

That's *so* Pinoy!
Intensifiers, Gender and Online Philippine Fan Forums

This paper presents a quantitative analysis of adjectival intensifier variation (e.g., *so, very, really, totally*, etc.) illustrating the role pop-culture fandom plays in linguistic practices of identity construction. Data (N=1204) were gathered from English-language websites devoted to two popular Philippine reality television shows: *Pinoy Idol* and *Philippine's Next Top Model (PNTM)*. Using the statistical analysis package, R-Brul (Johnson, 2009), correlations were examined between the choice of adjectival intensifier and being a male or female fan of each show.

Results reveal that *so* and *very* were the most frequent intensifiers, unlike other English-speaking communities where the rise of *so* is preceded by a rise in *really* and a drop in *very* (Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003; Tagliamonte & Roberts, 2005; Tagliamonte, 2005). Several gender-related patterns were noted: male *PNTM* fans intensified more than male *Pinoy Idol* fans and more than female *PNTM* fans. Innovative *so* was the intensifier of choice for female fans of both shows. Male *PNTM* fans also preferred *so*, while male *Pinoy Idol* fans preferred *very*. Show type was also a strong predictor of intensification in general among males, as was presence of Tagalog-English code-mixing in the token.

These findings show that gendered patterns of variation emerge differently depending on which community people choose to participate in, consistent with Henley et. al.'s (2008) *community of choice* model. Given Philippine men and women perceive intensifier use and code-mixing to be features of urban female Philippine speech (Mojica 2000) and that in other English-speaking communities young females lead the use of the variant *so* (Tagliamonte, 2005) these results reveal that not females, but male fans of *PNTM* are using forms considered to be more overtly female. This suggests that pop-culture participation may shape how one performs gender identity.

References

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