

# The Use of Maximizers and Semantic Prosodic Awareness of Tertiary Level Turkish EFL Learners

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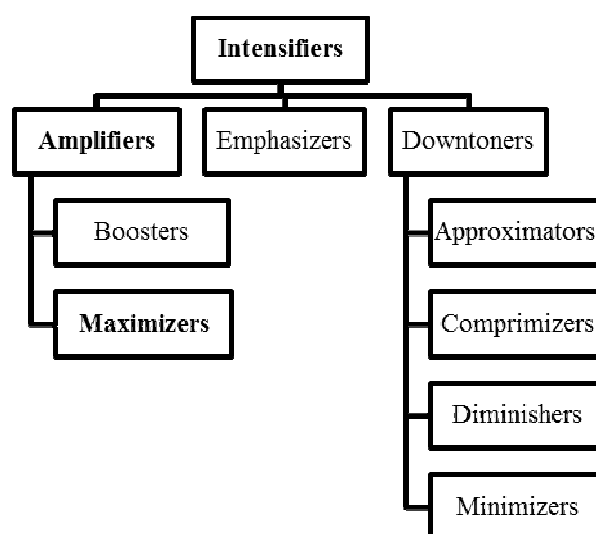
## Abstract

Intensifiers in English have potential to be a challenge for tertiary level EFL learners especially at times if or when these intensifiers have synonymous meanings and the EFL learners have mixed attitudes towards their prosodic features in use. Having knowledge towards the semantic prosodic nature of the English maximizers is important since, according to Sinclair (1996, p. 86), “the initial choice of SP is the functional choice which links meaning to purpose; all subsequent choices within the lexical item relate back to the prosody”. Thus, it becomes inevitable that the selection of the right lexical items to make meaningful sentences is what is of vital importance for the EFL and ESL learners alike and failure to consider the prosodic nature of these items may result in communication breaks. The aim of this study is to compare the intensifiers such as “absolutely, completely, entirely, fully, perfectly, totally and utterly” in terms of their semantic prosodic nature with IR adjectives in native and non-native corpora. Although these adverbials are generally regarded as near-synonym words, there are some semantic minor differences among their usages in context. Each of the lexemes creates different collocations positively, negatively and neutrally, and they are associated with various levels of subjectivity. The study focused on these variations, differences and restrictions as well as the collocational ranges of the intensifiers based on two learner corpora named as KTUCALE (Karadeniz Technical University Corpus of Academic Learner English) and BAWE (British Academic Written English), which contain academic essays in nature. In the study, a corpus-based methodology was used, and the use of adverbials in academic essays of university students in KTUCALE was compared to those of native speakers with reference to BAWE and their usage patterns were investigated in terms of semantic prosodic awareness. The findings indicated significant overuses and underuses in the number of the adverbials in KTUCALE and that tertiary level Turkish EFL learners seemed to have produced a limited number of intensifiers with less variety and complexity.

**Keywords:** KTUCALE, BAWE, Collocation, Semantic prosody, Maximizers, Learner corpus.

## 1. Introduction

In this introduction part, the classification of adverbs and their syntactic and semantic functions were briefly explained through the target adverbs within the framework of the current research. Next, adverbs of degree were characterised according to their meanings. Moreover, intensifiers, amplifiers and maximizers were introduced and classified according to external criteria. Finally, the term “semantic prosody” was defined with examples and its relevance with the current study was introduced. Quirk et al. (1985) classified intensifiers into three semantic categories as emphasizees, amplifiers and down toners. For them, intensifiers may express an intensity scale which may be high or low, while Chalker (1984) and Alexander (1988) claimed that intensifiers only strengthen the meaning. The reason for choosing the intensifiers as the subjects in this research is that intensifiers are the kind of adverbials which are frequently used in both spoken and written language. These adverbials may affect the meaning and prosody of the whole sentence. Adverbials are the important component of English language and also the vital structure of almost every language all over the world. They have also been used by their native users to a large scale. Therefore, the contention is that there is a need for EFL learners to become aware of the existence of these adverbials and be able to see the subtle differences of meaning among them before actively employing them in written English. The contention is further enhanced by the fact that the knowledge of the concept of prosodic variations (differences) in adverbials will definitely help EFL learners make better decisions in terms of appropriate contextual meaning and thus, produce successful and efficient written essays.



**Figure 1:** The classification of Intensifiers

Amplifiers, on the other hand, are the common types of adverbs, which convey the degree of their collocates. According to Quirk et al (1985), “amplifiers are divided into two subclasses, these being *maximizers* and *boosters*”. Maximizers, one sub-category of amplifiers, are also very common in English and signify “an absolute degree of intensity and therefore occupy the extreme upper end of the scale” (Altenberg, 1991, p. 128). Most popular examples of maximizers can be *absolutely*, *completely*, *entirely*, *totally*, *utterly*, *fully* and *perfectly* as seen in the previous studies. For the specific purpose and scope of this study, the focus will be on the seven maximizers. Even though, these maximizers are seen as near-synonym words, there are semantic nuances between them; thus, each of them creates different collocations in meaning. Biber et al. (1999, p. 554) say that “they can be used to mark that the extent or degree is either greater or less than usual or than that of something else in the neighbouring discourse” and that “they occur as both adverbials and modifiers”. “Maximizers are very commonly used in spoken interaction but not nearly as frequently in academic written texts. However, they do occur frequently in non-academic writings such as informal texts, books and periodicals (Xiao & Tao, 2007, p. 246)”.

In Figure 1 above, it can be seen that “intensifiers” constitute a general label for all adverbials that are frequently used in both spoken and written language. However, using the label of “intensifiers” as a general term makes the research wider and more complex in scope. For this reason, the focus of the study is reduced to a specific part of the intensifiers, namely “amplifiers” which are made up of a total of seven maximizers that are the near-synonym words, and have little semantic differences among them. “Maximizers can almost always be omitted from a sentence or interchanged with each other since they do not hold any content, but merely serve as a function in a sentence” (Athanasiadou, 2007, p. 557). Previous studies also show that native English writers and non-native writers use maximizers in different ways. Granger (1998, p. 4) found that “the use of two (*completely* and *totally*) maximizers are different and although non-native writers use them more than the native do, natives generally use them to a greater extent compared to non-natives”. There are some other examples of differences in the use of maximizers by natives and non-natives. For instance, Lorenz (1998) found out in his study that German EFL learners tend to overuse amplifier collocations in their writings compared to the British native students. Moreover, similar results can be seen in many other studies which were made in Spain, France, China, and Sweden.

Semantic prosody has become one of the important notions in Corpus linguistics in recent years. According to some linguists, the notion is also called as semantic harmony, discourse or pragmatic prosody, semantic association. Louw (1993, p. 157) describes semantic prosody as “a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates”. Sinclair (1991, p. 170) defines a collocation as “the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text”. Moreover, Partington (1998, p. 68) says that semantic prosody is “the spreading of connotational colouring beyond single word boundaries”. It means that semantic prosody is mostly related to connotation. This means that when a word is said for a specific meaning, it may co-occur with other words to have a prosodic effect. It, also, expresses the function of the word in a sentence by affecting the meaning of its collocates. Without the semantic prosodic collocates, the words are just considered as single meanings that are not suitable for communication and these prosodic collocates reveal “the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards viewpoint or feelings about the entities and propositions that he or she is talking about” (Hunston, 2000, p. 5). Shortly, the meaningful expression of the speakers’ or writers’

intentions is essential for proper communication. Guo et. al. (2011) emphasise that the semantic prosody may have positive or negative connotations in context. Stubbs (2001, p. 65) defines semantic preference as “the relation, not between individual words, but between a lemma or word-form and a set of semantically related words”. Moreover, Stubbs (1996) also analysed the semantic prosody of the word “*cause*” and the findings showed that it is used with more than a 90% with negative collocates (e.g., cancer, crisis, accident, delay, death, damage, trouble).

The idea behind this study is to find out the most common adverbial misuses made by tertiary level EFL learners as evidenced in KTUCALE corpus and the possible reasons and solutions for these problems. The use of native and non-native academic learner corpora in the study marks an important milestone in search for investigating the developmental stages of EFL learners in terms of using these adverbials. Such corpus tools as AntConc 3.4.4 and Sketch Engine were used in the study for further investigation of the phenomena.

### 1.1. Research Questions

The aim of this study is to investigate whether there are differences between the ways native English writers’ and tertiary level Turkish EFL Learners’ semantic prosodic awareness in academic argumentative essays in English. This research only focuses on a relatively small part of language use, namely maximizers and their use by Turkish EFL learners through KTUCALE and BAWE corpora. In order to further narrow down the scope, only the following maximizers were investigated: *fully, completely, entirely, absolutely, totally, perfectly and utterly*. Moreover, in order to fulfil the aim of this study, the following research questions needed to be addressed:

- 1) What are the semantic differences that exist among the following maximizers: *absolutely, completely, entirely, fully, perfectly, totally and utterly*?
- 2) What are the semantic prosodic profiles of the maximizers: *absolutely, completely, entirely, fully, perfectly, totally and utterly*?
- 3) Is there any significant difference between native English speakers and EFL learners in the use of maximizers from a semantic prosodic perspective?
- 4) Do the quantification measures between KTUCALE and BAWE corpora yield to significant overuse and underuse in terms of maximizers?

### 2. Methodology

The instruments employed in the study include one academic written native reference corpus; BAWE (British Academic Written English), and one academic written non-native corpus; KTUCALE (Karadeniz Technical University Corpus of Academic Learner English). Two similar function concordance tools were used in order to obtain and analyse the data, these being Sketch Engine online corpus interface, and AntConc 3.4.4 offline corpus software. The reference corpus (BAWE) consists of academic essays written by native English students and contains 6,506,995 words with the contents ranging from Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Life Sciences to Physical Sciences in three levels of study: undergraduate, graduate and master levels. The learner academic corpus (KTUCALE) contains argumentative essays written by the tertiary level EFL learners in a Turkish university. All the essays are academic in character and the selected sample for the present comparative study consists of a total of 500,045 words.

Table 1. Contents of the two corpora

Representation	Corpus	Number of Texts	Average Length of Texts	Total Number of Words
Learner Writing	KTUCALE	196 texts	2,272	500,045 words
<b>Native Expert Writing</b>	<b>BAWE</b>	<b>2897 texts</b>	<b>2,554</b>	<b>6,506,995 words</b>

In this corpus based comparative analysis of maximizers, quantitative statistical corpus methods were employed. Thus, the aim was to obtain real data as well as to identify the most frequent and the least frequent word samples. The aim was also to reveal the semantic prosodic awareness levels of the EFL learners in terms of lexical diversity and lexical density. Therefore, the findings from KTUCALE learner corpus were compared and contrasted with the reference corpus, BAWE, in order to gather data related to semantic prosodic awareness, the use of maximizers and their frequencies, overuse and underuse patterns.

Since the raw frequencies do not give the proportional data in comparison and contrasting processes, normalised frequencies were obtained from Sketch Engine in order to compare and contrast the native and non-native corpora. Sketch Engine automatically calculates the normalised data with the base of one million word count as the standard size of the corpus. Moreover, LL (Log Likelihood) scores of maximizers were calculated in order to find out the difference between the usage patterns in the native and non-native corpora. LL scores were automatically calculated via the online interface of Lanchester University database on the following link; (<http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>).

### 3. Results and Discussion

Semantic preference patterns in the dependent usages of the target maximizers with their 1R adjective collocates are shown in Table 2. Moreover, Table 3 shows the raw and normalised frequencies of maximizers in both corpora. According to these normalised frequencies, LL (Log Likelihood) scores were calculated and presented in Table 4 in order to reveal the similarities and the differences of the use of maximizers between the tertiary level EFL learners and the native writers of English. Next, Tables 5,6,7 present the most frequent collocates of the maximizers with the distinction of their semantic profiles as positive, neutral and negative in order to show the common collocational usages by the EFL learners and the native counterparts. Finally, Tables 8,9,10,11,12,13 and 14 show the collocates and semantic profiles of each target maximizers in both corpora. With the help of these tables, it becomes possible to make relevant implications about the usage patterns of maximizers, EFL learners' overuse and underuse patterns with them and the probable reasons for these problems.

Table 2. Semantic Preference Patterns in the Dependent Usage (Maximizer + 1R Adj)

	Semantic Profile	BAWE	KTUCALE	Total	%
Absolutely	Negative	31	1	32	30
	Neutral	11	0	11	10
	<b>Positive</b>	60	2	62	60
	Total	102	3	105	-
Completely	Negative	113	4	117	31
	<b>Neutral</b>	133	9	142	39
	Positive	103	4	107	30
	Total	349	17	366	-
Perfectly	Negative	3	0	3	2
	Neutral	49	0	49	37
	<b>Positive</b>	78	4	82	61
	Total	130	4	134	-
Totally	<b>Negative</b>	60	1	61	44
	Neutral	36	7	43	31
	Positive	31	3	34	25
	Total	127	11	138	-
Utterly	<b>Negative</b>	19	0	19	66
	Neutral	6	0	6	20
	Positive	3	1	4	14
	Total	28	1	29	-
Fully	Negative	1	0	1	1
	Neutral	51	0	51	35
	<b>Positive</b>	92	1	93	64
	Total	143	1	144	-
Entirely	Negative	70	2	72	28
	Neutral	62	4	66	25
	<b>Positive</b>	120	3	123	47
	Total	252	7	259	-

The total token numbers of each maximizer in both corpora are shown in the Table 2 with their potential semantic profiles. The table also shows how the maximizers tend to occur with their 1R adjective collocates. According to the Table 2, *absolutely*, *perfectly*, *fully* and *entirely* have the positive semantic profiles; *completely* has the neutral semantic profile; *totally* and *utterly* have the negative semantic profiles. However, the use of each maximizer may differ in the native and the learner corpora and in general terms *totally*, *utterly* and *entirely* have more distinct profiles in terms of their semantic prosodies to combine with 1R adjectives compared to the other maximizers. In the following tables (from 5 to 14), their common collocations and potential profiles are shown in an extended manner.

Table 3. Raw and normalised per million frequencies

	BAWE	KTUCALE	BAWE	KTUCALE
	Raw		Normalised Per Mil.	
Absolutely	102	3	15,6754	5,9994
Completely	349	17	53,6345	33,9969
Perfectly	130	4	19,9785	7,9992
Totally	127	11	19,5174	21,9980
Utterly	28	1	4,3030	1,9998
Fully	143	1	21,9763	1,9998
Entirely	252	7	38,7275	13,9987
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1131</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>173,8126</b>	<b>87,9918</b>

Table 3 shows the raw and normalised frequencies of the target maximizers. According to the table, EFL learners underuse most adverbials in their academic writings in total. As an exception, *totally* is the only maximizer that is used in similar number by EFL learners.

Table 4. Log Likelihood scores of BAWE and KTUCALE

	BAWE (normalised)	KTUCALE (normalised)	LL score
Absolutely	16	6	4.72
Completely	54	34	4.59
Perfectly	20	8	5.31
Totally	20	22	0.10
Utterly	4	2	0.68
Fully	22	2	19.50
<b>Entirely</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12.27</b>

The first comparison was made between the two academic corpora. In Table 4 above, log likelihood scores of BAWE and KTUCALE were calculated in order to examine their quantitative similarities and differences of their usage proportions. As seen in Table 4, some of the LL scores are over 3.84 ( $p < 0.05$ ) which is the critical difference value at 95% level. It is partly seen that there are differences between BAWE and KTUCALE corpora regarding the maximizer use. In order to analyse the use of maximizers more in specific terms, their semantic profile usages are compared in Tables 8-14.

### 3.1. Semantic Profiles of Each Target Adverbial

In Tables 5, 6 and 7 below, semantic prosodic profiles of all the adverbials were given across the two corpora. The positive, negative or neutral features of maximizers were not indicated in this study. Instead, each maximizer was analysed with only their most frequently used 1+ right adjective complements.

Table 5. Positive semantic profiles of all the maximizers across the two corpora

	BAWE (Abs)	KTUCALE (Abs)
Absolutely	Necessary (14) Great (9) Certain (8)	Necessary (2)
Completely	New (13) Accurate (9) Clear (5)	Voluntary Unequalled Satisfied
Perfectly	Competitive (14) Well (7) Acceptable (7)	Happy (4)
Totally	New (5) Based (3) Independent (2)	Accurate (2) Altruistic
Utterly	Unimpeded Fascinating Compliant	Related
Fully	Rational (20) Aware (13) Independent (11)	Adaptable
<b>Entirely</b>	<b>New (11)</b> <b>Accurate (8)</b> <b>Independent (6)</b>	<b>Unclouded</b> <b>Satisfied</b>

As seen in Table 5, the most frequent 1R positive adjective collocates of the maximizers are not compatible.

The only matching adjective is *necessary*, which collocates with *absolutely*. The use of different collocations when compared to the native corpus may be due to the various factors such as L1 transfer, repetition of most familiar forms as a result of the limited exposure to the various usage patterns these items belong to.

Table 6. Neutral semantic profiles of all the maximizers across the two corpora

	BAWE (Abs)	KTUCALE (Abs)
Absolutely	Alienable (2) Stable Objective	-
Completely	Different (72) Separate (6) Manual (3)	Different (7) Incidental (2)
Perfectly	Elastic (7) Legitimate (4) Inelastic (4)	-
Totally	Different (12) Responsible (3) Random (2)	Different (7)
Utterly	Subservient (2) Scientific Indivisible	-
Fully	Recoverable (3) Operational (3) Mature (3)	-
<b>Entirely</b>	<b>Different (28)</b> <b>Random (3)</b> <b>Subjective (2)</b>	<b>Distinguishable (2)</b> <b>Communal (2)</b>

Table 6 shows that some of 1R neutral collocates of the maximizers such as ‘completely different’ and ‘totally different’ are compatible; However, in general terms, the most frequently used collocates are different. Moreover, the underuse of these collocations by Turkish EFL learners may be due to limited knowledge towards the usage patterns and prosodic features of these items.

Table 7. Negative semantic profiles of all the maximizers across the two corpora

	BAWE (Abs)	KTUCALE (Abs)
Absolutely	No (13) Nothing (4) Critical (3)	Dead
Completely	Irrational (7) Alien (5) Dependent (4)	Lack (2) Wrong Blind
Perfectly	Negative Motionless Heartless	-
Totally	Lost (3) Dependent (3) Against (3)	Unexpected
Utterly	Dependent (2) Unknowable Unable	-
Fully	Dependent	-
<b>Entirely</b>	<b>Dependent (8)</b> <b>Separate (4)</b> <b>Devoid (4)</b>	<b>Devoid (2)</b> <b>Unexceptionable</b>

The most frequently used 1R negative adjectives significantly differ in the native and non-native corpora. There is no single matching collocation in Table 7 and it seems to be the result of the underuse of the maximizers by Turkish EFL learners. The rank of maximizer frequencies indicates different preferences by Turkish EFL learners and the native writers.

In the following part, semantic profiles of each target adverbial were given in detail. The following tables (from 8 to 14) include the 1R adjectives of each adverbial and their frequencies.



Table 8. Semantic profile of ‘Absolutely’

BAWE	ABSOLUTELY
Positive (60)	Necessary (14), Great (9), Certain (8), Essential (5), True (3), Crucial (3), Correct (3), Perfect (2), Important (2), Vital, Uniform, Reliable, Relevant, Profound, Opposed, Impeccable, Free, Clear, Appalling, Accurate
Neutral (11)	Alienable (2), Stable, Objective, Normal, Inseparable, Illimitable, Different, Deductive, Contingent, Rigid
Negative (31)	No (13), Nothing (4), Critical (3), Not (2), Servile (2), Unsafe, Unrelated, Unimaginable, Unfamiliar, Stationary, Inconceivable, Alien
KTUCALE	
Positive (2)	Necessary (2)
Neutral	
Negative (1)	Dead

Table 8 indicates that the target word *absolutely* shows positive prosody . The most frequently used 1R adjective is *necessary* in both corpora. On the other hand, “absolutely no” is a significant collocation in negative prosody. The table indicates that the usage pattern of this target word (*absolutely*) may be considered compatible because of the fact that the proportions of the distribution of the prosody are quite similar.

Table 9. Semantic profile of ‘Completely’

BAWE	COMPLETELY
Positive (103)	New (13), Accurate (9), Clear (5), Independent (4), Free (4), Certain (4), Subservient (3), Innocent (3), Consistent (3), Confident (3), Clean (3), Open (2), Valid (2), Sure (2), Acceptable (2), Successful (2), Rational (2), Organized (2), Natural (2), Harmless (2), Loyal (2), Understandable, Trusted, True, Synchronous, Straight, Socialised, Satisfied, Satisfactory, Reliant, Perfect, Necessary, Intact, Happy, Functional, Fit, Feasible, Familiar, Fair, Efficient, Correct, Compatible, Coherent, Believable, Appropriate, Adequate, Sure, Precise, Factual, Equal
Neutral (133)	Different (72), Separate (6), Manual (3), Dry (3), Sequenced (2), Automated (2), Immune (2), Integrated (2), Unrestricted, Separated, Unchanged, Superfluous, Subdued, Sinusoidal, Rigid, Relative, Reducible, Random, Probable, Peculiar, Obvious, Objective, Normal, Neutral, Monochromatic, Metric, Martensitic, Laminar, Irrefutable, Intolerable, Impartial, Immanent, Flexible, Flat, Fibrous, Extraordinary, External, Essential, Endogenous, Effective, Dominant, Dependant, Conclusive, Arbitrary, Silent, Identical, Diverse,
Negative (113)	Irrational (7), Alien (5), Dependent (4), Useless (4), Unlike (4), Opposed (4), Unrelated (3), Lost (3), Eradicated (3), Absent (3), Unrealistic (2), Unfamiliar (2), Overwhelmed (2), Impossible (2), Ignorant (2), Dead (2), Blind (2), Wrong, Void, Unviable, Untypical, Untrustworthy, Unsuitable, Unscientific, Unreliable, Unregulated, Unpredictable, Unnecessary, Unjust, Unintentional, Unintelligible, Unfitting, Undisturbed, Uncorrelated, Unbridled, Unbearable, Unaware, Unavoidable, Unacceptable, Unable, Turbulent, Sunken, Subjugated, Stagnant, Shackled, Scandalous, Powerless, Pointless, Passive, Paradoxical, Opposite, Negligible, Insensitive, Inimical, Incompatible, Incapable, Inaccurate, Futile, Empty, Dark, Close, Black, Aside, Apathetic, Alone, Against, Abandoned, Subversive, Nonsense, Inappropriate, Ill, Helpless, Distant, Devoid, Absent
KTUCALE	
Positive (4)	Voluntary, Unequaled, Satisfied, Communicative
Neutral (9)	Different (7), Incidental (2)
Negative (4)	Lack (2), Wrong, Blind

Table 9 points out a balanced semantic profile for the target word *completely*. The long list given above shows a clear picture of the words frequently intensified by *completely*. It is seen that *completely* does not display a regular prosody. This maximizer can be used with both positive, neutral and negative profiles randomly. Nevertheless, it is also followed quite often by the adjectives, such as *different*, *new*, *irrational* and *accurate*. Also in learner corpora, the distribution of the profiles has similar proportions to each other.

Table 10. Semantic profile of ‘Entirely’

BAWE	ENTIRELY
Positive (120)	New (11), Accurate (8), Independent (6), Possible (6), Correct (5), Consistent (5), Sure (4), Plausible (4), Compatible (4), Certain (4), Voluntary (3), Valid (3), Successful (3), Positive (3), Happy (3), Convincing (3), Satisfactory (2), Necessary (2), Reliable (2), Realistic (2), Objective (2), Logical (2), Justified (2), Fair (2), Determined (2), Clear (2), Worthy, Viable, Unambiguous, True, Sufficient, Sincere, Satisfied, Safe, Right, Reliant, Reasonable, Precise, Justifiable, Irreversible, Ideal, Honest, Harmonious, Genuine, Frank, Economic, Comfortable, Appropriate, Applicable, Accessible, Aware
Neutral (62)	Different (28), Random (3), Subjective (2), Specific (2), Responsible (2), United, Unbiased, Textual, Terrestrial, Temporary, Synonymous, Renewable, Reflective, Private, Physical, Obvious, Neutral, Mobile, Inelastic, Indicative, Impartial, Fictitious, Fictional, Dry, Distinct, Dissimilar, Derivative, Classical, Automatic, Arbitrary,
Negative (70)	Dependent (8), Separate (4), Devoid (4), Negative (3), Wrong (2), Unsuccessful (2), Unrelated (2), Unhelpful (2), False (2), Confined (2), Against (2), Unsuitable, Unpackable, Unfounded, Unfair, Unexpected, Undone, Unconvincing, Unconcerned, Subversive, Selfish, Ridiculous, Redundant, Pointless, Pessimistic, Passive, Opposed, Limited, Insoluble, Inhumane, Indeterminate, Inconsistent, Inappropriate, Impractical, Impossible, Futile, Fruitless, Expendable, Erroneous, Detrimental, Dependant, Debatable, Dark, Dangerous, Culpable, Counterintuitive, Burnt, Anti
<b>KTUCALE</b>	
Positive (2)	Unclouded, Satisfied
Neutral (4)	Distinguishable (2), Communal (2)
Negative (3)	Devoid (2), Unexceptionable

Table 10 demonstrates that *entirely* has mostly a positive profile while it amounts to similar proportion within the negative and neutral semantic prosody. This may be due to the fact that there is no clear-cut distinction between positive, neutral and negative categories. These inferences are just the major and frequent semantic prosodies. The learner corpora, also, has a balanced distribution.

Table 11. Semantic profile of ‘Fully’

BAWE	FULLY
Positive (92)	Rational (20), Aware (13), Independent (11), Conscious (10), Functional (7), Modern (3), Representative (3), Valid (2), Qualified (2), Credible (2), Consistent (2), Comprehensive (2), Competent (2), Sweet, Supportive, Successful, Secure, Realistic, Productive, Enough, Efficient, Comfortable, Cognisant, Certified, Capable, Achievable
Neutral (51)	Recoverable (3), Operational (3), Mature (3), Effective (3), Autonomous (3), Responsible (2), Republican (2), Detailed (2), Associative (2), Virtual, Vegetative, Upright, Underway, Tolerable, Traceable, Synthetic, Synchronise, Surveyable, Specific, Sedentary, Searchable, Routable, Reversible, Parallel, Organic, Objective, Mobile, Incorporative, Immune, Global, Flexible, Customisable, Configurable, Competitive, Cohesive, Classless, Allegorical
Negative (1)	Dependent
<b>KTUCALE</b>	
Positive (1)	Adaptable
Neutral	
Negative	

It appears, according to the list above in Table 11 that the positive collocates of *fully* accounts for more than half of its collocates. The most frequently used 1R adjectives are *rational, aware, independent, conscious* and *functional* which are the words with positive meaning. The others are neutral in most cases, such as *recoverable, operational, mature* and *effective*. The learner corpus also shows a positive profile with only one example, though.



Table 12. Semantic profile of ‘Perfectly’

BAWE	PERFECTLY
Positive (78)	Competitive (14), Well (7), Acceptable (7), Coherent (5), Reasonable (4), Possible (4), Adequate (4), Compatible (3), Plausible (2), Good (2), Correct (2), Conceivable (2), Viable, Valid, Understandable, True, Respectable, Rational, Organised, Logical, Lawful, Justifiable, Intelligible, Honourable, Happy, Free, Fine, Easy, Clear, Certain, Capable, Believable, Aware, Applicable
Neutral (49)	Elastic (7), Legitimate (4), Inelastic (4), Normal (3), Natural (3), Mobile (3), Straight (2), Linear (2), Immobile (2), Divisible (2), Placed, Transparent, Symmetrical, Square, Spherical, Sanitary, Round, Random, Positioned, Homogenous, Flexible, Flat, Consistent, Concentric, Competitive, Cloudless, Black
Negative (3)	Negative, Motionless, Heartless
<b>KTUCALE</b>	
Positive (4)	Happy (4)
Neutral	
Negative	

Table 12 shows that *perfectly* has a similar profile with *fully* both in reference corpora and learner corpora. The maximizer has mostly positive collocates such as *competitive, well, acceptable, coherent, reasonable* and *happy*. On the other hand, there are some significantly used neutral collocates such as *elastic, legitimate, inelastic* and *normal*.

Table 13. Semantic profile of ‘Totally’

BAWE	TOTALLY
Positive (31)	New (5), Based (3), Independent (2), Accurate (2), Pitiable, Satisfactory, Rigorous, Right, Perfect, Organic, Obedient, Equitable, Equal, Effective, Dominant, Developed, Convinced, Compliant, Coherent, Aware, Assured, Appropriate, Acceptable
Neutral (36)	Different (12), Responsible (3), Random (2), Aquatic (2), Unfold, Symmetric, Soft, Scientific, Reformulated, Reflective, Predictable, Perpendicular, Flexible, Excluding, Diverse, Discounted, Deterministic, Dependable, Conclusive, Awake, Linear,
Negative (60)	Lost (3), Dependant (3), Against (3), Servile (3), Separate (2), Reprehensible (2), Eliminated (2), Disregarded (2), Disappeared (2), Dependent (2), Depended (2), Denatured (2), Wrong, Unsuitable, Unstable, Unrepresented, Unregulated, Unreasonable, Unnecessary, Unknown, Unacceptable, Unable, Outlawed, Opposite, Oblivious, Nullifying, Negative, Isolated, Inexperienced, Inconsistent, Impossible, Immersed, Ignorant, Flawed, Eradicated, Empty, Dismissed, Disintegrated, Destructive, Contradictory, Consumed, Blank, Assimilated, Selfless
<b>KTUCALE</b>	
Positive (3)	Accurate (2), Altruistic
Neutral (7)	Different (7)
Negative (1)	Unexpected

In the case of *totally*, the Table 13 shows negative semantic prosody in about half of the total frequency. The semantic prosody of *totally* appears to be deterministic as it occurs mostly with words which have unpleasant connotations. Evidence of this can be seen in its collocates such as *lost, dependant, against, servile* and *separate*. As can be seen above, a great number of the words with *totally* intensify seemingly unfavourable implications. Only a small minority seem to be favourable, such as *different, new* and *accurate*. Nevertheless, although the learner corpus shows a neutral prosody, it can be tolerated because of a collation with a frequently used word ‘*different*’.

Table 14. Semantic profile of ‘Utterly’

BAWE	UTTERLY
Positive (3)	Unimpeded, Fascinating, Compliant
Neutral (6)	Subservient (2), Scientific, Indivisible, Discretionary, Devoted,
Negative (19)	Dependent (2), Unknowable, Unable, Tragic, Servile, Overturned, Melodramatic, Inhumane, Incoherent, Incapable, Inappropriate, Impolite, Illiberal, Hopeless, Futile, Disgusted, Diseased, Absurd
<b>KTUCALE</b>	
Positive (1)	Related
Neutral	
Negative	

Table 14 demonstrates that “utterly” tends to have a negative prosody in use. It is obvious that in the table *utterly* displays a typically negative semantic prosody. It seems to have a strong tendency to co-occur with unfavourable words such as *dependent*, *unknowable*, *unable* and *tragic*. *Fascinating* and *scientific* seem to have no particular semantic colouring. On the other hand, while *utterly* has a negative profile in native speaker corpora, it has a positive profile in Turkish corpora. This may be due to the limited exposure of Turkish EFL learners towards the compatible usage patterns of “utterly” and seemingly the lack of awareness towards the semantic prosodic features of the “utterly” in context.

#### 4. Conclusions

In this study, the maximizers: *absolutely*, *completely*, *entirely*, *fully*, *perfectly*, *totally* and *utterly* were analysed in terms of their semantic profiles, frequencies and percentages. The research demonstrated that they cannot be considered as absolute synonyms. Although they are grammatically synonyms, they are not entirely interchangeable words in the collocational base. The range of the intensifiers may sometimes be seen to overlap, but on the whole, each of the intensifiers creates distinct collocations with a certain group of adjectives and differs semantically from the others. From the perspective of connotations, there are adverbs with positive, neutral and negative import. According to the analysis, *absolutely*, *entirely*, *fully* and *perfectly* are principally positive although they can be possibly used in collocations with negative or neutral meaning. “*Completely*” can be considered as a neutral maximizer because of its balanced semantic profile. *Totally* and *utterly* are the negative amplifiers with their high proportion of negative collocates.

In the case of the tertiary level Turkish EFL learners, they seem to have used some of these maximizers which may be considered as incompatible, these being *entirely*, *totally* and *utterly*. The possible reasons for this incompatibility may be that they lack of semantic prosodic awareness of English language. In an attempt to reach native language proficiency norms and standards in academic writing, it seems that there is a need for tertiary level Turkish EFL learners to gain insight into the semantic prosodic features and norms as well as apply them when or where necessary while they are writing. It may also be claimed that part of the problems seen in EFL learners’ writing may be given to the limited exposure of the intensifiers as a whole group by Turkish EFL learners as well as their lack of awareness towards the existence and usage patterns of these.

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#### **Notes**

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