

A Study on the Cognition and Contextual Construction of the “DEGREE ADVERB + NOUN” Structure

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Received: July 20, 2026

Accepted: September 4, 2026

Online Published: October 22, 2026

doi:10.5430/wjel.v17n1p318

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v17n1p318>

Abstract

Research on degree expression in English has primarily examined how degree adverbs modify adjectives, verbs, and clauses. However, relatively little attention has been paid to the cognitive constraints and contextual mechanisms underlying the cross-categorical “degree adverb + noun” construction, particularly in Malaysian English. To address this gap, the study develops an integrated analytical framework consisting of cognitive-semantic identification, contextual parameter annotation, and construction–function mapping. A self-compiled Malaysian English corpus was constructed from 4,862 publicly available texts produced between 2021 and 2025, comprising approximately 1.18 million words. Automatic extraction identified 2,436 candidate instances, of which 1,972 were retained after manual screening, yielding a retention rate of 80.95%. The 20 most frequent constructions accounted for 1,062 instances, or 53.86% of the valid data. Inferential tests confirmed an association between construction type and discourse domain at both the broad category level, $\chi^2(18, N = 1,972) = 42.03, p = .001$, Cramér’s $V = .103$, and the high-frequency lexical level, $\chi^2(38, N = 1,062) = 143.30, p < .001$, Cramér’s $V = .260$. The stronger lexical-level association indicates that register differentiation is concentrated in recurring combinations rather than distributed uniformly across general semantic categories.

Keywords: degree adverbs + nouns, Malaysian English, cognitive semantics, context construction, construction analysis

1. Introduction

Degree modification is a central mechanism through which English speakers locate qualities, events, and states on scalar dimensions. Previous research on English degree modification has mainly examined degree adverbs with adjectives, verbs, and clauses, where the modified element already provides a relatively accessible scale for interpreting differences in intensity or degree. This established line of research provides a useful point of departure, but it does not fully explain cases in which degree expressions occur in nominal constructions whose head nouns are not inherently associated with an ordered scale. Nouns commonly denote entities, events, or abstract concepts, so their interpretation as stronger, weaker, greater, excessive, or otherwise degree-sensitive often requires additional semantic and contextual support. The central issue of the present study is therefore how a degree expression within a noun phrase makes a nominal referent interpretable along a scale and how the surrounding context selects the relevant scalar meaning. Depending on the construction and its context, a noun may be construed as evaluable, measurable, bounded, excessive, or closer to a salient category prototype, thereby allowing the degree expression to receive a contextually appropriate interpretation. Expressions such as *too much pressure*, *quite a problem*, *very serious concern*, and *so much damage* illustrate this interpretive process. Although these combinations differ in their internal syntactic organization, they share the ability to impose or reinforce a scalar interpretation on a nominal referent. Abstract states may be construed as measurable quantities, problems may be presented as bounded objects, and evaluative concepts may be positioned on scales of quality or intensity. Construction Grammar provides the general theoretical basis for this analysis by treating a construction as a recurrent pairing of form and meaning whose interpretation emerges from the interaction between its component words and the constructional pattern. In this study, conceptual metaphor refers to understanding an abstract concept through a different conceptual domain, such as construing intensity in terms of scale or pressure in terms of load. Metonymy refers to accessing a concept through a closely associated aspect within the same conceptual domain. Their specific analytical roles are developed further in the literature review and subsequent cognitive analysis. Local contextual cues further determine which of these possible interpretations is activated in a particular sentence and what discourse function the construction performs, including evaluation, stance marking, topic focusing, and information compression. Malaysian English provides an appropriate setting for examining these construction–context relations because English is used across journalistic, educational, institutional, and public communication in a multilingual environment. These discourse domains place different communicative demands on language use: news discourse emphasizes concise identification of risks and public concerns, academic-oriented discourse requires careful qualification of evidence and uncertainty, and public-media discourse frequently employs compact evaluative expressions. The study therefore examines whether these discourse environments are associated with systematic differences in the selection and recurrence of degree-modified noun constructions and in the contextual functions assigned to them. The occurrence of these constructions in Malaysian English is not, however, treated as evidence of regional uniqueness; the present

analysis is limited to identifying recurrent patterns and discourse-related variation within the sampled Malaysian English data.

Against this background, three unresolved issues provide the immediate motivation for the present study. First, previous studies of noncanonical degree modification have concentrated largely on proper-name constructions, particular phrase types, or degree constructions in Chinese, leaving English common nouns comparatively underexamined within a unified constructional framework. Second, constructional representation, changes in noun interpretation, conceptual mapping, and context-dependent meaning have generally been investigated in separate strands of research rather than within the same analytical procedure. Consequently, it remains unclear how the semantic characteristics of individual words, the structural relations among the degree expression and the noun phrase, nearby linguistic cues, and discourse functions jointly shape the interpretation of the construction. Third, corpus-based evidence remains limited on whether degree-modified noun constructions show systematic distributional differences across news, academic-oriented, and public-media discourse in Malaysian English. Simple frequency counts are insufficient for this purpose because differences in observed counts may result from sample composition rather than a statistically stable association between constructional choice and discourse domain. To address these limitations, the study uses a self-compiled corpus of Malaysian English texts produced between 2021 and 2025. After automatic retrieval and manual screening, 1,972 valid instances were retained for analysis; detailed corpus size, extraction procedures, and screening criteria are reported in the Methodology section. The study combines cognitive-semantic annotation, contextual analysis, construction-function mapping, and statistical testing to examine the recurrent forms, discourse distribution, and contextual interpretation of degree-modified noun constructions. This design keeps the introduction focused on a single analytical question: how recurrent nominal degree constructions are distributed across discourse domains and how their interpretations are supported by semantic and contextual information.

2. Literature Review

Research relevant to noncanonical degree modification can be organized around several interconnected issues, including the representation of unconventional form-meaning pairings, the processing of atypical adverbial combinations, and the conditions under which nouns acquire degree-related interpretations. From a constructional perspective, Frazer-McKee and Duffley (2024) demonstrate through the “DEGREE ADVERB + PROPER NAME” construction that noncanonical degree meaning cannot always be derived from the meanings of individual lexical items alone. Instead, interpretation may depend on recognition of the larger construction as a recurrent form-meaning pairing (Frazer-McKee & Duffley, 2024). This finding is important for the present study because it suggests that degree expressions occurring in nominal environments may require construction-level interpretation rather than ordinary compositional modification. Chen (2025) develops this perspective further through a network-based analysis of degree adverb constructions, showing that recurrent lexical combinations can become increasingly schematic and form relatively stable semantic associations (Chen, 2025). Such findings indicate that repeated co-occurrence contributes to the conventionalization of degree constructions rather than merely reflecting accidental lexical adjacency. At the processing level, Chen et al. (2025) show that relations between adverbial and nominal elements are influenced by structural position and processing demands, indicating that interpretation depends not only on lexical meaning but also on the grammatical relations among the relevant constituents (Chen et al., 2025). Zang and Wang (2025) complement this evidence by demonstrating that nouns may undergo systematic semantic shifts within particular constructions. This observation is relevant to degree-modified nominal expressions because nouns that conventionally denote entities, events, or abstract states may acquire measurable or evaluative readings when they occur in specific constructional environments (Zang & Wang, 2025). Constructional patterns should therefore not be treated as isolated units. Bouso et al. (2024) show through structural priming that related constructions may exhibit measurable strengths of association within a constructional network (Bouso et al., 2024), while Wei et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of structural information in real-time language processing (Wei et al., 2024). Taken together, these studies suggest that noncanonical degree modification is best understood through the interaction of recurrent constructional patterns, structural relations, and changes in nominal interpretation rather than through isolated lexical meanings alone.

A second line of research concerns the role of context in determining how linguistic expressions are interpreted. In the present study, context-dependent or dynamic interpretation refers to the process by which the meaning assigned to a lexical item or construction is progressively adjusted as surrounding linguistic information becomes available. Iftikhar and Shahzad (2024) emphasize that linguistic structures contribute to the gradual construction of discourse situations and that interpretation develops as contextual information accumulates (Iftikhar & Shahzad, 2024). Their findings support the view that constructional meaning cannot be determined independently of the immediate textual environment. Corpus-based studies provide similar evidence. Ahmad and Saleem (2026) demonstrate that recurrent constructional environments can influence the semantic prosody or evaluative orientation associated with lexical items, illustrating how contextual distribution contributes to meaning beyond the dictionary meaning of an individual word (Ahmad & Saleem, 2026). Rahmah and Simatupang (2024) likewise show that lexical meaning varies according to recurrent corpus distributions, reinforcing the need to examine actual patterns of co-occurrence rather than assigning a fixed interpretation to a linguistic form in advance (Rahmah & Simatupang, 2024). This contextual perspective is particularly relevant to noun interpretation. Cao et al. (2025) show that noun recategorization depends jointly on contextual cues and constructional patterns (Cao et al., 2025). In the present study, “contextual recategorization” refers to a context-driven change in the way a noun is construed. A noun that normally denotes an entity, event, or abstract state may, in a particular construction, be interpreted as measurable, evaluable, bounded, or otherwise compatible with a degree scale. Such recategorization does not necessarily change the lexical category of the noun; rather, it changes the semantic dimension through which the noun is interpreted in the immediate context. Although Barghi et al. (2025) focus on grammatical assessment rather

than degree modification itself, their multidimensional diagnostic framework is methodologically relevant because it demonstrates the value of combining several observable features when identifying and classifying complex grammatical patterns (Barghi et al., 2025). These studies collectively indicate that the interpretation of degree-modified nominal constructions should be examined through the interaction of constructional form, noun meaning, and local contextual information.

Research from Cognitive Grammar, semantic-network analysis, and quantitative linguistics further extends this account by showing how context-sensitive interpretations can be represented and measured. Yan (2025), through an analysis of the Chinese expression *duō shǎo* (“how much/how many”), shows that expressions associated with quantity and degree may develop interpretations that depart from their prototypical meanings, illustrating a broader process of context-sensitive semantic extension (Yan, 2025). Han (2025), from the perspective of Cognitive Grammar, argues that the interpretation of English noun phrases depends partly on how speakers mentally construe their referents in context, which supports the treatment of nominal interpretation as context-sensitive rather than fixed (Han, 2025). Quantitative approaches provide a complementary perspective. Wang et al. (2026) demonstrate that syntactic and lexical information can be jointly characterized through probability-based measures, indicating that linguistic preferences may be represented as graded distributional tendencies rather than categorical choices (Wang et al., 2026). Chen et al. (2025) similarly show that characteristics of English nominal structures can be compared quantitatively across different English contexts, supporting the use of measurable distributional features in the analysis of noun constructions (Chen et al., 2025). At the lexical-semantic level, Liang et al. (2024) demonstrate that related meanings can be represented through structured polysemy networks, suggesting that semantic extensions are systematically connected rather than independent interpretations (Liang et al., 2024). Alisoy (2025) further integrates structural and semantic dimensions in phraseological classification, providing support for an analytical procedure in which formal patterning and semantic interpretation are examined together (Alisoy, 2025). These approaches are relevant to the present study because they provide theoretical and methodological support for treating degree-modified noun constructions as patterned form–meaning associations whose interpretations vary systematically with lexical, structural, and contextual conditions.

Conceptual metaphor and metonymy provide a further means of explaining how nouns that do not possess an obvious lexical scale can nevertheless participate in degree-related interpretation. In the present framework, conceptual metaphor refers to a cross-domain mapping through which a relatively abstract concept is understood in terms of another, often more concrete, conceptual domain. For example, an abstract state such as pressure may be conceptualized in terms of physical load, while intensity may be understood in terms of position on a scale. Metonymy differs from metaphor in that it operates through association within the same broader conceptual domain: one salient aspect of a concept provides access to another closely related aspect. These mechanisms are relevant to degree-modified nominal constructions because they help explain how abstract states, risks, problems, consequences, or evaluative concepts can be interpreted as measurable, bounded, accumulated, intensified, or otherwise situated on a scale. Conceptual metaphor and metonymy are therefore not treated in this study as independent explanations for every instance. Rather, they serve as analytical mechanisms for cases in which the degree interpretation involves a systematic conceptual mapping that cannot be sufficiently explained by the conventional lexical meaning of the noun alone. Their role must consequently be examined together with the constructional pattern and the local contextual cues that activate a particular interpretation.

Taken together, previous studies have clarified several important components of noncanonical degree modification, including recognition of recurrent form–meaning patterns, changes in noun interpretation, structural constraints on processing, semantic extension, and context-dependent meaning construction. However, these components have generally been examined in separate theoretical or methodological traditions. Construction-based studies tend to focus on particular patterns, processing studies emphasize real-time recognition, and corpus studies often describe distributions without directly testing how semantic interpretation is connected with discourse function. This separation leaves several issues unresolved. First, findings derived primarily from proper-name constructions, Mandarin degree constructions, or isolated lexical items cannot be transferred directly to English common nouns without further examination. A proper name normally identifies a particular referent, whereas a common noun typically denotes a category whose specific interpretation is established in context. In the present study, “gradability” refers to whether a nominal meaning can be interpreted along an ordered scale such as amount, intensity, severity, or evaluative strength. Many common nouns do not lexically encode such a scale, but particular constructions and contexts may make a scalar interpretation available. “Contextual recategorization,” accordingly, refers to a context-driven shift through which a noun that is not normally interpreted in scalar terms is construed as measurable, evaluable, bounded, excessive, or otherwise compatible with degree modification.

Second, existing studies have rarely integrated the semantic interpretation of individual constructional instances with inferential statistical comparisons across discourse domains. Consequently, it remains unclear whether differences observed among news, academic-oriented, and public-media discourse represent stable associations between constructional choice and discourse environment or merely differences in raw frequencies. Third, constructional form, noun semantics, contextual information, conceptual mapping, and discourse function have rarely been incorporated into the same analytical procedure. The present study addresses these limitations by analyzing each target instance through five connected dimensions: the function of the degree expression, the semantic type of the noun, the structural relation between the degree expression and the noun phrase, nearby contextual cues, and the discourse function performed by the construction. The contribution of this framework lies not in proposing another inventory of degree-modified forms, but in examining a connected interpretive sequence in which a noun receives a scalar reading, local context selects the relevant interpretation, and recurrent use associates particular constructional patterns with particular discourse functions.

Malaysian English provides an appropriate context in which to examine these relationships because English is used across news, academic-oriented, institutional, and public-media communication within a multilingual environment. The present study does not assume that the identified patterns are unique to Malaysian English. Rather, Malaysian English provides a defined corpus context in which the interaction among constructional form, nominal interpretation, contextual cues, and discourse distribution can be investigated systematically. On this basis, the study addresses the following three research questions: (1) Which degree-expression and noun-semantic combinations recur most frequently in the corpus? (2) Are construction types significantly associated with discourse domain? (3) How do conceptual mapping and local contextual cues jointly support stance focusing, abstract quantification, issue identification, and conceptual reframing?

3. Methodology

3.1 Corpus Sources and Sample Composition

This research focuses on degree-modified nominal constructions in Malaysian English and examines their distribution and contextual interpretation across three discourse-source groups. A self-compiled Malaysian English corpus was constructed from three clearly differentiated types of publicly available written sources: news discourse, academic-oriented institutional discourse, and public-media discourse. The news component consisted of English-language reports published by Malaysian news outlets, including The New Straits Times and The Star. The academic-oriented institutional component consisted of publicly available academic information and course descriptions published on Malaysian university websites; these texts were included because they represent English used in an educational and institutional context and provide a discourse environment distinct from news reporting and public-media interaction. The public-media component consisted of publicly accessible English-language posts collected from local online forums and public social-media spaces. Only publicly available English texts belonging to the 2021–2025 sampling period and providing sufficient sentence-level context for construction identification were included. The three discourse-source groups provide comparable contextual environments for examining whether degree-modified nominal constructions vary with discourse setting. The same screening criteria were subsequently applied to all three groups before structural identification, contextual annotation, and cognitive-semantic analysis were conducted (Olguín Martínez & Gries, 2025).

3.2 Corpus Selection Criteria and Scope Definition

To ensure stylistic coverage and structural comparability, the corpus timeframe was limited to 2021 – 2025. After the original corpus was compiled, a uniform screening procedure was carried out on the candidate samples to ensure consistency in identifying the "degree adverb + noun" structure, as well as the operability of the subsequent modeling. The specific size of the screening, the retention rule, and the variation of the sample are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Corpus Screening Criteria and Definition of Research Scope

Item	Standard Description	Data Volume
Total Raw Text Volume	English-language news articles from Malaysia, publicly available university texts, and English-language public media texts from 2021–2025	4,862 articles
Raw Corpus Size	Total number of words in the English corpus after deduplication, cleaning, and word segmentation	1,180,000
Candidate Structure Extraction	Preliminary screening based on the adverb of degree lexicon, noun core lexicon, part-of-speech tags, and dependency relations	2,436 examples
Structure retention criterion 1	Degree adverbs and nouns form adjacent or partially dependent, identifiable units	Retain
Structural Retention Criterion 2	The noun is a common noun or an abstract noun that can be referred back to, and does not contain purely proper nouns or specific instances	Retain
Structural Retention Criterion 3	The sentence context is complete, and a context window of at least 10 words before and after can be extracted	Retain
Exclusion Criteria 1	Misidentified proper nouns, ad fragments, incomplete sentence fragments, OCR noise	214 instances excluded
Exclusion Criteria 2	Cross-sentence breaks, spelling anomalies, and automatic annotation conflicts that cannot be manually verified	250 cases excluded
Final valid samples	Total number of samples used for subsequent contextual parameter annotation and cognitive construction analysis	1,972

A hierarchical convergence method was used for the screening of the corpus, as shown in Table 1: Initially, 4,862 Malaysian English texts were collected; after cleaning and deduplication, a basic corpus of about 1,180,000 words was formed; on this basis, 2,436 candidate structures of "degree adverb + noun" were extracted using part-of-speech tagging and dependency constraints. A second screening was conducted according to structural adjacency, noun type, and contextual completeness. This procedure excluded 214 misidentified or noisy instances and 250 instances involving structural discontinuities or unresolved annotation conflicts, leaving 1,972 valid instances. The screening procedure retained 80.95% of the 2,436 candidate instances and reduced the influence of extraction errors and incomplete contexts, and provides a stable data base for later retrieval of contextual parameters and cognitive construction.

3.3 Framework for Cognitive Semantic Analysis and Contextual Construction Analysis

After sample screening, a three-level analytical framework was established, comprising cognitive-semantic identification, contextual

parameter annotation, and construction–function mapping. The whole process is shown in Figure 1. The purpose of this distinction is to determine whether degree interpretation is produced primarily through cross-domain conceptual mapping, through association within a conceptual frame, or through the interaction of both mechanisms. The first level encodes the intensification, restriction, and evaluation functions of the degree adverb, and at the same time, it also identifies the concrete, abstract, event relatedness, and evaluative ability to form the basic semantic matrix; the second layer extracts context parameters, including the context window, style category, syntax position, modifier chain length, and co-occurring evaluative words — from Malaysian English texts. In order to ensure analytical consistency between the different text sources, Table 2 provides a summary of the primary annotation dimensions and descriptions.

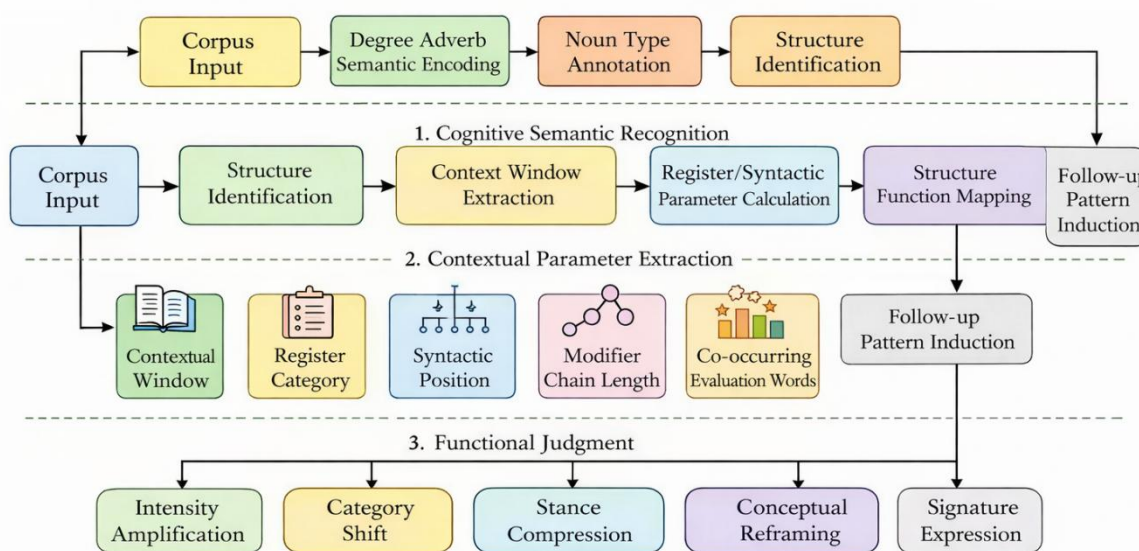


Figure 1. Cognitive-Semantic Analysis and Contextual Construction Analysis Framework

This framework does not regard the "degree adverb + noun" as a single, fixed phrase, but as a compound structure which is driven by the semantic characteristics, the local syntax, and the discourse context. While maintaining the consistency of the selection criteria, this method provides a uniform interface for manual annotation, consistency verification, and pattern induction.

Table 2. Primary Annotation Dimensions for Cognitive Semantic Analysis and Contextual Construction

Dimension	Annotation Content
Degree-Adverb Functions: Intensifying	Restrictive, Excessive, Evaluation-Triggering
Noun Semantic Categories	Specific Nouns, Abstract Nouns, Event Nouns, Evaluative Nouns
Syntactic parameters	Intra-sentential position, modifier chain length, dependency relations
Contextual parameters	Contextual Window, Discourse Category, Co-occurrence of Evaluative Words
Pragmatic Functions	Stance Focus, Issue Identification, Abstract Quantification, Conceptual Reframing, Result Compression, Risk Anticipation, Modal Reinforcement, Interactive Buffering, Information Calibration

The dimensions shown in Table 2 together form a uniform annotation interface for later analysis. The semantic layer explains "whether you can enter the structure," the syntactic layer explains "how the structure is entered," and the context layer explains "why a particular interpretation appears in the existing text." Only by interacting with each other can the cognitive structures of Malaysian English's "degree adverb + noun" structure be accurately described.

3.4 Coding Reliability and Analytical Methods

Subsequently, encoding and analysis were performed on the valid samples that had been filtered. The formal boundaries and semantic categories of each target instance were identified according to a standardized annotation manual, after which its cognitive-semantic and contextual features were coded (Kim, 2025). This step included:

① Structural Unit Identification: To determine if the noun head is directly modified by the degree adverb, for example, a lot of chaos, too much pressure, and a lot of nonsense.

② Noun type encoding: Classification of nouns as specific, abstract, event, or evaluative; for example, "pressure" is encoded as AN, and "mess" as EVN.

(3) Degree Function Encoding: Each degree expression was coded according to the function it performed in the local construction rather than according to its lexical form alone. Four functional categories were distinguished: intensifying, restrictive, excessive, and evaluation-triggering. An intensifying expression increases the scalar strength associated with the nominal expression; a restrictive expression narrows or delimits the relevant degree range; an excessive expression indicates that an amount or intensity exceeds a contextually relevant threshold, as in too much pressure; and an evaluation-triggering expression contributes to construing the nominal referent in explicitly evaluative terms. Ambiguous items were classified according to their function in the sentence context. This distinction follows the constructional view that degree interpretation results from the interaction between the degree expression and its constructional environment.

(4) Contextual Window Analysis: A 10-word context is extracted, and its style category, syntax location, and evaluation words are labeled.

⑤ Pragmatic Function Categorization: Each valid instance was assigned a dominant discourse function according to its contribution within the local context. The categories correspond to those used in the subsequent results analysis: stance focus highlights or condenses an evaluative position; issue identification presents a problem or concern as a salient discourse object; abstract quantification construes an abstract state in measurable degree terms; conceptual reframing changes the perspective from which a nominal concept is interpreted; result compression condenses the consequence of an event into a compact nominal expression; risk anticipation incorporates a potential future risk into current evaluation; modal reinforcement strengthens necessity or urgency; interactive buffering reduces the interpersonal force of a direct evaluation; and information calibration specifies the strength or reliability with which information or evidence is presented. When an instance could plausibly perform more than one function, the category that best represented its primary contribution to the surrounding sentence was selected. The classification draws on context-sensitive approaches in which discourse function is established through the interaction of linguistic form and local contextual information.

These coding steps distinguish lexical form from contextual function: the same degree expression was not automatically assigned the same functional label in every occurrence, and the final category was determined by its scalar contribution within the complete sentence context. Based on the comparison of the prototypical meaning of the adverb, the conventional category meaning of the noun, and the combination of them in the present sentence, it is determined whether the target structure exhibits non-prototypical degree modification or context reconstruction. In order to ensure the consistency of the encoding, the study used a double-review mechanism, which includes an English linguist and a corpus annotation researcher. The two coders independently annotated a pilot sample of 240 instances before the full corpus was coded. Inter-coder reliability was calculated separately for structural-unit identification, noun-type classification, degree-function classification, and pragmatic-function classification. The observed agreement rates were 97.08% (233/240), 94.58% (227/240), 95.83% (230/240), and 93.33% (224/240), respectively, and the corresponding Cohen's κ coefficients were .94, .91, .93, and .88. Across the four coding dimensions, the mean observed agreement was 95.21% (914/960 coding decisions), and the mean Cohen's κ was .92, indicating almost perfect inter-coder agreement. Disagreements were resolved through discussion, and the clarified coding rules were incorporated into the final annotation manual before the remaining instances were coded. At the analysis stage, frequencies and percentages were calculated to describe the distribution of each construction type. Pearson's chi-square tests of independence were then conducted to determine whether construction types were associated with news, academic, and public-media discourse. Cramér's V was reported to quantify the strength of each association. When an omnibus test was significant, pairwise chi-square comparisons were conducted with a Bonferroni-adjusted significance level of .0167. Adjusted standardized residuals were also examined to identify construction-register combinations that contributed substantially to the overall association. All statistical tests were two-tailed, with the initial significance level set at $\alpha = .05$ (Haselow, 2024).

4. Results

4.1 Overall Distribution Characteristics of the "Degree Adverb + Noun" Structure

The purpose of this research is to find out the general distribution features of the "degree adverb + noun" structure in the Malaysian English corpus. A Pearson chi-square test showed that the 10 construction types were not distributed independently of discourse domain, $\chi^2(18, N = 1,972) = 42.03, p = .001$, Cramér's $V = .103$. All expected cell frequencies exceeded 5, with a minimum expected frequency of 12.32, indicating that the assumptions of the chi-square test were satisfied. The effect size was small, suggesting that discourse domain constrained constructional choice probabilistically rather than determining it categorically. Intensifying-adverb constructions with evaluative nouns (428 instances, 21.70%) and abstract nouns (361 instances, 18.31%) were the most frequent patterns. Excessive constructions occurred with abstract nouns in 276 instances (14.00%) and event nouns in 151 instances (7.66%). Restrictive constructions were most frequent with concrete or specific nouns (219 instances, 11.1%), followed by abstract nouns (126 instances, 6.39%) and event nouns (47 instances, 2.38%). These distributions suggest that constructional choice is associated with noun semantics and discourse context (Oleniak, 2025). Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons showed a significant difference between academic and public-media discourse, $\chi^2(9, N = 1,160) = 36.08, p < .001$, Cramér's $V = .176$. By contrast, the difference between news and academic discourse did not reach the adjusted significance level, $\chi^2(9, N = 1,455) = 16.75, p = .053$, and neither did the difference between news and public-media discourse, $\chi^2(9, N = 1,329) = 13.64, p = .136$. The overall association was therefore driven primarily by contrasts between academic and public-media usage rather than by uniform differences among all three discourse types. For a more intuitive presentation of

this distribution pattern, Table 3 summarizes the frequency and proportion of the target structure across the major semantic and stylistic combinations.

Table 3. Overall Distribution of the “Degree Adverb + Noun” Structure

Structure Type	News Style	Academic Style	Public Media Style	Frequency	Percentage
Intensifying adverbs + evaluative nouns	176	141	111	428	21.7
Intensifying adverb + abstract noun	142	131	88	361	18.31
Excessive adverbs + abstract nouns	118	94	64	276	14
Restrictive adverbs + concrete or specific nouns	96	73	50	219	11.1
Intensifying adverb + event noun	78	74	53	205	10.4
Excessive adverbs + event nouns	66	48	37	151	7.66
Restrictive adverbs + abstract nouns	52	43	31	126	6.39
Evaluation-triggering adverbs + evaluation nouns	38	27	39	104	5.27
Excessive-type adverb + evaluative noun	21	7	27	55	2.79
Restrictive adverb + event noun	25	5	17	47	2.38
Total	812	643	517	1,972	100

As shown in Table 3, the 1,972 valid instances comprised 812 cases from news discourse, 643 from academic discourse, and 517 from public media discourse. 812 examples (41.18%) belong to the news genre, 643 (32.61%) to the academic genre, and 517 (26.22%) to the public media genre. This distribution is consistent with the corpus source structure discussed earlier, suggesting that the news text serves a high frequency function of degree expression in Malaysian English, especially in evaluative and abstract expressions; The academic register shows a relatively balanced use pattern but tends to be more abstract; whereas the public media register, although representing a smaller percentage, has a clear preference for certain structural types.

In terms of structure, the core of the distribution is the combination of intensifying adverbs + evaluative nouns (428 cases, accounting for 21.70%) and intensifying adverbs + abstract nouns (361 cases, or 18.31%), which makes up 40.01% of the total. Among these, 176 and 142 cases were found in the two structural categories, respectively, indicating that news reporting tends to amplify the semantic meaning of nouns when reinforcing a stance or focusing on a concept; The academic register accounted for 131 instances of the "intensifying adverb + abstract noun" structure, approaching the level of the news register, indicating that this structure has a stable application in theoretical statements and conceptual definitions.

The distribution of excessive-adverb constructions differed by noun category: 276 instances (14.00%) occurred with abstract nouns and 151 instances (7.66%) with event nouns, for a combined total of 427 instances (21.66%). These results show that excessive expressions in Malaysian English are more often used to describe dynamic processes or deviations in degree and are particularly applicable in information-dissemination contexts (Vartiainen et al., 2025).

There were 392 restrictive-adverb constructions (19.88% of the 1,972 valid instances). Most occurred with concrete or specific nouns (219 cases), followed by abstract nouns (126 cases, 6.39%) and event nouns (47 cases, 2.38%). This distribution shows that when entering a noun structure, a restrictive adverb is more likely to act on an object that has a definite boundary or a measurable property, whereas it is less adaptable to event structures.

Generally speaking, this distribution model reveals the double feature of the English "degree adverb + noun" construction in Malaysia: on the one hand, the high frequency of the intensive and abstract expressions suggests that the structure has a stable function in the field of information compression and semantic concentration; on the other hand, the difference in quantity between the different styles indicates that the use of this structure is contextual, providing a clear empirical basis for further analysis of cognitive and semantic mechanisms.

4.2 High-Frequency “Degree Adverb + Noun” Structural Types and Semantic Categories

After confirming the general distribution, we need to identify the high frequency "Degree Adverb + Noun" structure and their semantic affiliation in Malaysian English corpus. In order to present this distribution pattern in more detail, Table 4 summarizes some of the most frequent structural types and their semantic categories.

Table 4. High-Frequency “Degree Adverb + Noun” Structural Types and Semantic Categories

Structural Type	Semantic Category	News Register	Academic Discourse	Public Media Style	Frequency	Percentage
very good reason	Evaluative noun	41	26	18	85	4.31
too much pressure	Abstract noun	24	31	19	74	3.75
quite a problem	Event noun	27	22	20	69	3.5
very serious concern	Abstract noun	33	21	11	65	3.3
too much delay	Event Noun	29	14	17	60	3.04
very real risk	abstract noun	26	23	9	58	2.94
quite a challenge	Event noun	19	24	14	57	2.89
so much damage	Noun (entity/result)	23	11	22	56	2.84
very bad idea	Review Noun	17	15	20	52	2.64
too much noise	Entity/Perceptual Noun	15	12	24	51	2.59
very strong evidence	Abstract noun	12	34	4	50	2.54
quite a success	Evaluation noun	16	9	24	49	2.48
very clear signal	Entity/Information Noun	18	19	10	47	2.38
too much uncertainty	Abstract noun	11	25	10	46	2.33
quite a shock	Event Noun	14	8	21	43	2.18
very good news	Information Noun	20	7	15	42	2.13
quite a mess	Evaluation noun	9	6	26	41	2.08
too much dependence	Abstract noun	8	22	10	40	2.03
Very poor response	Event Name	21	9	9	39	1.98
so much effort	Abstract noun	10	18	10	38	1.93
Total		393	356	313	1,062	53.86

The 20 high-frequency constructions occurred 1,062 times and accounted for 53.86% of the valid instances. Their distribution differed significantly across the three discourse domains, $\chi^2(38, N = 1,062) = 143.30, p < .001$, Cramér's $V = .260$. This association was stronger than that observed for the broader semantic categories, indicating that discourse differentiation was more pronounced at the level of recurrent lexical combinations than at the level of general construction types. In terms of individual frequency, “very good reason” ranked first with 85 instances, accounting for 4.31% of the total sample; followed by “too much pressure” (74 instances, 3.75%), “quite a problem” (69 instances, 3.50%), and “very serious concern” (65 instances, 3.30%). The four most frequent combinations occurred 293 times and accounted for 14.86% of the valid instances. They were primarily associated with the justification of reasons, the expression of pressure, the identification of problems, and the emphasis of concerns.

In terms of semantic category distribution, abstract nouns were the most concentrated, including 7 items such as “pressure,” “concern,” “risk,” “evidence,” “uncertainty,” “dependence,” and “effort,” totaling 371 instances and accounting for 34.93% of the total in the table; event nouns such as “problem,” “delay,” “challenge,” “shock,” and “response” totaled 268 instances, accounting for 25.24%; and evaluative nouns such as “reason,” “idea,” “success,” and “mess” totaled 227 instances, accounting for 21.37%. This indicates that in Malaysian English, degree adverbs tend to occur more frequently in the context of evaluative, quantifiable, and re-framed nouns, with a particular preference for abstract concepts and event-based objects, while their frequency in the context of purely concrete nouns is relatively low. This distribution aligns with the trend observed in the overall statistics mentioned earlier, where “intensifying adverbs + evaluative nouns” and “intensifying adverbs + abstract nouns” dominate.

From a stylistic perspective, news style accounted for 393 instances, representing 37.01% of the total in the table. It was predominant in structures such as “very good reason,” “very serious concern,” and “too much delay,” indicating that news English relies more heavily on this construction to achieve topic focus and position compression. Examination of adjusted standardized residuals, using a Bonferroni-adjusted critical value of $|z| > 3.34$, showed that “very strong evidence” was significantly overrepresented in academic discourse, $z = 5.29$, whereas “quite a mess” was significantly overrepresented in public-media discourse, $z = 4.86$. These localized differences indicate that register effects were concentrated in particular lexicalized constructions rather than applying uniformly to every degree-modified noun pattern. Public media discourse comprised 313 instances, accounting for 29.47%, and was more prevalent in structures such as “quite a mess,” “quite a success,” and “too much noise,” reflecting that the Malaysian public communication context tends to favor the use of condensed evaluative expressions. Overall, Table 4 not only reveals the high-frequency unit composition of the English “degree adverb + noun” structure in the Malaysian context but also provides direct empirical support for subsequent analysis of the cognitive-semantic choices and contextual construction pathways of different structural types.

4.3 Mapping Mechanisms of Conceptual Metaphors and Metonymy in Structures

After identifying the high-frequency constructions and their semantic categories, the analysis further distinguishes metaphorical and metonymic mechanisms involved in their interpretation. A token was treated as metaphorical when its degree interpretation required mapping the nominal concept onto a different conceptual domain, such as construing degree through a vertical scale or construing pressure through physical load. A metonymic interpretation was identified when one salient aspect, result, or associated element within the same broader conceptual frame provided access to another aspect of the nominal concept. Instances in which a cross-domain mapping and an associated within-domain relation operated together were coded as metaphor/metonymy compounds. In order to present this distribution pattern more clearly, the major mapping mechanisms and their associated structural characteristics are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Mapping Mechanisms of Conceptual Metaphor and Metonymy in the “Degree Adverb + Noun” Structure

Mapping Type	Dominant Mechanism	High-Frequency Triggering Adverbs	Core Noun Domain	Example	Number of structural types	Proportion
Degree = Vertical Scale Increase	Conceptual Metaphors	very, highly, so	reason, concern, value	318	61	16.13
Degree = Capacity Overflow		too much, so much	pressure, delay, noise	276	48	14
Abstract state = load capacity	Metaphor/Metonymy Compound	too much, heavy, deep	pressure, burden, dependence	241	37	12.2
Risk/Problem = Tangible Entity	Conceptual Metaphor	quite, real, serious	problem, risk, issue	219	42	11.11
Evaluation = quality or grade of an item		good, bad, strong	idea, reason, success	205	39	10.4
Event = impactful object		rather, quite, sudden	shock, response, challenge	178	31	9.03
Evidence/Signal = Perceptible Object	Metaphor/Metonymy Compound	very, clear, strong	evidence, signal, sign	156	26	7.91
Uncertainty/dependence = constraining medium	Conceptual metaphor	too much, high, growing	uncertainty, dependence, exposure	142	24	7.2
Damage/Consequences = Cumulative Substance		so much, massive, heavy	damage, loss, impact	129	22	6.54
News/Reaction = Measurable Output		very, poor, little	news, response, feedback	108	19	5.48
Total				1,972	349	100

After annotating 1,972 valid samples for conceptual metaphor and metonymic mapping mechanisms, Table 5 shows the distribution of different mapping types in the “degree adverb + noun” structure. At the level of conceptual mapping, “degree = vertical scale” and “degree = capacity overflow” together account for 594 instances, or 30.13% of the 1,972 valid samples. These patterns are interpreted metaphorically because an abstract scalar relation is understood through spatial position or container capacity rather than through the conventional lexical meaning of the noun alone. The results suggest that degree expressions frequently conceptualize intensity or magnitude through spatial-scale and container-based mappings, particularly when modifying abstract or evaluative nouns. These highly frequent constructions suggest that Malaysian English is not only dependent on adverbial modification, but also on the extension and concretization of noun properties.

The category “abstract state = load capacity” contains 241 instances (12.20%). It was coded as a metaphor/metonymy compound because abstract states such as pressure or dependence are construed through a load-based domain while the salient notion of burden provides contextual access to the relevant degree of the state. By contrast, “risk/problem = tangible entity,” with 219 instances (11.11%), was coded as conceptual metaphor because an abstract risk or problem is represented as if it were an identifiable entity that can be made more salient or evaluated in degree terms. The existence of these structures shows that, in these circumstances, nouns are no longer merely static entities, but are recoded into tolerable or visible objects by metonymy and metaphor, for example, abstract nouns like “pressure” and “burden” when modified with an adverb such as “too much” or “heavy” to form the notion of “load,” so that it can be perceived or evaluated. The mapping “evaluation = physical quality or grade” accounts for 205 instances (10.40%) and is interpreted as metaphorical when an abstract judgment is represented through a scale of quality or grade. The same criterion is applied throughout Table 5: metaphor requires cross-domain mapping, metonymy requires an associative relation within a conceptual frame, and the compound label is reserved for instances in which both relations are necessary for the interpretation. This category focuses on adverbs like “good,” “bad,” and “strong,” and evaluated nouns such as “thought,” “reason” and “success,” which suggests that Malaysian English tends to emphasize or qualify the character or condition of a noun when expressing judgment, evaluation, or emotion.

Because Table 5 reports mapping mechanisms for the full set of 1,972 instances rather than separate counts for each discourse domain, the present results are interpreted as overall cognitive-mapping tendencies and are not used to infer register-specific preferences. In academic discourse, structures such as "abstract state = tolerable load" and "evidence/signal = perceptible entity" are more frequently used, reflecting the inherent rationality and logic of academic writing. On the other hand, public media discourse may be inclined towards structures such as "damage/outcome = cumulative substance" and "news/response = measurable output" to convey information in a more interactive and emotional environment. In summary, table 5 illustrates the cognitive mapping mechanism of the "degree adverb + noun" structure in Malaysian English, showing how nouns function in different contexts by metonymy and metaphor, and how degree adverbs enhance context functions by means of cross-domain projection.

4.4 Multidimensional Manifestations of Context-Building Functions

Following the identification of the structure type and the mapping mechanism, the functional manifestations of the "degree adverb + noun" structure in particular contexts in Malaysian English need to be further examined to determine how this structure is involved in local discourse organization, stance compression, and conceptual restructuring. Table 6 provides a summary of the target structure distribution across the main context building functions and their related parameters.

Table 6. Distribution of Context-Building Functions of the "Degree Adverb + Noun" Structure

Function Type	Primary Contextual Tasks	High-Frequency Triggering Adverbs	Typical Co-occurrence Cues	Instance	Number of structural types	Average Number of Trigger Words per Window	Percentage of Samples
Stance Focus	Condense speaker identification and highlight the focus of evaluation	very, quite, really	clear, valid, serious, important	356	64	2.8	18.05
Issue Identification	Transforming latent issues into visible entities	quite, real, major	issue, problem, concern, challenge	311	53	2.5	15.77
Abstract Quantification	Converting abstract states into measurable levels	too much, so much, high	pressure, uncertainty, dependence	284	46	2.7	14.4
Conceptual Re-framing	Redefining the Original Boundaries of a Concept	very, rather, highly	reason, success, evidence, signal	247	39	2.3	12.53
Condensed Results	Condensing the consequences of events	so much, very, massive	damage, loss, response, impact	221	34	2.4	11.2
Risk Anticipation	Incorporating future risks into current assessments	very, highly, real	risk, exposure, threat, burden	198	31	2.6	10.04
Modal reinforcement	Emphasizing the necessity or urgency of a proposition	too much, very, deeply	need, urgency, necessity	153	24	2.1	7.76
Interactive buffering	Weakens the intensity of direct assertions through structural nuances	rather, quite, somewhat	shock, mess, surprise	121	18	1.9	6.14
Information Calibration	Set an interpretation threshold for messages or evidence	very, strong, clear	news, evidence, sign, feedback	81	14	2	4.11
Total				1,972	323		100

In terms of overall quantitative structure, there are 1,972 examples of contextual construction functions in this table. The four most frequent functions—stance focusing, issue identification, abstract quantification, and conceptual reframing—accounted for 1,198 instances, representing 60.75% of the valid data. This concentrated distribution suggests that the core function of the "degree adverb + noun" structure

in the Malaysian English context is not only to modify the degree, but also to prioritize the tasks of evaluation compression and topic reframing. This is in line with the pattern observed in the previous section, in which high frequency structures were concentrated around evaluative nouns and abstract nouns.

When broken down by functional level, stance focusing leads with 356 instances (18.05%), with an average window trigger count of 2.8, suggesting that this type of structure typically relies on relatively dense local context signals to enhance evaluation; Issue Identification and abstract quantification are 311 cases (15.77%) and 284 cases (14.40%), respectively, indicating that abstract topics in Malaysian English are subject to objectification and quantification. Conceptual reframing (247 cases, 12.53%) and result compression (221 cases, 11.20%) demonstrate the semantic reorganization function, which is to modify the original category of a noun by degree adverb, or to compress the results of events to achieve information integration in a restricted text space.

Risk expectations (198 cases, 10.04%) and modal reinforcement (153 cases, 7.76%) have different predictive and regulatory properties. Their average window trigger word counts are 2.6 and 2.1, suggesting that they are dependent on the local context while maintaining a certain level of semantic stability. Although interactive buffering (121 cases, 6.14%) and information calibration (81 cases, 4.11%) are relatively rare, their window trigger word counts drop to 1.9 – 2.0, indicating greater immediacy and expressive economy, particularly in public communication contexts.

Generally speaking, the differences in frequency and context density between different functional types suggest that the "degree adverb + noun" structure of Malaysian English is composed of "core evaluation-abstract reconstruction-pragmatic adjustment." High-frequency functions are responsible for organizing information and focusing on semantics, and low frequency functions are complementary to pragmatic adjustment and expression optimization. This distribution provides a clear empirical basis for further analysis of contextual triggering mechanisms and cognitive pathways.

5. Discussion

The findings support a usage-based constructional account in which repeated pairings of degree expressions with evaluative, abstract, and event nouns progressively conventionalize scalar readings that are not fully predictable from the lexical meaning of the noun alone. In the International English study, the analysis of degree in English has long been carried out in the context of adverbial modification of adjectives or verbs, whereas the focus on the cross-categorical combination of "degree adverb + noun" is relatively inadequate. The significant but small association between broad construction type and discourse domain, Cramér's $V = .103$, shows that register operates as a probabilistic constraint on constructional choice rather than as a categorical rule. This aligns with Frazer-McKee and Duffley's (2024) assessment regarding the holistic recognition of non-conventional degree constructions and resonates with Chen's (2025) perspective on the networked organization of degree adverb constructions. The findings should be interpreted within the multilingual and functionally diverse environment in which Malaysian English is used. As noted in the corpus design, the present data cover news, academic-oriented institutional, and public-media discourse, representing settings in which English performs different informational, evaluative, and interpersonal functions. At the same time, because the corpus does not include matched British, American, or other English-variety comparison groups, the observed patterns cannot establish that the constructions are uniquely Malaysian or significantly more frequent in Malaysian English than elsewhere. Malaysia's multilingual setting, in which English is used alongside Malay, Chinese varieties, Tamil, and other languages, provides a sociolinguistic environment in which constructional choices may be shaped by repeated exposure to different linguistic resources and by the communicative demands of different discourse settings. However, the present corpus does not directly measure cross-linguistic transfer, speaker language background, or contact intensity. Multilingual contact should therefore be treated as a plausible contextual factor rather than as a demonstrated cause of the observed constructional distributions. Consequently, it is more likely to facilitate the incorporation of abstract nouns, evaluative nouns, and event nouns into a gradational framework, achieving a shift from "semantic description" to "cognitive calibration"; This is particularly evident with high-frequency nouns such as "pressure," "concern," "risk," and "problem," where degree adverbs no longer function merely as adjunctive modifiers but rather as triggers for rapidly establishing the speaker's stance, the boundaries of the referent, and the intensity of the interpretation.

The mapping patterns can be interpreted as a three-stage mechanism. A degree expression first activates a scalar dimension, the local context then selects a relevant metaphorical or metonymic domain, and the resulting construction stabilizes a discourse function such as stance focusing, issue identification, or abstract quantification. This sequence explains why the same noun can receive different scalar interpretations under different contextual cues. On the one hand, it relies on basic cognitive models — for example, space, container, load, and material attributes — in order to make abstract nouns perceptible; on the other hand, it compresses this cognitive projection into shorter text windows by means of local co-occurrence cues, thus satisfying the double requirements of information density and expressive efficiency in news reporting, policy interpretation, academic discourse, and public discourses. The recurrent use of these constructions can therefore be interpreted as the result of an interaction between the productive resources of English nominal modification and the communicative demands represented in the sampled Malaysian discourse environments. The present data support this interpretation at the level of recurrent distribution and contextual function, but they do not isolate which particular linguistic or cultural factor produces the pattern.

The concentration of 60.75% of the instances in the four leading contextual functions indicates functional specialization, but it should not be interpreted as evidence that all degree-modified noun constructions perform the same evaluative task. Lower-frequency functions, including interactive buffering and information calibration, show that the construction also regulates interpersonal force and evidential

thresholds. While this increases the clarity and speed of communication, it can also reduce the scope for more subtle propositional development, which allows the rapid transcription of complex social problems at the language level into objects that can be named, quantified, and judged.

The patterns identified in Malaysian English can be situated within broader research on constructional variation in language-contact settings and World Englishes. Olguín Martínez and Gries (2025) examine constructional behavior in language-contact situations from a Usage-Based Construction Grammar perspective, while Vartiainen et al. (2025) investigate the productivity of complex modifier constructions across World Englishes. The present findings extend this broader line of inquiry by showing that, within the sampled Malaysian English data, discourse differentiation is relatively weak at the level of broad semantic categories (Cramér's $V = .103$) but becomes clearer among recurrent lexical constructions (Cramér's $V = .260$). This pattern suggests that the relationship between discourse environment and degree-modified nominal expression may be concentrated in repeatedly used lexical-constructional combinations rather than uniformly distributed across an entire grammatical category (Olguín Martínez & Gries, 2025; Vartiainen et al., 2025). These results refine earlier accounts by locating constructional stability at the intersection of three processes: noun recategorization supplies a scalar interpretation, recurrent co-occurrence increases cognitive predictability, and discourse-specific reuse strengthens particular form-function pairings. The stronger association found among the 20 recurrent lexical constructions, Cramér's $V = .260$, further suggests that entrenchment operates more strongly at the lexical-constructional level than at the level of broad semantic categories. The principal contribution is therefore analytical rather than typological. The integrated framework connects cognitive-semantic interpretation with register-sensitive statistical evidence, allowing claims about constructional organization to be evaluated through significance tests, effect sizes, and contextual mechanisms instead of being inferred from frequency alone. Accordingly, the present findings should be understood as evidence of recurrent constructional and discourse-related patterning within the sampled Malaysian English corpus rather than as proof of a uniquely Malaysian developmental trajectory. Direct comparison with matched corpora from other English varieties is required before claims about Malaysian distinctiveness, contact-induced change, or cross-variety differences can be established.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of 1,972 valid instances shows that degree-modified noun constructions in the Malaysian English corpus form a recurrent but internally differentiated set of form-meaning pairings rather than a homogeneous grammatical category. Evaluative, abstract, and event nouns constitute the principal semantic domains, while conceptual metaphor, metonymic linkage, and local contextual cues jointly support their scalar interpretation. Inferential analysis confirmed a significant association between broad construction type and discourse domain, $\chi^2(18, N = 1,972) = 42.03$, $p = .001$, Cramér's $V = .103$, while the stronger association among recurrent lexical constructions, $\chi^2(38, N = 1,062) = 143.30$, $p < .001$, Cramér's $V = .260$, indicates that register differentiation is concentrated in particular lexicalized patterns, demonstrating the adaptive extension of the English construction system in a multi-lingual context environment. The integrated framework advances the analysis from surface-form classification to a testable account of how degree-adverb function, noun semantics, syntactic configuration, contextual cues, and discourse function interact within a single constructional unit, thus providing strong empirical support for regional English building studies. Several limitations qualify these conclusions. The corpus contains publicly available written texts and does not represent spontaneous conversation, private interaction, or prosodic information. The three discourse domains also differ in sample size, and the 2021–2025 sampling period provides a cross-sectional view rather than evidence of diachronic change. In addition, the absence of a matched external English variety prevents direct claims about Malaysian distinctiveness, while the semantic and pragmatic categories retain an element of annotator judgment despite reliability control. Future research should incorporate spoken and diachronic corpora, matched comparisons with other English varieties, mixed-effects or multinomial models based on instance-level predictors, and acceptability or processing experiments that test whether the identified constructions are cognitively entrenched among Malaysian English users.

Acknowledgments

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Author contributions

Dr. Chang Guoping and Dr. Soo Rueyshing jointly designed the study. Chang Guoping performed data collection and drafted the manuscript. Soo Rueyshing revised the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript. Furthermore, both authors contributed equally to this work.

Funding

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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Declaration of AI-Assisted Tools

No artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including generative AI tools, were used in the preparation, writing, editing, or revision of this manuscript.

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