ApproxiMo
Approximation in Morphology

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Discontinuous Workshop
Virtual (Teams)
October 2021 – May 2022

Why ApproxiMo?   What we already know   What we want to learn   Program and people   Schedule

Outline

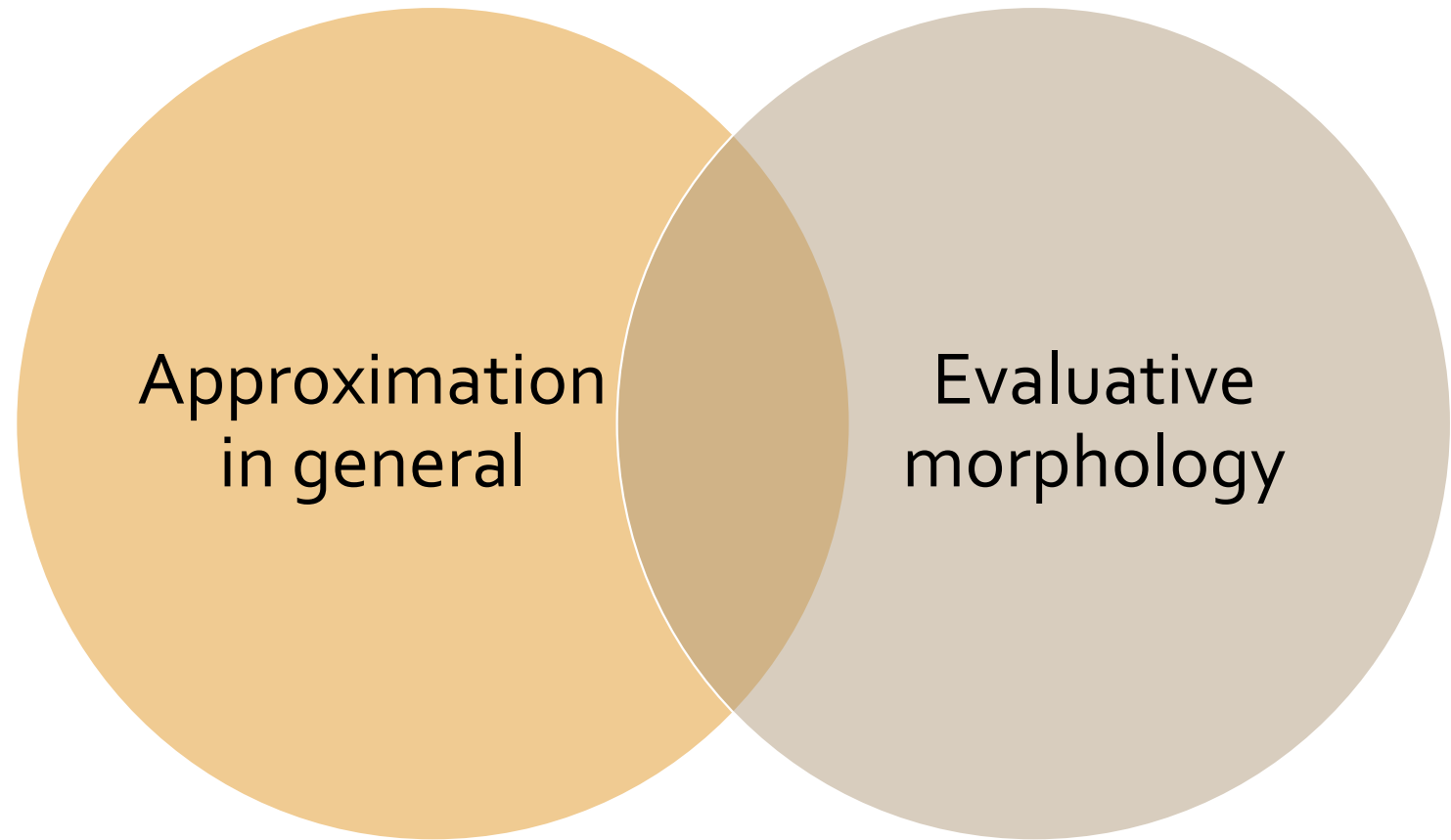Why ApproxiMo? · What we already know · What we want to learn · Program and people · Schedule

Why approximation in morphology?

Why approximation in morphology?

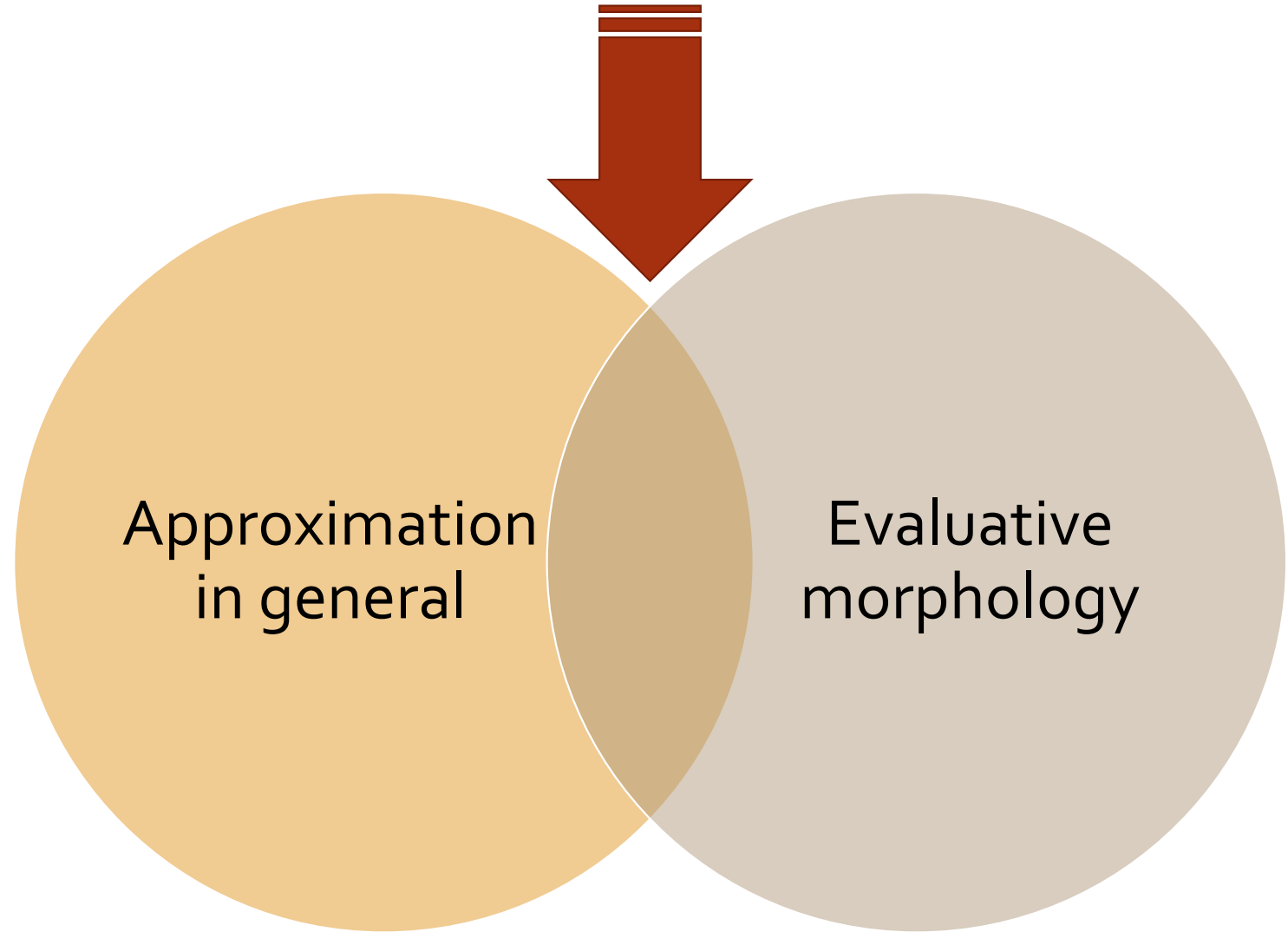Approximation in general

Evaluative morphology

Approximation in general

- Approximation has been and is at the centre of interest in various subfields of linguistics, such as **pragmatics** and **discourse studies**, producing a **huge** amount of literature

- There are many different **terms** that refer to this functional domain, some identifying specific types of approximation
  - 'hedging' (Lakoff 1972)
  - 'mitigation' (Caffi 2007)
  - 'indeterminacy' (Bazzanella 2011)
  - 'vagueness' (Channell 1994; Mihatsch 2007)
  - 'intentional vagueness' (Voghera 2012)
  - 'imprecision' (Balaş et al. 2017)
  - 'defectiveness' (Amiot & Stosic in press)
  - …

Evaluative morphology

- **Evaluative morphology** is by now a well-established domain of investigation which can count on large-scale typological studies
  - Cf. Bauer (1997), Grandi & Körtvélyessy (2015), Körtvélyessy (2015)

- However, most studies focus on **diminution**, **augmentation**, and **intensification**
  - Cf., a.m.o., Merlini Barbaresi & Dressler (1994), Jurafsky (1996), Grandi (2002), Schneider (2003), Bakema & Geeraerts (2004), Prieto (2005), Körtvélyessy & Štekauer eds. (2011), Efthymiou (2015), Efthymiou, Fragaki & Markos (2015), Rainer (2015), Napoli (2017)

- We still know very little on how **approximation** works within morphology
  - With the notable exception of diminutive markers used as attenuation strategies or being derived from approximative values (cf. Merlini Barbaresi & Dressler 1994; Merlini Barbaresi 2015; Grandi 2017)

Exploring the intersection between the two

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(Very) brief state-of-the-art

Approximation in evaluative morphology

- Grandi & Körtvélyessy (2015: 9, 11) use the triad '**approximation** / **reduction** / **attenuation**' to refer to the functional domain we are calling here APPROXIMATION

- Other relevant terms:
  - '**deintensification**' (cf. e.g. Körtvélyessy 2015: 63)
    - Rainer (2015: 1346) includes 'approximation/attenuation' in the wider category 'intensification', which "comprises not only a high degree but all degrees of intensity"
  - '**non-prototypicality**' (cf. e.g. Cúneo 2015: 630)
  - '**non-authenticity** / **fakeness** / **imitation**' (cf. e.g. Masini & Micheli 2020)

- Some terms are typically associated with specific domains
  - For instance, 'attenuation' typically refers to 'reduced degree of a quality' in relation to adjectives (cf. e.g. Bauer 2002), like in French *blanchâtre* 'whitish'
    - See also the SLE Workshop on *Attenuated qualities in a cross-linguistic perspective* organized in 2018 by Guillaume Segerer and Yvonne Treis
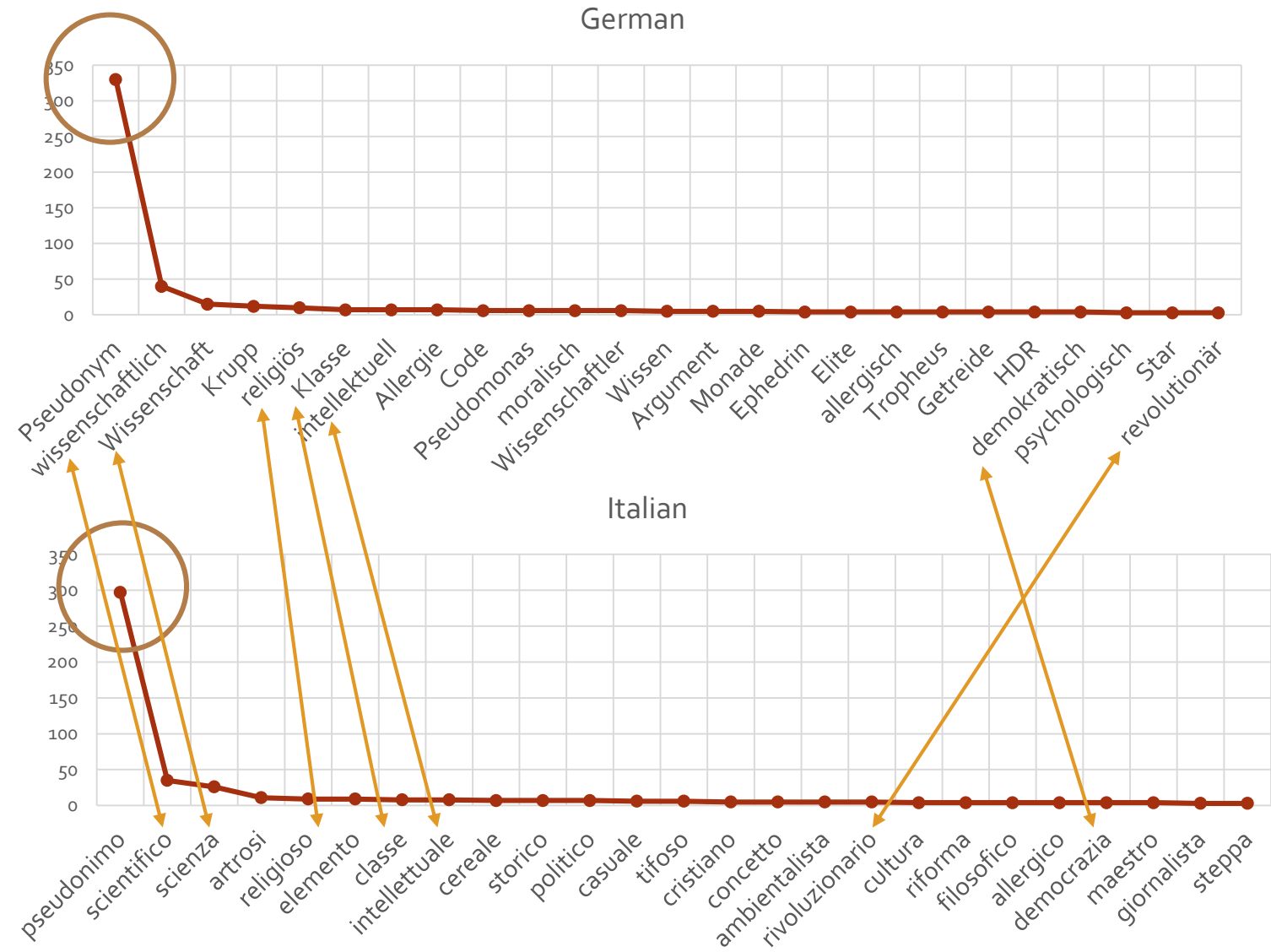
Approximation as a cover term

- We decided to use APPROXIMATION as a **cover term** for the (complex) functional domain associated with all these values
  - Excluding the 'opposite pole' of intensification (unlike Rainer 2015)

- Among the many available terms, it seems to be one of the broadest in scope and, at the same time, one of the least associated with a specific domain/phenomenon

Very recent research into approximative morphemes

- English *-ish* (Oltra-Massuet 2017, Kempf & Eitelmann 2018, Eitelmann, Haugland & Haumann 2020)
  - E.g. *warmish, lawyerish, elevenish, forever-ish*

- Italian **simil-** (Masini & Micheli 2020)
  - E.g. *simil-marsupio* 'sort of marsupium/pouch', *freddo simil siberiano* 'Siberian-like cold'

- Dutch "**fake**" morphemes (productivity, semantic profiles and categorical flexibility) (Van Goethem & Norde 2020)
  - E.g. *namaak-wasabi* 'fake wasabi', *neppe cupcake* 'fake cupcake'

- Danish/Dutch/English/German/French/Italian/Spanish/Swedish **pseudo-** (Van Goethem, Norde & Masini 2021)
  - E.g. IT *pseudotifosi* 'pseudo-supporters', SP *pseudoartistas* 'pseudo-artists', GE *pseudoreligiös* 'pseudo-religious', DU *pseudo-wetenschappen* 'pseudo-sciences'
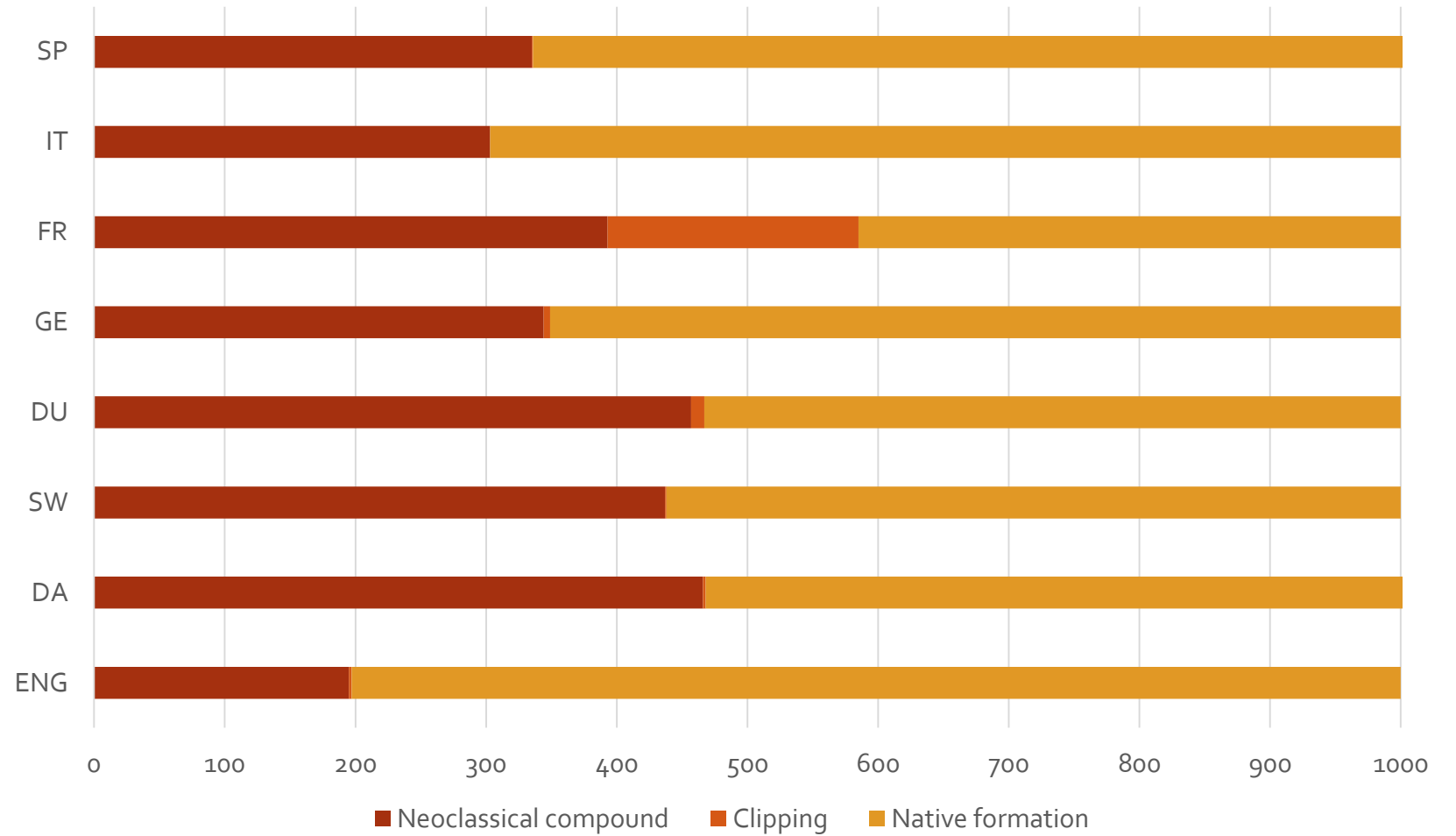 - → the same morpheme may have very different behavior cross-linguistically (in spite of a similar lexical distribution)

pseudo-: Word frequencies (very similar bases and very similar distribution)
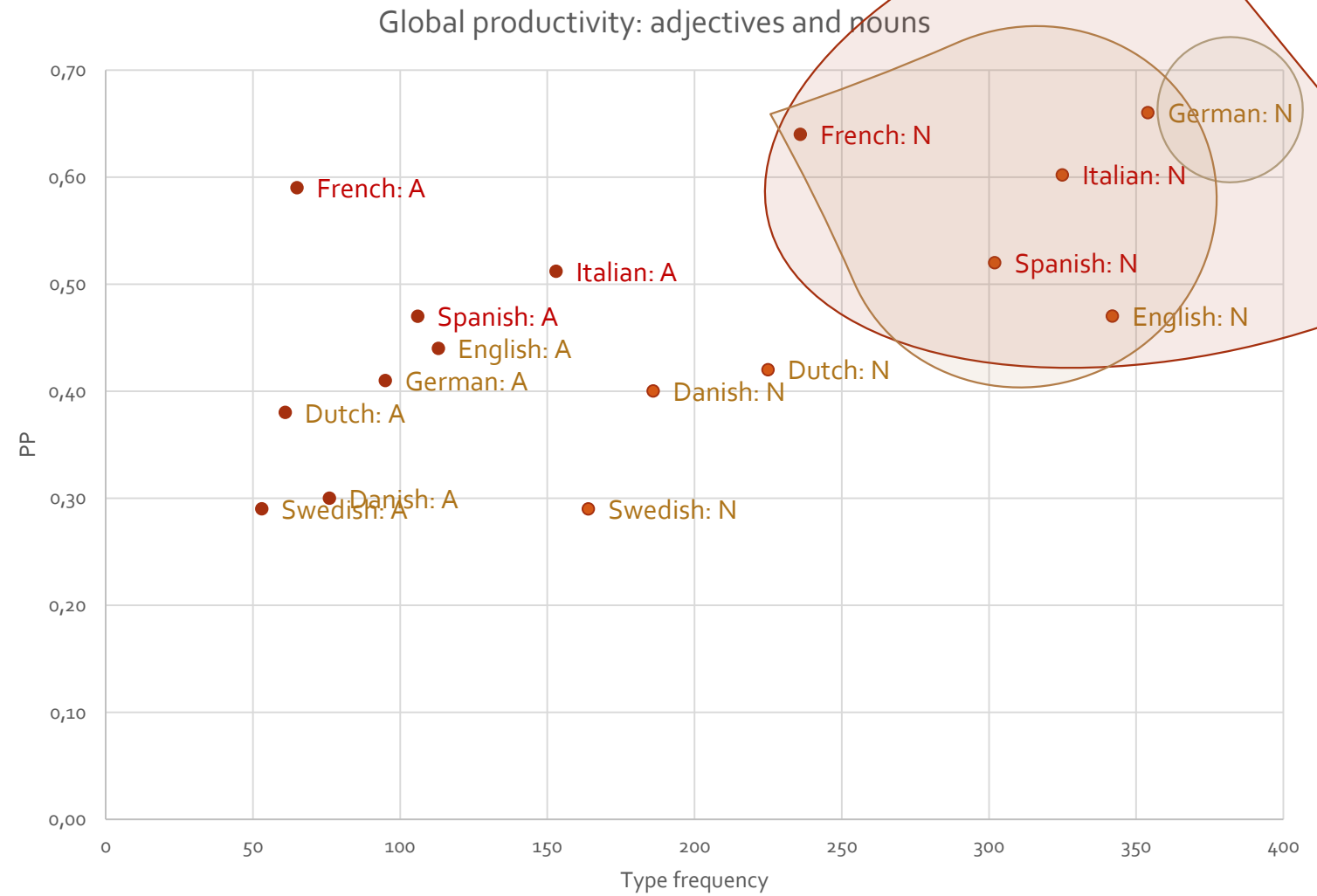
German

Italian

pseudo-: Construction types

Construction types (based on token frequency)

pseudo-: Global productivity
(cf. Baayen & Lieber 1991)

Global productivity: adjectives and nouns

- German: N
- French: N
- French: A
- Italian: N
- Italian: A
- Spanish: A
- Spanish: N
- English: A
- English: N
- German: A
- Dutch: N
- Dutch: A
- Danish: N
- Danish: A
- Swedish: A
- Swedish: N

PP (y-axis): 0,00 0,10 0,20 0,30 0,40 0,50 0,60 0,70

Type frequency (x-axis): 0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400

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Exploring approximation in word formation

Research questions

1) What is the role and **status** of approximation within word-formation?

2) Which morphological **means** are used to express approximating values and which approximating **values** are expressed by morphological means?

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

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

1) What is the role and **status** of approximation within word-formation?

- Is approximative morphology part of word-formation? 😅

- What is the relationship with 'canonical' word-formation, which aims at creating labels for concepts or categories?
  - 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* or *prefix-like* 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"

- Is approximation universally expressed via morphological means?
  - If not, what other means are there to express approximation and how do these differ from morphological means?

2) Which morphological means and which approximating values?

- 2a) Which morphological **means**
  - Suffixation
    - English *-ish* (*warmish, lawyerish, elevenish, forever-ish*) (Oltra-Massuet 2017, Kempf & Eitelmann 2018, Eitelmann, Haugland & Haumann 2020)
    - French *-âtre* (*jaunâtre* 'yellowish') (Amiot & Stosic , forthc.)
    - Greek *-eid(is)* (Eng. *-oid*) (Anastasiadis-Symeonis, forthc.)
  - Prefixation
    - *pseudo-* in many European languages (like other neoclassical formatives like *semi-* or *para-*) (Van Goethem, Norde & Masini 2021)
  - Circumfixation
    - Georgian *mo-o* (Topadze Gäumann 2015: 221-222)
      - *mžave* 'sour' > *mo- mžav-o* 'slightly sour'
  - Compounding / affixoids
    - Italian *simil-* but also French *simili-* (Höfler 1981)
    - Dutch *imitatieleer* 'imitation leather', *kunstgras* 'artificial grass', *nepjuwelen* 'fake jewels' (Van Goethem & Norde 2020)
  - Reduplication (examples extracted from ListTyp)
    - Makasar *le'leng* 'black' > *le'leng-le'leng* 'blackish' (Jukes 2006)
    - Ma'di *ɨ̄ŋgwē* 'white' > *ɨ̄ŋgwē ɨ̄ŋgwē* whitish' (Blackings & Fabb 2003)

2) Which morphological **means** and which approximating **values**?

- 2b) Which approximating **values**
  - Attenuation intended as reduced degree of a quality
    - Especially common with color terms (*jaunâtre, whitish*, etc.) and other gradable adjectives
  - Non-authenticity / fakeness / imitation (one value or more values?)
    - Cf. also Cappelle (2015), Cappelle, Denis & Keller (2018) on *fake*(ness)
  - Resemblance or similarity
  - Intentional vagueness (= uncertain or fuzzy categorization) / non-prototypicality (= peripheral member of category X) (again, one value or more values?)
  - Etcetera etcetera…

Specific values may be difficult to define and use **+** Many markers may convey more than one value **=** Big mess (as always happens with semantics…)

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

- Fake items
  - *pseudo-* (from Greek *pseudēs* 'false') in various European languages

- Spatial proximity items
  - *para-* (from Greek *para* 'beside') in various European languages
  - English *near-* (*near-identical, near-synonyms*)

- Diminutives
  - French *branchette* 'small branch'; *travailloter* 'to potter' (Amiot & Stosic forthc.)

- Degree and quantity items
  - *quasi-* in various European languages (English *quasiparticle*)
  - 'half' items
    - *semi-* in various European languages (English *semiofficial*) (cf. Micheli this workshop)
    - Italian *mezzo-pacifiste* 'half-pacifists'

- Similative items (cf. Masini, Micheli & Huang 2018 for an overview)
  - English *-like* (*baptismal-like, prefix-like*) (Bauer et al. 2013: 311-313)
  - Yulu *bèndē*, a similative with approximative use (Boyeldieu 2017: 244)

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

- In fact, we already know that *there is* competition...

- But which kind of competition?
  - Are different structural strategies competing with one another (e.g., prefixation vs. suffixation)?
    - English *near-white* versus *white-ish*
  - 'Exclusive' (blocking) vs. 'inclusive' (polymorphy) competition? Compare (Van Goethem & Norde 2020):
    - Dutch *kunstmest* 'fertiliser (litt. fake manure)' (exclusive)
    - Dutch *imitatie-/nep-/namaak rolex* 'fake rolex' (inclusive)

- And what are the factors governing this competition?

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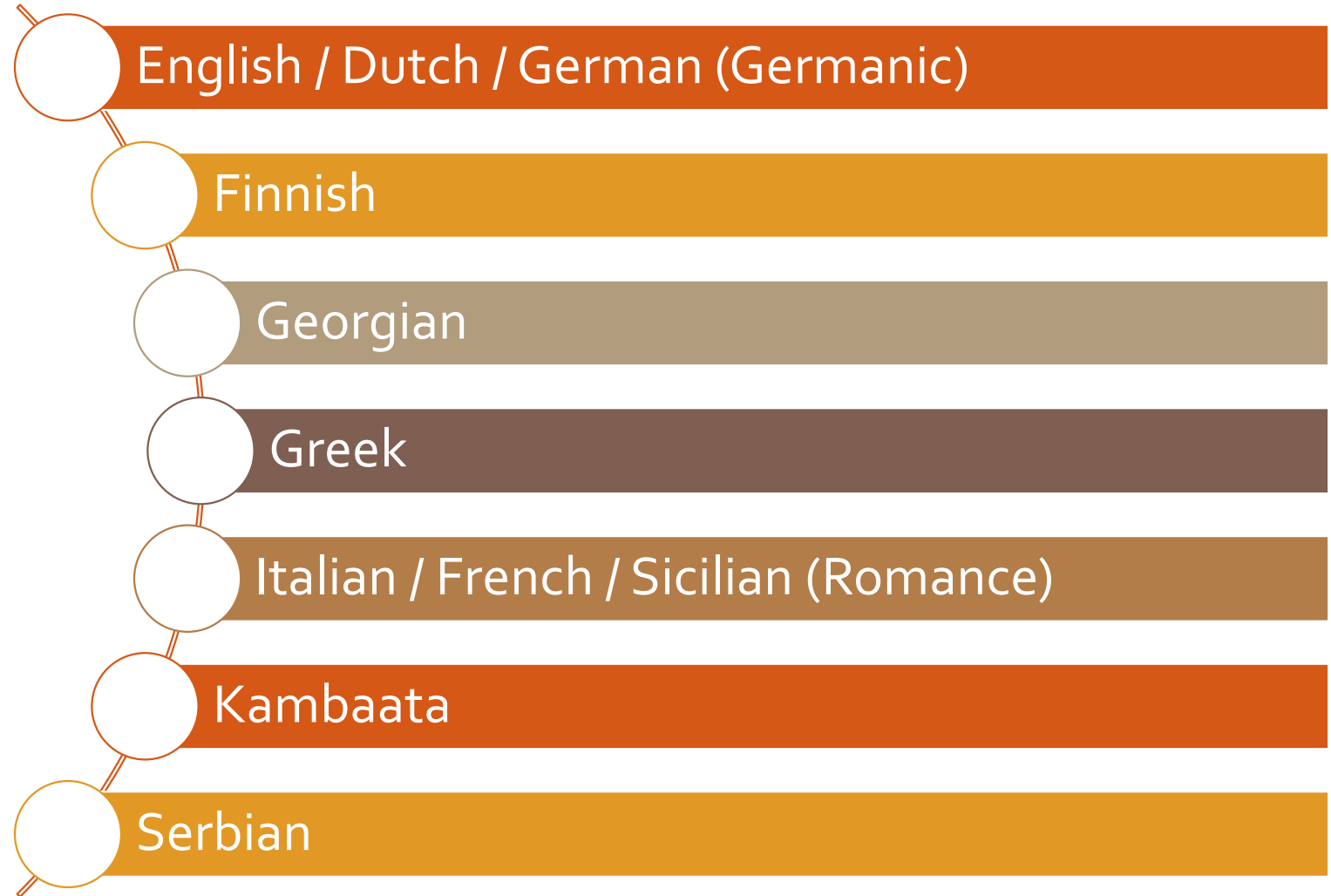
Schedule

Your contribution

List of papers (1)

1) **Nino Amiridze** (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University) – *Verbs in approximation in Georgian*

2) **Luisa Brucale** (University of Palermo) & **Egle Mocciaro** (Masaryk University, Brno) – *Approximation through suffixation: -ḍḍu/-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*

List of papers (2)

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*

Languages

- English / Dutch / German (Germanic)
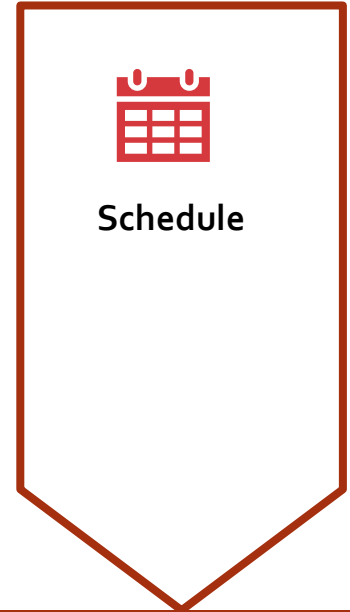- Finnish
- Georgian
- Greek
- Italian / French / Sicilian (Romance)
- Kambaata
- Serbian

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Planning

15 December 2021, 3-5 pm	Yvonne Treis	Silvia Micheli
18 January 2022, 3-5 pm	Jacopo Di Donato & Francesca Masini	Bert Cappelle, Stefan Hartmann & Robert Daugs
8 February 2022, 2-4 pm	Daniel Ebner	Matthias Hüning & Barbara Schlücker
15 March 2022, 2-4 pm	Gorgia Fotiadou, Francine Gerhart, Marie Lammert & Hélène Vassiliadou	Matthias Eitelmann & Dagmar Haumann
29 March 2022, 2-4 pm	Luisa Corona & Gina Russo	Nino Amiridze
19 April 2022, 2-4 pm	Miriam Voghera	Dejan Stosic & Dany Amiot
3 May 2022, 2-4 pm	Luisa Brucale & Egle Mocciaro	*Closing session*

Program

Practical information

- **Workshop program**:
  - We will send you the definitive program as soon as possible, with *Teams* links to each session (which you can share with interested colleagues)

- **Squibs and discussion sessions:**
  - Please upload your squib (max. 4000 words) at the latest one week before your presentation in the Teams channel of your session (or send it to kristel.vangoethem@uclouvain.be).
  - For each paper, we plan 10-15 minutes for a short presentation, followed by 45-50 minutes of discussion.

- **Special issue (*Journal of Word Formation*):**
  - When the workshop is over (May 2021), you'll be invited to submit a full version of the paper for publication in the *Journal of Word Formation* (deadline: 1 June 2022).
  - In our introduction to the special issue, we will outline the most important theoretical and terminological issues, so these need not be repeated in each individual contribution. You can focus on your data and results!

Any questions?

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