Recent work has proposed scale structural differences underlie absolute adjectives (straight, bent, dirty, clean) and relative adjectives (tall, short, old, young) (Kennedy and McNally 2005, Rotstein and Winter 2004, Cruse 1986).

Proposal: Negative evaluative adjectives project scales with qualities of both classes (closed scales like absolute adjectives, but context-determined standards like relative adjectives).

Roadmap:
§1.0 Absolute vs. relative adjectives vs. evaluative adjectives
§2.0 Diagnostics of scale structure
§3.0 Offline evidence for scale structures
§4.0 Online evidence for scale structures
§5.0 Future work

1.0 Relative, Absolute, and Evaluative Scale Structures

Characteristics that unify the set of all gradable adjectives:

• All adjectives associated with a scale. A scale is constructed from three components: D (set of degrees), < (total ordering on D), and δ (a dimension of ordering).

• When used in their ‘unmarked’ form, (e.g., ‘John is tall’), adjectives bear a null morpheme POS (‘positive’) that selects a point on the scale (STND(g)) such that the subject stands out with respect to the adjective (g).

\[ ([\text{POS}])^\circ = \lambda g \lambda x. g(x) > \text{STND}(g) \]  
(Kennedy 2007b)

Parameterized features characterizing classes of adjectives:

I. The nature of D:
   o ‘Open scale’ adjectives: no restriction on D
   o ‘Closed scale’ adjectives: minimal and/or maximal endpoint on D

II. The nature of STND(g):
   o Context-determined
   o Scale-determined

---

1 I am very grateful to Lyn Frazier, Rajesh Bhatt, and Charles Clifton Jr. for their guidance and advice in this project. I thank members of the Second Year Seminar for their suggestions and support. This work also benefitted from discussion with Chris Kennedy. Many thanks to Charles Clifton Jr. for assistance with statistics. All errors are my own.
1.1 Relative and Absolute Adjectives

• Two parameterized points of variation underlie the distinction between relative and absolute adjectives (Kennedy and McNally 2005).

• **Relative adjectival scales:** open scale, context-determined \( \text{STND}(g) \)
  - tall, short, old, young, expensive, inexpensive

(2)  
  a. *Short*  
  \[
  \text{STND}_{\text{short}}  
  \]
  \[
  \triangleleft \text{-height} \]
  \[
  \vdots \text{----------------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \vdots
  \]

  b. *Tall*  
  \[
  \text{STND}_{\text{tall}}  
  \]
  \[
  \text{+height} \text{----------------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \vdots
  \]

**Key:**

\( \triangleleft = \text{not part of adjective’s basic scale} \)
\( \checkmark = \text{part of the adjective’s basic scale} \)

• **Absolute adjectival scales:** closed scale, scale-determined \( \text{STND}(g) \).
  - Minimum endpoint (\( d_{\text{min}} \)): bent, open, dirty
  - Maximum endpoint (\( d_{\text{max}} \)): straight, closed, clean

(3)  
  a. *Straight*  
  \[
  \text{STND}_{\text{straight}}  
  \]
  \[
  \checkmark \text{-bend} \]
  \[
  \vdots \text{----------------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \vdots
  \]
  \[
  d_{\text{max}} = d_{\text{min}} = 0 \text{ degrees of bend}
  \]

  b. *Bent*  
  \[
  \checkmark \text{+bend} \]
  \[
  \vdots \text{----------------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \text{-------} \vdots
  \]
  \[
  d_{\text{min}} = d_{\text{max}} = 0 \text{ degrees of bend}
  \]
  \[
  d_{\text{max}} = d_{\text{min}} = 0 \text{ degrees of bend}
  \]

  o For the antonymic pair *straight / bent*, \( d_{\text{min}} = d_{\text{max}} = 0 \text{ degrees of bend} \).

  o All points on the scale for *bent* exceed \( d_{\text{min}} \).

• **Obligatory Scale Hypothesis:** Adjectival scales are projected as part of the basic meaning of an adjective (Frazier, Clifton, and Stolterfoht 2008).
  - \( d_{\text{min}} \) and \( d_{\text{max}} \) do not arise through coercion, deliberate reasoning, or POS.
1.2 Evaluative Adjectives

• If restrictions on D and the nature of \( \text{STND}(g) \) are truly parametric, we predict the full typology shown in FIGURE A. So far, only Quadrants I and III are attested in the literature.

**FIGURE A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Structure Typology</th>
<th>I. Relative Adjectives</th>
<th>II. ???</th>
<th>III. Absolute Adjectives</th>
<th>IV. ???</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Open scale</td>
<td>• Open scale</td>
<td>• Closed scale</td>
<td>• Closed scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scale-determined standard</td>
<td>• Scale-determined standard</td>
<td>• Context-determined standard</td>
<td>• Scale-determined standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• A class of adjectives that has not received much theoretical attention is **evaluative adjectives** (Bierwisch 1989).

(4)  
  a. *Negative evaluative*: Ugly, rude, unenthusiastic, lazy  
  b. *Positive evaluative*: Pretty, polite, enthusiastic, industrious

**Proposal:**

• Negative evaluative adjectives occupy Quadrant IV.  
  o They project scales with minimum endpoints (\( d_{\text{min}} \)).  
  o The value of \( d_{\text{min}} \) is determined relative to context but is projected as part of the adjective’s basic meaning.  
• Positive evaluative adjectives are relative adjectives.

(5)  
  a. *ugly*  
    \[ [-\text{attractiveness}] \]  
    \( \downarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{---} \end{array} \right\} \cdots \)  
    \( d_{\text{min}} \)  
  b. *pretty*  
    \[ [+\text{attractiveness}] \]  
    \( \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{---} \end{array} \right\} \cdots \text{STND}_{\text{pretty}} \)

• The scale structure for *ugly* reflects an earlier proposal by Bierwisch (1989) for lower closed scales for all evaluative adjectives.

• Rett (2008) also groups negative evaluative adjectives with minimum standard adjectives. Evidence is not provided for this claim (beyond data in §2.1). In addition, Rett takes positive evaluative adjectives to be maximum standard adjectives.
2.0 Central Diagnostics for Scales with Minimal Endpoints

• Two diagnostics for the existence of minimal endpoints \((d_{\text{min}})\) are discussed. With respect to both diagnostics, negative evaluative adjectives behave as though they project \(d_{\text{min}}\). Positive evaluative adjectives pattern like relative adjectives.

• Relative adjectives are represented by dimensional adjectives (\(tall, long, short\)).

2.1 Entailment to the \textit{POS}-marked form by the comparative

• A positive result on this diagnostic indicates a scale with a minimal endpoint: the degree that would have been \(\text{STND}(g)\) is the lower bound of the scale, prior to composition with \(\text{POS}\).

• Minimum standard absolute adjectives (\(bent\)) entail the \textit{POS}-marked form.

(6) The red pipe is more bent than the blue pipe \(\models\) The red pipe is bent.

• Relative adjectives do not carry such entailments, indicating that they have open scales prior to composition with \(\text{POS}\).

(7) Sandy is taller than Emi \(\neq\) Sandy is tall and \(\neq\) Emi is not tall.

• Negative evaluative adjectives pattern like minimum standard absolute adjectives.

  ○ Positive evaluative adjectives pattern like other relative adjectives.

(8) a. Sandy is uglier than Emi \(\models\) Sandy is ugly.
    b. Sandy is prettier than Emi \(\neq\) Sandy is pretty.

2.2 Felicity of minimizing modifiers

• Adverbial degree modifiers (\(completely, slightly, a\ little, halfway\)) have been used to diagnose scale structure.

• Minimizing modifiers (\(slightly, a\ little\)) diagnose a minimal endpoint (\(d_{\text{min}}\)) (Paradis 1997, Rotstein and Winter 2004, Kennedy and McNally 2005). The denotation in (9) is based on Rotstein and Winter (2004).

\[
[[slightly\ A]] = \{d_x \in S_A : R(d_{\text{min}},d_x) \land R(d_x,d_{SI}) \land d_x \neq d_{SI}\},
\]

where \(d_{SI} \in S_A\) satisfies \(R(d_{\text{min}},d_{SI}) \land d_{\text{min}} \neq d_{SI} \land d_{\text{min}} \neq d_x\)

\(d_x\) is a member of scale \(S_A\), where \(d_x\) occupies the space on the scale between \(d_{\text{min}}\) and \(d_{SI}\). \(d_{\text{min}}\) is not equal to \(d_x\).
This denotation accounts for its distribution in overt degree constructions (10) and with adjectives bearing minimal endpoints (e.g., \textit{bent}).

\begin{itemize}
\item[(10)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item Sandy is slightly/a little taller than Emi. \quad d_{\text{Emi}} = d_{\text{min}}, \quad d_{\text{Sandy}} = d_x, \quad d_x > d_{\text{min}}
\item Sandy is slightly/a little less tall than Emi. \quad d_{\text{Emi}} = d_{\text{min}}, \quad d_{\text{Sandy}} = d_x, \quad d_x < d_{\text{min}}
\item Sandy is slightly too tall to be a jockey. \quad d_{\text{jockey}} = d_{\text{min}}, \quad d_{\text{Sandy}} = d_x, \quad d_x > d_{\text{min}}
\item Sandy is slightly as tall as Emi. \quad d_{\text{Emi}} = d_{\text{min}}, \quad d_{\text{Sandy}} = d_x, \quad d_x \geq d_{\text{min}}
\item Sandy is slightly tall enough to be a jockey. \quad d_{\text{jockey}} = d_{\text{min}}, \quad d_{\text{Sandy}} = d_x, \quad d_x > d_{\text{min}}
\end{enumerate}
\end{itemize}

Among absolute adjectives, only minimum standard adjectives (\textit{bent}) are felicitous, as predicted.

\begin{itemize}
\item[(11)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item The red pipe is slightly bent. \quad d_{\text{Emi}} = d_{\text{min}}, \quad d_{\text{Sandy}} = d_x, \quad d_x > d_{\text{min}}
\item The red pipe is slightly straight. \quad d_{\text{Emi}} = d_{\text{min}}, \quad d_{\text{Sandy}} = d_x, \quad d_x < d_{\text{min}}
\end{enumerate}
\end{itemize}

Negative evaluative adjectives are felicitous with \textit{slightly} and \textit{a little} while positive evaluative adjectives are not.

- This supports the scale structures argued for above.

Relative adjectives pattern in an unexpected way with this diagnostic. Kennedy (2007b) reports the adjectives in (13) to be ?? with a minimizing modifier. I find them felicitous.

The sentences permit TOO and A BIT interpretations.

\begin{itemize}
\item[(13)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item Sandy is slightly tall / short.
\item Sandy is slightly ugly / rude / unenthusiastic / lazy.
\item Sandy is slightly pretty / polite / enthusiastic / industrious.
\end{enumerate}
\end{itemize}

Relative adjectives pattern in an unexpected way with this diagnostic. Kennedy (2007b) reports the adjectives in (13) to be ?? with a minimizing modifier. I find them felicitous.

The sentences permit TOO and A BIT interpretations.

- Sandy is too tall / short.
- Sandy exceeds the standard for tall / short to a small degree.

I argue that the TOO and A BIT interpretations in (13) arise through scale coercion. Coercion permits combination with minimizing modifiers.

- Under the TOO interpretation, $d_{\text{min}} = d_{\text{to}}$ (implicit or explicit).
- Under the A BIT interpretation, $d_{\text{min}}$ determined in relation to STND($g$).

Other modifiers (e.g., \textit{completely}, \textit{very}) known to coerce scales as well.

The ability of modifiers to force scale coercion does not mean that these modifiers should be discounted, however (contra Kennedy, p.c.).
• Instead, I predict that coercion leads to (i) multiple possible coercion ‘strategies’ and (ii) greater processing cost.

(i) Sentence (13) gives rise to multiple interpretations. I argue in Section 3 that this is true for relative adjectives more generally.

(ii) Experiment 3 shows that dimensional adjectives modified by *slightly* incurred longer reading times than negative evaluative adjectives modified by *slightly*.

### 2.3 Interim Summary

• Figure B compares the classes of adjectives posited by Kennedy and McNally (2005) to evaluative adjectives in terms of the diagnostics summarized above.

• In the remainder of the paper, I will focus on minimizing modifiers as diagnostics of minimal endpoints for negative evaluative adjectives, addressing the issue of coercion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic</th>
<th>Absolute</th>
<th>Evaluative</th>
<th>Relative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max.</td>
<td>Min.</td>
<td>NegEval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>straight</td>
<td>bent</td>
<td>ugly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimizing modifiers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entailment to the POS</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Experiment 1 considers facts in dotted circle in an offline study.

• Experiment 2 considers facts in solid circle in an offline study.

  o Experiment 3 considers facts in solid circle in an online study.

### 3.0 Offline Experimental Evidence for Scale Structures

#### 3.1 Experiment 1: Offline comparison of absolute and evaluative adjectives

• If negative evaluative adjectives project scales with minimal endpoints \(d_{\text{min}}\), minimizing modifiers should be felicitous. We expect:

  (i) Negative evaluative adjectives will be more felicitous with minimizing modifiers than positive evaluative adjectives.

  (ii) Negative evaluative adjectives and minimum standard absolute adjectives will both be felicitous with minimizing modifiers.
Materials:

- 32 test sentences of the form in (14). 16 evaluative antonymic pairs, 16 absolute antonymic pairs; *slightly* and *a little* used in equal proportion. 44 fillers.
  - Subjects only saw one sentence from each set of four to avoid influence of antonyms (or minimal pair methodology, Hirotani 2004).

(14)  a. During the lecture on ecosystems, the graduate students looked \{Ø / slightly\} \{interested / uninterested\}.
  b. The camp leader said that the pole we found to hold up the tent was \{Ø / slightly\} \{straight / curved\}.

- Ratings (1 = completely unacceptable, 5 = completely acceptable) collected from 24 native English-speaking UMass undergraduates.

Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure C</th>
<th>Mean ratings for absolute vs. evaluative adjectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Min</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluative</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NegEval</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Slightly PosEval and Slightly Max collocations incur large, highly significant penalties (pMCMC < 0.001; pMCMC < 0.0001).
  - Indicates scales incompatible with minimizing modifiers.

- Slightly NegEval and Slightly Min incur much smaller penalties.\(^2\)
  - Indicates scales compatible with minimizing modifiers.

3.2 Experiment 2: Offline comparison of evaluative and dimensional adjectives

- Section 2.2 claimed that minimizing modifiers force scale coercion where the scale is not inherently compatible.
  - The availability of scale coercion means that adjectives incompatible with minimizing modifiers may not always be judged infelicitous.

\(^2\) Why did Slightly NegEval and Slightly Min incur penalties at all? The Slightly NegEval penalty was significant (pMCMC < 0.005) while the Slightly Min penalty was not. I take both penalties to be due to increased complexity.
• Experiment 2 consisted of a rating study and a small exit poll.

3.2.1 Rating Study

• 32 test sentences of the form in (15); 16 evaluative antonymic pairs, 16 dimensional adjectives; slightly and a little used in equal proportion. Fillers and evaluative adjective sentences the same as in Experiment 1.

(15) a. Maxine thought that the dress Molly bought was \{Ø / slightly\} \{pretty / ugly\}.  
    b. Marsha said that the hallway in her apartment building was \{Ø / slightly\} \{narrow\}.

• Ratings (1 = completely unacceptable, 5 = completely acceptable) collected from 36 native English-speaking UMass undergraduates (not participants in Experiment 1).

Figure D  Mean ratings for dimensional vs. evaluative adjectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Evaluative</th>
<th></th>
<th>PosEval</th>
<th>Slightly PosEval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dim</td>
<td>Slightly Dim</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Dimensional adjectives were as felicitous with minimizing modifiers as negative evaluative adjectives were (4.21 vs. 4.18).³

• However, the two classes of adjectives differed in the range of interpretations assigned to slightly/a little Adj examples. These results were captured in the exit poll.

3.2.2 Exit Poll

• The exit poll was designed to determine participants’ intuitions about preferred interpretations of sentences containing minimizing modifiers with dimensional, negative evaluative, and positive evaluative adjectives.

• If dimensional adjectives require coercion in order to license minimizing modifiers, we predict a split in the preferred interpretations based on grammatical context, the participant’s own biases, etc.

  o If negative evaluative adjectives project scales compatible with minimizing modifiers, we predict very little variation in interpretations.

³ Penalties incurred by modified dimensional and negative evaluative adjectives numerically small but both significant. Again, this penalty is likely due to complexity.
Participants given an exit poll of 6 items drawn from experimental materials. 3 forms of exit poll containing distinct adjectives. Antonyms did not appear on the same form of the poll.

Paraphrases were discussed in relation to two provided paraphrases – Too and A Bit.

- Too and A Bit paraphrases both provided based on my intuitions and intuitions of colleagues; participants volunteered responses before seeing given paraphrases.

Christopher read many reviews that said that the North Face tent was slightly big. How would you paraphrase this sentence?

a. The North Face tent is big, but not extremely so.

b. The tent is excessively/too big.

**FIGURE E** Responses by adjective type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>NegEval</th>
<th>PosEval</th>
<th>Dim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too</td>
<td>4 (6.7%)</td>
<td>11 (20.8%)</td>
<td>47 (39.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Bit</td>
<td>54 (90%)</td>
<td>37 (69.8%)</td>
<td>70 (58.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2 (3.3%)</td>
<td>5 (9.4%)</td>
<td>2 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost no variation in responses seen with negative evaluative adjectives: A Bit paraphrase overwhelmingly selected.

- Follows if A Bit paraphrase arises when slightly modifies a $d_{\text{min}}$ determined in relation to STND$(g)$. This is the $d_{\text{min}}$ I argue to be projected by negative evaluative adjectives.

High degree of variation between Too and A Bit paraphrases for dimensional adjectives. This is consistent with the coercion story for dimensional adjectives.

- Variation suggests that ‘creativity’ is required by participants when confronted with a minimizing modifier and a dimensional adjective. Such creativity wasn’t required by negative evaluative adjectives, as expected.

Less preference for the Too interpretation seen for positive evaluative adjectives. This may be due to pragmatic factors (i.e., when can one be too pretty/industrious/polite?)

### 3.3 Summary of Offline Evidence

**Offline Conclusions:**

Experiments 1 and 2 suggest that $d_{\text{min}}$ (minimal endpoint) is part of the basic meaning of negative evaluative adjectives.

---

4 Where participants were indecisive between the two paraphrases, both responses are included in the totals.
4.0 Online Evidence for Scale Structures

• A self-paced reading study was conducted to consider online evidence for negative evaluative adjectival scales.

• Obligatory Scale Hypothesis (Frazier et al. 2008) argued that scales (including $d_{\text{min}}$ and/or $d_{\text{max}}$) are projected as part of the basic meaning of absolute adjectives.

  o If negative evaluative adjectives are comparable to minimum standard absolute adjectives, we expect to find evidence that $d_{\text{min}}$ does not arise through coercion.

• Both negative evaluative and dimensional (relative) adjectives permit minimizing modifiers.

• However, dimensional adjectives require scale coercion prior to composition. We predict coercion to incur processing costs.

Materials:

• Moving window self-paced reading study. 36 native English-speaking UMass undergraduates (not participants in Experiment 1 or 2).

• 48 sentences of the type in (17) were seen by each subject. Sentences were counterbalanced across the four conditions (slightly vs. too, negative evaluative vs. dimensional). 48 fillers.

  o Sentences kept constant except for critical region (underscored).

  o Reading times from the continuation region (italicized) also collected.

(17) Context: Mr. Richards suggested that | Ms. Smith show a film on the Massachusetts railway system | to her students during civic studies class.

  a. Ms. Smith thought that | the film was | slightly boring | to interest | her students, | so showed | another film.
  b. Ms. Smith thought that | the film was | slightly long | to interest | of her students, | so she showed | another film.
  c. Ms. Smith thought that | the film was | too boring | to interest | her students, | so she showed | another film.
  d. Ms. Smith thought that | the film was | too long | to interest | her students, | so she showed | another film.

• Reading times for slightly…to vs. too…to condition compared for each adjective type.

  o Too…to condition taken as the baseline for both adjective types. Too does not impose requirements on the adjective’s scale so coercion is never required.
On average, evaluative adjectives are longer and less frequently used than dimensional adjectives. Thus, any slowdown in the critical region due to scale coercion of dimensional adjectives was predicted to be obscured by greater length of evaluative adjectives.

1. In fact, we expect the effects of semantic coercion to appear in the continuation region (Clifton et al. 2007). Frazier et al. (2008) found effects of scale coercion with absolute adjectives in the continuation region in eye tracking experiments.

```
Predicted Critical Interaction:
(slightly long - too long) > (slightly boring - too boring)
```

Results:

2. In critical region, no significant effect except for effects due to length/frequency.

3. Mean reading times in the continuation region for Slightly NegEval and Slightly Dim basically equal.

```
Mean Reading Times (ms) in the Continuation Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Sl. NegEval</th>
<th>Sl. Dim</th>
<th>Too NegEval</th>
<th>Too Dim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>548.7</td>
<td>548.9</td>
<td>517.2</td>
<td>472.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

4. However, the difference between Sl. Dim and Too Dim (76.4ms) was twice as large as the difference between Sl. NegEval and Too NegEval (31.5ms).

```
Critical Interaction Attested and Significant:
(slightly long - too long) > (slightly boring - too boring)
76.4ms > 31.5ms
pMCMC = 0.03
```

- Evidence that minimizing modifiers force scale coercion with dimensional adjectives. No scale coercion required with negative evaluative adjectives.

5.0 Conclusions and Future Work

- Negative evaluative adjectives project scales with minimal endpoints (d_{min}), like minimum standard absolute adjectives.

- Focused on evidence for this conclusion from distribution and interpretation of minimizing modifiers (slightly, a little).
Two studies (offline rating, online self-paced reading) were presented to demonstrate that negative evaluative adjectives project $d_{\text{min}}$ as part of their basic meaning.

- Minimizing modifiers can modify relative adjectives only through coercion.

**Primary research question:** Are negative evaluative adjectives the occupants of Quadrant IV?

**Figure A** Scale Structure Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Relative Adjectives</th>
<th>II.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Open scale</td>
<td>• Open scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scale-determined standard</td>
<td>• Scale-determined standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III. Absolute Adjectives</th>
<th>IV. Negative Evaluative Adjectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Closed scale</td>
<td>• Closed scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Context-determined standard</td>
<td>• Context-determined standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative evaluative adjectives project closed scales (with $d_{\text{min}}$) as part of their basic meaning…

...but what is the nature of $d_{\text{min}}$? How is it similar to or different from the $d_{\text{min}}$ of absolute adjectives?

**Future Work:**

- Absolute adjectives are infelicitous with the implicit comparison construction (compared to $y$, $x$ is Adj), which involves context manipulation (Kennedy 2007a).

- Adjectives with context-determined values of STND(g) predicted to be felicitous.

- A pilot study was included as fillers for Experiment 3. Participants rated the felicity of absolute, relative (dimensional), and evaluative adjectives given contexts encouraging shifted standards.

- Taken together, these studies bring work on understudied evaluative adjectives into conversation with theoretical work by Rotstein and Winter (2004) and Kennedy and McNally (2005), and processing work by Frazier et al. (2008).

- Negative evaluative adjectives demonstrate the simultaneous diversity and predictability of adjectives.
References


