

**When two paths converge :  
debonding and clipping of Dutch *reuze* 'lit. giant; great'\***

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dutch *reuze(n)(-)* is a nice example of what Denison (2001) and Aarts (2007) call "intersective gradience", viz. synchronic gradience between word classes. Derived from the noun *reus* 'giant', it frequently occurs as first member of nominal and adjectival compounds such as *reuzenpas* 'lit. giant-step; gigantic step' and *reuzesterk* 'lit. giant-strong; as strong as a giant'. Moreover, it can be used as an intensifying semi-prefix in nominal and adjectival compounds (e.g. *reuzekerel* 'lit. giant-guy; very nice guy, terrific chap' and *reuzeleuk* 'lit. giant-funny; very nice, very funny, great'). Even more surprising is the fact that *reuze* currently occurs as an independent adjective and adverb with an intensifying function (e.g. *Het feestje was reuze* 'lit. the party was giant; the party was great'; *Mijn zwangerschap is reuze meegevallen* 'lit. my pregnancy is giant well-turned out; my pregnancy turned out much better than expected').

In this paper, we will argue that the prefixoid use of *reuze* is the result of a canonical grammaticalization process. The independent uses of Dutch *reuze*, though, are not the outcome of a single diachronic lineage, but result from an interaction between two different processes, that is debonding on the one hand and clipping on the other. These observations are completely in line with the recently developed idea of "multiple source constructions" (Van de Velde, De Smet & Ghesquière 2013), which claims that (lexical and grammatical) innovations in language change often result from (the interaction between) different sources.

In what follows, we will first have a closer look at the different synchronic uses of *reuze(n)(-)* (Section 2) and investigate how they are interrelated from a diachronic point of view (Section 3). In Section 4, we will argue that the emergence of the independent different uses of *reuze(n)(-)* result from both debonding and clipping.

## 2. SYNCHRONIC ANALYSIS

Synchronically, *reus* / *reuze(n)-* can be used in a wide range of constructions. It can act as a noun (2.1), a semi-prefix (2.2), an adjective and an adverb (2.3).

## 2.1. REUS AS A NOUN IN N+N- AND N+A-COMPOUNDS

The noun *reus* 'giant' can be used independently, as in *de reus Goliath* 'the giant Goliath', or as first member of an N+N- or N+A-compounds. In the latter case, it has a form ending in *-e(n)*, which was originally the genitive inflection, but is nowadays considered as a linking morpheme between the compound members. According to the actual Dutch spelling rules<sup>1</sup>, a linking morpheme *-n-*, sometimes cognitively associated with a plural interpretation (cf. Banga et al. [2013], Hanssen et al. [2013]) even if it is not pronounced, should be inserted in case of N+N-compounding (1a), but is deleted in case of N+A-compounds (1b).

- (1) a. *reuzenlied* 'lit. giant-song; song of/about the giants', *reuzenkracht* 'lit. giant-strength; gigantic strength', *reuzenrad* 'lit. giant-wheel; big wheel, Ferris wheel', *reuzenmossel* 'giant mussel'  
 b. *reuzegroot* 'lit. giant-big; as big as a giant', *reuzesterk* 'lit. giant-strong; as strong as a giant'

The examples indicate that the semantics of *reuze(n)-* in these compounds manifests some variation. Whereas in *reuzenlied* 'song of/about the giants', *reuzegroot* 'as big as a giant' and *reuzesterk* 'as strong as a giant', the left-hand member keeps its literal lexical meaning, referring to a giant, it has a qualifying value in *reuzenrad* 'big wheel, Ferris wheel' (and not: 'wheel of a giant'), which leads to a classifying interpretation in compounds such as *reuzenmossel* 'giant mussel' (and not: 'mussel of a giant'), being a specific species of mussels<sup>2</sup>. These latter meanings are most likely derived from the lexical meaning by metonymy since the prototypical property of giants is their gigantic stature: a *reuzenrad*, for example, is not 'a wheel of a giant', but could be described as 'a wheel as big as a giant' because of its enormous size. The semantics of *reuzen-* in *reuzenkracht* 'gigantic strength' is in-between: it can both literally refer to the strength of a giant or qualify this strength as being gigantic ('strength as of a giant').

## 2.2. REUZE- AS AN INTENSIFYING A PREFIXOID

Whereas in compounds such as *reuzenlied* 'lit. giant-song; song of/about the giants' or *reuzesterk* 'lit. giant-strong; as strong as a giant' (1), the lexical meaning of *reus* 'giant' is still

accessible, this is not the case for the nominal compounds illustrated in (2a), nor for the adjectival compounds in (2b).

- (2) a. *reuzekerel* 'lit. giant-guy; fantastic guy, terrific chap', *reuzeblunder* 'lit. giant-blunder; whopping blunder', *reuzehonger* 'lit. giant-appetite; great appetite'  
 b. *reuzeleuk* 'lit. giant-funny; very funny', *reuzehandig* 'lit. giant-useful; very useful, *reuzesaai* 'lit. giant-boring; very boring'

In these compounds, *reuze-* merely expresses a semantic intensification of the compound's right-hand member; it means 'very, enormous(ly), fantastic' and not just 'very big'. When a morpheme looks like a part of a compound and can still be used as a lexeme (i.e. *reus* 'giant'), but expresses a more abstract value (i.e. an intensifying value) within the compound, it is called a semi-affix or affixoid (Booij 2009: 208). According to this definition, *reuze-* can be considered an intensifying semi-prefix or prefixoid in the examples in (2).

Since Dutch compounds generally have fore-stress and Dutch prefixes are not necessarily stressed, it could be hypothesized that semi-affixes may undergo loss of stress (cf. Van Goethem 2008). However, as Booij (2005: 117) observes, affixoids are generally not characterized by phonological weakening and this especially applies to intensifying semi-prefixes which are always stressed in Dutch.<sup>3</sup> This implies that the distinction between the compounds in (1) in which *reuze(n)-* should still be qualified as a noun and the word-formations in (2) in which *reuze-* acts as an intensifying semi-prefix should essentially be made on semantic grounds. As a fact, in contrast to the compounds in (1), the semantics of the nominal compounds in (2a) and the adjectival compounds in (2b) should not be described by means of a reference to a giant: *reuzeleuk* does not mean 'as funny as a giant' and a *reuzeblunder* is not 'a blunder (as) of a giant'. This clearly indicates the semantic specialization of the semi-prefix *reuze-*. However, the borderline may be less sharp, as evidenced by *reuzehonger* which means 'great appetite' but could still be interpreted as 'an appetite as of a giant'.

Finally, it should be observed, that according to the modern Dutch spelling rules, the linking morpheme *-n-*, typical of the N+N-compounds, should be deleted when *reuze-* (and comparable elements such as *klasse-* 'class' in *klassespeler* 'lit. class-player; top-class player' and *bere-* 'bear' in *berehonger* 'lit. bear-appetite; great appetite') is no longer recognized as a noun but has developed an intensifying value.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.3. REUZE AS AN ADJECTIVE AND ADVERB

It is noteworthy that *reuze* can also be used independently as an adjective or an adverb<sup>5</sup>, while preserving its linking morpheme *-e-* and its intensifying meaning, both typical of its morphological stage as a prefixoid (see Section 2.2). In order to illustrate, qualify and quantify the relative frequencies of these uses, we took a sample of 100 occurrences of the independent form *reuze* from the (Belgian and Dutch) news archives on *news.google.com*, all published during the period 18 June - 18 July 2011. In 77% of these examples, *reuze* is used adverbially, mostly with an adjectival scope (49%) (3-4), but the adverb can also have scope over a verb or verbal expression (28%) (5-6).

- (3) Mijn zoontje en ik hebben een **reuze** leuke middag gehad!  
'My son and I had a great afternoon (lit. 'a giant nice afternoon)!'
- (4) De inwoners moeten dus behalve voor de vuilnisbak ruimte zoeken voor de gele vuilniszakken, en dat vinden ze **reuze** onhandig.  
'So the residents not only have to find a place for the garbage can but also for the yellow rubbish bags and they think that is very impractical (lit. 'giant impractical').'
- (5) Eerst riepen frisse papa-ministers als Wouter Bos en Camiel Eurlings dat het allemaal **reuze** mee zou vallen en in de VS zou blijven en bovendien tot de huizenmarkt beperkt zou blijven.  
'Newly turned papa-ministers such as Wouter Bos and Camiel Eurlings first shouted that it would all turn out much better than expected (lit. 'that it all giant would turn out') and would stay in the U.S. and moreover would be limited to the housing market.'
- (6) Om uiteenlopende redenen regende het afzeggingen, maar de vijf mensen die wél meededen aan de 18 kilometer lange scootmobieltocht in Terneuzen en omgeving hadden het gistermiddag **reuze** naar hun zin.  
'Because of various reasons cancellations poured in, but the five people who did participate in the scooter trip of 18 kilometres in Terneuzen and the surrounding area had the time of their life yesterday afternoon (lit. '(...) had it giant to their liking)!'

In the remaining 23% of the examined cases, *reuze* is used adjectivally, in which case its attributive use (22%) (7-9) overrules the predicative one (1%) (10).

- (7) De uitbreiding van de electorale faciliteiten tot heel Vlaanderen, via de unitaire kieskring, is een **reuze** stap achteruit.  
'The extension of the electoral facilities to the whole of Flanders, via the unitary electoral district, is a giant step backwards.'
- (8) Vanavond is er als extra attractie een **reuze** vuurwerkspektakel.  
'Tonight there will be a giant firework show as an additional attraction.'
- (9) De binnenstad staat immers op een **reuze** betonnen plaat van 12 ha tussen twee heuvelruggen, waaronder alle gemotoriseerd verkeer moet parkeren zodat het ganse centrum overdag een grote voetgangerszone is.  
'The town centre is indeed built on a gigantic sheet of concrete (lit. 'giant concrete sheet') of 12 ha between two ranges of hills, under which all motorized traffic has to park so that the entire centre is a large pedestrian zone by day.'
- (10) Ik heb het één keer mogen meemaken en dat was **reuze**!  
'I had the luck to experience it once and that was great (lit. 'giant')!'

*Reuze* is not an isolated case in Dutch of an intensifying semi-prefix that has developed independent uses ; other examples are illustrated in (11-14):

- (11) Verouderd hotel, maar **top** sfeertje hier! (NLCOW2012)  
'Old-fashioned hotel, but top atmosphere here !'
- (12) Je bent echt **kei** getalenteerd.(NLCOW2012)  
'You are really talented (lit. boulder talented).'
- (13) Ketnet is **bere bere bere** (WebCorp 2012)  
'lit. Ketnet is bear, bear, bear; Ketnet is fun, fun, fun'
- (14) De wijn eindigt met een lange, elegante afdronk. Te vergelijken met een échte **klasse** Champagne. (WebCorp 2012)  
'The wine rounds off with a long, elegant aftertaste. Comparable to a true first-class (lit. class) champagne'.

#### 2.4. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE SYNCHRONIC USES

The status of these independent (adverbial and adjectival) uses, as well as their relation to the morphological use of *reuze(n)*-, deserves some special attention. More particularly, in what

follows we will comment on (i) the existing spelling variations and (ii) the possible influence of readability on the spelling of complex expressions with *reuze*.

First, the spelling of complex expressions with *reuze(n)(-)* is subject to a lot of variation and ambiguity, which signals that the language user (or writer) does not have clear intuitions about the grammatical status of *reuze*. For instance, *reuze* is separated from *stap* 'step' in example (7), suggesting an analysis as an attributive adjective, while it can also be joined to the noun, with or without a linking morpheme *-n-* (*reuzenstap*, *reuzestap*), in which case the spelling is symptomatic of a nominal or semi-prefixal status respectively (see Sections 2.1 and 2.2). Semantically, however, all of the three spelling patterns convey similar meanings, as shown by the examples (15-17) in which *reuze( ) (n)stap* is used in the same syntactic construction (*een reuze( ) (n)stap vooruit* 'a giant step forward') within comparable semantic contexts:

- (15) De komst van de endoscoop betekende al een **reuze stap** vooruit in de chirurgie.  
 'The invention of the endoscope already meant a giant step forward in surgery.'  
<http://www.e-gezondheid.be/de-galblaas-verwijderen-zonder-littekens/actueel/574>,  
 accessed 24 January 2012)
- (16) De overname van Mannesmann (...) door Vodafone Airtouch bracht draadloze communicatie een **reuzestap** vooruit.  
 'The takeover of Mannesmann by Vodafone Airtouch put wireless communication a giant step ahead.'  
<http://www.cs.kuleuven.be/wit/knipsels/founding-fathers.html>, accessed 24 January 2012)
- (17) Pilletje tegen jetlag! Een nieuwe sensationele doorbraak, een **reuzenstap** vooruit in de medische wereld!  
 'A pill against jetlag! A new sensational breakthrough, a giant step forward in the medical world!'  
[http://users.telenet.be/duikclubbarracuda/DV\\_S\\_jetlag.htm](http://users.telenet.be/duikclubbarracuda/DV_S_jetlag.htm), accessed 24 January 2012)

As a second observation concerning the different synchronic uses of *reuze*, it might be argued that the independent uses of *reuze* are in fact just instances of the semi-prefix (written separately), not only on semantic grounds (similar intensifying value) but also on formal grounds. As examples (8) and (9) illustrate, separation of *reuze* often occurs when it combines

with complex compounds (*vuurwerkspektakel* 'firework show' in [8]) or a (lexicalized) noun phrase (*betonnen plaat* 'sheet of concrete' in [9]). As a fact, since 14 out of the 22 examples of attributive *reuze* in our synchronic data set exemplify this phenomenon, it is even very probable that separation is motivated here by a concern for the readability of these complex expressions. A similar motivation could be involved in (4): it seems to be the case that *reuze* is often separated from adjectives beginning with a vowel to avoid readability problems caused by a vowel clash (cf. *reuzeonhandig* 'lit. giant-impractical; very impractical'). Table 1 presents the number of hits of a *Google* search (25 January 2012) for the different spellings of *reuze* combined with adjectives and nouns with and without an initial vowel. In order to avoid semantic interference, a selection was made of adjectives and nouns with synonymous (*interessant* / *boeiend* 'interesting'; *angst* / *schrik* 'fear') and antonymous (*onhandig* 'impractical' / *handig* 'practical') meanings. The results indicate a general strong preference for splitting, which is even more pronounced in the case of a possible vowel clash.

<insert Table 1 here>

Whereas the readability factor should without any doubt be taken into consideration in the rise of the independent uses, it does not however account for the fact that separation also frequently occurs when *reuze* precedes nouns or adjectives beginning with a consonant (cf. example (3) and the examples *reuze handig* 'very practical', *reuze boeiend* 'very interesting' and *reuze schrik* 'gigantic fear' in Table 1). The readability factor neither accounts for the fact that adverbial *reuze* cannot only have scope over adjectives, but also over verbs and verbal expressions (5-6), contrary to the semi-prefix which can only have scope over adjectives and (to a lesser extent) to nouns. In addition, used as an adjective, *reuze* cannot only be used attributively but also predicatively (10). The adverbial use with scope over a verb or verbal expression and the predicative adjectival use are not (directly) reminiscent of the semi-prefix and therefore undoubtedly argue in favor of a true adverbial and adjectival use. Another argument can be found in example (9) in which *reuze* has scope over the noun phrase *betonnen plaat* 'sheet of concrete': even if Dutch semi-prefixes can combine with complex compounds (e.g. *hoofdverblijfplaats* 'lit. head-residence-place; main residence'), they cannot have scope over entire (lexicalized) phrases (e.g. *\*hoofd economische sector* 'lit. head economic sector' or *\*sleutel economische sector* 'lit. key economic sector' - while the literal English translation is unproblematic), contrary to Dutch adjectives (e.g. *belangrijke economische sector* 'important economic sector') (cf. Amiot and Van Goethem 2012).

Therefore *reuze* should be considered a true adjective in cases such as (9), and not just a semi-prefix, written separately because of readability reasons.

### 3. DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS

In this Section, a diachronic analysis will be carried out in order to find out how the different synchronic uses of *reuze(n)(-)* are historically related and when they have emerged. This diachronic study is first of all founded on the data provided by the Dutch historical dictionary *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal (WNT)*, which devotes a detailed article to the different uses of *reuze(n)(-)*, distinguishing besides a nominal use (*reus<sup>I</sup>*), a use as a so-called prefix (*reuze<sup>I</sup>*) and as an adjective, adverb and interjection (*reuze<sup>II</sup>*). This lexicographic analysis has been completed by a diachronic corpus study based on an extensive database of Dutch historical literature (*Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren, DBNL*).<sup>6</sup>

Table 2 summarizes the results of the corpus analysis conducted on the basis of the *DBNL*-corpus.

<insert Table 2 here>

#### 3.1. REUZE(N)- IN N+N- AND N+A- COMPOUNDS (FROM THE 17TH CENTURY ON)

From Table 2 and the data provided by the *WNT*, it can be derived that from the 17th until the 18th century, *reuze(n)-* only occurs as left-hand member of N+N-compounds (18-20). In these first occurrences, *reus/ze(n)-* always refers to a creature of gigantic stature (lexical value).

(18) De blyfchap kort den tyt, godinnen scheppen goden. Een **reuzenafkomst** trotst het hemelsch gezagh. (J. van den Vondel 11, 31 [1667])

'Gladness shortens time, goddesses create gods. Descent from the giants (lit. 'giant-descendance') defies the celestial authority.'

(19) De strijd van 't **Reuzerot** tegen den dondergod Jupijn is die van Lucifer tegen God, (...) (J. van den Vondel, *Hekeldichten*, [1682])<sup>7</sup>

'The battle of the race of giants (lit. 'giant-gang') against the god of thunder Jupiter is the one of Lucifer against God, (...)'

- (20) Reeds slieden de windjes, en het geboomte, dat hier en daar aan den oever stond, was met eene **reuzengedaante** in den stillen vloed geschilderd. (E.M. Post, *Het land, in brieven*, [1787])

'Already were the winds sleeping , and the trees (...) were painted with a gigantic stature (lit. 'giant-stature') in the silent tide.'

From the 19th century on, these N+N-compounds become particularly productive and a semantic shift occurs: the left-hand member of the compound develops besides the literal lexical meaning ('giant') a derived, qualifying value ('very big, gigantic, great'). This gradual metonymic transition manifests itself apparently in the semantic description of a compound such as *reuzenkind* (lit. 'giant child'): "kind van een reus (Halma [1710]) en vand. groot en zwaar kind (Kuipers [1901])" [child of a giant (Halma [1710]) and hence big and heavy child (Kuipers [1901])] (*WNT*, s.v. *reus*<sup>f</sup>). *Reuzenarm* (lit. 'giant arm') also combines the literal and the qualifying meaning: in addition to the meaning "arm (als) van een reus" [arm (as) from a giant] (*WNT*, s.v. *reus*<sup>f</sup>) (21) the *WNT*-dictionary mentions a second meaning "zeer grote arm" [very big arm] (*WNT*, s.v. *reus*<sup>f</sup>) (22).

- (21) Een ander menschensoort (...) Sterke schouders, **reuzenarmen**, schraagden 't mateloos geweld. (D.J. Lennep 235 [1823])

'Another human race (...) Strong shoulders, giant arms, supported the immense violence.'

- (22) Zij (Maria) wenkt: de krijg valt stil; zij komt heur stad beschermen, Die voor heur altaar bad, en 't steunde in **reuzenarmen**. (V. Ackere, *Winterbl.* 318 [1868])

'She (Mary) beckons: the war stops; she comes to protect her city, which prayed for her altar and supported it with gigantic arms (lit. 'giant-arms').'

According to the diachronic information provided by the *WNT*, all compounds that combine both meanings developed the lexical meaning before the qualifying one. For instance, in the case of *reuzenbed* (lit. 'giant bed'), the meaning "grafheuvel (= 'bed (als) van een reus')" [sepulchral mound, tumulus (= bed (as) from a giant)] (*WNT*, s.v. *reus*<sup>f</sup>) (23) precedes the qualifying value "zeer groot bed" [very big bed] (*WNT*, s.v. *reus*<sup>f</sup>) (24):

- (23) Hoedaenighe verheevene graven, (...), ende by de inzaeten **reusen-bedden** genoemd. (V. Slichtenhorst, *Geld. Gesch.* 1, 78 a [1654])

'Such elevated tombs, (...), called giant beds by the inhabitants.'

(24) Ik had 't over de dilligence, dat is dat **reuzebed** van boven. (Naeff, Veulen 140 [1903])

'I was talking about the stage coach, that is that giant bed from upstairs.'

In a final step of the semantic change, a number of 19th and 20th century's compounds can be observed in which only the derived qualifying value remains. A *reuzenkunstenaar* ('giant artist') (25), for example, is described as a very important and very big artist, and conveys a metaphorical qualifying meaning, in which the original meaning referring to a giant is no longer accessible.

(25) Drie eeuwen zijn er thans in 't ruim des tijds vervlogen Sinds Vlaandren aan Europe een **reuzenkunstnaar** schonk (betr. Rubens). (J. V. Rijswijck Jr. 1, 11 [1877])

'Three centuries have passed now in the space of time since Flanders donated a giant artist to Europe (about Rubens).'

In addition to this qualifying value, a classifying interpretation emerges from the second half of the 19th century on. When combined with names of animals, plants and fruits (26-27), compounds with *reuze(n)-* refer to species and varieties of very big dimensions.

(26) De schelp van de **reuzenmossel** is somtijds vijf voet breed, en wordt van 400 tot 500 pond zwaar. (Alb. d. Nat. 1859, 1, 32 [1859])

'The shell of a giant mussel is sometimes 5 feet wide, and can weigh from 400 to 500 pounds.'

(27) **Reuzenpopulieren**, die hun donkere kruinen, hoog in den blauwen sterrennacht, over de stille daakjes uitspreidden. (Buysse, Rozeke 1,6 [1905])

'Giant poplars which spread their dark crowns, high in the blue starry night, over the small silent roofs.'

During the 19th century, *reuze(n)-* also appears in adjectival compounds, even if they are very rare: the extensive list of compounds included in the *WNT*-article on the nominal use of *reus* (s.v. *reus*<sup>f</sup>) only contains two adjectival compounds beginning with *reuze-*: *reuzesterk* 'lit. giant-strong; as strong as a giant' (28) and *reuzegroot* 'lit. giant-big; as big as a giant' (29); *reuzensterk* is the only attested N+A-compound in the *DBNL* corpus.

(28) Hij is **reuzesterk**, il est d'une force de géant, il est prodigieusement fort (Kramers, Ned.-Fr. wdb. 1178a [1862])

'He is as strong as a giant (lit. 'giant-strong'), he has the strength of a giant, he is extremely strong'

(29) Twei komkommers feur vaàf sint! ... een concurrent ... riep met een kermis-drift in zijn aanprijzing: **Reuzegraut!** ... **reùzegraut!** ... ik geif d'r drie feur 'n stuyfer. (Querido, Jordaan 1, 320 [1912])

'Two cucumbers for five cents! ... a competitor ... shouted with a temper as if he were at the Fair: as big as giants (lit. 'giant-big')! ... as big as giants (lit. 'giant-big')! ... I give three of them for a penny.'

It can be concluded that the compounds beginning with *reuze(n)-* have been subject to a gradual semantic shift in the course of time. The 19th century appears to be a transitional period between the original lexical meaning, involving reference to giants, and the derived metonymical value "very big, great" that since then becomes more productive, in a qualifying or classifying sense. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the original meaning of *reus* with a literal reference to giants becomes less accessible. In this respect, the example in (28) deserves further attention. Taken from a bilingual Dutch-French dictionary (1862), it provides two different French translations for the sentence *Hij is reuzesterk* (lit. 'he is giant-strong'), the first one expressing the literal translation (*il est d'une force de géant* 'he has the strength of a giant') while the second one suggests an evolution to a new intensifying value (*il est prodigieusement fort* 'he is extremely strong'), in which the semi-prefixal use is grounded.

### 3.2. REUZE- AS A SEMI-PREFIX (19TH CENTURY)

By the middle of the 19th century the compounds with *reuze(n)-* seem to give rise to a new semi-prefixal use with an intensifying meaning ("very, very big, extreme(ly)"). The *WNT* dictionary nevertheless admits that the formal and semantic boundaries between the nominal, the semi-prefixal and even the adjectival use (see Section 3.3) are not always obvious. However, when *reuze-* can no longer be associated with the notion of a "giant" (as a mythological character, a very tall man), it should no longer be analyzed as a noun (*WNT*, s.v. *reuze*<sup>-1</sup>).

According to the *WNT* (s.v. *reuze*<sup>I</sup>), this semi-prefix gains in productivity from the beginning of the 20th century on, which is corroborated by our *DBNL* corpus analysis: while this semi-prefixal use remains marginal up to the 19th century (8,60%), it becomes the most frequent use in the 20th century's subcorpus (47,06%).

Already at the beginning of the 20th century, the intensifying semi-prefix *reuze*- (with various spellings) combines with nominal (30-31) and adjectival (32-33) heads:

- (30) Kol. Bulders (oordeelde) Hindenburg een **reuzenflater** begaan door de doorbraak te proberen bij St. Quentin. (Goeree d'Overfl., *Dagb.* 48 [1918])  
'Colonel Bulders (judged) that Hindenburg had committed a major blunder (lit. 'giant blunder') by forcing the breakthrough at St. Quentin.'
- (31) Je trouwt wel... Volgend jaar al misschien. En je krijgt 'n **reuze-cadeau** van me, als je nou maar opschiet. (Cissy V. Marxveldt, *J. ter Heul* 2, 8 [1921])  
'You will marry once... Maybe already next year. And you will get a huge present (lit. 'giant-present'), if you just hurry now.'
- (32) We hadden een **reuze-leuke** koffietafel. (Cissy V. Marxveldt, *J. ter Heul* 2, 73 [1921])  
'We had a very fun (lit. 'giant-funny') (coffee) lunch.'
- (33) Hij verdient een shilling per dag, maar is dan ook 'ketier mabsout', gij zoudt zeggen: **reuze-tevreden**. (J.I. de Haan, *Jerusalem*, [1921])  
'He earns a shilling a day, but then he is "ketier mabsout", you would say: tremendously happy (lit. 'giant-satisfied')'

### 3.3. REUZE AS ADJECTIVE, ADVERB AND INTERJECTION (20TH CENTURY)

Finally, the *WNT*-dictionary (s.v. *reuze*<sup>II</sup>) distinguishes three autonomous uses of *reuze*, which originate from its compositional use by a so-called process of "isolation". The dictionary supposes that the adjectival (34) and adverbial (35) use have preceded its use as an interjection (36).<sup>8</sup> In all three cases, *reuze* preserves the intensifying meaning (as well as the linking morpheme *-e-*) from its corresponding semi-prefix. The meaning of the independent form *reuze* is described as follows: "als superlatief gekleurd woord dat iets als zeer groot of zeer goed in zijn soort qualificeert. Te vergelijken met woorden als *geweldig*, *fantastisch*, *enorm*, *verschrikkelijk*, *akelig* (*netjes*), *bliksemsch* (*goed*) e.d." [word with a superlative meaning that qualifies something as very big or very good. Comparable to words such as *great*, *fantastic*, *enormous*, *terrible*, *awfully* (*neat*), *infernally* (*well*) etc.] (*WNT*, s.v. *reuze*<sup>II</sup>).

- (34) **Reuze** boffer, **reuze** lol, **reuze** boer, **reuze** gek, **reuze** uitvinding, (...) (V. Ginneken, Handb. 1, 509 [1913])  
 'Great luck (lit. 'giant luck'), great fun (lit. 'giant fun'), great farmer (lit. 'giant farmer'), great fool (lit. 'giant fool'), great invention (lit. 'giant invention') (...)'
- (35) Een gelegenheids-eenacter voor de H.B.S.-fuif... of andere hoogtijden, die meestal **'reuze'** insloeg en 't uitmuntend 'deed'. (Masker 1, 184 [1921])  
 'A one-act play for a special occasion at the H.B.S. party... or other feasts, which usually did a great job (lit. 'which usually giant stroke') and was a big success.'
- (36) N' smoel, man! **reuze!** (Ginneken, Handb. 1, 509 [1913])  
 'What a face, man! great (lit. 'giant')!'

The *DBNL* corpus analysis also corroborates the emergence of the adjectival (37) and adverbial (38) uses in the course of the 20th century, although the small number of occurrences do not allow us to examine more into detail their specific diachronic developments.

- (37) Delphine Seyrig heb ik zelf nooit ontmoet. Ik heb veel sympathie voor die vrouw, en ik vind het een **reuze** actrice. (W.M. Roggeman, Beroepsgeheim (6), [1987])  
 'I have never met Delphine Seyrig myself. I have a lot of sympathy for this woman, and I think she is a great actress (lit. 'giant actress').'
- (38) Het beste kun je natuurlijk in je slaap sterven, zoals Simon. Die heeft het wat dat betreft **reuze** getroffen. (P. Piryns, Er is nog zoveel on gezegd. Vraaggesprekken met schrijvers, [1987])  
 'The best thing is of course dying in your sleep, like Simon. In that respect, he had a lot of luck (lit. 'he struck it giant').'

It can however be assumed that the attributive use of *reuze* has preceded its predicative and interjectional use, the latter probably being derived from the former (*(het is/was) reuze!* '(it is/was) great!'), given the fact that attributive uses already sporadically occur by the middle of the 19th century in the historical news archives of the Royal Library (*KB*), as illustrated by example (39):

(39) (...) als men vergelijkender wijze betracht, welke **reuze schreden** de werktuigkunde, het fabriekwezen en andere kunsten en wetenschappen in deze eeuw hebben gemaakt. (KB, 1852)

'(...) if it is observed, by way of comparison, which gigantic steps (lit. 'giant steps') have been taken during this century by mechanics, industry and other arts and sciences.'

#### 4. A MULTIPLE PATHS ACCOUNT : grammaticalization, debonding and clipping

From what precedes, it can be drawn that *reus / reuze(n)(-)* has developed a wide range of uses through the course of time, and that the semantic and formal differences between all these uses are not always evident. We could therefore advance the existence of a continuum with nominal, semi-prefixal, adjectival and adverbial uses, with the synchronic uses reflecting the different stages of a gradual diachronic evolution of *reuze(n)-* (cf. Hopper's idea of *layering* [Hopper 1991]).

Whereas the transition from noun (as left-hand member of compounds) to semi-prefix has been proved to be mainly a semantic evolution (semantic shift from the lexical meaning "giant" to a metonymically derived qualifying / classifying value "very big" and finally to an intensifying function "very, great, enormous(ly)"), the evolution from the semi-prefix to the adjective and the adverb is essentially a formal process: it implies an increase of the autonomy of *reuze*, which activates its intensifying value in syntactic contexts. As a result, it can be supposed that both evolutions form part of two different processes. Whereas the first process can be considered a canonical case of grammaticalization (4.1), the emergence of the independent uses, considered as a case of "isolation" by the *WNT* (Section 3.3), will be shown to involve multiple paths, viz debonding and clipping (4.2).

##### 4.1. FROM NOUN TO SEMI-PREFIX. A canonical case of grammaticalization

The first process implies a metonymical shift from a lexeme with a concrete, lexical meaning to a morpheme with an abstract intensifying value and could be analyzed as a *desemanticization*, which is typically involved in a grammaticalization process. Previous studies already suggested that Dutch intensifying semi-prefixes such as *bloed-* in *bloedserieus* (lit. 'blood-serious; very serious') and *bere-* in *beregezellig* (lit. 'bear-cosy; very cosy') are the result of grammaticalization (Booij 2010; Van Goethem 2008, 2010, 2011):<sup>9</sup>

We can consider these changes in the meaning of "bound lexemes" as being cases of grammaticalization (Hopper and Traugott 2003; Ramat 2001) since these prefixoids have lost their original lexical meaning more or less, and have acquired a more general and abstract meaning of intensification. However, this does not mean that the lexical meaning of these prefixoids has become completely irrelevant (...): there are cases in which the lexical meaning is still relevant, a phenomenon referred to as "persistence" (Hopper 1991). (Booij 2010: 58)

Besides desemanticization, other typical parameters of grammaticalization are involved in this process: *subjectification* (shift from an objective lexical meaning to a subjective intensifying meaning), *decategorialization* (the semi-prefix *reuze-* is no longer a noun and can therefore no longer be used in its plural form, e.g. \**reuzenleuk* 'lit. giants-fun') and increase in productivity of the grammaticalized form (during the 20th century, see Section 3.2) (Lehmann 1995; Brinton and Traugott 2005; Van Goethem 2008, 2010, 2011).

#### 4.2. FROM SEMI-PREFIX TO ADJECTIVE AND ADVERB. *Debonding and clipping*

##### *DEBONDING*

The second process, involving the evolution from semi-prefix to adjective and adverb and implying an increase in the autonomy of *reuze*, is diametrically opposed to the grammaticalization process: it does not involve further desemanticization, but instead *reuze* preserves its intensifying value; *reuze* does not undergo further decategorialization, but instead develops new lexical categories (adjective and adverb) and finally, the scope and syntactic autonomy of *reuze* do not decrease, but increase. All these properties are typical of degrammaticalization, that is "a composite change whereby a gram in a specific context gains in autonomy or substance on more than one linguistic level (semantics, morphology, syntax, or phonology)" (Norde 2009: 120). More particularly, the shift from semi-prefix to adjective and adverb could be seen as a particular case of *debonding*, defined by Norde (2009) as "a composite change whereby a bound morpheme in a specific linguistic context becomes a free morpheme" (Norde 2009:186). *Debonding* is typically marked by the evolution of a bound morpheme to a free morpheme (*severance*), category change or recategorialization, scope expansion and increase of syntactic freedom (*flexibilization*), which all apply to the

emergence of the adjectival and adverbial uses out of the semi-prefixal use. Our diachronic study has shown that the intensifying semi-prefix gradually develops independent uses, first as an attributively used adjective (from the second half of the 19th century on), later as a predicatively used adjective, interjection and adverb (since the beginning of the 20th century), progressively increasing its syntactic autonomy (*flexibilization*). Scope expansion manifests itself, for instance, when the attributive adjective is not only used with scope over a bare noun, in which case it is still close to the semi-prefix (e.g. *reuze uitvinding* 'giant invention'), but also with scope over entire phrases (e.g. *reuze betonnen plaat* 'lit. giant concrete sheet; gigantic sheet of concrete'). In the case of the adverb, a similar flexibilization can be observed when the adverb does not only have an adjectival scope (e.g. *reuze interessant* 'lit. giant interesting; very interesting') but also develops a verbal scope (e.g. *Het valt reuze mee* 'lit. it falls giant with; it is much better than expected').

#### CLIPPING

However, the debonding hypothesis cannot account for certain semantic discrepancies found in the independent uses of *reuze*. Although the semi-prefix, the adverb and the adjective *reuze(-)* all share an intensifying value, their specific semantic connotations may differ to a certain extent. Used as a semi-prefix (40), adverb (41-42) or attributive adjective (43), *reuze(-)* acts as a "neutral" intensifier, which means that it can intensify adjectives, verbs or nouns with opposite meanings:

- (40) a. Gregory Medina uit Kortrijk ging dinsdag lopen met een **reuzegroot** T-shirt van KV Kortrijk.  
'Gregory Medina from Courtrai went for a run on Tuesday wearing a gigantic (lit. 'giant-big') T-shirt of [the Belgian football team] KV Kortrijk.'  
([http://www.nieuwsblad.be/article/detail.aspx?articleid=DMF20120717\\_00225815](http://www.nieuwsblad.be/article/detail.aspx?articleid=DMF20120717_00225815), 18 July 2012)
- b. Hij doodt de grote Filistijn die niemand durfde doden, want Goliath is **reuzeklein** voor God (...).  
'He kills the big Philistine who didn't dare to kill anybody, because Goliath is very small (lit. 'giant-small') for God (...)'  
(<http://www.gbsdebron.nl/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=iMK8qrKcY3s%3D&tabid=95&language=nl-NL>, accessed 19 July 2012)

- (41) a. Soms gebruik je lenzenbakjes als bakjes voor make-up. **Reuzehandig** maar als je geen lenzen hebt, waar kun je die bakjes dan ergens halen?  
'Sometimes contact lens holders can be used as make up holders. Very practical (lit. 'giant-practical'), but if you don't wear contact lenses, where can you find such holders then?'  
(<http://www.formspring.me/Teske/q/1973149690>, 27 December 2010, accessed 19 July 2012)
- b. Ik heb gemakkelijk praten, want ik ben **reuzeonhandig** en die door mij voorgestelde taak komt vast bij iemand anders terecht.  
'It's easy for me to talk, because I am very clumsy (lit. 'giant-impractical') and the task I am proposing will probably be done by someone else.'  
(<http://www.ivanwolffers.nl/column/column269.htm>, 2008, accessed 19 July 2012)
- (42) a. Het is de eerste keer dat ik vis en **het valt reuze mee**.  
'I am fishing for the first time and it turns out better than expected (lit. 'it turns out giant well').'  
([http://www.nieuwsblad.be/article/detail.aspx?articleid=DMF20120709\\_00216796](http://www.nieuwsblad.be/article/detail.aspx?articleid=DMF20120709_00216796), 10 July 2012, accessed 19 July 2012)
- b. Het lijkt alsof we hier zo ver zijn, maar dat **valt reuze tegen**.  
'It seems as if we are here so far away, but that turns out not to be true (lit. 'that turns out giant badly').'  
(<http://www.hartvannederland.nl/nederland/2012/aandacht-voor-adoptieouders-op-roze-zaterdag/>, 7 July 2012, accessed 19 July 2012)
- (43) a. Mijn eerste bezoek aan de carnavalsgekte van Aalst was een **reuze meevaller**.  
'My first visit to the madness of the Carnival in Aalst was a very pleasant surprise (lit. 'a giant stroke of luck').'  
(<http://users.telenet.be/harry/Daguitstapjes/Daguitstapjes.htm>, 6 February 2005, accessed 19 July 2012)
- b. Hoe hard we ook ons best doen om dat in te zien, het blijft altijd een **reuze-ontgoocheling** te moeten vaststellen dat het mislukt is.  
'No matter how hard we do our best to be aware of that fact, it is still a great disappointment (lit. 'a giant-disappointment') to find out that it didn't work out.'  
(<http://9maand.be/forum/archief/reactions/pid/1064694>, 29 January 2012, accessed 19 July 2012)

However, used as a predicative adjective or as an interjection (*Reuze!* 'Terrific!, Great!'), *reuze* always seems to imply a positive connotation, mostly in the sense of *reuzeleuk* 'very nice, very funny' or *reuzegoed* 'very good, terrific'. The examples under (44), in which *reuze* combines with neutrally loaded subjects, clearly prove that the default reading of predicative *reuze* is a positive one, which contrasts with its neutral intensifying function in an attributive position.

- (44) a. Ik heb het één keer mogen meemaken en dat was **reuze!**  
 'I had the luck to experience it once and it was great (lit. 'giant')!'   
<http://www.eurosong.be/33872/interview-simone-esf-90-had-een-boontje-voor-koen-wauters>, 23 June 2011, accessed 19 July 2012)
- b. De organisatie laat via Twitter weten tevreden te zijn over het verloop van de eerste dag. 'Dank voor jullie komst vandaag! Het was **reuze** en sfeervol. (...).'  
 'The organization team twitters being satisfied about the first day. "Thank you for your visit today! It was great (lit. 'giant') and delightful. (...)."'   
<http://www.hoogenlaag.nl/lokaal/geslaagde-eerste-dag-tria-fata-festival-oos-terbeek-28009630.html>, 30 June 2012, accessed 19 July 2012)

In order to verify if our instincts regarding the semantics of the adjective *reuze* had a basis in reality, we carried out a small-scale survey with 15 native (Flemish) speakers of Dutch. The participants had to judge on a 5-point scale the grammaticality of 8 randomly ordered sentences with *reuze* predicatively or attributively linked to a positively or negatively loaded noun (*feestje* 'party', *taart* 'cake' vs *ontgoocheling* 'disappointment', *probleem* 'problem'). The results are summarized in Table 3.

<insert Table 3 here>

The mean scores in Table 3 indicate that, used predicatively, *reuze* has a marked preference<sup>10</sup> for positively loaded subjects over negatively loaded subjects, which are very poorly evaluated (mean scores 1.67 and 1.33). When *reuze* is used attributively, the average scores are not only less divergent (between 2.93 and 3.80); compared to the predicative constructions with negatively connotated nouns, the attributive ones are much better accepted (2.93 vs 1.67 for the sentences with *ontgoocheling* 'disappointment' and 3.00 vs 1.33 for the sentences with *probleem* 'problem').

It can logically be assumed that since the positive compounds (such as *reuzeleuk* 'lit. giant-funny; very funny, great' and *reuzegroot* 'lit. giant-big; gigantic') are in general more frequent than the negative compounds (such as *reuzesaaï* 'lit. giant-boring; very boring' and *reuzeklein* 'lit. giant-small; very small'), *reuze* has developed a positive "semantic prosody"<sup>11</sup> (Bublitz 1996) when used by itself as a predicate or as an interjection. A more far-reaching hypothesis would be that predicatively used *reuze* and its use as an interjection are in fact the clipped forms of a positively connotated adjectival compound such as *reuzeleuk*. This hypothesis can be supported by the fact that fore-clipping of N+A-compounds, used predicatively, is a well-known phenomenon in Dutch: *stapel* 'lit. pile' in (45a) is the clipped form of *stapelverliefd* 'lit. pile-in-love; madly in love' and *piep* 'lit. peep' in (45b) is the result of fore-clipping of *piepjong* 'lit. peep-young; very young'.

- (45) a. Zijn eerste liefde was Carine, (...). Laurent was **stapel** op haar, zoals dat wel vaker gebeurt bij een eerste verliefdheid.  
'His first love was Carine, (...). Laurent was madly in love (lit. 'pile') with her, as is often the case with a first crush.'  
(<http://www.humo.be/humo-archief/31472/het-verboden-boek-over-prins-laurent>, 18 April 2011, accessed 19 July 2012)
- b. 'En ook nog een beetje artrose, maar dat is niet abnormaal gezien de leeftijd.'  
(...) Ik weet even niet goed wat te zeggen. Zo gaat dat nu eenmaal wanneer je er, compleet onverwachts, op wordt gewezen dat je niet zo **piep** meer bent.  
"And a little arthrosis also, but that is not unusual considering your age." (...) For a moment I don't know what to say. That's the way it goes when, suddenly, you get pointed out that you aren't so young (lit. 'peep') anymore.'  
([http://www.nieuwsblad.be/article/detail.aspx?articleid=DMF20110401\\_130](http://www.nieuwsblad.be/article/detail.aspx?articleid=DMF20110401_130), 2 April 2011, accessed 18 July 2012)

The examples in (45) provide additional evidence for the clipping hypothesis: whereas the predicative use of *reuze* could alternatively be explained by syntactic context expansion from its attributive use (which would however not account for its semantic shift), this is not a plausible hypothesis in the case of *stapel* or *piep*. Since the latter elements cannot be used attributively (*\*een stapel jongen* 'lit. a pile boy'; *\*een piep meisje* 'lit. a peep girl') nor form intensifying nominal compounds (*\*stapeljongen* 'lit. pile-boy'; *\*piepmeisje* 'lit. peep-girl'), they should inevitably be analyzed as clippings, and not as instances of debonding.

In sum, the adjectival uses of Dutch *reuze* can be accounted for by both debonding and clipping. Whereas debonding can account for the emergence of the attributive uses, the clipping hypothesis explains the semantic particularities of predicative *reuze*. It is however highly probable that both processes interfere with each other, in the sense that the rise of attributive uses may have favored clipping, or conversely.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND PERSPECTIVES

In this paper, we outlined the synchronic gradience of Dutch *reuze(n)(-)* and suggested how its different synchronic uses (as nominal left-hand member of nominal and adjectival compounds, as an intensifying semi-prefix, as an adjective, interjection and adverb) can be related from a diachronic point of view. It can be summarized that, in a first stage (during the 19th century), *reuze(n)-* grammaticalized from a noun taking part in N+N- and N+A-compounds with a lexical, qualifying or classifying value to an intensifying semi-prefix and that, subsequently (especially during the 20th century), this semi-prefix developed independent adjectival and adverbial uses by (a possible interaction between) degrammaticalization (in casu debonding) and clipping.

More particularly, our data suggest the existence of three clines, the first one leading from the N+N-compound to the attributive adjectival uses (debonding), the second one leading from the N+A-compound to the predicative adjectival uses (clipping), and the third one leading from the N+A-compound to the adverbial uses (debonding).

<insert Figure 1 here>

In sum, the evolution of *reuze(n)(-)* and the emergence of its independent uses should be considered as a very unique development in which a first process of grammaticalization (the development of the intensifying prefixoid) is continued by a reverse process of isolation, involving both debonding (as an instance of degrammaticalization, cf. Norde 2009) and clipping (as an instance of lexicalization, cf. Brinton and Traugott 2005). These results do not only challenge the unidirectionality hypothesis of language change, but also give evidence of its complexity, involving multiple lineages and interacting processes leading to the same results, which supports the recently developed idea of "multiple source constructions" (Van de Velde, De Smet & Ghesquière 2013).

The fact that the grammaticalization process especially affects the semantics of *reuze*, whereas its degrammaticalization (in casu debonding) and clipping have a particular impact on its autonomy, syntactic behavior and scope, is completely in line with Van der Auwera's claim that "(...) whereas in grammaticalization it is (predominantly) meaning that takes the lead, in degrammaticalization in the narrow, non-lexicalizing sense, it is (predominantly) form that changes first" (Van der Auwera 2002: 23). Our synchronic and diachronic analysis indeed demonstrate that whereas the grammaticalization process of *reuze* follows a natural cline of semantic change with consecutive steps of metonymical and metaphorical reanalysis ("as of a giant" > "very big" > "very important" > mere intensification), the debonding of *reuze* seems to have been caused by (more accidental) formal factors, such as the concern of readability in the case of complex compounds or vowel clash as observed in Section 2.4. In this respect, another question to be explored is the possible influence of the linking morpheme *-e-* on the debonding process, and particularly on the formal reanalysis of the semi-prefix as an attributive adjective. Since attributively used adjectives in Dutch mostly end in an inflectional *-e*,<sup>12</sup> it is very plausible that this linking morpheme has been reanalyzed as the inflectional morpheme *-e* (see also Van de Velde's work on the exaptation of the Dutch ending *-e* [Van de Velde 2012]). This formal reanalysis would explain, on the one hand, why other Dutch intensifying semi-prefixes ending in *-e* develop adjectival uses (e.g. *een klasse locatie* 'lit. a class location; a first-class location', *een bere speler* 'lit. a bear player; a terrific player') and, on the other hand, why Dutch semi-prefixes without this linking morpheme generally do not seem to give rise to attributive adjectival uses, for instance with scope over noun phrases (e.g. *\*sleutel economische sector* 'key economic sector') (cf. Amiot & Van Goethem 2012; Van Goethem & De Smet 2012). The fact that this reanalyzed *-e* persists in morpho-syntactic contexts where "normal" Dutch adjectives lack inflection, such as the predicative use (e.g. *het was reuze!* 'lit. it was giant; it was great'), can then still be accounted for by the clipping hypothesis. As shown in Section 4.2, the meaning of the adjective *reuze* (as a neutral intensifier or a positively connotated intensifier) largely depends on the construction in which it is embedded, an attributive or a predicative one respectively, which suggests that predicative *reuze* may be the clipped form of a positively loaded compound such as *reuzeleuk*. This implies that the predicative use (and its related use as an interjection) should not be included in the gradual debonding process of *reuze*, since it would be the result of an abrupt lexicalization operation.

The complex interplay between the processes of debonding and clipping obviously needs further investigation. As hypothesized before, it is highly probable that clipping of

predicatively used N+A- compounds has favored the process of debonding in the attributive position, or conversely, that the possibility of clipping has stimulated the emergence of attributive uses by debonding. Furthermore, it should be closely examined if clipping could also have played a role in the emergence of the adverbial uses of *reuze*: for instance, it is not excluded to interpret adverbial *reuze* in *het is reuze meegevallen* 'it has turned out much better than expected' as the clipped form of an adverbial N+Adv-compound such as *reuzegoed* 'giant-well'. These questions will be central topics in our future research.

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### **Dictionaries and corpora**

- DBNL (Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren* [Digital Library for Dutch Literature]) <http://www.dbnl.org/>
- KB Historische Kranten* [Historical newspapers of the Royal Library]: <http://kranten.kb.nl/>
- News archives on <http://news.google.com>
- NLCOW2012* [Corpora from the Web]: <http://hpsg.fu-berlin.de/cow/colibri/>
- WebCorp* [The Web as Corpus]: <http://www.webcorp.org.uk/live/>
- WNT (Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* [Dictionary of Dutch Language]): <http://gtb.inl.nl/>

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://taaladvies.net/taal/advies/vraag/1205/> (website accessed 18 July 2012).

<sup>2</sup> The *reuzenmossel* or *Tridacua gigas* is defined as the biggest variety of mussels in the Pacific Ocean (*WNT*, s.v. *reus*<sup>I</sup>).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.let.ru.nl/ans/e-ans/12/04/03/02/body.html> (website accessed 18 July 2012).

<sup>4</sup> See <http://taaladvies.net/taal/advies/vraag/1205/> (website accessed 18 July 2012).

<sup>5</sup> In Dutch, adverbs can be derived from adjectives by simple conversion (e.g. *een mooi meisje* 'a beautiful girl'; *dit meisje zingt mooi* 'this girl sings beautifully'), which explains why the same form *reuze* can be used as an adjective and as an adverb.

<sup>6</sup> This database contains 7599 Dutch literary texts from the 11th until the 21st century.

<sup>7</sup> The compound *reuze(n)rot* (19) appears several times in the 17th and 18th century subcorpora. A *rot* refers to a group of persons with malicious intentions (*WNT*, s.v. *rot*<sup>II</sup>).

<sup>8</sup> The *WNT* article (published in 1980) does not however provide examples of an adverbial use with adjectival scope, which nonetheless seems to be the most productive independent use from a synchronic point of view (cf. 2.3.), nor illustrates the use as a predicative adjective.

<sup>9</sup> For the debate on the grammaticalization/ lexicalization status of this process, see Brinton and Traugott (2005) and Himmelmann (2004).

<sup>10</sup> The mean scores of the sentences *het feestje was reuze*, *de ontgoocheling was reuze* and *het probleem was reuze* have statistical significance ( $t_{14} = 7,28$ ;  $t_{14} = -2,62$ ;  $t_{14} = -4,32$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ).

<sup>11</sup> "[S]emantic prosody refers to *negative or positive semantic colouring* of two (or possibly more) components" (Bublitz 1996: 11).

<sup>12</sup> Dutch attributively used adjectives are always inflected in *-e* (e.g. *mooi-e huizen* 'beautiful houses'), except when preceding a neuter, indefinite and singular noun (e.g. *een mooi huis* 'a beautiful house'). Predicatively used adjectives lack inflection (e.g. *het huis is mooi* 'the house is beautiful').