

# Approximo

## Approximation in Morphology

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Discontinuous Workshop  
Virtual (Teams)  
October 2021 – May 2022

# Thank you!

- 1) **Nino Amiridze** (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University) – *Verbs in approximation in Georgian*
- 2) **Luisa Brucale** (University of Palermo) & **Egle Mocciano** (Masaryk University, Brno) – *Approximation through suffixation: -d̥du/-a in Sicilian*
- 3) **Bert Cappelle** (Université de Lille), **Stefan Hartmann** (Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf) & **Robert Daugs** (Christian Albrechts Universität zu Kiel) – *The English privative prefixes near-, pseudo-, quasi- and sub-: approximation and 'disproximation'*
- 4) **Luisa Corona** (Università degli Studi dell'Aquila) & **Gina Russo** (Università degli Studi di Salerno) – *Italian deverbal verbs in -cchiare: a Manner of approximating*
- 5) **Jacopo Di Donato** & **Francesca Masini** (University of Bologna) – *Non-prototypicality by (discontinuous) reduplication: the N-non-N construction in Italian*
- 6) **Daniel Ebner** (Humboldt University Berlin) – *Approximation in Finnish verbal morphology*
- 7) **Matthias Eitelmann** (University of Mainz) & **Dagmar Haumann** (University of Bergen) – *Vague-ish language: approximative -ish vis-à-vis its approximating competitors*
- 8) **Gorgia Fotiadou** (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki); **Francine Gerhart**, **Marie Lammert** & **Hélène Vassiliadou** (University of Strasbourg) – *Pseudo(-) in French and Greek: fakeness/imitation, non-prototypicality and attenuation*
- 9) **Matthias Hüning** (Freie Universität Berlin) & **Barbara Schlücker** (Universität Leipzig) – *Approximation in West Germanic adjective derivation*
- 10) **Silvia Micheli** (University of Milano – Bicocca) – *The emergence of approximative values in Italian para- and semi-: a diachronic study*
- 11) **Dejan Stosic** (Université Toulouse) & **Dany Amiot** (Université de Lille) – *Why morphological augmentation does not lead to approximation?*
- 12) **Yvonne Treis** (CNRS-LLACAN) – *The approximative derivation in Kambaata (Cushitic)*
- 13) **Miriam Voghera** (University of Salerno) – *Vagueness Expressions from Time Nouns: the role of evaluative suffixes*

Evaluative  
morphology and  
approximation

State of the art of  
approximation in  
morphology (only)

Research questions  
(rephrased!) in  
relation to your  
contributions

Outline of our introduction

# Research questions

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1) Which morphological **means** / **forms** are used to express approximating values?

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2) What are the **sources** of approximating morphological markers crosslinguistically?

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3) Which approximating **values** are expressed by morphological means?

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4) Do we find **competition** between approximating morphological markers in a single language?

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5) Do we find **crosslinguistic** tendencies / similarities in the morphological marking of approximation?

# 1) Which morphological means / forms are used to express approximating values?

- Which morphological **processes**?
  - Suffixation (👉 Amiridze; Brucale & Mocciaro; Corona & Russo; Ebner; Eitelmann & Haumann; Hüning & Schlücker; Stosic & Amiot; Treis; Voghera)
    - Sicilian *longa* 'long' > *lungare***dda** 'a bit long, longish'
    - Italian *correre* 'to run' > *corricchiare* 'to run at a slow trot'
    - Kambaata *torr-* 'throw' > *torr-lab-á* 'in a kind of throwing way'
    - Italian *attimo* 'instant' > *attimino* 'instant.DIM'
    - English *-ish*: *greenish*
    - Finnish *-vinA*: *maksa-vina-an* [pay-VINA-POSS.3] '(they) pretend to pay'
  - Prefixation (👉 Cappelle et al.; Fotiadou et al.; Micheli)
    - Italian *besciamella* 'béchamel' > *para-besciamella* 'béchamel-like sauce'
    - Greek **ψευτο-επιστήμη** (*pseftoepistími*) 'pseudo-science'; French *pseudo-classique* 'pseudo-classical'
    - English *quasi-diplomatic*, *suboptimal*

# 1) Which morphological means / forms are used to express approximating values?

- Which morphological **processes**?
  - Circumfixation
    - Georgian *mžave* 'sour' > ***mo-mžav-o*** 'slightly SOUR' (Topadze Gäumann 2015: 221-222)
  - Compounding / affixoids (☞ **Stosic & Amiot**)
    - French *-forme* (*une substance géliforme* 'a gel-like substance')
    - Italian *simil-* (Masini & Micheli 2020); French *simili-* (Höfler 1981)
    - Dutch *imitatieleer* 'imitation leather', etc. (Van Goethem & Norde 2020)
  - Reduplication and discontinuous reduplication (☞ **DiDonato & Masini**)
    - Italian *sapone-non-sapone* (lit. soap-not-soap) 'soap-free cleanser'

# 1) Which morphological means / forms are used to express approximating values?

- Which kinds of **bases** (lexical categories) as **input**?
  - Nouns (☞ Brucale & Mocciaro; Cappelle et al.; DiDonato & Masini; Eitelmann & Haumann; Fotiadou et al.; Hüning & Schlücker; Micheli; Stosic & Amiot; Treis; Voghera)
  - Adjectives (☞ Brucale & Mocciaro; Cappelle et al.; Eitelmann & Haumann; Fotiadou et al.; Micheli; Stosic & Amiot; Treis)
  - Verbs (☞ Amiridze; Corona & Russo; Ebner; Fotiadou et al.; Micheli; Stosic & Amiot; Treis)
  - Adverbs (☞ Brucale & Mocciaro)
    - Sicilian *picc-ar-edda* 'a little bit'
  - Prepositions
    - Italian *simil-contro* 'SIMIL-against' (Masini & Micheli 2020)
  - Full phrases (☞ Eitelmann & Haumann)
    - All boy-next-door-*ish*
  - Debonded uses (☞ Eitelmann & Haumann; Fotiadou et al.)
    - You guys don't get along? – We get along... *ish*.
    - Κοιμάσαι; 'Kimase?' ('Are you asleep?') – Ε, ψευτό. 'Ε, pseftó' ('almost')

# 1) Which morphological means / forms are used to express approximating values?

- What about the **output** categories?
  - Often **homocategoriality** between input and output category (especially with left constituents such as prefixes)
    - E.g. French *pseudo-enquête* 'pseudo-investigation', Italian *parascientifico* 'parascientific', Italian *semi-scheggiarsi* 'nearly chip' (☞ Fotiadou et al.; Micheli)
    - Homocategoriality as a constraint for diminutives to express approximation, e.g. *livre* (N) 'book' / *livret* (N) 'small book' vs *bleu* (A) 'blue' / *bleuet* (N) 'cornflower' (☞ Stosic & Amiot)
  - But also cases of **word-class change** (especially category-changing suffixes)
    - Denominal adjectives in Germanic, e.g. *peacock-like feathers* (☞ Hüning & Schlücker)
    - *-ish* as derivational suffix or a category-neutral clitic? E.g. *she was don't car-ish* (Phrase > A), *forever-ish* (=Adv) (☞ Eitelmann & Haumann)
    - Special case of an originally nominal suffix *-savit* that derives finite verbs in Georgian (☞ Amiridze)



## 2) What are the sources of approximating morphological markers crosslinguistically?

- Fake items (☞ Cappelle et al.; Fotiadou et al.)
  - *pseudo-* (from Greek *pseudēs* 'false')
- Negation items (☞ DiDonato & Masini)
  - Italian *sapone-non-sapone* (lit. soap-not-soap) 'soap-free cleanser'
- Diminutives (☞ Brucale & Mocciaro; ?Corona & Russo; Stosic & Amiot; Voghera)
  - French *réformette* 'small reform with no value or scope'
  - NOT augmentatives! (☞ Stosic & Amiot)
- Spatial (proximity) items (☞ Cappelle et al.; Ebner; Hartmann & Daus; Micheli)
  - *para-* (from Greek *para* 'beside'), English *near-* (*near-synonyms*)
  - Finnish *-vinA-* (including an essive suffix)

## 2) What are the sources of approximating morphological markers crosslinguistically?

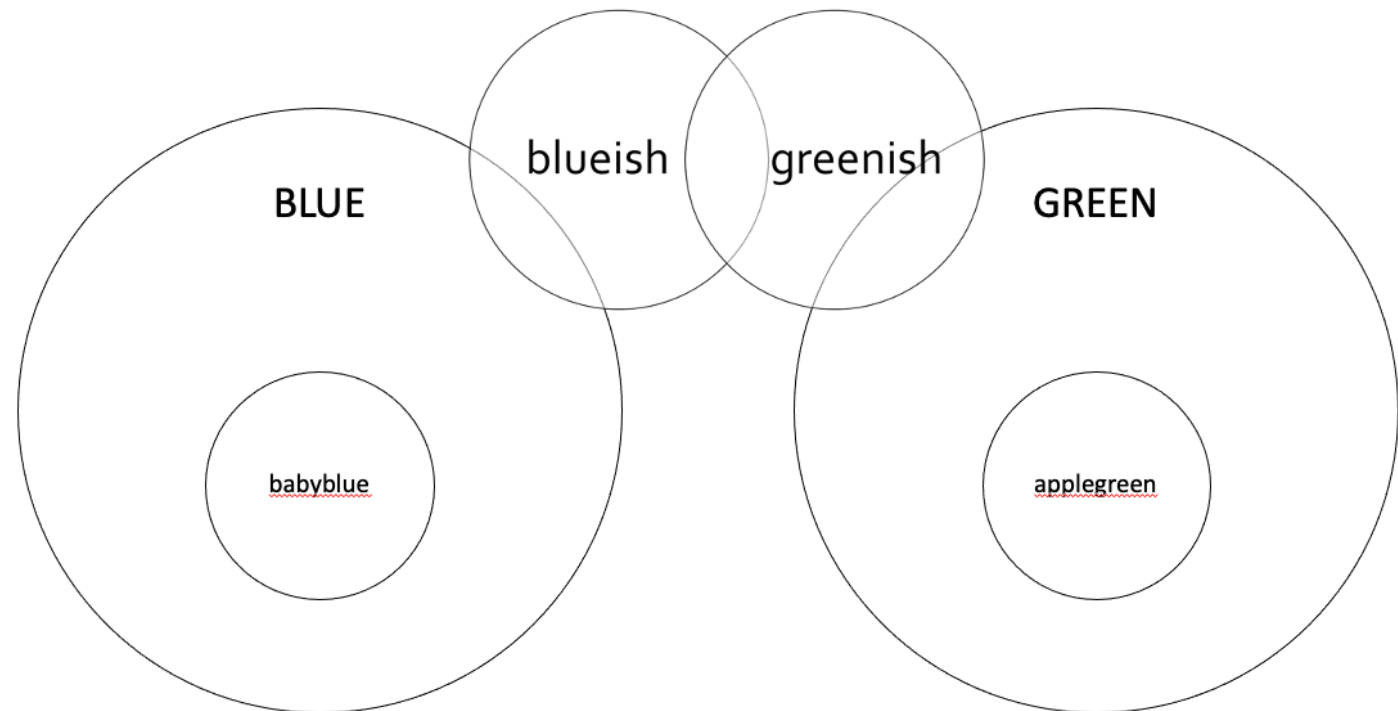
- Degree and quantity items (☞ Cappelle et al.; Micheli)
  - *quasi-*, *semi-*
- Similative/comparative items (☞ Amiridze; Brucale & Mocciaro; Hüning & Schlücker; Treis)
  - Kambaata *-lab* from verb root *lab-* 'resemble, seem' found in related languages
  - Georgian *-savit* (*vit* 'like, as')
  - German *-ähnlich* / English *-like*
- Relational items (☞ Eitelmann & Haumann)
  - English *-ish*: from associative (*Spanish*, *heavenish*) to approximative (*cleanish*, *50-ish*)
- Taxonomic items (☞ Hüning & Schlücker)
  - *vogelartiges Tier* ('bird-like animal') < Art 'species'

### 3) Which approximating values are expressed by morphological means?

- Which approximating **values**?
  - Privative (☞ Cappelle et al.; Fotiadou et al.)
  - Disproximation (☞ Cappelle et al.; Fotiadou et al.)
  - Non-authenticity / fakeness / imitation / simulation (☞ Ebner; Micheli)
  - Partialness / incompleteness (☞ Micheli)
  - Almost / proximative (☞ Ebner; Treis)
  - Attenuation (reduction) (☞ Brucale & Mocciaro; Corona & Russo; Micheli; Stosic & Amiot; Treis)
    - Various subclassifications (☞ Corona & Russo)
  - Non-prototypicality (☞ Brucale & Mocciaro; DiDonato & Masini; Fotiadou et al.)
  - Intentional vagueness (☞ Fotiadou et al.; Voghera)
    - Development of interactional and textual (focus) functions (☞ Voghera)
  - Resemblance / similarity / comparison (☞ Amiridze; Brucale & Mocciaro; Hüning & Schlückler; Micheli; Treis)

3) Which approximating values are expressed by morphological means?

- What is the relationship between **approximation** and **categorization**? Where does approximation end and where does categorization start (or vice versa)?
- When we use expressions like *blue-ish* are we approximating an existing concept or rather creating a new one?
  - Q: "What's your favourite shade of blue?"
  - A:  "baby blue" /  "dark blue" /  "blue-ish"



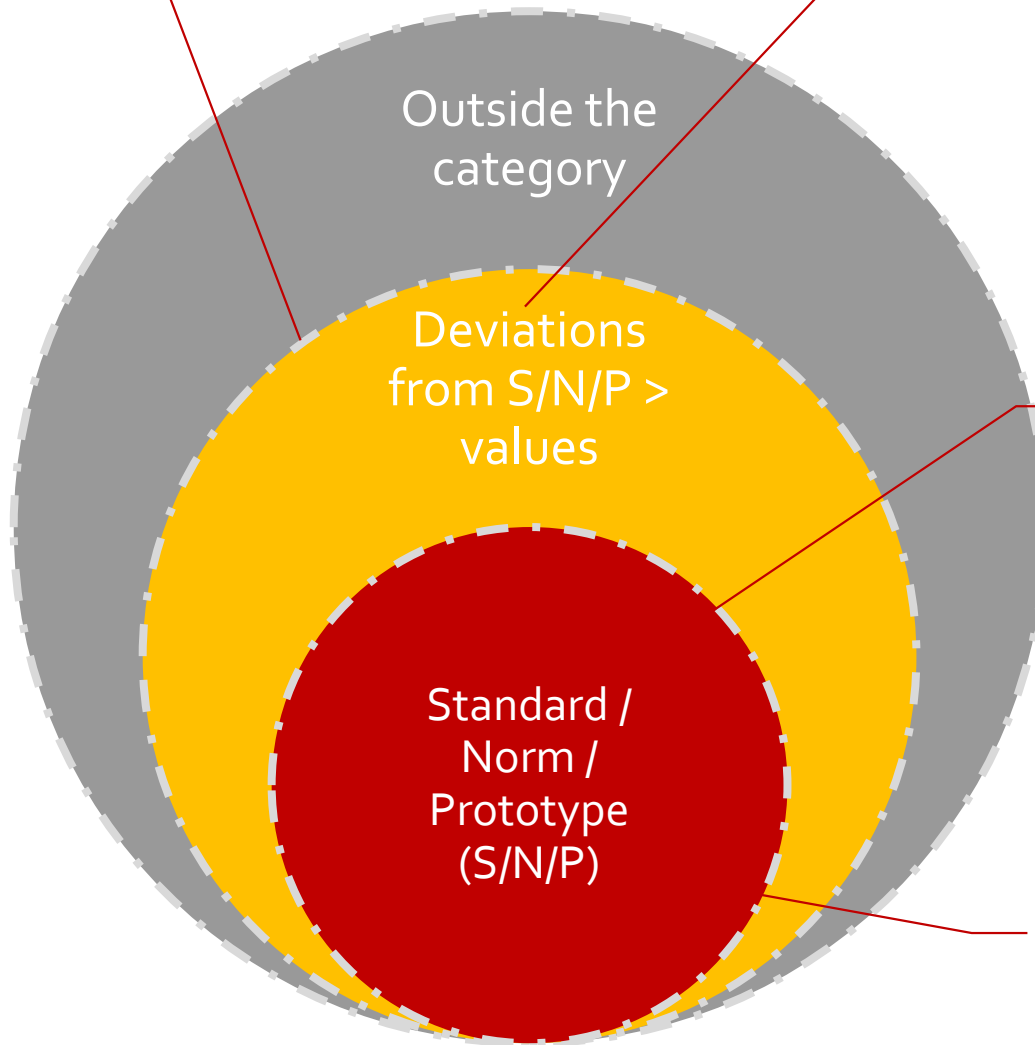
(NEW) CATEGORIZATION



Privative

Approximating values along different directions

S/N/P



Boundaries are **fuzzy**: it's not always possible to say if X (still) belongs to S/N/P!

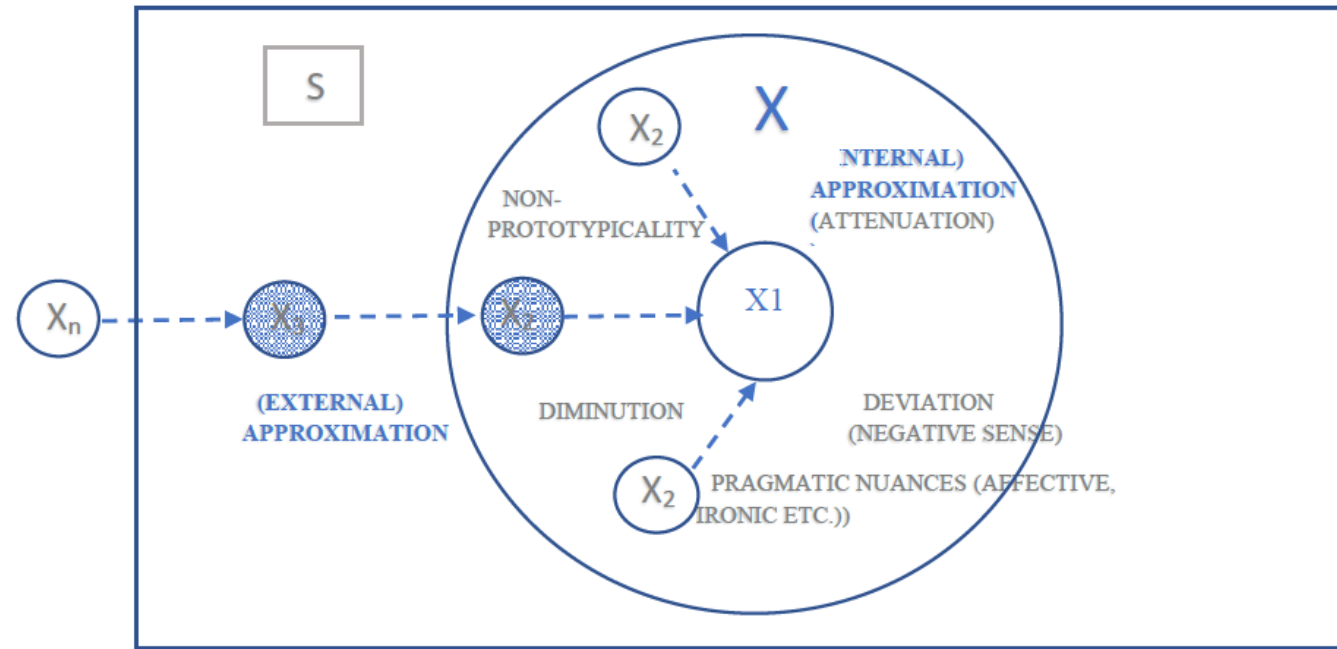
Deviations from the S/N/P may be of different types, generating different **approximating values**, also depending on the nature of the **base**: **more fine-grained schemas are needed for each single value!**

The S/N/P may be **recursive**: *baby blue* is a hyponym of *blue*, which may well develop his own "deviations" (*baby blue-ish*).

The S/N/P coincides with the **base**, which may belong to **different word classes**.

# Internal and external approximation

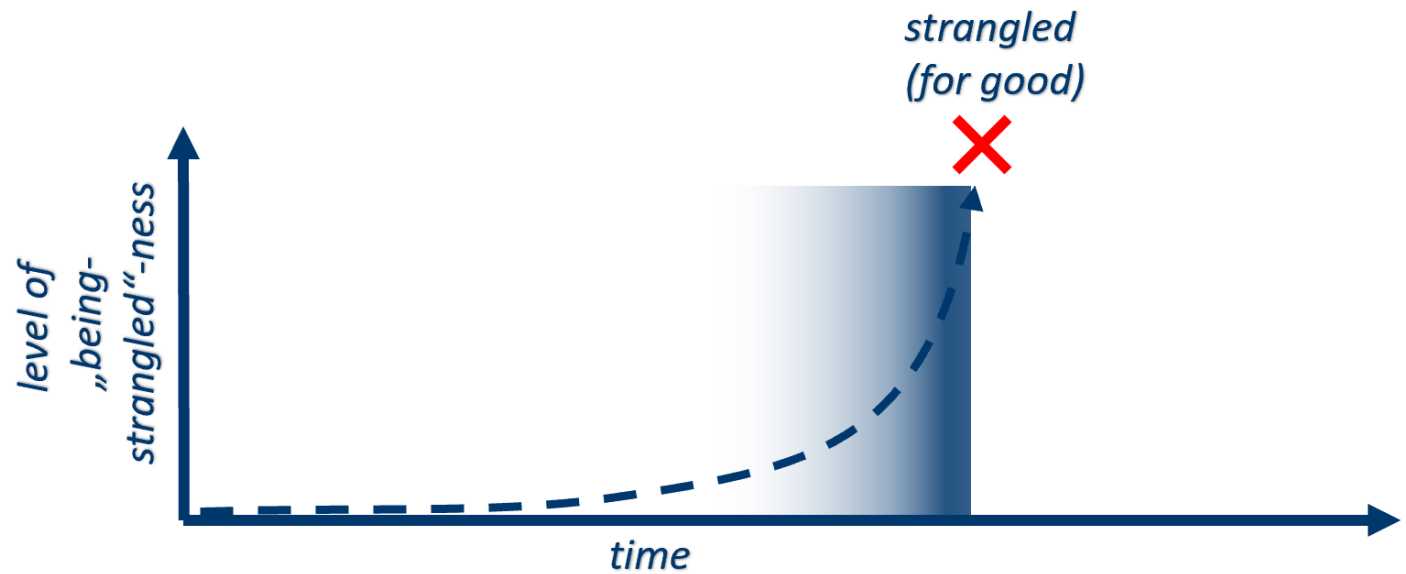
Sicilian  
*-eḍḍu/-eḍḍa*  
(Brucale &  
Mocciaro)



# Approximation as a function of time

Finnish *maisilla*  
(Ebner)

*maisilla*: (ap-)proximative

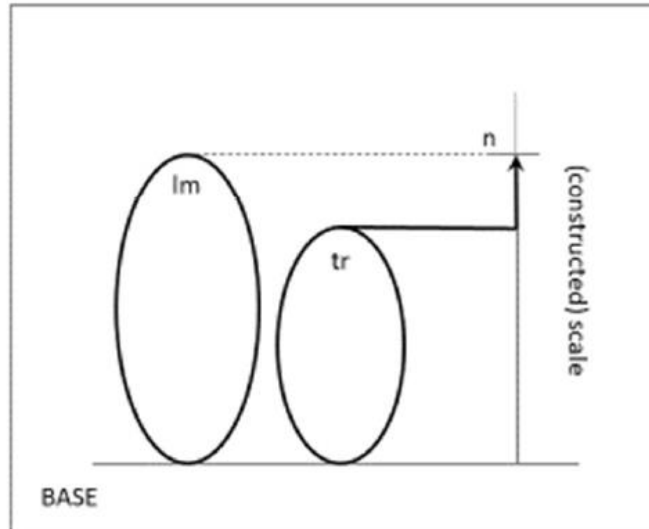


# Langackerian representations

English *near-/quasi-*  
*vs. pseudo-/sub-*  
(Cappelle, Daugs & Hartmann)

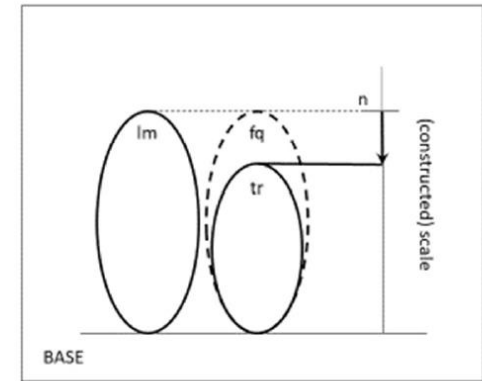
Genuine approximation in the sense of 'coming close' to a standard or baseline level

*near(-)* and *quasi(-)*

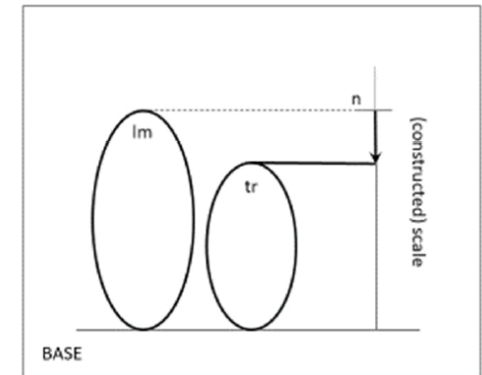


'Falling short' of a standard > disproximation

*pseudo(-)*



*sub(-)*





## 4) Do we find competition between approximating morphological markers in a single language?

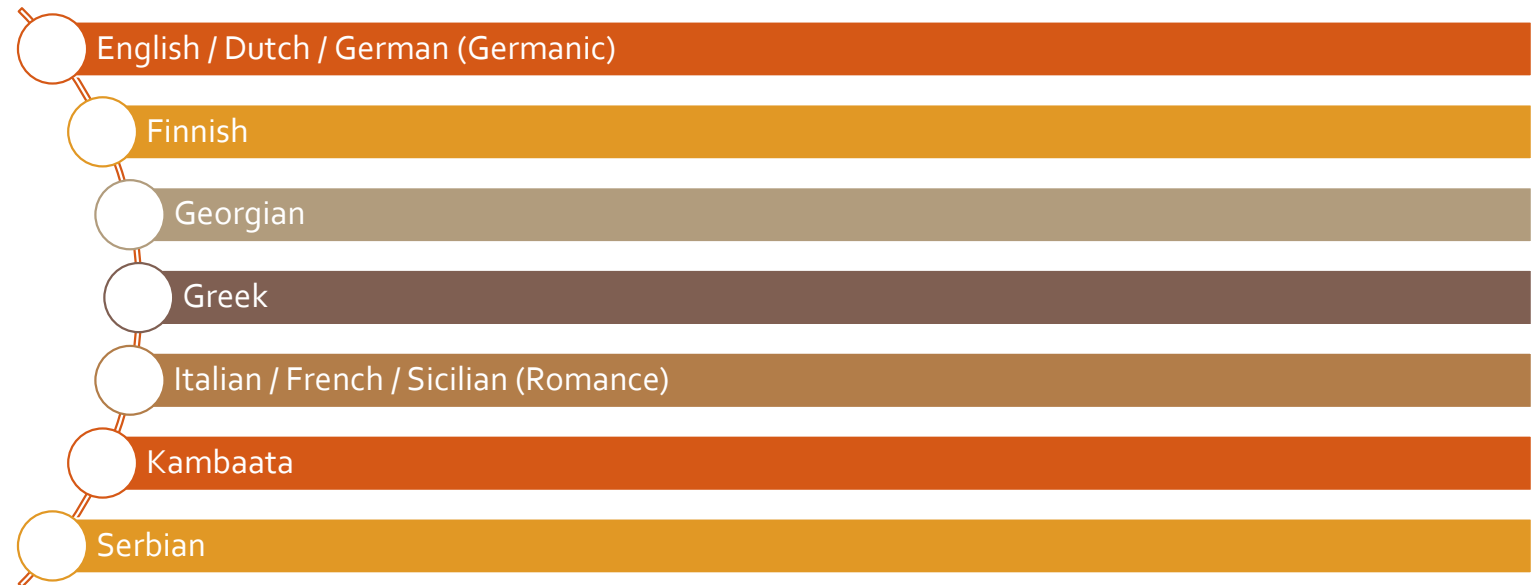
- Yes, but which **kind of competition**?
  - Are different structural strategies competing with one another (e.g., prefixation vs. suffixation)?
    - English *near-white* versus *white-ish*
    - «Prototypical approximation is realized by left constituents» (☞ Hüning & Schlücker)
  - Competition (☞ Cappelle et al.; Eitelmann & Haumann; Hüning & Schlücker)
    - Between allomorphs: *pseudo-/ psefto-* in MG
      - Κοιμάσαι; 'Kimase?' ('Are you asleep?') – Ε, ψευτό. 'Ε, pseftó' ('almost'). VS \* Ε, ψευδό. 'Ε, psevdó'
    - Between suffixes:
      - German *-ähnlich / -artig / -haft / -mäßig*
    - Between prefixes:
      - English
        - *quasi-* (e.g. *quasi-governmental*) can have a very specific, legal meaning (non-evaluative)
        - vs *pseudo-* with evaluative meaning (*pseudo-science*): no competition?
    - Between suffixes and other modifiers:
      - *-ish* vs *kind of/kinda, sort of/sorta*

#### 4) Do we find **competition** between approximating morphological markers in a single language?

- And what are the **factors** governing this competition?
  - Frequency (statistical pre-emption)?
  - Semantic (e.g. evaluative / non-evaluative)?
    - *Near-fatal* but *\*pseudo-fatal*
    - *Pseudo-scientific* but *\*near-scientific*
  - Etymology of the base (e.g. neo-classical compounds vs native bases)?
  - Register?
- And should we distinguish between competition on the level of the individual speaker and the level of a speech community?

5) Do we find **crosslinguistic** tendencies / similarities in the morphological marking of approximation?

- **General tendencies** (to be further explored in the introduction):
  - Morphological means to express approximation seem to be widely spread across European languages and beyond
  - The sources are also quite similar, overall
  - There is a tendency, for approximative affixes, to accommodate different kinds of bases



# Practical information

- **Special Issue**

- You are invited to submit your full paper to the Special Issue to appear in the *Journal of Word Formation* (OA)
- To be sent via email to the three editors: [francesca.masini@unibo.it](mailto:francesca.masini@unibo.it), [muriel.norde@hu-berlin.de](mailto:muriel.norde@hu-berlin.de), [kristel.vangoethem@uclouvain.be](mailto:kristel.vangoethem@uclouvain.be)
- Deadline for submission: **1 July 2022**
- Format: word + pdf
- Length: **8000 words all included** (footnotes, references, etc.)
  - The main theoretical and terminological issues will be mentioned in our introduction to the special issue, so there is no need to repeat them in each individual contribution. You can focus on data, results and discussion!
  - Do not hesitate to insert **cross-references** to each other's papers to ensure the coherence of the thematic issue; the manuscripts will be uploaded on Teams
- Reviewing: a double-blind peer-review process will be applied
  - We, as guest editors, will choose one reviewer for your paper, the other one will be selected by the journal
  - (The journal does not allow internal reviewing)
- Due publication date: April 2023 (hopefully)

## DESSERT

cuore caldo al cioccolato  
con crema al mascarpone  
non è una zuppa inglese



# Any questions?

'it is not a *zuppa inglese*'