Even as a scalar additive: Some last pieces of the puzzle

Yesteday we looked at *even:* A particle described in the literature as **scalar additive**

- We started with the traditional entry of *even* as a scalar additive focus particle:

$||\text{even}||^{g,c}$ $\lambda C.\ \lambda p.\lambda w{:}\ \exists q\ q \neq p \wedge q(w) = 1 \wedge \forall q \in C\ q \neq p \rightarrow p >_{unlikely} q.\ p(w) = 1$

In prose: *even (C)(p)(w):*

- Assertion: *p* is true in w
- An additive presupposition (=*also*): At least one distinct alternative in C is true in w
- A scalar presupposition: *p* is less likely than any distinct alternative in C

- **We raised issues for both the scalarity as well as for the additivity of *even*:**

Even as a scalar additive particle

- **Regarding the additivity of *even:***
- We claimed that unlike *also*, *even* is actually NOT inherently additive
  - We also saw that cross-linguistically – additivity is a parameter along which *even*-like particles vary (additive / exclusive / unspecified *even*-like particles)
  - So – additivity is not inherent to an *even*-like operation

- **Regarding the scalarity of *even*:**
- We pointed out challenges for the '**comparative-unlikelihood**' scalar presupposition of *even:*
  - We saw that there are many cases where *even p* is perfectly felicitous although no 'less likely' inference arises.
  - And that contextual factors affecting the felicity of *even* do not have to do with (un)likelihood judgements
- We also saw that the 'comparative' requirement is not enough – *even* also makes an evaluative ('above the standard')requirement)

We suggested that the traditional scalar presupposition of *even* should be replaced by a degree-based presupposition

- This presupposition relies on scales associated with **contextually-supplied gradable properties**
- It includes not only a comparative, but also an **evaluative** component:
  - It requires *p* and its alternatives to lead to degrees **above the standard** on these scale
- We furthermore suggested that the common / default 'less likely' inference of *even* is NOT hardwired (i.e. *even* is not a 'mirative' particle, designed to encode 'surprise' /'above expectations').
- Rather, the common 'less likely' / unexpected inference can be derived from
  - This 'above the standard' requirement +
  - the fact that default standards are 'distributional' (=represent normal distribution
  - ➢ With functional standards the 'less likely' inferences of *even* disappear

Three last pieces of the puzzle: *even* vs. *only*

- In class 1 we spoke about *only*
- In class 2 we spoke about *even*
- Conclusion so far: Both particles end up being scalar focus sensitive particles, and neither is additive.
- 3 last points concerning the comparison between *even* and *only*:

  A. Both *only* and *even* have a superlative scalarity - with opposite ordering
  - So, both are not only scalar, but also constrain the set of alternatives .

  B. But, unlike *even*, *only* also says something about the truth of these alternatives

  C. In addition, whereas sthe scalarity of *even* is evaluative, that of *only* is not.

Last point (I): The opposite 'superlative' semantics of *only* and *even*

- In class #1 we looked at the scalar entry for *only:*
- ➢ It's assertion negates all alternatives which are stronger than *p* on the scale (rank order / entailment-based).

- Guerzoni 2003 added an interesting component to this kind of entry:
  - She suggested that *only* presupposes that *p* is the **weakest** alternative in C
  - And that in this sense ***only* requires the opposite of *even***
  - Since *even* presupposes that *p* is the **strongest** alternative in C

➢ Notice: There are debates about whether these requirements are too strong or not (cf. Kay 1990, Xiang 2020, Greenberg 2021)

Last point (I): The opposite 'superlative' semantics of *only* and *even*

- Last time we gave a support for Guerzoni's claim about *only*:
- When there is a salient alternative weaker than *p only* is infelicitous (Greenberg 2019, 2021):

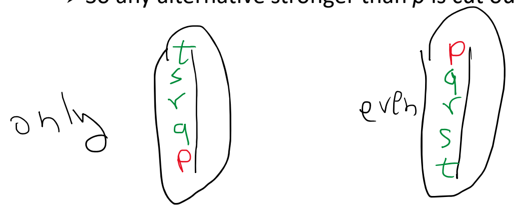
*(1) Last year John won bronze. And this year he (#**only**) won [silver]$_F$*

- Now we can give a support for Guerzoni's claim about *even*:
- When there is a salient alternative stronger than *p even* is infelicitous (Greenebrg 2016):

*(2) Last year he won gold. This year he (#**even**) won [silver]$_F$*

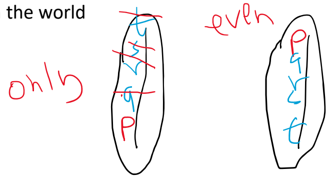
Last point (I): The opposite 'superlative' semantics of *only* and *even*

- I.e. *even* and *only* are not only scalar (= impose an order on the set of alternatives), but also constrain the set of alternatives – and in opposite ways:
  - *Only* presupposes that *p* is the **weakest** alternative in C –
    - ➢ So any alternative weaker than *p* is cut out of *C*
  - *Even* presupposes that *p* is the **strongest** element in C –
  - ➢ So any alternative stronger than *p* is cut out of *C*



Last point II: Unlike *even*, *only* also says something about the truth of the alternatives to *p*:

- We looked at the mirror-imaged scalarity of *only* and *even*
- But there is also a clear asymmetry between them:
  - *Only* also says something about the truth of the stronger alternatives:
    - It negates them
  - *Even* doesn't say anything about the truth of the weaker alternatives. It indicates a strength relation only – *p* is stronger than all of them.
    - This motivates claims in the literature that *even* is an 'argumentative' particle: It is used to strengthen a conclusion (Winterstein 2018)
    - In a sense: It does not add information about the world, but about the way we view strength relations in the world (cf. Umbach 2012 for a similar distinction)



Last point III: Do *even* and *only* also have an opposite evaluative scalarity? (Greenberg 2019, 2021)

- **In class # 2 we saw that *even* is an evaluative particle:**
  - It presupposes that *p* (and its alternatives) indicate a degree which is **above the standard** on the scale
- **Is *only* an evaluative particle as well?**
  - I.e. Does it require that *p* indicates a degree which is **below the standard** on the scale?
- On the surface, this seems to be the case –
- *only* was observed to have 'smallness' effects:
  - *(1) John only has $[2]_F$ kids* (≈> a little)
  - (2) *John (??only) has $[14]_F$ kids*

Last point II: Do *even* and *only* also have an opposite evaluative scalarity? (Greenberg 2019, 2021)

- Moreover, *even* and *only* were explicitly argued to have opposite 'evaluative' effects:
  - ***"Only*.. expresses that the size of something is disappointingly small: one expected more. Similarly, *even* expresses that one expected less**". (Zeevat 2009)

- This intuition is supported by the opposite felicity of *even* and *only* in (1) (Greenberg 2021) :

(1) (How do you think John will do in the quiz?)

a. He won't do so well. I think he can **only** / **#even** solve [6]F problems

b. He will do great. I think he can **even** / **#only** solve [6]F problems

- So, do *even* and *only* really have an opposite evaluative scalarity (above vs. below the standard?)
  - The answer seems to be **negative** –
  - There is an 'evaluative asymmetry' between the two:

An 'evaluative asymmetry' between *even* and *only*

- **The evaluative 'below the standard' inference of *only* is** **<u>cancellable</u>:**

(1) A: Both these pairs of shoes are expensive. The average price for a pair here is around \$50, and these two pairs cost more than \$100!

B: Wow. That's really expensive! Do both cost the same?

A: No. The red pair is \$130 and the green one is less - **only** $[\$110]_F$. (so it is cheaper, but not cheap - it is still very expensive)

➢ I.e. for *only* to be felicitous it is enough that *p* is lower than its alternatives, without being 'low'

- **The evaluative 'above the standard' inference of *even* <u>cannot be cancelled</u>:**

(2) A: Both green and red pairs of shoes are cheap. The average price for a pair is around \$100, and this one costs less than \$50!

B: Wow, that's really cheap! Do both cost the same?

A: No. The red pair is 20\$ and the green one is (**#even**) $[\$40]_F$. (So it is more expensive though still very cheap).

➢ I.e. for *even* to be felicitous it is not enough that *p* is higher than its alternatives – it has to be 'high' too

An ‘evaluative asymmetry’ between *even* and *only*

- So, although *even* and *only* are ‘superlative scalar antonyms’, they are not ‘evaluative scalar antonyms’:
  - The evaluativity of *even* (p indicates ‘higher than the standard’) is hardwired
  - That of *only*) (p indicates ‘lower than the standard’) is cancellable
    - It is mainly found in default, ‘out of the blue’ cases (*John only has $[3]_F$ / #$[11]_F$ kids*)
    - But it disappears when the sentence with *only* appears after an explicit stronger alternative:

(1) A: Bill has 12 kids.

B: Wow, that’s a lot! And what about John?

A: He has less: **Only** has $[11]_F$ kids

- Why is that? (See Greenebrg 2021 for a suggestion ☺)

Taking stock:

- Both *only* and *even* are scalar particles: Impose an ordering on the set of alternatives
- The scalarity of both is ‘superlative’ with an opposite ordering:
  - *Even* presupposes that *p* is the strongest alternative in C
  - *Only* presupposes that *p* is the weakest alternative in C
- On the surface, they also seem to be both ‘evaluative’ with opposite ordering
  - *Even* seems to presuppose that *p* indicates ‘higher than the standard’ / a lot
  - *only* seems to presuppose that *p* indicates ‘lower than the standard’ / a little
- But we argued that this is an illusion:
  - *Even* is a true evalutive – its evaluativity effect cannot be cancelled
  - *Only* is not a true evaluative – its evaluativity effect appears in ‘out of the blue’ contexts, but disappears if the sentence with *only* is utred after explicitly uttered stronger alternatives
- **Notice: We will see a similar picture when we get to *even* vs. *noch* with comparatives!**

Questions? / Comments?