

'Good' as an evaluative intensifier

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1. Introduction

GOALS

- 1 Discuss the intensifying interpretation of *good* (BON_{int}), mainly in Catalan.
- 2 Propose an analysis that ...
 - ⊙ ... relates goodness to intensification.
 - ⊙ ... predicts when BON_{int} will arise.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ⊕ What is the **distribution** of BON_{int} ?
 - ⊙ Diagnostics to tease apart plain evaluative BON and BON_{int}
 - ⊙ Characteristics of Ns modified by BON_{int}
- ⊕ What is the relationship between **intensification** and PPI behavior?
 - ⊙ How does goodness bring about intensification?
 - ⊙ Is intensification an at-issue entailment?

3. Main claims

- 1 We have a single lexical entry for **subjective** adjective *bon* 'good'.
- 2 BON_{int} is a reading that arises whenever the modified N has (or can be accommodated) an inherently **ordered extension**.
- 3 The PPI behavior is really masking an incompatibility between negation of *bon* N when N is inherently ordered along 1 dimension and the subjective nature of *bon*.

4. Distribution of BON_{int}

- ⊙ BON_{int} does not arise under negation, → "PPI behavior"
 - (1) a. (#No) he menjat un bon tros de pa.
'I have (#not) eaten a good piece of bread.'
 - b. (#No) he tingut un bon ensurt.
'I have (#not) had a good shock.'
- ⊙ BON_{int} is not the antonym of *mal* 'bad'.
 - (2) a. una bona dosi ≈ a big dose
a good dose
 - b. #una mala dosi
a bad dose
 - (3) a. un bon ensurt ≈ a big shock
a good problem
 - b. #un mal ensurt
a bad shock
- ⊙ Not every N gives rise to BON_{int} .
 - (4) a. una bona alçada a good height
'≈ a big/large height'
 - b. una bona salut a good health
'≈ a big/large health'

5. Typology of *bon* (depending on N)

3 OPTIONS FOR *bon*

- 1 $bon + N \rightsquigarrow$ plain evaluative *good*.
 - (5) un bon actor, un bon cotxe
a good actor a good car
- 2 $bon + N \rightsquigarrow$ intensifying *good* (BON_{int}).
 - (6) una bona dosi, un bon maldecap
a good dose a good worry
- 3 $bon + N \rightsquigarrow$ ambiguity.
 - (7) un bon esmorzar
a good breakfast

2. Our key examples

- (8) una bona dosi ≈ a big dose
a good dose
- (9) un bon ensurt ≈ a big shock
a good shock
- (10) un bon esmorzar ≈ a big breakfast
a good breakfast

UNAMBIGUOUS BON_{int}

- 1 Measure Ns: functional Ns heading partitive structures: $bon_{int} + N + of N$.
 - (11) un bon nombre, una bona quantitat, un bon grapat
a good number a good quantity a good handful
- 2 Negative Ns
 - (12) un bon maldecap, un bon ensurt, un bon cop
a good worry a good shock a good blow
- 3 Evaluative gradable Ns
 - (13) un bon idiota
a good idiot

AMBIGUOUS BON_{int}

- 4 Ns for which it can be accommodated that a bigger size better accomplishes some function:
 - (14) un bon esmorzar, un bon pèril, un bon massatge
a good breakfast a good ham a good massage

References

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6. Ingredients of the analysis

- ⊙ *Good* only has a **commend**ing function rather than an actual denotation (Hare, 1952), but criteria relate to factual properties, so *good* has a **highly contextual** quasi-denotational meaning (Umbach, 2015).
- ⊙ Some prenominal adjectives in Catalan (see Demonte, 1999, for Spanish) are interpreted **subjectively** (while postnominal adjectives are interpreted intersectively).
 - (15) a. un bon amic ≈ a great friend
a good friend
 - b. un amic bo ≈ a kind-hearted friend
- ⊙ **Expressive** items, extreme degree modifiers and evaluative adverbs resist embedding under NPI licensors. This has been explained as a clash between meanings conveyed at different dimensions.
 - (16) a. Murderers aren't (??*downright*) dangerous. (Morzycki, 2012)
 - b. Otto ist nicht **leider* krank.
Otto is not unfortunately sick (Liu, 2014)
- ⊙ **Telic polymorphic type shit**.

7. Our approach in a nutshell

- *Bon* is a subjective adjective: 'bon N' ≈ 'good AS AN N'.
- (17) ${}_{BON_{int}} = \lambda P_{u,e,t} \lambda x_e \mathbf{good-as}Px$ (adapted from Morzycki's 2016 denotation for *skillful*)
- Ns whose extension is ordered along 1 dimension only offer 1 criterion for evaluation. Goodness of N amounts to a good position on the scale.
- **Relation to function**.

8. A monotonicity inference

BLAH?

- ⊙ Under the assumption that all elements in the extension of N are ordered ...
 - (18) $\forall x, y [x \in N \wedge y \in N \rightarrow x < y \vee y < x]$
- ⊙ Intensification is automatically triggered as a result of the following monotonicity inference:
 - (19) $\forall P \forall x, y \in P [(\mathbf{good-as}(P))(x) \wedge y > x \rightarrow (\mathbf{good-as}(P))(y)]$
- ⊙ This is reminiscent of the downward monotonicity of evaluative adverbs as proposed by Nouwen (2005).
 - (20) a. John is surprisingly tall
 - b. $\lambda x. \exists d [\mathbf{SURPRISING}(\mathbf{TALL}(x, d)) \ \& \ \mathbf{TALL}(x, d)]$

- ⊙
- ⊙

PPI behavior

How do we tie functions and evaluation?

- ⊙
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