The solo ‘Alone’ Clusters: Continual Expansion with a Robust Central Member

Categorization of types in a schematic construction is related to productivity and can take different forms. The solo ‘alone’ clusters figure prominently in this study because they demonstrate the way that the increased entrenchment of the central member contributes to the productivity of a semantically coherent category over time. An examination of the evolution of this category supports the notion proposed by Barðdal (2008) that constructions with low type frequency exhibit productivity by extending to new types that are semantically very similar to established types yielding a coherent semantic category. In this view, extension of low type frequency constructions may be based on analogy to a single type. Barðdal (2008) proposes that productivity occurs on a cline in which there is an inverse correlation between type frequency and semantic coherence: the more types in a category, the less dependent productivity is on coherence, and vice versa (See Figure 1.4, Section 1.4). In the category centered on quedar(se) solo we find evidence that this set of types climbs the cline proposed by Barðdal over time. While this set of clusters certainly retains its coherence, over time it attracts many new types, including opposites. Also, the category of adjectives centered on solo shows a trend of emergence that depends on attracting types from the synonymic construction fincar(se) + ADJ in the early years of the QAD. At the same time, this category develops independently of other trends of productivity in the general construction quedar(se) + ADJ in the later years: as the general construction wanes in usage overall, this category becomes more productive.

An examination of the category centered on quedar(se) solo shows that prefabs have longevity. The prefab quedar(se) solo appears above the prefab threshold from the 1500s to the 1800s (see Table 5.1) and above the CIC threshold from the 1200s to the 1800s. One of the other things that this chapter demonstrates is that the proposed solo clusters are highly similar to each other from one century to the next during the entire span of time from which data

1 The CIC measurement (twice the token / type ratio) is applied to all types in the QAD while the prefab measurement is applied only to the type quedar(se) solo using the CDE: verb + adjective sequences that account for at least 1% of all adjectives and 4% of all occurrences of quedar(se) + ADJ.
was collected. *Quedar(se) solo* is always the central member and is consistently surrounded by similar types, often the same ones. The MDS similarity study presented in Chapter 8 supports the following depictions of the *solo* clusters in perceptual space by showing that participants perceived these types as similar to one another. Also, findings from the similarity study support the notion that *quedar(se) solo* is the central member of these clusters.

On a semantic level, the common link among adjective types in these clusters is that there is a change of state in which the subject is left without the company of another person or group. The opposites types appearing in the upcoming clusters appear by virtue of showing a change of state in which people are united in some fashion. The adjective data is presented in visual figures symbolizing categories as perceptual space in order to give the reader an optimally (and optically) tangible sense of how categories evolve diachronically while, at the same time, giving an account of the data. In analyzing emergent trends we observe the way categories emerge through a series of analogies to previously established types.

### 5.1 The *solo* Clusters in the 1200s

![Figure 5.1 1200s: The *solo* clusters.](image)

The 1200s is the first century from which data was collected for this study and yields a category that is low in type frequency that is, nevertheless, semantically coherent. As indicated in Table 4.2, Section 4.3, this century shows the lowest normalized frequency for the construction *quedar(se) + ADJ* 0.42 occurrences per 10k words. Despite the low normalized frequency of the general construction, *quedar(se) solo* appears above the proposed CIC threshold, showing evidence of conventionalization from the onset. The central member of these clusters is argued to be *quedar(se) solo* from the 1200s through the 1800s, and even into the 1900s (Bybee & Eddington 2006). Figure 5.1 shows the adjective types positioned in the semantic map based on their proposed