Lexical Positive Polarity Items in Romanian*

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The term polarity item has been used to define the linguistic constructions whose acceptability in a sentence depends on whether that sentence is grammatically negative or affirmative. This paper discusses lexical positive polarity items in Romanian, like *olecuta* ('a little') and *ca dracu* ('as hell'), which cannot occur within the scope of clausemate negation, hypothesis confirmed by native speakers of Romanian in one of the two experiments that the paper presents. Following Israel (1996), the focus, in this paper, lies on the meaning of PPIs, analyzing PPIs as scalar operators, that denote large or small quantities, that have an emphatic or attenuating effect, intensifying or attenuating the rhetorical force of an utterance. Following Israel's (1996) proposal, polarity sensitivity is understood in this paper as sensitivity to scalar reasoning, and the inferences relevant to polarity licensing do not depend on semantic entailment alone, but on a general ability for scalar reasoning.

Keywords: *positive polarity, scalar operators, pragmatic content*

1 Background: Syntactic and Semantic Accounts of Polarity Items

For years, many studies on polarity items have focused on providing a suitable definition of the licensing conditions, since polarity items are defined in terms of their distributions, but there are a number of important works, like Fauconnier's (1977) study, Kadmon and Landman's (1993) study and Israel's (1996 and the following) theory that focus on the nature of polarity sensitive items themselves. Following Israel (1996), this paper views polarity items in terms of the semantic and pragmatic contents they encode in observable discourse, building on Israel's (1996) claim that polarity items are polarity sensitive because of the meanings they encode.

With respect to the licensing of negative polarity items (NPIs), NPIs can be licensed by negative contexts, and negative contexts are introduced by negative elements (i.e. they require a negative operator above them in order to be licensed), such as the ones in figure (1) (figure presented in Zeijlstra, 2004).

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Figure 1: The class of negative elements

Negative Element	Properties	Examples
Negative markers	*yield* (sentential) negation	*Not* (English) *Nu* (Romanian)
Negative quantifiers	quantifiers that always introduce a negation and bind a variable within the domain of negation	*Nothing* (English) *Niets* (Dutch)
N-words	quantifiers that introduce negation in particular syntactic configurations	*Nessuno* (Italian) (Romanian)
Semi-negatives	Verbs or prepositions that have a negative connotation and that can be paraphrased with a true negative sentence	*Sans* (French) *Fara* (Romanian) *Doubt* (English) *Refuza* (Romanian)

However, the story is not that simple, since besides negation, which is the prototypical trigger, there are many triggers that have little, if anything to do with negative constructions, as is shown in the following examples, taken from Linebarger (1987), where NPIs are allowed within the scope of: *adversative predicates* as in (1), *antecedents of conditionals* as in (2), *comparative 'than' clauses* as in (3), *relative clauses headed by a universal* as in (4), *questions* as in (5), *few* as in (6), *too* as in (7), *only* as in (8).

(1) a. *He refused* to budge an inch.
b. **He promised* to budge an inch.
c. *She was surprised that there was* any *food left.*
d. **She was sure that there was* any *food left.*
e. *I'm sorry that I* ever *met him.*
f. **I'm glad that I* ever *met him.*
g. *I doubt he* much *likes Louise.*
h. **I think he* much *likes Louise.*

(2) a. *If you steal* any *food they'll arrest you.*
b. **If you steal food, they'll* ever *arrest you.*

(3) a. *He was taller than we* ever *thought that he would be.*
b. **He was* so *tall that* we ever *thought he would bump his head.*

(4) a. *Everyone who knows* a damn thing *about English knows that it's an SVO language.*
b. **Someone who knows* a damn thing *about English knows that it's an SVO language.*

(5) a. *Have you* ever *met George*?
b. **You have* ever *met George*.
c. *Who* gives a damn *about Bill?*
d. **Bob* gives a damn *about Bill*.

(6) a. *Few people have* any *interest in this.*
b. **Some people have* any *interest in this.*
(7) a. *John is too tired to* give a damn.
b. **John is tired enough* to give a damn.

(8) a. *Only John has* a hope in hell *of passing.*
b. **Even John has* a hope in hell *of passing.*

Analyzing all these negative contexts, the question that many studies tried to answer was what exactly these contexts have in common, and thus, proposals for the licensing of NPIs can be divided in accounts that claim that the licensing principle is syntactic in nature, or accounts that claim that the licensing principle is semantic/ pragmatic in nature.[1]

Syntactic accounts have focused on the licenser – licensee relation, aimed at determining which conditions have to be satisfied for the NPI to be 'in construction with' the trigger (Klima, 1964). These approaches presented the licensing requirement as a syntactic c-command requirement: an NPI has to be syntactically c-commanded by negation. The cases of non-negative triggers were explained by appealing to pragmatic explanations (cf. Baker, 1970), where NPIs have to be within the scope of negation, although negation need not be actually present in the sentence where the NPI occurs, but a negative statement may be entailed by it. According to Linebarger (1981), NPIs are licensed either in the immediate scope of negation in the Logical Form of a sentence S or when there is a proposition entailed or implicated by an S in whose LF the NPI occurs in the immediate scope of negation. In addition to the licensing conditions, syntactic approaches want to determine the position licensers can occupy in clause structure, especially when we deal with contexts such as questions, conditionals, comparatives, and complements of adversative predicates, where NPIs are licensed without overt negatives. The positing of abstract negative complementizers (Laka, 1990) and neg-features in the CP (Progovac, 1994) are two ways of addressing the previously mentioned problem.[2]

Building on theories concerned with scalar predication (Horn, 1972), scale reversal (Fauconnier, 1975) and the property of monotonicity within the account of generalized quantifiers (Barwise and Cooper, 1981), in order to explain the licensing properties of the contexts presented previously in examples (2) – (8), Ladusaw's[3] (1979) proposal is that

[1] The aim of this section or paper, for that matter, is not to provide a detailed description of the disadvantages of the syntactic or semantic accounts of polarity items. This section aims at providing the major concerns of the studies on polarity items in order to motivate the claim that the licensing and use of PPIs in Romanian belongs to pragmatics.

[2] A theory of NPI licensing based on Baker (1970) and Linebarger's (1981) extension of the original claim by Klima (that a negative polarity item yields a grammatical sentence if it is 'in construction with' an affective operator) faces several challenges since it may overgenerate and it does not provide a uniform way of determining indirect licensing.

[3] Ladusaw's (1979) theory investigates the semantic feature under which an NPI is allowed. The condition is that an NPI must be in a domain-sensitive environment. Roughly speaking, a

NPIs can only occur in *downward – entailing (DE) contexts*, the property of licensing inferences from sets to subsets, from the general to the specific, where NPI licensing is formulated in terms of entailment relations between sentences.[4]

(9) a. *Beth didn't see a bird on the porch.* →
b. *Beth didn't see a penguin.*

As pointed out in Rothschild (2006), a context is DE[5] (downward-entailing) if whenever the sentence is true you can replace the predicate in the context with a more exclusive one and still get another true sentence. The previous example, under (9) showed that *negation* is DE, while the following examples show that *few congressmen* is DE.[6]

(10) a. *Few congressmen eat vegetables.*
[spinach] ⊆ [vegetables]

→ Few congressmen spinach.

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sentence has a domain-sensitive environment if the truth value of the sentence is sensitive to the expansion of the domain in which more individuals satisfy the predicate in the environment.

Ladusaw has the great merit of being able to give content to the [+ Affective] feature that Klima proposed. An expression is affective (an NPI trigger, i.e. an expression in the sentence whose presence is necessary in order to make a PI legitimate; a trigger is also known as a licenser) if it licenses inferences in its scope from supersets to subsets, from general properties to specific instances.

[4] In order to better understand the concepts we are working with, I believe that we should present a bit of terminology. Consider a predicate P'. P' is more inclusive than a predicate P, just in case P' applies to everything that P applies to in addition to at least one other thing. A predicate P' is more exclusive than P if P' is more exclusive than P. Thus, 'coat' is more inclusive than 'red coat', and 'saw a chicken' is more exclusive that 'saw a bird'. S entails a sentence S' just in any situation in which S is true, S' is also true. Entailment does not depend on the meanings of various lexical predicates in a sentence.

[5] The following example shows that *many* is upward entailing. Upward entailing contexts are those where replacement of P by a more inclusive predicate preserves truth. Unlike upward entailing functions (UE), which are order preserving and closed under supersets, downward-entailing (DE) functions are order reversed and closed under subsets. UE functions support inference from sets to supersets and DE functions support inference from sets to subsets. In DE contexts, expressions denoting sets can be substituted for expressions denoting subsets *salva veritate* (see Giannakidou 2008, for further details)

(i) *Many congressmen eat spinach.*
[spinach] ⊆ [vegetables]

Many congressmen eat vegetables.

[6] There are the cases of NPIs which are acceptable despite the fact that they are not in the scope of a DE operator, and these cases include NPI licensing by adversative verbs, 'after', 'only' and 'exactly', some of which are borrowed from Linebarger (1981).

(i) a. *She was amazed that there was any food left.*
b. *I was surprised that he budged an inch.*
c. *We were astounded that she lifted a finger to help, considering her reputation for laziness.*
(ii) a. *Only John has ever been there.*
b. *Only the students who had ever read anything about phrenology attended the lectures.*

b. *Few congressmen eat spinach.*
[spinach] ⊆ [vegetables]

↛ Few congressmen eat vegetables.

Zwarts (1998) argues for a hierarchy of NPIs, in which three classes of NPIs are licensed by the restrictive logical properties of their respective contexts. In other words, he differentiates between different, logically defined categories of licensers which manifest different grades of negativity. Zwarts (1998) distinguishes between three types of negation: sub-minimal (for example *few*), minimal (for example *nobody*) and classical negation (*not*) which act as licensing triggers for weak, strong and super-strong NPIs. In the class of weak NPIs we can enumerate examples like: *can abide, sleep a wink,* in the class of strong NPIs we can enumerate *a thing* and *lift a finger,* while *one bit* is an example of super-strong NPI. The three types of negative expressions are distinguished from each other by their logical behaviour characterized by conditions imposed on the functional behaviour of the underlying hierarchy. The functional behaviour is argued to provide licensing conditions for the three previously mentioned classes of NPIs: the first is a downward-entailing environment reflecting Ladusaw's (1979) proposition, the second covers anti-additive expressions[7] and the third covers anti-morphic expressions, corresponding to classical negation. The theory claims that the three licensing conditions are downwards applicable in the sense that they hold for NPIs that are members of a class with a weaker condition.

Positive polarity items (PPIs) were first identified as a class by Baker (1970). One characterization that many studies elaborated on was that PPIs cannot occur in the scope of clausemate negation.[8] In other words, PPIs are said to be anti-licensed by negation.

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[7] Following Ton van der Wouden (1997), we provide the following definitions: Let B and B* be two Boolean algebras. A function *f* from B to B* is anti-additive iff for arbitrary elements X, Y ε B: *f* (XUY) = *f* (X) ∩ *f* (Y). The following example shows that 'no N' is anti-additive.

(i) *No girl sings or dances.* ↔
No girl sings and no girl dances.

Let B and B* be two Boolean algebras. A function *f* from B to B* is antimultiplicative iff for arbitrary elements X, Y ε B: *f* (X∩Y) = *f* (X) U *f* (Y). Noun phrases of the form 'not every N' is antimultiplicative.

(ii) *Not every girl sings and dances.* ↔
Not every girl sings or not every girl dances.

A hierarchy of monotone decreasing functors: (cf. van der Wouden, 1997)
Monotone decreasing: *f* (X ⊆ Y) → *f*(Y) ⊆ *f*(X) – *few, seldom, hardly*
Antimultiplicative: *f* (X∩Y) = *f* (X) U *f* (Y) – *not every, not always*
Anti-additive: *f* (XUY) = *f* (X) ∩ *f* (Y) – *nobody, never, nothing*
Antimorphic: *f* (X∩Y) = *f* (X) U *f* (Y)
f (XUY) = *f* (X) ∩ *f* (Y) – *not, not the teacher, allerminst*

[8] The following example, taken from Szabolcsi (2004) shows that PPIs can occur within the immediate scope of clausemate negation if the latter is construed as an emphatic denial of a similarly phrased statement.

(i) *He found something.*
Wrong! He DIDn't / DID NOT find something. √ not > some

Szabolcsi (2004) claims that the denial reading can be suppressed when we judge the negated clause in the context of a 'why – question.

(ii) *Why did John look so disappointed?*
Because he didn't find something. * not > some

Borrowing a definition presented in Ladusaw (1979: 168): "NPIs are appropriate in structures in the scope of a downward-entailing expression. PPIs are appropriate elsewhere." It was argued by Ladusaw (1979) that in English all PPIs are excluded from monotone decreasing contexts containing a negation. Nevertheless, 'some' and 'already' seem to be fine in the following contexts.

(11) a. *No more than three guests have eaten* some *of the soup.*
b. *No more than seven customers have* already *paid their bills.*

With respect to Dutch, van der Wouden (1997) presents the following 'laws of polarity': strong PPIs are incompatible with all monotone decreasing contexts, PPIs of medium strength are compatible with downward monotone contexts but incompatible with anti-additive ones, weak PPIs are compatible with downward monotonic and anti-additive contexts, but incompatible with antimorphic ones.

Van der Wouden proposes to reinterpret Ladusaw's (1979) generalization by claiming that English PPIs uniformly abhor anti-additive contexts: neither 'already' nor 'some' nor 'rather' may be combined with sentence negation either. However, the following examples[9] borrowed from Ladusaw (1979: 134) suggest that the situation of English PPIs is not that clear either and we should find a way to differentiate between various types of PPIs as well.

(12) a. **Someone hasn't eaten some of his soup.*
b. **John hasn't already finished the exam.*
c. **John wouldn't rather be in Cleveland.*

(13) a. **No one ate some of the soup.*
b. **No one has already finished the exam.*
c. **No one would rather be in Cleveland.*

(14) a ?*Few people ate some of the soup.*
b. *Few people have already finished the exam.*
c. *Few people would rather be in Cleveland.*

(15) a. ?*Hardly anyone ate some of the soup.*
b. ?*Hardly anyone has already finished the exam.*
c. *Hardly anyone would rather be in Cleveland.*

Szabolcsi's (2004) analysis of PPIs, an analysis, described in licensing terms, built on the NPI-PPI parallelism, starting from the fact that the distribution of PPIs is far

[9] The following examples, taken from Szabolcsi (2004) show that PPIs like 'someone/ something' are sensitive to other operators and not only to clausemate negation. For example 'some' cannot be in the immediate scope of a negative quantifier or 'without', but it can occur below 'at most five'.

(i) a. *John didn't call someone.* * not > some
b. *No one called someone.* * no one > some
c. *John came to the party without someone.* * without > some
(ii) *At most five boys called someone.* √ at most 5 > some

The difference that we notice when looking at the two sets of operators mentioned before is that 'no one' and 'without' are antiadditive operators and 'at most five' is monotone decreasing.

more complex than the fact that they cannot scope below negation (*I (*don't) see something* – unless 'some' scopes over 'not', or 'not' is an emphatic denial).

Szabolcsi (2004) claims that PPIs like 'someone/ something' are double NPIs, in the sense that they simultaneously show the licensing needs of the class of NPIs that must be in the scope of an additive operator and that must be in the scope of a monotone decreasing operator (cf. van der Wouden's typology[10]). In other words, they have both a strong NPI feature, like 'yet', which requires a clausemate antiadditive licensor, without intervention and a weak NPI feature, like 'ever', which requires a DE operator (not necessarily clausemate), without intervention. These features are 'dormant', unless activated by a 'yet'-licensing environment. The peculiar PPI distribution is due to the fact that a 'yet'-licensor activates both features but licenses only one of them, namely the antiadditive feature. The 'ever'-feature requires the presence of a second licenser. These features need to be interpreted as negations which either cancel out (dormancy) or enter into two separate resumptive quantifications.

These PPIs are "rescuable" in the sense that embedding a sentence like **you didn't see something* in a larger NPI licensing context (*I don't believe that you didn't see something.* – can mean *'I don't believe that you saw nothing'*) makes the new constellation legitimate, context which exhibits an interesting combination of properties. The generalization that Szabolcsi (2004) proposes is that: *PPIs do not occur in the immediate scope of a clausemate antiadditive operator AA-Op,* unless *[AA-Op > PPI] itself is in an NPI-licensing context, where "immediate" means that there is no scopal intervener.*[11]

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[10] The typology proposed by van der Wouden (1997) shows that NPIs and PPIs are not in complementary distribution but rather show a mirror image typology. Looking at the following two tables, borrowed from Falaus (2008), we notice that weak NPIs are licensed in all types of negative contexts, while strong PPIs are ruled out from the scope of downward entailing, antiadditive and antimorphic operators.

Positive polarity-sensitive Items

Negation/ Operators:	Strong	Medium	Weak
Minimal/ Downward entailing (e.g. 'few')	*	√	√
Regular/ Antiadditive (e.g. 'nobody')	*	*	√
Classical/ Antimorphic (e.g. 'not')	*	*	*

Negative Polarity-sensitive Items

Negation/ Operators:	Strong	Medium	Weak
Minimal/ Downward entailing (e.g. 'few')	*	*	√
Regular/ Antiadditive (e.g. 'nobody')	*	√	√
Classical/ Antimorphic (e.g. 'not')	√	√	√

[11] With respect to Romanian PPIs, Falaus (2008), building on Szabolcsi (2004) and on Savescu (2005) shows that *'un N oarecare'* in Romanian can take scope below an anti-additive operator (the scope of a negative predicate *'refuza'* and the scope of *'inaintea'*), as in the following example and provides the following generalization: *oarecare – PPIs do not occur in the immediate scope of a clausemate antimorphic Op (AM-Op) unless [AM-Op >PPI] itself is in a weak licensing context.*

(i) a. *Am refuzat o bursa oarecare fara sa stiu de ce.*
have.1SG refused a grant whatsoever without SUBJ know.1SG why
'I refused some grant without knowing why.'
√ refuse > oarecare

b. *Inaintea unei competitii oarecare trebuie sa dormi bine.*
before a.GEN competition whatsoever must SUBJ sleep.2SG well
Before any competition whatsoever, you must sleep well.'
√ before > oarecare

The present paper did not set out to investigate the connection between PPIs like *olecuta* ('a smidgen'), *ca dracu* ('as hell') and indefinites like *un N oarecare* ('some N'), but I must thank an

Although it can be said that the syntactic or semantic accounts of polarity items presented in this section manifest different disadvantages, what we want to retain from this section, as a conclusion, is that:

i. Licensing of NPIs in some accounts is done by negation, either by *entailment* (with negation) or (conventional or conversational) *implicature* (where there is no negation).
ii. The DE condition is a sufficient condition on NPIs rather than a necessary condition, as was argued by Ladusaw (1979).
iii. The great achievement of the DE account was the possibility of characterizing semantically the class of NPI – licensers.
iv. The theories presented above agree in their characterization of negation as a core case of an NPI licensor, but differ with respect to what other expressions are included in the set of core cases.
v. The claim that 'PPIs resist overt negation' (Ladusaw, 1979: 135), requires some modification because it is easily falsified[12].

The fact that inferencing plays an important role in the grammar of polarity sensitivity does not itself entail that the relevant inferences need to be represented in a sentence's logical form, nor even that they depend on a sentence's literal truth-conditional meaning.

(16) a. *Mary rarely drinks milk.* →
Mary rarely drinks skim milk.
b. *Few people understand the importance of syntactic theory.* →
Few people understand the importance of the minimalist program.
c. *Lou is too old to be spending all night at discos.* →
Lou is too old to be spending all night at Studio 54.
d. *Everyone who's eaten ice cream has had a taste of heaven.* →
Everyone who's eaten Vivoli's has had a taste of heaven.

Building on examples, such as the previous ones, the Scalar Model of Polarity, that will be presented in the following chapter, has as starting point Ladusaw's downward entailment theory, but as will be shown, it departs from the DE theory because it defines licensing environments in terms of the pragmatic interpretation of sentences in context,

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anonymous reviewer for having underlined this lacuna in the earlier version of this paper. As a matter of fact I hope to be able to present the results of two experiments conducted with native speakers of Romanian whose aim was twofold: to bring evidence to confirm my intuition that Romanian exhibits quite a large number of weak PPIs, that can be found in the scope of DE operators and of anti-additive operators and second to see if the previously mentioned PPIs (*olecuta, ca dracu*) are 'rescuable' in the sense of Szabolcsi (2004).

[12] PPIs such as *would rather* may yield ungrammaticality in a comparative, a construction which lacks an overt negation, as is shown in (ia). On the other hand, *would rather* is perfectly fine in the context of an expression such as *no fewer than five congressmen*, although it contains an overt negation, as is shown in (ii). Note that in (ib), the alternative with *prefer* suggests that the restrictions on the distribution of *would rather* are indeed the source of ungrammaticality.

(i) a. **John is more often away from home than he would rather be.*
b. *John is more often away from home than he prefers to be.*
(ii) *No fewer than five congressmen would rather be in Florida now.*

and not in terms of the truth-conditional semantics of scopal operators (cf. Ladusaw, 1979). The benefit of the Scalar Model of Polarity is that, by contrast with the DE account, it can account for:

i. licensing in environments which are not, strictly speaking, downward entailing,
ii. failure of licensing in environments which are incontrovertibly downward entailing.

2 The Scalar Model of Polarity

The starting point of the analysis of polarity items in the Scalar Model of Polarity proposed by Israel (1996), represents Horn's (1972) study on semantic scales. Semantic scales (cf. Horn, 1972) are those whose members (predicates) are ordered by semantic (or logical) entailment and where the mention of any member of the scale unilaterally entails the lower or weaker members to its right and conversationally implicates the negation of the higher or stronger scale members to its left.

Items belonging to scalar categories may be ordered according to their strength along that semantic dimension. According to the logic of a Horn scale (Horn, 1972), scalar expressions, <e1, e2, …, en>, are ranked in terms of their entailments so that for an arbitrary sentence frame S and expressions ej > ek, S(ej) unilaterally entails S(ek), where e1, e2, …, en are: lexicalized items, of the same word class, from the same register; and "about" the same semantic relations or from the same semantic field.

(17) STRONG WEAK (cf. Cornilescu, 1985)

1……2…….m…….m+1……n	
< n…..n-1……4 3 2 1>	the cardinal scale
< the first…..the second……..the n-th>	the ordinal scale
< all……many……...……..some>	the quantificational scale
< must……should…..……...may>	a deontic scale

Basically, stronger predicates entail weaker ones.

(18) a. *It is cold.* → *It is cool.*
b. *He has three children.* → *He has two children.*

A scalar model (cf. Israel, 1996) is a structured set of propositions ordered along one or more parameters in a way that supports inferencing. The model consists of a propositional function with one or more open variables, each ranging over a scale of possible values. According to Israel (1996), the propositional function effectively defines a type of eventuality, and the variables stand for the various ways this eventuality may be realized. A scalar model can be either simple with one variable and values ordered along a single scale, or complex with many variables and thus with many scales and inferencing in a scalar model is defined relative to the propositional function on which is built.

A very important feature of the scalar model is the idea that polarity items themselves conventionally express certain pragmatic functions and they are licensed where they can discharge these functions and that polarity items are sensitive to the logical structure of the contexts in which they appear because the rhetorical attitudes they encode crucially depend on the kinds of inferences one might draw from their use.

Polarity contexts are defined by their effects on scalar inferences and as proposed by Israel (1996), polarity items encode semantic properties which make them sensitive to such inferences. The scalar model receives support from the fact that polarity items come from semantic domains which are inherently scalar and measure terms or degree adverbs qualify as polarity items that bear this feature.

In this paper polarity items are analyzed as forms whose felicity depends on the sorts of inferences one might draw from their use in context. These inferences are scalar in nature and reflect the scalar semantics of the polarity items themselves. According to Israel (1996), polarity items are scalar operators whose profiled content is construed against the background of an ordered set of alternatives and which are thus interpreted within the information structure provided by the scalar model. Israel's (1996, 1997) Scalar Model of Polarity predicts a reliable correlation between a polarity item's sensitivity and its scalar semantic properties and that polarity items are conventionally specified for two semantic features, quantitative value and informative value, and the interaction of these two features in a single lexical form is what creates the effect of polarity sensitivity. As proposed by Israel (1996), sensitivity arises from the interaction of the two scalar semantic properties, q-value and i-value, each of which functions independently of polarity sensitivity, but which together constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for a construction to be polarity sensitive. As claimed in the Scalar Model of Polarity, both features are grounded in the logic of scalar reasoning and the rhetoric of interpersonal communication. The combination of these two features in a single form limits that form to contexts which allow the scalar inferences needed to make both values felicitous.[13]

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[13] Polarity Items in the Scalar Model of Polarity:

Emphatic NPIs: *any, ever, at all, the least bit, in the slightest, give a damn, have a chance in hell, can possibly, can dream of.*

(i) a. *I didn't* drink a drop *in any of my three pregnancies. To be honest I stopped drinking when we were planning to get pregnant*
(http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/blogs/pg-parental-guidance-advised/3832782/Would-you-drink-while-pregnant)

b. *In training, for example, when you feel your position on the team is in danger then you have to be fully focused. And if needs be, you send a clear signal saying: I'm not going to* budge one inch.
(Michael Ballack, http://www.stern.de/sport/fussball/michael-ballack-im-not-going-to-budge-one-inch-620376.html)

Attenuating NPIs: *be all that, any too, overmuch, long, much, great shakes, be born yesterday, trouble to V, need.*

(ii) a. *The new house is not* all that *different from your old one.*
(http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/all+that)

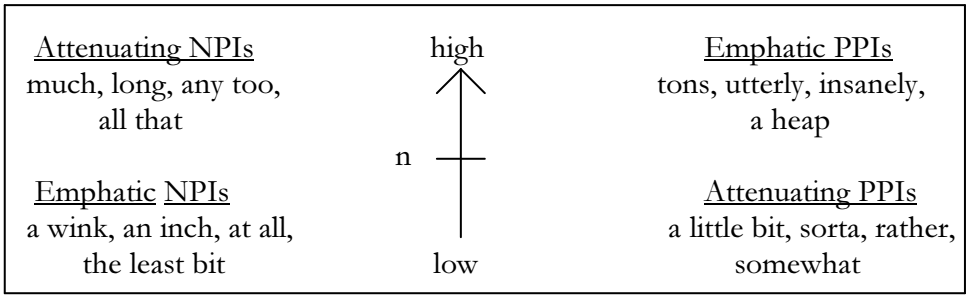
b. *Here are a few celebrity marriages that didn't last very* long. *Many of them had quickie weddings.*
(http://marriage.about.com/od/entertainmen1/a/shortestmarriages.htm)

Emphatic PPIs: *tons of* N, *scads of* N, *constantly, utterly, insanely, in a flash, within an inch of* N, *be bound to* V, *gotta* V.

(iii) a. *ASHES 2009: We're in* tons of *trouble - Ponting and Katich smash brilliant centuries to tear England apart.*
(http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/cricket/article-1198667/ASHES-2009-Were-tons-trouble--Ponting-Katich-smash-brilliant-centuries-tear-England-apart.html)

b. *After last season's foreboding "will they or won't they return?" season finale,* scads of *scandal, and the endless enticing ads that have been running on TLC, the highly anticipated* Jon & Kate Plus 8 *season premiere aired last night.*
(http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20281011,00.html)

Figure 2: Polarity Items in the Scalar Model of Polarity (cf. Israel, 1996)



The quantitative value need not be absolute but is in fact often understood as relative to some scalar norm, represented as 'n' in the diagram. This diagram divides polarity items along three parameters according to whether they are PPIs or NPIs, high-scalar or low-scalar, emphatic or understanding.

(19) *I really don't* give a hoot. *I just desperately want to win this trophy.*[14]

An expression like, 'give a hoot', expresses a minimal amount of interest/ concern and contrast with all expressions that denote a considerably high amount of interest/ concern. Being an emphatic item it contributes to a strong proposition. Thus, this expression can only be used in scale reversing contexts, where inferences run from minimal amounts of concern to maximal amounts of concern.

A sentence like (19) is grammatical because it licenses the inference that 'she doesn't care much'.

(20) **I give a hoot.*

By contrast, (20) cannot generate such an inference and the reason for its failure is that such an expression expresses a weak proposition incompatible with its inherently emphatic nature.

The same logic applies to attenuating polarity items; these forms require a construal in which they are entailed by some default norm within the scalar norm.

(21) *He's helluv (hell of) tall.* (Israel, 1996)

In the previous sentence 'helluv' signals that the predicate holds to a very high degree. Being an emphatic PPI, it can only be used in scale preserving contexts, where inferences run from high scalar values to low scalar values.

Attenuating PPIs: *some, somewhat, rather, sorta, a tad, a hint, a smidgen, would just as soon.*

(iv) a. *It's* sorta *interesting to see that even Steve Jobs has to deal with these kind of email rants.* (http://twitter.com/sophiestication/status/14089094280)

b. *Mix a dash of synchronicity with* a smidgen of *serendipity, then serve.* (http://fromsmilerwithlove.com/)

[14] Michael Ballack, http://www.stern.de/sport/fussball/michael-ballack-im-not-going-to-budge-one-inch-620376.html

Quantitative value reflects the fact that most PSIs encode a scalar semantics. Israel views a scale as an ordering of elements along some gradable dimension of semantic space. Thus, for a form to encode a specific Q-value, it has to designate some relative or absolute position within such an ordering. The high and low q-value of polarity items is understood relative to the contextual norms associated with a given dimension. For most PSIs q-value is a transparent element of meaning, because quantifiers and degree modifiers designate an abstract scalar extent or degree, often without reference to any particular dimension.

Informative value is a pragmatic feature encoding a speaker's attitude to the content he/ she conveys. Thus, emphatic utterances express great involvement and commitment to what is said while understatements denote deference and a desire to mitigate face threatening acts. Basically, informativity is a property of sentences used in contexts. Emphatic sentences make a stronger claim than might have been expected while understating sentences make a weaker claim that might have been expected.

The advantage of interpreting polarity items in the lines proposed by the Scalar Model of Polarity is that, as presented by Israel (1996), it suggests a compromise between previous accounts of polarity items, in the sense that it underlines the importance of implicature to explain what licenses the NPI in certain examples and the importance of inferencing as the crucial mechanism of licensing. As was mentioned previously, on Israel's account the distribution of polarity items, as with any lexical items, is constrained by the meaning they encode. The following examples, borrowed from Israel (1996) show that *'most',* which is neither DE nor UE, licenses NPIs.

(22) a. *Most of the students who ate an apple got sick.*
↛ Most of the students who ate some fruit got sick.

b. *Most of the students who ate some fruit got sick.*
↛ Most of the students who ate an apple got sick.

Most is not UE on its first argument because it may be that while there were a lot of rotten apples, the rest of the fruit turned out to be fine. The inference under (b) is not valid either because it may be that it was just those students who ate apples that avoided getting sick, so *most* cannot be DE in the previous example.

As presented in Israel (1996), the following examples show that NPIs should be acceptable as long as an appropriate scalar model is contextually available.

(23) a. ?*Most of the students who studied an awfully long time got an A.*
b. ??*Most of the students who studied at all wore earrings.*
c. *Most students who studied at all got an A.*

The PPI 'awfully' under (a) is odd because its emphatic force would seem to suggest that the more students studied the less likely they were to get an A. in the example under (b), the NPI 'at all' is bizarre because the scalar model required to license 'at all' would have to somehow link the effort of studying with the preference for wearing earrings, and given normal background assumptions, the scalar model is no longer available. But the same NPI sounds acceptable in the example under (c) because the required scalar model pairing studiousness with good grades does form a part of the stereotypical understanding of schoolwork.

As a conclusion, what we want to retain from Israel (1996) is that, *most* does license polarity items by virtue of its inferential properties, but that these are not logical properties of the form itself, nor even of the sentences it occurs in, rather they reflect the complex interaction of syntactic, semantic and especially pragmatic factors which determine the availability of an appropriate scalar construal.

3 Romanian PPIs in the Scalar Model of Polarity

This paper examines the lexicalization patterns of PPIs in Romanian showing that items or expressions like *olecuta* ('a little') in (24a) denotes a minimal scalar degree and qualifies as an attenuating PPI and *sumedenie* ('tons') in (24b) denotes a maximal scalar degree and qualifies as an emphatic PPI. Polarity items, like *olecuta* ('a little') and *sumedenie* ('tons') are conventionally specified for two semantic features, quantitative value and informative value, and the interaction of these two features in a single lexical form is what creates the effect of polarity sensitivity.

(24) a. *Sînt* olecuţă *tristă, e ultima zi şi a început să plouă la Viena.*
Am-I little sad is last day and started SA rain in Vienna.
'I am a little sad, it is the last day and it started raining in Vienna.'

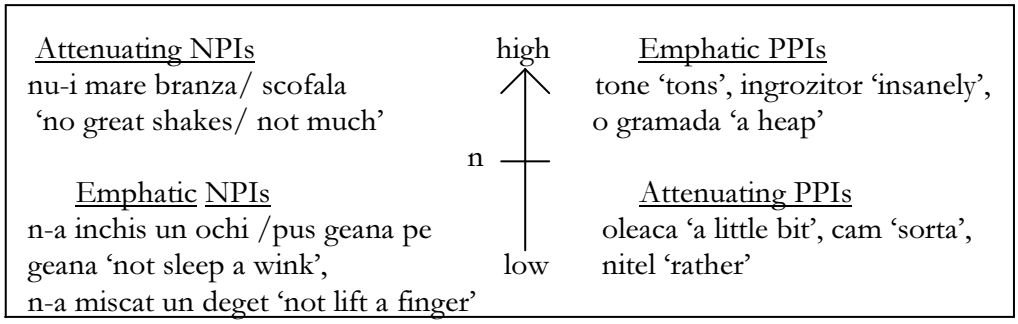
b. *Bucurestiul are* o sumedenie *de muzee foarte bune.*
Bucharest-the has a multitude of museum-pl. very good.
'Bucharest has tons/ scads of interesting museums.'

The aim of this section is to show that lexical PPIs in Romanian can be described according to the parameters of the Scalar Model of Polarity proposed by Israel (1996), showing that in Romanian polarity items can be understood as scalar operators which must be interpreted with respect to an appropriately structured scalar model: they are forms whose lexical semantic-pragmatic content make them sensitive to scalar inferences.

3.1. The Lexicalization Patterns of PPIs in Romanian

As was stated in the previous section, following Israel's (1996) proposal, polarity items are conventionally specified for two semantic features, quantitative value and informative value, and the interaction of these two features in a single lexical form is what creates the effect of polarity sensitivity. The following figure, adapted from Israel (1996) shows examples of polarity items in Romanian, divided along three parametres, whether they are PPIs or NPIs, high-scalar or low-scalar, emphatic or understanding.

Figure 3: Romanian Polarity Items in the Scalar Model of Polarity



The following sentence, under (25a) makes a strong claim by denying that Mary slept even the smallest amount imaginable, and the sentence under (25b) makes a weak claim by denying only that Mary slept for a long time. Thus, 'a wink' marks a low, in fact a minimal, quantitative value and produces an emphatic sentence, and 'much' marks a relatively high quantitative value and produces an understatement.

So, *un ochi* and *geana pe geana* mark a low, minimal quantitative value and produce an emphatic sentence, and *mult* marks a high quantitative value and produce an understatement.

(25) a. *Maria n- a inchis* un ochi *toata noaptea./*
Maria not has closed an eye all night /
Maria n- a pus geana pe geana *toata noaptea.*
Maria not has put eyelash on eyelash all night
'Mary didn't sleep a wink all night.'

b. *Maria n- a dormit* mult.
Maria not has sleept much
'Mary didn't sleep much.'

Looking at PPIs, analyzing the following examples, we note that the situation is quite reversed. Emphatic forms denote high scalar values and attenuating forms denote low to mid scalar values.

Now, we can consider the contrast between the low-scalar PPI *olecuta /niscaiva* = 'a little bit' and the high-scalar *o gramada / tone* = 'scads'. The use of the negative operator "nu" = 'not' shows that these expressions qualify as PPIs.

(26) a. *Belinda (*nu) a castigat* o gramada/ tone *de bani la*
Belinda (*not)has won a heap/ tons of money at
ruleta.
roulette
'Belinda (*not) won scads of money at the Blackjack tables.'

b. *Belinda (*nu) a castigat* olecuta/ niscaiva *bani la ruleta.*
Belinda (*not)has won a little / some money at roulette
'Belinda (*not) won a little bit of money at the Black jack tables.'

The sentence under (26a) constitutes an emphatic assertion to the effect that Belinda won a very large quantity of money, while the example under (26b) asserts only that Belinda won a small quantity of money. *O gramada / tone* = 'scads' defines a very high

quantity and produces an emphatic sentence, while *olecuta* / *niscaiva* = 'a little bit' defines a small quantity and produces an understatement.

The following tests, proposed in Israel (1996), suggest that emphatic PSIs represent a distinct class from understating PSIs. In this respect, certain intensifying devices allow some intensifiers but exclude hedged constructions within their scope. Emphatic polarity items allow modification by intensifying *literally*, but understating polarity items reject it.

(27) a. *Silvia literalmente a castigat* tone *de bani la ruleta.*
Sylvia literally has won tons DE money at roulette
'Sylvia literally won scads of money at the Blackjack tables.'

b. **Silvia literalmente a castigat* olecuta *de bani la ruleta.*
Sylvia literally has won a little DE money at roulette
*'Sylvia literally won a little bit of money at the Blackjack tables.'

Emphatic polarity items allow occurrence after the introduction 'You'll never believe it!', while understating polarity items reject it.

(28) a. *N- o sa-ti vina sa crezi niciodata!*
not will CL-2ND.P.SG come SA believe never
Silvia a castigat tone *de bani la ruleta.*
Sylvia has won tons DE money at roulette
'You'll never believe it! Sylvia won scads of money at the Blackjack tables.'

b. ?*N- o sa-ti vina sa crezi niciodata!*
not will CL-2ND.P.SG come SA believe never
Silvia a castigat olecuta *de bani la ruleta.*
Sylvia has won a little DE money at roulette
?'You'll never believe it! Sylvia won a little bit of money at the Blackjack tables.'

Coordinating conjunctions like 'or at least' require that the first conjunct represents a stronger claim than the second conjunct.

(29) a. *Silvia a castigat* tone *de bani la ruleta*
Sylvia has won tons DE money at roulette
sau macar a castigat olecuta *de bani.*
or at least has won a little DE money
'Sylvia won scads of money at the Blackjack tables or at least she won a little bit.'

b. **Silvia a castigat* olecuta *de bani la ruleta*
Sylvia has won a little DE money at roulette
sau macar a castigat tone *de bani.*
or at least has won tons DE money
*'Sylvia won a little money at the Blackjack tables or a least she won scads.'

Coordinating conjunctions like 'in fact' require that the second conjunct make a stronger claim than the first conjunct.

(30) a. *Silvia a castigat* olecuta *de bani la ruleta*,
Sylvia has won a little DE money at roulette
de fapt a castigat tone *de bani.*
DE fact has won tons DE money
'Sylvia won a little bit of money at the Blackjack tables, in fact she won scads.'

b. **Silvia a castigat* tone *de bani la ruleta*,
Sylvia has won tons DE money at roulette,
de fapt a castigat olecuta *de bani.*
DE fact has won a litlle DE money
'*Sylvia won scads of money at the Blackjack tables, in fact she won a little bit.'

Having tested 60 items or expressions[15] with the help of the previously mentioned tests we can conclude that 16 items/ expressions qualify as attenuating PPIs and 44 qualify as emphatic PPIs, some of which are exemplified below.[16] Example (31) shows attenuating PPIs and example (32) shows emphatic PPIs.

(31) a. *Poate printre toate răutăţile, mai găsim şi* o fărâmă *de*
maybe among all malices, still find also a crumb DE
bunătate.
kindness
'Maybe we can still find a little happiness among all sorrows.'

b. *Sînt* olecuţă *tristă, e ultima zi şi a inceput să plouă la*
Am-I little sad, is last day and has started SA rain in
Viena.
Vienna
'I am a little sad, it is the last day and it started raining in Vienna.'

c. *Dani Coman: "George Copos sa mai aiba* nitica *rabdare!"*
Dani Coman: George Copos SA still have a bit patience
'Dani Coman: George Copos should have a little bit of patience.'

(32) a. *E frig* ca dracu' *aici in sufletu' tau.*
is cold like hell here in soul-the your
'It's cold as hell, here in your soul.'

b. *Vor castiga la LOTO* cand o pica frunza de
will-they win at LOTO when will-ARCH.3RD.P.SG fall leaf-the DE
pe brad.
from firtree
'They'll win the lottery when hell freezes over.'

[15] We came to test the 60 items/ expressions by looking at examples of English PPIs analyzed/ mentioned in Israel's (1996) study because unfortunately, there aren't any studies on lexical PPIs in Romanian, at least not to my knowledge.

[16] For reasons of space I have chosen not to write all of the items/ expressions that qualify as lexical PPIs.

c. *Bruma: "Am tinut* o gramada de *diete aberante!"*
Bruma: have-I kept a heap of diets anomalous
'Bruma: I have been on/ tried tons of ludicrous diets.'

3.2. The Lexicalization Patterns of PPIs in Romanian

PPIs in Romanian are not a homogenous class, but no matter how varied they are[17] we wish to make the claim that they license the same type of inferences: PPIs are scale preserving, allowing inferences from high values to low values.

A polarity sensitive item is a lexical form or a grammatical construction which specifies an expressed proposition p's location within a scalar model and which, by virtue of imposing a particular informative value on that proposition, further requires that p either entails or be entailed by a default context proposition q available within the model.

Inferencing in a scalar model is defined relative to the propositional function on which it is built. For an affirmative function inferences run from high values to low values on the scale, whereas, with negative propositions the direction of entailments is reversed and inferences run from low values on the scale up to higher values. Polarity licensors – negation, conditionals, questions and universal quantifiers – are united by the sort of inferences they allow over elements occurring in their scope.

The following examples show that items like *gramada* ('tons / scads'), *ca dracu* ('as hell') in the examples under (a) are scale preserving, allowing inferences from high values to low values, whereas, *olecuta* ('a little') and *destul* ('pretty') which denote low scalar values cannot allow inferences to high scalar values.[18]

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[17] Examples:

(i) Degree Adverbs: *destul, enorm, putin (putintel), oleaca (olecuta), nitel, cam*
QPs: *extraordinar de, grozav de, teribil de, atat de, ingrozitor de, uimitor de, exagerat de, colosal de, fabulos de, imens de, infinit de, desavarsit de, anormal de, neverosimil de, nemaipomenit de tanar, nemaivazut de.* This class also includes terms like: *crunt de, cumplit de, fioros de, groaznic de, infernal de, jalnic de, monstrous de, oribil de.*
NPs, pseudo-partitive constructions: *un strop, o farama, un dram, o umbra, o picatura, un graunte, un crampei, tone, o groaza (fig), o gramada, o puzderie, o sumedenie, o droaie, o armata, un card.*
PPs: *intr-o clipa, intr-o clipita, intr-o clipeala din ochi , la Pastele Cailor, la Sfantu' Asteapta, la mosii cei verzi, la calendele grecesti, la mama dracului, la dracu-n praznic*
AdvPs (these AdvPs/ expressions have a complex structure and function as a single syntactic unit, cf. Gramatica Academiei): *un pic, cat ai clipi, cat ai zice mei, cat ai zice peste, cat ai scapara din ochi, cat ai scapara dintr-un amnar, cat te-ai sterge la ochi, cat te-oi freca la ochi, cat ai bate din palme, cat ai da in cremene, unde si-a intarcat dracul copiii, unde si-a spart dracul opincile*
Verbal Idioms: *cand mi-oi vedea ceafa, cand va face broasca par, cand va face plopul pere si rachita micsunele, cand o prinde mata peste, cand va face spanul barba, cand mi-o creste iarba-n barba si-ntre deste, cand o sta oul in cui, cand o da din piatra lapte, cand or zbura bivolii, cand o pica frunza de pe brad, cand mi-o creste par in calcaie, cand mi-o creste par in palma si-ntre deste, cand o zbura porcu, in doi timpi si trei miscari.*

[18] In order to verify if native speakers of Romanian confirm the hypothesis that PPIs are scale preserving, allowing inferences from high values to low values. Seventy-six native speakers of Romanian took part in the experiment – 30 students of English philology (Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest) and 46 other native speakers (friends, family). The questionnaire the participants worked with comprised of 24 pairs of sentences, 12 pairs allowing

(33) a. *Ne* *spune* o droaie/ sumedenie *de* *minciuni.* →
CL-1ST.PL.DAT say a lot/ lot DE lie-PL
'He/ She tells us heaps of lies.'
→ *Ne* *spune* oarece/ putine *minciuni.*
CL-1ST.PL.DAT say some lie-PL
'He/ She tells us some lies.'
b. *Ne* *spune* oarece/ putine *minciuni.* ↛
CL-1ST.PL.DAT say some lie-PL
'He/ She tells us some lies.'
↛ *Ne* *spune* o droaie/ sumedenie *de* *minciuni.*
CL-1ST.PL.DAT say a lot DE lie-PL
'He/ She tells us heaps of lies.'

(34) a. *Este* incredibil *de* *proasta.* →
is-3RD.SG incredibly DE stupid-FEM
'She is incredibly stupid.'
→ *Este* cam *proasta.*
is-3RD.SG sorta stupid-FEM
'She is sorta stupid.
b. *Este* cam *proasta.* ↛
is-3RD.SG sorta stupid-FEM
'She is sorta stupid.
↛ *Este* incredibil *de* *proasta.* →
is-3RD.SG incredibly DE stupid- FEM
'She is incredibly stupid.'

In conclusion, what we want to retain from this section is that for an affirmative function inferences run from high values to low values on the scale, upward entailing

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inferences from high values to low values and 12 pairs not allowing inferences from low values to high values. Out of the 60 items or expressions that I mentioned previously and which qualify as PPIs, I only chose 12 items/ expressions for this experiment because many of these expressions are synonymous and I considered that it is sufficient to test one or two examples from the same morpho-syntactic class. For reasons of space I chose to present here only one of the examples that were present in the questionnaire, and hopefully I will be able to present the experiment in detail in a future paper. The instructions for the grammaticality judgment tasks were provided on the questionnaire, thus the participants had to mark Yes or No, if the item/ expression used in the first sentence allows inferences to the second sentence, as in the following example:

(i) *Are* oleaca de/ nitica *rabdare* *cu* *acesti* *copii.*
has a little DE/ some patience with these children
'He/ She has a little bit of patience in dealing with these children.' ↛
Are o gramada *de* *rabdare* *cu* *acesti* *copii*
has a pile DE patience with these children

The results for the previously mentioned example show that 18% of the participants believe that it is possible to allow inferences from the low value *oleaca* / *nitica* = 'a bit' to the high value *gramada* = 'lots/ tons' and 82% of the participants believe that it is not possible to allow such an inference. Looking at all the percentages we obtained we can clearly state that the prediction we started out from is valid, as we established the ratio of speakers that has to consider a sentence well-formed at 70% in order to count as proof of its grammaticality. Thus, native speakers of Romanian attested the fact that PPIs are scale preserving, allowing inferences from high values to low values.

functions (UE) are order preserving and closed under supersets, UE functions support inference from sets to supersets.

4 Experimental Data

The aim of the first experiment was to verify if native speakers of Romanian recognize the items/ expressions we used as PPIs. One hundred native speakers of Romanian took part in the experiment – 50 students of English philology (Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest) and 50 other native speakers (friends, family). The questionnaire the participants worked with comprised of 108 sentences, 54 assertive contexts and 54 negative contexts (all the items that were tested in assertive contexts, were also tested in negative contexts). The instructions for the grammaticality judgement tasks were provided on the questionnaire, thus the participants had to mark Yes or No, if the sentences seem correct or not in Romanian, on examples such as the following[19]:

(35) a. *Sînt* olecuţă *tristă, e ultima zi şi a inceput sa ploua la*
am little sad is last day and has started SA rain in
Viena.
Vienna
'I am a little sad, it is the last day and it started raining in Vienna.'

b. *Dani Coman: "George Copos sa mai aiba* nitica *rabdare!"*
Dani Coman: George Copos SA still have a bit patience
'Dani Coman: George Copos should have a little bit of patience.'

c. *Sfatul meu este sa fii* putintel *mai atent si*
advice-the my-DAT is SA be a bit more attentive and
sa nu te grabesti.
SA not CL-2ND.SG.ACC hurry-2ND.SG
'My advice is to be a bit more attentive and no to hurry.'

d. […]*vreau sa dispari* cat ai clipi
[…]want-I SA disappear how many/much would-2ND.SG blink
'I want you to disappear in a jiffy / in the twinkling of an eye.'

e. *O să te paraseasca cat* te-
will CL-2ND.SG.ACC leave how much/many CL-2ND.SG.ACC
oi freca la ochi.
will.2ND.SG rub at eyes
'He will leave you in a flash.'

[19] Example (35):
a. http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:4slrSpuM6sJ:danoaca.wordpress.com/2009/09/04/olecuta-si-gata/+olecuta&cd=16&hl=ro&ct=clnk&gl=ro
b. http://www.9am.ro/.../dani-coman-george-copos-sa-mai-aiba-nitica-rabdare.html
c. http://www.fotonud.ro/forum/showthread.php?tid=948
d. http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:U54MTfpFhLsJ:www.versuri.ro/versuri/eeggkm_arssura%2Bdoar%2Bo%2Bzdreanta.html+cat+ai+clipi&cd=21&hl=ro&ct=clnk&gl=ro
f. http://74.125.93.132/search?q=cache:P7ewVI2tPdMJ:ceafa.dictionarweb.com/+cand+mi-oi+vedea+ceafa&cd=5&hl=ro&ct=clnk&gl=ro

f. *O să faceți dumneavoastră turism pe litoral* când mi-
will make you tourism on seaside when CL-1ST.SG.DAT
oi vedea ceafa fără oglindă...
will-1ST.SG see nape without mirror
'You'll promote tourism at the seaside when hell freezes over.'

For the sentences previously mentioned the results[20] show that:

i. 72% of the participants consider example (35a) grammatical and 28% judged it as ungrammatical. The same item, olecuta, was tested in the negative context:[21] *Nu intrerup* olecuta *seria anecdotelor (posibil autentice) pentru a relata o fraza citita in dimineata asta* 'I am not interrupting a little the series of possibly authentic jokes to tell you about a comment I read this morning.' and 91% of the participants consider this sentence ungrammatical and 9% judged it as grammatical.

ii. 74% of the participants consider example (35b) grammatical and 26% judged it as ungrammatical. The same item, nitica, was tested in the negative context: *Nu iti trebuie* nitica *inteligenta pentru a coace o prajitura* 'You don't need a shred of intelligence to bake a cake', and 80% of the participants consider this sentence ungrammatical and 20% judged it as grammatical.

iii. (35c) was tested in its negative form: *Sfatul meu este sa nu fii* putintel *mai atent si sa nu te grabesti*, and 97% of the participants consider this sentence ungrammatical and 3% judged it as grammatical. The same item, *putintel*, was tested in the following assertive context: *Iata un fel* … putintel *mai scump […]* 'This is a type of meal … a bit expensive […]', and 77% of the participants consider this sentence grammatical and 23% judged it as ungrammatical.

iv. The AdvP *cat ai clipi* was tested in the following assertive context: *Ma ajuta* cat ai clipi 'He'll help me in the twinkling of an eye', and 80% of the participants consider the sentence grammatical and 20% judged it as ungrammatical. The same expression was tested in the negative context: *Nu ma ajuta* cat ai clipi, '*He won't help me in a jiffy', and 83% of the participants consider this sentence grammatical and 17% judged it as ungrammatical.

v. The AdvP *cat te-oi freca la ochi* was tested in the following assertive context: *Vei intelege problema* cat te-oi freca la ochi 'You'll understand this problem in a jiffy', and 42% of the participants consider the sentence grammatical and 58% judged it as ungrammatical. The same expression was tested in the negative context: *Nu vei termina lucrarea* cat te-oi freca la ochi 'You won't finish the paper in a jiffy' and 73% of the participants consider this sentence ungrammatical and 27% judged it as grammatical.

vi. The idiomatic expression "cand mi-oi vedea ceafa" in (35f) was tested in the following assertive context: *O sa te mai ajut* cand mi-oi vedea ceafa 'I'll help you when hell freezes over), and 83% of the participants consider this sentence

[20] We established the ratio of speakers that has to consider a sentence well-formed at 70% in order to count as proof of its grammaticality.

[21] In order to answer one of the questions that an anonymous reviewer asked, I need to mention that the affirmative sentence came from a corpus that I am trying to set up and which contains a little over 100 examples, while the 'wrong' sentences do not come from any corpus. In order to obtain 'wrong' sentences I modified originally affirmative sentences by inserting the negative operator, because I couldn't find any examples where these items/ expressions appear in the scope of negation.

grammatical and 17% judged it as ungrammatical. The same expression was tested in the following negative context: *Nu o sa te primesc inapoi* cand mi-oi vedea ceafa '*I won't allow you back in my life when hell freezes over', and 98% of the participants consider this sentence ungrammatical and 2% judged it as grammatical.

Looking at the percentages we obtained we can clearly state that the prediction we started out from is valid – native speakers of Romanian attested the fact that the expressions/ items used in the examples qualify as PPIs.

Taking a closer look at examples like the ones under (35d,e), we where we tested the occurrence of items/ expressions similar to 'in a jiffy/ in the twinkling of an eye' – were lower than we would have liked them to be. Among the possible explanations for the low percentages obtained for examples (35d,e) could be that:

i. some PPIs can appear in the scope of clausemate negation if focused.
ii. Since expressions like 'in a jiffy/ before you can say Jack Robinson' denote minimal spans, but still produce an emphatic effect, some of our participants might have interpreted them as NPIs, which would be understandable since minimal quantity and emphatic effect looks like a diagnosis for NPIs.[22]

In conclusion, this paper argued in favour of an analysis of lexical PPIs in Romanian in the lines of the Scalar Model of Polarity proposed by Israel (1996), viewing lexical PPIs as scalar operators, specified for two scalar semantic features, quantitative value and informative value, whose lexical semantic-pragmatic content make them sensitive to scalar inferences. The inferences relevant to polarity licensing do not depend on semantic entailment alone; they seem to depend on a general ability for scalar reasoning.

Polarity items are governed by the same sort of inferencing which determines the rhetoric of scalar emphasis and the interpretation of superlatives, and this inferencing is essentially pragmatic. The inferences relevant to polarity licensing need not to be and frequently are not logical at all, that is, they do not depend entirely on semantic entailment and they cannot be captured at any single level of representation.

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[22] Nevertheless, items/ expressions similar to 'in a jiffy/ in the twinkling of an eye/ before you can say Jack Robinson' qualify as emphatic PPIs, actually inverted PPIs (cf. Israel, 1996) and the role such forms play within the structure of a scalar model will be the subject of a future paper which will aim at showing that inverted polarity refer to roles that involve entities which militate against the realization of a proposition, and also that inverted polarity items do not undermine the SM.

For short, a scalar model is basically a conceptual tool for thinking about the relations between different possible eventualities. The structure of the model is such that if one knows the status of a given eventuality (i.e. whether it does or does not hold), one may automatically infer the status of other, related eventualities within the model. According to Israel (1996), this is the key problem inverted polarity items face. Elements on any scale, within a scalar model are always ranked in terms of the inferences they support for a given propositional schema. In scale preserving contexts, elements that form the propositions with the most entailments are ranked the top of the scale and those elements (that under the same conditions) form the propositions with the fewest entailments are ranked at the bottom. → the ranking does not depend on the objective properties of the scalar elements alone, but is crucially determined by the way these properties interact with a given propositional schema.

Polarity sensitivity is a sensitivity to scalar reasoning. Scalar reasoning plays a pervasive role in the structure of rhetorical utterances in general and polarity items reflect the conventional exploitation of scalar reasoning and complex scalar models for specific rhetorical purposes in discourse.

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