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Non-truth-conditional intensification. The case of ‘good’

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We address the intensifying use of Catalan *bon* ‘good’, which emphasizes the property denoted by the modified N and thus yields intensification and potentially the expression of an emotive attitude (indicated with ‘!’ (1a)); it is unavailable in negative environments (1b).

- (1) a. Hem tingut un bon ensurt!
 we had a good shock
 ‘≈ We had a big shock!’
 b. (#No) he menjat un bon tros de pa.
 NEG have.I eaten a good piece of bread
 ‘I have (#not) eaten a good piece of bread.’

We treat INTENSIFYING GOOD as a more restrictive version of subsecutive good (2a), which yields intensification through a monotonic inference encoded as non-truth-conditional content. This amounts to the comment that any individuals in the extension of N that are ordered higher on the scale, also count as good Ns (inspired by Nouwen’s 2011 analysis of evaluative adverbs like *amazingly*), and we formalize this as in (2b).

- (2) a. $[[\text{bon}_{int}]] = \lambda P_{e,t} \lambda x_e : \forall y, z \in P[y > z \vee z > y]. (\text{good-as}(P))(x)$
 b. $\forall y [P(y) \wedge y > x \rightarrow (\text{good-as}(P))(y)]$

Treating the monotonicity inference as non-truth-conditionally conveyed accounts for the positive polarity behavior of INTENSIFYING GOOD (recall (1b)): if the at-issue content is negated, then the non-truth-conditional meaning, which cannot be detached, yields a falsity. That is, if *x* is not a good piece of bread, then it does not follow that any larger piece will count as good. This, we put forth, is the reason why evaluativity-based intensifiers behave as positive polarity items. They share the expression of intensification as a secondary meaning, which yields falsity if the at-issue part is challenged by sentential operators.

References: • Nouwen, R. (2011). Degree modifiers and monotonicity. In Egré & Klinedinst (eds.):

Vagueness and Language Use. Palgrave McMillan.

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