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Bert Cornillie, Hubert Cuyckens, and Torsten Leuschner

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Altri autori (Persone) DavidseKristin

CornillieBert <1975->

CuyckensH

LeuschnerTorsten <1966->

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Sommario/riassunto

This study focuses on "the many careers of negative polarity items", taking a diachronic perspective on NPIs in general and on scalar NPIs in particular. Its main thesis is that scalar NPIs are prototypical NPIs. The downward entailing contexts of NPIs can be explained and made cognitively accessible by the pragmatic mechanisms associated with scalar NPIs, viz. the capacity to evoke alternatives (ALT) and the scalar interpretation of these alternatives (SCALE). NPIs with standard contexts of distribution are, or are otherwise tied to, scalar expressions, while NPIs with an idiosyncratic range

3.5 Neither (de)grammaticalization nor lexicalization