

On **evaluative intensification** and **positive polarity**

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Goals

- ▶ Provide a principled explanation for the resistance of evaluative intensifiers to appear in entailment-canceling contexts.
- ▶ Pin down the relation between CI-ness and PPI-hood.
 - ▶ CI: Conventional Implicature
 - ▶ PPI: Positive Polarity Item

Facts

- ▶ Bolinger (1972, 120) on degree words under negation:

→ Some intensifiers are only possible in an echo reading, (1)

- (1)
- *The girl isn't *quite* attractive.
 - *I think she's not *pretty* good-looking.
 - *He's not *rather* foolish!

Facts

- ▶ Bosque (1980, 20) includes intensifiers among PPIs, (2-b).

- (2)
- a. *No hemos llegado ya.
neg have.pres.we arrived already
 - b. *La película no me ha gustado *bastante*.
the movie neg me has pleased quite
 - c. *No tiene usted toda la razón
neg has.pres.3.sg you.honorific all the reason
del mundo.
of the world

(Spanish)

(for an extensive list of different types of PPIs (in German) see Liu and Soehn 2009)

Facts

- ▶ González-Rodríguez (2006, 855) explores the behavior of so-called **elatives** in entailment-canceling environments, (3).

- (3)
- a. Pablo (*no) es listo *como el hambre*.
Paul neg is smart like the hunger
'Pablo is (not) extremely smart.'
 - b. Irene (*no) es *bien* espabilada.
Irene neg is well bright
'Irene is (not) WELL bright.'
 - c. Tu jefe (*no) es *más* comprensivo!
your boss neg is more understanding
'Your boss is (not) so understanding!'

(Spanish)

Facts

- ▶ Morzycki (2012, 34) shows that **extreme degree modifiers** (*downright*, *flat-out*, *positively*, *full-on*) resist embedding under NPI-licensing operators, (4).
- (4)
- a. Murderers aren't (??*downright*) dangerous.
 - b. Are murderers (??*downright*) dangerous?
 - c. If murderers are (??*downright*) dangerous, you might want to avoid Harold.

Main claims

- ▶ Intensifiers exhibit a varied behavior in entailment-canceling environments. Some can be in the scope of NPI-licensing operators and yield a **litotes** interpretation. Others cannot be in their scope.
- ▶ The reason why certain intensifiers resist embedding is because of the presupposition of the CI content they convey (building on Liu 2012, 2014, regarding evaluative adverbs).
- ▶ Catalan **intensifying BEN 'well'** positively evaluates a property ascription and delivers this content at the CI tier.

Roadmap of the talk

1. Intensifiers
 - 1.1 Scope interactions between intensifiers and negation
 - 1.2 Previous literature on evaluative intensifiers
2. Catalan intensifying BEN 'well'
 - 2.1 Distribution
 - 2.2 Our CI account
3. Subjective evaluation more generally
4. General conclusions about the relation between PPI-hood and CI-ness

What do we call “intensifiers”?

- ▶ Modifiers (broadly understood) that have a degree-boosting effect or else that strengthen the modified expression in a scalar ordering . . .
- ▶ . . . by making a subjective rather than an objective predication (the modified expression remains vague).

e.g. *very*, but not *completely*

What do we call “evaluative intensifiers” (EIs)?

- ▶ A subset of what we have called “intensifiers”
- ▶ Vague, subjective, emphatic, often hyperbolic intensifiers; e.g. *exceptionally*, *terribly*, *extremely*
- ▶ These yield ill-formedness in entailment-canceling environments.

Intensifiers and negation

Three options

1. *Intensifier > Neg
2. Neg > Intensifier
3. *Neg > (PPI) Intensifier

NB: Metalinguistic / echo reading

- (5) a. Patricia is not VERY tall, she is EXTREMELY tall.
b. I didn't meet a REALLY handsome man, I met a
DROP DEAD handsome man.

→ We will leave aside this option for now.

1: Intensifier > Neg?

- ▶ This option might be available for **individual** quantifiers (6) but not for **degree** quantifiers (7) (Sánchez-López 1999).

- (6) El presidente no respondió **muchas** preguntas. (Spanish)
 the president neg answered many questions
- a. There are many (specific) questions the president didn't answer. MANY > Neg
 - b. The president answered few questions. Neg > MANY
- (7) Roberto no es **muy** generoso. (González-Rodríguez 2010, 143)
 Robert neg is very generous
- a. NOT: There is a high degree of generosity that doesn't hold of Robert. *VERY > Neg
 - b. Robert is rather greedy. Neg > VERY

1: Intensifier > Neg?

⇒ Intensifiers cannot outscope negation: *Intensifier > Neg

2: Neg > Intensifier

- (8)
- a. My food is not *very* good.
 - b. Los empleados de esa empresa no están *muy*
the employees of this firm neg are very
satisfechos con su sueldo. (Spanish)
satisfied with their salary
'The employees of this firm aren't very satisfied with
their salary.' (González-Rodríguez 2006, 857)

2: Neg > Intensifier

- (9) The employees of this firm aren't very satisfied with their salary.

Let's assume the denotation of *very* in McNally (to appear), (10-a).

- (10) a. $\llbracket \text{very} \rrbracket = \lambda G \lambda x [G(x) \geq d_s(\{y: \text{pos}(G)(y)\})]$
 b. $\llbracket \text{very satisfied} \rrbracket = \lambda x [\text{satisfied}(x) \geq d_s(\{y: \text{pos}(\text{satisfied})(y)\})]$

- (11) a. $\llbracket \text{not very satisfied} \rrbracket = \lambda x. \neg [\text{satisfied}(x) \geq d_s(\{y: \text{pos}(\text{satisfied})(y)\})]$
 b. $\equiv \lambda x [\text{satisfied}(x) < d_s(\{y: \text{pos}(\text{satisfied})(y)\})]$

2: Neg > Intensifier

- ▶ Does the negation of *very* yield the desired results?

- (12) a. not very satisfied
 b. $\lambda x[\text{satisfied}(x) < d_s(\{y:\text{pos}(\text{satisfied})(y)\})]$
- (13) a. ??I'm satisfied, but not very satisfied.
 b. ??I'm not very satisfied, but I'm satisfied.
- (14) not very satisfied \equiv rather unsatisfied

→ We have litotes instead.

Litotes

- ▶ Bolinger (1972, 116) observes: “the litotes tends to deny one end of a polarity to imply an encroachment on the other end.”

- (15) He's not *overly* bright.
≡ He's rather underly bright, rather stupid.
- (16) It isn't much *a whole lot* better.
≡ It's rather worse.
- (17) They weren't *too* convinced of it.
≡ They were pretty unsure of it.

This works for *very*, *overly*, *particularly*, *awfully*, *so*, etc.

Litotes

Imagine the following scale:

(18) **overly stupid, somewhat stupid**, somewhat bright, **overly bright**

- (19)
- \langle overly bright, somewhat bright \rangle
 - $\langle \neg$ somewhat bright, \neg overly bright \rangle
 - \neg overly bright \rightsquigarrow ?? \rightsquigarrow somewhat bright

- ▶ 'Not overly bright' does not imply 'somewhat bright'.
- ▶ Rather, it implies 'somewhat stupid' or even further.
- ▶ 'Somewhat bright' is left unused.

NPI intensifiers

- ▶ There are intensifiers that can only occur in NPI environments, e.g. Catalan *gaire* 'very' (20).

- (20)
- a. *Els empleats estan gaire satisfets.
the employees are NPI-very satisfied
 - b. Els empleats no estan gaire satisfets.
the employees neg are NPI-very satisfied
'The employees aren't very satisfied.'
 - c. Estan gaire satisfets, els empleats?
are.they NP-very satisfied the employees
'Are the employees satisfied at all?'

NPI intensifiers

- ▶ This delivers the litotes inference just outlined (21).

(21) *Els empleats no estan gaire satisfets, però
the employees neg are.they NPI-very satisfied but
estan satisfets.
are.they satisfied

(22) no gaire satisfets \equiv rather unsatisfied

(contrast with Spanish *muy*)

3: *Neg > Intensifier

1. Certain intensifiers across languages: *not rather, *not fairly, *not pretty, *not tolerably, *not sort of, *not somewhat (Bolinger 1972, 124); Cat. *no molt 'not very'.
2. Certain emphatic, evaluative, hyperbolic intensifiers (**elatives**): Sp. *no extremadamente 'not extremely'.
3. BUT! Fr. 'pas extremmement' and Engl. 'not extremely' have a litotes interpretation.

3: *Neg > E(valuative) I(intensifier)

- Our focus today: Els, especially (23-c).

- (23) a. Sus alumnos (*no) son *rematadamente* tontos.
 his students neg are extremely stupid
 'His students are (not) extremely stupid.'
- b. Aquel hombre (*no) es cortés *hasta la adulación*.
 that man neg is polite until the flattery
 'That man is (not) extremely polite.'
- c. Sus compañeros de trabajo (*no) son *bien*
 his colleagues from work neg are.they well
 arrogantes.
 arrogant
 'His work colleagues are (not) WELL arrogant.'

(Spanish)

Interim conclusions

- ▶ Intensifiers cannot scope over negation.
- ▶ Whenever we find an intensifier under negation, the composition of Neg + intensifier does not yield the expected outcome, but a litotes interpretation.
- ▶ Those intensifiers that do not yield litotes when negated resist embedding under negation (or the other way around).

Previous literature on (Spanish) EIs (“elatives”)

1. González-Rodríguez (2010): Extreme degree expression
2. Hernanz (1999): PPI, in complementary distribution with negation, syntactic explanation
3. González-Rodríguez (2006, 2010): PPI, semantic explanation

Els as extreme degree expressions?

- ▶ Els are vague, subjective, emphatic, often hyperbolic; e.g. *exceptionally, terribly, extremely*
- ▶ They contrast with non-vague degree expressions like *completely, totally*:
 - ▶ Only the latter select for absolute (e.g. *full, certain*) rather than relative adjectives (e.g. *tall, nice*) (Kennedy and McNally 2005); (24).

- (24)
- a. John is extremely / *completely tall.
 - b. The pool is *extremely / completely empty.

Els as extreme degree expressions?

Nevertheless, González-Rodríguez (2010) argues that Els are extreme degree expressions.

- ▶ Both extreme degree modifiers and Els express quantification to the highest degree.
- ▶ Els “subjectively close the scale” of a relative (open-scale) adjective.
- ▶ Evaluative/emphatic component of Els is a consequence of the fact that they are “oriented to the speaker”

Problem for Els as extreme degree expressions

Els do not necessarily involve extreme degrees / reference to a bounded scale.

- ▶ E.g. (25) can also mean that Ángeles is sweeter than the speaker expects anyone else to be.
- ▶ Other Els do not even intuitively involve extreme degrees, e.g. Spanish *bien*, Catalan *ben* 'well'.

(25) Ángeles es extremadamente dulce, #aunque no tanto como María. (González-Rodríguez 2010, 134)
'Ángeles is extremely sweet, # although not as much as María.

⇒ We rather focus on the **expressive/emphatic** character of Els to capture the impression that there is a **subjective** notion of a degree that exceeds certain expected boundaries.

EIs as PPIs: syntactic explanation

- ▶ Hernanz (1999) on Spanish *bien*:
 - ▶ Has a [+INT] ('intensifier') feature that triggers its (covert) movement to the specifier of Laka's (1990) higher polarity projection ΣP .
 - ▶ Negative words occupy the same position.
- Complementary distribution

BUT Why is it also banned from other entailment-canceling contexts?

EIs as PPIs: semantic explanation

- ▶ González-Rodríguez (2006, 2010): unavailability of a well-formed interpretation on the basis of the possible scope relations, we illustrate her account in (26)

- (26) *Roberto no es extremadamente generoso.
'Roberto is not extremely generous.'
- #'There exists a degree d , such that Robert is generous to this degree, and d is not the maximum degree on the generosity scale.' [$*\text{Neg} > \text{EI}$]
 - #'There is not a degree d , such that d is the maximum degree on the generosity scale, and Robert is not generous to this degree.' [$*\text{Neg} > \text{EI}$]
 - #'There is a degree d , such that d is the maximum degree on the generosity scale, and Robert is not generous to this degree.' [$*\text{EI} > \text{Neg}$]

EIs as PPIs: semantic explanation

- ▶ González-Rodríguez (2006, 2010):
 - ▶ (26-c) [**Neg > EI*] is not possible (as we have already outlined above)
 - ▶ (26-a) would be possible for, e.g., *muy* 'much', but not for EIs (what we called litotes interpretation); (26-b) isn't possible for either.

BUT Why would negation be able to target both the existence of a unique maximum degree, (26-a), and Robert's height, (26-b)? E.g. (27) cannot mean that the existence of a unique maximum degree of fullness is negated.

(27) The pool is not completely full.

Our approach

- ▶ Semantic account of Els (here: Catalan *ben*), but different from González'
- ▶ Els as PPI: descriptively adequate, but it does not help us understand why they are banned from entailment-canceling contexts.
- ▶ Els form a natural class with other evaluative and expressive items. → PPI behavior as a consequence

The phenomenon

Catalan *ben* 'well' can convey amount/degree intensification.

- ▶ E.g. (28): The degree to which the head is high is considerable.

(28) Marxem amb el cap **ben** alt.
we.leave with the head WELL high
'(lit.) We leave with our head WELL high.'
(We leave with dignity)

[http://www.esport3.cat/video/4619973/futbol/
Boadas-Marxem-amb-el-cap-ben-alt](http://www.esport3.cat/video/4619973/futbol/Boadas-Marxem-amb-el-cap-ben-alt)

The challenge we started out with (independent of PPI-hood)

- ▶ Provide a semantics of degree intensification, which maintains its relation to other uses of *well* across languages:
 - ▶ **Manner** use (29)
 - ▶ **'Degree'** use (30) (Bolinger 1972; Kennedy and McNally 2005)

(29) He has written the article **well**. \rightsquigarrow **in a good manner**

(available across languages and eventive verb classes)

(30) They are **well** acquainted. \rightsquigarrow **to a good degree**

(only available under certain conditions)

(more on English and German *well* in Gehrke and Castroviejo 2016)

BEN vs. 'degree' WELL

- ▶ 'Degree' WELL modifies participles (30), but not genuine adjectives (31-a). (cf. Bolinger 1972; Kennedy and McNally 2005)
- ▶ Catalan BEN can modify adjectives (31-b).
(similar: *bien* in some varieties of Spanish, cf. Hernanz 1999; González-Rodríguez 2006; González-Rivera and Gutiérrez-Rexach 2012)

- (31) a. *The train is **well** blue / long / beautiful.
 b. El tren és **ben** blau / llarg / bonic.
 the train is WELL blue long beautiful
 'The train is pretty blue / long / beautiful.'

- WELL is a VP modifier (a predicate of events).
- BEN can be an ad-adjectival modifier.

BEN vs. 'degree' WELL

- ▶ 'Degree' **WELL** is incompatible with open scales (32), and with maximum standards (33) (Kennedy and McNally 2005).

- (32) a. The truck is **well** / partially loaded.
 b. ??Marge was **well** / partially worried when she saw the flying pig.
- (33) a. The hay is **well** loaded. ONLY MANNER
 b. The truck is **well** loaded. DEGREE/MANNER

- ▶ **BEN** does not exhibit such scale structure restrictions:

- (34) a. Open scale: ben a prop 'WELL close', ben amunt 'WELL up', ben sonat 'WELL nuts', ben simpàtic 'WELL kind', ben trist 'WELL sad', ben viu 'WELL alive', ben idiota 'WELL idiotic'
- b. Closed scale, maximum standard: ben tancat 'WELL closed', ben buit 'WELL empty', ben recte 'WELL straight', ben pla 'WELL flat'

BEN vs. 'degree' WELL

- ▶ WELL but not BEN can be modified by degree modification:

- (35)
- They know each other (very) **well**.
 - En Pere és (*molt) **ben** alt.
the Peter is very WELL tall

→ WELL cannot be a degree modifier in and by itself.

→ This is accounted for under an event predicate analysis of WELL, also under its 'degree' reading.

(cf. Castroviejo and Gehrke 2015, Gehrke and Castroviejo 2016)

- ▶ What about BEN?

BEN vs. degree modifiers

Intensifying BEN is different from ordinary ad-adjectival degree modifiers (say, of type $\langle\langle d, et \rangle, \langle e, t \rangle\rangle$), such as:

- ▶ Standard boosters, e.g. *very*: readjust the standard of gradable adjectives
- ▶ Slack regulators, e.g. *completely*: eliminate pragmatic slack with absolute adjectives

(cf. Lasersohn 1999; Kennedy and McNally 2005; Sassoon and Toledo 2011, and literature cited therein on such modifiers)

Standards for absolute/relative adjectives

- ▶ Relative adjectives (36-a): The standard is contextually determined with respect to a comparison class.
- ▶ Absolute adjectives (36-b): The standard is (by economy) the bound of the closed scale; some slack is allowed.

- (36) a. En Pere és alt.
the Peter is tall
(i) for a 10-year-old boy from Barcelona: at least 1.40m
(ii) for an NBA basketball player: at least 2.05m
- b. L'estadi està ple.
the stadium is full
'The stadium is full.'
→ pragmatic slack: some seats can be empty

BEN vs. standard boosters

- ▶ Relative adjectives + *very*: Standard is raised
- ▶ Absolute adjectives + *very*: Are relativized into having a context-dependent threshold + standard boosting

- (37) a. En Pere és **molt** alt.
 the Peter is very tall
 (i) for a 10-year-old boy from Barcelona: at least 1.50m
- b. L'estadi està **molt** ple.
 the stadium is very full

- ▶ Absolute adjectives + **BEN**: No relativizing, no standard boosting; no slack allowed

- (38) L'estadi està **ben** ple.
 the stadium is WELL full

→ Is BEN a **slack regulator**?

BEN vs. slack regulators

- ▶ Absolute adjective + *completely* (39-a): No slack is allowed.
- ▶ Relative adjective + *completely* (39-b): Infelicitous, because it requires a closed scale adjective (Kennedy and McNally 2005).

- (39) a. L'estadi està **completament** ple.
 the stadium is completely full
- b. *En Pere és **completament** alt.
 the Peter is completely tall

- ▶ Relative adjective + BEN (40): felicitous
 - Focus on the most typical instances of the property in question
 - Exclusion of borderline cases

- (40) En Pere és **ben** alt.
 the Peter is WELL tall

Sum: BEN vs. degree modifiers

- ▶ Degree modifiers directly operate on degree arguments and thus manipulate standards.
 - ▶ BEN only indirectly affects the standard, by focusing on the core cases to which the adjective in question can apply.
- This will be captured by our account of BEN as **positively evaluating a property ascription**.

BEN involves subjective evaluation

- ▶ BEN does not felicitously modify an adjective out of the blue (41), unless it is clearly a predicate of personal taste (42).

- (41) A: Com és en Carles?
 how is the Charles
 'What is Charles like?'
 B: {Molt / #ben} intel.ligent.
 very WELL intelligent
 '{Very / #WELL} intelligent.'
- (42) A: Com és el pastís?
 how is the cake
 'How do you like the cake?'
 B: {Molt / ben} bo.
 very WELL good
 'Very / WELL tasty.'

Sidenote: Predicates of personal taste

- ▶ Have a built-in evaluative / subjective meaning component (cf., e.g., Lasersohn 2005; Stephenson 2007)
- ▶ E.g. they can readily be embedded under predicates like *find*: (cf. Kennedy 2015 and literature cited therein)

(43) Trobo el pastís bo.
find.I the cake good
'I find the cake tasty.'

BEN involves subjective evaluation

- ▶ Other predicates become felicitous with BEN when there can be disagreement whether or not x is ADJ:

(44) A: Ahir m'ho vaig passar molt bé amb en Pere. És
yesterday me-it have.1SG passed very well with the Peter is
tan divertit!
so funny

so funny

'I had such a blast yesterday with Peter. He is so funny!'

B: Doncs jo el trobo **ben** avorrit.

actually I him find WELL boring

'Actually, I find him WELL boring.'

(45) La Mar porta un barret **ben** bonic. M'ha sorprès que
the Mar wears a hat WELL pretty me-has surprised that
tingui tan bon gust.

has.SUBJ that good taste

'Mar is wearing a WELL pretty hat. I am surprised that she has such good taste.'

BEN involves subjective evaluation

- Correlation in (in)compatibility with BEN and *trobar* 'find':

- (46) a. **ben** ridícul cf. El trobo ridícul.
 WELL ridiculous him find.1SG ridiculous
- b. ***ben** just cf. *El trobo just.
 WELL fair him find.1SG just
- c. ***ben** solidari cf. *El trobo solidari.
 WELL solidary him find.1SG solidary

The PPI-behavior of BEN

- ▶ BEN cannot occur under negation or in questions:

- (47) a. *En Pere no és **ben** simpàtic.
the Peter not is WELL nice
- b. *En Pere és **ben** simpàtic?
the Peter is WELL nice

→ Hernanz (1999, 2010); González-Rodríguez (2006):
BEN (in Spanish and Catalan) is a PPI.

Our proposal in a nutshell

Our analysis does not treat BEN as a PPI.

- ▶ BEN contributes a meaning at the Conventional Implicature [CI] tier.
 - ▶ The PPI properties follow from its factive evaluative nature (building on Liu 2012, 2014):
- **Infelicity in entailment-canceling contexts** is the result of a **contradiction between** the meaning conveyed at the **at-issue** tier **and** the **presupposition of the CI**.

Manner and 'degree' WELL

- ▶ Under both readings, WELL has the same general lexical semantics as the underlying adjective *good* (approval by some judge) (48-a); cf. (48-b).

$$(48) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{a. } \llbracket \text{good} \rrbracket = \lambda d. \lambda x [\mathbf{good}(x) \geq d] \\ \text{b. } \llbracket \text{well} \rrbracket = \lambda d. \lambda e [\mathbf{good}(e) \geq d] \end{array}$$

(for proposals how the degree reading comes about, cf. McNally and Kennedy 2013; Castroviejo and Gehrke 2015, Gehrke and Castroviejo 2016)

⇒ Idea: Also **BEN** **modifies** an event, just not the lexical event but **a saying event**.

Piñón (2013)

Performative uses of speech-act adverbs like *frankly*:

- ▶ Predicate of expression manners (**expression**(e))
- ▶ Self-describes the utterance of the context C as a saying event

- (49) a. Frankly, Facebook is overrated.
- b. **utterance**(C) = $e \wedge$ **speaker**(C) = $x \wedge$ **hearer**(C) = $y \wedge$ **say**($e, \exists s(\text{overrated}(s, \text{facebook})) \wedge$ **now** $\subseteq \tau(e) \wedge$ **agent**(e, x) \wedge **recipient**(e, y) \wedge **frank**(**expression**(e))

BEN vs. 'frankly' etc.

Unlike *frankly*, BEN:

- ▶ is not a sentential adverb, but an ad-adjectival modifier; and
- ▶ it does not evaluate a proposition, but a property ascription.

We also do not want to claim that BEN characterizes an expression manner, but just the saying event.

→ We dispose of the expression manner.

BEN: Self-evaluation of a property ascription

Our proposal:

$$(50) \quad \llbracket \text{BEN} \rrbracket = \lambda P. \lambda z [\text{utterance}(C) = e \wedge \text{speaker}(C) = x \wedge \text{hearer}(C) = y \wedge \text{say}(e, P(z)) \wedge \text{now} \subseteq \tau(e) \wedge \text{agent}(e, x) \wedge \text{recipient}(e, y) \wedge \underline{\text{good}}(e)]$$

- (51) a. En Joan és **ben** alt.
 the John is WELL tall
 'John is WELL tall.'
- b. $\text{utterance}(C) = e \wedge \text{speaker}(C) = x \wedge \text{hearer}(C) = y \wedge \text{say}(e, \llbracket \text{POS tall} \rrbracket(\mathbf{j})) \wedge \text{now} \subseteq \tau(e) \wedge \text{agent}(e, x) \wedge \text{recipient}(e, y) \wedge \underline{\text{good}}(e)$

BEN: Self-evaluation of a property ascription

- ▶ Positively self-evaluating a property ascription yields an **emphatic** assertion.
 - ▶ Emphatic statements are only felicitous if emphasis is justified
 - unless we can accommodate that it is a matter of taste whether or not x should be considered ADJ.
- BEN is felicitous in contexts where contrastive statements are being discussed and/or with predicates of personal taste, which are clearly judge-dependent.

BEN: Self-evaluation of a property ascription

- ▶ BEN operates on the speech act event.
 - ▶ A performative verb is semantically represented in every utterance (like Piñón 2013).
 - ▶ Its output meaning is not part of the at-issue content of the assertion, but conventionally implicated (in the sense of Potts 2005, and further elaborations).
- This will ultimately explain its resistance to appear in entailment-canceling contexts, as follows.

Extreme degree modifiers

- ▶ BEN's resistance to certain embeddings parallels the resistance of expressive items (Potts 2007), e.g.:
 - ▶ Evaluative adverbs (Liu 2012, 2014)
 - ▶ Extreme degree modifiers (Morzycki 2012); cf. (52), (53)

(52) a. ??Murderers aren't downright dangerous.
b. ??Are murderers downright dangerous?

(53) a. ??He isn't fucking calm.
b. ??Is he fucking calm?

(52) and (53), and similarly our examples (47-a) and (47-b), can only be rescued under an echo-reading.

Extreme degree modifiers

- ▶ Expressive items convey meaning through a CI.
- ▶ Ill-formedness of the previous sentences: Mismatch between the two meanings conveyed (at-issue and CI):

(54) ??He isn't fucking calm. (= (53-a))

- At-issue tier: $\neg(\mathbf{calm}(\mathbf{he}_i))$
- CI tier: Speaker expresses a negative attitude at him being calm.

Evaluative adverbs (Liu 2014)

► Two types of evaluative adverbs:

- **Factive**, e.g. German *leider* 'unfortunately': banned from all entailment-canceling contexts, e.g. those in (55) (also Chinese *kexi* 'regrettably')
- **Non-factive**, e.g. German *unglücklicherweise* 'unfortunately': only banned from negation, cf. (55-a) vs. (55-b,c) (also Chinese *buxing* 'unfortunately')

- (55)
- a. Otto ist nicht {*leider/*unglücklicherweise} krank.
 Otto is not unfortunately sick
 - b. Otto ist vielleicht {*leider/unglücklicherweise} krank.
 Otto is maybe unfortunately sick
 - c. Ist Otto {*leider/unglücklicherweise} krank?
 is Otto unfortunately sick
- (56)
- a. $\llbracket \text{leider} \rrbracket \rightsquigarrow \lambda p. \text{unfortunate}(p)$
 - b. $\llbracket \text{unglücklicherweise} \rrbracket \rightsquigarrow \lambda p. p \rightarrow \text{unfortunate}(p)$

Evaluative adverbs (Liu 2014)

- ▶ (Only) factive evaluative adverbs presuppose the at-issue content in affirmative sentences (57).

- (57)
- Otto ist leider krank.
Otto is unfortunately sick
'Otto is unfortunately sick.'
 - At-issue tier: Otto is sick.
 - CI tier: It is unfortunate that Otto is sick.
 - CI's presupposition: Otto is sick.

→ This yields presupposition failure in entailment-canceling contexts like (51).

[Liu on the infelicity of non-factive evaluatives with negation: semantic clash, following Bonami and Godard (2008), who also propose a conditional semantics for evaluatives, but do not make a division among different types of evaluatives]

BEN as a factive evaluative

- The distribution of BEN is parallel to factive evaluatives:

- (58) a. *En Pere no és **ben** simpàtic. (= (47-a))
 the Peter not is WELL nice
- b. *És possible que en Pere sigui **ben**
 is possible that the Peter is.pres.subj WELL
 simpàtic.
 nice
- c. *Si en Pere és **ben** simpàtic, estaré
 if the Peter is WELL nice be.fut.1sg
 contenta.
 glad

BEN as a factive evaluative

- (59) *En Pere no és **ben** simpàtic. (= (47-a))
the Peter not is WELL nice
- a. At-issue tier: $\neg(\mathbf{nice}(\mathbf{p}))$
 - b. CI tier: **nice** is well ascribed to Peter.
 - c. CI's presupposition: **nice**(**p**)

→ BEN is of type $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, t^c \rangle\rangle$, where c indicates that the output is delivered at the CI tier (following Potts 2005).

Zooming out again: Subjective evaluation

Our analysis: *ben* is a non-restrictive modifier that expresses an emphatic subjective evaluation of a property ascription

- What does the literature say about (subjective) evaluative predicates (both adjectives and adverbs) more generally (beyond Liu 2012, 2014, or Bonami and Godard 2007, 2008)?

Evaluative vs. dimensional As

- ▶ Bierwisch (1989): Unlike **dimensional As** (e.g. *tall, short*), **evaluative As** (e.g. *lazy, good*) do not have a syntactically specified comparison class.
 - ▶ They merely specify an ungraded condition.
 - ▶ However, their truth can be parametrized with respect to context (e.g. *good as a doctor*).

[NB: The lack of a specified comparison class could also explain their **non-restrictive bias**, on which see Martin (2014), given that restrictive modification generally relies on alternatives]

- ▶ Umbach (2015):
 - ▶ In their positive form, dimensional predicates have both **descriptive** and **interpretational** uses, but in their comparative form they can only be used descriptively.
 - ▶ Evaluative predicates are commonly used interpretationally.

More evaluative predicates in the literature

- ▶ **Martin (2014)**: Evaluatives are often strange in true questions due to their '**mirative**' flavor: it is pragmatically odd to question whether something holds to some degree while at the same time expressing that the expectations with respect to that degree have been exceeded.
- ▶ **Ernst (2009)**: PPI account of evaluative (and other speaker-oriented) ADVs [see also Nilsen (2003, 2004)]
 - ▶ **Strong PPIs** (e.g. *unfortunately, amazingly*): Blocked in all non-veridical contexts (in the sense of Giannakidou 1999 et seq.)
 - ▶ **Weak PPIs** (e.g. *mysteriously, famously*): only blocked in antiveridical contexts
- ▶ **Umbach (2015)**:
 - ▶ **General evaluatives** (e.g. *beautiful*): express judgments that are intended to enter the common ground (CG); truly debatable
 - ▶ **Subjective evaluatives** (e.g. *wonderful*): Public commitments of the speaker that are stored in the individual discourse commitments (cf. Farkas and Bruce 2010); not intended to enter the CG

Summary

- ▶ Catalan ad-adjectival BEN 'well' yields intensification by positively self-evaluating a property ascription.
- ▶ The predicate **good** applies to the saying event available to any utterance.
- ▶ The output of this modification is a manipulation of the performative rather than descriptive content of the utterance (a CI rather than at-issue meaning).
- ▶ The PPI behavior of BEN follows from its being a factive evaluative: it presupposes the at-issue content, so that it is infelicitous in entailment-canceling contexts.

Back to the big questions

- ▶ Why do EIs resist to embed?
- They convey expressive (emphatic, hyperbolic) meaning that presupposes its at-issue content, so they are unavailable in entailment-canceling contexts.

Back to the big questions

- ▶ What is the link between CI-ness and PPI-hood?
- Following Liu (2012, 2014), whenever expressive CI content presupposes the at-issue meaning, NPI contexts will yield presupposition failure (of the expressive presupposition).

Prospects

- ▶ Additional inferences may arise from the predication of **good** such as satisfaction or else irony depending on whether the adjective is positive or pejorative.
- ▶ The adjective GOOD/BON can have a similar intensifying meaning:

(60) a. a **good** while, a **good** thirty minutes
b. un **bon** misteri, un **bon** embolic
a good mystery a good mess
- ▶ Can the account be extended to elements that are used in other languages (e.g. German *ganz schön*, *richtig*, *schon*, English *pretty*)?

On evaluative intensification and positive polarity

Thanks !

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