

INTENSIFYING CONSTRUCTIONS IN FRENCH- SPEAKING L2 LEARNERS OF DUTCH: A COLLOSTRUCTIONAL ANALYSIS

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Outline

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CLIL in French-Speaking Belgium

“Assessing Content and Language Integrated Learning: Linguistic, Cognitive and Educational Perspectives” (Hilgsmann et al. *forth.*)

- In French-speaking Belgium
 - 2/3 of the schools CLIL in Dutch
 - 1/3 CLIL in English

- 8 à 13 h/week in target language

→ More input in target language in CLIL



1.2 Intensifiers: definition

- Intensifier: “a **scaling device**... which co-occurs with a gradable adjective” (Quirk et al. 1997: 445)
- Intensifier as amplifier – “upward scaling” (Lorenz 1999)



- Stylistic specialisation (Hoeksema 2005, Foolen, Wottrich & Zwets 2012)
- Abundant intensification in youth language (Lorenz 1999, De Decker & Vandekerckhove 2013)

1.3 Morphological and syntactic intensifiers

- “[...] intensifiers represent an extremely varied and ever-changing set, which takes an intermediate position **between lexis and grammar**” (Cacchiani 2009: 229)
- Language-specific preferences for **morphological** or **syntactic** intensifying constructions (Rainer 2015)
- “[...] at least in the more familiar Indo-European languages (cf. Rainer 1983, Italian), **analytic expressions of degree** by far outnumber **synthetic patterns**, which nevertheless constitute a substantial part of word-formation” (Rainer 2015: 1340)
 - *bête **comme ses pieds*** ‘stupid as his feet’
 - ***incredibly** beautiful*
 - *bell**issimo*** ‘very beautiful’
 - ***bitter**kalt* ‘bitterly cold’; ***bitter**böse* ‘furious’

1.4 L2 acquisition of intensifying constructions

- Intensifying construction (a.o. Booij 2010)

$[[X]_{\text{INT}} [Y]_{\text{ADJ}}]_{\text{AP/ADJ}} \leftrightarrow \text{'very Y'}$

- “learning words and learning grammar are really all part of the same developmental process” (Tomasello 2003:42)

1.5 Intensifying constructions in Dutch

[[X]_{INT} [Y]_{ADJ}]_{AP/ADJ}

**[N/A/V +
Adj]_{ADJ}**

beresterk
'bear strong'
dolgelukkig
'madly
happy'

**[Prefix +
Adj]_{ADJ}**

supermodern

**[as ADJ as
X]_{AP}**

zo trots als
een aap
'proud like a
monkey'

**[Adj
Adj]_{AP}**

mooi,
mooi

**[Adv +
Adj]_{AP}**

heel ziek
'very ill'

1.6 Intensifying constructions in French

[[X]_{INT} [Y]_{ADJ}]_{AP/ADJ}

[N/A/V +
Adj]_{ADJ}

[Prefix +
Adj]_{ADJ}

[as ADJ as
X]_{AP}

[Adj
Adj]_{AP}

[Adv +
Adj]_{AP}

ultrapuissant

fort comme un
Turc

‘strong like a
Turkish person’

un monde
fou fou fou

très malade
very ill’

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2.1 Research questions (1)

1. Do **French-speaking pupils** encounter difficulties when they acquire **Dutch intensifying constructions**?
2. Compared to non-CLIL learners, do French-speaking **CLIL-learners** of Dutch develop a **more native-like** use of intensifiers due to more native input of Dutch?
 - Importance input for L2 acquisition
(Ellis & Cadierno 2009; Goldberg 2010)

2.1 Research questions (2)

- What are the **language-specific preferences** for intensifying constructions in Dutch, in French and in the interlanguages?
 - We expect CLIL learners to show a more native-like use of intensifiers (less overuse, underuse and misuse)
- Do learners have difficulties related to **collocational specialization**?

3. METHOD

3.1 Data collection

- 438 Belgian French-speaking secondary school learners of English or Dutch in CLIL and non-CLIL
 - Fifth grade secondary school (average age 16,5 years old)
- Timed writing task in computer rooms
 - E-mails of at least 15 lines: one in L2 (English or Dutch) and one in L1 (French)
 - Topics: holidays or party
- 63 Flemish and Netherlandic Dutch-speaking secondary school pupils
 - Fifth grade secondary school (average age: 16,7 years old)

	Control group Dutch	Dutch CLIL	Dutch non-CLIL	French
Texts	61	100	132	431
Words	16262	37209	19399	131539

3.2 Collostructional analysis

“Lexemes that are attracted to a particular construction are referred to as *collexemes* of this construction; conversely, a construction associated with a particular lexeme may be referred to as a *collostruct*; the combination of a collexeme and a collostruct will be referred to as a **collostruction**” (Stefanowitsch and Gries 2003: 215)

→ Comparison of the statistically significant “**intensifying collostructions**” that occur in the native and learner corpora

Collostructional analysis applied to **SLA** (Gries & Wulff 2005; Ellis & Ferreira-Junior 2009; Wulff & Gries 2011; Gilquin 2012; Gries 2012; Martinez-Garcia & Wulff 2012)

3.3 Covarying Collexeme Analysis

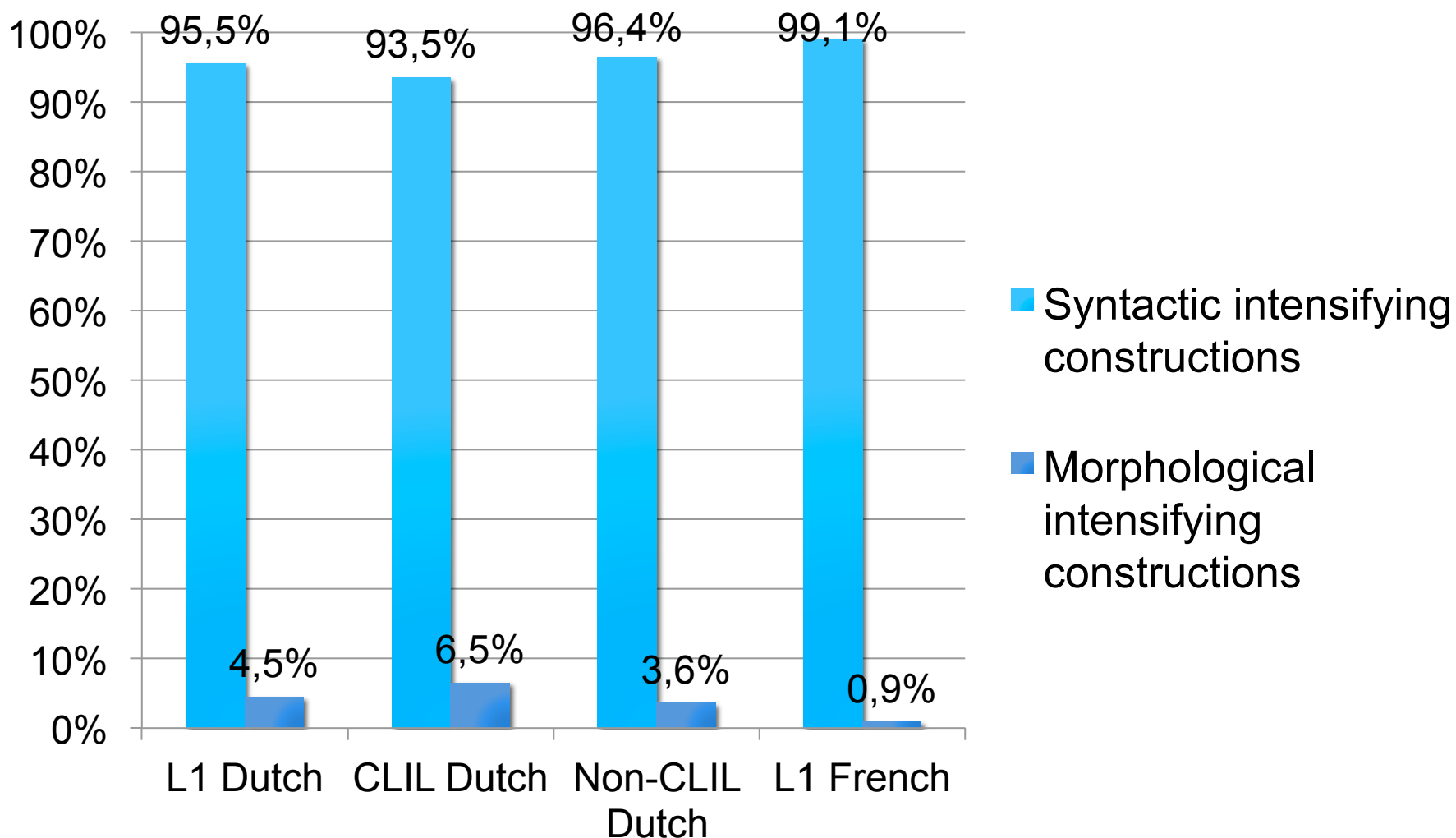
(Gries 2007; Stefanowitsch 2013)

- "aims to identify pairs of words that occur with each other more or less frequently than expected in two slots of the same construction" (Stefanowitsch 2013: 223)
- Gries (2007) uses **Fischer Yates exact test**

	Word l_1 in slot s_1 of construction C	Other words in slot s_1 of construction C	Total
Word l_2 in slot s_2 of construction C	<i>completely clear</i>	<i>crystal, totally, -est ever</i>	
Other words in slot s_2 of construction C	<i>green, flat, empty</i>	<i>totally empty, greenest ever</i>	
Total			

4. RESULTS

4.1 Morphological vs syntactic intensifying constructions



4.2 Most frequent intensifiers (1)

	L1 Dutch		CLIL Dutch		NON-CLIL Dutch		L1 FRENCH	
	Intensifier	freq	Intensifier	freq	Intensifier	freq	Intensifier	freq
	No intensifier	672 (72,2%)	No intensifier	1697 (75,4%)	No intensifier	793 (73,6%)	No intensifier	5416 (84,8)
1	heel	65 (7,0%)	heel	251 (11,2%)	heel	187 (17,3%)	très	360 (5,6%)
2	erg	28 (3,0%)	zeer	72 (3,2%)	veel	23 (2,1%)	vraiment	221 (3,5%)
3	zo	26 (2,8%)	super	48 (2,1%)	zo	16 (1,5%)	super	89 (1,4%)
4	super	25 (2,7%)	zo	43 (1,9%)	zeer	15 (1,4%)	trop	56 (0,9%)
5	echt	24 (2,6%)	echt	42 (1,9%)	super	10 (0,9%)	tellement	43 (0,7%)

4.2 Most frequent intensifiers (2)

- The most frequent intensifiers in L1 French and Dutch and the L2 corpora are **adverbs** (and *super*)
- The most frequent intensifier is **heel** ‘very’ in Dutch and **très** ‘very’ in French. **Heel** is **overused** by both learner groups
Het is heel leuk. ik heb veel activiteit gedaan met mijn familie. (non-CLIL Dutch)
 ‘lit. It is very nice. I have done many activities with my parents.’
- **Zo** ‘so’ and **super** ‘super’ figure as most frequent intensifiers **in each of the three Dutch subgroups**
- Non-CLIL learners used the **quantifier veel** ‘many’ erroneously as second most frequently used intensifier
Ze waren veel sympathiek en we hebben samen geamuseerd. (non-CLIL)
 ‘lit. They were many sympathetic and we have together amused.’

4.3 Variety and productivity

	L1 Dutch	CLIL Dutch	Non-CLIL Dutch	L1 French
Percentage intensified adjectives	23,98%	30,01%	28,54%	23,39%
Extreme adjectives (without intensifier)	9,78%	5,19%	3,34%	8,02%
Type-Token Ratio (Baayen 2009)	0,104	0,070	0,060	0,056
Hapax Legomena Ratio (Baayen 2009)	0,039	0,025	0,011	0,020

- Overuse all-round intensifiers in L2 English (Granger 1998, Lorenz 1999)
- TTR sensitive to text length (a.o. Koizumi 2012)

4.4 Collostructional analysis

	L1 DUTCH			CLIL DUTCH			NON-CLIL DUTCH			L1 FRENCH		
	Intens	Adj	Pbin	Intens	Adj	Pbin	Intens	Adj	Pbin	Intens	Adj	Pbin
1	echt	super	11.86 2	super	tof	17.692	No intens	best goed	7.416	très	bien	24.796
2	super	leuk	6.757	peper	duur	17.242	heel	leuk	6.711	No intens	petit	21.536
3	No intens	best goed	6.527	No intens	best goed	12.722	super	tof	5.896	plein	mort	16.946
4	erg	gezellig	6.054	aller	leuk	11.849	kei	hard	4.986	No intens	autre	16.589
5	No intens	volgend	3.303	dood	moe	9.688	aller	leuk	4.814	No intens	plein	16.589
6	heel	grappig	3.105	heel	mooi	9.509	No intens	nieuw	4.065	vraiment	génial	12.947
7	te	warm	2.769	No intens	nieuw	7.222	heel	mooi	3.321	vraiment	bien	12.294
8	heel	erg	2.759	No intens	ander	6.97	heel	blij	3.081	trop	cool	10.565
9	super	gezellig	2.749	heel	leuk	6.663	really	fun	2.732	No intens	même	9.402
10	super	tof	2.689	No intens	volgend	6.339	heel	grappig	2.652	De ma vie	meilleur	8.838

4.5 Result 1: Collostructions without an intensifier

1. Non-gradable adjectives: *volgend* ‘next’, *autre* ‘other’, *même* ‘same’
2. Adjectives that are never intensified in the subcorpora: *nieuw* ‘new’, *zeker* ‘certain’, *laatst* ‘last’
→ “limit” adjectives (Paradis 1997; 2001)
3. Not intensified scalar adjectives, for example *petit* ‘small’ (339 occurrences)
→ hypothesis: inherently positively/negatively valued adjectives intensified more frequently (Boucher et al. 1969; Baumeister et al. 2001; Liebrecht et al. 2013)

4.5 Result 2: language-specific collocations (1)

- **L1 French**

- Complex intensifying constructions (Cacchiani 2009)
 - *hyper mega cool* ‘hyper mega cool’, *tout juste sublime* ‘lit. all just sublime’, *vraiment très riche* ‘really very rich’, *vraiment trop cool* ‘really too cool’
- Unique constructions
 - *MON DIEU que bizarre* ‘lit. my god that bizarre’
 - no intensifier *extraordinaire* – lexicalized intensifying construction
 - *sympa comme tout* ‘lit. nice as all’
 - *le plus ADJ de ma vie* ‘of my life’ in L1 French, *ADJ van mijn leven* ‘of my life’ in both learner corpora
 - *plein mort* ‘lit. full dead, very drunk’
 - *vraiment pas terrible* ‘lit. really not terrible, really bad’

4.5 Result 2: language-specific collocations (2)

- **L1 Dutch**

- 2 compounds
 - *bloedheet* 'lit. blood hot', *keihard* 'lit stone hard'
 - *Mega-* (also in CLIL corpus, not in non-CLIL corpus)
- 'Youth language'/informal language figuring in L1 corpus but not in L2 corpora
 - *wel cava* 'lit. well ok', *wel chill* 'lit. well chill', *wat fix* 'lit. what nice', *vet bang* 'lit. fat scared', *fucking hard*, *erg cute* 'terribly cute'
- Coercion scalar adjectives
 - Absolute reading
 - *helemaal gek* 'completely crazy'
 - Excess
 - *te grappig* 'lit. too funny', *te koud* 'lit. too cold', *te ver* 'lit. too far'

4.5 Result 2: interlanguage-specific collocations (3)

• CLIL Dutch

• Compounds

- *doodmoe* 'lit. dead tired', *oersaai* 'lit. originally dull', *beeldschoon* 'gorgeous', *keigespierd* 'lit. stone muscular'

• Repetition

- *groot zeer groot* 'big very big'

• [as ADJ as X]_{AP}

- *zo rap mogelijk* 'as fast as possible'

• Semantically unexpected constructions / coercion

- *fantastisch zonnig* 'fantastically sunny', *helemaal verschrikkelijk* 'totally terrible', *totaal idioot* 'totally idiot'

4.5 Result 2: interlanguage-specific collocations (4)

- **Non-CLIL Dutch**
 - Fewer collocations, fewer unique collocations
 - Quantifier instead of intensifier
 - *veel leuk* ‘many nice’ (4x)
 - Semantically unexpected constructions / coercion
 - *te blauw* ‘too blue’, *te luxueus*, ‘too luxurious’

4.5 Result 3: misuse

- Misuse in 8 collocations CLIL corpus, while 7 in non-CLIL corpus → Josse 2015
- Types of misuse
 - Transfer from French
 - *De mensen zijn **zeer accueillant**.* 1.495 (CLIL)
'The people are very accueillant'
 - Transfer from other L2
 - *Hoe was jouw vakantie? Mijn was **verry toffe**.* 1.618 (non-CLIL)
'How about your holidays? Mine was verry toffe'
 - Grammatical mistakes/direct lexical transfer from French
 - *Het was mooi en **veel luxurius**.* 2.098 (CLIL)
'lit. It was beautiful and many luxurius'
 - Semantic/collocational mistakes
 - *Het was daar **uitstekend mooi** weer, al iets anders dan hier in ons koud vaderland!"* (CLIL)
'lit. It was there outstanding beautiful weather, already something else than here in our cold native country!'

5. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

- The study confirms that CLIL education has a positive impact on the development of a more native-like use of intensifying constructions:
 - **Non-CLIL** learners slightly **overuse** intensifying **adverbs**, whilst **CLIL learners** significantly overuse **morphological** intensifying constructions
 - Compared to CLIL-learners, non-CLIL learners show a **lower productivity and variety of intensifying constructions** (lower TTR and Hapax legomena ratio)
 - The collocation analysis revealed
 - (inter)language-specific (intensifying) collocations
 - **more variation** in the collocations of the **CLIL subcorpus** than of the non-CLIL subcorpus
 - **more different types of misuse** among the collocations of CLIL learners in Dutch

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