# Scalarity and additivity in natural language: (IV) English *even*

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#### Recapitulation

- Day 2 and Day 3: Comparatives and -er/more
  - How an additivity-based perspective improve our understanding of scalarity-related phenomena?
  - What is additivity?
- Yesterday
  - Formal analysis of gradable adjectives, including
    - \* antonyms
    - ★ -er/more
    - \* less
    - \* various uses of gradable adjectives
    - ★ than-clause internal quantifiers
    - \* numerical differentials
  - ► Cross-linguistic phenomena: languages without morphemes like -er/more
  - etc.

## Today

- Day 1: Basics of scales and degrees; how they are relevant to natural language
  - What are scales? What are their formal properties? What operators do they support?
- Day 2 and Day 3: Comparatives and -er/more
  - How an additivity-based perspective improve our understanding of scalarity-related phenomena?
  - What is additivity?
- Day 4 and Day 5: Even and its cross-linguistic siblings
  - How a scalarity-based perspective improve our understanding of additivity-related phenomena?

#### Outline

Canonical view on English even and challenges

② A context-relevant scale in interpreting even

3 Degree QUD and maximizing informativeness

#### **Basic observations**

- (1) a. Even  $[Mary]_F$  came.
  - b. It's not the case that even  $[Mary]_F$  came.
- (2) a. Presupposition of entity-based additivity:
  - (1)  $\sim$  Someone other than Mary came.
  - b. Presupposition of likelihood-based scalarity:
    - (1)  $\sim$  Compared to others, Mary was unlikely to come.
  - The alternative set of Mary is considered ordered along a scale of likelihood.
    - i.e., how likely it is for x, a member in the alternative set of Mary, to make 'come(x)' true

## A challenge with regard to the presupposition of additivity

- Szabolcsi (2017): Imagine Pooh and friends coming upon a bush of thistles. Eeyore (known to favor thistles) takes a bite but spits it out.
- (3) Those thistles must be really prickly! Even Eeyore spit them out!
  - The use of *even* is felicitous in the given scenario, **but the presuppositional requirement of additivity is not met**, because Eeyore was the only one who took a bite of thistles and spit them out.

## Challenges with regard to the presupposition of likelihood

- A low likelihood is not a necessary condition for felicitous uses of even.
- (4) John is a political non-conformist. He even read [Manufacturing Consent] $_F$  although it has been banned by the censorship committee. (Rullmann 1997)
- (5) Seller to client: Both tools are strong. The one on the right is made of strong aluminum, and the one of the left is even made of  $[steel]_F$ .

  (Greenberg 2016)
  - A low likelihood is not a sufficient condition for felicitous uses of even.
- (6) The red box has fruits. The blue one (#even) has  $[apples]_F$  in it. (Greenberg 2016)

### A new challenge with regard to QUD in using even

- (7) Who spit out thistles? a.
  - Only [Eeyore] $_F$  spit thistles out. b. A felicitous answer → Eeyore spit thistles out, and no one other than Eeyore did so.
- (8) Who spit out thistles?
  - [Eeyore] $_F$  also spit thistles out. b. A felicitous answer → Eeyore spit thistles out, and someone else did so.
- (9)Who spit out thistles?
  - b. ??Even [Eeyore] $_F$  spit thistles out. Not a felicitous answer!
- Who was (the most) unlikely to spit out thistles? (10) b. ?Even [Eeyore] $_F$  spit thistles out. Not a felicitous answer!
  - These data on question/answer congruence show that *even* is different from *only* or *also* with regard to the pattern of focus/QUD congruence.

## A new challenge with regard to QUD in using even

- How do we use *even* felicitously then?
- Scenario: Imagine Pooh and friends coming upon a bush of thistles. Eeyore (known to favor thistles) takes a bite but spits it out.
- (11) a. How are those thistles? A degree question
  - b.  $\checkmark$  Even Eeyore $_F$  spit them out! A felicitous answer
- (12) a. Are those thistles prickly?

(about whether a positive threshold of being prickly is reached)

- b.  $\checkmark$  Even Eeyore<sub>F</sub> spit them out! A felicitous answer
- Even though *Eeyore* bears focus, a good QUD for using *even* felicitously is not about *Eeyore*, but about degrees.

#### A new challenge with regard to QUD in using even

• Another example: only boys as tall as 5 feet 8 inches are eligible to join the tennis team.

- (13) a. How tall is Bill?
  - b. ??Bill is even  $6_F$  feet tall.

Not a felicitous answer!

- (14) a. How tall is Bill unlikely to be?
  - b. ??Bill is even  $6_F$  feet tall.

Not a felicitous answer!

- (15) a. How is Bill's eligibility to join the tennis team?
  - b.  $\checkmark$  Bill is even  $6_F$  feet tall.

A felicitous answer

- (16) a. Is Bill tall enough to join the tennis team?
  - ✓ Bill is even  $6_F$  feet tall.

A felicitous answer

• A good QUD for using *even* felicitously is not about *6 feet* (i.e., how tall Bill is), but about an underlying concern (e.g., the degree of eligibility).

(Zhang 2022)

#### Intuition behind even

#### (QUDs: how's the party? how urgent was the meeting? ...)

- (17) Even  $Mary_F$  came.
  - a.  $\sim$  The party was really successful, to the extent that Mary came.
  - b.  $\sim$  The meeting was really urgent, to the extent that Mary came.
- (18) It's not the case that even  $Mary_F$  came.
  - a.  $\sim$  The party wasn't so successful that Mary came.
  - b.  $\sim$  The meeting wasn't so urgent that Mary came.
  - The prejacent of *even* indicates a benchmark for the degree of success, urgency, etc.

#### Interim summary

- The use of even addresses a degree QUD.
- (19) Even  $[Eeyore]_F$  spit them out!

  \*\* Those thistles are so prickly that  $[Eeyore]_F$  spit them out.

  \*\*wrt a degree QUD\*\* the prejacent of even
- (20) (It's not the case that) even  $[Mary]_F$  came. (Prejacent: *Mary came*.)

The exhibition was (not) so successful People were (not) so enthusiastic The matter was (not) so urgent

to the degree that  $[Mary]_F$  came.

#### Outline

Canonical view on English even and challenges

A context-relevant scale in interpreting even

Objective to the property of the property o

## The use of *even* is based on scalarity

- (21) a. Even  $[Eeyore]_F$  spit thistles out.
  - b. Even  $[Mary]_F$  came.
  - c. Bill is even  $[6 \text{ feet}]_F$  tall.
  - The use of *even* express an intensified degree of eligibility, success, enthusiasm, urgency, etc.
  - Thus, the semantics of *even* involves scalarity,
     i.e., scale-based additivity, not entity-based additivity
    - cf. entity-based focus particles like *also* (maybe *only* as well)
  - The use of *even* makes its prejacent contribute information to resolve a
    contextually salient degree QUD, leading to an increase from a usual
    contextual threshold to a higher value, and thus resolving the degree
    QUD with an increasingly positive answer.

## The meaning of even

- (22) even(p)
  - a. asserts p.
  - b. presupposes
    - (i) p provides information to resolve a degree QUD
    - (ii) p is maximally informative, as informative as any of its alternatives in resolving this degree QUD (like a superlative meaning;
       see discussions on additive particles that encode / suggest an end point, e.g., works by Osamu Sawada, Guillaume Thomas, Carla Umbach)
  - What an analysis needs to include
    - ightharpoonup Associating p with the resolution of a degree QUD
    - How to represent maximal informativeness

## Associating prejacent with the resolution of a degree QUD

- A necessity modal (see Kratzer 1981, 1991) is assumed to relate the prejacent of 'even(p)' and the degree information for resolving a degree QUD.
- (23) Associating the prejacent p with the resolution of a degree QUD how  $G_{aud}$  is  $x_{aud}$ :

$$\forall w' \in Acc(w)[p(w') \rightarrow G_{qud}(x_{qud})(w') \geq d_{threshold}]$$

e.g., the prickliness degree of this tles in  $\boldsymbol{w'}$ 

(to be revisited and changed into interval semantics that addresses informativeness) i.e., Every p-world is a world where the measurement of  $x_{\rm qud}$  along the scale  $G_{\rm qud}$  reaches the threshold degree  $d_{\rm threshold}$ .

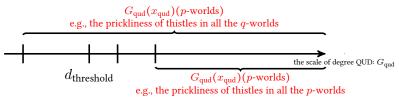
(Zhang 2022); see also the analysis of *enough* and *so ...that* in Meier (2003), Hacquard (2005, 2006), Nadathur (2019)

## Representing informativeness

- In a domain of scalar values (i.e., degrees or intervals), there is not necessarily entailment between a lower and a higher value along a scale.
- (24) a. Mary has exactly 3 kids ≠ Mary has exactly 2 kids
  - b. Mary has exactly 2 kids ⊭ Mary has exactly 3 kids
  - However, if an underlying QUD addresses the degree of family burden, then having exactly 3 kids is at a higher level than having exactly 2 kids. The former burden level should entail (be more informative than) the latter burden level.
    - (i.e., informativeness increases along with the increase of kid numbers.)
- (25) degree QUD: how heavy is the family burden?  $I_p >_{\rm info} I_q$ 
  - a. p =Mary has exactly 3 kids.  $I_p$  = the burden level of '|kids| = 3'
  - b. q = Mary has exactly 2 kids.  $I_q = the burden level of '|kids| = 2'$

### The presupposition of even

#### (26) The degree-QUD-based presupposition of *even*



- ullet In all the p-worlds (e.g., worlds where Eeyore spit thistles out), the resolution to the QUD (e.g., how prickly are thistles) exceeds the threshold for the positive use,  $d_{\mathrm{threshold}}$
- Among all the alternatives to the prejacent p, p solves the QUD in the most informative way.

## The presupposition of even

(27) The presupposition of  $\llbracket \text{even} \rrbracket^w$  in even Eeyore<sub>F</sub> spit thistles out: (prejacent p = Eeyore spit thistles out)  $\forall w' \in \text{Acc}(w) \cap \lambda w$ . Eeyore spit thistles out in w

$$[\operatorname{Max}_{\operatorname{info}}[\lambda I.G_{\operatorname{qud}}(x_{\operatorname{qud}})(w') \subseteq I] \subset [d_{\operatorname{threshold}}, +\infty)] \wedge$$

e.g., the most informative answer to the question how prickly the thistles are in w'

$$\forall q \in C[\operatorname{Max}_{\operatorname{info}}[\lambda I.[\forall w' \in \operatorname{Acc}(w) \cap p[G_{\operatorname{qud}}(x_{\operatorname{qud}})(w') \subseteq I]]] \subseteq$$

e.g., $I_p$ =the most informative interval that answers the question how prickly the thistles are in the p-worlds

$$\operatorname{Max}_{\operatorname{info}}[\lambda I.[\forall w'' \in \operatorname{Acc}(w) \cap q[G_{\operatorname{qud}}(x_{\operatorname{qud}})(w'') \subseteq I]]]]$$

e.g.,  $I_q$ =the most informative interval that answers the question how prickly the thistles are in the q-worlds

### Consequence 1: Entity-based additivity is not necessary

- Szabolcsi (2017): Imagine Pooh and friends coming upon a bush of thistles. Eeyore (known to favor thistles) takes a bite but spits it out.
- (3) Those thistles must be really prickly! Even Eeyore spit them out!
  - Compared to alternatives, 'Eeyore' is maximally informative in addressing how prickly those thistles are.
  - Here it is not true that others spit thistles out.

#### Concequence 2: Likelihood inference is an implicature

- It's not unlikely for John, a non-conformist, to read Manufacturing Consent.
- Likelihood might be due to a normal distribution assumption wrt a scale of being non-conformist: people that are highly non-conformist are rare.
- (4) John is a political non-conformist. He even read [Manufacturing Consent] $_F$  although it has been banned by the censorship committee. (Rullmann 1997)
  - a. In all the worlds where he read *Manufacturing Consent*, John is above the threshold of being a non-conformist.
  - b. Compared to alternative books, *Manufacturing Consent* is maximally informative in indicating how non-conformist John is.
    - → e.g., The sum 'Manufacturing Consent and The Decameron' is not more informative than Manufacturing Consent alone in indicating how non-conformist John is.

## Concequence 2: Likelihood inference is an implicature

(5) Seller to client: Both tools are strong. The one on the right is made of strong aluminum, and the one of the left is even made of  $[steel]_F$ .

(Greenberg 2016)

- a. In all the worlds where the tool of the left is made of steel, our tools are above the threshold of being strong.
- b. Compared to other materials, steel is maximally informative in indicating how strong our tools are.

## Concequence 2: Likelihood inference is an implicature

- (28) Ed has two children and Fred even has [three] $_F$ . (Rullmann 1997)
  - a. In all the worlds where Fred has 3 children, his burden / enthusiasm for raising kid is above the threshold.
  - b. Compared to other numbers, 3 is maximally informative in indicating how heavy the burden is / how enthusiastic they (including Ed and Fred) are for raising kids.
    - $\sim$  'Fred has 4 children' is not considered more informative in resolving the degree QUD.

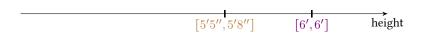
#### Outline

1 Canonical view on English even and challenges

A context-relevant scale in interpreting even

Object of the property of t

#### Two kinds of scales



- In a domain of scalar values (i.e., degrees or intervals), there is not necessarily entailment between a lower and a higher value along a scale.
- (29) a. Lucy is exactly 6 feet tall  $\not\models$  Lucy is between 5'5" and 5'8" tall
  - b. Lucy is between 5'5'' and 5'8'' tall  $\not\models$  Lucy is exactly 6 feet tall
  - However, a higher value reaches higher thresholds (i.e., is more informative) than a lower value in addressing a relevant degree QUD.
  - Two kinds of scales involved here:
    - ► One that addresses the height measurements no evaluativity
    - The other one that addresses degree-QUD-based informativeness measurements: e.g., to what extent Lucy is (positively) tall, short, eligible for the tennis team?
      with evaluativity

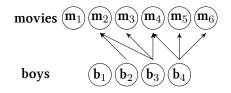
#### Two kinds of scales

- Another example: only boys as tall as 5 feet 8 inches are eligible to join the tennis team.
- (13) a. How tall is Bill? (asking about the height measurement, not a positive use) b. ??Bill is even  $6_F$  feet tall. Not a felicitous answer!
- (15) a. How is Bill's eligibility to join the tennis team?
  - b.  $\checkmark$  Bill is even  $6_F$  feet tall. A felicitous answer
    - (i) Bill's being 6 feet tall makes his eligibility above the threshold.
    - (ii) Compared to alternatives, the prejacent is maximally informative in addressing the eligibility.

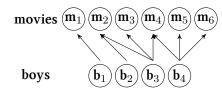
(e.g., being 7 feet tall would not make him more eligible.)

- Measurement sentence: context-independent
- Positive use: context-dependent
- Are there other phenomena in natural language that require the notion of a contextually relevant degree QUD?

## Cumulative-reading sentence



The genuine cumulative reading of is **true** in this context.



The genuine **cumulative** reading is false in this context.

- (30)Exactly three  $^{u}$  boys saw exactly five  $^{\nu}$  movies.
  - Cumulative reading:

(31) 
$$\underbrace{\sigma x \sigma y \big[ \text{BOY} \big( x \big) \land \text{MOVIE} \big( y \big) \land \text{SEE} \big( x, y \big) \big]}_{\text{the mereologically maximal } x \text{ and } y \text{ satisfying these restrictions}} \land \underbrace{|y| = 5 \land |x| = 3}_{\text{cardinality tests}}$$

#### About modified numerals

- Modified numerals contribute maximality (see e.g., Szabolcsi 1997, Krifka 1999, de Swart 1999, Umbach 2005).
- (32) a. Mary fed two dogs. They are cute. Perhaps she fed more.
  - b. Mary fed at least two dogs. They are nice. #Perhaps she fed more.
  - at least two dogs denotes and counts the totality of dogs fed by Mary.
- (30) Exactly three u boys saw exactly five  $\nu$  movies.
  - Brasoveanu (2013): the semantic contribution of modified numerals:
    - The introduction of discourse referents (drefs)
    - After adding restrictions like BOY(x), MOVIE(y), and SEE(x,y) on drefs, the application of maximality operators and cardinality tests
      - ★ Maximality is mereology-based

## Another cumulative-reading sentence

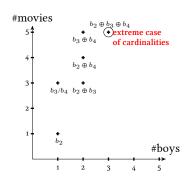
- (33) In Guatemala, at most 3% of the population own at least 70% of the land.
  - Krifka (1999): the simultaneous mereology-based maximization strategy 'would lead as to select the alternative In Guatemala, 100 percent of the population own 100 percent of the land, which clearly is not the most informative one among the alternatives as a matter of fact, it is pretty uninformative.'

## Another cumulative-reading sentence

- (33) In Guatemala, at most 3% of the population own at least 70% of the land.
  - Krifka (1999):

'What is peculiar with sentences like (33) is that they want to give information about the bias of a statistical distribution. One conventionalized way of expressing particularly biased distributions is to select a small set among one dimension that is related to a large set of the other dimension.'

## Degree-QUD-based maximal informativeness: The case of the movie-seeing scenario

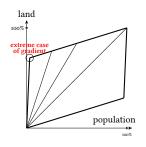


(30) Exactly three boys saw exactly five movies.

QUD: How much is the overall film consumption among boys?  $\sim$  The maximally informative true answer corresponds to the cardinalities of the mereologically maximal drefs.

(Zhang 2023)

## Degree-QUD-based maximal informativeness: The case of the land-owning scenario



(33)In Guatemala, at most 3% of the population own at least 70% of the land.

QUD: How skewed is wealth distribution in Guatemala?

→ The maximally informative true answer corresponds to the case with the maximal ratio between the amount of land and the population of its owner.

# The interpretation of cumulative-reading depends on a degree QUD

- The interpretation of cumulative-reading sentences involves
  - measurements represented by numbers along multiple dimensions
  - how numbers contribute to address an underlying degree QUD
- (30) Exactly three boys saw exactly five movies.
  - QUD: How much is the overall film consumption among boys?  $\sim$  Maximal informativeness is achieved with the mereologically maximal boy-sum and movie-sum.
- (33) In Guatemala, at most 3% of the population own at least 70% of the land.

#### Discussion on informativeness

- Language phenomena relevant to a degree QUD:
  - ▶ The use of even
  - Cumulative-reading sentences that involve multi-dimensional measurements
- Compared to a direct, entailment-based informativeness (see Schlenker 2012, Fintel et al. 2014), a degree-QUD-based informativeness is looser
  - Oftentimes, direct entailment doesn't hold.
- (34) a. Lucy is exactly 6 feet tall  $\not\models$  Lucy is between 5'5'' and 5'8'' tall
  - b. Lucy is between 5'5'' and 5'8'' tall  $\not\models$  Lucy is exactly 6 feet tall
- (30) Exactly three boys saw exactly five movies.
- (30') Exactly one boy saw exactly four movies.

#### Take-home messages:

- Day 4 and Day 5: *Even* and its cross-linguistic siblings
  - How a scalarity-based perspective improve our understanding of additivity-related phenomena?
- The case study of English *even*:
  - scalarity and scale-based additivity of even
  - degree QUD and maximal informativeness

#### **Tomorrow**

- Day 4 and Day 5: *Even* and its cross-linguistic siblings
  - How a scalarity-based perspective improve our understanding of additivity-related phenomena?
- Tomorrow: cross-linguistic siblings of even
  - Chinese gèng
  - ▶ Chinese hái
  - Chinese dōu
  - and their use in comparatives

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