

## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INTENSIFIERS *QUITE*, *RATHER*, AND *PRETTY* USED BY AMERICANS AND BRITISH PEOPLE: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

Words have many different meanings and this can cause problems for nonnative speakers of English. Because words can mean many different things depending on the sentence that they appear in, Indonesian learners of English often have trouble telling the different meanings apart, especially when the words are synonyms or from specific group of words like intensifiers. From this, the writer would like to do a research on the topic of the comparison between American and British English. The research is limited to comparing the intensifiers *quite*, *rather* and *pretty*. The data is taken from COCA for the American English and BNC for the British English. The result shows that in general, the three intensifiers are more or less similar in meaning, with only slight differences. The usages of these three intensifiers by Americans and British people are also not too different.

**Keywords:** intensifier, American and British people, corpus

### ABSTRAK

*Kata-kata memiliki banyak arti berbeda dan ini dapat menyebabkan masalah bagi penutur bahasa Inggris yang tidak asli. Karena kata-kata dapat berarti banyak hal yang berbeda tergantung pada kalimat yang muncul, para pelajar bahasa Inggris Indonesia sering mengalami kesulitan membedakan makna yang berbeda, terutama ketika kata-kata tersebut adalah sinonim atau dari kelompok kata tertentu seperti penguat. Dari sini, penulis ingin melakukan penelitian pada topik perbandingan antara bahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh orang Amerika dan Inggris. Penelitian ini terbatas untuk membandingkan penguat *quite*, *rather* dan *pretty*. Data diambil dari COCA untuk Bahasa Inggris Amerika dan BNC untuk Bahasa Inggris orang Inggris. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa secara umum, ketiga penguat ini kurang lebih memiliki makna yang sama, dengan hanya sedikit perbedaan. Penggunaan ketiga penguat ini oleh orang Amerika dan Inggris juga tidak terlalu berbeda.*

**Kata Kunci:** penguat, orang Amerika dan Inggris, korpus

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Words in a language can have more than one meaning. For example, the word **mouse** in English can mean a small animal or a piece of technology that you can use for computers. The meaning of a word can change depending on the context of the sentence. Not only the meaning, but sometimes words can have different parts of speech too such as the

word **light**. **Light** can be a noun which means an energy that allows us to see things, or it can also be an adjective which means the opposite of heavy. Even as an adjective, the word **light** can also have several meanings. For instance, besides the opposite of heavy, it can also mean a pale color. Because words can have many meanings, it is difficult for nonnative speakers of English to tell the difference between one meaning and another sometimes.

It is sometimes even harder for nonnative speakers of English to tell the

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difference between words with similar meanings or words that are synonyms of one another. For example, the word **big** and **large**. Even though these two words are similar, it does not mean that we can use them in exactly the same way. For instance, if we look at the collocations of these two words, we can see that the word **big** can go with the word **sister** because it will mean 'older' sister. But we cannot exactly say **large sister** unless we really are talking about the size of the person. Another example is the collocation with the word **problem**. It is normal to say **big problem**, but it is not common to say **large problem**.

Besides having difficulty with words that are synonyms, nonnative speakers of English often have problems with certain groups of words such as **intensifiers**. Examples of intensifiers are words like *really*, *very*, *so*, *truly*, *absolutely*, *completely*, etc. Their function is more or less the same which is to make the meaning of other words stronger. However, just like the collocation of synonymous words, not all intensifiers can go together with every other word. An example is the adjective **splendid**. You can strengthen it using intensifiers like **absolutely** and **truly**, but you cannot combine it with words like **very** or **completely**.

Depending on who you talk to, nonnative speakers of English may also need to adjust their choice of words. For example, Americans and British people have different vocabulary for the same things like **flat** (British) and **apartment** (American). Not only different vocabulary, but Americans and British people use the same words differently too. An example is with the intensifiers **quite**, **rather** and **pretty**. As intensifiers, again their function is similar which is to strengthen or emphasize other words. However, the way that Americans and British people use them in sentences is somewhat different. How can we know this for sure? A good way of comparing between American and British English is to look at an American and British corpus. A well-known corpus of American English is COCA or Corpus of Contemporary American English, and a popular corpus for British

English is BNC or British National Corpus. By looking at these two corpora, we can try to find out the similarities and differences between American and British English.

## 1.2. Statement of Problem and Research Questions

The introduction above shows that words have many different meanings and this can cause problems for nonnative speakers of English. Of course, this includes Indonesians too since English is considered as a foreign language here. Because words can mean many different things depending on the sentence that they appear in, Indonesian learners of English often have trouble telling the different meanings apart, especially when the words are synonyms or from specific group of words like intensifiers. In addition, even the same words can be used differently between American and British English. In order to help us with this problem, we can try to look at two corpora from both varieties of English, which is COCA and BNC.

Based on the background and problem above, the writer would like to do a research on the topic of the comparison between American and British English. The research is limited to comparing the intensifiers **quite**, **rather** and **pretty**. The reason for choosing these intensifiers is because these are common words but difficult to tell the difference between them, and they are sometimes used differently by Americans and British people. To find out the similar and different usages of these words, the writer is going to refer to COCA and BNC. The research questions for the research are:

- 1) What are the similarities and differences between the intensifiers **quite**, **rather** and **pretty**?
- 2) How do Americans and British people use these intensifiers?

## 1.3. Objective of the Research

The objective of the research is to explore the similarities and differences between 3 similar intensifiers and how the Americans and British people use them. We will be able to see whether these 3 words are

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different from one another even though they seem similar at a glance. We will also be able to see whether the Americans and British people use them differently or not. In order to do this, we will refer to a corpus of American English, which is COCA, and a corpus of British English, which is BNC. The similarities and differences that are going to be explored are related to the frequency and the collocations of these words found in both COCA and BNC.

#### 1.4. Significance of the Research

The significance of the study is that it will provide information about the similarities and differences between the intensifiers *quite*, *rather* and *pretty*. Since Indonesian learners of English often have problems with these kinds of words and how to use them appropriately, it is expected that the result of this study can help them have a better understanding of how to use them. Moreover, it can also tell them about how Americans and British people use these words. So in the end, the research is important because it can provide valuable information for the Indonesian learners of English and teach them how to use the intensifiers accurately and also how to tell the difference between how Americans and British people use them.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1. Corpus

Cheng (2012) defines corpus as “a collection of texts that has been compiled for a particular reason.” Hunston (2002) also mentions that corpus is a collection of examples of natural language use. These two definitions tell us that a corpus is basically a collection of texts that consist of examples of how language is used naturally. There are many corpora which are available such as COCA, BNC, MICASE, CANCODE, etc. Because a corpus is compiled for a particular reason, the collection of texts is of course going to be different too. For example, COCA and BNC are examples of general corpus which consist of many different texts.

Different with MICASE and CANCODE which are specialized corpora and their collection of texts is smaller and more specific.

#### 2.2. Collocation

Hunston (2002) gives a definition of collocation as “the tendency of words to be biased in the way they co-occur.” In addition, McEnergy, Xiao and Tono (2006) mention that collocation is “the characteristic co-occurrence patterns of words, i.e., which words typically co-occur in corpus data.” Based on these two definitions, we can say that collocation refers to the common combination of words that normally go together and they can be found in corpus data. An example of collocation is the words **take** and **bath**. This is an example of a collocation because it is normal or common to say **take a bath**. In other words, these words go together naturally.

There are many types of collocations. One classification is given by Benson, Benson & Ilson (1997). They divide collocations into **grammatical** and **lexical** collocation. Grammatical collocation is when the combination of words is between a dominant word and a preposition or other grammatical structures. For example, the words **look into**. This is a grammatical collocation because it combines the verb **look** and the preposition **into**. On the other hand, lexical collocation is the combination of dominant words such as verb + noun. So the words **have dinner** is an example of a lexical collocation because it combines the verb **have** and the noun **dinner**.

#### 2.3. Intensifiers

Quirk et al. (1985, as cited in Athanasiadou, 2007) describe intensifiers as “adverbs that express extent or intensity.” Moreover, Ito and Tagliamonte (2003) define intensifiers as “adverbs that maximize or boost meaning.” From these two definitions it can be concluded that intensifiers are adverbs that modify the meaning of words by maximizing or boosting it. Some examples include words like *absolutely*, *completely*, *very*, *really*, etc. Since they are adverbs, they can be used to modify verbs and adjectives. For example, we can use the intensifier **completely** to modify

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the verb **defeat** and we can also use it to modify the adjective **absurd**.

#### 2.4. Previous Studies

Several researches on the topic of intensifiers have been done. For example, Ito and Tagliamonte (2003) did a research on the use of intensifiers by different groups of people. One of their findings is that the intensifier **very** is more commonly used by older speakers while **really** is more popular with the younger speakers. Another research by Romero (2012) compared the intensifiers in British and American English. Their findings show that there is a clear difference between how British and American people use certain intensifiers.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Data Source

For this study, the data is taken from COCA for the American English and BNC for the British English. The data is limited to three intensifiers which are **quite**, **rather** and **pretty**. In order to limit the search in these two corpora, these words are limited to the part of speech of adverbs. For the collocations, they are also limited to adjective collocations only.

#### 3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

To collect the data, the researcher refers to COCA and BNC. The researcher first inputs the three intensifiers into these corpora to find out the frequency of each word in each corpus. The frequency of each word is compared to see which group of people uses each word the most. The writer also looks at the concordance lines to try to find the differences between the usages of these intensifiers in American and British English. Besides looking at the concordance lines, the researcher also refers to the online Cambridge English Dictionary to find the meaning of these words. Finally, the writer looks at the collocations for each word which has been limited to adjective collocations only.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Data Analysis

First of all, before we look into how the intensifiers **quite**, **rather** and **pretty** are used in COCA and BNC, we should look at their definitions in the dictionary to see whether they are similar or different. The dictionary that is used for this research is the online Cambridge English Dictionary. This dictionary is used because it shows the definition for both American and British English. The definitions for the three intensifiers are as follow:

##### 1) **Quite**

- British:
  - completely = The two situations are quite different.
  - a little or a lot but not completely = I'm quite tired but I can certainly walk a little further.
- American:
  - to a large degree = School is quite different from what it once was.
  - completely = I'm not quite done yet.
  - really or truly = It was quite a remarkable speech.

##### 2) **Rather**

- British:
  - quite, to a slight degree = It's rather cold today, isn't it?
  - very, to a large degree = Actually, I did rather well in my exams.
- American: -

##### 3) **Pretty**

- British:
  - quite, but not extremely = I'm pretty sure it was her.
- American:
  - to a large degree; to some degree = She was pretty tired.

We can see from the definitions above that the three intensifiers are more or less the same or have the similar meanings. However, there are some slight differences; for example, the word

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*quite* means ‘completely’ both in American and British English, but this meaning is not the same with the meaning of *rather* and *pretty*. But when comparing the American and British meaning for the word *quite*, it can be seen that the British meaning is ‘a little’ while the American meaning is ‘to a large degree.’ The American use of *quite* also has an additional meaning which is ‘really or truly.’ The word *rather* also does not have a meaning in the American English as an intensifier (or it is similar to the British meaning). Lastly, the

British and American definition for the word *pretty* is also somewhat different. For the British it means ‘not extremely’ but for the Americans it means ‘to a large degree.’

#### 4.1.1. Frequency Comparison of Quite, Rather and Pretty

To compare the three intensifiers, we are going to first look at the frequency of each word in COCA and BNC. The frequencies are as follow:

Figure 1. Frequency of Quite in COCA

The screenshot shows the COCA search interface. The search results table is as follows:

Corpus of Contemporary American English			
SEARCH	FREQUENCY		CONTEXT
SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [HELP...]			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT ALL FORMS (SAMPLE): 100 200 500	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	QUITE	95650

Figure 2. Frequency of Quite in BNC

The screenshot shows the BNC search interface. The search results table is as follows:

British National Corpus (BNC)			
SEARCH	FREQUENCY		CONTEXT
SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [HELP...]			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT ALL FORMS (SAMPLE): 100 200 500	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	QUITE	39516

Figure 3. Frequency of Rather in COCA

The screenshot shows the COCA search interface. The search results table is as follows:

Corpus of Contemporary American English			
SEARCH	FREQUENCY		CONTEXT
SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [HELP...]			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT ALL FORMS (SAMPLE): 100 200 500	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	RATHER	62123

Figure 4. Frequency of Rather in BNC





British National Corpus (BNC)    			
SEARCH	FREQUENCY		CONTEXT
SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] <a href="#">[HELP...]</a>			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT ALL FORMS (SAMPLE): 100 200 500	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	RATHER	20323

Figure 5. Frequency of Pretty in COCA










Corpus of Contemporary American English     			
SEARCH	FREQUENCY		CONTEXT
SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] <a href="#">[HELP...]</a>			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT ALL FORMS (SAMPLE): 100 200 500	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	PRETTY	76856

Figure 6. Frequency of Pretty in BNC

British National Corpus (BNC)    			
SEARCH	FREQUENCY		CONTEXT
SEE CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] <a href="#">[HELP...]</a>			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT ALL FORMS (SAMPLE): 100 200 500	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	PRETTY	4750

As we can see from the figures above, the frequencies for each intensifier are quite different. Out of the three words, the one that is most frequently found in COCA and BNC is the word *quite* with a total of **95,650** occurrences in COCA and **39,516** occurrences in BNC. However, the least found in COCA is the word *rather* with **62,123** occurrences and the least found in BNC is the word *pretty* with only **4,750** occurrences. This shows that both Americans and British people often use the word *quite* as intensifiers in their utterances. Even though the difference in total is very large (**95,650** vs. **39,516**), this is because we have to consider the size of the corpus. COCA consists of more than 560 million words while

BNC consists only of 100 million words. On the other hand, the Americans use *rather* the least while British people use *pretty* the least. This means that it is more common to use *pretty* as an intensifier for Americans, but it is more common to use *rather* as an intensifier for British people.

#### 4.1.2. Collocation Comparison of Quite, Rather and Pretty

After looking at the frequency of the three words in COCA and BNC, we are now going to look into their collocations. The figures below show this:

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Figure 7. Collocation of Quite in COCA

	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	DIFFERENT	2698
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURE	1765
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLEAR	1026
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD	736
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	RIGHT	687
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	POSSIBLE	575
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	READY	426
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIMILAR	414
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIMPLE	351
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	SMALL	349

Figure 8. Collocation of Quite in BNC

	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	DIFFERENT	1257
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURE	717
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD	585
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLEAR	564
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	HAPPY	559
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	RIGHT	351
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE	314
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	POSSIBLE	237
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	DIFFICULT	207
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	EASY	200

From the figures above we can see that there are some similarities and differences of collocations for the intensifier *quite* in COCA and BNC. The words that are similar in both corpora are **different**, **sure**, **clear**, **good**, **right**, and **possible**. Even though the order is not exactly the same, these words are the top 10

most common collocations for the word *quite* in both COCA and BNC. However, the words **ready**, **similar**, **simple** and **small** are found in COCA but not in BNC, while the words **happy**, **nice**, **difficult** and **easy** are found in BNC but not in COCA.

Figure 9. Collocation of Rather in COCA

	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	LARGE	326
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	DIFFERENT	277
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	SMALL	234
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	DIFFICULT	155
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	LIKE	144
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNUSUAL	142
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	LIMITED	122
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD	117
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIMPLE	110
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOW	107

Figure 10. Collocation of Rather in BNC

	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	DIFFERENT	477
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	LIKE	185
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	DIFFICULT	110
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD	96
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE	89
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	SMALL	79
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIMILAR	76
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	STRANGE	72
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	ODD	71
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	LARGE	69

Figure 9 and 10 above show us the collocations of the word *rather* in COCA and BNC. We can see here that there are also some similarities and differences. The words **large**, **different**, **small**, **difficult**, **like**, and **good** are found in both corpora. But the words **unusual**, **limited**, **simple** and **low** are only found in COCA, while **nice**, **similar**, **strange** and **odd**

are only found in BNC. So this means that Americans and British people sometimes use the intensifier *rather* differently. It should also be noted that the word *like* here is actually a verb and not an adjective, but it is somehow still included in the list even though the search has been limited to adjective collocations only.

Figure 11. Collocation of Pretty in COCA

	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD	10247
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURE	2106
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLEAR	1131
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	BAD	1032
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	BIG	936
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	COOL	876
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	TOUGH	662
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLOSE	647
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	AMAZING	609
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	HARD	590

Figure 12. Collocation of Pretty in BNC

	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	FREQ
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD	462
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURE	157
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	WELL	54
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	OBVIOUS	52
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	BAD	51
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	CERTAIN	43
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	BIG	40
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLEAR	39
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	YOUNG	39
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	CLOSE	34



From the figures above, we can see that similar to the previous words, there are some similar and different collocations for the word *pretty* in COCA and BNC. The similar words are **good**, **sure**, **clear**, **bad**, **big**, and **close**. The different words are **cool**, **tough**, **amazing** and **hard** which are found in COCA, and **well**, **obvious**, **certain**, and **young** which are found in BNC. It should also be noted that the frequency for the collocations in COCA are much higher compared to the collocations in BNC which shows that Americans like to

use the word *pretty* as an intensifier compared to British people.

#### 4.1.3. Concordance Lines Comparison of Quite, Rather and Pretty

We are now going to look into some concordance lines for each of the intensifiers to find out if they are similar to the dictionary definitions described at the beginning of the section.

#### Figure 13. Concordance Lines of Quite in COCA

raise. However, the cash flow streams from transmission line easements are **quite** peculiar. These easements are  
is one by Bottemiller and Wolverton (2013), who find generally **quite** small or nonexistent impacts on residential p  
niles, the function would tend to be **quite** steep and likely inappropriate for representing the magnitude of the effe  
here is that implicit prices for different land uses can be **quite** different. For example, the impact of transmission li

#### Figure 14. Concordance Lines of Quite in BNC

was kind to her in the summerhouse, though I'll assure you I was **quite** innocent then as now, and I desire you to keep  
to sleep and not mind her. She'll come to bed when she's **quite** awake. PAMELA: Poor soul. BELVILLE gropes his way to  
favour and now with so much openness, affection and honour too, I am **quite** overcome. Presumption, you will say. So

If we look at the concordance lines above, the definition of *quite* in COCA is more about 'to a large degree' when combined with the words **peculiar**, **small**, **steep** and **different**. For example if the collocation is *quite peculiar*, it means that it is 'to a large degree' **peculiar** or strange, but it does not mean 'completely' or 'really or truly' **peculiar**. Whereas for the

definition of *quite* in BNC, it can be seen that it refers to the meaning of 'a little or a lot but not completely.' This can be seen when combined with the words **innocent**, **awake** and **overcome**. The collocation *quite innocent* means that the person is 'a little' **innocent**, but not 'completely' **innocent**.

#### Figure 15. Concordance Lines of Rather in COCA

replaced from managing the fund during this period, as removal is **rather** difficult and expensive and usually only done as a last resort.  
quity, private real estate fee structures are not standardized, but **rather** complex. There is a wide variation of fee structures, even by st  
ragers will not outperform the market. The impact of this assumption is **rather** low given the number of funds using a relative benchm.

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### Figure 16. Concordance Lines of Rather in BNC

...ep up our R and D efforts and had several **rather** successful new product introductions during the year. As a result with good control  
of the cost reduction is the accumulation of er of **rather** smaller ones, but the main ones are redundancy, sadly, more redundancy and  
profits were down a little less than ten percent which is **rather** good going, given their (pause) erm heavy specialist skills in M and A w

Looking at the concordance lines above, we can see that the meaning of **rather** is similar to the dictionary one which is 'to a slight degree' in COCA. The words **difficult**, **complex** and **low** can be considered to be somewhat 'negative,' so when combined with these adjectives, the meaning of **rather** is more 'to a slight degree' or 'quite.'

hand, the concordance lines in BNC show that the meaning is probably more to 'very' or 'to a large degree.' This is because it is followed by 'positive' adjectives like **successful** and **good**. So the collocation **rather good** means 'very' **good**.

### Figure 17. Concordance Lines of Pretty in COCA

igio or sauvignon blanc. To qualify "affordable," consider that it is **pretty** easy to find a good Rueda verdejo that doesn't even venture into the  
...en around. " # What it all comes down to for Orchard is really **pretty** simple, though it's something he admitted is easier said than done: Sack  
...esident have been talking about with regard to our economy. But the message was **pretty** clear. " # Trump had blasted Murkowski in a tweet c

### Figure 18. Concordance Lines of Pretty in BNC

v kind words for their rivals.' Major and Lamont are doing a **pretty** good job of impersonating Stan and Ollie,' said Graham.' All  
...league within a league.' Says Swales: 'They fought **pretty** dirty. What concerns me is that a group of clubs had clandestine me  
...when asked about her future she said: 'Next year? It's **pretty** hard to think about that when you've just gone out of a Grand Sk

Lastly, if we look at the concordance lines above, it can be said that the definitions of **pretty** as an adverb are also similar to the dictionary meanings. For example, the word **pretty** is combined with **easy**, **simple** and **clear** in COCA, which shows that the meaning is 'to a large degree.' So the collocation **pretty easy** means that it is 'to a large degree' or 'very' **easy**. Similarly, the concordance lines in BNC show that the meaning is 'quite, but not extremely' because the word **pretty** is combined with **dirty** and **hard**. So the collocation **pretty hard** means that it is 'quite' **hard** but not 'extremely' **hard**.

#### 4.2. Discussion

After we have seen the data analysis, we are now going to discuss the findings for this research and answer the research questions. The first is about the similarities

and differences of the three intensifiers. First of all, they are more or less similar in terms of meaning according to the dictionary. All of them talk about a certain degree, whether it is slight or large degree. The only difference is in the word **quite**, where there is the meaning of 'completely.' Lastly, if we look at the collocations for the three intensifiers, we can see that they all share one similar adjective between them which is the word **good**. In other words, the adjective **good** can be modified using either **quite**, **rather** or **pretty**. Beside that word, there are some other similar adjectives that they share, but not between all three words. For example, the word **different** is a common collocation for **quite** and **rather** but not for **pretty**. In other words, if we compare all three intensifiers, they each have their own common collocations and are not all exactly the same.

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The second research question is about how the Americans and British people use these three intensifiers. First of all, in terms of frequency, both groups used the word *quite* the most. So, it can be said that this word is a common intensifier for both Americans and British people. However, the difference is in the word that is used the least. The Americans use *rather* the least while the British people use *pretty* the least. This shows that each group has a certain preference over some intensifiers. The Americans do not like to use *rather* while the British people do not like to use *pretty* as intensifiers. Especially for the British people, where according to BNC, only use the word *pretty* 4,750 times as an intensifier, which is quite a small number compared to the other two intensifiers (quite = 39,516 and rather = 20,323).

Next, about the collocations for the three intensifiers, some are similar but others are different between the Americans and British people. For example, the adjectives **different**, **sure** and **clear** are collocations of the word *quite* for both Americans and British people. However, words like **simple** and **small** are only used by Americans while **happy** and **nice** are only used by British people. So, it can be said that between the two groups of people, they sometimes use the intensifiers with similar adjectives, but at other times use them with different ones.

Finally, when we look at the concordance lines, we can see that there are some differences between how the Americans and British people use the intensifiers in terms of their meaning. For example for the word *quite*, the meaning for the Americans is 'to a large degree' while the meaning for the British people is 'a little but not completely.' Even though both of them refer to the meaning talking about 'degree,' the difference is whether it is a large or slight degree. This also depends on the adjective that follows the intensifier. If it is followed by words like **peculiar**, the word *quite* means 'very.' But when it is followed by words like **innocent**, it means 'a little.'

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

### 5.1. Conclusion

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that in general, the three intensifiers *quite*, *rather* and *pretty* are more or less similar in meaning, with only slight differences. In other words, it is true that they are synonyms because their meaning is really quite similar with one another. As for their collocations, they only share one adjective which is the same, which is the word **good**. Other than that, the three words have some similar collocations, but not for all three words. So some collocations are similar for *quite* and *rather*, but different for *pretty*. Or some are similar for *rather* and *pretty*, but different for *quite*.

As for the usages of these three intensifiers by Americans and British people, it could be said that overall they are not too different. Some intensifiers are preferred by a certain group, for example Americans like to use *pretty* while British people do not. However, in general the way they use them is not too different. For instance, both groups of people share similar collocations for these three intensifiers. Their meanings are also somewhat the same which is talking about a degree, although sometimes between the Americans and British people there are some differences in terms of small or large degree.

### 5.2. Suggestions

From the result of this research, there are two suggestions that we can make. First of all, since the result show that the difference between the three intensifiers is not too significant, it means that we can use them in more or less the same way. In other words, teachers can teach these intensifiers similarly and language users can also use them in more or less the same way. Also, between Americans and British people, the differences in the usages is also not that much. Finally, since this research is limited in terms of the number of intensifiers, it can be suggested that researchers explore different words other than these three words. They can also try to

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compare the usages of intensifiers not only by American and British people, but also by other groups of people.

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