), where all semantic aspects of a language are represented. The highest unit of analysis at this level is the Propositional Content, which may contain one or more Episodes (ep), which may, in turn, contain one or more State-of-Affairs (e). These are characterized by one or more Configurational Properties, which contain one or more Properties (f) and Individuals (x). In addition, FDG distinguishes Manner (m), Quantity (q), Location (l) and Time (t) among the set of semantic categories that are formally expressed in the grammar of languages.

These two levels are involved in Formulation, one of the two types of operations distinguished. The second operation is Encoding, that is, the expression of all the pragmatic and semantic distinctions that are captured by the IL and the RL, respectively. This operation takes place in the two remaining levels, namely, the Morphosyntactic Level and the Phonological Level.

The Morphosyntactic Level (henceforth ML) accounts for morpho-syntactic aspects and contains different units like the Linguistic Expression, which may contain any combination of Words, Phrases and Clauses.

Finally, phonological aspects are represented at the Phonological Level (henceforth PL), where the highest unit is the Utterance, which may contain Intonational Phrases, Phonological Phrases and Phonological Words.

3.1.2 Operators and modifiers

To account for the distinction between grammatical and lexical units, FDG draws a basic distinction between operators and modifiers. Operators belong to the set of primitives of the theory of FDG and alongside functions, which represent information about the relation between units within the same layer, constitute grammatically expressed strategies. In contrast, modifiers are the lexical means to restrict the head at the IL and the RL.

This distinction is not clear-cut, however, as many lexical units undergo gradual processes of grammaticalization, which makes them difficult to classify as lexical or grammatical elements. Broadly speaking, Heine and Kuteva (2002, 378) observe that grammaticalization involves a number of changes that can be described in terms of three mechanisms, namely, (i) desemanticization (“bleaching”) or loss of meaning, (ii) decategorialization (“downgrading”) or loss of categorial properties and (iii) erosion (“phonetic reduction”) or loss of phonetic substance. Partial drawing on Heine and Kuteva (2002), Keizer (2007) tests the degree of lexuality/grammaticality of a number of linguistic elements using a set of pragmatic, semantic, morphosyntactic and phonological criteria, which results in the classification shown in Table 1.

Keizer’s main concern is how to treat those linguistic units that, like some of the intensifying devices under exploration, exhibit both grammatical and lexical properties. As shown in Table 1, this classification has two opposite poles with clear lexical (primary content items, that is, full lexemes) or grammatical elements (primary grammatical elements, that is, non-affixal grammatical forms such as *of*). In between these two poles, Keizer finds evidence for a middle area where intermediate categories exhibiting different degrees of grammaticality are located. First, Keizer proposes the existence of secondary lexical elements, which are partially lexicalized expressions like *sort of*. A second intermediate category is referred to as secondary grammatical elements, which include partially grammaticalized forms like numerals. Keizer then proposes to represent the latter as “lexical operators” within the theory of FDG.

Table 1: Revised cline of grammaticality: major divisions for English (Keizer 2007, 47)

Content item		>	grammatical word	>	inflectional affix ⁹
Primary	Secondary		Secondary	Primary	
Full verbs; nouns; adjectives	Idioms; lexicalized forms (<i>in the event that, sort-of</i>)		Numerals; demonstratives; pronouns; <i>through, under, incase</i> ???	Lets; articles; modals; <i>of (nom.)/by (pass.); that (compl.);</i>	-s -ed -ing
	Restrictors				Operators/functions

3.1.3 The structicon

In addition to Lexemes and operators, FDG distinguishes an inventory of structuring primitives in the Fund (Keizer 2015, Genée, Keizer, and García Velasco 2016, 882), including Frames and Templates, which are referred to as the “structicon” (Genée, Keizer, and García Velasco 2016, 882) or “frameset” (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2016, 1141). Together, the Lexicon, Frames and Operators constitute the totality of primitives that feed the operations at the RL and the IL.

In the FGD approach, in each language, there is an inventory of Interpersonal and Representational Frames that capture the pragmatic and semantic configurations which are expressed systematically in the grammar of the language under consideration. Examples of semantic Frames are given in (7) (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2016, 1141).

- (7) a. $[(f_1: \blacklozenge (f_1)) (x_1)_A]$
 b. $[(f_1: \blacklozenge (f_1)) (x_1)_A (x_2)_U]$

The Frame in (7a) represents situations in which an Individual with the semantic function Actor is engaged in an action, as in *Peter walks every day*. In (7b), an Agent entity acts on an Undergoer entity, such as in *Peter walks his dog every day*. These Frames are chosen first by Speakers, and it is only after a Frame has been selected that a compatible lexeme (e.g., *walk*) is picked up to map onto the Frame.

In some cases, Frames are partially instantiated. For example, in (8a), the possessive determiner + *way* is a fixed component associated with *walk*, so that in cases like this one, the Frame includes that component, as shown in (8b).

- (8) a. *Peter walked his way into the headquarters*
 b. $(f_1: [(f_2: [(f_3: \blacklozenge (f_3)) (\text{Poss way}_N)) (f_2) (x_1)_A (x_2)_U (l_1)_L] (f_1))]$

Partially Instantiated Frames are also illustrated with idiomatic expressions (Keizer 2016, Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2016), as they contain fixed combinations of elements. For example, in (9), the lexical units filling f_1 and x_2 are given, as well as the operator for plural in x_2 . It is only x_1 that needs to be completed.

- (9) *to spill the beans* ‘to divulge a secret’ (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2016, 1144)
 $[(f_1: \text{spill } (f_1)) (x_1)_{Ag} [\text{mx}_2: \text{bean}_N (f_2)) (x_2)_U]_U]$

The counterpart of Frames at the ML and the PL are Templates, which are the structural configurations governing the Encoding operations at these two levels. Morphosyntactic Templates represent the syntactic structure of expressions in the form of structures for clauses and words, while Phonological Templates determine the segmental and supra-segmental structure of linguistic units.

3.2 Intensifiers in FDG

In this section, the classification of intensifiers will be first revised in the light of the architecture of FDG, specifically in relation to the levels of linguistic representation that are distinguished in this theory and in terms of FDG's distinction between lexical and grammatical units.

3.2.1 Intensifiers and levels of representation

From an FDG perspective, intensification and some of its neighbouring categories, such as quantification and emphasis, are accounted for by a number of units at different levels of representation in the architecture of FDG.

3.2.1.1 Representational level

Intensification is mentioned at different points in Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008), specifically, when addressing the RL, the authors refer to this notion as “degree adverbs” (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 221), “modifiers of lexical properties” (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 230) or “adverbs intensifying the degree to which a Manner applies” (e.g., “very neatly,” Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 267). In addition, intensification appears (not explicitly, though, but in connection with degree adverbs), when dealing with the notion of Quantity (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 270). Semantics-wise, the two categories involved would be therefore degree and quantity.

3.2.1.1.1 Degree

Hengeveld includes degree words within the class of manner adverbs, which are analysed as predicates, that is, lexical units which restrict the property variable and are stored in the lexicon. For example, the adverb *extremely* is analysed as a modifier of the adjective *clumsy*, as shown in (10).

$$(10) \quad (f_i: \text{clumsy}_A (f_i): [(f_j: \text{extreme}_A (f_j)) (f_i)])$$

However, Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008) do not offer a similar analysis in the case of other degree words, as will be shown below (see Example (11)).

3.2.1.1.2 Quantity and quantification

FDG is no exception to the common linguistic tradition of associating intensification with semantically close categories (see Section 2). In their analysis of *highly intelligent*, Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, 270) point out that degree adverbs indicate the Quantity (q) of application of their head and represent it as shown in (11) (see Giomi, 2022).

$$(11) \quad (f_i: \text{intelligent}_A (f_i): [(q_i: [(f_j: \text{high}_A (f_j)) (q_i)]) (f_i)])$$

Quantity is given independent status and regarded as a semantic category at the RL, alongside Manner, Location, Time, Reason, Properties, Individuals, States-of-Affairs, Episodes and Propositional Content, as these are all categories with an impact on the formal expression of languages. This means that, when analysed as Quantity, intensifiers should be included within the set of semantic units expressing representational meaning.

3.2.1.2 Interpersonal level

When the use of intensifying devices is meant to express the Speaker's degree of commitment to his/her utterance (Keizer 2015, 87) or his/her emotional stance toward the message, they can be best analysed as emphatic devices, applying at the IL. Emphatic modifiers (and operators) are indeed pervasive at this level as they can apply to (virtually) all its different units (layers), as shown in Table 2. It should be therefore made clear that in FDG Emphasis is non-truth-conditional and that Speaker's commitment means his/her degree of engagement with the Discourse Act, Subact, Communicated Content or Illocutionary force and not to the truth conditions of the proposition.

Table 2: Lexical devices of Emphasis at the different layers of IL

Layers	Example
Discourse act	Let's go <i>dammit</i>
Communicated content	I <i>really</i> don't like you
Ascriptive subact	A <i>really</i> very nice example

Emphatic devices of the Discourse Act are characterized by the fact that they can occur with all kinds of Illocutions, as shown in (12) (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 64–5).

- (12) IMPERATIVE Answer me *dammit*!
 DECLARATIVE I want to go home *dammit*.
 INTERROGATIVE Did you do it or not *dammit*?
 HORTATIVE Let's go *dammit*.

Emphatic modifiers of the Communicated Content emphasize the entire content of an utterance. They are different from those of the Discourse Act in that they do not express the Speaker's anger, irritation and the like but only “intensify” the content of the Discourse Act (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 102). They can combine with Discourse Act modifiers, but they appear in an internal position, as the example in (13) shows. In addition, they cannot apply to some Illocutions, as can be seen in (13), where it applies to a Declarative and an Interrogative Illocution only (not to Imperatives and Hortatives).

- (13) I *really* don't like you, *dammit*!
 Do you *really* want to hurt me?
 **Really* answer me.
 *Let's go *really*.

At the layer of the Ascriptive Subact, emphatic modifiers indicate the Speaker's commitment, as can be seen in (14).

- (14) a. a *really* very nice example
 b. IL: $C_I: [... (R_I: [(T_I) (T_J) [... (T_J): \text{really } (T_J)]) (R_I))...] (C_I)$
 RL: $x_i: [(f_i: \text{behaviour } (f_i)) (x_i)]: [(f_j: \text{annoying } (f_j)): [(f_k: \text{very } (f_k)) (f_j)](x_i)]$

In Hengeveld and Mackenzie's (2008, 111) view, in (14), the use of *really* does not provide descriptive information but indicates the Speaker's “emphatic commitment.” Likewise, when explaining different examples of modifiers at the layer of Ascriptive Subacts, Keizer (2015, 87) points out that, when the Speaker says “a really expensive tie,” “the tie's expensiveness is not described as being real.” The representation in (14b) shows the difference between property modifiers, such as *very* (intensification), and Ascriptive Subact modification (emphasis) by the adverb *really*.

Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, 111) explain their analysis of *really* as an emphatic modifier of an Ascriptive Subact on the grounds that it can be combined with another degree word, *very*, in a fixed order

that reflects their different scope relationships, as (14) shows. By contrast, (15) is not allowed, showing that *really* applies to an Ascriptive Subact, which occurs within a Referential Subact, while *very* modifies a Lexical Property at the RL.

(15) *a very *really* nice example

The difference in scope allows the co-occurrence of intensifiers at the three layers of IL mentioned earlier, as can be seen in (16), where *dammit* modifies a whole Discourse Act and serves to express Emphasis, *really* modifies an Ascriptive Subact, expressing the Speaker's strong feelings, and *very* modifies the Lexical Property ("behaviour") expressing high degree.

(16) *really* (Subact) *very* (Lexical Property) annoying behaviour, *dammit* (Discourse Act)!

Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, 123–4) and Mackenzie (2019) also give examples of (Emotional) Emphasis on the Subact of Reference. For the sake of clarity, they will be discussed in Section 3.2.2, where other grammatical devices of Emphasis are mentioned.

3.2.2 Intensification as a lexical or grammatical device

As mentioned earlier, Hengeveld (1997) and Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, 221) treat some degree words like English *extremely* as lexemes modifying the Lexical Property "f," as can be seen in the representation for the previous adverb in (17).

(17) *extremely serious*
 $(f_i: \text{serious}_A(f_i): [(f_j: \text{extreme}_A(f_j))(f_i)])$

Hengeveld's analysis is based on the fact that these adverbs may impose semantic restrictions on the predicate and are created by derivational rules. By contrast, Mackenzie (2001, 125–6) treats degree words as operators, that is, grammatical units, as they are not semantically rich enough to have their own predicate Frames.

In actual practice, however, examples like (18) and (19) show that the adverb may keep its denotational meaning, at least partially, so that the analysis of adverbs in *-ly* as grammatical units would not be completely adequate.

(18) But as the plane taxis to the runaway, he makes the mistake of looking out of the window at the wings bouncing gently up and down. The panels and rivets are almost *painfully visible*, the painted markings weathered, there are streaks of soot on the engine cowlings. It is borne in upon him that he is, after all, entrusting his life to a machine ... (David Lodge, *Changing Places*)

(19) Chatting to Giancarlo about Rome was *wonderfully instructive*. He gave me tips on where to eat and what to see. (Healan, A. and K. Gormley, *Close-up*, 136)

In (18), to express the high degree of anxiety of the main character, who suffers from flying phobia, David Lodge describes the panels and rivets as "almost painfully visible," that is "so clearly visible that it was almost painful". This example nicely illustrates the strategy used by the writer to add emphasis to the expression of the character's emotions by means of a very productive process, adverb forming *-ly* suffixation. In FDG, this process takes place at the interface between the RL and the ML, where the suffix is added to mark a non-default position of an adjective. However, the choice of the adjectival lexeme *painful* to describe the degree of visibility of the panels is a strategy that Lodge uses to exaggerate the feeling of fright caused by this on his character. Likewise, in (19), delighted with the information received, the speaker

qualifies his chat with Giancarlo as “wonderfully instructive,” so that he does not only intensify the degree of informativeness but also expresses his positive feelings about it.

The analysis of intensifying adverbs in *-ly* as lexical units is supported by the fact that they are usually found in collocational relations, such as those in (20).

- (20) *bitterly disappointed*
deeply concerned
highly recommended
ridiculously long

Aware of the conflict in the analysis of degree words as lexical or grammatical units, García-Velasco (2013) takes an intermediate stance and analyses some degree words as operators, while other are regarded as modifiers. First, and unlike in Hengeveld and Mackenzie’s analysis introduced earlier in (17), intensifiers like *very* are treated as operators, that is grammatical elements, at the RL, and words at the ML. These cases would be represented as shown in (21).

- (21) *very tall*
 RL: (intens f_i : tall_A (f_i))
 ML: (Ap_i: (Gw_i: very (Gw_i)) (Aw_i: tall (Aw_i)) (Ap_i)) (García-Velasco 2013, 89)

By contrast, other degree words are analysed as predicative lexemes which take a result or comparative clause as an argument. García Velasco (2013, 91) proposes the representation in (22b) for cases like (22a).

- (22) a. *so rich that he bought a Ferrari.*
 b. (f_i : rich_A (f_i): [(f_j : so_{Deg} (f_j)) (p_i: – that he bought a Ferrari – (p_i))_{Result}] (f_i))

This representation shows that *so* is a lexical unit that takes a proposition as its argument. The degree word and the clause together function as a modifier of the property f_i , restricted by the adjective *rich* (see Giomi 2022, for the analysis of comparative modifiers). However, *very* was analysed as the grammatical expression of intensification, *so* is regarded as a lexical head and a Degree word.

The third class of degree words that García Velasco distinguishes corresponds to those suffixed in *-ly*, such as *suspiciously* in (23).

- (23) The kids were *suspiciously* quiet.

García Velasco (2013, 94) analyses these adverbs as interpersonal modifiers, arguing that the interpretation of these adverbs when expressing degree is not systematic (in this case, “to a degree that caused suspicion”). Therefore, they cannot be accounted for in a similar way to manner adverbs in *-ly*, which have a predictable meaning (“in a X_A manner”) and are regarded as inflectional variants of the adjective in specific syntactic environments. The representation he proposes for (23) is shown in (24).

- (24) IL: (T_I: [] (T_I): suspiciously (T_I))
 RL: (f_i : quiet_A (f_i))

This representation shows that *suspiciously* functions as a modifier of the Ascriptive Subact (T_I) at the IL, and its lexical head is the adjective *quiet*, which is introduced at the RL.

In other cases, however, the adverb has not lost its denotational meaning and has not acquired an IL. For example, *highly* would be analysed as an adjective that restricts a Quantity variable, as mentioned earlier as regards (11), represented as (25).

- (25) *highly intelligent*
 (q_i: [(f_i: high_A (f_i)) (q_i)])

Like English, Spanish has an array of intensifying devices ranging from completely grammaticalized degree words to a varied and creative inventory of lexical units.

Among the set of grammatical devices in Spanish that are used to express intensification *mu*y stands out, which can be analysed as similar to *very* in that it is an operator at the RL that corresponds to a grammatical word at the ML.

Another grammatical device in Spanish is the use of highly productive affixes, such as the suffix *-ísimo* in the formation of superlative adjectives or the prefix *super-*. The attachment of *-ísimo* to *tarde* in (26) and of *super-* to *contenta* in (27) (Roels and Enghels 2018, 127–8) function to express a high degree of the Lexical Property “tarde” and “contenta” at the RL, respectively.

- (26) CON2M1 No porque como he llegado *tardísimo* por el puto tren que ha tardado cuarenta minutos en vez de veinte
 ‘No because as I arrived really late because of the fucking train that took forty minutes instead of twenty.’
- (27) AM3F2 Y Ana está *supercontenta* eh
 ‘And Ana is really happy, eh.’

On the lexical side, there is a whole set of contemporary intensifiers. Some of these words are neutral, and others, like those involving the use of taboo words, are more expressive forms. Roels and Enghels (2018, 131) have explored the use of intensifiers in a corpus of present-day Madrilenian Spanish (CORMA) and provide the list of lexical intensifiers, some of which are illustrated in (28).

- (28) a. Ha engordado *un montón*.
 ‘He/she has put on a lot of weight’
 b. *Menudo* desastre!
 ‘What a mess!’
 c. Los fines de semana duerme *mogollón*
 ‘He/she sleeps a lot at week-ends’
 d. Hace un frío *del copón*.
 ‘It is really cold’

Summing up, intensification is not exclusively expressed by means of grammatical devices, but also by lexemes (acting as modifiers). Acknowledging the existence of a gradation of grammaticalization (Keizer 2007, Heine 2013, Heine and Kuteva 2002) for degree words is most logical when considering the constant renewal that intensifiers are subjected to.

The use of lexical and grammatical devices also applies to neighbouring categories like Emphasis. Section 3.2.1.2 introduces the different lexical devices for Emphasis at the different layers of IL. To avoid repetition, in this section, only grammatical devices will be presented.

For example, in (29), the use of the suffix *-azo* is intended to express the speaker’s degree of surprise or amazement at the quality of the shot.

- (29) ¡Gol-Azo!
 goal-EMPH³
 ‘what a goal!’

³ In RAE (<https://dle.rae.es/-azo>), this suffix is said to be used to exaggerate (e.g. *golazo* “great goal”) or praise (e.g., *cuerpazo* “great body”).

For a different example, also involving the use of a productive suffix, consider the emphatic use of Spanish suffix *-ísimo*, mentioned earlier and repeated here for convenience.

- (1) que lo que hacemos mal nosotros es peor que el *mismísimo* Trump y todas sus medidas. [...]
 ‘what we do is worse than Trump himself and all his measures.’

As is the case with emphatic modifiers that were introduced in Section 3.2.1.2, grammatical expressions of Emphasis occur at all the different layers of the IL (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 66–7, 83, 104–106, 112–3, 123–4), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Grammatical devices for Emphasis across Interpersonal layers⁴

Layers	Example
Discourse act	She has grown! Did you say you were pregnant?! Hurry up!
Illocution	Please, <i>do</i> sit down Doe je werk <i>dan</i> ! ‘Go on, do your work.’
Communicated content	Wǒ shì gēn nǐ kāiwánxiào de. ‘I’m just joking with you.’
Ascriptive subact	Ma-che:-də zə ge-li-ke. ‘We remained (totally) unafraid.’
Referential subact	ŋa-mi:-ye zə ŋaĩ:hke. ‘I saw it with my own eyes.’

Firstly, at the layer of the Discourse Act, emphatic operators have scope over the entire Discourse Act regardless of the Illocution of the Discourse Act, such as English emphatic intonation pattern, which can be found with Declarative, Interrogative and Imperative Illocutions, as the examples in (30) show.

- (30) She HAS grown!
 Did you say you were PREGnant?!
 Hurry UP!

At the layer of the Illocution, emphatic operators reinforce the illocutionary force of an expression, such as the use of *do* in Imperatives, which strengthen the Speaker’s intention, as shown in (31).

- (31) a. Oh, *do* shut up!
 b. Please, *do* sit down.

At the layer of the Communicated Content, expressions of Emphasis can also be found in the form of cleft-like constructions in Scottish Gaelic, illustrated in (32) (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 105).

- (32) ‘S ann a dh’fheumas tu rud beag de dh’eolas ciùil
 CLEFT must/need 2.SG thing little of knowledge music.GEN
 ‘It’s just that you must have some knowledge of music.’

⁴ Lexical devices of Emphasis at the different layers of IL are provided in Table 2.

Examples of the adverb *muy* were taken from previous studies on the adverb (González-García 2020), except for one Google example. For the English examples of *way*, I used the TV subsection of Davies' 1950's–2018) *Corpus of Contemporary American English*. The reason why this sub-corpus was chosen is that it is much larger than any other corpus of informal English, and it is in informal English where *way* is typically used. For *way*, 493 different types (3,020 tokens) were retrieved in which the adverb was followed by an adjective. In addition, 505 types (2,949 tokens) of the combination *way too* were obtained. As regards *proper*, I used data from the previous work on this adverb (Núñez-Pertejo and Palacios-Martínez, 2018).

In this section, the different intensifying devices will be first presented. A tentative proposal for their analysis within the theory of FDG will then be offered in Section 3.4.

3.3.1 Spanish “X no, lo siguiente”

The *Online dictionary of advanced Spanish*⁶ defines “*no, lo siguiente*,” as an expression used to indicate that the quality denoted by the adjective falls short of expressing the Speaker's intended meaning. The examples in (36) are provided in this source.

- (36) a. Me bebí casi un litro de vodka. Estaba borracho *no, lo siguiente*.
 ‘I drank almost a litre of vodka. Drunk would be an understatement.’
 b. Lo veo estrecho *no, lo siguiente*.
 ‘It looks way too narrow.’

The structure “X *no, lo siguiente*” is metaphorical as it originates from conceptualizing degree in terms of space as a cumulative series, so that *lo siguiente* (“what comes next”) expresses a higher degree. This expression, which has received criticism and has been neglected by prescriptivists, is already part of the language of many native Spanish speakers and, as shown above, included in some dictionaries of current Spanish and other reliable sources (see, e.g., Cianca Aguilar and Franco 2018, 164).⁷ In a search in the *Spanish corpus* compiled by Davies (corpusdelespanol.org), 52 examples like (37) were found.

- (37) Como dice el amigo JUANASUS si la calidad de las retransmisiones de Footers son como las padecidas en este partido apaga y vámonos..., de calidad *penosa NO lo siguiente*.
 ‘As our friend JUANASUS says, if the quality of Footers’ broadcast is as that we’ve suffered in this match this is all killed stone-dead...not of an awful quality, worse than that.’

In (37), the speaker describes the quality of the football broadcast as worse than embarrassing. However, instead of choosing a conventional way of expressing a higher degree, he/she says that “it was not embarrassing but the following degree on the scale of being bad”, as if lacking the appropriate adjective to describe it. In this way, the speaker not only expresses a high degree of bad quality but also his/her annoyance or enthusiasm with the situation described in the previous co-text.

In the data retrieved from Davies's *Corpus del español*, the majority of the examples included negative adjectives. The data obtained using Sketch Engine yielded different results, as the number of cases with positive adjectives or phrases almost equals that of negative cases. Thus, 191 of the 416 examples (45.9%) of the *Spanish Web Corpus* included negative adjectives or expressions. The examples in (38) illustrate these cases.

⁶ <https://www.espanolavanzado.com/significados/1914-no-lo-siguiente-significado>.

⁷ Both Elena Cianca Aguilar and Emilio Gavilanes Franco are members of the Institute of lexicography of the Spanish Royal Academy of Language (RAE).

- (38) a. Bar el Puerto, *trato **denigrante?** no lo siguiente*. Pase por el lugar el día 27 de mayo, junto al grupo de 5, etapa O Cebreiro/Samos. (consumer.es)
 ‘Bar El Puerto, insulting treatment? No, worse than that [...]’
- b. Primer libro que leo, de esta autora y seguramente el último. *Libro **malo** no lo siguiente* es una tragedia desde la primera página hasta la última [...] (compartelibros.com)
 ‘First book I read by this author and surely the last one. Not a bad book, worse than that, it’s a tragedy from the first page until the last one [...]’
- c. La comida ***mala** no lo siguiente*, no interesa comer allí, lo único que se come bien (tripadvisor.com)
 ‘The food is even worse than bad, it’s not a big deal to eat there [...]’

In all examples in (38), speakers express their annoyance by using this expression. A typical case is their use in customers’ negative comments about restaurants or services which were not satisfactory.

The remaining examples, amounting to 54.1% of the data retrieved using Sketch Engine, included positive adjectives or expressions, as shown in (39a)–(39c), where the Speaker expresses his/her excitement about her new dishwasher, a cake or the child’s physical appearance, respectively:

- (39) a. Pues yo acabo de comprar un lavavajillas, de la marca indesit de 45 centímetros para mi novio y para mí, pues hace dos meses y estoy ***encantada** no lo siguiente*, a mí no me ha quedado nunca nada en los vasos salen brillantes, los platos igual, [...] (euroresidentes.com)
 ‘I’ve just bought a dishwasher, of Indesit brand, 45 cm, for my boyfriend and me, two months ago and I’m more than delighted [...]’
- b. Vamos a preparar una tarta de lo más molona y fácil de preparar, la he montado en cinco minutos, sin ensuciar prácticamente nada y ¡sorpresa!!! Está ***de lujo, rica** no lo siguiente*, así que no lo dudes y prepárala, lo tiene todo, la cremosidad de las natillas, el sabor de la fruta el delicioso sabor de la crema de cacao y el toque mágico del ron. (cocinayaficiones.com)
 ‘We are preparing a very nice easy-to-make cake, I’ve made it in 5 minutes, with very little mess and surprise! It’s so cool, really good [...]’
- c. Hola Silvia, me alegro de que tengas un niño tan guapo!!! bueno ***guapo** no lo siguiente* podríamos decir que es, esta noche aviso a mi madre para que lo vea, me encanta la foto de toda la familia junta.
 ‘Hi Silvia, I’m glad that you have such a good-looking child!!! Well, more than good-looking we could say he is [...]’

By using “X no lo siguiente”, the Speaker expresses her/his strong emotions, either annoyance or enthusiasm towards the situation expressed in the previous utterance. Hence, it is not surprising to find this phrase in combination with already intensified adjectives. Thus, in (40), we find adjectives inflected in the superlative form where the suffix *-ísimo/a* has been attached. In (41), the adjective is intensified by the preceding adverb *mu* (*muy*), and in (42), the phrase *de narices* (“very intense,” lit. “of noses”) is used with the same function. Finally, in (43), the adjective *paupérrimo* is an irregular superlative form meaning “very poor.” Overall, 24% of the types contain some kind of intensifying device, either grammatical (e.g. *-ísimo/a*, *muy* “very,” *realmente* “really”, *complete* “complete”) or lexical (e.g. *de muerte lenta*, “very out of this world”, lit. “of very slow death,” *de muerte relentísima* “very very out of this world” lit. “of very very slow death,” *de relujo* “so cool,” *de rexupete* “yummy,” *de narices* “very intense” lit. “of noses”).

- (40) a. Pero la canción es ***malísima** no, lo siguiente*. Ni se nota la producción, ni instrumentos tradicionales audibles, ni voz peculiar. (12–01–04, ES El Mundo.es)
 ‘But the song is not very bad, it is more than very bad. You cannot perceive the production, neither audible traditional instruments nor a peculiar voice.’
- b. matarán pero son más ciegos que su amado entrenador que está ***sobrevaloradísimo** no lo siguiente*. (17–03–14, ES MARCA.com)

‘they will kill but they are more blind than their dear coach, who is not just very overrated but even more than that.’

- c. Que si me apetece un plato dices uummmmmmmmm te ha quedado un potaje **divinísimo** *no lo siguiente* además de estar de muerte lenta las fotos lo dicen todo. (juliaysus recetas.com)
 ‘Would I like a dish you say ummmmmmmmm your chickpea stew is not absolutely divine, it is even better, in addition to being out of this world, you only need to see the pictures.’

- (41) espero que cambien ya de motor gráfico que éste está **mu trillao** *no lo siguiente* # 0 # CHAer29 Mar, 1319: 46 # que vergüenza de juego. (13–03–29, ES GamerZona)
 ‘I hope they change the graphics engine at once, as this is not very hackneyed, it is even worse [...].’
- (42) pufffff para empezar como has conseguido enchufarlo al revés?????? si los cables son **cortos de narices** *no lo siguiente* pero bueno otra demostración más de que nada es imposible
 ‘puff...to start how have you managed to switch it upside down??? The cables are so extremely short... well one more proof that nothing is impossible.’
- (43) ¿tiene sentido esta profesión?. Espero respuesta de quien le pueda interesar. Y sí para los críticos ya lo adelanto **suelto paupérrimo** *no lo siguiente*. (actv.info)
 ‘Does this profession make sense? I’m waiting for an answer from anyone who might be interested. And yes for critics I anticipate very poor income not, extremely poor.’

The expression is also found with emphasized words, as shown in (44), where emphasis is represented by vowel lengthening (repetition of letters), with exclamations, such as (45) or with other emphatic expressions used to exaggerate or reinforce the Speaker’s positive or negative feelings, like (46).

- (44) **Espectaculaaaaaaaaaar** *no lo siguiente* como todo lo que haces, esos bizcochitos son lo más de lo más me requeteencantan, que color tan bonito tienen y que ricos deben estar al igual que la charlota tiene que ser una delicia para el paladar. (bavette.es)
 ‘Absolutely spectacular as everything you do, those little cakes are the best, I superlove them, what beautiful colour and how good they must be [...].’
- (45) **Madre miaaa** vas a acabar **kao** *no lo siguiente*. (bodas.net)
 ‘My God, you’ll end up knackered, no, worse than that.’
- (46) **Efectivamente** *día negro* *no lo siguiente*. Debe dimitir el gobierno de España en pleno. (dolcatalunya.com)
 ‘Indeed, worse than a black day... The whole Spanish government should resign.’

In addition, although in most cases, the word preceding the negative particle is an adjective, examples are found where that slot is occupied by a verbal phrase or a noun, as the examples in (47) show.

- (47) a. ahora le pide a Susana Diaz que dimita, hay que **tener morro** *no lo siguiente*. Vaya personaje ES. (18–12–03, ES El Mundo)
 ‘now he’s asked Susana Diaz to resign, you have to be worse than cheeky. What a character he is [...].’
- b. daré un ejemplo (Los restaurantes de cocina española **peligros de la salud** *no lo siguiente* mortales) utilización de huevo no desinfectado lo ponen en la tortilla con las plumas pegadas. (15–04–17, ES 20minutos.es)

- ‘I’ll give an example (Spanish cuisine restaurants not dangers for health, worse than that, lethal) use of unsterilised eggs, they put it in the omelette with the feathers stuck to them.’
- c. Las mujeres somos como el vino cuanto más edad mejor calidad. Así que si lo que estas pesando es tomarte algo bueno no dudes en llamarme soy todo amor una mujer que sabe dar y recibir. Conmigo pasarías un momento. Bueno **momento no lo siguiente**. Un momentazo Jajajajaja va en serio he. ‘We women are like wine, the older the better quality. So if you’re thinking about having something good, just call me, I’m all love, a woman that knows how to give and to get. You’d spend a moment with me. Well not a moment, more than that, a super moment, jajajaja not joking.’

This Spanish intensifying device is also characterized by a special morphosyntactic structure, as the negative particle does not precede the copular verb but follows the adjective. In terms of phonological structure, the first part follows an upward–downward intonation pattern and is followed by a pause after the negative particle. According to Royal Spanish Academy (RAE),⁸ a comma should be used after the adjective (and, it is inferred, the negative particle),⁹ which is a conventional use to separate segments in a contrastive relation.¹⁰ In short, these expressions constitute an interesting innovative intensifying device, which shows that intensification is not unique to the function of adverbial units.

3.3.2 Muy

Spanish adverb *muy* is defined as an adverb that is used before adjectives (e.g. *muy bonito*, “very pretty”), adverbs (e.g. *muy deprisa* “very fast”) and some prepositional phrases (e.g. *muy hacia adentro* “very deep inside”) and expresses a high degree of the property designated by the element it modifies.¹¹ This basic use has been expanded, and tautological uses like (48), where *muy* precedes a previously mentioned noun, are common nowadays.

- (48) Este lunes será un lunes *muy lunes* (y mucho lunes) para Mariano Rajoy. El expresidente del Gobierno está citado a declarar en la Comisión del Congreso que investiga la llamada ‘operación Kitchen’, uno de los casos de corrupción en el que se vio implicado su Ejecutivo y que más escándalo ha generado en los últimos años.¹²
- ‘This Monday will be a Monday very Monday (and much Monday) for Mariano Rajoy [...].’

In examples like (48), the use of *muy* before a noun that has been mentioned in the preceding co-text is intended to express a high degree of prototypicality of the entity designated by the noun. In this case, *muy* precedes “Monday,” a day of the week that is conceptualized negatively by many people in our culture, as it implies resuming our daily routine after the weekend. The presence of *muy* emphasizes the negativity associated with Mondays, precisely because it is on this Monday that former prime minister Rajoy has been called to court for a political scandal.

In his usage-based study, González-García (2020) convincingly shows that in present-day Spanish intensifiers like *muy* (“very”), *bastante* (“very”), *completamente* (“completely”), *totalmente* (“totally”) and the like can be felicitously combined with common and proper nouns associated with a range of different semantic areas (e.g., *Es muy Madonna* “She is very Madonna”). In these cases, González-García notes, the

⁸ RAE is Spain’s official royal institution which aims to ensure the stability of the Spanish language within and between different territories by applying linguistic prescription.

⁹ Note, however, that the comma is missing in some examples, which can be explained by the relatively informal nature of the expression and the erroneous use of punctuation by language users (considering that the data from NOW is web based).

¹⁰ <https://diccet.com/2020/10/26/x-no-lo-siguiente/>. <http://aplica.rae.es/orweb/cgi-bin/v.cgi?i=UGNgSKgmZFqiaklr>.

¹¹ <https://dle.rae.es/muy>.

¹² https://www.huffingtonpost.es/entry/un-lunes-muy-lunes-y-mucho-lunes-las-claves-de-la-declaracion-de-rajoy-en-el-congreso-por-la-kitchen_es_61b331b9e4b089ee1c32c88e.

intensifier coerces the noun into a gradable interpretation, and he adds that the construction instantiates a gradual change from noun to adjective in the second slot. At the ML, this categorial change is shown in a number of properties: For example, González-García (2020, 160) observes that the noun cannot be preceded by determiners (e.g., **Mariano Rajoy es muy un zorro*, Lit. “Mariano Rajoy is very a fox”), and it develops adjectival features, such as its possibility to occur in attributive (e.g., *Letizia ofreció un look muy Oscar*, Lit. “Letizia offered a very Oscar look”) and predicative position (e.g., *Te veo muy Madonna*, Lit. “I see you very Madonna”).¹³

González-García (2020, 159) analyses these expressions as instantiations of a construction which, in his view, “conveys a positive or negative forceful assessment by the speaker/writer of a given person, entity, event or state of affairs [...]”. Thus, in (49), *muy Madonna* might be interpreted in quite opposite ways, with a positive (“sexy,” “cool,” “stylish”) or negative meaning (“vulgar,” “silly,” “lame”), depending on the speaker’s fondness of Madonna.

- (49) Y la cuestión es que Gaga es *muy* Madonna.
 ‘And the thing is that Gaga is very Madonna.’

In many cases, more specific contextual knowledge might be required for interpretation. For example, in (49), the speaker expects the hearer to have some knowledge of the specific conditions of Spanish ex-PM Zapatero, namely, that most members of his government were women. More often than not, however, some linguistic cueing will guide the Addressee to the right interpretation. Thus, in (50) and (51), the following co-text providing the Speaker’s description makes explicit what he means by his/her choice of the adjectivalized nouns Zapatero and Amsterdam to qualify Ferreras and the room, respectively.

- (50) Ferreras es *muy Zapatero*, le gusta trabajar sólo con mujeres.
 ‘Ferreras is very Zapatero, he likes to work with women only.’
- (51) La habitación es *muy Amsterdam*, con pintadas y graffitis. Sólo un baño para 8-10 personas, aunque moderno, eso sí.
 ‘The room is very Amsterdam-like, with paintings and graffitis. Only a bathroom for 8–10 people, modern, though.’

Interestingly, a related construction (52) (adapted from González-García 2020, 178–9) is found in which the noun slot in the previous construction is replaced by a prepositional phrase headed by *de* followed by a noun or an infinitive clause, which further demonstrates the flexibility of the use of *muy*.

- (52) a. Soy *muy de Estrella Galicia*
 be.1SG INT of Estrella Galicia
 ‘I usually like drinking Estrella Galicia’
 b. Soy *muy de beber cerveza*
 be.1SG INT of drink-INF beer
 ‘I often/usually like drinking beer’

Drawing on research from Michaelis (2011) and González-García (2011), González-García (2021, 179) points out that ‘the nominal element after “de” (“of”) encodes a habit, understood as a characterization of the subject’ (see also Fernández Leborans and Sánchez López 2015, 95). The “stativizing nature” of this

¹³ It is assumed that the use of the terms attributive and predicative differs from their use in English grammar, where they indicate a position before the noun and after the verb, respectively. By contrast, González uses ‘attributive’ to describe the position of an adjective after a noun (“un look muy Oscar”) and ‘predicative’ to refer to its position after a verb (“Te veo muy Madonna”).

construction is, according to González-García, responsible for the inability to combine it with the progressive, the perfective and with adverbial modification expressing a punctual meaning, as shown in (53).

- (53) a. *Soy muy de estar bebiendo Estrella Galicia
 be.PRES1SG very of be.INF drink.GER Estrella Galicia
 b. *Soy muy de haber bebido Estrella Galicia
 be.PRES1SG very of PFTAUX.INF drink.PTCP Estrella Galicia
 c. Soy muy de beber Estrella Galicia los fines de semana/*justo ahora
 be.PRES1SG very of drink.INF Estrella Galicia DEF.M.PL end of week/*just now

This section has introduced two innovative uses of the established intensifier *muy*. Drawing on a previous study by González-García (2020), I have shown that this adverb has expanded its use and that it is now usually found in combination with proper nouns or followed by a prepositional phrase with “de”.

3.3.3 Way

The first use of *way* as an adverb can be traced back to 1833 according to Merriam Webster dictionary. In this first adverbial usage, *way* denoted “by a long distance, to a considerable degree or extent, far”. An example of the use of *way* denoting physical distance is given in (54).

- (54) a. sat *way* in the back row
 b. They live *way* out in the suburbs.

Way can also be used as a quantifier with a similar meaning to “by far” or “much,” as shown in (55).

- (55) a. I ate *way* too much
 b. that’s *way* too expensive

In still another adverbial use, *way* is regarded as an intensifier with a similar meaning to “very,” as can be seen in (56).

- (56) a. *way* cool
 b. *way* excited

In a note on usage of *way* in The American Heritage Dictionary, the use as an intensifying adverb meaning “to a great degree,” as in *way over budget* is regarded as both acceptable and common but informal. The use as a general intensifier, as in *way cool* and *way depressing* is considered “a hallmark of casual speech and is not appropriate for formal contexts.”

With this intensifying use, *way* can be found in combination with adjectives, prepositions and even nouns. In addition, it is often followed by different forms that express some kinds of intensification, either inflectionally or by means of morphologically complex lexemes. An example of the former is (57), where the following adjective is found in the comparative form.

- (57) Take off your gun. – Come on, man, you’re *way bigger* than her. ‘Way’? – I’m just saying that those two deadweight bodies are ten percent heavier than that woman. (2014, Those Who Kill)

Cases like (57) are significant, as the form of the adjective is comparative in 100 out of 493 types in the COCA TV corpus search of the sequence “*way Adj.*” In addition, another 295 different types (828 tokens) were found of the sequence “*way more Adj.*,” which means that *way* combines with an adjective in comparative form in 50.1% of the types where it is followed by an adjective.

An example of the second case mentioned earlier, where the adjective that follows is a morphologically complex word derived by prefixation of an intensifying affix (e.g. *over*, *super* and the like) is (58).

- (58) in china. – That’s why I never shop here. – It’s *way overpriced*. – Seems almost illegal. I like that one. for you. (2006, Invasion)

These derived adjectives denote excess, that is, an upward deviance with respect to some ideal or established norm.

In addition, 505 different types (2,499 tokens) were found where *way* is followed by the adverb *too*, used to express “more than is needed or wanted; more than is suitable or enough” (Cambridge Online Dictionary). This is shown in (59).

- (59) Willis is *way too busy* with her social work to follow the crime news. And too busy feeding [...]. (1966, The Fugitive)

Way also combines with prepositions, like *past*, denoting “in or to a position that is further than a particular point,” *over* “above or higher than something else, sometimes so that one thing covers the other” or *back* “a long time ago.” This is exemplified in (60)–(62).

- (60) No, no, no, no, no... no... we are *way past happy* This is psychotic. It’s maniacal. It’s like. THAT’S [...]. (1998, Two Guys, a Girl and...)
- (61) It says \$7,250’right there. Well, that’s *way over* budget! (2017, Schitt’s Creek)
- (62) I know all about your father, too, from a long *way back*. It’s not the first time he betrayed me. He shot me (1960, Bonanza)

As can be seen in (60), *way past* can be followed by an adjective, meaning “far beyond or above a particular point, time or age, outside a stated limit,” which does not differ significantly from cases in which *too* follows *way*, in the sense that both *way too* and *way past* express some kind of excess. Thus, in (60), the speaker describes their state as far beyond happy, “psychotic” or “maniacal.” A similar meaning is conveyed when *way* is followed by *over*, as in (61), and it intensifies temporal distance (“a long time ago”) when followed by *back*, as shown in (62).

3.3.4 Proper

Proper is a recent intensifier in teen talk of Multicultural London English (Núñez-Pertejo and Palacios-Martínez 2018), already included as such in dictionaries like the Cambridge Online Dictionary. According to this dictionary, this use of *proper* (meaning “extremely”) is listed as an informal use in British English for “emphasizing what you are saying.” An example from the Cambridge Online Dictionary is given in (63).

- (63) I was *proper* annoyed with him.

Núñez-Pertejo and Palacios-Martínez (2018, 136, 146) point out that *proper* shows a preference for adjectives expressing “negative semantic prosody” and that most of these adjectives are used to describe a human quality or condition, which the speaker regards as negative, so that it can be said that young speakers resort to the use of *proper* to describe and accentuate a person’s negative traits. Stratton’s (2020) study on *proper* confirms Núñez-Pertejo and Palacios-Martínez’s findings. He adds that since this adjective no longer conveys the meaning of “appropriateness” or “correctness” in its use as intensifier, this may be an indicative of a process of semantic bleaching.

In this section, I have presented a brief overview of four relatively recent intensifying expressions or new uses of well-established ones. It has been shown that these expressions exhibit distributional properties that differ from more common degree words. For example, in spite of being found with adjectives in their most productive use, there are cases with other grammatical categories (e.g., the use of *muy* and *way too* with nouns). In addition, in some cases, these intensifying expressions are found in combinations that are not always allowed with more common intensifiers (such as the use of *way* with *too* or the use of “Adj *no, lo siguiente*” with already intensified adjectives). Finally, these expressions can be used to indicate the Speaker’s attitude or emotions.

3.4 A Functional Discourse Grammar proposal

In this section, I will make a proposal for the analysis of the intensifying strategies that have been described in Section 3.3, following the premises of the FDG theory. In doing so, two main questions need to be answered. Firstly, what type of meaning do these intensifiers denote or, in other words, at which level and layer of the architecture of FDG should they be represented? The second question concerns their status as grammatical or lexical devices.

3.4.1 “X *no, lo siguiente*”

Spanish expression “X *no, lo siguiente*” is an intensifier of recent informal use, which expresses high degree of a property denoted by a previously mentioned adjective, noun or verb. The expression could be accounted for, *a priori*, at the RL, and represented as (64).

(64) La comida *mala no, lo siguiente*.

RL: $(f_i: [(x_i: \text{comida } (x_i)): (\text{int } f_j: \text{mala } (f_j)) (x_i)]) (f_i)]$

However, what this expression appears to do is not, or not only, intensify. As mentioned in Section 3.3.1, there are cases where the adjective slot is filled by an adjective that is inflected in the superlative form or combined with an intensifier, as can be seen in (40), repeated here for convenience.

(40) Pero la canción es *malísima no, lo siguiente*. Ni se nota la producción, ni instrumentos tradicionales audibles, ni voz peculiar. (12–01–04, ES El Mundo.es)

‘But the song is not very bad, it is more than very bad. You cannot perceive the production, neither audible traditional instruments nor a peculiar voice.’

Examples like (40) show that this expression can co-occur with words that are already intensified, unlike well-established intensifiers, which are not found in such combinations (e.g. *malísima* “very bad,” **muy malísima*,¹⁴ lit. “very very bad”). In addition, in Section 3.3.1, it was shown that the adjectives or phrases filling the variable slot preceding “*no lo siguiente*” were usually emphasized in different ways. This might be adduced as an argument in favour of their analysis as emphatic devices at the IL (see Section 3.2.1.2).

It might be said that what the speaker does by using this expression is to emphasize the strength of his attitude rather than intensify what is already intensified. The option of combining with a degree adverb (*muy* “very”) shows that the expression “Adj *no, lo siguiente*” has a different function from that of degree

¹⁴ Some examples are found, such as ‘eso sí que es heavy metal y no mi frase. Es de ser *muy malísima* pessshona humana, lo siento bucho y a mí me hacen algo así y ya.’ However, this is not regarded as standard or acceptable Spanish usage.

words which modify a Lexical Property at the RL. In FDG, these expressions could be analysed as emphatic devices and represented as shown in (65).

- (65) la canción es malísima no, lo siguiente
 ART.DEF.F song be.3SGPR bad.INT NEG ART.DEF.N next
 ‘the song is not very bad, it is worse’
 IL: (T₁: (neg T₂ [...] (T₂) (T₃: lo-siguiente (T₃))) (T₁))
 RL: (f_i: [(x_i: canción (x_i)): (int f_j: mala (f_j) (x_i))] (f_i))

The representation in (65) shows that there is a complex Act of Ascription (T₁) (representing the entire predicate *malísima no, lo siguiente* “not very bad, worse”), consisting of two further Ascriptive Acts, one for *malísima no* (T₂), the other for *lo-siguiente* (T₃) and a Subact of reference (R₁) that evokes the entity “canción.” The first Ascriptive Subact is negated. Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2018, 39–40) refer to similar cases as T-negation,¹⁵ which they illustrate with examples like *She is not “pretty,” she is gorgeous*. In the authors’ view, these cases are appropriate in a context where a speaker has ascribed a property to a referent and is then corrected by another speaker that provides an alternative. They represent this type of negation with an operator of the Ascriptive Subact. Drawing on Hengeveld and Mackenzie, a similar representation of the negation in “X no lo siguiente” has been used in (65). The other Ascriptive Act contains the lexical operator *lo-siguiente*, which is semantically empty, as it does not add any meaning at the RL, but it only emphasizes the property evoked in the preceding Ascriptive Subact.

At the RL, the first Ascriptive Subact corresponds to a property restricted by an adjective. As this property is intensified, it is represented at the RL by means of the degree operator *int*.

The presence of a “dummy” element (“lo siguiente”), that is, an uninformative item, is reminiscent of non-straightforward communication, illustrated in (66) (Hengeveld and Keizer 2011, 38, Keizer 2015, 86).

- (66) a. ...and am now at home reading the forum whilst marinating pork and frying tofu, to be *thin-gummied* with tomatoes and spring onions.
 b. She had her hair *kind of down* in a *kind of* I don’t know *net*.

Hengeveld and Keizer explain the use of *thingummied* in (66a) as a communicative strategy by which the Speaker is unable or unwilling to evoke the relevant property and where it functions as the head of an “un(der)specified Ascriptive Subact” at the IL. In (66b), by contrast, the Speaker selects a lexeme to describe the entity referred to, although he/she specifies (or possibly modifies) it with “grammaticalized (or possibly lexicalized)” items, such as “kind of” to make it clear that the entity is not a prototypical member of the class denoted by the lexeme in question. In this case, the Speaker uses a different strategy to perform what Hengeveld and Keizer call an “approximate Ascriptive Subact.”

The analysis of “lo siguiente” in the expressions explored in this article is similar to recognizing the semantic emptiness and pragmatic function of the phrase. As “lo siguiente” contributes no semantic content (or not in most cases), the best place to account for it in uses like (65) must be the IL. At this level, “lo siguiente” could be analysed as a ready-made complex lexeme in the lexicon which feeds the IL and acts as a modifier of the previous Ascriptive Subact, though the Speaker is not willing to evoke a specific property (rather than not being able to find the right word for this, as assumed by speakers reluctant to use this expression). The analysis of this type of modification at the IL can be explained by the fact that they serve to indicate to the Addressee to what extent the property is ascribed to some entity, while at the same time conveying the Speaker’s attitude.

Concerning the status of “Adj *no, lo siguiente*” as a lexical or grammatical unit, this phrase cannot be accounted for in any theory drawing strict dividing lines between the lexicon and syntax, as it very much looks like an idiomatic expression with fixed slots and a variable position for an adjective, a noun or a verb. The most plausible option would therefore be to analyse it in terms of a partially instantiated frame retrieved at the IL (Keizer 2015, 86; Keizer 2016, Genée, Keizer, and García-Velasco 2016, 882–4, 892–3, Hengeveld and

¹⁵ Horns (1985) speaks of metalinguistic negation in these cases.

Mackenzie 2016), with different specific properties of its own, function-wise, and also noncanonical in its morphosyntactic and phonological realization. The representation of this frame is shown in (67).

(67) IL: [neg (T₂): (T₃: lo-siguiente (T₃)) (T₂)]_{Emph}

As previously mentioned, the frame includes a slot, which corresponds to a Subact of Ascription (T) evoking a property at the IL that will be filled by an appropriate lexeme at the RL. As mentioned in Section 3.3.1, where these expressions were first described, there appears to be some attraction to adjectives that are intensified. Examples are also found where a noun or a verb appear instead of an adjective. Next, there is a Subact of Ascription (T₃) with a dummy head “lo siguiente.” This dummy element does not contribute any semantic content when the expression is used as a strategic device by the Speaker, who is unwilling to find the appropriate word to express his/her attitude and to convey Emphasis. The combination of all these elements in a frame conveys an emphatic function.

As regards morphosyntactic structure, these expressions exhibit different word order from other syntactic structures, with inversion of the negative particle and the adjective, compared to a similar Spanish syntactic structure that is used to express contrast, as illustrated in (68).

(68)	esos	procesos	demuestran	que	la	contaminación
	DET.PL	process.M.PL	show.PRS.3.PL	that	DET.F.SG	pollution
	no	es	local	sino	global.	
	NEG	COP.3.SG	local	but	global	

‘And these processes show that pollution is not local but global’

In (68), the negative particle “no” appears before the verb “es.” These cases could be treated as the result of two Discourse Acts, where the Speaker first negates the ascription of a Lexical Property and subsequently produces a second Discourse Act, whereby he ascribes another Lexical Property, which is thus contrasted with the previous one. Indeed, the use of a pause between the two Discourse Acts is the formal realization of some kind of contrastive function, which is common in Spanish adversative expressions with *sino*. A simplified representation is given in (69), where A₁ stands for the first Discourse Act and A₂ for the contrastive one.

(69) la contaminación no es local sino global
 ‘pollution is not local but global’
 (M₁: [(A₁: (A₁)) (A₂: (A₂))_{Contrast}]M₁)

By contrast, what we find in the emphatic expressions explored in this article is a reordering of the adjective and the negative particle, as shown in (65).

This expression also exhibits a specific phonological pattern, with three intonational phrases (IP). Each of these intonational phrases is characterized by the syllables in small capitals in (70a), which represent a pitch movement. The hyphen indicates a pause between the two Subacts. In addition, the representation in (70b) shows that there is not a one-to-one relationship between Subacts and Intonational Phrases in this utterance (U). Thus, in the first Subact, there are two Intonational Phrases (IP₁, IP₂) with a rising and falling intonation pattern, represented by the operators *r* and *f*, respectively, while the second Subact corresponds to one Intonational Phrase (IP₃).

(70) a. la canción es maLÍsima NO – lo siGUIEnte
 b. PL: (U₁: [(*r* IP₁:/la kanθi’r’ on es ma’li:sima/) (*f* IP₂:/’no/) (*f* IP₃:/lo si’guiente/)]U)

Finally, as regards function, these expressions will be analysed as emphatic devices used to express the Speaker’s annoyance or enthusiasm and to exaggerate his/her feelings about the situation previously expressed, as already mentioned. Contrary to what might be expected (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008,

426),¹⁶ the emphatic function of these expressions is encoded both morphologically and phonologically by the internal properties of the Template.

3.4.2 Muy

Spanish *muy* is an intensifier acting within the RL, which, drawing on the analysis of similar cases by Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, 221) can be represented as shown in (71), where it modifies a property, expressing a higher degree of this property (however, see the discussion later in this section).

- (71) *muy* cervecera
 ‘very fond of beer’
 $(f_i: cervecera_A(f_i): [(f_j: muy_{Adv}(f_j))(f_i)])$

When used in combination with nouns, the Spanish intensifier *muy* forces this noun to be interpreted as a gradable property. For example, when followed by a proper noun, such as in (72), the Speaker picks up a salient property of an entity he assumes to be known to the Addressee and assigns a high degree of this property to someone else by using the entity’s name.

- (72) La cantante es *muy* Madonna
 ‘The singer is very Madonna’

This means that the entity is really not *identified* through one or a set of salient properties, as in the case of identificational constructions (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 193–4), represented and exemplified in (73).

- (73) La cantante es Madonna
 $R_1 \quad R_2$
 $(f_i: [(v_1)(v_1)](f_i))$
 (where both instances of v_1 and v_1 are of the same semantic category and co-indexed)

Example (73) shows that an entity is identified as another entity, that is, two Subacts of Reference are produced at the IL, although one and the same entity is referred at the RL, as represented in the variable’s co-indexation.

By contrast, by using *muy* before a proper name, the proper name is coerced into functioning as an adjective and a gradable property, so that the entity is actually *characterized* by means of this property. In other words, these cases are like predication frames used in classifying constructions (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 191–3, Keizer 2015, 299), as we are dealing with property assignment, and hence, with an Ascriptive rather than Referential Subact. An example of classifying construction and its representation is (74).

- (74) John is a teacher
 $R \quad T$
 $(f_i: [(v_1)(v_2)_U](f_i))$
 (where v_1 and v_2 are of the same semantic category)

This representation shows that the Speaker’s intention in these cases is to ascribe a property of one of the elements (“a teacher”) to the other (“John”). The symbol U stands for the function of the argument v_2 ,

¹⁶ Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, 426) point out that there seems to be a sort of trade-off between the morphosyntactic and the phonological levels, so that a distinction that is encoded at any of the two levels need not also be encoded at the other.

which, according to Keizer's (2015, 299) definition of the construction, must be Undergoer: "copular sentence which at the RL consists of an Undergoer argument and a non-verbal predicate designating the class to which the Undergoer belongs".

A similar representation can therefore be given in cases like (72). This is shown in (75).

- (75) La cantante es muy Madonna
 (C₁: [(T₁) (+id R₁: (T₂) (R₁))](C₁))
 (f₁: [(int f₂: MadonnaA (f₂)) (x₁: cantanteN (x₁)_U)] (f₁))
 Where (T₁) = 'Madonna'
 (T₂) = 'cantante'
 (R₁) = 'la cantante'

The representation in (75) shows that a Subact of Ascription (T₂) is produced whereby some of the properties of Madonna are ascribed to a referent (R₁: "la cantante"). The function that *muy* performs is therefore not modifying the head of a referential Subact. Instead, what the use of *muy* before the noun does is express the singer's high degree of resemblance to Madonna, by ascribing one or a few of Madonna's salient properties to "la cantante." This means that a Subact of Ascription is produced, which corresponds to a property (f₂) at the RL, as shown in the representation in (75).

We now turn to a different use of *muy* introduced earlier. In the stativizing construction "*muy de* + noun/pronoun/infinitive," *muy* intensifies an aspectual feature, namely, habituality, that is, the frequency of an action characterizing an individual and can therefore be also analysed at the RL, as shown in (76).

- (76) Este estudiante es muy de quejarse.
 'This student is always complaining'
 (C₁: [(T₁) (+id R₁: (T₂) (R₁))](C₁))
 (int hab f₁: [(f₂: quejarseA (f₂))] (x₁: studentN (x₁)_A) (f₁))
 Where (T₁) = 'quejarse'
 (T₂) = 'estudiante'
 (R₁) = 'este estudiante'

The representation in (76) shows that a verbal property is specified for an intensified (habitual) meaning (int hab). Notice that, even though these cases resemble the classificational construction described earlier, this time the semantic function of the argument restricted with the Lexical Property "estudiante" is Agent. At the ML the presence of an intensifying operator at the RL acting on a verbal property will trigger the insertion of the preposition "de" ("of").

It is only in tautological uses, such as *un lunes muy lunes* ("what a Monday!", Lit. "a Monday very Monday") that the function of *muy* can be better accounted for at the IL. In these cases, the Speaker uses repetition and intensification as an emphatic strategy, expressing his/her attitude and a high degree of prototypicality of the entity evoked. These cases partially resemble the use of *very* as a marker of exactness, illustrated in (77), where *very* is used "to indicate that the properties ascribed apply exactly." (Hengeveld and Keizer 2011, 39–40).

- (77) She must have mailed this the *very day* I left, he thought and wondered what it would say. (COCA)

Let us now discuss the status of *muy* as a lexical or grammatical unit. *Muy* is an intensifying device typically used with adjectives and with other adverbs, and it can be regarded as "the" Spanish intensifier *par excellence*. The origin of *muy* can be traced back to the Latin word *multum*, which was subjected to a sequence of changes leading to phonetic reduction and resulting in variant forms, *much* and *muít/mui/muy*. This erosion bears out the analysis of *muy* as a grammatical unit.

Further support for the analysis of *muy* as an operator is the fact that it cannot be used on its own, as compared with *mucho*, as can be seen in (78). In these examples, it is shown that *muy* cannot constitute the answer to a question on its own, as compared with Spanish adverb *mucho*.

- (78) a. En Córdoba hace *mucho* calor
‘In Cordoba it is very hot’

¿Hace calor en Córdoba?
‘Is it hot in Córdoba?’

Mucho.

‘very’

- b. El libro es *muy* interesante
‘The book is very interesting’

¿Es interesante el libro?
‘Is the book interesting?’

Mucho (**muy*)

‘very’

As shown in (78), Spanish *mucho* and *muy* are both translated into “very.” Spanish *mucho* is used as an intensifier before nouns (or after verbs) and can be used on its own. By contrast, *muy* is typically used before adjectives (and adverbs), but it does not allow independent use. Interestingly, though, they share a common origin, Latin *multum*, as already mentioned. These forms were in complementary distribution, *mucho* being used before vowels (e.g. *much onrrado*) and *muy* before consonants (e.g. *muít/muí/muy grande*). *Muy* was an unstressed form, which explains why it cannot be used in isolation in contexts where it is the expected form, as the only possible short answer to the question in (78b) is *mucho*, although *muy* would be used in the expanded answer (*muy interesante*).¹⁷

Another property distinguishing them is that *mucho* can be intensified, whereas this is not possible in the case of *muy*, as shown in (79):

- (79) Hacer *much-ísimo* calor en verano en Córdoba.
do.3SG very.INT heat in summer in Córdoba
‘It is very very hot in summer in Córdoba.’

*El libro es mucho muy interesante.

‘The book is very very interesting.’

Furthermore, as seen earlier, the use of *muy* has been expanded to precede the noun, so that the noun is coerced into a gradable meaning. This expansion is typical of grammaticalized units. Taken together, all these properties appear to indicate that, from the perspective of the theory of FDG, the best option is to include *muy* within the set of primitives and to represent it by means of an operator of the Lexical Property at the RL, as can be seen in (80), in a similar fashion to García Velasco’s (2013) analysis of “very” that was shown in (22) (Section 3.2.2).

- (80) *muy interesante*
RL: (int f_i : interesante (f_i))
ML: (Ap_i : (Gw_i: muy (Gw_i)) (Aw_i: interesante (Aw_i)) (Ap_i))

This representation shows that *muy* is a grammatical element at the RL and a Word at the ML.

¹⁷ <https://www.delcastellano.com/etimologia/mucho-muy/>.

3.4.3 Way

In Section 3.3.3, it was shown that *way* is frequently used in combination with *too*. These cases are even more frequent than the use with comparative adjectives, with 505 types (2949 tokens) in the COCA TV corpus search of the sequence *way too*.

Tentatively, and drawing on a similar case within FDG, this use could be analysed as a case of recursive embedding of lexical properties at the RL, illustrated and represented in (81) (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 231).

(81) *a very amazingly good book*

(x_i : [$(f_i$: book (f_i)) (x_i): [$(f_j$: good (f_j): [$(f_k$: amazing (f_k): [$(f_l$: very (f_l) (f_k)) (f_j)) (x_i)]])

In (81) the Lexical Property f_j (“good”) is modified by another Lexical Property, f_k (“amazing”), which is modified by the Lexical Property f_l (“very”), and the resulting complex Property (“very amazingly good”) is then used to characterize another entity type, an Individual x_i (“book”). The stacking of intensifiers exhibited by *way too* could be accounted for in a similar fashion at the RL, and it could be represented as shown in (82).

(82) *way too lazy work ethic*

(x_i : [$(f_i$: -work ethic- (f_i)) (x_i): [$(f_j$: lazy (f_j): [$(f_k$: too (f_k): [$(f_l$: way (f_l) (f_k)) (f_j)) (x_i)]])

Having said that, in a diachronic study on *way too*, Quentin (2020, 4) makes reference to its use in emphatic contexts in cases such as (83). He points out that ‘the construction semantically carries an overt judgment of excess over the argument it is applied to, and that it can most often be glossed by “excessively”’. This “negative quality of the intensification” is, however, not found, in Quentin’s view, when *way* is followed by an adjective.

(83) I think some of the comments here are *way too harsh*.

This use is not only increasingly productive but it is also expanding to other categories. Thus, in more recent formations, *way too* is followed by a noun, as shown in the examples in (84).

(84) know, I could never get into Berkeley. And California is just *way too Beach Boys* for me. You might like it. I’ll visit. Were [...]. (2005, Joan of Arcadia)

In (84), *way too Beach Boys* does not express a higher degree of “Beach Boyness” than *too Beach Boys*. In these cases, and when followed by *past*, *way* appears to be used for Emphasis, not only highlighting the excessive degree of the property denoted by the following adjective that is conveyed by the use of *too* but also expressing his/her attitude (annoyance/surprise/etc), as shown in (85).

(85) a. [...] Not supposed to be like that. Look, we are *way past* how things are supposed to be, Cass.
Look, I’m gon na (2015, 19-feb).
b. go for a walk. A walk? Look, me and Dallas are *way past* the ‘trying to impress each other’ stage.
You know, we can (2012, Suburgatory)

In both (85a) and (85b), the speakers express their strong feelings about limit situations. It is therefore close to the Spanish use of the expression “Adj *no, lo siguiente*”, when the specific preceding adjective is already intensified.

Therefore, in the case of *way*, two different cases can be distinguished. In cases like (86), it is used as an intensifier, expressing a higher degree of the Lexical Property that it modifies at the RL. Thus, in (86), the Speaker does not mean to say that his/her scar is just ugly, but extremely ugly.

(86) Yeah, I tried that. Got ugly, did it? *Way ugly*. Well, nothing good ever happens without a fight, right?
Ems, (2011, The lying game)

These cases can be represented as shown in (87), where *way* is an operator specifying a high degree of a Lexical Property at the RL.

- (87) *way ugly*
 RL: (int f_i : ugly_A (f_i))

In contrast, in (88), the Speaker uses *way too lazy* to emphasize his/her annoyance about the addressee's laziness, which is already qualified as "too lazy" at the RL.

- (88) you're not smart enough to learn Korean". You're *way too lazy*. You'll never amount to anything.
 (2008, Testees)

Above in (82), a representation was offered drawing on FDG's previous analyses of similar cases. The alternative representation in (89) is now proposed to capture the use of *way* at the IL, where *way* is followed by *too* to add Emphasis on a Subact.

- (89) *way too lazy*
 IL: (emph (T_1))
 RL: (f_i : [(Exc f_j : lazy_A (f_j))](f_i))

The representation in (89) shows that *way* is triggered at the IL by an Emphatic operator which acts on an Ascriptive Act evoking a property that is modified or specified for excessive degree at the RL.

As far as the status of *way* as a lexical or grammatical unit is concerned, it is probably not completely grammaticalized, but it is on its way to grammaticalization. In terms of meaning, *way* has undergone a process of semantic change following a common path of development for many intensifiers, moving from concrete to more abstract meaning, that is, from the denotation of physical distance (e.g. *sat way in the back row*) to that of degree in the second half of the 20th century. This type of semantic change, by which meaning is generalized and develops into more abstract or relational meaning, is typical in cases of grammaticalization and results in a widening of the domain of applicability, or an increase in type frequency.

A second criterion in favour of the analysis as a grammatical unit, syntactic-wise, is decategorialization or "downgrading." In the case of *way*, it is not so clear that any change of category has taken place, as the origin of the intensifying adverb is also an adverb, unless we take it to be something else.¹⁸ In any case, an increase in flexibility can be observed, since, as already mentioned in Section 3.3.3, *way* can be combined with words of different grammatical categories, which implies an expansion in use, a development that is usually associated with grammaticalization processes.

In terms of phonology, *way* has been regarded as a reduced form of *away*,¹⁹ which developed the sense "far," as in *way upriver*, so it also behaves like other cases of grammaticalization in this respect, since reduction is typically involved in grammaticalization processes.

From the perspective of FDG, bearing in mind that nothing remains of the original physical meaning of *way* in its use as an intensifier, this adverb could be best analysed as an operator that can function at two different levels depending on the specific combination, as shown earlier. However, the analysis of *way* as completely grammaticalized is not without problems, since it still shows some preferences for specific types of adjectives to be combined with, like adjectives inflected for comparative, for a limited number of prepositions (*over*, *past*, *back*) and for the adverb *too*. In addition, *way* can take Focus, as shown in (57), mentioned earlier and repeated here for convenience.

¹⁸ William Safire attributes this use of *way* to the popularity of the adjective *way-out*.

¹⁹ According to www.etymonline.com, *way* is a shortened form of *away* (adv.) that can be traced back to c. 1200. There are many expressions that include this form in modern and colloquial American English. For example, *way-out* 'far off'; *way back* 'a long time ago' (1887); *way off* 'quite wrong' (1892). The adverbial meaning 'very, extremely', attested by 1984 (as in *way cool*) might have arisen from any of the previous expressions. https://www.etymonline.com/word/way#etymonline_v_50055.

- (57) Take off your gun. – Come on, man, you’re *way bigger* than her. ‘Way’? – I’m just saying that those two deadweight bodies are ten percent heavier than that woman. (2014, Those Who Kill)

Therefore, we should be able to account for this intermediate status, which can be done by invoking Keizer’s (2007) cline of grammaticality, as shown in Table 1. Drawing on Keizer’s classification, *way* can be regarded among the set of secondary grammaticalized items, that is, as a lexical operator with an intensifying function. Therefore, as an intensifying device, an improved representation for *way* could be (90).

- (90) *way ugly*
 RL: (way f_i : ugly_A (f_i))

3.4.4 Proper

In Section 3.3.4, it was shown that *proper* is currently used in informal British English as an intensifying adverb in cases like (91).

- (91) who’s got Lucy? I du n no. Dan’s been acting *proper weird*, though. Weird how? Just like not himself. (2015, Prey)

Since in cases like (91) *proper* is used to denote high degree, they should be accounted for at the RL and represented as (92).

- (92) *proper weird*
 RL: (f_i : weird_A (f_i): [(f_j : proper_{Adv} (f_j)) (f_i)])

In some cases, however, *proper* will be analysed as an emphatic device triggered by the IL. Thus, Núñez-Pertejo and Palacios-Martínez (2018) find that *proper* is sometimes used in a sequence with other intensifiers, which they regard as resulting from the speaker’s intention to reinforce the message, that is, to express emphasis. They also observe that, when used in this way, *proper* always occurs in first position, as shown in (93), again showing a higher scope of application than the adverbs appearing closer to the adjective.

- (93) The teacher used to get *proper really badly* pissed off by Charlotte. (Núñez-Pertejo and Palacios-Martínez 2018, 136)

The example in (93) could be represented as shown in (94), where *proper* has been analysed as a modifier of an Ascriptive Subact at the IL conveying emphasis, while *really* is represented as an operator of the Lexical Property “bad” at the RL, in a similar fashion to *very*.

- (94) *proper really badly*
 IL: [(T_i) (T_j : [] (T_j): proper (T_j))]
 RL: (f_i : [(int f_j : bad_A (f_j))](f_i))

4 Conclusion

In this article, I have made a proposal for an analysis of recent intensifying resources in English and Spanish from the perspective of the theory of FDG. It has been shown that the various functional properties of the different expressions analysed can be easily accommodated in a model that distinguishes different levels of representation. As intensifying devices, *mu*y, *way* and *proper* have been represented as units

specifying or modifying the Lexical Property at the RL, where all semantic distinctions are accounted for. In addition, it has been proposed that some of these expressions can be used with an emphatic function, pertaining to the set of pragmatic distinctions that are represented at the IL. Specifically, *way* and *proper* have been analysed as units acting on an Ascriptive Subact. The Spanish phrase “*X no, lo siguiente*” has been analysed as an Emphatic device that Speakers use to convey annoyance or to express enthusiasm and is captured at the IL.

These expressions are also challenging in that they cannot be clearly classified into grammatical or lexical devices. In this case, FDG demonstrates that it can adequately treat these types of intermediate units with its proposed cline of grammaticality (Keizer 2007), where the different units explored can be accommodated. Thus, while *muy* is a well-established Spanish intensifier that can be regarded as fully grammaticalized, the more recent English adverb *way* is better accounted for as a lexical operator, that is, as an intermediate element falling half-way between the lexicon and the grammar. *Proper* has been analysed as a modifier of the Lexical Property expressing high degree and, when combined with other intensifiers, as a modifier of an Ascriptive Subact conveying Emphasis. Finally, the Spanish phrase “*X no, lo siguiente*” has been analysed in terms of a Partially Instantiated Frame, as these expressions include a variable and a set of fixed properties of their own, as regards their pragmatic function, and also in their morphosyntactic and phonological realizations.

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