'Evaluative Morphology' in German, Dutch and Swedish:

Constructional Networks and the Loci of Change[1]

1. Introduction

In languages with productive compounding like German, Dutch and Swedish, 'evaluative morphology' (cf. Bauer, 1997) raises intriguing issues of category status and change. The present contribution addresses category changes involving 'expressive compounds' (Meibauer, 2013) such as G. **Hammer***auftritt* 'lit. hammer, i.e. great performance' or **Mist***wetter* 'lit. dung, i.e. terrible weather', in which the nominal non-head has an evaluative function. The same morphemes, which we will henceforth refer to as 'evaluatives', can sometimes function as adjective intensifiers (G. **hammer***schön* 'very pretty') and, more importantly, display free uses (G. *hammer* 'great, excellent', *mist* 'terrible, awful') which seem to be the result of re-categorization from noun to adjective. The adjective status is not clear-cut, however, given that the general lack of inflection in the relevant grammatical contexts makes it difficult to unequivocally identify adjectival behaviour. We will therefore argue (i) that discrete categories in the highly dynamic domain of evaluative morphology in Germanic cannot be maintained, and (ii) that the emergence of new (defective) adjectives expressing evaluation should be seen as a productive process. Two loci of change prove crucial in this context: the non-head position of compounds and the predicative position.

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The left-hand members in nominal compounds like *Hammer-*, *Mist-* and many others are sometimes referred to as 'prefixoids'. Affixoids, a term encompassing both prefixoids and suffixoids, are defined as compound constituents with a more abstract meaning which deviates systematically from the corresponding 'parent morph' (Stevens, 2005, p. 73) and is, at least in principle, restricted to their use in complex words. The more abstract nature of the novel meaning and the fact that they tend to be part of productive word-formation schemata, therefore forming series, are properties more reminiscent of affixes than of lexemes (see, among others, Booij & Hüning, 2014; Elsen, 2009; Leuschner, 2010; Stevens, 2005; Van Goethem, 2008). Here are some examples from German (a), Dutch (b) and Swedish (c), with the evaluative prefixoids in boldface:

1. a. G. ***Bomben****stimmung* 'lit. bomb, i.e. great vibe', ***Hammer****wetter* 'lit. hammer, i.e. great weather', ***Schrott****film* 'lit. junk, i.e. terrible movie'

    b. D. ***klote****ding* 'testicle, i.e. stupid thing', ***reuze****pret* 'giant, i.e. great fun', ***top****weer* 'top, i.e. great weather'

    c. Sw. ***kalas****väder* 'party, i.e. great weather', ***skit****dag* 'shit, i.e. terrible day', ***toppen****kväll* 'top, i.e. great evening'

In ordinary compounds, the literal meaning of the parent morphs is preserved (e.g. G. *Schrott* 'junk' > *Schrotthändler* 'junk dealer', D. *top* 'top, summit' > *toplaag* 'upper layer', Sw. *kalas* 'festivity' > *kalasmat* 'festive meal, banquet'), thus distinguishing them from affixoid formations. Since affixoids challenge any straightforward dichotomy between compounding and derivation, they are sometimes said to constitute a separate category of word-forming elements in their own right (e.g. Elsen, 2009). Other authors have taken a compromise position, suggesting that affixoids are in the transition zone (both synchronically and diachronically) between two

prototypes, viz. lexeme and affix, and that 'affixoid' remains a useful descriptive label even in the absence of any strong claim to the status of category in the linguistic system (e.g. Motsch, 1996; Leuschner, 2010; Booij & Hüning, 2014; for a summary of the controversy see Leuschner, 2010, p. 868-869). Some regard the emergence of affixoids as a type of grammaticalization (Stevens, 2005, pp. 76-77, Habermann to app.); in a constructionist framework, the rise of a new word-formation subschema (see 2.3) with an affixoidal constituent can alternatively be conceptualized as a form of 'constructionalization' (Hüning & Booij, 2014) or, more specifically, 'lexical constructionalization' in the sense of Traugott & Trousdale (2013).

Regardless of how one chooses to define the intermediate status of affixoids, it is interesting to note that *evaluative* prefixoids do not necessarily behave like typical bound morphemes either. They may appear separately like attributive adjectives (spelled with the appropriate lower-case initial in German) while retaining their more abstract, evaluative meaning: G. *hammer Wetter* vs. *Hammerwetter* 'great weather'; D. *top weer* vs. *topweer* 'great weather'; Sw. *kalas väder* vs. *kalasväder* 'great weather'. Such two-word spellings could simply be due to the well-known tendency in these languages to separate compounds – either under the influence of English or out of processing concerns (cf. Scherer, 2012; Haeseryn et al., 1999, p. 682; Teleman et al., 1999, p. 57) – were it not for such widely attested predicative uses as in G. *Das Wetter ist hammer/Hammer* 'The weather is great', D. *Het weer is top* 'The weather is great', Sw. *Vädret är kalas* 'The weather is great'. Since the non-bound versions clearly retain the evaluative meanings of the corresponding prefixoids, the least we can say is that native speakers/writers don't necessarily perceive the prefixoids as bound. On the other hand we are not dealing with prototypical adjectives either, as such unbound evaluatives general fail to show inflection in the relevant grammatical

environments (which in Swedish include not only attributive but also predicative uses, see 3.1.4). The categorial status is therefore no less problematic than that of the corresponding prefixoids.

Drawing on previous research on noun-to-adjective category changes (Norde & Van Goethem, 2014, 2015; Pittner & Berman, 2006; Berman, 2009; Van Goethem & De Smet, 2014; Van Goethem & Hiligsman, 2014, Van Goethem & Hüning, 2015), we suggest in the present contribution that non-bound evaluatives are primarily the result of both evaluative prefixoids and bare nouns in predicative position being re-categorized as (yet defective) adjectives. This process is linked to and facilitated by the existence of specific constructional networks that involve lexical items expressing evaluation in German, Dutch and Swedish. In addition, the use of a given item in adjectival intensifying compounds may contribute to its free use as an evaluative. A few examples with bound as well as free uses in German (2), Dutch (3) and Swedish (4) are given below. The two main functions of evaluation, viz. amelioration (a) and pejoration (b), are illustrated separately for each language:

2.   a. *bombe(n)* 'lit. bomb', *hammer* 'lit. hammer', *mega* 'lit. mega', *spitze(n)* 'lit. top', *top* 'lit. top', ... 'great'

b. *mist* 'lit. dung', *scheiß(e)* 'lit. shit', ... 'awful'

3.   a. *bere* 'bear', *klasse* 'class', *reuze* 'giant', *super* 'lit. super', *top* 'lit. top', ... 'great'

b. *klote* 'lit. testicles', *kut* 'lit. vagina', ... 'awful'

4.   a. *dunder* 'lit. thunder', *kalas* 'lit. feast', *kanon* 'lit. cannon', *super* 'lit. super', *toppen* 'lit. the top', ... 'great'

b. *botten* 'lit. bottom', *skit* 'lit. shit', ... 'awful'

Our concept of constructional networks in this particular case, i.e. paradigmatic relationships between different word formation schemata and syntactic patterns in the mental lexicon, is based on corpus data revealing distributional and semantic properties of these items from a broad, cross-linguistic and mainly qualitative perspective. It is also supported by observations regarding so-called 'loan prefixes' (cf. Ruf, 1996) like *super(-)* and *mega(-)*. Loan prefixes do not have free, less abstract nominal counterparts, yet they have been reanalysed in the same way as functionally equivalent prefixoids and show a very similar distribution. They therefore lend themselves well to the idea that category changes affecting evaluatives are facilitated by essentially identical underlying structures and semantics; the morphological output (adjectival evaluative items) thus proves more important than the input (noun or prefix), rendering membership in lexical categories theoretically less significant. The assumption of a constructional network encompassing both bound and unbound evaluative items also makes the observed re-categorizations seem less idiosyncratic than we might expect in view of Norde & Van Goethem's comment that "each prefixoid needs to be examined in its own right" (2014, p. 260). While this claim will obviously be true in view of item-specific productivity levels or semantic and distributional properties, the mechanisms underlying the emergence of adjectival counterparts of *evaluative* prefixoids are in fact very much alike. The contrastive approach reflects our desire to establish broad generalizations, stressing crosslinguistic similarities between the re-categorization processes in three Germanic languages with different degrees of genetical closeness.

We will start with a brief survey of the existing literature, followed by remarks on how the problematic status of affixoids in general and evaluative prefixoids in particular can be resolved under the framework of Construction Morphology (CxM;

Booij, 2010) (Section 2). We will then proceed with empirical observations on both bound and free evaluative items in German, Dutch and Swedish, including evaluatives other than prefixoids and their corresponding free forms (Section 3). Subsequently, the concept of a constructional network underlying evaluative morphemes will be explicated, and formal variation of adjectival evaluatives in German (see 2a, b) is addressed (Section 4). Conclusion and prospects for further research round the paper off.

2. Theoretical preliminaries

2.1 Sources of adjectival evaluatives

Possibly owing to their marginal status, if not absence, in the standard varieties, the products of on-going noun-to-adjective changes in Germanic have only recently been receiving attention in the literature. In a classic statement, Booij (2010, p. 60-61; see also Booij & Hüning, 2014, p. 87-90) suggests that adjectival uses of D. *kut(-)* 'awful' and *reuze(-)* 'great' originated in prefixoids; the adjectival form *reuze* (marked by the linking element *-e-* and the associated lenition /s/ > /z/) is clearly distinct from nominal *reus* 'giant' and therefore leaves no doubt about its origin as compound member. Taking up his lead, Norde & Van Goethem (2014, 2015), Van Goethem & De Smet (2014) and Van Goethem & Hiligsmann (2014) argue that adjective-like uses of qualifying and evaluative prefixoids in Dutch (e.g. *reuze-* 'huge; fantastic', *klote-* 'awful') and German (*riesen-* 'giant') are best accounted for through a process they call 'debonding', i.e. a type of degrammaticalization (Norde, 2009, p. 186-227)

by which formerly free lexemes become, via an intermediate stage as prefixoids, free morphemes again, albeit with a more abstract meaning and a different word class. In some cases, clipping of adjectival prefixoid formations also plays a role (e.g. D. *reuze* 'fantastic' < *reuzeleuk* 'very nice', *bere* 'idem' < *beregoed* 'very good'; see Norde & Van Goethem, 2015; Van Goethem & De Smet, 2014; Van Goethem & Hiligsman, 2014). A potential third source had been identified a few years earlier by Pittner & Berman (2006) and Berman (2009), who argued that free evaluative *bombe*, *hammer*, *spitze* 'great' etc. in German arose through noun-to-adjective conversion in predicative position, as in e.g. *Der Film ist Spitze/spitze*; once established, the products of such a reanalysis spread to contexts of attribution (*ein spitze Auto*[2] 'a great car') and composition (*Bomben-*, *Hammer-*, *Spitzen-*). In a recent case study evaluating the 'debonding' and 'conversion' theories, Van Goethem & Hüning (2015; see also Van Goethem, 2014) argue that the non-bonded uses of D. *top(-)* and G. *spitze(n-)* 'lit. top, i.e. great' probably emerge from a complex interaction between the different source construction types as implied by the concept of 'multiple inheritance' (Trousdale, 2013; Trousdale & Norde, 2013) and the idea that a given target construction can have multiple source constructions (Van de Velde et al., 2013). Since evaluatives usually fail to show inflection in the relevant contexts, however, it seems more appropriate to speak of syntactic 'coercion' (cf. Booij & Audring, this volume; Gaeta, 2014; Lauwers, 2014); true morphological conversion is a word-formation process accompanied by the acquisition of all default morphosyntactic properties, cf. G. Fisch '*fish*', n. > *fischen* '(to) fish, *blau* 'blue', adj. > (das) *Blau* 'blue', n. The categorial openness of the predicative position (cf. Berman 2009) is due to the

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[2] *Duden* online dictionary (consulted on March 1 2015, http://www.duden.de).

abstract meaning attached to the syntactic construction involved, thus rendering noun-to-adjective re-categorization possible.

In summary, then, we can identify three contributing sources of adjectival evaluatives: (i-a) left-hand members of nominal compounds (debonding), (i-b) intensifying left-hand members of adjectival compounds (clipping), and (ii) bare nouns used in predicative position (coercion). In the case of (i-a) and (i-b), the locus of change is in word-formation, providing evidence for the reanalysis of compound members as adjectives or adverbs; in the case of (ii) the locus of change is in syntax, providing for the reanalysis of nouns as adjectives in predicative position. All the respective pathways are available in German, Dutch and Swedish, and since any given evaluative item, once established, usually spreads to the other environments as well, its primary origin and pathway may be difficult to identify. While we may be able to reconstruct the rise of a specific item on grounds of its formal properties in some cases, in other cases it may remain obscure (cf. 4.2).

2.2 Evaluative prefixoids

Before considering free uses of evaluatives, we will focus on their occurrence in the non-head position of nominal compounds, as this bound use holds a key position in the re-categorization of such elements as adjectives. It will be demonstrated below (see 3.3) that left-hand compound members and prefixes expressing evaluation behave very similarly in this respect. For the time being, we will only be concerned with denominal evaluatives, i.e. items that qualify as 'prefixoids'.

In order to be classified as a prefixoid, a given morpheme must fulfil two conditions: it must have a corresponding free lexeme from which it systematically

deviates in meaning, and it must be part of a potentially productive word-formation schema (Stevens, 2005, p. 73). Informal usage as encountered on the Internet is particularly rich in different compound types:

5.　　a. G. **Schrott***auto* 'terrible car', *-immobilie* 'real estate', *-kommentar* 'comment', *-spiel* 'game'

　　b. D. **klote***bikini* 'awful/stupid bikini', *-kabinet* 'cabinet, government', *-programma* 'program', *-vraag* 'question'

　　c. Sw. **kalas***dag* 'great day', *-idé* 'idea', *-jobb* 'job', *-ställe* 'place'

Rather than evaluative as in (5), prefixoids may be just qualifying – a significant difference that tends to be overlooked in the literature. Many standard instances of prefixoids are in fact qualifying, e.g. G. *Haupt-*, D. *hoofd-*, Sw. *huvud-* 'lit. head, i.e. main' (*Hauptursache*, *hoofdoorzaak*, *huvudorsak* 'main cause'), *Schlüssel-*, *sleutel-*, *nyckel-* 'lit. key, i.e. crucial' (*Schlüsselfrage*, *sleutelvraag*, *nyckelfråga* 'key issue') and G. *Marathon-*, D. *marathon-*, Sw. *maraton-* 'lit. marathon, i.e. of a large time span' (*Marathonsitzung*, *marathonzitting*, *maratonsittning* 'marathon session, very long meeting'). Rather than a subjective evaluation by the speaker or writer as 'excellent' or 'terrible', such prefixoids express a specific characteristic of the referent ('main', 'crucial', 'of long duration', etc.).

Qualifying prefixoids may sometimes be subject to 'debonding': G. *riesen* < *Riesen-* and D. *reuze* < *reuze-* with the qualifying meaning 'huge' do occur as attributively used adjectival items (Van Goethem & Hiligsmann, 2014; Norde & Van Goethem, 2014); with this meaning, however, they are never used predicatively, which is why the distinction between qualifying and evaluative prefixoids is essential

(cf. Van Goethem & De Smet, 2014, p. 264-265).[3] D. *reuze(-)* can also be evaluative, denoting 'great', and this variant of the item is used both attributively and predicatively; the prefixoid *reuze-* is polysemous and the resulting compounds may be semantically ambiguous. Other polysemous prefixoids are G. *Spitzen-* and D. *top-* 'lit. top, summit', which can be qualifying ('of a high, the highest class', as in G. *Spitzensportler*, D. *topatleet* 'top athlete') or evaluative ('excellent, great', as in G. *Spitzenfilm*, D. *topfilm* 'excellent movie') (cf. Grzega, 2004; Van Goethem & Hüning, 2015). We can contrast similar prefixoid formations with paraphrases to elucidate this rather subtle, yet decisive distinction; in examples (6)-(8), this semantic nuance will be exemplified for each language:

6.   a. G. ***Spitzen****politiker* 'top politician' ≠

*Der Politiker ist **spitze***. 'The politician is excellent'

      b. ***Spitzen****film* 'excellent movie' ≙

*Der Film ist **spitze***. 'The movie is excellent.'

7.   a. D. ***reuze****honger* 'enormous hunger' ≠

*??Haar honger was **reuze***. 'Her hunger was enormous.'

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b. ***reuze****film* 'excellent movie' ≜

*De film is **reuze**.* 'The movie is excellent.'

8.   a. Sw. ***topp****spelare* 'top player' ≠

*Spelaren är **toppen**.* 'The player is excellent.'

b. ***toppen****kväll* 'excellent evening' ≜

*Filmen är **toppen**.* 'The movie is excellent.'

The paraphrases in (6a)-(8a) are not ungrammatical (although odd in Dutch for semantic reasons), but the evaluative items (G. *spitze*, D. *reuze*, Sw. *toppen* 'great, excellent') do not correspond semantically to the equivalent element in the prefixoid formation (hence '≠'); therefore, the complex words in (6a)-(8a) cannot be regarded as 'evaluative compounds'. The items in the paraphrases in (6b)-(8b) do, however,

functionally match ('≜') the evaluative prefixoid. In the case of Swedish, we also

observe formal differences between the two prefixoids: *topp-* is qualifying and refers to a hierarchy ('of a high, the highest class'), whereas *toppen-* expresses a subjective

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quality ('excellent'). No such formal difference is present in the equivalent German *Spitzen-* as in (6), nor indeed in D. *top-*, which can both be either qualifying or evaluative. For obvious reasons, our focus will henceforth lie on the evaluative function of semantically ambiguous prefixoids.

2.3 Affixoids in construction morphology

In a construction-morphological (CxM) framework, affixoids can insightfully be modelled as the lexically specified parts of 'constructional idioms' at the word level, i.e. as word-formation schemata with a filled slot (Booij, 2010, p. 13, passim; cf. Booij & Hüning, 2014). Affixoid formations have the structure of ordinary compounds; to express the bound meaning of an affixoid within a compound, which systematically deviates from the parent morph in terms of semantics, affixoids are conceptualized as being part of subschemata linked with the more general schema for nominal compounds (Booij, 2010, p. 51):[4]

9. $[[a]_{Xk} [b]_{Ni}]_{Nj} \leftrightarrow [SEM_i \text{ with relation R to } SEM_k]_j$

While ordinary compounds, for example G. *Bombenalarm* 'bomb alert', are directly linked with the general schema for NN-compounds – $[[Bomben]_{Nk} [alarm]_{Ni}]_{Nj} \leftrightarrow [alarm_i \text{ warning of a possible airstrike by means of bombs}_k]_j$ –, prefixoid formations, for example G. *Bombenstimmung* 'great atmosphere', *Bombenwetter* 'great weather', *Bomben-Job* 'great job', can be seen as instantiations of a related productive

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[4] Square brackets stand for lexemes, *k*, *i*, and *j* being lexical indexes. X is a lexical category variable (noun, verb adjective, adverb, preposition, etc.). The right-hand constituent in Germanic compounds, here specified as a noun (N), is the morphological head, inheriting properties like gender and plural inflection from that compound member. Following Downing (1977), the semantic relation ('R') between the two compound constituents is not specified any further.

subschema in which the prefixoid with its systematically deviating meaning fills a slot:

10. $[[Bomben]_N [b]_{Ni}]_{Nj} \leftrightarrow [\text{great SEM}_i]_j$

The subschema in (10) expresses a possible abstraction by language users on the basis of complex lexemes that share the left-hand constituent G. *Bomben-* with the meaning 'great'. Just like any word-formation schema, this subschema depends for its existence on the linguistic knowledge of individual speakers: "Schemas are based on lexical knowledge, and this type of knowledge varies from speaker to speaker. Hence, speakers may also differ in the number and types of schemas they deduce from their lexical knowledge." (Booij, 2010, p. 89). This provides a welcome explanation for idiolectal variation: the subschema in (10) is not necessarily part of the mental lexicon of every speaker of German, and individuals may generally differ strongly in their use of bound and unbound evaluative items. All intertwined entries in the mental lexicon with different levels of abstraction constitute the 'hierarchical lexicon', from completely abstract schemata through partially specified subschemata to individual lexemes (Booij, 2010, p. 25-31).

2.4 Abstract subschemata for evaluative compounds
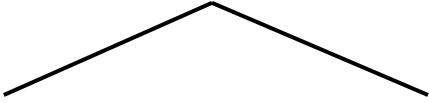
The evaluative prefixoids G. *Bomben-*, *Hammer-* and *Spitzen-* 'great' can, for all intents and purposes, be considered synonymous. Given this semantic commonality, Schlücker (2014, p. 94-99) discusses the possible existence of an underlying 'augmentative-evaluative' compounding schema in German (in her notation: $^{\text{AUG-EV}}[\text{N N}]_N$), an abstract subschema closely linked to the general schema of nominal compounds in (9). Schlücker (ibid.) concludes that this schema is only a theoretical

abstraction and not (yet) productive, since according to her the lexical items involved belong to a closed set of morphemes; hence, the evaluative prefixoids *Bomben-*, *Hammer-* and *Spitzen-* should be seen as the lexically specified parts of separate constructional idioms. Due to the existence of innovative evaluative items, not just in German, but across the languages in question, we do assume an abstract subschema for evaluative compounds with a certain degree of productivity. This cross-linguistically present subschema is strengthened by numerous morphemes with an evaluative function, not just nouns (see 3.3).

Schlücker (2014, p. 95) also adduces formal evidence for the special status of these prefixoids: formations with the evaluative left-hand members *Bomben-*, *Hammer-* and *Spitzen-* 'great' may differ prosodically from ordinary nominal compounds which have primary stress on the first constituent; in 'augmentative-evaluative' compounds, the right-hand constituent can carry primary stress as well (see also Altmann, 2011, p. 80; Grzega, 2004; Fleischer & Barz, 2012, p. 145). As our own data come exclusively from written sources, and because a comprehensive empirical investigation is beyond the scope of the present paper, we have to leave prosody out of the picture. Even so, the above-mentioned observations are clearly symptomatic of the re-categorization of prefixoids as adjectives, and we will therefore assume a cline between evaluative compounds, i.e. formations with an evaluative prefixoid (e.g. in *Bombenwetter*, *Hammerwetter*, *Spitzenwetter* 'great weather') on the one hand, and noun phrases in which the evaluative item has been re-categorized as an attributive adjective (*bomben Wetter*, *hammer Wetter*, *spitzen Wetter* 'idem') on the other hand.[5]

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[5] Schlücker (2014) also suggests that the qualifying prefixoids *Mords-* and *Riesen-* 'giant, huge' (e.g. *Mordsproblem*, *Riesenproblem* 'huge problem') may be linked to an abstract 'augmentative-evaluative' compound schema, as such formations may deviate prosodically from ordinary nominal compounds as

To sum up, we propose an abstract subschema related to the general schema for nominal compounds in German, Dutch and Swedish, based on complex lexemes in which the left-hand constituent expresses evaluation (11a), including a subdivision between ameliorative and pejorative evaluatives (11b). Once the link is made between a given prefixoid and this subschema, it may be reanalysed as adjectival. The angle brackets in this notation indicate the intermediate affixoidal status of the evaluative (cf. Norde & Van Goethem, 2015, p. 115-116):

11.   a. $[<a>_{EV} [b]_{Ni}]_{Nj} \leftrightarrow [\textit{evaluating } SEM_i]_j$

b. $[<a>_{EV+} [b]_{Ni}]_{Nj} \leftrightarrow [\text{excellent } SEM_i]_j$ $[<a>_{EV-} [b]_{Ni}]_{Nj} \leftrightarrow [\text{awful } SEM_i]_j$

Bomben-   *Mist-*

Hammer-   *Scheiß-*

Spitzen-   *Schrott-*

We should therefore revise the analysis in (10) and instead postulate a constructional idiom in which the prefixoid G. *Bomben-* expresses positive evaluation as $[<\textit{Bomben}>_{EV+} [b]_{Ni}]_{Nj} \leftrightarrow [\text{excellent } SEM_i]_j$. Again, this partially specified schema is not necessarily part of every German speaker's mental lexicon, as CxM easily accommodates and even assumes differences between the linguistic knowledge of individuals from which the more abstract schemata are derived. The integration of new lexical items into the evaluative compound schema, which is at the basis of an

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well. This is supported by the case study on, inter alia, G. *Riesen-*/*riesen* 'giant' by Norde & Van Goethem (2014), who show that the prefixoid *Riesen-* may appear as an attributive adjective (e.g. *riesen Problem* 'huge problem'). However, none of these qualifying prefixoids appears to be used predicatively; the distinction between qualifying and evaluative items is therefore crucial.

adjectival interpretation, can be considered a case of morphological coercion (Booij & Audring, this volume).

3. Evaluatives in German, Dutch and Swedish

This section is concerned with empirical observations concerning the different uses of evaluatives in German, Dutch and Swedish. All attestations, unless otherwise stated, were obtained using the web interface of the COW-corpora (Corpora from the Web; Schäfer, 2015; Schäfer & Bildhauer, 2012). These giga-token corpora of, inter alia, German (*DECOW14AX*: 11.7 GT), Dutch (*NLCOW14AX*: 3 GT) and Swedish (*SVCOW14AX*: 4.8 GT) web texts contain recent and to some extent informal language, thus usefully illustrating the kind of unmonitored usage that may include violations (spontaneous or deliberate) of prescriptive rules of spelling. Since our approach is mainly qualitative, the corpora were primarily searched in a heuristic manner in order to find appropriate examples; complete corpus searches were conducted for the quantitative data in section 3.1.2. Additional Google searches are marked as such and were only performed if no valid corpus results were returned; this is in turn symptomatic of the very low frequency of the observed phenomena (cf. 3.1.4).

3.1 Denominal evaluatives and nouns

3.1.1 Distributional properties

Evaluatives with scope over nouns appear in (a) the non-head position of nominal compounds, (b) the attributive position, and (c) the predicative position, where the evaluative item is linked with the noun by means of a copula. These grammatical environments are relevant for two kinds of re-categorization: debonding (a and b), and coercion (c).

Evaluatives are ameliorative ('great, excellent, awesome, etc.') or pejorative ('awful, terrible, stupid, etc.'); regardless of their morphosyntactic position, the semantics of the evaluatives (in bold) are of a kind that is typically expressed by adjectives, as reflected in the translations. The attestations in (a)-(b) demonstrate the cline between evaluative compound members and attributively used adjectives; the evaluative bare nouns in predicative position (c) do not differ from these other uses in terms of semantics. We will start with two examples from German: the ameliorative *Hammer*/*hammer(-)* 'lit. hammer' (12) and the pejorative *Scheiß(e)(-)* 'lit. shit' (13).

12. a. Das ist ein **Hammer**foto…

   'That is an excellent photo…'

   (http://www.gerd-kluge.de/archives/2009/02/24/projekt-52-9-08-bewegung/)

   b. Werd erwachsen, das war eine **hammer** Sendung!

   'Grow up, it was an awesome show!'

   (http://meinrap.de/forum/archive/index.php/t-51.html)

   c. […] das Gefühl ist einfach nur **Hammer**.

   'the feeling is really just great'

   (http://daslebenistmeinponyhof.digital-dictators.de/2009/04/26/klassik-konzert-

   entjungferung-dank-web-20-in-duisburg-philharmoniker/)

13. a. Solche **Scheiß**kerle sind absolut krank!

   'Such awful guys are absolutely sick!'

(http://deliria-italiano.phpbb8.de/spanien-f29/the-nameless-jaume-balaguero-

t761.html)

b. Du musst die **scheiß** Diskette finden!!

'You have to find that stupid floppy disk!!'

(https://www.gilmoregirls.de/forum/archive/index.php/t-1478.html)

c. Ist die Übersetzung so **scheiße**?

'Is the translation that bad?'

(http://www.idgames.de/archive/index.php?t-9207-p-4.html)

The positively evaluating item *top(-)* 'lit. top, peak' (14) and the negatively evaluating

item *kut(-)* 'lit. vagina' (15) exemplify the corresponding functions in Dutch:

14.   a. Ziet er goed uit, en Martin is echt een **top**aankoop!

'Looks good, and Martin really is an excellent acquisition!'

(http://forum.manutd.nl/showthread.php?48215-4-1-2-3-Match-Engine-

Exploiter-V2-3-by-

Hazza22299/page3%26s=f89a4964c12f218c0e426d9736648353)

b. Wat een **TOP** avond!

'Such a great evening!'

(http://www.trijntje.nl/the-hague-jazz)

c. De huisjes zijn echt **top**!

'The houses are really great!'

(http://www.elizawashere.nl/griekenland/peloponnesos/kamaria/kamaria_villas.

htm?view=print)

15.   a. wat een **kut**wedstrijd was het.

'It was such an awful [soccer] match.'

(http://www.frl-forum.nl/showthread.php?17027-Feyenoord-AA-Gent-

Donderdag-19-augustus/page11%26s=dcdb654647f69b59b68d531ffdaac465)

b. […] dat is het probleem met dit **kut** land.

'That is the problem in this stupid country.

(http://feyenoord.blog.nl/algemeen/2011/07/19/jongens-dit-gaat-te-fer)

c. Het is hoe dan ook **kut**.

'It is in any case terrible.'

(http://www.gamingonly.nl/forum/search.php?s=9911973c47fd0ac9d36e22ff07

b68a8e%26searchid=454448)

Equivalent contexts for Swedish are exemplified in (16) und (17), the evaluatives

being *kanon(-)* 'lit. canon' (ameliorative) and *skit(-)* 'lit. shit' (pejorative):

16.   a. **Kanon**vin för lite pengar.

'Great wine for little money.'

(http://www.matklubben.se/matklubben/anluk/forum/?offset=171)

b. Tack för **kanon** dagar…

'Thanks for wonderful days…'

(http://www.hagstromshastar.se/gastbok.asp)

c. Tycker det är **kanon** det SVT gör.

'I think it is great what SVT [the Swedish public TV broadcaster] does.'

(http://axon.blogg.se/2012/february/utkast-feb-6-2012.html)

17.   a. Mår illa och lyssnar på **skit**musik nu.

'Feeling bad and currently listening to terrible music.'

(http://pews.se/category/allmanna-vardagsbetraktelser-4.html)

b. Jag är för bra för den här **skit** staden […]

'I am too good for this damned town'

(http://snyggastvinner.blogg.se/2010/september/)

c. Billigt toapapper är **skit**!!

'Cheap toilet paper is awful!!'

(http://stigstrombergsson.blogg.se/category/politik-7.html)

3.1.2 Compound vs. noun phrase: evidence from spelling

While in (12a)-(17a) we are superficially dealing with compounds, in (12b)-(17b) the evaluatives may be seen as uninflected attributive adjectives. The question arises whether the spelling reflects the actual category status of these items. The findings of Van Goethem & Hüning (2015, p. 385) do indicate that there is more at hand than just erratic orthography: evaluative D. *top(-)* 'great' has a strong tendency to be separated from the following noun, whereas in the vast majority of compound spellings, *top(-)* is qualifying ('of the highest class' etc.). The semantics of evaluative left-hand compound constituents, which Booij (2010, p. 61) describes as prototypically adjectival, apparently go hand in hand with lower compound cohesion.

To test our intuition that evaluative elements tend to be spelled separately from the noun that follows, we contrasted three combinations of evaluatives with three ordinary compounds containing the same right-hand constituent 'movie, film' for each language (G. *Kinofilm*, D. *bioscoopfilm*, Sw. *biofilm* 'cinema film'; *Naturfilm*, *natuurfilm*, *naturfilm* 'nature film'; *Spielfilm*, *speelfilm*, *spelfilm* 'motion picture'), making use of the COW-corpora. The absolute and relative frequencies of these combinations are presented in Table 1.[6]

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[6] Numerous false positives, e.g. D. *speel film* 'play.IMP movie', and irrelevant hits such as G. *Hammer Film Productions* '[the company] Hammer Film Productions', D. *Klassefilm* '[the organization] Klassefilm', Sw. *biofilm* 'biofilm, group of microorganisms' had to be discarded. Spelling variants may

type	evaluative + noun		compound	
spelling	one-word	apart	one-word	apart
German	*Hammerfilm*	*hammer Film*	*Kinofilm*	*Kino Film*
	90 (40.5 %)	132 (59.5 %)	>10000 (98.2%)	184 (1.8 %)
	Spitzenfilm	*spitzen Film*	*Naturfilm*	*Natur Film*
	127 (75.2 %)	42 (24.8 %)	254 (100.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)
	Scheißfilm	*scheiß Film*	*Spielfilm*	*Spiel Film*
	57 (48.7 %)	60 (51.3 %)	>10000 (100.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)
Dutch	*klassefilm*	*klasse film*	*bioscoopfilm*	*bioscoop film*
	5 (29.4 %)	12 (70.6 %)	512 (97.0 %)	16 (3.0 %)
	topfilm	*top film*	*natuurfilm*	*natuur film*
	266 (70.4 %)	112 (29.6 %)	127 (97.7 %)	3 (2.3 %)
	kutfilm	*kut film*	*speelfilm*	*speel film*
	132 (83.5 %)	26 (16.5 %)	2425 (100.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)
Swedish	*kanonfilm*	*kanon film*	*biofilm*	*bio film*
	62 (57.4 %)	46 (42.6 %)	357 (89.0 %)	44 (11.0 %)
	toppenfilm	*toppen film*	*naturfilm*	*natur film*
	60 (59.4 %)	41 (40.6 %)	75 (96.1 %)	3 (3.9 %)
	skitfilm	*skit film*	*spelfilm*	*spel film*
	229 (78.4 %)	63 (21.6 %)	531 (98.9 %)	6 (1.1 %)

Table 1: Spelling of evaluative + noun vs. spelling of compound

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include forms such as D. *TOPfilm* or G. *HAMMER Film* (which probably serve to express emphasis) and several others. Hyphenated spellings are not included, as they only occur with G. *Kino-Film* (821 attestations), D. *bioscoop-film* (6), and Sw. *bio-film* (18).

Although we do find two-word spellings of ordinary compounds, a phenomenon familiar in morphological research as well as in popular culture[7] and often connected to the influence of English, the overwhelming majority of ordinary compounds is spelled in one word, i.e. in compliance with orthographic rules – even in the potentially informal corpus material. Note that one-word spellings of G. *Kinofilm* 'cinema film' and *Spielfilm* 'motion picture' are attested more than 10,000 times (the maximum output allowed by the COW web interface), which means that the relative frequency of *Kinofilm* spelled as one word is even higher. While there are fewer attestations for combinations of evaluative and noun overall, two-word spellings occur proportionally a lot more often; with the absolute number of attestations for G. *Kinofilm* and *Spielfilm* fixed at 10,000, there is a highly significant association between the type of modifier (evaluative or non-evaluative) and whether or not that element is spelled apart from the following noun in all three languages (German: χ^2 (5) = 5863, *p* < 0.001; Dutch: χ^2 (5) = 872, *p* < 0.001; Swedish: χ^2 (5) = 239, *p* < 0.001). It is therefore feasible to assume that variation in spelling, rather than simply being unsystematic, reflects the tendency among language users to conceive of evaluatives as adjectives. However, standard language norms generally disapprove of separating compounds and thus may counteract the visibility of the re-categorization process; the observed variation amongst writers in the use of these items can be seen as an indication for on-going language change.

According to German rules of orthography, adjectives are spelled with a lower-case initial, as opposed to nouns, which have with an upper-case initial. If writers indeed consider evaluatives to be adjectives in two-word spellings, we would also

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[7] Cf. www.spatiegebruik.nl, a Dutch website dedicated to real-life, often humorous examples of "improper uses of the space character" (D. *onjuist spatiegebruik*).

expect the appropriate initial lower-case letter in such cases. *Kinofilm* 'cinema film' is the only German compound for which two-word spellings could be attested, and the non-head *Kino* only shows an initial lower-case letter twice in these cases, which should therefore be explained as typos (also keeping in mind that the relative frequency of *Kinofilm* spelled as two words is extremely low). Evaluatives, on the other hand, are frequently spelled with a lower-case initial, and so is *spitzen* in the vast majority of all attestations. Hence, the figures in Table 2 lend additional support to the hypothesis that denominal evaluatives are perceived as adjectival by many language users. The total numbers of two-word spellings are smaller than in Table 1, as only attestations from sentences in which capitalization rules were respected could be considered. Again, the type of modifier (evaluative or non-evaluative) displays a highly significant effect, this time on the spelling (lower or upper-case) of its initial (χ^2 (3) = 131, $p < 0.001$).

type	evaluative + noun			compound
initial upper-case	*Hammer Film* 41 (59.4 %)	*Spitzen Film* 2 (6.7 %)	*Scheiß Film* 13 (33.3 %)	*Kino Film* 126 (98.4 %)
initial lower-case	*hammer Film* 28 (40.6)	*spitzen Film* 28 (93.3 %)	*scheiß Film* 26 (66.7 %)	*kino Film* 2 (1.6 %)
total	69 (100.0 %)	30 (100.0 %)	39 (100.0 %)	128 (100.0 %)

Table 2: Two-word spellings and case sensitivity

Still, the categorial status of evaluatives preceding a noun remains ambiguous. In sharp contrast to ordinary compounds, we can discern a clear tendency for writers to spell the evaluative item separately from the following noun and with an intial lower-case letter in German, yet one-word spellings involving evaluatives are by no means absent (cf. Table 1). A cline between evaluative compounds and noun phrases seems

to be the most adequate assumption (cf. 2.4). We may additionally conclude that the semantic properties of the non-head are a contributing factor in the separation of compound constituents in spelling, aside from English influence or processing concerns.

3.1.3 Predicative position

Evaluatives in predicative position in examples (12-17c) have an ambiguous status, too: in many cases, it is impossible to formally differentiate between a bare noun and an adjective. The adverbial modifiers preceding the evaluative in (12c), G. *einfach nur **Hammer*** 'really just great', and (14c), D. *echt **top*** 'really great', could be seen as indicators of adjective-hood (Androutsopoulos, 1998, p. 189-190), but it is often impossible to differentiate between intensifying and sentence adverbs in such cases. The upper-case initial of G. *Hammer* in the example is another argument against adjective status.

   A particular problem concerning the classification of predicatively used denominal evaluatives as adjectives is the fact that they sometimes compete with unambiguous nouns, as indicated by a preceding article (cf. the prefixoid formations G. ***Hammer**band* 'incredible band' and ***Knaller**show* 'great show'; *Knaller* 'firecracker'):

18.   G. diese band ist **der hammer**!!!

      'This band is incredible!!!'

      (https://www.gilmoregirls.de/forum/archive/index.php/t-254.html)

19.   Nachts wäre die Show **der Knaller** gewesen, vielleicht.

      'At night, the show would have been great, maybe.'

      (http://www.berliner-journalistenbuero.de/erik_heier/arbeitsprobe7.html)

Likewise, G. *die Bombe* 'lit. the bomb, i.e. great' and D. *de top* 'lit. the top, i.e. great' can be used predicatively instead of just *Bombe/bombe* or *top* (Van Goethem & Hüning, 2015, p. 372-373, 381). Semantically, however, the presence or absence of an article does not seem to make any difference. Sw. *toppen* 'great' is particularly telling in this respect: it clearly originates in the noun *topp-* 'top' combined with the suffixal definite article *-en*; the *Svenska Akademiens Grammatik* (Teleman et al., 1999, p. 232) explicitly mentions *toppen* as an instance of nouns being used adjectivally. Evaluative *toppen(-)* also retains this form when used as a left-hand compound member (e.g. *toppenfilm* 'great movie').

3.1.4 Inflection

Yet another sound argument against adjective status of unbound evaluatives is that these items generally fail to show adjectival inflection in the relevant contexts. This concerns above all the attributive position in all three languages, where adjectives have an inflectional ending in most cases; it may even give rise to minimal pairs like G. *ein spitze-Ø Bleistift* 'an excellent pencil' vs. *ein spitz-er Bleistift* 'a sharp pencil' (Booij & Hüning, 2014, p. 90). While predicatively used adjectives never inflect in German or Dutch, in Swedish they are subject to gender and number agreement as well (Kunkel-Razum et al., 2009, p. 363-366; Haeseryn et al., 1997, p. 400-412; Teleman et al., 1999, p. 208-209).

   However, the absence of inflection is not particularly problematic, given the existence of many other defective adjectives in German, Dutch and Swedish such as colour adjectives (e.g. G. *lila* 'purple') and adjectives of foreign origin (e.g. G. *trendy* 'idem'; Kunkel-Razum et al., 2009, p. 343-347; Haeseryn et al., 1997, p. 398-401; Teleman et al., 1999, p. 214-216). Remarkably, the *Duden-Grammatik* (Kunkel-

Razum et al., 2009, p. 360) mentions numerous potential adjectives with an evaluative meaning, stating that their categorial classification causes difficulties due to a general lack of inflection. Most, although not all, are of nominal origin: *hammer*, *klasse*, *mega*, *spitze*, *tipptopp* (ameliorative); *hölle*, *schrott* (pejorative). Evaluatives, across German, Dutch and Swedish, apparently contribute to the group of defective adjectives.

If an evaluative does inflect like an ordinary adjective, e.g. in attributive position, or appears in the comparative or superlative, we may regard it as having acquired prototypical adjectival properties. Evaluatives with adjectival endings are conspicuously rare even in our large corpora, but they do occur (cf. Van Goethem & Hüning, 2015, p. 392-393). German examples of this kind are given in the following examples: (23) is a comparative form, and in (24) *hammer* 'great' is inflected according to gender, case and number (cf. *ein schön-es Gefühl* 'a nice.NOM.SG feeling').

23.   Das wird ja immer **hammerer**!

'This is getting even great-er!'

(http://www.elvisnachrichten.de/archive/index.php/t-8986.html)

24.   […] das war ein **hammeres** gefühl als ob man fliegt.

'it was great.INFL feeling, as if you are flying.'

(http://www.cosmiq.de/qa/show/2505746/was-kann-einen-erwarten-bei-der-geschwindigkeit/, Google search)

3.1.5 Adverbial use

When a denominal evaluative item has scope over a verb or verb phrase, i.e. when it is used as an adverb with the innovative adjectival meaning, it has obviously been re-categorized and lost noun status:

20. G. […] die halbe schule hat draußen zugeschaut und trotzdem <u>hab</u> ich **hammer** <u>gespielt</u>

    'half of the school was watching outside, but I played excellent anyway'

    (http://www.basketball.de/archive/index.php/t-2736.html)

21. D. Dit alles <u>valt</u> **reuze** <u>mee</u>.

    'All this turns out a lot better than expected.'

    (http://artikelen.foobie.nl/recensies/call-of-duty-black-ops-in-3d-op-de-ps3/)

22. Sw. Jag <u>mår</u> **toppen**, eller gör jag?

    'I'm doing great, or do I?'

    (http://www.sandragrefve.se/category/personligt)

To sum up Section 3.1, while it is ill-advised to assume adjective status of evaluatives generally, there are numerous indicators of (ongoing) noun-to-adjective category changes of denominal evaluatives in attributive and predicative position: two-word spellings, initial lower-case spellings when written apart from the following noun in German, adverbial modification, and, if rarely, adjectival inflection. Concerning the latter, it is worth noting that defective adjectives are not at all uncommon in German, Dutch and Swedish, an aspect that has to date been overlooked in the discussion of re-catogorization from noun to adjective.

3.2 Intensification of adjectives and adverbs

Many denominal evaluatives also appear in adjectival (and/or adverbial) prefixoid formations, in which they function as intensifiers, for example Sw. *dunder-* 'lit. 'thunder', *kalas-* 'lit. party', *toppenbra* 'lit. top, i.e. very nice' (cf. *dunder-*, *kalas-*, *toppenkväll* 'great evening'). When used in this way, the prefixoids compete with degree modifiers ('very', 'extremely'). Here, too, the left-hand constituents are generally part of productive word-formation schemata, as illustrated in (25):

25. a. G. *hammerdumm*, 'lit. hammer, i.e. very stupid', -*geil* 'cool', -*gut* 'good', -*schwer* 'difficult'

b. D. *reuzebenieuwd* 'lit. giant, i.e. very curious', -*blij* 'happy', -*fijn* 'fine', -*gezellig* 'enjoyable'

c. *kanonbra* 'lit. canon, i.e. very good', -*fin* 'fine', -*förkyld* 'having a bad cold', -*nöjd* 'content'

Intensifying adjectival compounds have been widely discussed with regard to all three languages in question, and as many intensifying items fulfil affixoid criteria, the notion of 'prefixoid' has played an important role in this context (see, inter alia, on German: Klara, 2009, 2012; on Dutch: Fletcher, 1980; Hoeksema, 2012; on Swedish: Lundbladh, 2002; Sigurd, 1983; Thorell, 1981, p. 14-15, 63-64). In many cases it is possible to identify the origin of a given intensifier from a specific simile compound, e.g. *stocksteif* 'lit. stick-stiff, i.e. stiff as a stick' > 'very stiff', *stockkonservativ* 'very conservative' (Hüning & Booij, 2014, p. 593-598). Given the commonalities between these formations and the openness of the patterns to new elements, Norde & Van Goethem (2015, p. 116) suggest the following abstract schema for adjectival formations with an intensifying non-head:

26. $[<a>_{INT} [b]_{Ai}]_{Aj} \leftrightarrow [\text{very SEM}_i]_j$

Interestingly, items that express negative evaluation in combination with nouns can just as easily function as intensifiers. Especially productive is Sw. *skit-* 'lit. shit' (*skitbra* 'very nice', *-kul* 'cool', *-snygg* 'pretty', *-svår* 'difficult'); in German and Dutch, negative evaluative items are less common, but there does not seem to be a principle constraint, as shown by G. *scheißdreckig* 'very dirty', *-gut* 'good', *kackblöd* 'very stupid', *-freundlich* 'friendly'; *kankerstom* 'very stupid, *-vet* 'cool'; *kutgoed* 'very good', *-zwaar* 'difficult'. The fact that many language users regard these elements as offensive can, of course, counteract productivity; Sw. *skit-* seems to be the least problematic in this way. This can be seen as a phenomenon related to the 'emphasis of horror' (Hentschel, 1998; cf. Meibauer, 2013, p. 32): a negatively charged modifier functions as intensifier (cf. G. *schrecklich lecker*, D. *vreselijk lekker*, Sw. *hemskt gott* 'terribly tasty'), which perhaps is a linguistic universal, and not at all uncommon in the Germanic languages.

Norde & Van Goethem (2015), Van Goethem & De Smet (2014) and Van Goethem & Hiligsmann (2014) convincingly show that the rise of adjectival D. *reuze* 'great' is simultaneously the result of debonding from nominal compounds and clipping of intensifying adjectival compounds: since it is more productive with positively than negatively connoted adjectives, it is plausible to regard *reuze* as the clipped form of adjectival formations like *reuzeleuk* 'very nice', *-goed* 'good', *-gezellig* 'enjoyable, cosy'. This pathway does not by any means exclude debonding of the compound member *reuze-* in nominal formations; rather, the two processes are intertwined. Another adjectival evaluative that emerged from its use as intensifier is D. *bere* 'excellent': *beresterk* 'as strong as a bear' > 'very strong'; > *bereleuk* 'very nice' > *bere* 'great'. Once entrenched as an evaluative, a clipped form can occur in any of the relevant grammatical environments (*De avond was bereleuk* 'The evening

was very nice' > *De avond was bere* 'The evening was great' > *Het was een bere avond* / *bereavond* 'It was a great evening'; *een bereleuke avond* 'a very nice evening' > *een bere avond* 'a great evening' > *De avond was bere* 'the evening was great').

Clipped adjectival intensifying formations taking on the meaning of the whole formation are common across Germanic, cf. G. *Er ist hyper*, D. *Hij is hyper*, Sw. *Han är hyper* 'He is hyperactive' < G./Sw. *hyperaktiv*, D. *hyperactief* 'hyperactive' (see also Norde & Van Goethem, 2015). The emergence of pejorative evaluatives through clipping does not seem implausible either: Sw. *skit* 'terrible' could be the clipped form of *skit-* that functions as an intensifier of negatively loaded adjectives (e.g. *skitdålig* 'very bad', *skitilla* 'idem', *skitdum* 'very stupid', etc.). On the other hand, the intensifier *skit-* is semantically neutral and can just as easily be combined with adjectives with a positive connotation (e.g. *skitbra* 'very good', *-duktig* 'well-behaved', *-kul* 'cool'). Since we cannot rule out the possibility that free evaluative *skit* was influenced by its use in adjectival compounds, we should at least see such uses as beneficial to the emergence of evaluative adjectives. The same holds for many other evaluatives of nominal origin that also function as adjective intensifiers. While evaluative D. *bere* 'great' may have arisen from the use of *bere* as an adjective intensifier, many evaluatives are more likely to have multiple source constructions (cf. Van de Velde et al., 2013) involving combinations with both nouns and adjectives. Finally, there are evaluatives for which the clipping pathway seems impossible, viz. those that are barely productive or unproductive as adjective intensifiers like D. *top* or G. *spitze(n).*

The majority of all (productive) intensifiers for adjectives do not function as evaluatives; some are never combined with nouns (e.g. G. *stock-*, D. *kei-*, Sw. *as-*

'very') or do not have an evaluative meaning when combined with nouns (e.g. Sw. *jätte-* 'very; giant', G./D./Sw. *über/uber-* 'very, too; more than ordinary', under the influence of English). Conversely, evaluatives can apparently always function as adjective intensifiers as well: even combinations that might be judged as unusual by native speakers can be attested via a Google search (e.g. G. *gefällt mir echt spitzengut*[8] '(I) really like it a whole lot'; *(…) om echt **topgoed** te worden (…)*[9] 'to really become very good'). The link between evaluatives and intensifiers is most conspicuous in Swedish: any of the items in (4a-b) above can readily combine with adjectives or adverbs: *dunder-*, *kalas-*, *kanon-*, *super-*, *toppen-*, *botten-*, *skitbra* 'very good/well'. Clearly, as soon as a morpheme is established as an evaluative, it may in principle be used as an intensifier as well.[10] In other cases, the intensifying use is either the original one or at least a beneficial factor in the emergence of the adjectival evaluative. Following the notation by Booij (2010, p. 30-36), we therefore propose a paradigmatic relationship ('≈') between nominal compounds with an evaluative non-head (11a) and adjectival compounds with an intensifying non-head (26), an idea also present in Schlücker (2014, p. 98-99):

28. $[<a>_{EV} \text{N}]_N \leftrightarrow [evaluating \text{ N}]_N \approx [<a>_{INT} \text{A}]_A \leftrightarrow [intensifying \text{ A}]_A$

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[8] http://www.myownmusic.de/psychogate/play/?songid=226950 (consulted on March 1 2015, Google search)

[9] http://forum.girlscene.nl/forum/food-sport/leniger-worden-ii-224955.1325.html (consulted on March 1 2015, Google search)

[10] A related yet different case in this context is the use of pejorative evaluatives that are used adverbially to intensify adjectives, e.g. *scheiße* 'lit. shit, i.e. terrible' in *scheiße gut* 'terribly good' or *scheiße schlecht* 'terribly bad' (cf. *schrecklich gut/schlecht* 'terribly good/bad'), which can easily be attested with a Google search.

An interesting argument in favour of the clipping pathway in the emergence of D. *reuze* 'great' is made by Van Goethem & De Smet (2014, p. 268-270) and Van Goethem & Hiligsmann (2014, p. 56-58): both *reuze feestje* 'great party' and *reuze probleem* 'enormous problem' are acceptable, but when used predicatively, *reuze* has a clear preference for nouns with a positive connotation: *Het feestje was reuze* 'The party was great', whereas *??Het probleem was reuze* 'The problem was great' is considered odd by native speakers, as shown by a small scale survey. Hence, predicatively used *reuze* should be strongly influenced by its use as intensifier of positively connoted adjectives: *Het feestje was reuzeleuk > Het feestje was reuze*. While we absolutely agree with the multiple pathway account in the emergence of adjectival *reuze*, these distributional properties do not necessarily imply that the clipping of adjectival compounds must have been a contributing factor in its emergence. Again, what is crucial here, is the distinction between qualifying and evaluative functions: *reuze* in *reuze probleem* is qualifying ('enormous'), whereas in *reuze feestje* it may be either qualifying ('huge') or evaluative ('great'). As mentioned before, even qualifying prefixoids may debond and be used attributively (cf. G. *riesen Problem* 'huge problem'), but only those with evaluative semantics can regularly extend their usage into predicative position (cf. 2.2).

3.3 Evaluative 'loan prefixes'

Denominal evaluatives compete with a type of morpheme that does not originate from nouns, viz. 'loan prefixes': bound lexical items which were borrowed into German, Dutch and Swedish in complex loan words (cf. Ruf 1996). This subsection sets out the semantic and distributional resemblance of evaluative prefixoids and loan

prefixes, providing an additional argument for a constructional network involving evaluatives in the following section (4.). *Super*/*super*(-) in German, Dutch and Swedish as well as *Mega*/*mega*(-) and *Top*/*top*(-) in German will serve as examples.

The seemingly trivial internationalism *super(-)*, which came into Germanic via Latin and French, bears striking similarities to (ameliorative) evaluative prefixoids and their unbound counterparts. Like many prefixoids, *Super*/*super*- in German, Dutch and Swedish is polysemous and expresses more than just evaluation (cf. qualifying uses in G. *Supermarkt*, D. *supermarkt*, Sw. *supermarknad* 'supermarket'; G. *Supermacht*, D. *supermacht*, Sw. *supermakt* 'super power'); its evaluative use is in fact a fairly recent innovation, most likely influenced by similar uses in English (Ruf 1996, p. 78-124, Schmidt 1990).

Evaluative *Super*/*super*(-) appears in the non-head position of complex lexemes (a), displays free uses in the attributive (b) and predicative (c) positions, and is used adverbially (d); it can also function as an intensifier for adjectives and adverbs (e). Its uses are therefore the same as those of denominal evaluatives, as exemplified in examples (31)-(33):

31.   a. G. Bleibt er gesund ein **Super**zugang!!

'If he stays healthy, (he is) an excellent acquisition'

(http://www.basketball.de/archive/index.php/t-21271.html)

b. Sie ist halt einfach ein **super** Hund!

'She simply is an excellent dog!'

(http://www.tsv-schnuppy.de/TagebuchOkt2009.htm)

c. Wäre **super**, wenn ihr mir antworten könntet.

'Would be great if you could answer me.'

(http://www.diebandscheibe.de/ibf/lofiversion/index.php/t35555.html)

d. Hilft **super**, aber dann muss auch geschlafen werden!!!...

'Helps great, but then you really have to sleep, too!!!...'

(http://www.forum-gesundheit24.de/was-ist-das-beste-hausmittel-gegen-

erkaltung/)

e. Und das Bild ist **super**schön!

'And the picture is very beautiful!'

(http://www.schmid-gartenpflanzen.de/forum/index.php/t/3216/0/)

32.   a. D. echt een **super**film!

'Truly a great movie!'

http://forum.xboxworld.nl/archive/index.php?t-97240.html

b. wat een **super** verhaal!!!

'What a great story!!!'

(http://martinebakker.reismee.nl/reisverhaal/43051/ziektes-salta-en-bueno-

bolivia/)

c. De kwaliteit is dit jaar **super**!

'The quality is excellent this year!'

(http://www.schmidtzeevis.nl/html/nieuwtjes_uit_de_visserijwerel.html)

d. Met mij gaat het helemaal **super**.

'I am doing just great.'

(http://www.lotgenotenforum.nl/forum/archive/index.php/t-2378.html)

e. Dit vind ik nu een **super**goed initiatief.

'I think this is a very good initiative.'

(http://www.gk.nl/news/9249-vijf_generaals_varen_mee_met_grachtenparade)

33.   a. Sw. Hoppas du haft en **super**dag!

'I hope you've had an excellent day!'

(http://kenzas.se/2012/04/29/29e-april-2012/)

b. Visst det är ju ingen **super** kvalité…

'Of course, it is not exactly excellent quality…'

(http://27mhz.se/forums/viewtopic.php?p=878%26sid=c74aea5eac146a4bee1bf

35146b740eb)

c. Tycker det är **super**!

'I think that is great!'

(http://vallegoesfreaky.soclog.se/p/2011/11/)

d. Vi hade prao i två dagar och det det gick **super**!

'We had work experience for two days and it went great!'

(http://myjagborn.blogg.se/2011/january/)

e. Nu är jag **super**peppad att komma igång igen!

'Now I am very excited about getting going again!'

(http://www.flygstart.se/bloggsok/index/372?s=32446)

As also suggested by German, Dutch and Swedish dictionaries, the adjectival status of the unbound lexeme *super* is probably uncontroversial. Nor is *super(-)* an isolated case of a loan prefix acquiring evaluative semantics: *Mega/mega(-)*, another internationalism, has recently been extending its function in the same direction in German, without yet reaching the same degree of entrenchment as an evaluative as *super(-)*. In the majority of compounds that can be considered genuinely German, *Mega/mega-* qualifies the referent as very large or of extraordinary size: *Megaprojekt* 'huge project', *-stadt* 'city', *-waffeleisen* 'waffle iron'; the same meaning is also common in Dutch (*megafeest* 'huge party', *-scherm* 'screen', *-winst* 'profit') and Swedish (*megabokhandel* 'huge bookstore, *-portion* 'portion', *-succé* 'success'). In quite a few such instances, qualifying *mega* is spelled separately from the following

noun (e.g. G. *mega Schwankung* 'huge fluctuation', D. *mega collectie* 'huge collection', Sw. *mega trädgård* 'huge garden'); *Mega/mega(-)* 'huge' therefore competes with both the qualifying prefixoid and debonded attributive adjectives G. *Riesen/riesen(-)*, D. *reuze(-)* and Sw. *jätte(-)* 'huge, enormous' (cf. Norde & Van Goethem 2014).

On the other hand, we also find instances of *Mega/mega(-)* with a clearly evaluative function in German, either spelled as a compound (G. *Megamannschaft* 'great team', *Megaqualität* 'great quality', *Megastimmung* 'great atmosphere') or separately (G. *mega Angebot* 'great offer', *mega Auftritt* 'great performance' *mega Wetter* 'great weather'); since *Mega/mega*(-) is more often qualifying ('huge') than evaluative ('great'), the reanalysis leading from the former function to the latter must have taken place relatively recently. The innovative re-interpretation of, for example, *Megachance* 'huge/enormous chance' as 'excellent chance' is reflected in adjectival and adverbial uses as in (34) and (35):

34.   [...] die Sicht auf Sydney war echt **mega**!

'The view of Sidney was really great!'

(http://isa.fabsplace.de/page/3/)

35.   Habs auch mal probiert und es hat **mega** funktioniert!

'(I) also tried it once und it worked perfectly.'

(http://www.gutefrage.net/frage/wie-bekomme-ich-einen-guten-gedaechtnis-

und-wie-kann-ich-mich-gut-konzentrieren, Google search)

As intensifier for adjectives and adverbs, *mega-* is common in all three languages, and this presumably facilitated the rise and spread of the evaluative function (cf. 3.2) as for example in G. *megaerfrischend* 'very refreshing', *-häufig* 'often', *-langweilig* 'boring', *-lustig* 'funny', *-schlecht* 'bad'.

Similarly, *Top/top-* can be considered a loan prefix in German. Unlike D. *top-* and Sw. *topp(en)-*, which are native lexemes, *Top/top-* was borrowed into German in complex English loans like *top manager* or *top-secret*. It then became productive as left-hand member of nominal compounds, competing with qualifying *Spitzen-* ('of a high, the highest class': *Topathlet* 'top athlete', *Topanbieter* 'top provider', *Topfavorit* 'absolute favourite'). Very much like evaluative D. *top(-)* and Sw. *toppen(-)*, G. *Top/top(-)* acquired evaluative semantics recently: *Top-Film* 'great movie', *-Webseite* 'website', *-zustand* 'condition' (see also Battefeld et al. to app, Ruf 1996, p. 125-146, Van Goethem & Hüning, 2015). The new evaluative meaning 'great' is also present in attributive uses (*top Auto* 'great car', *top Bilder* 'great pictures', *top Schulsport* 'great school sport'), in predicative position (36) and in adverbial function (37):

36.   Und ich muss sagen, das Teil ist für das Geld echt **top**!

'And I have to say, this thing is really great for the money!'

(http://www.gtrp.de/archive/index.php/t-33402.html)

37.   sieht **top** aus!

'Looks great!'

(http://beautyjunkies.inbeauty.de/forum/archive/index.php/t-62044.html)

As an intensifier for adjectives, *top-* is not very productive: the majority of all combinations belongs to three types with a high token frequency, *topaktuell* 'very up-to-date', *topfit* 'very fit' and *topmodern* 'very modern'; *topgut* 'very good', e.g., is only attested once in the *DECOW14AX*-corpus – as against 3656 instances of *supergut*, 109 instances of *megagut* and 104 instances of *hammergut*. We can conclude from these facts that clipping of adjectival compounds may be a contributing factor, but by no means a necessary one for evaluative adjectives to emerge from formally bound items (cf. 3.2).

As a final note, *super*, *mega* and *top* are occasionally attested with unequivocally adjectival endings. (38)-(40) are examples from German (Google search):

38. 5 kg wären **super**, 10 am **supersten** ;-)

'5 kg would be great, 10 the great-est ;-)'

(http://www.abnehmen.com/threads/58182-5-kg-waeren-super-10-am-supersten)

39. **Megaaaaa**, es sind jetzt schon knapp 200 Leute dabei, ohne dass wirs bisher überhaupt beworben haben! Und noch **megaer**: Es fahren wohl ernsthaft Busse aus Köln und Hamburg, sofern genug Anmeldungen zusammenkommen!!!

'Great, already it is going to be close to 200 people, without us doing any advertising at all! And even great-er: There will seriously be busses from Cologne and Hamburg, if we receive enough registrations!!!'

(https://de-de.facebook.com/tackleberrypunk/posts/363488747063258)

40. Ich sag nur **toppes** Wetter, **toppe** Bootstour, **toppe** Leute, **TOP**!

All I am saying is great.INFL weather, great.INFL boat ride, great.INFL people, great!

(http://matzeinparis.blogspot.be/2008_03_01_archive.html)

Such cases should not be overrated, as they are very rare and seem to have a humorous touch. They do show nonetheless that the acquisition of adjectival features can in principle go all the way to completion, even if the items in question remain defective in general use (cf. 3.1).

4. Constructional networks

Based on the above observations, this section maps out the concept of constructional networks involving lexical items that express evaluation, facilitating the emergence of new defective adjectives. We will suggest that bound and unbound evaluatives are in a paradigmatic, network-like relationship (4.1). We then address the issue of different source constructions and formal variation in adjectival evaluatives (4.2).

4.1 Paradigmatic relationships

One potential explanation for commonalities in usage and function between evaluatives that originate from bound morphemes, both 'prefixoids' and 'loan prefixes', on the one hand and predicatively used bare nouns on the other hand is to assume idiosyncratic developments and changes in individual lexical items. On this view, any semantic and distributional similarities are coincidental, resulting from semantic changes of individual items. This is not a very informative approach, however, given the strong functional resemblance between such items across German, Dutch and Swedish and the fact that any given evaluative, once sufficiently entrenched, tends to spread to all relevant grammatical environments. We therefore suggest a different approach, based on the notion that linguistic and lexical knowledge is necessarily structured (cf. the concept of a 'hierarchical lexicon', Booij 2010, p. 25-31), and that bound and unbound evaluative items are connected by links in a constructional network; this structure is paradigmatic in nature, linking abstract word-formation schemata and syntactic patterns. Under a constructionist approach, these networks correspond to the abstractions made by individual language users on the basis of their linguistic knowledge.

As we have seen, functionally equivalent evaluatives with scope over a noun generally appear as bound morphemes in the non-head position, and unbound in attributive and predicative position. We therefore assume the following paradigmatic relationship:

37. $< [<a>_{EVk} [b]_{Ni}]_{Nj/NPj} \leftrightarrow [\text{great/awful } SEM_i]_j >$

  $\approx < [<a>_{EV}]_{Ak/ADVk} \leftrightarrow [\text{great/awful}] >$

Since a clear-cut boundary between bound and unbound evaluatives would not be adequate (cf. 3.1), the top schema refrains from specifying whether the instantiation is a complex noun or a noun phrase. Once established, an evaluative adjective can be used adverbially with the same meaning. Examples (38)-(40) serve as additional illustrations of the paradigmatic relationship in (37):

38. a. *Hammerwetter* / *hammer Wetter* ‚great weather'

  $\approx$ *Das Wetter ist hammer!* ‚The weather is great!'

  b. *Schrottwetter* / *schrott Wetter* 'awful weather'

  $\approx$ *Das Wetter ist schrott!* ‚The weather is awful!'

39. a. *topweer* / *top weer* ‚ great weather'

  $\approx$ *Het weer is top!* ‚The weather is great!'

  b. *kloteweer* / *klote weer* 'awful weather'

  $\approx$ *Het weer is klote!* ‚The weather is awful!'

40. a. *kanonväder* / *kanon väder* ‚great weather'

  $\approx$ *Vädret är kanon!* ‚The weather is great!'

  b. *skitväder* / *skit väder* 'awful weather'

  $\approx$ *Vädret är skit!* ‚The weather is awful!'

A more schematic representation of this relationship, including the schema for adjectival intensification, is given in Figure (1) below:
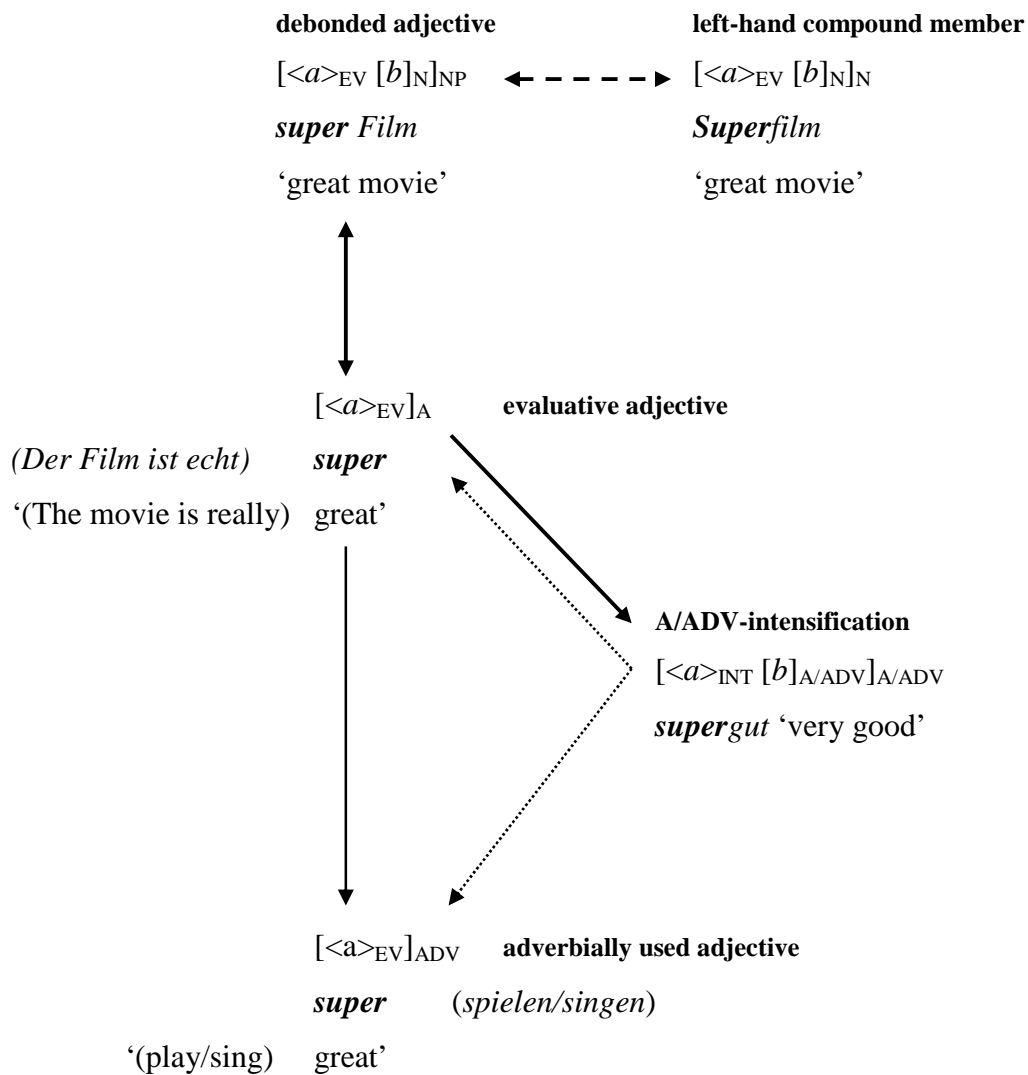
debonded adjective   **left-hand compound member**

$[<a>_{EV} \; [b]_N]_{NP}$ ◄ ‒ ‒ ‒ ‒ ► $[<a>_{EV} \; [b]_N]_N$

super Film   **Super***film*

'great movie'   'great movie'

$[<a>_{EV}]_A$ **evaluative adjective**

(Der Film ist echt)   **super**

'(The movie is really) great'

                                        A/ADV-intensification

                                        $[<a>_{INT} \; [b]_{A/ADV}]_{A/ADV}$

                                        super*gut* 'very good'

$[<a>_{EV}]_{ADV}$ **adverbially used adjective**

super   (*spielen/singen*)

'(play/sing)   great'

Figure 1: Network of evaluative items

⟶ paradigmatic relations

◄ ‒ ‒ ‒ ► cline

·······► clipping/semantic influence

⟶ adverbial use

4.2 Source constructions and formal variation

As we saw above, evaluative non-heads – both prefixoids and (loan) prefixes – are
prone to be used adjectivally in attributive and predicative position, and may also

develop intensifying uses. Bare nouns in predicative position that develop evaluative semantics, can appear in attributive position as well as in the non-head position of nominal and (as intensifiers) adjectival compounds. An evaluative emerging solely from clipping of adjectival formations may similarly spread to these grammatical environments.

In some cases, it is possible to trace the exact origin of evaluatives, based on formal properties like the presence of linking elements. Thus, adjectival G. *spitze* 'great' and *scheiße* 'awful' must have emerged by reanalysis from the bare nouns *Spitze* 'top' and *Scheiße* 'shit' because the latter enter into compounds as *Spitzen-* and *Scheiß-*; by contrast, adjectival D. *bere*, *reuze* 'excellent' and *klote* 'terrible' must all have arisen from compounds precisely because they retain the linking vowel. Furthermore, adjectival uses of 'loan prefixes' must have originated by reanalysis in the non-head position of complex lexemes. In other cases, formal properties do not offer any indication in this respect, for example G. *hammer* 'great', *mist* 'awful', D. *top* 'great', *kut* 'awful'; this is particular true for most Swedish evaluatives, except for *toppen* 'great' (*topp* 'top' + definite article *-en*) which was clearly reanalysed in predicative position.

In German, some adjectival evaluatives exhibit formal variation, for example *spitze(n)* 'great' as in *ein spitze(n) Auto* 'a great car'. While *spitzen* has arisen through debonding (< *Spitzenauto*), *spitze* originates in the bare noun *Spitze* (*das Auto ist spitze* 'the car is great') (cf. Van Goethem & Hüning, 2015); although both forms are used attributively, only *spitze* is used predicatively. Van Goethem & Hüning (2015, p. 403) conclude that some language users may perceive *spitzen* as the inflected form of *spitze* (cf. *einen schön-en Tag* 'a pretty.ACC.SG day'), and since adjectives in predicative position never inflect in German, *spitze* remains the appropriate form. A

slightly different case are G. *bombe(n)* and *scheiß(e)* 'awful': they usually appear as *bomben* and *scheiß* in attributive position (*bomben Typ* 'great guy', *scheiß Typ* 'awful guy', cf. *Bombentyp*, *Scheißtyp*), but as *bombe* and *scheiße* in predicative position, resulting from the re-categorization of a bare noun. However, even *bombe* and *scheiße* are attested (if rarely) in attributive uses on the Internet (e.g. *bombe Typ* / *Bombe-Typ*, *scheiße Typ*), hence there cannot be a constraint in principle. We can interpret these distributional facts as indicating the extent to which a specific item is entrenched as an unbound evaluative: while *spitze* is readily used both predicatively and – like *spitzen* and *Spitzen-* – attributively, attributive uses of *bombe* and *scheiße* may be (as yet) blocked by the prefixoids *Bomben-* and *Scheiß-* and their adjectival counterparts *bomben* and *scheiß* (cf. Meibauer 2013, p. 39).

Another kind of formal variance can be observed when an evaluative prefixoid does not have an adjectival counterpart: *Traum-* 'dream', and similarly D. *droom-* and Sw. *dröm-* 'idem' are widely used prefixoids (e.g. **Traum***reise* 'excellent journey', -*frau* 'woman', -*job* 'job'); in predicative position, nominal *ein Traum* 'a dream' or even '*ein Träumchen*' 'a dream.DIM' has to be used to express evaluation: *Die Reise war (echt)* **ein Traum** / **ein Träumchen** 'lit. The journey was (really) a dream, i.e. great'. The two uses are clearly related; hence, even in the absence of formal identity, a paradigmatic relationship between equivalent evaluatives should still be maintained.

5. Conclusions

This contribution has addressed category changes involving bound and unbound morphemes with evaluative semantics: prefixoids, loan prefixes and bare nouns in

predicative position, all of which tend to be re-categorized as adjectives. As previous studies of recent noun-to-adjective changes in German, Dutch and Swedish mostly examined the distributional and semantic properties of specific prefixoids, evaluative or otherwise, we decided to aim at broad generalizations, focussing exclusively on evaluatives.

Two loci of change prove crucial in this context: the non-head position of both nominal and adjectival compounds or complex lexemes, and the predicative position. Evaluative non-heads of nominal formations are reanalysed as attributively used adjectives: their semantic characteristics apparently bring about a lower degree of compound cohesion, encouraging debonding; the use of a given item as an intensifier with adjectives is another beneficial factor. Finally, once a bare noun has come to serve as an evaluative in predicative position, noun-to-adjective re-categorization may take place. Together, these different morphosyntactic contexts form a cline, allowing a given evaluative, once established, to spread to all grammatical environments in which adjectives are used, irrespective of its specific origin. Still, as adjectives such post-debonding evaluatives tend to remain defective; to confirm their status as adjectives (albeit defective), it suffices that they are used adverbially with the same meaning and that there is marginal evidence of inflection and comparatives or superlatives. In fact, defective adjectives are not at all uncommon in German, Dutch and Swedish, and evaluatives seem to be one contributing source.

Thanks to the constructionist approach, we can avoid any absolute distinction between syntax and lexicon; as a matter of fact, evaluatives can be seen as evidence that word-formation and syntax are intertwined in intricate ways and should often be investigated conjointly (cf. Booij & Audring, this volume). The emergence of (usually defective) adjectival evaluatives is a case of gradual constructionalization (cf. Van

Goethem et al., this volume), provided it successfully results in new lexical entries with a specific kind of generalized meaning that is clearly separate from the original lexeme. Both morphological and syntactic coercion do not automatically result in new entries in the mental lexicon, but in any case the open slots in the constructions involved are potential loci of change. These noun-to-adjective changes are on-going, and some items may be more entrenched as adjectival evaluatives than others.

As expected with informal language generally, the actual use of evaluatives may vary widely between individual speakers; it may be subject to linguistic fashions and limited to certain regions or registers. While inventories of evaluatives depend in part on creativity and language-specific patterns of usage, the underlying systemic and distributional properties are strikingly similar across different Germanic languages (cf. Leuschner 2010). The approach of the present paper has mainly been synchronic and qualitative; future research on bound and unbound evaluatives should investigate (i) the exact etymological origins of specific evaluatives, if determinable, (ii) quantitative aspects of their productivity, and (iii) prosody, an area in which empirical research is particularly desirable, not just with regard to evaluative compounding, but also compounding in general.

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