

“Du hast eh voll den guten Musikgeschmack!” – Underdetermination and grammaticalization of NP-external intensifying constructions in German

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International Conference on Construction Grammar (ICCG12)
Prague, May 19–21, 2023



Outline

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2. The case of *voll* and *total*
3. *voll* the grammaticalization?
4. *total* the data
5. Underdetermination and constructional meaning
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Intensifiers

- increase the “degree of a property or an attitude expressed in an utterance” (Scheffler et al. 2023: 1), i.e. its expressiveness (e.g. Claudi 2006, Gutzmann 2019, Kirschbaum 2022, Schmidt 2022, Stratton 2020)
- open class that is prone to innovation due to its expressive function (Lorenz 2002: 143)
- usually occur inside an AdjP, modifying an adjective (e.g. Duden 2022: 837-842) often in predicative position, which is thought to be particularly salient



Intensifiers

- (1) *Er hatte leider **ziemlich krumme** Beine, ganz enorm.* (DWDS Webcorpus; [Affentheater. Hildegard Lewandowsky, 2013-11-19](#))
'Unfortunately, he had quite crooked legs, quite tremendously.'
- (2) *Schade es ist **eine sehr gute** Folge von Euch.* (DWDS Webcorpus; [Jetzt beim Podwichteln 2013 mitmachen!. PodUnion, 2013-11-05](#))
'Too bad, it is a very good episode of yours'



NP-external intensifiers

- appear outside of an NP, e.g. *ziemlich der coole Gartenzaun* ('quite.INT the cool garden fence'); *mega der schöne Fliederbusch* ('mega.INT the beautiful lilac bush')
- Schlieben-Lange (1995: 230): in the [INT Det (Adj.) N]-structure, Det can only be filled with definite articles
- Gutzmann & Turgay (2015), Gutzmann (2019): „external degree modification constructions“, which “still intensifies the adjective or noun inside the DP” (Gutzmann & Turgay 2015: 185)
- focus today: ‘scalar’ intensifiers (Lorenz 2002: 137) *voll* (‘fully’) and *total* (‘totally’)



The case of *voll* and *total*

Degree modifiers like *voll* and *total* may occur outside of (simple or complex) NPs

(3) Find auch dass Sookie und Jackson **voll das süße paar** sind!!!

‘I also think that Sookie and Jackson are DM the cute couple’

(deCow14 ID 85600e5cf7101502d719a808d8ce13b234c4)

(4) Ich hab letztens im Internet **total den süßen Hund** gefunden.

‘I have recently found DM the cute dog on the internet’

(deCow14 ID b9a5d2c5787b24dd0e587cdf401185894eca)



The case of *voll* and *total*

Gutzmann & Turgay (2015), Gutzmann (2019) suggest that...

- the degree modifiers intensify the adjective (not the whole NP), even if they occur outside the NP

However, we do not need adjectives in this construction!

(5) Jetzt habe ich **voll die Panik** und denke es ist eine Brown Recluse.

‘Now I am DM panicking and thinking it is a Brown Recluse’

(deCow14 ID a1731290c50c4638418303ba75983d724bcd)



The case of *voll* and *total*

Four types of occurrences of *voll* and *total*

	definite	indefinite
with adjective	<i>voll das süße Paar</i> <i>total den süßen Hund</i>	<i>voll ein ähnliches System</i> <i>total ne kranke Serie</i>
without adjective	<i>voll die Panik</i> <i>total das Sommerkind</i>	<i>voll einen Albtraum</i> <i>total ein Fake</i>



Grammaticalization

- *voll* and *total* show signs of semantic bleaching, becoming scalar intensifiers similar to *very*; they can occur with elements that contradict their source semantics
- in stage 2 of a typical intensifier grammaticalization process (semantically): still have part of their source semantics and potentially high emotive force (cf. Claudi 2002: 364)




Grammaticalizing from ...

NP-internal in (in)definite NP	<i>Es ist eine total kaputte Welt.</i> (DWDS KK20, Brussig 2001[1991]: 147) 'It is a totally broken world'
NP-external adverbial use	<i>Aber jetzt hab ich mich total den Tuningsites und ebay verschrieben ...</i> (deCow a908938cdd589196e1e7ed988e7b18c0e51b) 'But now I am totally dedicated to tuning sites and ebay'



with potential ambiguities in these uses



creates contexts where no adjective is needed in opposition to NP-internal use



Ambiguity

(6) *als ich diese bilder mit matt und der gesehen hab, da muss ich ehlich gestehen: da hat mich total der schlag getroffen!* (deCow ba8f5c870e4a75bea916877670d78d6bab9e)
'when i saw these pictures with matt and her, i have to confess: it totally floored me!'

Two possible readings:

→ 'der Schlag' hit me real hard (adverbial use)

→ it was an especially intense/hard/... 'Schlag' that hit me (NP-external intensifier use)



Shift in scope towards the NP

(7) *ich bin auch total der hübsche bengel übrigens demnächst kommt neues bild, war beim friseur hehehe ;)* (deCow b870a6d11a850b53cba4472cf2ed7ac7207f)

‘I am also INT the pretty boy by the way soon comes new picture, was at the hairdresser hehehe’

(8) *Plötzlich passierte es: Ich bekam plötzlich voll den Lachflasch!* (deCow dac606bfd24fa86f072350a637d75ec876a2)

‘Suddenly it happened: I suddenly got INT the laugh attack’



Data

- we chose CMC because of its conceptual orality and tendency to expressive compensation (Androutsopoulos 2011; Koch & Oesterreicher 1985)
- 5000 random sentences for *voll* and *total* from deCow16B (Austrian, German, Swiss German) (Schäfer & Bildhauer 2013, 2018)
- resulting in 1860 sentences with *total* and 2836 sentences with *voll* as NP-external degree modifiers
- data were annotated regarding the lemma of the verb, the lemma of the noun and its definiteness, the adjective, and whether the construction is in predicative position



voll and ***total***

	definite	indefinite
with adjective	<i>voll das süße Paar (19.6%) total den süßen Hund (17.6%)</i>	<i>voll ein ähnliches System (0.5%) total ne kranke Serie (0.8%)</i>
without adjective	<i>voll die Panik (78.3%) total das Sommerkind (79.9%)</i>	<i>voll einen Albtraum (1.5%) total ein Fake (1.8%)</i>




Predicative use

Intensifier	predicative	not predicative	without verb
<i>voll</i>	36.8%	36.4%	26.8%
<i>total</i>	42.3%	14%	43.8%




Productivity – heads of NPs

- *voll* occurs with 1579 different NP heads (55.68%), 1554 of which are hapaxes
- *total* occurs with 982 different NP heads (52.80%), 961 of which are hapaxes




NP heads of <i>voll</i>	Raw frequency
Panik (panic)	49
Scheiß (shit)	48
Durchblick (overview)	35
Mist (shit)	26
Problem (problem)	25
Stress (stress)	25
Leben (life)	24
Ahnung (clue)	23
Müll (garbage)	21
Fan (fan)	20

NP heads of <i>total</i>	Raw frequency
Hammer (hammer)	80
Panik (panic)	42
Problem (problem)	40
Gegenteil (opposite)	36
Mist (shit)	21
Angst (fear)	19
Gewissen (consciousness)	17
Scheiß (shit)	17
Kopf (head)	16
Schock (shock)	16



Productivity – Adjectives

- *voll* occurs with 218 different adjectives (7.69%), 200 of which are hapaxes
- *total* occurs with 176 different NP heads (9.46%), 163 of which are hapaxes



Adjectives with <i>voll</i>	Raw frequency
geil (awesome)	56
gut (good)	25
schlecht (bad)	24
krass (crass)	22
schön (beautiful)	21
süß (cute/sweet)	21
cool (cool)	20
komisch (funny/weird)	19
scheiß (shit)	19
fett (fat/amazing)	14

Adjectives with <i>total</i>	Raw frequency
schlecht (bad)	28
falsch (wrong)	24
geil (awesome)	18
schön (beautiful)	14
gut (good)	10
süß (cute/sweet)	9
cool (cool)	7
toll (great)	7
komisch (funny/weird)	6
krass (crass)	5

Underdetermination and constructional meaning

Two types of constructions (constructional polysemy):

	definite	indefinite
Cxn with adjective	<i>voll das süße Paar</i> <i>total den süßen Hund</i>	<i>voll ein ähnliches System</i> <i>total ne kranke Serie</i>
Cxn without adjective	<i>voll die Panik</i> <i>total das Sommerkind</i>	<i>voll einen Albtraum</i> <i>total ein Fake</i>

Underdetermination and constructional meaning

Construction **with** adjective:

<i>voll die</i>	<i>cool</i> 'cool'	<i>Idee(n)</i>
	<i>gut</i> 'good'	
	<i>hammer-gut</i> 'hammer-good'	
	<i>pervers</i> 'perverse'	
	<i>supi</i> 'super'	
	<i>toll</i> 'great'	
<i>total die</i>	<i>cool</i> 'cool'	<i>Idee(n)</i>
	<i>geil</i> 'nice'	
	<i>süß</i> 'cute'	

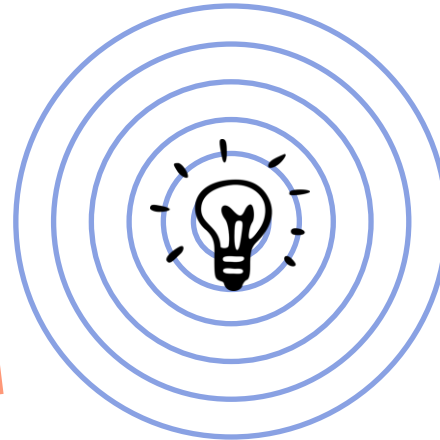
Criterion: Quality

Underdetermination and constructional meaning

NP denotes a category within which a member is situated as a prototypical exemplar

- Category membership is clear
- Adjectives denote criteria for category membership
- Focus on placement of the member within given category

Criterion:
Quality



Category:
IDEAS



Underdetermination and constructional meaning

Construction **without** adjective:

- (9) Aber die vielen Feedbacks haben mir jetzt **voll die Ideen** gegeben.
'But the amount of feedback has now given me DM some ideas'
(deCow14 ID 249a1bb8cd332c46b80c17c9d9288d9a602f)
- (10) Ja, ich habe **total die Angst**, zu versagen.
'Yes, I am DM afraid to fail'
(deCow14 ID 130bf897d2f281c9443212470e60d119f969)

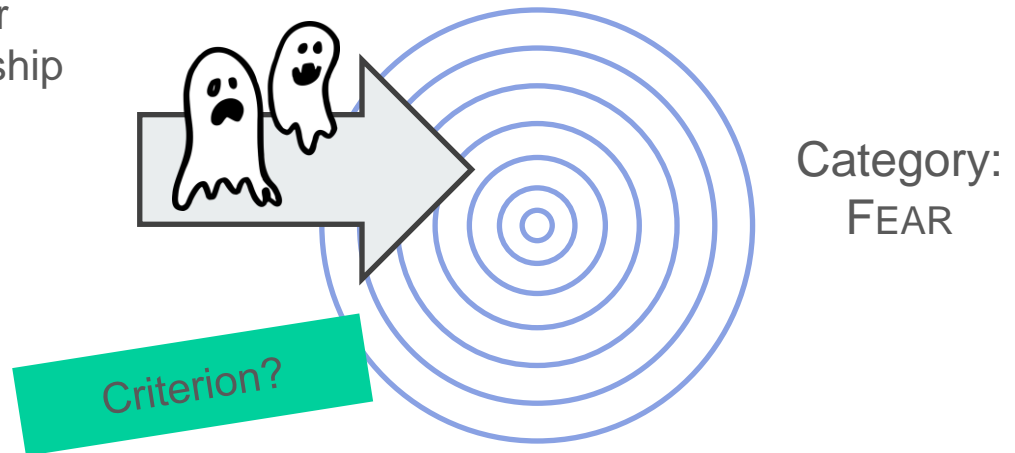


Criterion?

Underdetermination and constructional meaning

NP denotes a category within which a member is situated as a prototypical exemplar

- Category membership is clear
- Criteria for category membership are underdetermined
- Focus just on category membership





Conclusion

- NP-external intensifying is highly productive
- *voll* and *total* are most typical with bare NPs and productive,
- NP-external intensifiers form a grammatical construction with multiple senses
- There is a lot more to do 😊, e.g. semantic classification of NP heads and adjectives, contrastive analysis, ...



Thank you!

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