

## The Intensifiers on Makasae and English Languages

António Constantino Soares<sup>1</sup>, Atánasio António Gusmão Freitas Belo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Instituto São João de Brito, Cassait, Liquica, Timor-Leste, <sup>2</sup>Universidade Dili, Timor-Leste  
Email: [antonio.soares.281170@gmail.com](mailto:antonio.soares.281170@gmail.com), [gusmaoata@gmail.com](mailto:gusmaoata@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** This research aimed to investigate the intensifiers on Makasae and English languages. This topic was selected in order to find out the similarities and differences of using intensifiers on both Makasae and English languages. Typologically, both Makasae and English languages have different word order syntactically. This research applied qualitative method which also involves annotating transcripts or written texts to highlight and explain the use of intensifiers and their effects on meaning. Direct Elicitation was used by providing the examples of sentences used, including the specific intensifiers. The other technique used is sentence completion tasks which aimed to complete incomplete sentences by filling in the gaps with appropriate intensifiers. After all the data collected, then they were analysed qualitatively by using deletion and reduction techniques.

**Keywords:** *Intensifiers, Makasae, English Languages*

### INTRODUCTION

Intensifiers are essential components of language that enhance the meaning of adjectives and adverbs, providing greater emphasis and clarity in communication. Words such as 'very,' 'extremely,' and 'absolutely' amplify the intensity of descriptions, allowing speakers and writers to convey emotions and nuances effectively. Recent studies highlight the increasing significance of intensifiers in both spoken and written discourse. For instance, according to Siyanova-Chanturia and Martinez (2021), intensifiers not only modify the degree of qualities but also play a crucial role in expressing speaker attitudes and emotions. Furthermore, research by Dörnyei and Murphey (2023) underscores the importance of mastering intensifiers for effective communication, especially in conveying subtleties in personal expression and persuasion. By understanding and utilizing intensifiers, individuals can enrich their language, making their communication more impactful and engaging.

Makasae language is a Trans New Guinea language spoken primarily in the territorial of Timor-Leste with its word order SOV. In Makasae language, intensifiers are used to enhance the meaning of adjectives and verbs, providing speakers with tools to express degrees of intensity and emotion effectively. These linguistic elements contribute to the richness of the language, allowing for nuanced communication in various contexts, from everyday communication to storytelling. Recent studies have begun to explore the specific forms and functions of intensifiers in Makasae, highlighting their importance in cultural expression and social interactions (Soares, 2022). Understanding how intensifiers operate within the Makasae language not only sheds light on its grammatical structure but it also offers insights into the ways speakers convey emphasis and emotional depth. As linguistic research continues to expand, the study of intensifiers in Makasae represents a fascinating area for further exploration and understanding of this vibrant language.

English intensifiers are lexical categories which serve to enhance the meaning of adjectives and adverbs, allowing speakers to convey stronger emotions and emphasize particular qualities (Quirk et al., 1985). By modifying the intensity of expressions, these words play a crucial role in effective communication, helping to create a more vivid and impactful message (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). Common examples of intensifiers include "very," "really," "extremely," and "absolutely." Each of these terms contributes to a nuanced understanding of the subject being discussed, enabling speakers and writers to articulate subtleties in tone and meaning (Biber et al., 1999). Mastering the use of



intensifiers can significantly enhance one's expressive capabilities in both spoken and written English, making communication more engaging and persuasive.

### **Literature Review**

The role of intensifiers in language has garnered significant scholarly attention, highlighting their impact across various forms of discourse. Siyanova-Chanturia and Martinez (2021) provide a comprehensive review of how intensifiers affect the meanings of adjectives and adverbs in both spoken and written contexts. Dörnyei and Murphey (2023) emphasize the importance of intensifiers for effective communication and personal expression. In a more culturally focused study, Soares (2022) examines the specific roles of intensifiers in the Makasae language, revealing their cultural significance. Hernandez and Chen (2022) explore the cross-cultural use of intensifiers, demonstrating their varying impacts on meaning and emphasis in different languages. Li and Thompson (2023) analyze the pragmatic functions of intensifiers in diverse communicative contexts, while Jiang and Kim (2022) track the evolution of intensifiers in contemporary English, shedding light on their implications for modern language use. In the realm of social media, Singh and Patel (2023) investigated the role of intensifiers, focusing on their influence on user engagement. Foster and Jones (2022) discuss the connection between intensifiers and emotional expression, underscoring their significance in conveying feelings. In academic contexts, Griffiths and Lee (2023) review the usage of intensifiers in academic writing and their effects on argumentation. Finally, Nguyen and Wong (2023) conduct a meta-analysis to evaluate how intensifiers impact persuasive communication across various settings. Together, these studies underscore the multifaceted nature of intensifiers and their crucial role in shaping meaning and interaction in language.

### **Method Used**

This is a qualitative research therefore qualitative descriptive method would be applied for data collection and data analysis. The following techniques are used for data collection. Annotation: This technique involves annotating transcripts or written texts to highlight and explain the use of intensifiers and their effects on meaning (Gee & Handford, 2012). Direct Elicitation: Participants will be asked to provide examples of language use, including specific intensifiers (Schäffner, 2004). Sentence Completion Tasks: Participants will complete incomplete sentences by filling in the gaps with appropriate intensifiers (Ritchie, 2009). Besides, the researcher is also the native speaker of (MK) that has ability to determine the intensifiers of (MK) syntactically.

### **Results and Discussion**

Based on the data found through elicitations, the analysis would be focused on two parts namely Makasae intensifiers and English intensifiers. The following are the analysis of Makasae intensifiers.

#### **1.1 The data of Intensifiers on Makasae Language**

1. *Ani sege boli.*  
*I very hungry.*  
*'I am very hungry'*

The sentence of Makasae language ‘Ani sege boli’ on data (1) above is an intensifier of Makasae Language. ‘sege’, ‘very’ is the intensifier which modifies the adjective ‘boli’, ‘hungry’ to indicate a strong degree of hunger.

2. *Pi lita isagugu.*  
*We very foolish*  
*‘we are very foolish’*

In Makasae language like the sentence on the data (2) above could be seen that ‘ala’ is an adv.P which functions as an intensifier which precedes the adjective ‘kole’, ‘tired’, showing that the subject ‘Gi’ can refer to S/he is not just tired but ‘very tired.’ The adverb ‘very’ strengthens adjective ‘tired’ to be stronger.

3. *Gi ala kole.*  
*S/he very tired*  
*‘s/he is very tired’*

The word ‘ala’ acts as an ‘intensifier’, which is a type of adverb that serves to increase the degree or intensity of the adjective it modifies. In this case, ‘ala’ intensifies the adjective ‘kole’ (tired), meaning the subject is not just tired but very tired.

4. *Era ne ma’ene.*  
*They very kind*  
*‘They are very kind’*

The word ‘ne’ on the Makasae language on the data (4) above acts as an intensifier, similar to ‘very’ in English. It enhances the meaning of the adjective ‘ma’ene’. ‘kind’, making the kindness stronger or more noticeable. As it has been discussed earlier, intensifiers like ‘ne’ modify adjectives to increase their intensity. In this case, ‘ne’ turns ‘kind’ into ‘very kind’, stressing that the kindness is particularly very strong.

5. *Ai pae si’aka.*  
*You very angry.*  
*‘You are very angry’*

The Intensifiers like "pae" on Makasae language on the data (5) above is used to emphasize the degree or extent of a quality. Here, ‘pae’ makes the adjective ‘angry’ becomes stronger, meaning the subject is not just mildly angry, but extremely angry or very angry. This sentence follows the same pattern as the earlier ones, where an intensifier ‘pae’ modifies the adjective ‘si’aka’ to give more emphasis to the emotional state of the subject.

6. *Era sege panarae.*  
*They very beautiful*  
*‘They are very beautiful’*

The word 'sege', on the data of sentence (6) ' is an intensifier. 'sege' modifies the adjective 'panarae', 'beautiful' to express a stronger sense of beauty. The overall structure is the same as the other sentences, emphasizing the subject's beauty in a very strong way.

## 1.2 Analysis of English Intensifiers

### 1. *I am really excited about the upcoming concert.*

The word 'really' on sentence (1) above is a key word in the sentence. It is functioning as an intensifier, which is used to heighten the emotional or descriptive strength of the adjective that follows. In this case, 'really' is amplifying the degree of excitement. It signifies that the speaker is not just mildly excited, but strongly or enthusiastically so. The use of 'really' contributes to an emotional intensification, reflecting a high level of anticipation and enthusiasm about the upcoming event.

### 2. *The movie was incredibly boring.*

The word "incredibly" on the sentence (2) above is functioning as an intensifier. It modifies the adjective 'boring' and serves to amplify the strength of the speaker's judgment. "Incredibly" increases the intensity of the negative evaluation, suggesting that the movie was not merely boring, but exceptionally or overwhelmingly boring. It communicates a strong, negative emotional reaction to the movie, reinforcing that the experience was deeply unenjoyable. The use of "incredibly" also adds a layer of subjective emotion to the statement, hinting that the speaker felt frustrated, disappointed, or disconnected during the viewing. Subjective Judgment:

### 3. *This pizza is so delicious.*

The word 'so' on sentence (3) above is an adverb of degree which functions as an intensifier that strengthens the adjective "delicious." It amplifies the level of satisfaction the speaker feels about the pizza, suggesting that it's not just somewhat delicious, but extremely or exceptionally delicious. 'So' also expresses high intensity, meaning the speaker's enjoyment of the pizza is not mild or average but stands out as remarkably positive. It serves to elevate the feeling and make the statement more emphatic, indicating a very strong emotional reaction.

### 4. *He is absolutely right.*

The adverb 'absolutely' on sentence (4) above is an intensifier which used to strengthen the adjective 'right.' It suggests that the speaker is not merely agreeing with the individual, but strongly affirming their correctness. "Absolutely" amplifies the speaker's confidence in the person's judgment or stance, implying that there is no doubt about their correctness. This contributes a high level of certainty and conviction to the statement. 5. I am totally exhausted.

### 5. *I am totally exhausted.*

The adverb 'totally' on sentence (5) above serves as an intensifier which used for amplifying the adjective "exhausted." It suggests that the level of exhaustion is complete or absolute the speaker is not just a little tired, but extremely or thoroughly worn out. 'Totally' communicates a high degree of intensity, making the exhaustion feel all-encompassing and significant.

## Conclusion

Based on the research results of intensifiers in both Makasae and English, it can be concluded that five words were found to function as intensifiers in Makasae. These are: 'sege,' 'lita,' 'ala,' 'ne,' and 'pae'. These words modify adjectives to express stronger degrees of feelings or qualities.

In contrast, there were around 13 intensifiers found in English, but the researcher selected only five intensifiers for this study. These are: 'really,' 'incredibly,' 'so,' 'absolutely,' and 'totally.'

Both Makasae and English intensifiers are used to express stronger degrees of adjectives, typically in the pre-adjective position. However, English offers a wider range of intensifiers to convey varying levels of emphasis, whereas Makasae tends to rely on a smaller set of intensifiers that generally align with the meaning of 'very' in English.

These similarities and differences highlight how intensification works across languages and cultures. English provides more flexibility and subtlety in how intensifiers are used, while Makasae uses a more limited but direct set of intensifiers.

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