



Semantic Hierarchy of Degree Expressions for Psychological Predicates in Yimeng Dialect

Feng Chen*, Yimei Feng

School of Foreign Languages, Qilu Normal University, Jinan, China

Email: *chenfeng@qlnu.edu.cn

How to cite this paper: Chen, F. and Feng, Y.M. (2025) Semantic Hierarchy of Degree Expressions for Psychological Predicates in Yimeng Dialect. *Open Access Library Journal*, 12: e13906.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1113906>

Received: July 3, 2025

Accepted: August 9, 2025

Published: August 12, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Open Access Library Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

Psychological predicates describe mental states and cognitive capacities, reflecting a subject's internal experiences, emotional states, and cognitive processes, with their degree semantics exhibiting multi-layered distinctions (high, medium, low). Compared with Mandarin, the degree category of psychological predicates in the Yimeng dialect of Shandong exhibits distinct regional characteristics. Based on field investigations, this study systematically examines the semantic representations of degree and their semantic hierarchy to intensify psychological predicates in the dialect. The findings reveal that the degree category of psychological predicates in the Yimeng dialect encompasses multiple levels, including polar degree, minimal degree, and comparative degree. Notably, polar and high-degree adverbs are predominant, with their semantics largely derived from the perceptual intensity of sensory stimuli and cognitive processing. This not only reflects the psychological reality of degree expressions in psychological predicates but also reveals the dialect community's shared cognitive patterns regarding emotional intensity. The study provides new empirical evidence for the gradability systems of psychological predicates in Chinese dialects.

Subject Areas

Linguistics

Keywords

Yimeng Dialect, Psychological Predicates, Degree Category, Semantic Hierarchy

1. Introduction

Psychological predicates refer to verbs or adjectives that function as predicates to describe individual psychological state [1], or emotional responses to physical

world, such as joy, anger, sorrow, contemplation, grief, fear, and surprise. These psychological predicates exhibit distinct semantic levels (high, medium, low) in degree, which are linguistically encoded through corresponding formal representations. For instance, degree adverbs or adjectives may serve as intensifying adverbials or complements to psychological predicates, indicating the magnitude or range of the described psychological state. From a grammatical perspective, these degree-marking expressions belong to quantitative category.

The study of quantitative category has long been highly valued in linguistic research. Semantically, research on quantitative category involves temporal quantity [2] [3], spatial quantity [4] [5], degree quantity [6]-[10], as well as subjective and fuzzy quantity [11]-[15].

Quantitative category exhibits distinct quantitative characteristics and measurement methods via different lexical classes. For instance, adjectival measurement [16] [17] differs from verbal measurement [18] [19].

From a semantic perspective, the measurement of psychological predicates falls under the subcategory of degree quantity. In terms of lexical classification, the measurement of psychological predicates involves both the forms of psychological adjectives and psychological verbs.

A review of the literature reveals three main research gaps in existing studies: First, prior research has predominantly focused on single subcategories selected by lexical class or semantic type, while studies on the gradability of psychological predicates—which exhibit cross-categorical properties and multidimensional interactive features—remain relatively scarce. Second, existing studies on gradability categories in Chinese have largely relied on Mandarin as the primary data source, with insufficient attention paid to dialectal data. In particular, research on gradability in Yimeng dialects remains notably underdeveloped. Third, current studies on gradability in Shandong dialects tend to emphasize the grammatical forms, functions, and semantic features of general degree adverbs, whereas systematic investigations into the gradational hierarchy of psychological predicates are still lacking.

Dialects are often regarded by linguists as “living fossils of language”. Many unique expressions in dialects serve as carriers of local cultural identity, reflecting a region’s distinctive culture and shared view of the world. Traits such as “forthrightness, boldness, loyalty, warmth, and simplicity” have long been emblematic of Shandong regional image. But how is this “Shandong identity” linguistically encoded in the Yimeng dialect? More specifically, how is local people’s cultural identity and self-perception embodied in degree expressions of psychological predicates in Yimeng of Shandong dialect? This study aims to investigate the linguistic representations of degree category in psychological predicates within the Yimeng dialect of Shandong, along with their synchronic comparison of gradability expressions between Yimeng dialect and Mandarin. The paper is structured as follows: first, the explicit linguistic manifestations of gradability in psychological predicates in the Yimeng dialect are illustrated. Next, the degree expressions

across five semantic levels will be displayed: polar, high, medium, low, and comparative degrees, which construct the semantic hierarchy of the degree category of psychological predicates in the Yimeng dialect.

2. Degree Expressions of Psychological Predicates in Yimeng Dialect

The core area of the Yimeng Mountain Region in Shandong includes Yishui, Mengyin, Pingyi, Feixian, Yinan, Junan, Linshu, Tancheng, Lanling (formerly Cangshan), Luozhuang, Lanshan, and Hedong in Linyi City; Yiyuan in Zibo City; Linqu in Weifang City; Wulian in Rizhao City; and Sishui in Jining City. The dialect in this region lies in a transitional zone among Central Plains Mandarin (Yanhe Dialect Group, Xuhuai Dialect Group), Jilu Mandarin (Shiji Dialect Group), and Jiao-Liao Mandarin (as exemplified by Wulian in Rizhao). However, Central Plains Mandarin remains the predominant dialect overall. When compared with Mandarin Chinese, the expression of measurement categories in the Yimeng dialect exhibits two distinct features: First, there is a difference in the number of degree adverbs between the Yimeng dialect and Mandarin Chinese, with some degree adverbs in the Yimeng dialect absent in Mandarin; second, there is certain difference in the semantic representations and semantic hierarchies of degree adverbs between the Yimeng dialect and Mandarin Chinese. Their difference can be presented as follows (**Table 1**):

Table 1. Comparison of degree adverbs in Yimeng dialect & Mandarin Chinese.

Meaning	Mandarin Chinese	Yimeng Dialect
too much	guoyu (过于)	(tai) zhan (展)
very much	tai (太), hen (很): neutral	qiao (乔) xie (邪): negative
rather	xiangdang (相当), ting (挺)	xi (稀): reverse sense
a little	shaowei (稍微) youdian (有点)	qiaoqi (悄奇)
distinctively	*** (no equivalent)	qiqi (奇奇)

Psychological predicates are predicates used to describe states of mental activity or cognitive abilities. They typically refer to an individual's inner experiences, cognitive processes, or emotional states, such as "happiness", "anger", "worry", "belief", "awareness", "hope" and "doubt", etc. From a grammatical perspective, psychological predicates are generally verbs or adjectives that describe a person's psychological feelings and serve as semantic predicate in a construction [1]. They represent a relatively special category among predicates, as they can be modified by the degree adverb "very" (e.g., "very afraid") and can also partially take objects (e.g., "afraid of failure") [20]. A statistical analysis of psychological verbs shows that 61.5% of the 117 psychological verbs could be modified by degree adverbs [21]. In contrast to psychological verbs, the vast majority of psychological adjectives can be modified by degree adverbs, reflecting certain measurement

characteristics. However, since psychological predicates originate from an individual's inner experiences, which vary from person to person and have fuzzy boundaries in terms of degree, the measurement hierarchy of psychological states does not possess the precise measurable characteristics seen in the attributes of concrete objects. Instead, the measurement of psychological predicates exhibits significant subjectivity [22]. Nevertheless, to express the intensity of emotions, language users require certain means of emotional intensification, namely, degree expression structures within the measurement category [23]. These expression structures take various forms in Mandarin Chinese, with degree adverbs being the most commonly used form, functioning as adverbials or complements modifying psychological predicates in sentences.

This paper primarily analyzes the forms of special degree adverbs modifying psychological predicates in the Yimeng dialect within the core area of the Linyi city. These forms include degree adverbs functioning as pre-verbal adverbials, post-verbal complements, and the co-occurrence of both pre-verbal adverbials and post-verbal complements.

The majority of the linguistic data is derived from oral corpora obtained through fieldwork. To investigate the frequency and intensity of degree expressions in Yimeng dialect, this study collected descriptions and interpretations from 80 native speakers (with 40 males and 40 females) of Yimeng dialect. All speakers range from 40 years old to 70 years old considering that the dialect is used less in younger generation. They are distributed in suburbs of or countrysides from 16 Yimeng areas (See **Table 2**).

Participants followed ethical regulations and consented to participate in the research by providing their language judgments in two ways: descriptions of 20 given sentences and interpretations of their degree of intensity by labeling numerical judgments by instinct. The first part of the investigation examines how local speakers describe the psychological state with degree expressions in comparison to the given Mandarin Chinese, and the second part expands on their numerical judgments with 5-point Likert Scale from 1 - 5 according to the gradability to find out the corresponding degree of intensity.

Table 2. Data summary of participants.

Category	Group	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	40	50.0%
	Female	40	50.0%
Age	41 - 50 years	25	31.25%
	51 - 60 years	25	31.25%
	61 - 70 years	30	37.5%
Education	Primary School	30	37.5%
	Middle School	30	37.5%
	College/University	20	25.0%

Additionally, relevant materials were gathered from the internet for reference. Furthermore, some data was sourced from works such as Shandong Dialect Records [24], Linyi Dialect Records [25], Feixian Dialect Records [26], as well as relevant examples from the literature of previous scholars [27].

2.1. Adverbials Proceeding Predicates

In the Yimeng dialect, the most commonly used expression for conveying degree is the structure of “degree adverb + psychological predicate”, where the degree adverb functions as an adverbial modifier preceding the predicate verb. Common degree adverbs in this structure include “zhan/zhang (展/张), qiao (乔), guai (怪), gang (刚), xie (邪), xiang (响), xi (稀), qiaoqi (悄奇), qiqi (奇奇)”, etc.

2.2.1. Qiao (乔) + Psychological Predicate

It is generally employed to modify the degree of negative or unfavorable emotional meanings, as illustrated in the following examples:

(1) Wǒ qiáo fán’er tā.

I really dislike/detest him.

(2) Tā xīnli qiáo nánshòu/dānxīn/hàipà.

She feels extremely uncomfortable/worried/afraid in her heart.

2.2.2. Guai (怪) + Psychological Predicate or Guai (怪) + Psychological Predicate + De (得) + Shang (上)/Huang (慌)

It is generally employed to modify the high degree of emotional meanings, but without positive or negative tendency of affective tendency, as illustrated in the following examples:

(3) Tā nà yàng duì wǒ shuō huà, wǒ guài nǎo huǒ.

I got really annoyed/angry when he talked to me like that.

(4) Zhè cì lǚxíng suīrán yǒudiǎn lèi, kě tā juéde guài kāixīn de.

Although this trip was a bit tiring, she felt extremely happy.

(5) Tā nà yàng duì wǒ shuō huà, wǒ guài nǎo huǒ de shàng/huāng.

I felt extremely annoyed/flustered when he talked to me like that.

2.2.3. Tài Zhāng/Zhǎn + Ràng Rén (Cause Someone to) + Psychological Predicate

The psychological predicates that fit into the pattern of “tài zhāng/zhǎn + ràng rén (cause someone to) + psychological predicate” can express the intensity of the psychological state of either the subject or the object, as demonstrated in (6) - (9).

(6) Tīng dào zhè xiāoxī, tā tài zhāng/zhǎn jīdòng/xīngfèn le.

She’s really/extremely zhāng/zhǎn thrilled/excited upon hearing this news.

(7) Tā tài zhāng/zhǎn ràng rén fán le.

He’s really/extremely zhāng/zhǎn annoying to others.

(8) Tā tài zhāng/zhǎn fán rén le.

He’s really/extremely zhāng/zhǎn irritating.

- (9) Nǐ tài zhāng/zhǎn ràng rén dānxīn le.
You're really/extremely zhāng/zhǎn worrying to others.

2.2.4. Xiang/Gang/Xi + Psychological Predicate

This pattern is generally employed to modify the high or medium degree of emotional meanings, with the latter being less in intensity, but both can be used in expressions with positive and negative affective meaning, as illustrated in the following examples:

- (10) Tā zhè liǎng tiān xiǎng nánshòu le, dōu bié zhāo rě tā.
He's been really/extremely feeling awful these past two days, so don't provoke him.
- (11) Tā zuǐ shàng bù shuō xīn lǐ gāng zī ne!
She doesn't say it out loud, but she's actually really happy inside!
- (12) Nǐ gào sù tā yǐ hòu tā xī gāo xìng.
After you told her, she was really/extremely happy.

2.2.5. Xie + Psychological Predicate

It is generally employed to modify the high degree of emotional meanings, but usually is associated with unfavourable and negative affective meaning, as illustrated in the following examples:

- (13) Tōngguò zhè jiàn shì wǒ xié fán tā.
I'm really/extremely annoyed with him because of this incident.
- (14) Zhè xióng háizi, wǒ xié wù yìng tā.
This naughty kid, I'm really/extremely fed up with dealing with him.

2.2.6. Qiaoqi + Psychological Predicate

The word “悄奇” in the Yimeng dialect is used to indicate an extremely slight or almost negligible degree, equivalent to “a tiny bit” or “very little” in Mandarin. In certain contexts, it can modify psychological states and is often paired with “有点” (a little) to emphasize a minimal or barely noticeable amount. For example:

- (15) Tā xīnli qiāo qí yǒudiǎn nánshòu.
He feels a bit strangely/peculiarly uncomfortable in his heart.

The sentence in (15) implies that “He has a little uncomfortable mood inside but it is too slight for him to reveal reluctantly”.

2.2.7. Degree Aggravation Comparison Form: Qiqi + Psychological Predicate

It is generally employed to describe the situation where compared with others, the degree of the mental state is more severe, as in example (16):

- (16) Tān shàng yíyàng de shìr tā qíqí nánguò.
When faced with the same incident, she feels extremely/peculiarly much sadder.

2.2. Complement Following Predicate

2.2.1. (Monosyllabic) Psychological Predicate + Life-Change State Word

This type of structure reflects how the intensity of a psychological state is measured by a life state or physiological reaction. Life states are often expressed through resultative complements indicating an extreme or terminal condition, such as “死” (to death), “要命” (to the point of agony), etc. Physiological reactions are typically represented by resultative complements triggered by external stimuli, describing either: Literal physical discomfort (e.g., “胃疼” (stomachache), “晕倒” (fainting), “恶心” (nausea)), or metaphorical physiological responses (e.g., “掉了魂” (soul leaving the body), “炸” (exploding with emotion), “傻了” (dumbstruck), “呆了” (stunned)). For example:

(17) Wǒ kuài bèi tā qì sǐ le!

I'm about to be infuriated to death by him!

(18) Bàn yè lǐ tīng dào zhè shēng yīn yào xià diào le hún.

Hearing this sound in the middle of the night would scare the wits out of me.

2.2.2. (Monosyllabic or Disyllabic) Psychological Predicate + De + Complement

This pattern is similar to the above pattern in meaning but different in form, for the resultative state needs to be introduced by the auxiliary particle “de(得)”, expressing the degree level to which psychological emotions extend. Usually resultative complements are functioned by life-change state words, such as “to death” or “shang(上)/huang(慌)”. For example:

(19) Yī tí qǐ zhè shì wǒ jiù jué de biē qū de huāng/shàng.

The mere mention of this matter makes me feel extremely aggrieved/oppresed.

(20) Tā dān xīn de yào mìng.

She's worried sick.

2.3. Adverbial + Psychological Predicate + De + Complement (Shang 上/Huang 慌)

In this pattern, the preceding adverbial and following complement co-occur with the psychological predicate, but the complement words are limited only to “shang(上)” and “huang(慌)”, as in example (21) - (22):

(21) Dōu zhème wǎn le nǚ'ér hái méi huí jiā, diànhuà yě bō bù tōng, wǒmen qiáo/gāng dān xīn de huāng/shàng.

It's already so late, and our daughter still hasn't come home. We can't even get through to her on the phone. We're really/extremely worried sick.

(22) *Tā qiáo/gāng qì de liǎn hóng bózi cū.

He was so furious that his face turned red and his neck got thick.

3. Semantic Hierarchy of Degree Expressions in Psychological Predicates

Yimeng dialect constructs a rich and nuanced semantic magnitude system

through its unique lexical innovations, grammatical devices, and semantic extensions. As illustrated in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**, words such as “zhǎn/zhāng”, “sǐ”, etc, constitute the extreme magnitude level; terms like “qiáo/qí”, “guài”, and “xié” form the high magnitude level; “xī” represents the medium magnitude level; “qiāo qí” signifies the low magnitude level; and “qí qí” reflects the comparative magnitude.

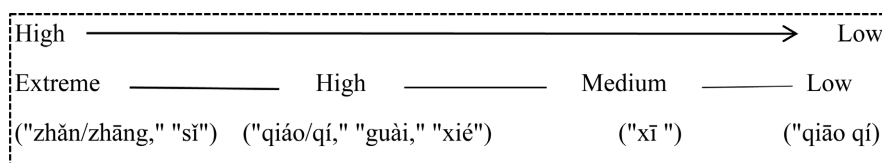


Figure 1. Semantic hierarchy of absolute degree expressions.

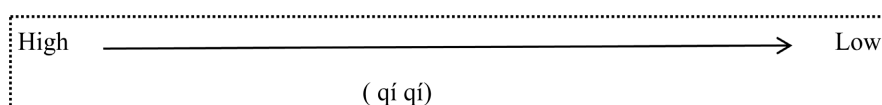


Figure 2. Semantic hierarchy of comparative degree expressions.

3.1. Extreme High Level

In the Yimeng dialect, adverbs conveying extreme magnitude primarily include “zhǎn/zhāng”. From a semantic perspective, these words originally carried the basic meanings of “unfolding” or “expanding”. Over the long process of linguistic evolution, their semantics have gradually become more abstract. They no longer simply denote actions but are used to intensify the semantic degree of psychological predicates, expressing an “extreme” psychological state. Through the composite application of lexical innovation and grammatical devices, the semantic intensity of psychological predicates is greatly enhanced, pushing subjective feelings to the extreme. For instance, when a person experiences a sudden event and their emotions reach a peak, becoming somewhat uncontrollable, they might use an expression like (23), which implies that your emotion has gone a bit too far and is beyond your control.

(23) Nǐ qíngxù zhǎn/zhāng jīdòng le, dāngshí bù yīnggāi shuō zhèyàng de huà.

You were extremely/overly excited, and you shouldn't have said such words at that time.

3.2. High Level

In the Yimeng dialect, adverbs conveying high magnitude exhibit dual semantic features of exceeding quantity and deviation from expectations, expressing not only degrees like “very” or “extremely” but also differences from anticipated states.

The word “qiáo”, used as an adverb of high magnitude, as in “qiáo hàipà” (extremely afraid). Originally, “qiáo” described tall and straight trees, which were

defined in the “Shuowen Jiezi” as “tall and curved”, specifically referring to tree trunks that soar high with curved branches. In the Yimeng dialect, through semantic transformation, “qiáo” has shifted from describing physical forms to measuring qualities or psychological states, with its semantics gradually becoming abstract and forming the meaning of “very”. For example, expressions like “qiáo shèn de shàng” (a psychological feeling caused by affected speech or repulsive things), “qiáo qì de shàng” (extremely angry), and “qiáo bù nàifán” (extremely impatient). This way of expression corresponds to the “very” in Mandarin, showcasing the regional characteristics of the dialect.

Originally, “qí” meant strange or special, but in the Yimeng dialect, it is mainly used to emphasize the degree of psychological states. “Guài” initially referred to things or phenomena that exceeded norms and were different from others, carrying the meaning of “strange” or “unusual.” Through semantic abstraction, it expresses the meaning of “exceeding expectations” and becomes an adverb of high magnitude.

“Xié” is the opposite of “zhèng” (right/proper), indicating strangeness and deviation from the norm. Therefore, it can undergo semantic evolution to express a significant degree of deviation from the normal or usual state. Another explanation is that “xié” might be a phonetic variation of “xiē” (a little), which, in combination with dialectal loanwords in the Yimeng dialect, forms the meaning of “very” as an adverb of high magnitude.

“Xiǎng” originally meant the propagation of sound during the Pre-Qin and Han dynasties. The “Shuowen Jiezi” explains “xiǎng” as “sound”, referring to the sound emitted by objects, as in “kōng gǔ chuán xiǎng” (echoes in the empty valley) from the “Huainanzi”. Later, during the Wei, Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties, its meaning extended to “loud sound”, developing from the concrete meaning of “sound” to the intensive meaning of “loud sound”. For example, “zhōng míng xiǎng qīng” (the bell rings loudly and clearly) from Cao Zhi’s poetry. During the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, it further abstracted to mean “significant effect/great influence”, expanding from auditory perception to visual or abstract fields of “significance,” as in “other people’s words are more convincing and reasonable than hers” from the Qing dynasty novel “Xianü Qiyuan” (Part 1), referring to outstanding speaking effects. In modern times, it has finally become an adverb of degree in Shandong and Jianghuai Mandarin, modifying adjectives or verbs to mean “very”. For example, “xiǎng qíng” (extremely clear) and “xiǎng bǎo” (very full). As an adverb of high magnitude, “xiǎng” forms the meaning of “very comfortable” through affixation, as in “xiǎng hǎo shòu le” (extremely comfortable). For example, after resting for a while and feeling extremely relaxed both physically and mentally, people in Yimeng might say, “Tǎng le yíhuìr, xiǎng hǎo shòu le” (After lying down for a while, I feel extremely comfortable).

“Gāng” means hard or strong. The “Shuowen Jiezi” defines “gāng” as “strong and decisive.” For example, “gāng qiáng sì fāng” from the “Book of Songs·Da Ya” describes military might. In dialects, it has evolved from the original meaning of

“strong” to an adverb of degree meaning “very” or “extremely”, as in “gāng nánshòu” (extremely uncomfortable). Meanwhile, “tè” is a loanword with a similar semantic function to “tài” (too) in Mandarin but with a stronger tone.

3.3. Medium Level

The semantic meaning of “xī” in Chinese has undergone an evolutionary process from the concrete to the abstract, developing unique usages as an adverb of degree in different dialects, especially in the Shandong dialect. Originally, “xī” referred to a small quantity. As defined in the *Shuowen Jiezi*: “xī means sparse”, indicating that things are not densely distributed or are few in number. Since the Song and Yuan dynasties, its meaning has metaphorically extended from “low density” to “weak degree”, modifying adjectives to convey the sense of “slightly”, as seen in the line “sù zhū xī dàn méi chéng zì” (the overnight porridge is thin, and the eyebrows form words) from the *Anlu Collection* (Song Dynasty, *Siku Jibu* 185).

In the Shandong dialect, however, “xī” has evolved in the opposite direction to become an adverb of high degree, equivalent to “very” or “particularly”. It is speculated that this usage may have originated from the term “xī làn” (originally meaning “extremely rotten”) and subsequently undergone semantic generalization. This represents a typical example of reverse semantic expansion, illustrating the innovative inheritance of ancient Chinese by dialects. Similar evolutions can be observed in words like “chòu” (originally meaning “odor”, but used to mean “very” in dialects) and “jīng” (as in “jīng shī”, meaning “drenched”), all of which achieve intensification of degree through hyperbolic rhetoric.

3.4. Low Level

The original meaning of “qiāo” is “silence or soundlessness”. As explained in the *Shuowen Jiezi*: “qiāo means sorrow. It combines the radical ‘heart’ with the phonetic component ‘xiāo’”, originally referring to inner sorrow and silence. During the Tang and Song dynasties, its meaning extended from “soundlessness” to “secretly, stealthily; gently”, as seen in the line “qiāo qiāo chóng mén yǎn, huáng hūn dú yǐ lán” (Quietly, the double doors close; Alone, I lean on the railing at dusk) from Li Shangyin’s Untitled poem. After the Yuan and Ming dynasties, because “qiāo” conveyed the sense of “gentle and unobtrusive”, it gradually became abstracted into an adverb modifying actions or states, meaning “slightly”, as in “qiāo niē le tā yī bǎ” (giving him a slight pinch) (from the Qing dynasty novel *The Story of Heroic Sons and Daughters*).

In the Linyi dialect, “qiāo” combines with “qí” (a modal particle) to form the fixed expression “qiāo qí”, meaning “slightly”. Here, “qiāo” retains its meaning of “lightness or slightness”, while “qí” itself indicates degree. The two elements combine perfectly to express a minimal degree.

3.5. Comparative Degree

In the Linyi dialect, the character “(qí)” inherently carries the connotation of

“deviating from the normal standard” in terms of degree. When this character is reduplicated, it intensifies the degree, making the modified psychological state more prominent compared to the reference standard of the comparison object. Formally, it is similar in usage to “(shāo shāo, slightly)”, but semantically, it often expresses a greater degree of difference.

Even though the hierarchy above is proposed based on Yimeng areas in Shandong province, it agrees with cross-dialect model [28] [29] or even cross-linguistic models of gradability [30]-[32], which indicates the research significance beyond Yimeng Dialect.

4. Conclusions

Psychological predicates express human psychological and emotional meanings, and their magnitude categories, to a certain extent, reflect the cognitive patterns of a speech community. Through an investigation into the Yimeng dialect of Shandong Province, this study reveals that the magnitude categories of psychological predicates in this dialect encompass multiple levels, ranging from extreme magnitude to minimal and comparative magnitudes. Among them, extreme and high-magnitude adverbs of degree are numerous, and the vast majority originate from the perception and cognition of the intensity of sensory stimuli. This reflects the psychological reality of the magnitude categories of psychological predicates in the dialect, as well as the universal cognitive understanding of psychological and emotional intensity within the dialect community. It also indirectly demonstrates the straightforwardness of character and simplicity of thought among people in Yimeng, Shandong.

To be frank, the characteristics of a regional dialect are influenced by a multitude of factors. Given Shandong’s large population, vast geographical expanse, profound historical and cultural heritage, significant population mobility, and exposure to various regional languages, the manifestations of its magnitude categories are rich and diverse. The inability to conduct a comprehensive and systematic investigation into all these manifestations constitutes a limitation of this study. It must be acknowledged that sampling bias, such as single Yimeng region and oral style only, which may limit the generalization to wider Shandong speech communities.

Funding

Funded by Humanities and Social Sciences Research Project of Shandong Province for “Research on Degree Expressions of Psychological Predicates in Shandong Dialect” (2022-JCWX-09).

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

- [1] Zhang, J.Y. (2002) The Acquisition of Psychological Predicates by English Learners

- Who Speak Chinese: A Semantic Salience Hierarchy Model. Doctoral Dissertation, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.
- [2] Wu, C.X. (2006) A Study on the Category of Temporal Quantity in Modern Chinese. Doctoral Dissertation, Shanghai Normal University.
- [3] Wang, S.K. (2010) A Study on the Category of Temporal Quantity in Modern Chinese. China Social Sciences Press.
- [4] Huang, J.Q. (2013) A Study on the Expression of Spatial Quantity in Chinese. Doctoral Dissertation, Shanghai Normal University.
- [5] Liu, G.L. (2022) A Perspective-Based Study on the Spatial Meanings of Spatial Measurement Words in English and Chinese. *Journal of Northeast Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, No. 2, 69-74+110.
- [6] Cai, L. and Peng, X.C. (2011) The Degree Category and Its Syntactic Realization in the Complement System. *Applied Linguistics*, No. 1, 144.
- [7] Zhang, X.M. (2016) A Study on the Degree Quantity of Adjectives in Modern Chinese. Doctoral Dissertation, Shanghai Normal University.
- [8] Zhu, L. (2018) A Study on the New Forms and Functions of Degree Adverbs in Modern Chinese. Doctoral Dissertation, Shanghai Normal University.
- [9] Xuan, Y. and Li, D. (2020) Two Formation Mechanisms of Emerging Degree Expressions. *Collected Papers on Linguistic Research*, No. 1, 154-172+379-380.
- [10] Wang, D. and Cao, G. (2024) The Current Status of and Theoretical Proposals for the English Translation of Foshan Cantonese Opera. *International Linguistics Research*, 7, 38-50. <https://doi.org/10.30560/ilr.v7n3p38>
- [11] Li, Y.M. (2000) A Study on the Category of Quantity in Chinese. Central China Normal University Press.
- [12] Chen, G. (2003) A Study on the Semantic Category of Gradability in Modern Chinese. Doctoral Dissertation, Nankai University.
- [13] Wei, Y.L. (2010) A Comparative Study on the Expression of Fuzzy Quantity in Chinese and English. Doctoral Dissertation, Huazhong University of Science and Technology.
- [14] Huang, L.M. (2018) A Study on the Fuzzy Quantity and Its Changes of Measurement Adjectives. Doctoral Dissertation, Xiangtan University.
- [15] Yu, Y. (2021) From Objective Small Quantity to Subjective High Quantity: An Exploration of the Subjective High-Quantity Expression of “You Dianr”. *Chinese Language Learning*, No. 6, 103-112.
- [16] Zhang, G.X. (2000) The Typical Characteristics of Adjectives in Modern Chinese. *Chinese Language*, No. 5, 447-458+480.
- [17] Xiong, Z.R. (2013) The Category of Measurement and Chinese Adjectives. *Chinese Teaching in the World*, 27, 291-304.
- [18] Lan, J.R. (2008) The Quantitative Characteristics of Psychological Verbs in Modern Chinese. Doctoral Dissertation, Fudan University.
- [19] Guo, Q. (2016) A Study on the Quantitative Characteristics of Verbs in Modern Chinese. Doctoral Dissertation, Shanghai Normal University.
- [20] Zhou, Y.B. and Shao, J.M. (1993) Psychological Verbs in Chinese and Their Sentence Patterns. *Linguistic Research*, No. 3, 32-36+48.
- [21] Dong, X.M. (1991) On Psychological Verbs in Chinese. *Journal of Liaocheng Teachers College (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, No. 4, 115-119.

-
- [22] Athanasiadou, A. (2010) Emotive Intensification and Subjectivity. In: Vainik, E. and Sahkai, H., Eds., *Emotions in and around language: Book of Abstracts*, The Institute of the Estonian Language, 17-19.
- [23] Foolen, A. (2011) Emotive Intensifiers in Dutch. *The Seventh Chinese Cognitive Linguistics Conference*, Shanghai, 7 July 2011, 7-9.
- [24] Qian, Z.Y. (2001) A Study on the Dialects of Shandong. Qilu Publishing House.
- [25] Ma, J. and Wu, Y.H. (2003) A Record of the Linyi Dialect. Qilu Publishing House.
- [26] Shao, Y.M., *et al.* (2019) A Record of the Feixian Dialect. The Commercial Press.
- [27] Li, Z.Y. (2024) A Study on Adverbs in the Lanshan Dialect of Linyi, Shandong. Doctoral Dissertation, Shanxi Datong University.
- [28] Zheng, R.M. (2023) The Research on the Expression of Degree Quantity in Shouguang Dialect of Shandong Province. Doctoral Dissertation, Hebei University.
- [29] Jiang, L.Y. (2024) Jiaozhou Dialect Degree Expression System. Doctoral Dissertation, Jiangxi Normal University.
- [30] Huang, R.H. (2008) The Scalar Quantity Implicature of English Degree Adverbs. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, No. 2, 121-127.
- [31] Liu, F. (2020) A Cognitive Study on Emotional Intensifying Adverbs in English. The Commercial Press.
- [32] Wang, Y.J. (2023) A Comparative Study on the Semantic Evolution of Emotional Intensifying Adverbs in English and Chinese. Doctoral Dissertation, Dalian University of Technology.