

‘They were canny good like’: Variation and change in the intensifying system of Tyneside teenagers

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Project overview

Discourse-pragmatic variation and change in the oral speech of Tyneside teenagers

Boosters

What typifies Tyneside Teen Talk?

Emphasisers

Age-grading or language change in Tyneside?

Methodology

Sampling & Data collection

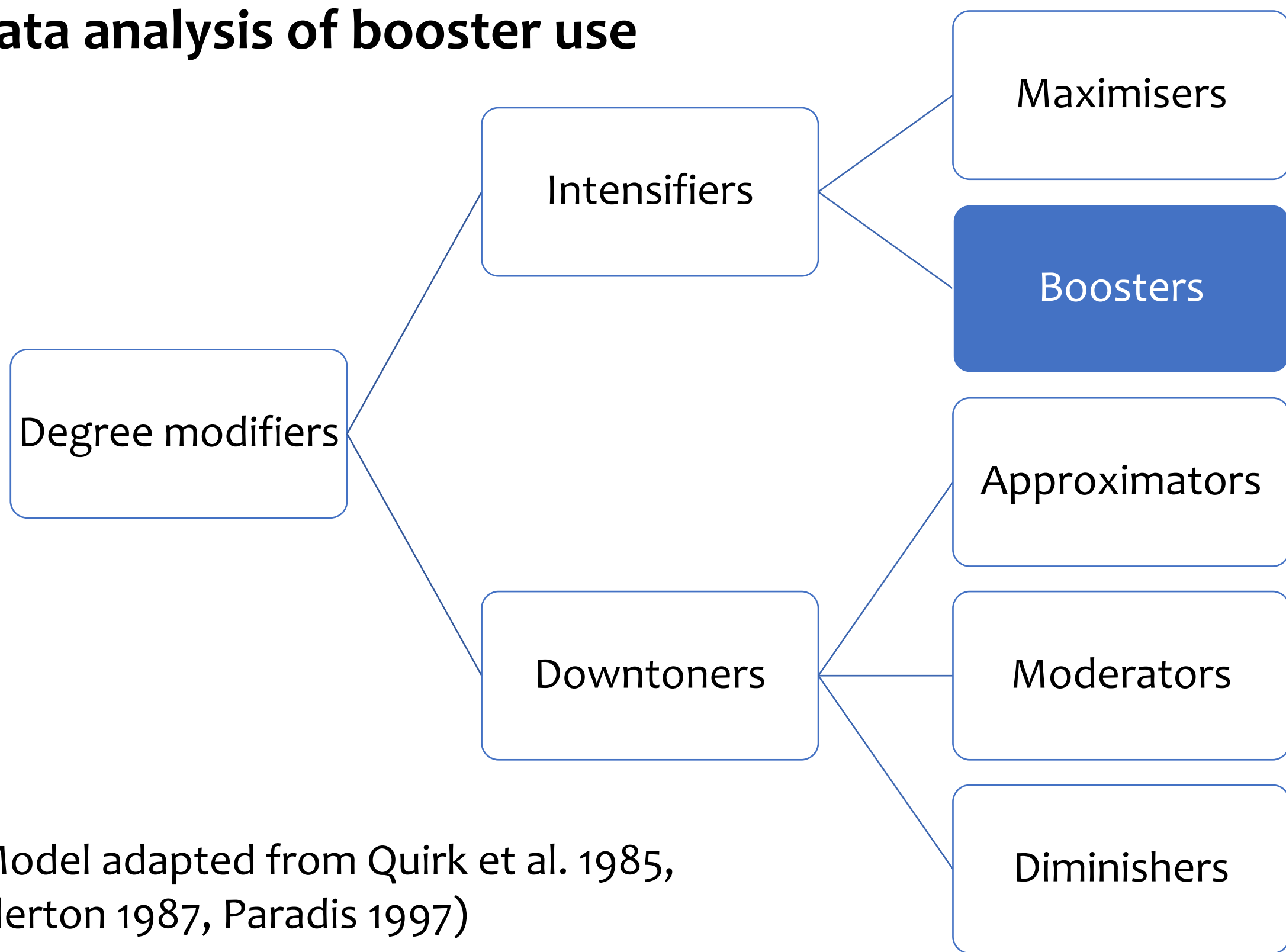
	12-15	16-18	19-20	Total per gender
Male	6	6	6	18
Female	6	6	6	18
Total per age	12	12	12	Total sample: 36

Dyadic interviews
Semi-structured
Self-selected pairs
Same gender
Same age group
60' – 70'

TyTeC
(part of DECTE, Corrigan et al. 2012)

Multivariate analysis
lme4 package in R Studio

Data analysis of booster use



(Model adapted from Quirk et al. 1985, Allerton 1987, Paradis 1997)

- Function-delimited variable
- Adverbs pre-modifying adjectival heads
- Bottom-up approach: corpus informs list of variants.

Null cases for Principle of Accountability (Labov 1972)?

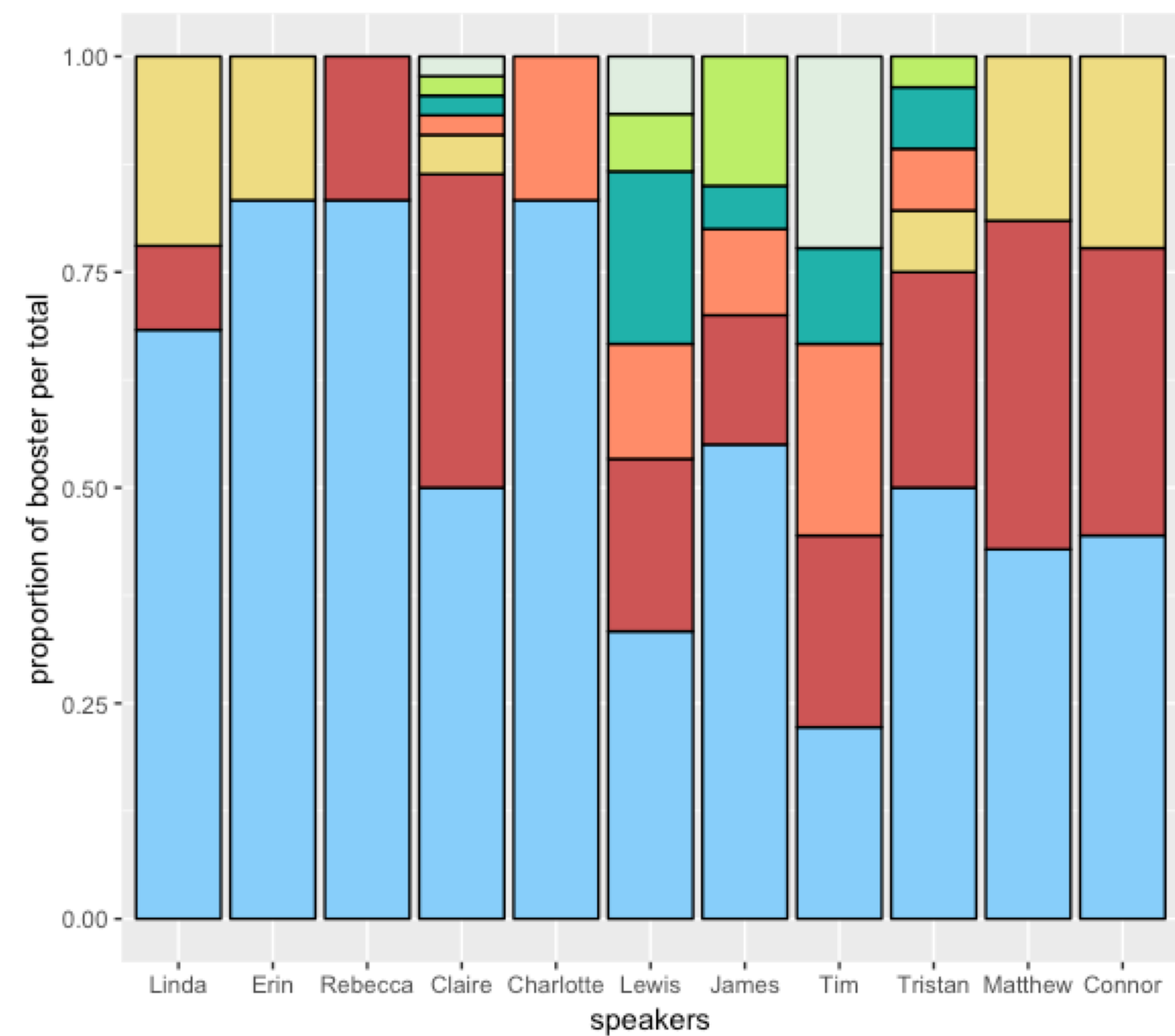
- Inclusion (e.g. Ito & Tagliamonte 2003, D'Arcy 2015): statistical accuracy; neutral degree
- Exclusion (e.g. Barnfield and Buchstaller 2010): interest in variants, not intensifying as a strategy
- My approach: dual analysis to test if it makes a difference.

Maximisers & boosters?

- Same variable context: boundaries are not clear-cut (Xiao and Tao 2007); they behave similarly in syntagmatic terms (Barnfield and Buchstaller 2010)
- My approach: not the same variable context, different in paradigmatic terms.

Discussion of results in booster use in the 16-18 age group

16-18 age group; 6 M, 5 F
Exclusion of null cases; Chi-square test



Brief overview of distribution

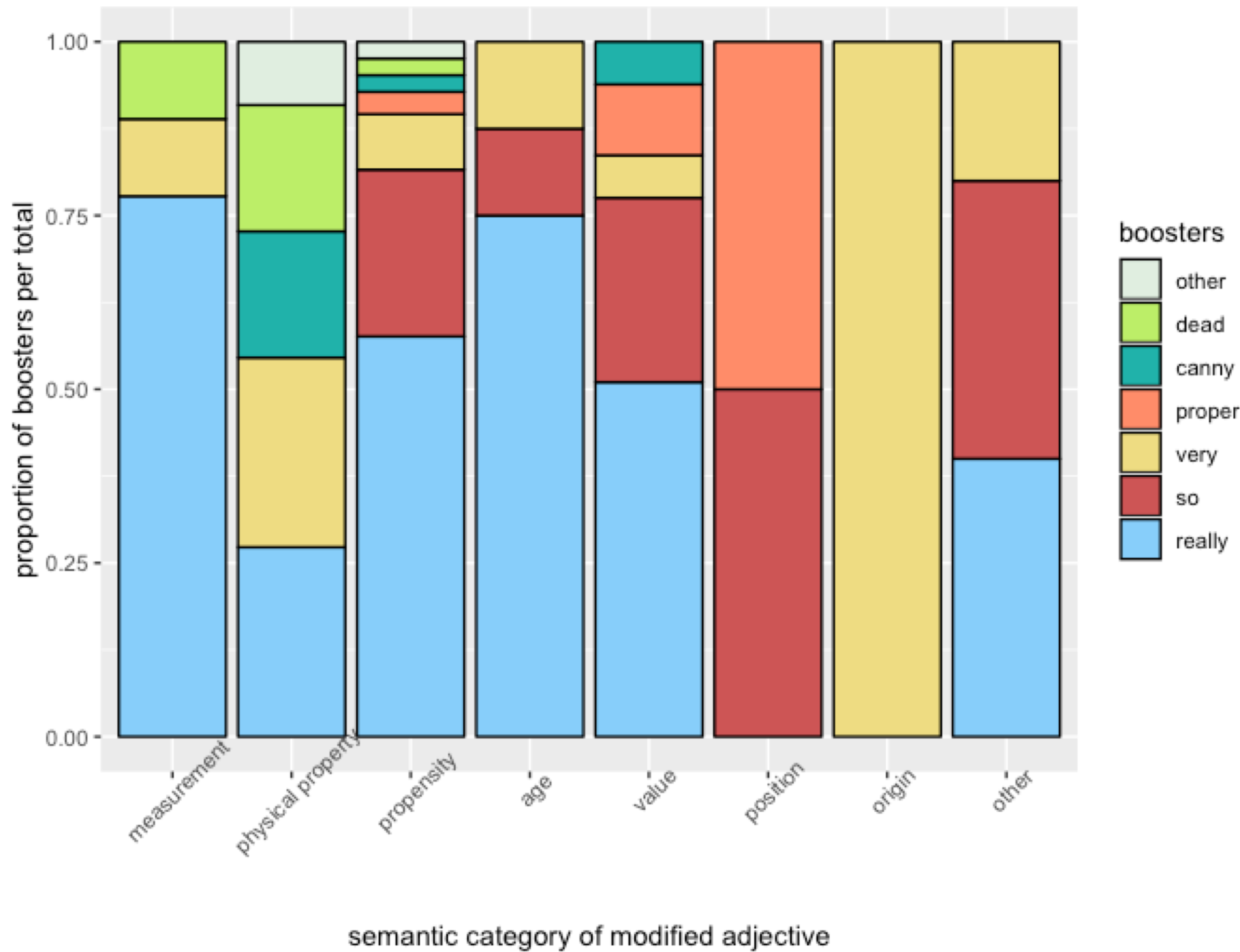
- Boosters grouped in 'other' category have a frequency < 3% ('pure', 'right', 'real', and 'super')
- 'really' is in most cases the most frequent variant.
- 'very' is generally infrequent in comparison and is even absent in the repertoire of many speakers.
- 'proper', 'canny', and 'dead' are infrequent and often idiosyncratic of certain speakers.
- Generally, male speakers seem to show more internal variation. Female speakers only use 2 or 3 variants, with the exception of Claire who has a distribution of variants similar to male speakers like Tristan.

External constraint: gender

- Female speakers: 'really' accounts for more than half of the uses, whereas 'so' is almost as infrequent as 'very'.
- Male speakers: more variation, 'so' and 'really' similar in frequency
- Gender differences **significant at p < 0.01**

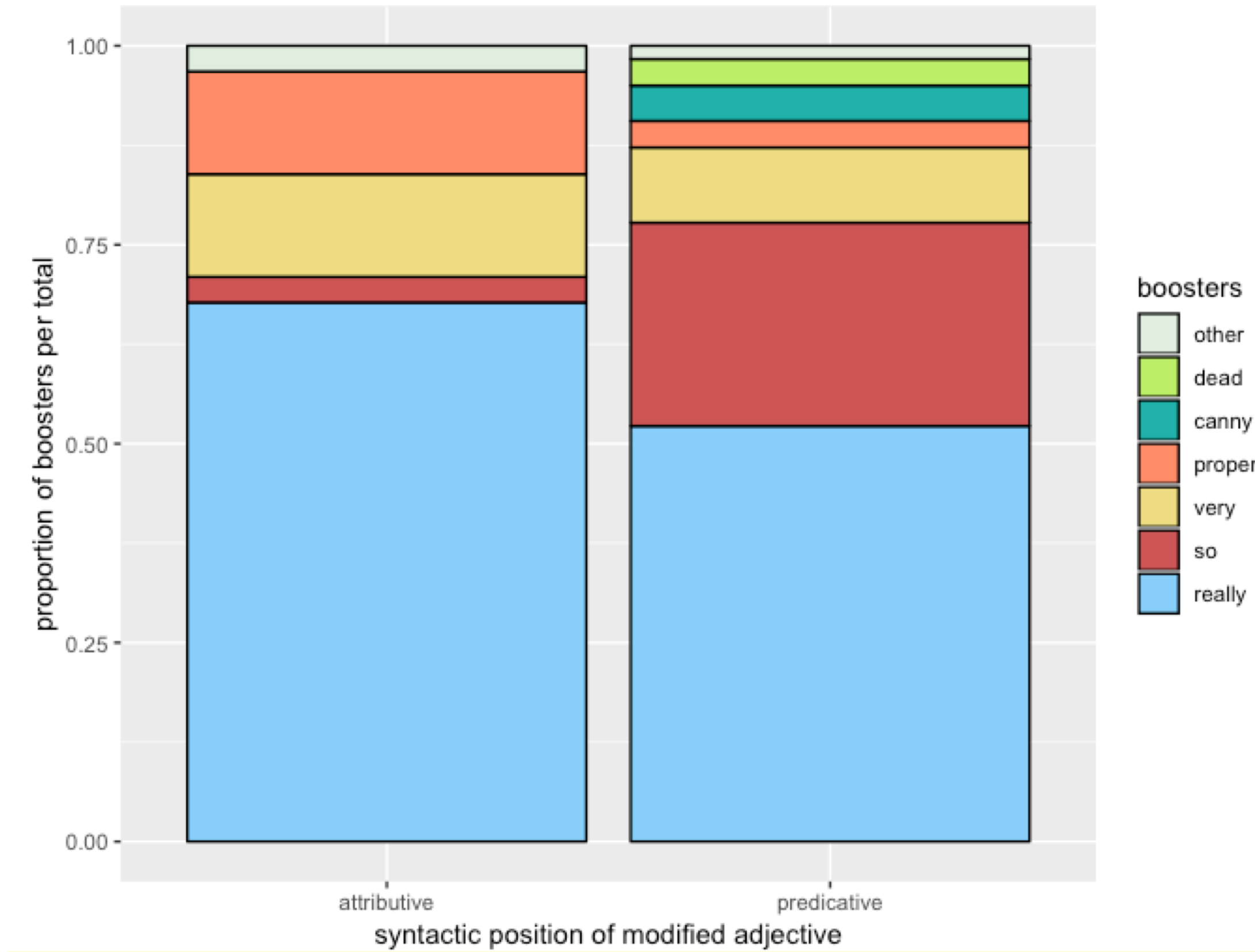
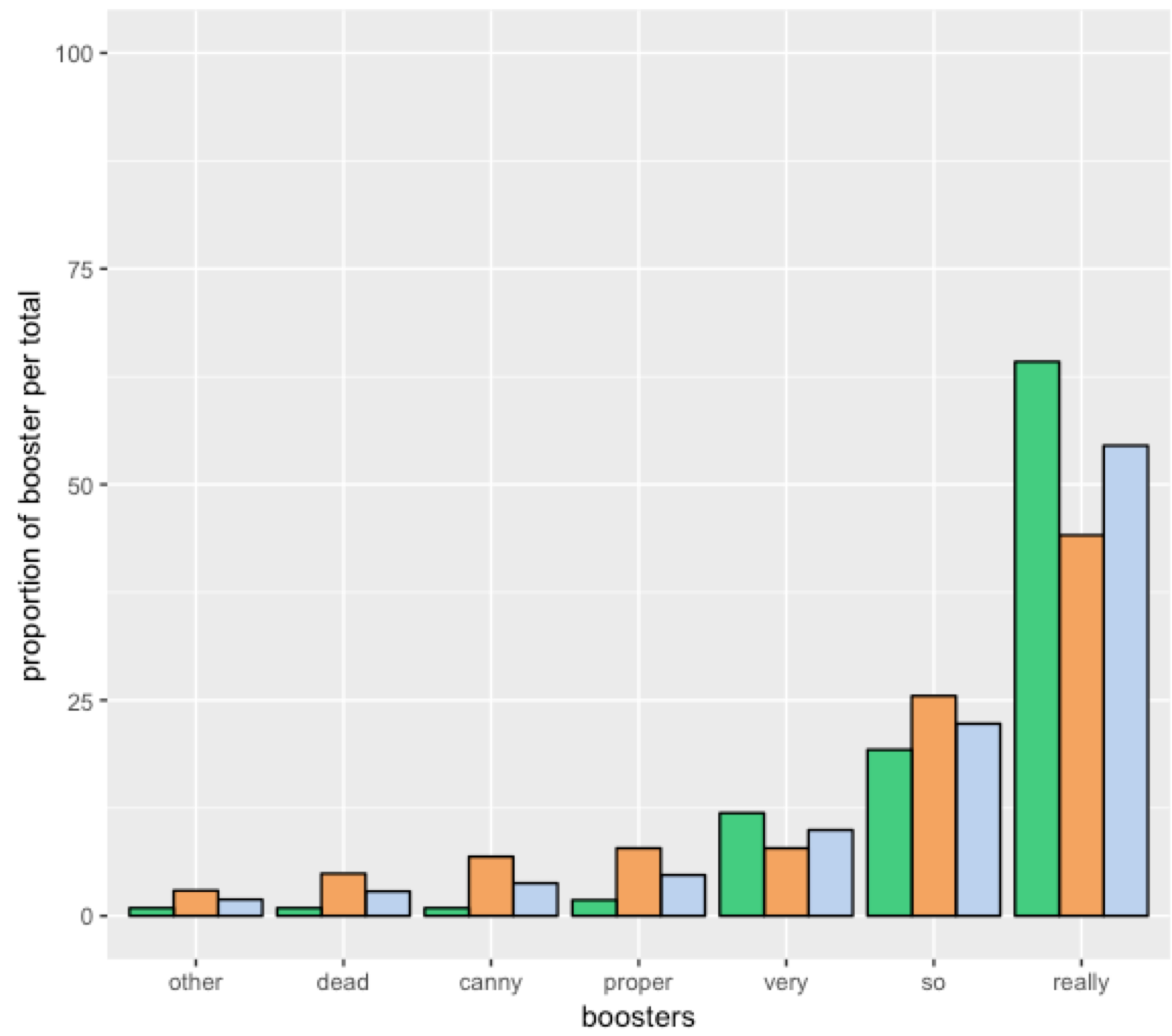
Comparing total with Barnfield and Buchstaller (2010: 273)

- 'very' is in steep decline (~33% v 10%)
- 'so' sees a moderate increase (~10% v 22%)
- 'really' is on the rise (~28% v 55%)
- 'canny' and 'proper' are still infrequent (<3% v 4% and 5%)
- 'canny' and 'dead' are almost exclusively used by male speakers (see Childs 2016)



Internal constraint: semantic category of modified adjective (based on Dixon 2010[1982])

- 'really' and 'very' are widely spread across semantic categories
- 'proper', 'canny', and 'dead' are still restricted to specific categories (early grammaticalisation)
- Only 2 tokens of position adjs with boosters ('so' and 'proper') and 2 of origin adjs with boosters ('very')
- Differences due to semantic category **significant at p < 0.01**



Internal constraint: syntactic position of modified adjective

- 'really' largely dominates both contexts
- 1 token of attributive 'so' (systemic impossibility)
- 'proper' already used both in attributive and predicative contexts
- 'canny' and 'dead' used exclusively in predicative contexts (early grammaticalisation – cf. Ito and Tagliamonte 2003)
- Differences due to syntactic position **significant at p < 0.1**

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