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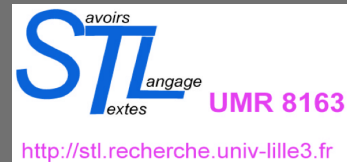
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Grammaticalisation meets Construction Grammar: Syntactic reanalysis and actualization

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- Today's topic (new research topic)
 - starts very locally (my children's variety of Belgian Dutch)
 - moves to a much larger, possibly recurrent pattern of language change concerning evaluative adjectives

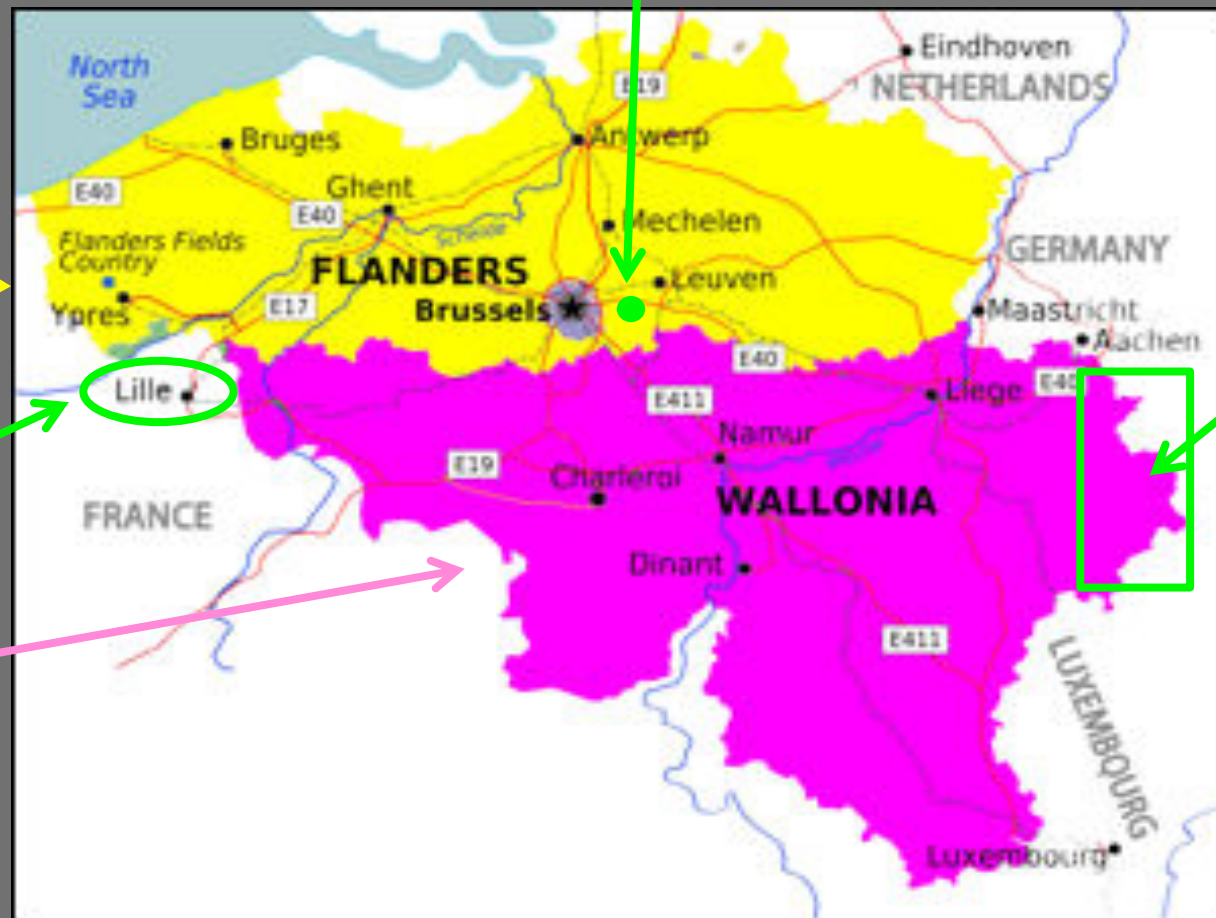
Belgium

home (Flanders, Belgium)

Dutch-speaking
("Flemish")

work
(Lille,
France)

French-speaking



German-speaking

The *ça va* phenomenon

(Lemmens 2012; 2013)

- Belgian Dutch (= "Flemish") : informal conversations often use French phrase *ça va* ('it goes') in answer to the question "How are things / How are you?"

- Example (pers. att.):

A: *Hoe gaat het ?*

How goes it ?

B: *ça va*, en met u ?

çava, and with

you?

- This **conversational use** of *ça va* is a perfect calque of the French use:
 - *Comment ça va ?* How it goes?
 - *ça va Ø / bien / mal.* It goes Ø / well / badly
- cf. English: *How's it going? It's going (fine).*

- In Belgian Dutch ("Flemish"), the phrase is fully **lexicalised loanword**, as a **monomorphemic invariable unit**
- commonly used as answer to question *How are you? How is it?* (= conversational use)
- new use as ADJECTIVE (first predicative, then attributive)

ça va as predicative adjective

- *X is ça va ; I find X ça va*
 - *Die pokémon is nog wel ça va* (www)
that pokémon is still *ça va* (itgoes)
 - *ik vind het toch ça va nog zo* (www)
I find it nevertheless *ça va* still like that

ça va as predicative adjective

With intensifiers:

- *de kotbazen zijn heel erg ça va* (www)
the landlords are *very much* *çava*
- *voor de rest is die echt ça va !* (www)
for the rest this one is *really* *çava*
- *dik çavatjes* zou ik zo zeggen (www)
fat *çava*.DIM.PL I would say

ça va as attributive ADJ

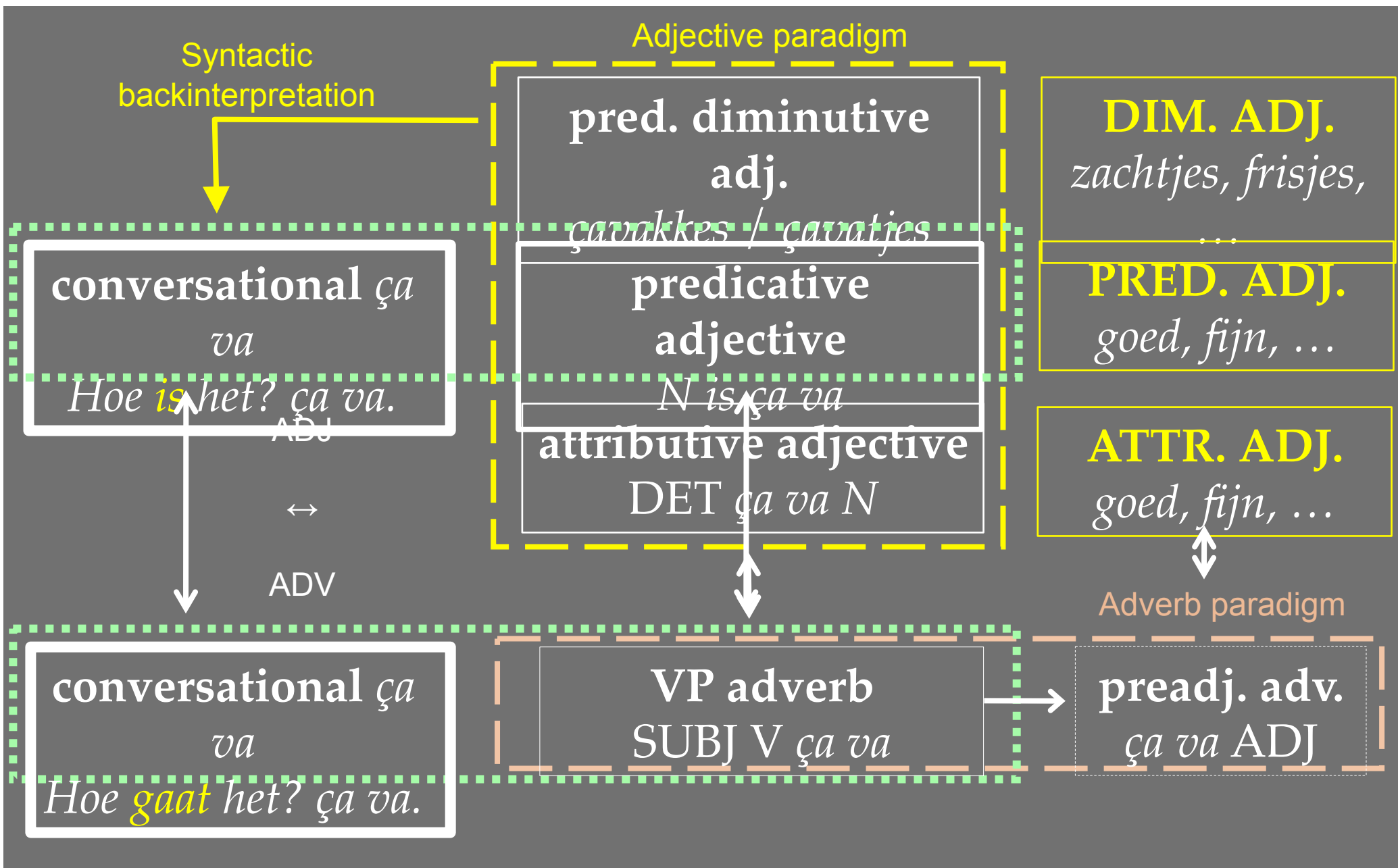
- DET *ça va* NOUN:
 - *Maar toch een **ça va** plaat* om ...
but still a *çava* (music) record to ...
 - *Ziet er nog een **ça va** cd'ke* uit
looks like a *çava* CD.DIM
 - *zij speelden een **ca va** match*
they played a *çava* game
 - a *çava* degree, a *çava* blogger, etc.

- Once adjectival use is possible, adverbial use becomes possible as well (no formal difference in Dutch between ADJ & ADV):
 - [*je kan*] *toch* ***ça va*** *meedraaien*. (www)
you can nevertheless play along ***çava***
 - *Dit is* ***ça va*** *gedaan* (TV Eén, 22/02/2012)
this is ***çava*** done (=well done)
 - *Ik slaap* ***çava*** *nog wel* (pers. att. 20-11-2011, Simon Lemmens)
I sleep ***çava*** despite all

- Adverbial pre-adjectival modifier :
 - *ik vind alle nieuwe BMW's strontlelijk, de Z8 is mooi, oude M3 ook, en de M6 is nog wel sava mooi, X5 is degoutant, X3 nog ranziger* (www)
I find all new BMW shit-ugly, the Z8 is pretty, old M3 too, and the M6 is still çava pretty, X5 is disgusting, X3 even more revolting
 - *Da's toch çava logisch* (pers. att, JW Lemmens, 20-11-2012)
This is PRT çava logical

Analysis in terms of reinterpretation & actualisation

- Not really grammaticalisation, but *syntactic reinterpretation* and subsequent *actualisation* (triggered & driven by analogy; cf. De Smet 2012; Denison 2001), yet may be road into grammaticalisation (cf. below)
- Different steps *need* not be strictly linear (\Leftrightarrow grammaticalisation); rather *similarity* network (within and beyond)



Empirical support

- difficulty of finding sufficiently reliable corpus evidence:
 - highly informal register (adolescents)
 - WebCorp / Twitter: impossible to filter out noise
 - *ça va* extremely common on French Belgian sites
 - spelling often *cava* and *cv*: overlaps with common words (sparkling wine, curriculum vitae)

Informal acceptability inquiry

- 35 KU students (Flemish; 19-21 yrs);
- 2 moments (nov. 2011, nov. 2012);
 $N_1=18$, $N_2=17$);
- sentences projected on PPT (one after the other), individual written answers "yes" / "no" regarding acceptability in *informal Flemish*
- N_1 : 2 sentences (pred. & attr. use),

Results

- predicative use : **91%** (32 on 35)
the new Coldplay CD is still çava
- attributive use : **80%** (28 on 35)
this is a çava song
- adverbial use (VP) : **17,6%** (3 on 17)
play along çava
- adverbial use (AdjP) : **17,6%** (3 on 17)
this BMW is çava pretty

Interim conclusion

- Change from conversational particle to adjective; analogy-driven reinterpretation and actualisation = rise of new constructional possibilities because of reinterpretation
- starting from predicative use (locus of analogy), expanding to (1) attributive use and (2) adverbial uses
- not grammaticalisation (yet)

Outline

1. Use of the French loan *ça va* ('it goes') in Belgian Dutch
2. Analysis in terms of actualisation & reinterpretation;
3. Parallels with *OK*

English *O.K.* (*OK*, *okay*)

- Evolution of *çava* similar to that of *OK*
INT > Pred. ADJ > Attr. ADJ

1. Interjection / Q-tag

A: OK, let's go. / Let's go, ok?

B: OK.

2. Predicative ADJ / ADV

It is OK; he seems ok; it works ok

3. Attributive ADJ

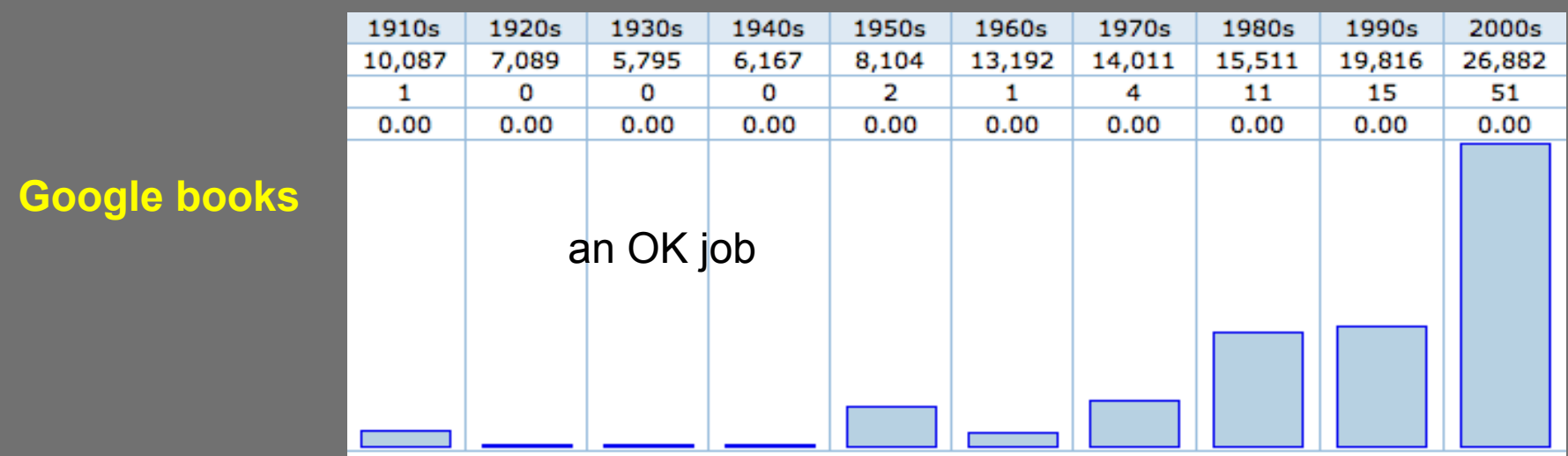
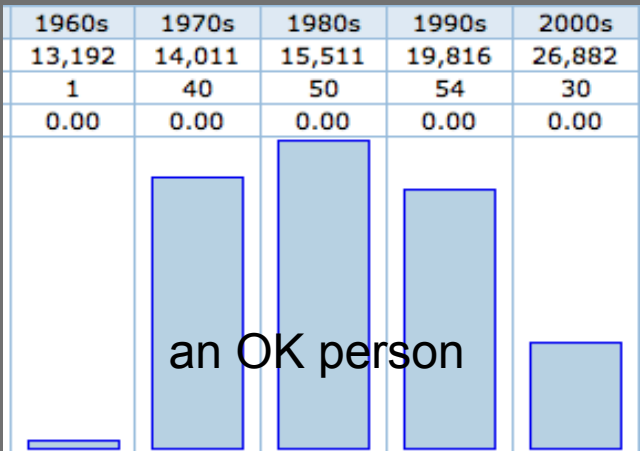
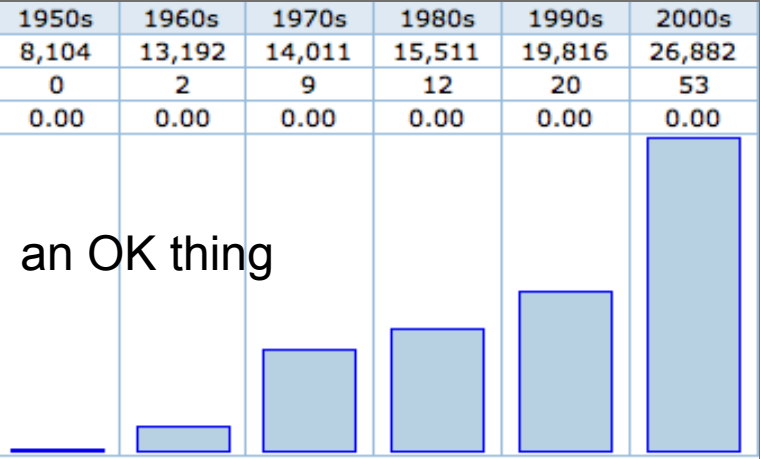
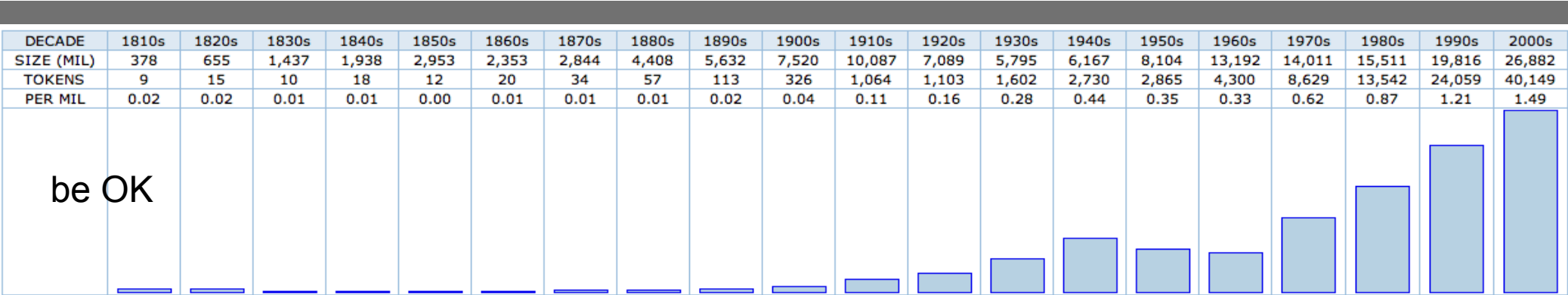
an OK N

OK in English

- Empirical support (English):
 1. O.E.D.
 2. Corpus data:
 - Corpus of Contemporary Am. English
 - Corpus of Historical Am. English
 - Google books

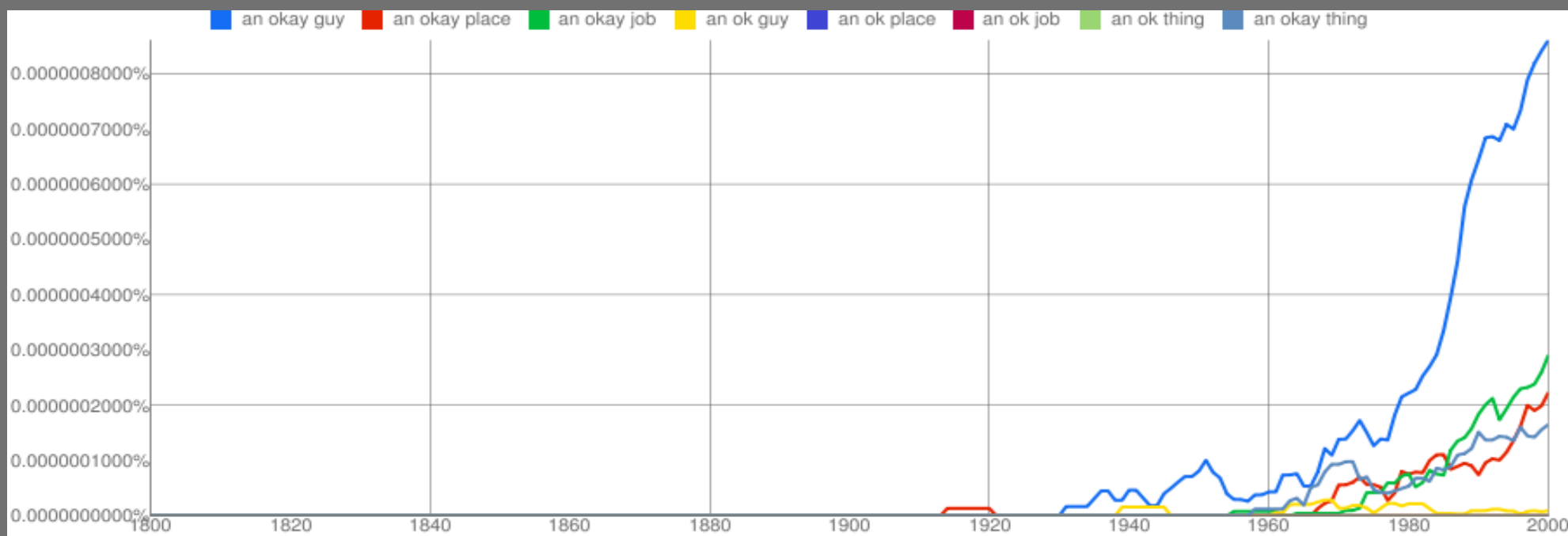
O.E.D.

- O.K.: "chiefly in predicative use or as *int.*"
- predicative use:
 - 1839 *The house was O.K. at the last concert*
 - 1839 *It's O.K. (all correct) in this quarter*
 - 1840 *He pronounced all O.K.*
- attributive use:
 - 1869 *The O.K. thing to do*
 - 1874 *We had an O.K. time till we went to bed*



N-grams Google books:

an OK / okay N



Typical patterns & collocates

- Predicative use of English *ok* :
 - *it's ok to [V]*
 - *that's ok.* (anaphorical backreference)
 - *X looks/seems/sounds ok*
 - *X works ok* (adverbial)

- Collocates attr. use (COCA): ART
 [OK | ok | okay]

GUY	14	9.5%
JOB	12	8.1%
TIME	11	7.4%
THING	9	6.1%
PLACE	6	4.1%
MOVIE	4	2.7%
PERSON	3	2.0%
BOOK	2	1.4%
BUSINESS	2	1.4%
CAFE	2	1.4%
CITY	2	1.4%
COLLEGE	2	1.4%
KIND	2	1.4%
MAN	2	1.4%
PIECE	2	1.4%
PLAN	2	1.4%
SPELLER	2	1.4%
TECH	2	1.4%
=1 occ.	67	45.2%
TOTAL	148	100%

English OK : summing up

- Similar evolution to Dutch *ça va*:
 - starts out as **interjection**
 - reinterpreted as **(predicative) adjective**, because of constructional analogy
 - *Shall we go? OK (int.) / (That's) OK (adj.)*
 - actualisation: extension to **attributive use** (*an OK N*) and adverbial uses (*it works ok*)
- fairly robust collocational patterns: people or creative work (book, film; often context

OK (*oké*) in Dutch

- Three usage patterns:
 1. stand-alone conversational use (cf. English):
 - "yes / I agree"
 2. predicative evaluative adjective (cf. English):
 - "X is ok"
 3. attributive evaluative adjective (cf. English)
 - "a (very) OK N"

- Hypothesis: similar path of change:
 1. conversational / pragmatic
 - > 2. Pred. ADJ.
 - > 3. ATTR. ADJ
- Empirical support (contemporary Dutch only):
 - *Corpus Gesproken Nederlands* (Corpus Spoken Dutch; Neth. D & Belgian D.)
 - 1998 – 2004;
 - about 5,900 sentences with *oké*

oké in Dutch

	N	%
INT. or HEDGE	5756	97.77%
PREDICATIVE	102	1.73%
ADVERBIAL	9	0.15%
ATTRIBUTIVE	1	0.02%
MISCELLANEOUS	2	0.03%
INDETERMINATE	17	0.29%
Total	5887	100%

okeetjes OK.DIM.PL

- Also diminutive use possible:
 - *Alles okeetjes :) k werk nu freelance ...*
all ok.DIM.PL :) I work freelance now
 - *[deze zaal] is wel ok hoor, ik had daar een verloving, was wel okeetjes.*
this (ball)room is fairly ok, you know, I had an engagement (party) there, was ok.DIM.PL

OK (*okej*) in Swedish

- widespread as **interjection** (cf. En. & Du):

A: *Ska vi gå?* B: *okej*

A: Shall we go? B: ok

- widespread as **pred. adjective** (cf. En. & Du):

det är (helt) okej

that is (totally) ok

OK in Swedish

- Empirical evidence: Språkbanken – Bloggmix (2012)
 - <http://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/>
 - 31,152 hits for *okej*
- restrictive search on [ART] *okej* [N] :
 - 276 occurrences; 164 types
 - much more varied set of nouns (cf. next slide)
 - much more positive

N			
<i>pris</i>	price	19	6.9%
<i>dag</i>	day	12	4.3%
<i>film</i>	film	8	2.9%
<i>kväll</i>	evening	8	2.9%
<i>insats</i>	stake, effort	7	2.5%
<i>tid</i>	time	6	2.2%
<i>jobb</i>	job	4	1.4%
<i>lön</i>	salary	4	1.4%
<i>sätt</i>	way, fashion	4	1.4%
<i>start</i>	start	4	1.4%
<i>telefon</i>	telephone	4	1.4%
<i>alternativ</i>	alternative	3	1.1%
<i>år</i>	year	3	1.1%
<i>bok</i>	book	3	1.1%
<i>lösning</i>	solution	3	1.1%
<i>match</i>	game	3	1.1%
<i>natt</i>	night	3	1.1%
<i>ord</i>	word	3	1.1%
<i>resultat</i>	result	3	1.1%
<i>story</i>	story	3	1.1%

Similar patterns in other languages

- Estonian *okei*
INT > PRED. ADJ > (ATTR. ADJ)
- Spanish *mas o menos* ('more or less')
ADV > PRED. ADJ > (ATTR. ADJ)

Outline

1. Use of the French loan *ça va* ('it goes') in Belgian Dutch
2. Analysis in terms of actualisation & reinterpretation
3. Parallels with *OK* (*okay, ok*)
4. Further grammaticalisation?
5. Conclusions

ça va vs. *oké* in Dutch

- **parallel** uses & evolutions :
 - discourse particle (INT)
 - adjectival uses (PRED. ADJ > ATTR. ADJ.)
 - diminutive (only INT & PRED. ADJ)
- **differences** :
 - *çava*: use as pre-adjectival modifier (adverbial use); not for *oké* (**oké fijn* 'ok nice')

ça va vs. *oké* in Dutch

- Pragmatic / contextual factor: *ça va* typically used against background of **negative expectation**, e.g.,

as far as Xs go, this X is still ça va

despite X, it was still ça va

not the best X ever but still ça va

often used with stance / attitudinal particles *toch*, *nog*, *wel*, etc.

('nevertheless' 'still' 'despite X')

Meliorisation

- negative expectation => mediocre
becomes good => **meliorisation**, e.g.
 - *cocktails worde gemaakt door 2 pro's, die kunne da blijkbaar wel çava goe*
cocktails are made by 2 pros, these seem to be çava good
 - *Hoe komt da het ni zo goe was dees jaar?*
'Vroeger' waarde gij toch çava goe?
how come that it wasn't as good this

- ambiguous contexts: *çava* = "mediocre" or "very" (intensifier)
 - => beginning grammaticalisation ?
 - cmp. *goed fout* 'good wrong' = very wrong
- importantly: only in adjectival and adverbial use
- so far: only with positive adjectives
 - *çava good / pretty*

Conclusions

- Evidence for **on-going change** for *ça va* and *ok*;
- Triggered by **analogy** (reanalysis and actualisation)
- *çava*: **meliorisation** esp. in attributive use and adjectival modifier (subjectification?)
 - beginning of (further) grammaticalisation?

- Some desemanticisation (widening of usage) but strictly speaking, these evolutions are not instances of grammaticalisation
 - no phonetic reduction
 - no increase of dependency
 - no evolution from lexical to grammatical
- However: CxG: everything is a construction, so what then is grammaticalisation?

- NOT grammaticalisation, but reanalysis (cf. Himmelman 2004:39) yet actualisation that follows opens the road to *new constructions*
 - Bybee (2003:145) defines grammaticalisation as "the creation of new constructions"
 - Traugott (1988:410): in grammaticalization "meanings tend to become increasingly situated in the speaker's subjective belief/ attitude toward the situation"

Conclusions

- Further research necessary :
 - further analysis of corpus data (esp. pragmatic uses)
 - collocations & Cx patterns
 - parallels with other evaluative adjectives, also in other languages
- In short:
 - Still quite a bit of work to do, but the first⁴⁴

ça va 'okay

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Thank you !



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