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(PARTIALLY) FREE TO VARY
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BACKGROUND: Recent work on Romance epistemic determiners (e.g. Falaus 2009) has shown that Romanian *vreun* has a more restricted distribution than other epistemic determiners (e.g. Spanish *algún,* French *quelque*). Unlike its Romance counterparts, it is restricted to contexts which are interpreted with respect to an epistemic modal base, under operators which satisfy the epistemic constraint in (1):

(1)   Op *p* entails that the speaker's epistemic alternatives include *non p*-worlds

This generalization has been argued to capture the occurrence of *vreun* under epistemic modals and epistemic attitude verbs (e.g. *think, suppose, guess, hope*) and its non-occurrence under non-epistemic (e.g. deontic modals) and factive (*know, regret*) or non-epistemic intensional verbs (*advise, say, intend*).

PROBLEM: In this paper, we take this generalization one step further, by examining the distribution of *vreun* in an understudied context, namely imperatives. Farkas (2002) argues that *vreun* is ruled out in imperatives, as illustrated in (2):

(2)   * Ia   ***vreo***   prăjitură!
          Take.IMP.2SG   VREUN   cookie

However, a closer examination of empirical facts reveals that there are imperatives which allow *vreun*, like in the following example:

(3)   Verifică   pe ***vreun***   site, nu sunt   sigur că nu e   o greşeală.
          Check.IMP.2SG on VREUN   site, NEG be.1SG sure   that NEG be.3SG a mistake
          'Check on some website, I'm not sure it's not a mistake.'

Standard analyses of imperatives treat them as 'modalized' propositions (e.g. Han 2000, Schwager 2006, Aloni 2007). Accordingly, their interpretation involves a modal base and an ordering source, which is obligatorily 'preference-related'. On these assumptions, the occurrence of *vreun* in (3) is surprising. We know that its use under modal operators is restricted to epistemic contexts, but imperatives are not epistemic modals. Consequently, these examples pose a double challenge. On the one hand, we want to pinpoint the distinction among imperatives that determines the (non-)occurrence of *vreun*. On the other hand, we need to understand whether and how these examples square with the data covered by (1).

PROPOSAL: In order to account for the use of *vreun* in imperatives and put it together with the facts captured by the generalization in (1), we adopt the alternative-based, semantic approach to polarity developed in Chierchia (2006, 2010) and Falaus (2009). On this account, a dependent determiner like *vreun* has as part of its meaning *active alternatives*, which require the insertion of an exhaustivity operator (akin to *only*), and give rise to (obligatory) implicatures, used for enriching the basic meaning of assertions. The aforementioned analyses have shown that (i) like all indefinites, *vreun* triggers *scalar* alternatives and (ii) like all polarity-sensitive items, it activates singleton *domain* alternatives. The switch to singleton alternatives derives a parametric difference among existential dependent determiners (Jayez & Tovena 2006, Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez-Benito 2010), namely the extent of **variation** ('freedom of choice') among the members of the restriction set – TOTAL for existential FCIs like *un NP oarecare / qualsiasi/ quelconque* (4) and PARTIAL for epistemic items like *algún* or *vreun* (5):

(4)   Poţi dansa cu ***un coleg oarecare,*** # dar nu cu Paul.
          'You can dance with a colleague whatsoever, but not with Paul'

(5)   E posibil să se fi întâlnit cu ***vreun*** prieten, dar *nu poate fi Luca* tocmai l-am văzut.
          'It's possible he met some friend, but *it cannot be Luca*, I have just seen him.'

This meaning difference stems from different sizes in the domain alternatives considered for exhaustification: if the domain alternatives are *non-minimal*, the resulting meaning is a TOTAL free-choice interpretation: there is a single individual satisfying the existential claim, and *all*

relevant alternatives qualify as possible options (existential FCI); if the domain alternatives are *minimal* (singletons), the resulting meaning is PARTIAL VARIATION - *some, but not necessarily all* alternatives qualify as possible options (epistemic items).

Elaborating on this analysis, we show it can capture the imperative facts. More precisely, we argue that the contrast in (2)-(3) can be reduced to a more general distinction between two types of imperatives, discussed in Aloni (2007). The two kinds of imperatives have different entailment properties, as best illustrated by cases involving disjunctions – whereas choice-offering disjunctive imperatives *do a or b* entail that the hearer is both allowed to do *a and* allowed to do *b* ('free-choice permission'), crucially, this entailment is absent for alternative-presenting imperatives, i.e. *Stop that foolishness or leave the room* does not entail *You may stop that foolishness and you may leave the room*. Importing this distinction in terms of *total*/*partial* variation, we show that *vreun* is excluded from *choice-offering* imperatives (2) and possible in *alternative-presenting* imperatives like (3) and (6) below. Only the latter is compatible with a continuation of the type *don't do b,* overtly excluding one possible value, thus qualifying as partial variation models. This is confirmed by the continuation in (6), in a context where A is waiting for an important parcel, but will be away for the next couple of days. B says:

(6) Vorbeşte cu **vreun** vecin, să ridice el coletul. Dar *nu cu Petre*, nu prea e dispus să ajute.
'Talk to some neighbor, so that he picks up the parcel. But not to Peter, he is not too willing to help.'

In contrast to this, choice-offering imperatives like (2) qualify as total variation models, and hence rule out the use of *vreun*. To account for the observed pattern, we argue that the full range of occurrences of *vreun* can be captured by assuming that *vreun* imposes a stronger constraint on its domain alternatives – not only does *vreun* allow partial variation, like other epistemic determiners, but actually *requires* it:

(7) *Vreun* rules out TOTAL VARIATION, i.e. one of the domain alternatives must stand a chance of being false.

We implement this requirement by assuming that the total variation implicature gets added to the set of alternatives over which we exhaustify, and show that the resulting meaning in a modal context entails that *one of the alternatives must be false* (but we ignore which one). Whereas epistemic operators satisfy this constraint (in virtue of their *non p*-worlds meaning component), this requirement cannot be met under deontic modalities, like in free-choice permission sentences of the form *You may eat the cake or the icecream*, where *each* disjunct is a possible option (Fox 2007). In other words, the lexical semantics of deontic modalities and choice-offering imperatives allows for total variation, a situation which gives rise to a clash with the partial variation requirement imposed by *vreun* (7), which is correctly predicted to be ruled out in these contexts.

Summarizing, our proposal to reformulate the epistemic constraint as a condition on domain alternatives maintains the empirical coverage of (1), and has the advantage of offering an account for the distribution of *vreun* in imperatives. The alternative-based proposal we pursue allows us to integrate *vreun* in a broader typology of dependent elements, and retains the recurrent insight that differences among dependent indefinites result from different operations on quantificational domains. Their restricted distribution then comes out as the result of the logical interaction of their lexical meaning with other operators in the context.

SELECTED REFERENCES: Aloni 2007. 'Free Choice, Modals and Imperatives'. *NALS*. 15, 65-94; Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez-Benito 2010. 'Modal Indefinites'. *NALS*; Chierchia 2006. 'Broaden your Views. Implicatures of Domain Widening and the Spontaneous Logicality of Language', *LI 37*: 535-590; Falaus 2009. *Polarity items and dependent indefinites in Romanian*, PhD diss, U. Nantes; Farkas 2002. 'Extreme Non-Specificity in Romanian', *in* C. Beyssade *et al.* (eds), *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2000*; Jayez & Tovena 2006. 'Epistemic determiners', *JoS 23*, 217–250; Schwager 2006. *Interpreting Imperatives*. PhD.thesis, Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universität zu Frankfurt.