Focus and Degree Modifiers

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The words which are studied in this work are members of a mainly closed set of words whose function is to modify a word or phrase by qualifying its meaning in some way.

All the examples in this study are taken from the utterances of adults in an electronic database of transcribed audio-recordings of spontaneous adult-child interactions which were collected by an ESCR-funded project, the details of which are available at https://users.aber.ac.uk/bmj/abercld/cronfa18_30/sae/intro.html. There are 21 Welsh speakers who variously provide a total of 682 examples in which a modifier occurs. This database is not only a valuable resource for the study of the input language which children experience but also provides very useful data for the study of adult Welsh.

The modifiers which occur in the database are given in table 1 along with their frequencies.

Table 1. The modifiers, in descending order of frequencies

iawn 'very'	312
rhy 'too'	174
jyst 'just'	68
dim+ond 'only'	54
bron 'nearly'	20
go 'fairly'	13
reit 'right'	12
mor 'so'	10
braidd 'rather'	9
hyd+yn+oed 'even'	4
hollol 'completely'	3
eithaf 'quite'	2
byth 'still'	2
amboutu 'about'	1
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The table gives a list of fourteen words and two of these are far more frequent than the others: *rhy* 'too' and, especially, *iawn* 'very'. The high frequencies of *iawn* 'very' are mainly due to the many occurrences of the expression *da iawn* 'very good'.

These words are mainly members of a closed set. That is, they have no other function except to modify phrases. There are exceptions: *iawn* 'very' and *byth* 'still' are discussed in section 1.1, and *mor* 'so' is also considered as a possible exception in the same section.

These modifying words can be discussed in terms of their meanings, the types of phrases in which they occur and their positions in these phrases. We shall begin by establishing a distinction based on types phrases and within this distinction we shall attempt to explain the semantics of individual words. To this end, this work draws upon the semantic distinctions made in Huddleston and Pullum (2002) and Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) about Englsh modifiers, where relevant to the Welsh material. A detailed accout of the words in table 1, in the tradition of a reference grammar which concentrates mainly on formal Welsh, is to be found in Thomas (1996). Fynes-Clinton (1913) — in a dictionary-type format — provides descriptions of modifiers in the dialect of a district in northwest Wales (although very brief in some instances).

1 Adjective phrases and other phrases

We shall initially distinguish adjective phrases from all other phrases and show that some of the modifers qualify adjectives while other modifers qualify one or more other phrases. Table 2 lists the frequencies of adjective phrases and all other types phrases taken together.

Table 2. Adjective phrases and all other phrases in which modifiers occur

Adjective Phrases	509
Other Phrases	173
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The predominance of adjective phrases is due to the fact that more modifiers occur in these phrases than in any other individual phrase (see table 7 in section 2) and especially to the fact that the expression *da iawn* 'very good' occurs very frequently, as already mentioned. This expression occurs in 242 of the total of 509 examples of adjective phrases, which is 47.45%.

1.1 Adjective phrases and degree modifiers

Table 3 gives the words which modify adjectives.

Table 3. Modifiers in descending order of frequencies

iawn	'very'	304
rhy	'too'	174
go	'fairly'	13
mor	'so'	8
hollol	'completely'	3
reit	'right'	3
eithaf	'quite'	2
byth	'still'	2
		509

As can be seen, *iawn* 'very' and *rhy* 'too' are far more frequent than the other modifiers, which, in comparison, are very infrequent in the database.

The majority of these modifiers occur before the adjective.

1 a. ***eitha*** *agos*.

    'quite close.'

  b. *G--- fydda   'n   cael pen+blwydd **go** fuan,, yndy*?

     G--- be.CNTF.3SG PROG have birthday   fairly soon be.PRES.3SG

     'G--- would be having a birthday fairly soon, yes.'

  c. *ti   'n2 **hollol**   siwr bod honna yn   mynd yfanna.*

     you.SG PRED completely sure be that.F   PROG go   there

     'you're completely sure that that goes there.'

  d. *oh,,, drycha   **mor** bert mae   e.*

     oh   look.IMPV.SG so   pretty be.PRES.3SG it

     'oh, look so pretty it is.'

  e. ***rhy*** *brysur,, ie*?

     'too busy, yes'

Only two modifiers occur after the adjective, namely, *byth* 'still' and *iawn* 'very'.

2 a. *oh,,, gwell **fyth***.

    'oh`better`still.'

  b. *da   **iawn***.

    good very

    'very good.'

Reit 'right' can occur either before or after the adjective (see section 1.2.4 for its etymology).

3 a. *ie,,, mae   'n   edrych fel buwch* **reit** *ryfedd hefyd,, on'd yw   hi?*
     yes be.PRES.3SG PROG look   like cow   right strange also   Q.NEG be.PRES.3SG she
     'yes, it looks like a 'right' strange cow also, doesn't it?'

   b. *ma'   dy   wallt ti   'n   edrych yn2 ole   ***reit*** *fanna.*
     be.PRES.3SG CL.2SG hair you.SG PROG look   PRED light right there
     'your hair looks 'right' light there.'

The adjectives are gradeable adjectives and the modifiers can indicate a degree of amplification on the basis of an assumed scale. As such, they can be referred to as degree modifiers (or scalar modifiers). *Iawn* 'very', *mor* 'so', *rhy* 'too', *hollol* 'completely' and *byth* 'still' are strong amplifiers whereas *eithaf* 'quite', *go* 'fairly' and *reit* 'right' are more moderate modifers. *Reit* 'right' is also used as a modifier of other phrases as shown in section 1.2.4. There its semantics are explained as having maximal effect. It is questionable whether *reit* 'right' as a degree modifier of gradeable adjectives conveys maximum degree but is more moderate.

Byth 'still', as in (2a), is distinctive in that it is confined to comparative adjectives. *Byth* can also be used as an adverb to convey '(n)ever' in negative clauses. The translation of *byth* as 'still' should not be taken as an indication that *byth* conveys 'still' in other contexts.

The modifier *rhy* 'too' extends the meaning of the adjective to such an extent that it hinders or prevents an action or event.

4 a. *mae   'r   tractor yn2 **rhy*** *fach i' godi hwn.*
     be.PRES.3SG the tractor PRED too small to lift   this.M
     'the tractor is too small to lift this.'

   b. *mae   hi 'n2 **rhy*** *gynnar yn1 bore   i' ruthro o+gwmpas.*
     be.PRES.3SG it PRED too early   in morning to rush   around
     'it's too early in the morning to rush around.'

   c. *mae   Mister+Blaidd yn2 **rhy*** *fawr fynd i+lawr y   twll.*
     be.PRES.3SG Mister Wolf   PRED too big   go   down the hole
     'Mr Wolf is too big to go down the hole.'

The word *mor* is also used as an equative particle in an equative phrase.

5 a. *'dy   'o ddim* **mor** *ddrwg a: hynna.*
     be.PRES.3SG he NEG   as bad   with that
     'he's not as bad as that.'

b. *o'dd   Menna **mor** browd1 a: ti $dw   i 'n   meddwl$,, on'd oedd,*
   M---.

   be.IMPF3SG Menna as   proud   as you.SG be.PRES.1SG I PROG think   Q.NEG be.IMPF3SG

   M---

   'Menna was as proud as you, I think, wasn't she, M---.'

The word *iawn* can also be used as an adjective.

6 a. *ody   e 'n2   **iawn** 'na?*
      be.PRES.3SG he PRED   right   there
      'is he alright there?'

   b. *oh,, wel,,, ddim y   bocs **iawn**.*
      oh well NEG   the box   right
       'oh, well, not the right box.'

As such, it can be modified by a degree modifier.

7   *ie,,, pe:l **go**   **iawn** 'dy   hon,, ie.*
     yes ball fairly right be.PRES.3SG this.F yes
     'yes, this is a proper ball, yes.'

We also discuss *iawn* modifying *bron* 'nearly' in section 1.2.5.

Jones (2009) offers a more formal analysis of the modification of adjectives.

1.2 Other phrases and focus modifiers

The words which occur in other phrases (that is, it will be recalled, phrases other than adjective phrases)
are given in table 4.

Table 4. Modifiers in other phrase

jyst 'just'	68
dim+ond 'only'	54
bron 'nearly'	20
reit 'right'	9
braidd 'rather'	9
iawn	8
hyd+yn+oed 'even'	4
amboutu 'about'	1
	173

The inclusion of *iawn* 'very' in this list is discussed in section 1.2.5.

1.2.1 *Jyst* 'just'

Jyst 'just' (other spellings are *jest*, *jwst* and *dest*) is a borrowing form English. The earliest examples given in *Geiriadaur Prifysgol Cymru* are from the the mid 18th century.

Jyst 'just' occurs in more phrases than any other modifier in the database, all of which are illustrated in the examples in (8).

8   a. ***jyst*** *nawr*.   [Adverb]
       'just now.'

   b. *ti*   ***jyst*** *yn bod yn2 sili,, 'd   wyt*.   [Aspect phrase]
       you.SG just PROG be PRED silly Q.NEG be.PRES.2SG
       'you are just being silly, aren't you.'

   c. ***jyst*** *gafael arno   'te1*.   [Imperative]
       just hold   on.3SG then
       'just hold it then.'

   d. ***jyst*** *bod 'na   dri   fel 'na*.   [Complement Clause]
       just be   there three like that
       'just that there are three like that.'

   e ***jyst*** *rhag+ofn i'   ti   dorri fo,,'te*.   [Subordinate *i*-clause]
        just in case   for you.SG break it then
       'just in case you break it then,'

   f. ***jyst*** *be   'dy   'o*?   [*Wh*-word]
       just what be.PRES.3SG it
       'just what is it?'

   g. ***jyst*** *fel   'na*.   [Prepositional Phrase]
       just like that
       'just like that.'

   h. *mae   isie   **jyst** tsecio bod nos+sadwrn   yn2 **iawn** 'da   ti*?   [Verb Phrase]
       be.PRES.3SG want just check be   night+Saturday PRED right with you.SG
       'there's a need just to check that Saturday night is alright with you.'

   i. ***jyst*** *isio   wneud*.   [*Eisiau* 'want' phrase]
       just want do
       'just want to do it.'

    j. ***jyst*** *pysgodyn,, ife.*   [Noun Phrase]

        just fish   Q

        'just a fish, yes.'

    k. *iawn,,, te*   ***jyst*** *yn2*   *barod.*   [Predicatival Phrase]

        right   tea just PRED ready

        'right, tea just ready.'

Jyst 'just' is a focusing modifier which picks out one possibility, indicated by the phrase which it modifies, from a number of other implied possibiities. The focus of *jyst* 'just' can produce a specificity which can reduce the import or significance of the possibility. For example, in the case of the aspect phrase in (8b), *jyst* 'just' reduces the action (of the child) to nothing more than being silly. In the case of the complement in (8c), *jyst* 'just' focusses on the fact that there are three and no more.

Jyst 'just' mainly precedes the phrase which it modifies but it can also post-modify in some cases, as the comparison of the following examples show.

9   a. ***jyst*** *fel*   *'na,, ie.*

       just like that yes

       'just like that, yes.'

   b. *mae*   *'o fath+a: llew* ***jyst,,*** *yndy.*

       be.PRES.3SG he like   lion just   be.PRES.3SG

       'he's like a lion just, yes.'

Jyst 'just' in some examples is close to, if not identical with, the modifier *bron* 'nearly', discussed in section 1.2.5. There is a possible interpretation of approximation in (8k) and (9b) and it is especially so in examples where it occurs with the preposition *a:* 'with', discussed in section 1.2.8. There are grounds, then, for considering that *jyst* 'just', like *bron* 'nearly', can convey approximation and can be translated as 'almost, nearly'.

Jyst 'just' is also discussed in section 1.2.8 in the sequence *jyst a:* 'just with'.

1.2.2 *Dim+ond* 'only'

Dim+ond 'only' is similar to *jyst* 'just' but is considerably older etymogically. *Geiriadaur Prifysgol Cymru* gives c. 1300 as the earliest date for *dim+ond* 'only'. *Dim ond* also occurs as *'m+ond*. Like *jyst* 'just' it is a focussing modifier which picks out one possibility from a number of implied possibilities. In the database, it occurs in fewer phrases than *jyst* 'just', illustrated by the examples in (10).

10 a. **_dim+ond_** _fanna sy_ _'n2_ _lyb._ [Deictic adverb]
    only   there be.PRES.3SG PRED wet
    'only there is wet.'

  b. **_dim+ond_** _unwaith dw_ _i 'n_ _dweud wrthot._ [Adverb]
    only   once   be.PRES.1sg I PROG tell   to.2SG
    'only once I'm telling you.'

  c. **_dim+ond_** _be_ _sydd_ _i+mewn, y_ _darn yna._ [_Wh_-word]
    only   what be.PRES.3SG inside   the part there
    'only what is inside, that part.'

  d. **_dim+ond_** _ar bapur wnaiff_ _e sticio._ [Prepositional Phrase]
    only   on paper do.FUT.3SG it stick
    'only on paper will it stick.'

  e. **_'m+ond_** _i+fyny_ _'r_ _lo:n._ [Prepositional Phrase]
    only   up   the road
    'only up the road.'

  F. **_dim+ond_** _mynd i+fyny ac_ _i+lawr._ [Verb Phrase]
    only   go   up   and down
    'only go up and down.'

  g. **_dim+ond_** _car s'_ _gen Dad._ [Noun Phrase]
    only   car be.PRES.3SG with Dad
    'it's only a car that Dad has got.'

There is a subtle difference between _jyst_ 'just' and _dim+ond_ 'only'. The latter does not have the same reductive capacity as _jyst_ 'just', that is, it does not necessarily reduce the import or significanse of the focussed phrase like jyst 'just', which, as we have seen, can imply something along the lines of '… that's all'.

1.2.3 _Hyd+yn+oed_

Hyd+yn+oed 'even' occurs in the database in the phrases which are given in the examples in (11).

11 a. _paid_ **_hyd+yn+oed_** _meddwl am_ _y_ _peth._ [Verb Phrase]
    do.IMPV.NEG.2SG even   think   about the thing
    'don't even think about the the thing.'

b. *dw   i 'n   meddwl bydde   isie cael **hyd+yn+oed** mwy na1 'nna1 i'*
   Mam.   [Quantifier Phrase]
   be.PRES.1sg I PROG think   be.CNTF.3SG want have even   more than that   for
   Mother
   'I think that there would be a need (you would need) to have more than that for Mum.'

c. *'dy   'o ddim yn   sefyll **hyd+yn+oed**.*   [Aspect Phrase]
   be.PRES.3SG it NEG   PROG stand even
   'it doesn't stand even.'

d. *wel,,, ma'   'n2   amheus 'da fi   a1   neith   G--- ffitio **hyd+yn+oed**.*
   well be.PRES.3SG PRED doubtful with me whether do.FUT.3SG G---   fit   even
   'well, I doubt whether G--- fit even.'   [Verb Phrase]

Like *jyst* 'just' and *dim+ond* 'only', *hyd+yn+oed* 'even' is a focusing modifier which singles out one possibility (as conveyed by the phrase which is modified) from a number of implied possibilities. Whereas *jyst* 'just' and *dim+ond* 'only' are restrictive *hyd+yn+oed* 'even' singles out the possibility as an addition to implied possibilities and can provide a sense of particularity or exclusiveness to that on which it focuses.

Hyd+yn+oed 'even' can pre-modify or post-modify.

12 a. *dw   i 'n   meddwl bydde   isie cael **hyd+yn+oed** mwy na1 'nna1 i'*
      Mam.
      be.PRES.1sg I PROG think   be.CNTF.3SG want have even   more than that   for
      Mother
      'I think that there would be a need (you would need) to have more than that for Mum.'

b. *'dy   'o ddim yn   sefyll **hyd+yn+oed**.*
   be.PRES.3SG it NEG   PROG stand even
    'it doesn't stand even.'

1.2.4 *Reit* 'right'

Reit 'right' is a borrowing from English. The earliest examples of *reit* 'right' as a modifier in *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* are from the mid 19th century.

Reit 'right' occurs in the database in the phrases which are illustrated in (13).

13 a. ***reit*** *yfanna.*   [Deictic Adverb]

    'right there.'

  b. *mae   e **reit** yn1 y   gornel.*   [Prepositional Phrase]

    be.PRES.3SG it right in   the corner

    'it's right in the corner.'

  c. ***reit***   *draw yfyncw.*   [Prepositional Phrase]

    right over there

    'right over there.'

It has the meaning of indicating maximum degree, which can also imply precision and exactitude, and as such intensifies what is said. As already shown in section 1.1 *reit* 'right' can also be used as a degree modifier of adjectives.

1.2.5 *Bron* 'almost, nearly'

Bron 'nearly' occurs in the database in the phrases which are illustrated in (14).

14 a. *mae   diod **bron** 'di   mynd.*   [Aspect Phrase]

    be.PRES.3SG drink nearly PERF go

    'the drink has nearly gone.'

  b. ***bron***   *iawn i' Sio:n foddi.*   [*I*-clause]

    nearly very for Sion drown

    'Sion nearly drowned.'

  c. ***bron*** *'r un lliw   a: dillad M---.*   [Noun Phrase]

    nearly the same colour with clothes M---

    'nearly the same colour as M---'s clothes.'

  d. *ody   'r sosej **bron** yn2 barod?*   [Predicatival Phrase]

    be.PRES.3SG the sausage nearly PRED ready

    'is the sausage nearly ready?'

Bron 'nearly' conveys approximation to whatever is conveyed by the phrase which it modifies. In (14a–b), the actions indicated by the various phrases are about to be achieved. In (14c), the colour involved approached being the sane as another colour but is not quite the same. In (14d), completeness is imminent but not yet achieved,

Bron 'nearly' is the only modifier in the database which occurs without an accompanying modifying phrase.

15 Mother: *pa   liw   yw   hwnna*?

which colour be.PRES.3SG that.M

'what colour is that?

Child: *coch*.

'red.'

Mother: ***bron***.

almost.'

Bron 'nearly' is the only modifier in the database which can be modified by another degree modifier, namely *iawn* 'very'.

16 a. ***bron***   ***iawn*** *i′   Sio:n foddi*.

nearly very for Sion drown

'Sion very nearly drowned.'

 b. ***bron***   ***iawn*** *yr un2 lliw   a: dy   ffrog di*.

nearly very the same colour with CL.2SG frock you.SG

'very nearly the same colour as your frock.'

 c. ***bron***   ***iawn*** *′di   mynd*.

nearly very PERF go

'very nearly gone.'

 d. ***bron***   ***iawn***.

nearly very

'very nearly.'

As *iawn* 'very' predominantly modifies adjectives, we can either say that it is behaving unusually in modifying a word which is not an adjective or *bron* is an adjective and *iawn* 'very' is behaving normally. *Iawn* 'very' can also postmodify *jyst* 'just' but there are no examples in the database.

Bron 'nearly' is also discussed in section 1.2.8 in the sequence *bron a:*.

1.2.6 *Braidd* 'rather, quite'

Braidd 'rather, quite' in the database modifies only two phrase, as given in (18).

18 a. *o′n   i ′n   ame   **braidd***.   [Aspect Phrase]

be.IMPF.1sg I PROG doubt rather

'I doubted somewhat.'

b. *o'dd*   *honna* **braidd** *yn2*   *wan,, M---.*   [PredicativalPhrase]
be.IMPF.3SG   that.F   rather   PRED   weak   M---
'that was rather weak, M---.'

Braidd 'rather, quite' is a degree modifier which conveys moderation. In (18a) the subject has doubts but they are given as moderate doubts. In (18b), the subject is described as weak but only moderately so.

Braidd 'rather, quite' can pre-modify or post-modify.

19 a. *oh, na,,, mae*   *'o* **braidd** *yn2*   *fawr,, yndy.*
    oh   no   be.PRES.3SG   it   rather   PRED   big   be.PRES.3SG
    'oh, no, it's rather big, isn't it.'

   b. *ond K--- yn*   *dangos ei+hun* **braidd** *pan*   *mae*   *rhywun yn*   *dod*   *yma.*
     but   K---   PROG   show   himself   rather   when   be.PRES.3SG   someone   PROG   come   here
     'but K--- shows off rather when someone comes here.'

1.2.7 *Amboutu* 'about'

Amboutu 'about' can occur as *biti* (and *'bouti*). In the database there is one example in which it occurs between the subject and the verb phrase in a finite copular clause.

20   *ma'*   *G---*   **'biti**   *bennu*   *hwn.*
    be.PRES.3SG   G---   about   finish   this.M
    'G--- is about to finish this.'

It is an approximator which indicates nearness to that which is described by the phrase which it modifies. In this sense it is like *bron* 'nearly' but is positionally different.

1.2.8 *Jyst a:* and *bron a:*

Jyst 'just' and *bron* 'nearly' can both co-occur with the preposotion *a:* 'with' to form the sequences *jyst a:* 'just with' and *bron a:* 'nearly with'. These phrases occur in post-subject position in a copular clause preceding a verb phrase.

21 a. *mae*   **jyst a:**   *marw isio*   *sbia1 ar hwnna.*
    be.PRES.3SG   just   with   die   want   look   on that.M
    'he is just about dying wanting to look at that.'

b. *dan   ni **bron** **a:**   gorffen*.

   be.PRES.1PL we nearly with finish

   'we are nearly finishing,'

We shall claim that these EXPRESSIONS are used when there is a process which is leading up to the inception of an action, event or state but which has not yet occurred or come into existence. In short, we have approximation, a meaning which has been attributed to *bron* 'nearly' in section 1.2.5. There is, however, a difference between the use of *bron a:* in examples like (21b) and examples like (14b), repeated here for convience.

22 **bron**   *iawn i' Sio:n foddi*.

   nearly very for Sion drown

   'Sion nearly drowned.'

When *bron* 'nearly' modifies the event in an *i*-clause as in (22) it indicates that an event almost happened while in (21b) *bron a:* indicates that approximation is in a process which can lead up to an event. The same can be said about *jyst a:* 'just with'.

The syntax of examples like (21) is challenging to explain. We could claim that the preposition *a:* forms a constituent with the verb and that *jyst* 'just' or *bron* 'nearly' modifies this constituent, [[*bron*] [*a: gorffen*]] or we could claim that *jyst 'just'* or *bron* and *a:* form some sort of constituent which modifies the verb phrase which follows [[*bron a:*] [*gorffen*]]. Neither the modifer *bron* 'nearly' or *jyst* 'just' cannot be left out to produce **dan ni a: gorffen* and the preposition cannot be left out to produce **dan ni bron gorffen*. There is more discussion of this type of pattern in Jones (2010).

2 Phrases and classes of modifiers again

The types of phrases which the modifiers can variously modify are given in table 6.

Table 6. Phrases in which modifiers occur, in descending order of frequencies

Adjective Phrases	509
Noun Phrases	60
Verb Phrases	34
Prepositional Phrases	16
Predicatival Phrases	12
Aspect Phrases	10
Bron 'nearly'	8
Complement Clauses	6
Zero	6
Adverbs	5
Imperatives	5
Deictic Locatives	3
Missing data	3
Wh- Words	2
I-clauses	2
Eisiau 'want' Phrases	1
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Bron 'nearly' is included as a phrase on the basis of the illustrations in section 1.2.5.

We can bring together words and phrases by providing a cross-tabulation which relates words to the phrases in which they can occur. The cross-tabulation is given in table 7.

<div align="center">Table 7. Cross-tabulation of words and phrases</div>

	jyst	dim+ond	hyd+yn+oed	bron	reit	braidd	amboitu	iawn	rhy	go	mor	hollol	eithaf	byth	
Adjective Phrase				3				304	174	13	8	3	2	2	509
Noun Phrase	18	38	1	3											60
Verb Phrase	21	7	2	3			1								34
Prepositional Phrase	5	2		1	8										16
Predicatival Phrase	1			4		7									12
Aspect Phrase	5		1	2		2									10
Bron								8							8
Complement Clause	6														6
Zero				6											6
Adverb	1	4													5
Imperative	5														5
Deictic locative		2				1									3
Missing data	3														3
I-clause	1			1											2
Wh- word	1	1													2
Eisiau 'want' Phrase	1														1
	68	54	4	20	12	9	1	312	174	13	8	3	2	2	682

The table shows the number of modifiers which can occur in a phrase (given in the rows) and the number of phrases that a modifier can occur in (given in the columns). *Jyst 'just'* occurs in the greatest number of types of phrases (eleven) while *amboutu* 'about' occurs in only one type of phrase. Adjective phrases can be modified by the greatest number of modifiers (eight) while imperatives, for example, are modified by only one modifier.

A clear difference can be made between focus modifiers in the left-most set of columns and degree modifiers in the right-most set. The latter are resricted to adjective phrases and the former can occur with a greater number of phrases except adjective phrases. In more general terms, focus modifiers can modify any phrase which allows a focus interpetation (that is, it can be interpreted as one of a number of implied possibilities) and degree modifiers can modify gradeable adjectives (in more general terms, adjectives allow a scalar interpretation).

It is more challenging to classify the modifiers which are in the mid set of columns: *bron* 'nearly', *reit* 'right', *braidd* 'rather, quite' and *amboutu* 'about'. They could be put into a third general class but it would simplify matters if they could be assigned to one of the other classes. Like the focus modifiers they mainly occur with phrases other than adjective phrases, with the exception of *reit* 'right'. But a semantic reading indicates that they are not focus modifiers. The question then arises as to whether they are degree modifiers, that is, whether the phrases they modify allow a scalar interpretation of some sort.

Braidd 'rather, quite'' and *bron* 'nearly' allow such an interpretation when they occur with predicatival phrases. Predicatival phrases are headed by the predicatival particle *yn2*, which can occur in the predicate phrase of a copular clause. The predicatival particle can take as its complements a number of types of phrases especially, for our interest, adjective phrases. Adjective phrases can be modified by several degree modifiers. Different degree modifiers modify predicatival phrases.

23 a. *mae*   *E--- **braidd** yn2*   *fawr*.
     be.PRES.3SG E--- rather   PRED big
     'E--- is rather big.'

  b. *ody*   *'r sosej*   **bron** *yn2* *barod*?
     be.PRES.3SG the sausage nearly PRED ready
     'is the sausage nearly ready?'

We thus have a difference between degree modifiers which can modify adjectives and degree modifiers which can modify predicatival phrases which contain adjectives. *Bron* 'nearly' also occurs with noun phrases. Noun phrases are chiefly modified by focus modifiers especially *dim+ond* 'only'. *Bron* 'nearly' can only modify a noun phrase which allows a scalar interpretation.

24 a. ***bron***   *'r* *un2* *lliw* *a:*   *dillad M---*.
     nearly the same colur with clothes M---
     'nearly the same colour as M---'s clothes.'

  b. *bron* ***iawn*** *yr* *un2* *lliw*   *a:*   *dy*   *ffrog di*.
     nearly very the same colour with CL.2SG frock you
     'nearly the same colour as your frock.'

  c. *mae*   *'n2* ***bron*** *amser Anti+S-- fynd* *rwan*.
     be.PRES.3SG PRED nearly time Anti+S--- go   now
     'it's nearly time for Anti+S--- to go now.'

The examples in (24a–b) are based on colour, which allows a scalar interpretation. The example in (24c) is based on time, which also allows a scalar interpretation. (Some speakers may prefer *mae bron 'n2 amser Anti+S-- fynd rwan* or *mae 'n2 amser Anti+S-- fynd rwan bron* for this example.) There are then grounds for classifying *bron* 'nearly' and *braidd* 'quite' as degree modifiers but degree modifiers of phrases other than adjective phrases.

Reit 'right' is clearly a degree modifier when it qualifies adjectives. But it also occurs with prepositional phrases and deictic locatives. Deictic locatives are words which indicate nearness like *yma*, *fama*, *fan+hyn*, farness like *yna*, *fanna*, *fan+draw*, and location which is pointed out like *acw* and *fancw*. For

the purposes of this study, we include as prepositional phrases those phrases which are headed by directional words like *i+fyny* 'up' and *i+lawr* 'down' as well as phrases which are headed by canonical prpeositions like *ar* 'on' and *i* 'for, to'. *Reit* 'right' provies a sense of exactide or precision which can be seen as the maximal end of a scale of precision.

30 a. **reit**   *yfanna.*

 'right there.'

 b. *mae*   *e* **reit** *yn1* *y*   *gornel.*

   be.PRES.3SG it right in   the   corner

   'it's right in the corner.'

 c. *mae*   *'o* *'n*   *mynd* **reit**   *rownd,,*   *yndy.*

   be.PRES.3SG it PROG go   right round   be.PRES.3SG

   'it's going right round, isn't it.'

In other words, *reit* 'right' is a degree modifier which can occur with phrases which allow a scalar interpretation.

The remaining modifier is *amboutu* 'about', which as we have seen indicates approximation. This meaning can be given a scalar interpretation and *amboutu* 'about' can be seen as a degree modifier of verb phrases in this syntactic context.

On the basis of the discussion above, the modifiers can be placed in two general classes, given in table 5.

Table 5. Classes of modifiers

Degree - adjective phrases	*iawn* 'very', *rhy* 'too', *go* 'fairly', *mor* 'so', *hollol* 'completely'
- other phrases	*braidd* 'rather, quite', *bron* 'nearly', *amboutu* 'about', *reit* 'right'
Focusing	*jyst* 'just', *dim+ond* 'only', *hyd+yn+oed* 'even',

Braidd, *bron*, *amboutu* and *reit* have been viewed as degree (or scalar) modifiers, which occur in phrases other than adjective phrases. Of these, *reit* can also modify adjectives.

We can make other comments about phrases and modifiers. *Jyst* 'just' occurs with imperatives in the database. Imperatives in Welsh can be finite but they can also be conveyed by non-finite forms.

33 a. ***jyst*** *gwthio top   i+mewn.*

    just push   top   in

    'just push top in.'

  b. ***jyst***   *gafael arno   'te1.*

    just   hold   on.3sg.M then

    'just hold it then.'

  c. *wel,,,* ***jyst*** *dyro nhw ar   y   rwg yna.*

    well just put   they on   the rug there

    'well just put them on that rug.'

Of the 34 examples of verb phrases, 23 are ellipsed clauses.

25 a. ***'m+ond*** *sbio   arno   fo.*

    only   look   on.3SG.M it

    'only look at it.'

  b. *na,,,* ***jyst*** *mynd i+fyny ac   i+lawr fel   'na.*

    no just go   up   and down   like that

    'no, just go up and down like that.'

It is a challenge to determine, in performance data, whether these are assertions or commands. If the latter, these modifiers are modifying imperatives. The remaining examples contain verb phrases which occur in the contexts which are given in (26).

26 a. *ma'*   *G--- **'biti**   bennu hwn.*   [Predicate in copular clause]

    be.PRES.3SG G--- about finish   this.M

    'G--- is about to finish this.'

  b. *paid*   ***hyd+yn+oed*** *meddwl am   y   peth.*   [Predicate in negative imperative]

    do.IMPV.NEG.2SG even   think   about the thing

    'don't even think about the the thing.'

  c. *gaf*   *i **jyst** wneud?*   [Predicate in auxiliary verb clause]

    have.FUT.1SG I just do

    'can I just do it.'

  d. *mae*   *'n   **jyst** ffitio $dw   i 'n   meddwl$.*

    be.PRES.3SG PROG just fit   be.PRES.1sg I PROG think

    'it just fits I think.'   [Predicate in progressive aspect clause]

e. *mae   isie   jyst tsecio bod nos+sadwrn   yn2   iawn 'da ti*?
be.PRES.3SG want just check be   night+Saturday PRED right with you.SG
'there's a need just to check that Saturday night is alright with you.' [Complement to *eisiau* 'want']

Aspect phrases can be either progressive or perfect and can be modified by either *bron* 'nearly' or *jyst* 'just'.

27 a. *mae   diod **bron** 'di   mynd*.
be.PRES.3SG drink nearly PERF go
'the drink has nearly gone.'

b. *ne' **jyst** wedi golchi fe*?
or   just PERF wash   it
'or just have washed it.'

c. ***jyst** yn   mynd i' siop am funud,, ie.*
just PROG go   to shop for minute yes
'just going to the shop for a minute, yes.'

d. *ti   **jyst** yn   bod yn2 sili,, 'd   wyt.*
you.SG just PROG be   PRED silly Q.NEG be.PRES.2SG
'you are just being silly, aren't you.'

It is more common to modify a perfect aspect phrase than a progressive aspect phrase.

The complement clauses which are modified in the database are all *bod* clauses

36 a. ***jyst** fod 'o 'n   tynnu stumiau.*
just be he PROG pull   grimaces
'just that he's making faces.'

b. ***jyst** bo' ti   'n   neud mwy o olchi i' Mam   eto.*
just be you.SG PROG make more of wash for Mother again
'just that you make more washing for Mum again.'

c. ***jyst** bod 'na   dri   fel   'na.*
just be   there three like that
'just that there are three like that.'

3 Position

Modifiers either immeditely precede the word or phrase which they modify or immediately follow the word which the modify.

The majority are premodifiers: *amboitu* 'about', *dim+ond* 'only', *eithaf* 'quite', *go* 'fairly', *hollol* 'completely', *mor* 'so', *rhy* 'too'.

40 a. *ma'*   *G---* ***'biti*** *bennu*   *hwn.*
     be.PRES.3SG   G--- about finish   this.M
     'G--- is about to finish this.'

   b. ***dim+ond***   *car*   *s'*   *gen Dad.*
     only   car   be.PRES.3SG   with Dad
     'it's only a car that Dad has got.'

   c. *wel,,, ma'*   *gwddw* ***eitha*** *hir*   *gyda nhw,, on'd*   *oes*?
     well   be.PRES.3SG neck   quite   long with   they   Q.neg be.PRES.3SG
     'well, they've got quite a long neck, havn't they?'

   d. *G---*   *fydda*   *'n*   *cael*   *pen+blwydd* ***go***   *fuan,, yndy*?
     G---   be.CNTF.3SG PROG have   birthday   fairly soon be.PRES.3SG
     'G--- would be having a birthday fairly soon, yes.'

   e. *ti*   *'n2*   ***hollol***   *siwr*   *bod honna*   *yn*   *mynd yfanna.*
     you.SG PRED completely sure   be   that.F   PROG go   there
     'you're completely sure that that goes there.'

   f. *drycha*   ***mor*** *lliwgar*   *ma'n*   *nhw.*
     look.IMPV.SG   so   colourful   be.PRES.3PL they
     'look so colourful they are.'

   g. *mae*   *'o 'n2*   ***rhy*** *fawr*   *i' fynd*   *yna,, cyw.*
     be.PRES.3SG it   PRED too big   to go   there chick
     'it's too big to go there, chuck.'

There is a much smaller number of words which are post-modifiers: *byth* 'still' and *iawn* 'very'.

41 a. *oh,,, gwell* ***fyth***.
     'oh, better still.'

b. *mae* *'n2* *flasus* ***iawn***.
   be.PRES.3SG PRED tasty very
   'it's very tasty.'

There are some modifiers which can be either pre-modifiers or postmodifiers: *braidd* 'quite', *bron* 'nearly', *hyd+yn+oed* 'even', *jyst* 'just' and *reit* 'right'.

42 a. *oh, na,,, mae* *'o* ***braidd*** *yn2* *fawr,, yndy*.
   oh no be.PRES.3SG it rather PRED big be.PRES.3SG
   'oh, no, it's rather big, isn't it.'

b. *ond K--- yn* *dangos ei+hun* ***braidd*** *pan mae* *rhywun yn dod yma*.
   but K--- PROG show himself rather when be.PRES.3SG someone PROG come here
   'but K--- shows off rather when someone comes here.'

43 a. *dw* *i 'n* *meddwl bydde* *isie cael* ***hyd+yn+oed*** *mwy na1 'nna1 i'*
   Mam.
   be.PRES.1sg I PROG think be.CNTF.3SG want have even more than that for
   Mother
   'I think that there would be a need (you would need) to have more than that for Mum.'

b. *'dy* *'o ddim yn* *sefyll* ***hyd+yn+oed***.
   be.PRES.3SG it NEG PROG stand even
   'it doesn't stand even.'

44 a. ***jyst*** *fel* *'na,, ie*.
   just like that yes
   'just like that, yes.'

b. *mae* *'o fath+a: llew* ***jyst,, yndy***.
   be.PRES.3SG he like lion just be.PRES.3SG
   'he's like a lion just, yes.'

45 a. ***reit*** *handi*.
   'right handy.'

b. *ma'* *dy* *wallt ti* *'n* *edrych yn2 ole* ***reit*** *fanna*.
   be.PRES.3SG CL.2SG hair you.SG PROG look PRED light right there
   'your hair looks 'right' light there.'

There may be various constraints here whereby the position of the modifier may be influenced by the type of phrase which is modified. This is a matter for future research.

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