Puerto Rican Intensifiers: *Bien*/*Muy* Variables

Esther L. Brown and Mayra Cortés-Torres
University of Colorado Boulder and Pima Community College

1. Introduction

The diachronic development and synchronic variation of intensifiers has garnered much attention in linguistic analyses generally (Paradis 2000; Lorenz 2002; Ito & Tagliamonte 2003; Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005; Tagliamonte 2008) and in Spanish specifically (Arjona 1990; Delbecque 1994; Bosque 1999; Sedano 2002-2004, 2005; Serradilla Castaño 2006). Results stemming from such research have implications for theories of grammaticalization, dialectology, and sociolinguistics. Previous work has made evident that cross-linguistically, intensifiers exhibit a high degree of variation and have a high capacity for change (Tagliamonte 2008:362). The inherent, highly variable nature of this grammatical class of words thus makes variationist analyses and the incorporation of sociolinguistic variables ideal in the study of intensifiers.

The most frequent intensifiers of predicate and attribute adjectives in a corpus of spontaneous, spoken Puerto Rican Spanish (Cortés-Torres 2005) are *bien* 'good' and *muy* 'very'. These intensifiers exhibit much variation and are not in complementary distribution, as can be seen in examples 1 and 2.

(1) Pasa que está *bien bonita* la casa, la tiene *bien bonita*… (Interview 1, page 5, speaker 1)
(2) Sí, están *muy bellos* los dos. (Interview 2, page 30, speaker 2)

Variation is evident, as well, within the speech of individuals (example 3) in which a single speaker may use both *bien* and *muy* to modify adjectives. Further, the intensifiers vary with regard to one and the same adjective, as seen in examples 4 and 5.

(3) Además tuvimos un vuelo, el vuelo que tuvimos para acá fue *muy, muy tranquilo*, un vuelo *bien tranquilo*. (Interview 12, page 9, speaker E)
(4) ¿El dueño? Esa casa es *bien grande* también. (Interview 18, page 15, speaker 4)
(5) Eso como que es *muy grande* pa' ti. (Interview 18, page 13, speaker 4)

Despite a wealth of previous research on adverbial intensification, however, to date no large-scale empirical analyses exist for Spanish and there is a paucity of research on intensifier usage in Puerto Rican Spanish. This current work will examine the linguistic and social factors that predict the variation of *bien* and *muy* as intensifiers using quantitative, variationist methodologies in order to determine rates of use and potential pathways of change. We first present a selective summary of previous research on Spanish intensifier usage which informs our hypotheses. Section 3 presents a description of our data and methods, we present our results in Section 4, and we end the work with a brief conclusion.

2. Background

Researchers have examined the variable use of *bien* and *muy* in other varieties of Spanish to which our results might be compared. Arjona (1990), for instance, examined the use of *muy* and *bien* in cases extracted from the *Habla popular de México*. This author noted that *bien* as an intensifier is used more frequently by women than men, and is preferred by younger speakers (18-34 years old) than older members of the speech community. Sedano (2002-04) looked at an oral corpus of Spanish spoken in

Caracas from 1987 and noted that *bien* is used for expressiveness in colloquial speech, and *bien* usage is favored with affirmative polarity. Serradilla Castaño (2006) analyzed oral and written corpora of Spanish from Latin America and Spain and found *bien* to be used more frequently in Latin America compared to Peninsular varieties. Additionally, this author notes that *bien* is more common in oral registers (as opposed to written), in the speech of women, by the lower-middle class, and with affirmative modality.

Thus, linguistic analyses of the Spanish data accord with intensifier usage in other languages, such as English for example, where it has been noted that intensifier use is "associated with colloquial and nonstandard usage" (Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005:284). Further, Ito & Tagliamonte (2003:260) note that the use of intensifiers is most characteristic of women and "that it is the women who will lead when intensifiers change".

Clearly language external factors are implicated in the variation and change of intensifiers. As noted by many (e.g.; Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005; Tagliamonte 2008), however, language internal forces are also at work in the development of these adverbial intensifiers. Indeed the grammaticalization pathway is often quite evident. The intensifiers used in discourse have undergone a step-by-step process of delexicalization in which the original meaning of the word becomes lost and supplanted (partially/completely) by a meaning of intensification. As a word becomes more and more bleached of its original semantic meaning, it can be used in more contexts, and consequently also becomes more frequent (Tagliamonte & Roberts 2005).

In the case of *bien,* Arjona (1990) and Serradilla Castaño (2006) highlight the development from a positive modal meaning (as illustrated in example 6), to an intensifier adjective (as illustrated in example 7).

(6) Y es todo *bien organizado…* (Interview 4, page 3, Speaker E)
(7) Ni aunque fuera *bien caro* ni nada (Interview 17, page 16, Speaker 29)

According to Serradilla Castaño (2006:222), with the use of *bien* as an intensifier over *muy,* ¨Hablamos de mayor expresividad y este valor nos puede hacer pensar en si el uso de *bien* nos dirige en algún momento al valor positivo, es decir si conserva aún algo de su valor modal positivo, frente al uso de *muy*. La respuesta a la vista de los datos es NO. Y es NO porque podemos ver cómo acompaña a adjetivos tanto con valor positivo como negativo: *bien bonito / bien feo; bien alegre / bien triste; bien pequeño / bien grande* […]¨. We test this conclusion in the Puerto Rican data by examining the frequency of use of *bien* with positive and negative adjectives and come to a different conclusion. We will return to this point because it suggests evidence of retention of the positive modal meaning in this variety of Spanish.

3. Data and Methods

In the analysis of intensifier variation in Puerto Rico we use a corpus of approximately 370,000 words of spontaneous, recorded conversations (Cortés-Torres 2005) between family members and friends. The data represent roughly twenty-seven hours of recordings taken from eighteen separate interviews with thirty native speakers from Cayey, Caguas, and San Juan.

We employ a more functionally based approach to circumscribe the variable context as opposed to a form based approach. All tokens of *bien* and *muy* used with an adjective are extracted from the interviews totaling 932 cases of intensified adjectives for analysis.[1] There were 138 cases of *tan* that were excluded from this present analysis because this intensifier did not have the same functional role in discourse, and hence was not truly in variation with *bien* and *muy*. Following Tagliamonte (2008), who noted that negative contexts do not always express the same meaning, we also excluded all thirteen cases of negative polarity (*No es tan feo* vs. *No es bien feo*).

In order to determine what linguistic variables might favor the use of one intensifier over the other, we built upon previous research to select the linguistic variables coded for analysis. Unlike previous research on Spanish intensifiers, however, we introduce statistical analyses using Varbrul

---

[1] Tagliamonte (2008) coded her data differently: she included all adjectives that were capable of being intensified. We only included for analysis intensified adjectives.

(Sankoff, Tagliamonte & Smith 2005) in order to ascertain any significant effect of any independent factor group while simultaneously controlling for potential effects of other factors considered in the analysis. We coded for the following linguistic variables.

    a.   Following Serradilla Castaño (2006) we coded each adjective for 'adjective quality': positive or negative. The positive or negative connotation for each adjective was determined from the discourse context and based upon the native speaker intuition of one of the authors (CT). If *bien* maintained some positive modal meaning (and was not entirely semantically bleached), we might expect it to be used less frequently (be disfavored) with negative adjectives.

    b.   Another feature of the adjective considered in this analysis was the semantic category. Each adjective was classified according to 'adjective type' (age, color, dimension, human propensity, physical property, speed, value).

    c.   Usage-based approaches to the study of language variation (e.g.; Bybee 2010) have demonstrated that variation reflects usage-patterns. We hypothesized that frequency of collocational patterns elsewhere in the language (e.g.; verb + *bien,* verb + *muy*) might be detected via significant effects stemming from the verb. That is, the frequent use of expressions such as "*Está bien*" might thus favor *bien* over *muy* in intensifier constructions with the verb *estar*. For this reason, we code each token for the main verb; *ser, estar,* other, and null.

    d.   Additionally, we explored potential effects of the NP on the intensifier variation. We code each token according to the animacy of the NP being described; animate, inanimate.

    e.   We test whether the number of the NP has an effect on the variation. We code each token for whether the NP was singular or plural.

    f.   We code each token for whether surface realization of the NP has an effect on the variation. Thus each token is coded for whether the NP is overt or null.

Tagliamonte (2008:362) has noted that "the use of intensifiers has long had sociolinguistic correlates". For this reason, in addition to the previous linguistic variables, we also coded each of the 932 cases of *bien* and *muy* according to extralinguistic variables based upon the speaker. Speaker variables we considered for analysis are speaker gender and age.

    g.   As was outlined above, intensifier usage has long been associated with female speech[2]. Thus, in order to determine if speaker sex has a significant effect on the Puerto Rican intensifier variation, we code each token as to whether it was uttered by a male or a female.

    h.   Intensifiers are also quick to change. Thus, in order to determine if there is any indication of a change in progress, we divided our group of speakers according to age. We divided the speakers in age groups representing different stages of life. This method, known as *emic*, classifies speakers according to shared time experiences that might correlate with life states or their history (Eckert 1997:155). Speakers were divided into groups *a* (aged 20-29), group *b* (aged 30-59), and group *c* (aged 60 and above).

The distribution of speakers by age and speaker sex can be seen in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Number of speakers by age and gender

Age	Men	Women	Total
A: 20-29	5	4	9
B: 30-59	4	7	11
C: 60+	5	5	10
Total	14	16	30

---

[2] For instance, Tagliamonte (2003) quotes Jespersen's (1922) observation that "The fondness of women for hyperbole will very often lead the fashion with regard to adverbs of intensity".

4. Results and Discussion

The quantitative analysis of the tokens of the two most frequent intensifiers (*bien, muy*) in the Puerto Rican Spanish corpus reveal some interesting and significant trends. In terms of frequency of use, when an adjective is accompanied by an intensifier in informal, conversational Puerto Rican Spanish, the intensifier *bien* far outweighs *muy* in frequency of use. That is, when an adjective is intensified in this register and variety of Spanish, *bien* is the form overwhelmingly preferred, making up 86% of the intensified cases. This is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency of *bien* and *muy* as intensifiers in Puerto Rican discourse

Bien		Muy		Total
%	N	%	N	
86	810	13	122	932

In order to determine if this variety accords with other varieties of Spanish studied such as Venezuelan (Sedano 2002-2004) or Mexican (Arjona 1990), we examined frequencies of use for each of the extralinguistic variables we considered (age, gender). As can be seen in Table 3 which summarizes the data distribution according to speaker sex, both males and females use *bien* more frequently than *muy*. However, women choose the intensifier *bien* significantly (p = .04, X^2 = 4.433767) more often than men at a rate of 88%.

Table 3: % *bien* use by speaker sex

Gender	% bien	% muy	Total N
Female	88	11	622
Male	83	16	310

With regard to age, another significant pattern is seen to emerge from the quantitative analyses. As can be observed in Table 4, the youngest group of speakers has the highest percent use of *bien* as an intensifier out of the 30 speakers analyzed. In contrast, the speakers in the middle aged group (30-59), use *bien* at a rate of 85%, significantly less than the younger speakers (p = .02, X^2 = 5.745353). The oldest group of speakers is seen to use *bien* as an intensifier the least frequently (82%), although this is not significantly less than the middle group.

Table 4: % *bien* use by speaker age

Age	% bien	% muy	Total N
A: 20-29	91	8	309
B: 30-59	85	14	456
C: 60+	82	17	167

These usage patterns reflected in the extralinguistic variables sex and age are in line with previous research on intensifier use generally (e.g.; Tagliamonte 2008) and for Spanish specifically (e.g.; Sedano 2005; Serradilla Castaño 2006). Unlike previous analyses of Spanish, we next submit our data to a variable rule analysis using Varbrul. This sociolinguistic tool enables us to determine the significance (p < .05) of the factor groups (outlined in section 3 above), as well as the magnitude of effect (as determined by range) of each of the groups of factors. Further, Varbrul identifies the individual effect of factors within groups as to whether they favor (factor weights >.50) the dependent variable (in this case use of *bien*) or disfavor *bien* usage (factor weights <.50). The results of the variable rule analysis are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Factors conditioning *bien* usage in Puerto Rican discourse

	% *bien*	Factor Weight	% data
Input	.879		
Total	932		
Age/Gender			
Females 20-29	92	.65	17
Males 20-29	90	.56	15
Females 30-59	*87*	*.51*	*38*
Females 60+	86	.45	9
Males 30-59	77	.34	10
Males 60+	77	.30	7
	Range	*35*	
Adjective Quality			
Positive	88	.55	66
Negative	83	.41	33
	Range	*14*	

Log likelihood = 347.633, X^2 per cell = 1.0370

The factor group that most significantly constrains intensifier variation in this variety of Spanish is the group that crosstabulates the extralinguistic variables speaker sex and age. By combining the extralinguistic variables into one group, a more nuanced analysis is possible of the data. That is, while it is true that averaged across the data, women use *bien* more than men (Table 3), and the younger speakers more than older (Table 4), the stratification of data evidenced in Table 5 reveals a more precise picture. That is, within each age group, females consistently use *bien* more than *muy*, and further, for both males and females, *bien* usage increases in the younger generation. The youngest females (aged 20-29) are the speakers who most favor *bien* usage with a factor weight of .65 and with a very high percent use (92%). However, the youngest males (aged 20-29) also favor *bien* over *muy* with a factor weight of .56 and a high percent use (90%). The speakers with the lowest rate of *bien* use (77%) and who most disfavor *bien* as an intensifier are the men (aged 30-59) with a factor weight of .34, and the men aged 60 and older who strongly disfavor *bien* usage with a factor weight of .30.

The only linguistic factor group found to significantly constrain the use of *bien* in Puerto Rico is the adjective quality. If the adjective expresses a positive value (is used with a positive connotation), *bien* is favored (88%) with a factor weight of .55. Conversely, when the adjective expresses a negative value, *bien* use is less frequent (83%) and it is disfavored as an intensifier (.41). Overall in the community, therefore, it is the case that the intensification of a positive adjective favors *bien*, suggesting that there is at least some retention of the positive modal value of the original semantic content of the word.

However, an interesting pattern is evident when we examine percent *bien* use with positive adjective (the dark bars in Figure 1) and negative adjectives (the light bars in Figure 1) in each of the six groups divided by age (a: 20-29, b:30-59, c:60+) and speaker sex. All groups follow the pattern of favoring *bien* with positive adjectives with the exception of the youngest males. This group (Males-a), is the only group of speakers to use *bien* more with a negative adjective than a positive one. In fact, although women and men in the youngest age cohort have very similar overall percent use of *bien* (92%, 90% respectively) as seen in Table 5, the details seen in Figure 1 (Females-a vs. Males-a) suggest that their overall patterns of use may, in fact, be divergent.
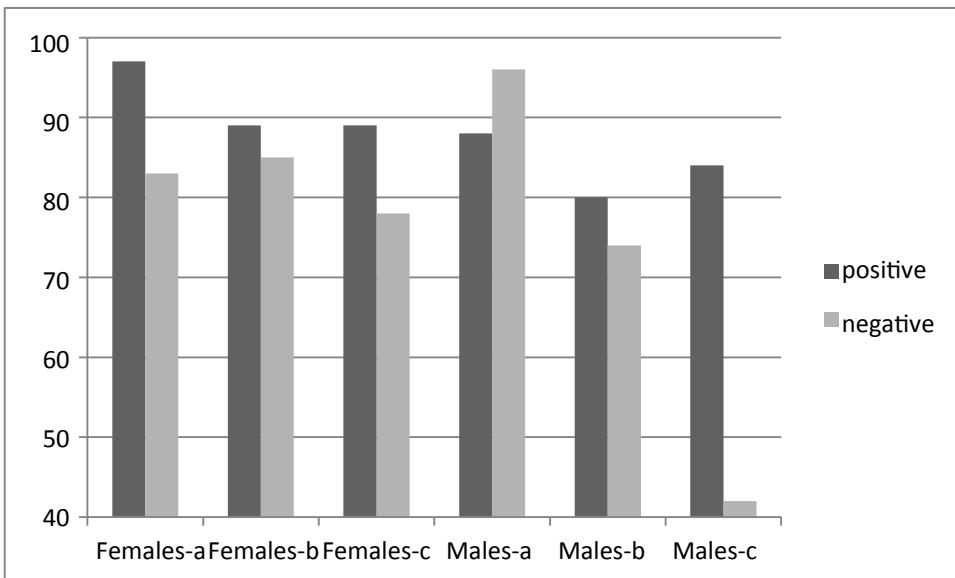
Figure 1: % *bien* usage with positive (*bonito, bueno*) and negative (*feo, malo*) adjectives in each speaker group by sex and age.

The young women's usage resembles the overall pattern in this community of preference for *bien* over *muy* for positive adjectives. The young men's usage, however, is the only group to have more *bien* usage for negative adjectives than positive out of the 6 groups of gender/age speakers we examine. Given male and female usage, we further investigated adjective characteristics. We created an adjective distinction that was based upon whether the adjective being intensified either invariably has a positive or negative connation (it's only used in a positive or negative sense) or whether the adjective varies in its positive or negative qualities (it can be used with both meanings). Examples of invariable adjectives can be found in (8) and (9). In our corpus, both of these adjectives consistently express either a positive (*bonito*) or a negative (*feo*) quality.

(8) Las avenidas están *bien bonitas* ahora… (Interview 3, page 8, Speaker 1)
(9) …porque 'residencial' sonaba *muy feo*…(Interview 1, page 9, Speaker 1)

Nevertheless, other adjectives can be described as *variably* expressing a positive or a negative quality. For instance, *grande* in examples (10) and (11) illustrate this point. In (10), *grande* expresses a positive quality, whereas in (11), the same adjective is used with a negative focus.

(10) Tiene una casa bien linda, *bien grande*. (Interview 17, page 10, speaker 4)
(11) un bocio es la, la glándula de la tiroide *bien grande*…(Interview 4, page 62, speaker 5)

We propose that an adjective that only variably expresses positive or negative qualities might exert a distinct degree of influence over the intensifier selection (*bien* vs. *muy*), and we develop a methodology to test this. In order to classify adjectives as either variable or invariable for this analysis, and, in order to obtain a representative sample of adjective uses, we limit our data to tokens that occur three or more times in the corpus. The variable adjectives used with both a positive and a negative connotation (e.g.; *grande, brutal, chiquito, diferente,* etc.) total 201 examples (15 types). The invariable adjectives, those always expressing either a positive or a negative value in our corpus (e.g.; *bonito, difícil, feo, lindo, malo,* etc.) total 515 examples (47 types). An analysis of *bien* usage for these tokens is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: % *bien* use with variable and invariable adjectives with negative and positive connotation in overall speech community

Adjectives	Positive	Negative	
Variable	97 (N=48) (*grande*)	73 (N = 103) (*grande*)	p = 0.0000, X^2 = 21.48153
Invariable	87 (N=406) (*bonito*)	89 (N=100) (*feo*)	n.s.

In Table 6, it is noteworthy that the linguistic factor group found to be significant overall in the community for constraining *bien/muy* variation in the Varbul analysis (Adjective quality: positive/negative) is neutralized for invariable adjectives (those adjectives that are always either positive or negative). There is no significant difference in rates of *bien* use between positive and negative adjectives when they invariably express such a quality. For these invariable adjectives, *bien* seems to operate as simply an intensifier, similar to the assertion made by Serradilla Castaño (2006). However, retention of a positive modal value of *bien* is very clear in contexts in which an adjective is variable (used with both positive or negative connotations). When speakers intensify a variable adjective with a positive connotation (Example 10), *bien* usage is almost categorical (97%). Conversely, when used with a negative connotation, *bien* usage falls to just 73%.

These variables adjectives seem to suggest that what Serradilla Castaño (2006) found to be true for varieties in her analysis does not hold in Puerto Rico. For invariable adjectives, *bien* is used as an intensifier. But the retention of positive modal meaning is apparent with variable adjectives where *bien* is preferentially used to enhance a positive semantic reading, and disfavored in cases with an intended negative semantic interpretation.

This analysis of variable and invariable adjectives also enables us to detect a significant difference in *bien* usage among the youngest speakers of the community. Recall that men and women generally have significantly different rates of use of the intensifier *bien* (Table 3). However in the youngest generation considered in this analysis, rates of *bien* usage are almost identical (92%, 90%), suggesting that perhaps patterns of use are also similar. Yet the data summarized in Figure 1 illustrates one way in which usage patterns diverge between the genders – men favoring *bien* with negative adjectives.

If we contrast *bien* usage with variable adjectives across different groups within our data set, it is clear that patterns of use between men and women are, indeed, different. This is seen summarized in Figure 2. In the community overall, and in the speech of the youngest females (age group A: 20-29), with variable adjectives *bien* use is more frequent with the positive adjectives, reflecting, perhaps, the retention of positive modal meaning.
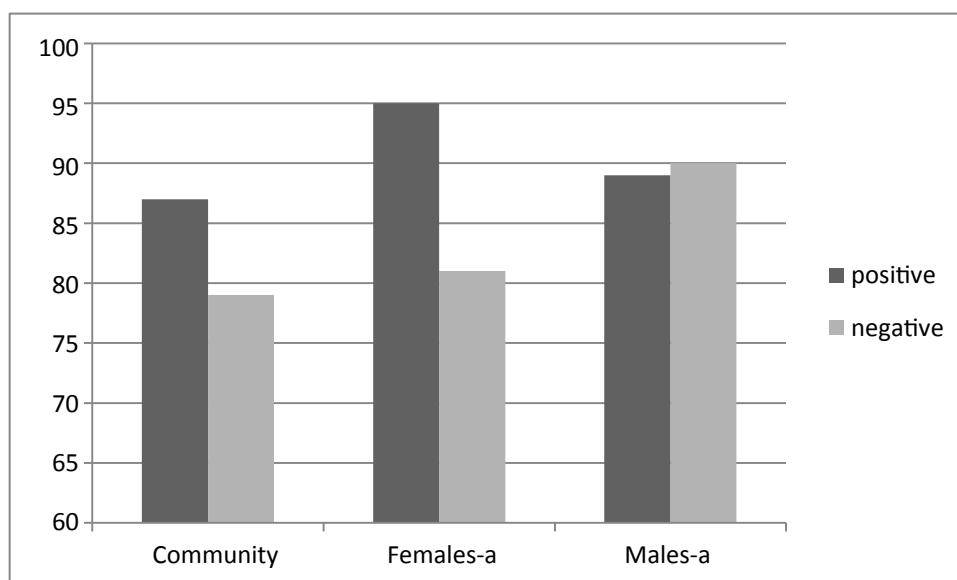

Figure 2: % *bien* usage for the data overall, young women, and young men with variable adjectives with positive and negative connotations

In the speech of the youngest men, however, there is virtually no difference in rate of *bien* usage with adjectives expressing either a positive or a negative quality. It seems, therefore, that for the youngest men in this community, *bien* is highly frequent and maintains none of the more nuanced distribution between positive and negative adjectives indicative of retention of positive meaning attributed to *bien*. This may be a natural result of the rapid increase in frequency of use of *bien* in this age cohort in which the positive semantic meaning is lost. Additionally, given that *bien* usage has been characteristic of female speech in the three age groups we analyze, it is possible such patterns of use differentiate male and female speech within this community (Eckert 2012).

5. Conclusion

This current study of variation between *bien* and *muy* in Puerto Rican Spanish addresses a lack of research regarding intensifier variation in Puerto Rico. The results of the quantitative analyses reveal that in informal, spontaneous, conversational Spanish, use of *bien* (86%) as an intensifier for adjectives far outweighs use of *muy* (13%) in frequency in this variety. In each generation, women use *bien* (88%) more than men (83%). The youngest generation (both men and women) have a higher frequency of use (91%) of *bien* than the older generations (85%, 82%). Results of variable rule analyses using Varbrul reveal the factors conditioning the variation to be age, speaker sex, and adjective quality (either positive or negative).

Viewing this data as an apparent time study, the biggest change in intensifier use is in the men of the youngest generation whose use of *bien* equals that of women. However, a detailed analysis of the adjectives suggests that men do not use *bien* in the same way as women. Their use of *bien* with negative adjectives outweighs their use with positive, and furthermore, with variable adjectives males' *bien* usage reflects no retention of the positive modal meaning of the intensifier. Speakers might use linguistic variables, either consciously or not, to construct identities in local social contexts (Dodsworth 2005; Eckert 2012). Even though both genders in the youngest age group are using *bien* as an intensifier at nearly identical rates, they are not doing so in the same way.

It has been noted that the rate at which intensifiers change is among the "most rapid" of linguistic elements (Murphy 2010:111) and this can perhaps be appreciated with these data, particularly in male speech. The degree of change with regard to rate of use of *bien* is marked between the oldest generation in this data set (aged 60+) and the youngest (aged 20-29), as can be appreciated in Figure 1. Given the rate at which these linguistic elements are said to change, sociolinguistic methodology and variationist analyses of these linguistic elements seem particularly well suited to afford us insights into pathways of change. In this case, the original positive modal meaning of *bien* has been sufficiently bleached to allow the adverb to take on (frequent) uses as an intensifier. Results of the variable rule analysis suggest that some aspects of the positive value are retained when used as an intensifier, however, in that *bien* usage is favored with adjectives expressing a positive value, and disfavored when combined with adjectives expressing a negative value.

Yet the nuanced analysis conducted on not just semantic groupings of adjectives (ie; positive vs. negative), but also on the degree of meaning variability expressed by the adjective (those variably vs. invariably expressing positive/negative attributes) illustrates the multifaceted and complex nature of language use patterns. That is, this work identifies discourse contexts in which the effects of positive meaning retention are neutralized; instances in which *bien* intensifies an adjective that invariably expressed a positive or negative value. The lack of significant difference for *bien* usage with invariable types of adjectives (Table 6) suggests *bien* functions solely as an intensifier in these cases. Conversely, when used with adjectives that variably express one meaning or another (*ie*; used with both positive and negative value), the large discrepancy in rates of *bien* usage suggests this is a context in which the original lexical meaning of the adverb is enhanced or is, at least, most apparent. The important role of variation at the discourse level may prove instructive for other processes of variation and change.

A limitation of this current project is the dependence upon apparent time data, as opposed to data that would allow a real time analysis. With additional diachronic data, or future research conducted with a time lag, we might be able to confirm the trend suggested with the apparent time study. This study also only considers intensified adjectives and not all adjectives capable of being intensified. A study of the latter type would be able to address whether there is also an overall rise not just in selection of one intensifier over another, but in relative frequency, as well. This current project has attempted to consider determinative linguistic and extralinguistic variables implicated in intensifier

variation. We have not included an exhaustive list of the internal and external factors that might play a role in this variation. Future analysis of this and other varieties of Spanish may reveal additional important variables not noted here, and we hope to encourage such work with this project.

References

Arjona, Marina. 1990. El adverbio *muy* y otros intensificadores en el habla popular de México. *Anuario de Letras*, 28, 75-96.

Bosque, Ignacio. 1999. El sintagma adjetival. Modificadores y complementos del adjetivo, adverbio y participio. In Ignacio Bosque y Violeta Demonte (eds.), Vol 1, pp. 217-310.

Bybee, Joan. 2010. *Language, Usage, and Cognition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cortés-Torres, Mayra E. 2005. *La perífrasis estar + -ndo en el español puertorriqueño: variación dialectal o contacto lingüístico?* PhD dissertation. University of New Mexico.

Delbecque, Nicole. 1994. Las funciones de *así*, *bien* y *mal*. *Revista Española de Lingüística*, 24/2, 435-466.

Dodsworth, Robin M. 2005. *Linguistic variation and sociological consciousness*. PhD dissertation. The Ohio State University.

Eckert, Penelope. 1997. Age as a sociolinguistic variable, in*: The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, Coulmas, Florian, ed., Oxford, 151-167.

----. 2012. Three Waves of Variation Study: The Emergence of Meaning in the Study of Sociolinguistic Variation. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 41, 87-100.

Ito, Rika & Sali Tagliamonte. 2003. *Well* weird, *right* dodgy, *very* strange, *really* cool: Layering and recycling in English intensifiers. *Language in Society* 32, 257-279.

Jespersen, Otto. 1922. *Language: Its Nature, Development, and Origin*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Lorenz, Gunter. 2002. *Really worthwhile* or *not really significant*? A corpus-based approach to the delexicalization and grammaticalization of intensifiers in Modern English. In Ilse Wischer & Gabriele Diewald (eds.), *New reflections on grammaticalization*, 143–61.

Murphy, Bróna. 2010. *Corpus and Sociolinguistics: Investigating Age and Gender in Female Talk.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Paradis, Carita. 2000. *It's well weird*. Degree modifiers of adjectives revisited: The nineties. In Kirk (ed.), 147–60. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Sankoff, David, Sali Tagliamonte, & Eric Smith. 2005. Goldvarb X. A variable rule application for Mac and Windows. Department of Linguistics, University of Toronto.

Sedano, Mercedes. 2002-2004. Este tema es *muy/bien interesante.* Archivo de filología aragonesa 59-60. 859-73.

Sedano, Mercedes. 2005. *muy/bien interesante, muy/bien lejos*: Usos y creencias. Homenaje a José Joaquín Montes Giraldo, 252-75. Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo.

Serradilla Castaño, Ana. 2006. *Bien* + adjetivo como perífrasis de superlativo en español. Particularidades semánticas y sintácticas. Verba 33. 215-33.

Tagliamonte, Sali. 2008. So Different and Pretty Cool! Recycling Intensifiers in Toronto, Canada. *English Language and Linguistics* 12.2, 361-394.

Tagliamonte, Sali, and Chris Roberts. 2005. So weird; So cool; So innovative: The use of intensifiers in the television series Friends. *American Speech* 80.3, 280-300.

Selected Proceedings of the 6th Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics

edited by Ana M. Carvalho and Sara Beaudrie

Web access and citation information

This entire proceedings can also be viewed on the web at www.lingref.com. Each paper has a unique document # which can be added to citations to facilitate access. The document # should not replace the full citation.

This paper can be cited as:

Brown, Esther L. and Mayra Cortés-Torres. 2013. Puerto Rican Intensifiers: *Bien/Muy* Variables. In *Selected Proceedings of the 6th Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics*, ed. Ana M. Carvalho and Sara Beaudrie, 11-19. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. www.lingref.com, document #2852.