Intensity, intensification and intensifying modification across languages

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Intensification may be defined as a linguistic strategy related to the expression of degree, since it scales upwards or downwards the properties referred to by a given entity (Bolinger 1972). Gradable elements exhibiting the feature of being measurable along a scale can be intensified: as a tendency, this is proper to adjectives, which typically allow manifestation of degree. However, intensification may be associated with all word classes, including nouns and verbs. Intensifiers are expressive in nature, strengthen the element with which they combine, can be regarded as markers of subjectivity (Athanasiadou 2007), since they encode the writer’s/speaker’s perspective, and serve different pragmatic and textual functions (Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi 1994).

The goal of this conference is to promote dialogue on this topic among international scholars from different perspectives and theoretical frameworks, with a special focus on morphological, semantic and pragmatic issues, diachronic developments and contrastive analysis.

We aim at investigating the use of strategies of intensification of different kinds and in different languages, by raising, in particular, the following questions:

- Which are the most widespread means of intensification across languages?
- How the different means of intensification can be classified?
- Which linguistic levels are involved in the expression of degree and to what extent (phonological, semantic, grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, cognitive, textual)?
- How do intensifiers develop and evolve from a diachronic point of view?
- On the basis of which parameters distinct word classes vary with respect to their being intensified?
- How is evaluative morphology related to pragmatic intensification?

Several invited lectures are scheduled: the complete list will be available in the conference website (see Program). The Conference will also hold a poster session for senior and junior researchers (including PhD students: see Call for poster session)

The two languages of the conference are English and German. The publication of the conference proceedings is planned.
Local organizing Committee
Maria Napoli
Miriam Ravetto

Scientific Committee
Hardarik Blühdorn (IDS Mannheim), Marcella Costa (University of Turin), Eystein Dahl (University of Tromsø), Marina Foschi Albert (University of Pisa), Nicola Grandi (University of Bologna), Giovanna Marotta (University of Pisa), Davide Ricca (University of Turin)

Selected Bibliography