The scalarity and quantificational domain of speaker concession

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This study probes the concessive meaning of *at least* (CON) by examining its scalar property. Five discoveries are presented. First, CON is focus-sensitive and compatible with various scales. Second, CON demonstrates two scalar effects: the top-of-the-scale effect (TSE) and the bottom-of-the-scale-effect (BSE). TSE demands that the associate cannot be the element at the top of the scale while BSE that the associate cannot be the element at the bottom of the scale. Third, CON arises when the set of contextually relevant alternatives is evaluated against the speaker's goal and the interlocutor's interest in a given discourse (Biezma 2013), and when the speaker knows that the relevant higher alternatives are false in the discourse. Forth, the relevant higher alternatives are not always more preferable by the common world knownledge. Finally, CON does not arise with short answers. This study shows how these empirical properties are captured by a scalar meaning interacting with pragmatics.

References: • Biezma, M. (2013): Only one at least – refining the role of discourse in building alternatives. In: *Penn Working Papers* 19(1), 11–19. • Nakanishi, K. & H. Rullmann (2009): Epistemic and concessive interpretations of at least. Slides presented in CLA. • Kay, P. (1992): At least. In: Frames, Fields, and Contrasts – New Essays in Semantic and Lexical Organization: Hillsdayle, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 309–331.