

Master Thesis

Is *nauwelijks* barely or hardly translatable?



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Introduction

In 2005 Elsevier published the article *Decision problems for semi-Thue systems with a few rules* by Matiyasevitch and Senizergues. They are respectively Russian and French and choose to write in English as a common second language. However, the argument that they wanted to convey was *a system with few rules*, because the article was about their study on semi-Thue systems with a very small amount of rules. *Few* and *a few* might have overlapping semantic value, but they seem to draw a different picture in the mind of the hearer, lead to an opposite conclusion (Pullum 2017).

This feature of language became the basis for the ‘theory of argumentativity within language’, outlined by Anscombre (1989) and Ducrot (1995) and later by Verhagen (2008). This theory thus argues that certain statements have an extra argumentative value next to, or above, and not derivable from their informative value. Where the informative view of language meaning says that the conventional function of words and construction comes from the information that they give and that rhetorical effects can then be added to this depending on the contexts and can thus change, the theory of argumentativity within language contrarily argues that the conventional phrases support an argument towards a certain conclusion. This argumentative orientation, that can be either positive or negative, is then the actual constant of its function and the informative value is changeable. (Verhagen 312) Some words, known as argumentative operators, only function based on their argumentative value. Examples of these are the adverbs *hardly* and *barely*. In the situation *The boy hardly gave a right answer* literally would still entail that the boy gave some right answers, however it will generally lead to a negative conclusion such as *He must have forgotten to open a book and actually study*.

Matiyasevitch and Senizergues were probably not familiar with the full significance of the phrase *a few*, as English is not their native language. However, the editors at Elsevier that are native in English did not recognize it either. It gives to wonder how important knowledge of the argumentativity is when writing or speaking in another language or more importantly when translating between languages.

We would like to focus on negative argumentative operators, such as *hardly* or *barely*, and analyse the difference in usage and argumentative force in different languages. There is literature on these words individually, often in comparison with other operators in that language, but we would thus like to expand the literature by combining it with translation studies. Our suggestion is that in translating these words, their argumentative force and direction should also be taken into account, rather than solely translating their semantic meaning. The Dutch operator *nauwelijks*, for example, can be

translated into English as *barely*, *hardly* or *scarcely*, but are all these three translations compatible in their usage with their semantic Dutch counterpart?

The main research question of this thesis will be: The Dutch argumentative operators *nauwelijks* and *amper* and their English semantic counterparts, *barely*, *scarcely* and *hardly*, all have a negative argumentative orientation, but how are they possibly different and how could they best be translated? If they indeed were to have their own distinctive argumentative strength, then we might want to consider changing the way we usually translate them.

To answer the research question, we have chosen to compare Dutch and English as these languages are closely related and have operators with similar semantic meaning. The operators that will be examined are outlined here below.

Dutch argumentative operators: *nauwelijks*, *amper*,

Engels argumentative operators: *barely*, *hardly*, *scarcely*

The research will be a combination of an online corpus analysis and surveys among native speakers of Dutch and English.

This thesis will first look at the literature on translation sciences and the theory on argumentativity within language. Firstly, we will consider the concept of translation. What does translating mean? What is the status of translated works and the reputation of the translator? The chapter will further explain the methods that translators might use and the problems they might face. Secondly, we will look at the concept of meaning of utterances. We will discuss how the construction of the meaning of an utterance is generally explained by giving an overview of the field of semantics and the most prominent views within pragmatics. How do people derive the full intended meaning of an utterance? The view of argumentativity within language will then be placed within this sphere of interest. What are the possible similarities and differences? The theory of Anscombe and Ducrot will be further explained and compared to the other fields.

Secondly, we will discuss the research of this thesis on the differences between the negative argumentative operators in the Dutch and English language by conducting an online corpus analysis and online surveys. We will begin by explaining the methodology of the corpus analysis of an online contextual dictionary. This will help determining how the operators are generally translated and also in what kind of linguistic environment or context they are used. Do they show similar usages within sentences? Having explained the methodology of this part of the research, the first results will be

presented. We will discuss the found translations of the operators in the corpus and their possible constraints. Do they have their own distinctive place in the syntax or a particular context?

The third part of this thesis will then continue with outlining the second part of the research, namely: an online survey among Dutch and English native speakers, in which they are asked to complete sentences containing one of the argumentative operators. The survey will be used to verify the findings of the corpus analysis and moreover, the directness and outspokenness of the given answers will be taken as an indicator for the argumentative force of the operator. After explaining the used methodology of the survey, the results of the research will be presented. If these findings were also visible in the results of the survey, they are confirmed and reinforced, however, if the surveys show different findings this would mean that the usage of the operators might be very flexible. The possible difference in argumentative strength will first be discussed per language and then between the languages. Are there clear differences in strength or can the operators actually be used interchangeably?

Finally, the overall research will be discussed and in the conclusion the results will be summarised and the main research question answered. Are the operators properly translatable or do they lose some meaning in translation?

Chapter 1. Science of Translation

1.1 The concept of translating

Before looking into the linguistic and argumentative differences between the Dutch and English operators in more depth and finally determining their translatability, we first have to look at the notion of translation. What exactly is *translating*? What kind of methods can translators use? What problems do they most often encounter?

In the Oxford dictionary the verb *to translate* is defined as follows:

1: "Express the sense of (words or text) in another language." As used in the following example:
'several of his books were translated into English'

The word is then further explained with:

1.1 (no object) Be expressed or be capable of being expressed in another language.

'shiatsu literally translates as 'finger pressure''

1.2 (translate something into/translate into) Convert something or be converted into (another form or medium)

'few of Shakespeare's other works have been translated into ballets'

Important in this definition is that it mentions the sense of a word, thus not only its semantic meaning. The translator has multiple aspects to consider. The concept of language should moreover be taken in a broad sense. People can have difficulties understanding a dialect of their own language and then need the help of a translation into the standard variety of the language. Translations can further also be made across time; the works of Chaucer get a new edition in modern English and also the stories of writers like Jane Austen still get new publications, often either in a translated version or in one with explanatory foot- or endnotes. Translation should be seen as both a linguistic and a cultural undertaking across space and time (Damrosch 2009, 66). It is not simply a task of precisely reproducing a text, but more of conscious selecting, structuring and fabricating. Translators, as those in the field of creative writing, engage in the influential undertaking of creating knowledge and also shaping culture. (Tymoczka and Genzler 2002, xxi)

Because translation is a very subjective concept, there are different views on what it entails in different cultures around the world. In India the verb *to translate* can be expressed by either *rapuntar*, meaning a *change in form*, or *anuvad*, meaning *to repeat, to follow*. Neither of these really

implies a loyalty to the original. That idea of loyalty to the source text only made its entrance into Indian society with the arrival of Christianity. The Arabic term *Tarjama* originally meant *biography*. It possibly originated from the early Syrian-orthodox translators, who focused on works such as the bible and biographies of saints. The Native Americans had yet another tradition of translation. They saw it as the 'reciting of a story'. It was thus very closely connected with narration and depositions. Finally, in China the most common term for translation is *fan yi*, which literally means *to swing around, to turn*. The idea of *fan yi* is associated with that of an embroidery. The source text is the front side and the target text or translation is the backside of the embroidery. The backside will always have a few loose threads and variations to the pattern on the front and a translation will thus, in this definition, not be considered a genuine equivalent of the original. It would be comparable to the difference between the actual picture and its negative. (Tymoczka 2010, 411,412)

1.2 The reputation of translating

So how should we perceive the relation between the original texts and its translation? In general, a translation will not be considered equal to the original. However, religious books have their own particular status that blurs this line between the original and its translations. The bible is considered a holy book in all its many translations. The source text often does not even exist anymore. A famous example of this is that of the book of Mormon. The story goes that Joseph Smith was given a package of golden plates by an angel, containing a text in an unknown language. The plates would be an addition to the bible. He also finds a pair of stone disks that allows him to translate the foreign text. When the translation is done, a voice from heaven tells Smith and a few of his followers that the translation is true and accurate. This statement practically allows the translation to replace the original text, which is exactly what happens. The stones are reclaimed by the angel now that there is no longer need for them. Even a Dutch translation of the book doesn't name a translator, it states that the book is a true translation of the plates by Joseph Smith, who wrote his work in English. This only enhances the idea of equivalence between the target text and the source. The moment that the work is no longer seen as an actual translation, it also no longer functions as such. When a translation is said to be a perfect equivalent of the source text, in perfect harmony in voice and spirit with it, it seizes by that performative action to be a translation (Hermans et al 2001, 377- 382). Translations seem by definition to have to be inferior to the original.

This is further linked to the reputation of the translator himself. He is invisible and has to remain that way. A translation, whether it is fiction or poetry, is deemed agreeable by the audience and the publishers if it reads easily and is transparent without any linguistic particularities. It has to give the illusion that it shows the intention and character of the writer and that it is not really a translation

but the original. However, this illusionary transparency only disguises the circumstances in which the translator works. He constantly has to meddle in the source text, which we will come back to later in this chapter. Another factor in the invisibility of the translator is the continuing prevailing of authorship, stating that the writer expresses his thoughts and sentiments. So on the one hand translation is seen as a second ranked copy of a text, on the other hand it is expected to efface this status by being fluent and transparent and giving the impression of the presence of the writer (Venuti 1995, 2-7). There is an Italian saying that perfectly captures the general opinion on translators: "*Traduttore traditore*", 'translators are betrayors'. In its translation the playfulness and briefness of the Italian rhyme are lost, thereby essentially proving the point it wants to make. How can the nuance in meaning or the subtle verbal melody of poetry be translated? (Damrosch 2009, 65) However, this betrayal is not necessarily a bad thing for a translator. You are knowingly and willingly trying to do the impossible. The treason is to the fact that it is not considered possible (Van de Pol 2015, 17,18). Translators might be seen as failed authors, but translation should be considered an art rather than a sort of science (Van de Pol 2015, 25).

1.3 Methods for translating

What are the methods that a translator can turn to when translating a work? There are two approaches that can be followed according to German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher. You can either bring the reader to the writer, leaving the writer alone as much as possible, or you can bring the writer to the reader, thereby leaving the reader at peace. Both methods are so different that the translator has no choice but to follow one of them as strictly as he can. The former means that the translator will try to instil the missing piece of knowledge about the source language onto the reader, moving him to the otherwise foreign writing. The new book is perfect when people can say that the writer would have written it in exactly the same way if he had had the same knowledge of the target language as the translator. The latter method wants the translation to sound as if the writer had been born and raised in the country of the target language and had written the original text there in that language (Schleiermacher 2010, 45). These methods can respectively be described as methods of foreignization and domestication. Foreignization will thus highlight both the linguistic and cultural differences between the two texts and bring the reader in touch with a foreign culture. It tries to be as loyal as possible to the source text, even when this means alienating the target audience. (Venuti 1995, 20,21) It are often more literal, word for word translations that make use of foot- and/or endnotes to explain foreign concepts. Domestication makes use of the concept of *dynamic equivalence*, meaning that it wants the reader of the translation to understand the text the same way as a reader of the original work. It is not only about form, but also about finding a functionally equivalent set of forms that are similar in meaning to the original text. (Nida and Taber 2003, 14) The

effect of both texts has to be the same. The translator has to blur the lines between the cultures and make the importance of the source text clear. (Venuti 1995, 20-22)

David Damrosch describes possible methods among similar lines. He takes a scope from extremely literal translation to free adaptations. On the one end of the scale, he puts the method of *metaphrase* that entails literal, word-for word translation. It can thus be compared with foreignization. On the other end of the spectrum, he puts the method of *imitation*. These are free translations that take the source texts as a starting point for a new work. They can have their own cohesion and conform to the literary taste of the readers, similar to the idea of domestication. However, the translator has to keep in mind the content and strength of the original texts and his loyalty to the author. There is thus need for a happy medium, named *paraphrase*, a compromise between freedom and loyalty. This so called strength of the text, as we will come to see later on in this thesis, could be an important factor in the translation of *nauwelijks* and *amper*.

1.4 difficulties with translating

The main, obvious problem that translator has to deal with is the intrinsic difference between the languages, the difference in syntax and grammar. The translator is then forced to make adjustments. Arthur Langeveld distinguishes 4 different types of changes that can be made: *omzettingen* 'conversions', *veranderingen* 'adjustments', *toevoegingen* 'additions', *weglatingen* 'omissions'. (Langeveld 1986, 68)

Conversions are changes in the placements of words and phrases in relation to one another. It is thus about the difference in syntax between the languages. They are often considered obvious.

'A train was derailed near Amsterdam yesterday afternoon'

'Gistermiddag is bij Amsterdam een trein ontspoord.'

In English the verbs, *was derailed* are grouped together, where in Dutch the participle *ontspoord* is put in the back of the sentence. The common placement of time indication, as seen in the example, is also different. Many other distinctions, such as placement of adverbs, can also require the use of conversions. Not only grammatical rules but also the standard for placement of the emphasized phrase plays an important role (Langeveld 1986, 69-71)

Adjustments are not adaptations in the placements of the words and phrases but changes in the functions of them. A word in the source text gets a different function in the target text. Adjustments can be grammatical or lexical. By grammatical adjustments, we mean changes in the part of speech

and/or phrase; a noun might become an adjective and the subject of a sentence might change into the object. All options are basically possible (Langeveld 1986, 76-80).

“Their bodies streamed with perspiration” is changed into *“het zweet gutste van hun lijven.”* The subject of the English sentence becomes an adverbial adjunct in the Dutch translation. (Langeveld 78)

“I like watching her dance” can only be translated into Dutch as *“ik kijk graag naar haar als ze danst.”* The simple English sentence is a compound sentence in Dutch.

Lexical adjustments are: concretization, generalization and antonymic translation. The first two can be compared with the idea of hyponymy and hypernymy. However, here they are more inherent to the language use; one language has a more concrete or general way of expressing a concept. (Langeveld 1986 ,81-83)

“The book is on the table” is translated as *“Het boek ligt op de tafel”.*

“The glass is on the table” is translated as *“het glas staat op tafel”* (Langeveld 1986, 81)

In both of the two examples above the Dutch language has a more specific way of expressing an object being on a table.

If there is no applicable equivalent of a term in the target language, the translator can use an antonymic translation, the use of an antonym in combination with a negation.

He always remembers can for example be put as *he never forgets*.

Langeveld’s third type of change, additions, are those instances when a translator is forced to add information to the translation and thus makes it more explicit than the original. Every language has transitive verbs, that require an object, and intransitive verbs, that can be used without an object. However, these are not the same among all languages. The verb *to miss* can be used in many different ways, either with or without an object. *You missed* can easily be said after someone missed a target, however the literal translation in Dutch, *je hebt gemist*, will very often need to be complemented with an object. (Langeveld 1986, 87-91)

The final type are the omissions. They are firstly associated with a laziness or incompetence of the translator. However, there are certainly instances of motivated omissions in order to make sure the text is not too informative in the target language. (Langeveld 1986, 92-94)

For example: the English sentence *“He is terribly concerned and worried about her”* is difficult to translate because *to be concerned* and *to worry* are translated into Dutch with the same verb *bezord*

zijn. When translating the English sentence, one of the two terms can thus easily be omitted without losing meaning. (Langeveld 1986, 93)

The translator will need all the four kinds of changes in order to finally come to a well written text in the target language that sounds natural.

Another difficulty, apart from the discussed intrinsic difference in language, are *realia*. These are concepts or objects that are bound to the source culture. They are very culture-specific and do not exist in the other culture. Typical examples of realia in Dutch texts can be *de elfstedentocht*, *hutspot* or the famous word *gezellig*. Realia can be many things, from flowers, to food, to customs. The farther apart two cultures are from one another, the more often problems will occur with the translating of realia. However, it should be noted that even the most common, ubiquitous terms that exist in basically all languages can hold very different connotations. A breakfast is different everywhere; in Holland we will have a few slices of bread with chocolate sprinkles and maybe a cup of milk, but people in Italy will just have an espresso with perhaps a small croissant. The translator thus not only has to keep in mind the denotation of a word but also its connotation. If the target culture does not know or have an objective term for the concept or object from the source text, the people will definitely not understand the connotation associated with it. The translator needs a thorough knowledge of both cultures in order to properly translate the realia.

There are multiple ways to go about translating realia. The easiest is to simply omit the word from the text. Another possibility is the direct transfer of the term to the new text with an explanation in a footnote. A third option is the use of a paraphrase. This is an intext explanation or definition of the word. A final way is the creation of a neologism by the translator; he comes up with a new term in the target language (Mertens 2012, 171-172).

The Dutch operators *nauwelijks* and *amper* are not realia and they do have equivalents in the English language. The operators function as the same part of speech in both languages, and thus should be translatable without having to make any of the mentioned possible changes to the text. The possible problem would be more subtle. The Dutch terms have no clear, one on one translation into English. They can be translated with three different English terms, *barely*, *hardly* and *scarcely*, and possibly even more options. The translator will thus have to make a choice. As we will see in the next chapter about the ideas on semantics and pragmatics, people will aim for simplicity. It would be superfluous and redundant to have two terms in a language that are exactly the same in both meaning and usage. People will feel a difference between the words, whether it is in the semantics, linguistic usage or in its argumentativity. As was discussed, a good translation also keeps the force or strength of the text in mind when it wants to be loyal to the writer. The differences between the operators

will first have to be determined for both languages separately, before the most correct translation can then be selected. This thesis will try to find the similarities and differences between the Dutch and English operators to then determine if a fully equivalent translation is possible and if not, what the closest possibility is. Before explaining the methodology of the research, we will first look at the general ideas on the meaning of utterances and how people come to the right interpretation.

Chapter 2. Meaning of an utterance

There are many different ideas on what the full meaning of an utterance consists of. A part of it seems to be intrinsic and another part is more likely determined by context. This chapter will thus look at the field of pragmatics to determine the full meaning of the operators. What kind of implicatures can be derived from them?

2.1 semantics and pragmatics

A very common idea on the understanding of language is that words have a commonly recognized, arbitrary meaning that is used informatively in conversation between people. Due to context, the meaning of the word can be altered or made more specific, and rhetorical effects can be added. The informative view of language meaning believes that the one constant function of everyday words is in the information that is given. The variability lies in the context-dependent rhetorics. The full meaning of a word is thus only understood by a combination of semantics and pragmatics. The semantics are often seen as truth-conditional, meaning that to understand an utterance is to know the conditions under which it would be true. A sentence is then either true or false. This idea is contested by the field of pragmatics.

2.1.1 Gricean pragmatics

One of the leading figures in the world of pragmatics was Paul Grice. He differentiated between 'what is said' and 'what is meant' in any given utterance. Furthermore, he devised the concepts of conventional implicatures that are derived from the semantic meaning of words, and conversational implicatures that are dependent on the context and situation in which the words are uttered. People, mostly unconsciously, can infer these implicatures because they communicate according to a cooperation principle which says that they should "make their conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which they are engaged." (Chapman 2011,74) Grice identified four maxims of behaviour that are followed in order to comply with this principle, namely the maxim of quantity, quality, manner and relation.

Firstly, the category of quantity says that people have to make their contribution to the exchange as informative as is required, yet, not make it more informative than is required. Secondly, the category of quality essentially means that you have to be truthful. You cannot say things that you either believe to be false or for which you do not have enough evidence. Thirdly, the maxim of relation states that the utterance has to be relevant within the conversation. Finally, the maxim of manner entails that people have to avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity. They should also make sure to keep their statements brief and orderly. It thus looks at how the information is given, rather than the actual information itself. (Chapman 2011, 74-76)

People might not always comply with the cooperative principle. People can inconspicuously violate these maxims, in which case they are misleading the other party or, in other terms, lying. They can also 'opt out' of participating in the principle and simply say *my lips are sealed*. Furthermore, it is possible to 'flout a maxim', meaning that the speaker openly fails to comply. This then raises the question: "how can his saying what he did say be reconciled with the supposition that he is observing the overall CP?" This situation will commonly result in the triggering of a conversational implicature. An example of the flouting of the maxim of quantity would be a professor writing a letter of recommendation for a pupil who is applying for a mathematics job as follows: "Dear Sir, his command of English is exemplary and his attendance in classes has always been regular." Normally, more information would be required, and so it creates the assumption that he is unwilling to give certain information, namely that he assumes the student to be unfit for the job. (Grice 1975, 49-53)

Another possible explanation for the emerging of conversational implicatures is that the speaker naturally follows these maxims and that, moreover, the hearer also expects this to be so. A very clear and well known example is the following exchange:

Person A: I'd like to eat some chocolate.

Person B: There is a store just around the corner.

Person A will believe that there really is a shop around the corner and, more importantly, he will also assume that this shop actually sells chocolate and is open. If this would not be the case, the statement would not have been relevant in the conversation. Person A assumes that person B is as informative as necessary, while still being brief and orderly. If the store was closed or not selling chocolate, making it irrelevant to person A, person B should and would have said so in order to be informative enough. These kind of implicatures that thus occur in a particular context are known as particularized conversational implicatures. (Chapman 2011, 75-79)

Particularized conversational implicatures can become so common in our language that they eventually happen on default. They become generalized conversational implicatures. These are still dependent on context, but do not happen only within a specific context. They happen due to the usage of certain words unless they are explicitly cancelled.

1: He passed the exams and got into university.

2: He got into university and passed the exams.

Utterances 1 and 2 have the same informative values, yet people will understand them differently. In 1 he will first have passed his exams and afterwards, and probably because of it, got into university. In 2 he was accepted into the university and then he passed his exams there. (Chapman 2011 80-81)

Gricean pragmatics became the term for describing a specific type of non-literal meaning. More generally, it came to stand for trying to interpret meaning as a two-stage process that differentiates between what is added by language and what is contributed by context. The defining line between these two parts is usually not that clear cut and highly contested. (Chapman 2011,90)

2.1.2 Neo-Gricean pragmatics

Quite a few people agreed with the general idea of Grice and its framework on conversation. A branch of new-gricean pragmatics came into being. These linguists tried to improve on Grice's theory in a less complex and reductionist form. A well-known neo-gricean pragmatist is Stephen Levinson. He introduced in his work the Q-, I- and M- principles, that are respectively concerned with quantity, informativeness and manner. They can all be taken as maxims in that they restrict what a speaker can say and what a hearer may assume from it. They help the hearer to come to the preferred interpretation. The Q-principle says that the speaker should not say less than is required, so the hearer can then assume that what is not said is thus not the case.

The I-principle states that people are not to say more than is required. The hearer will then conclude that what is said, will be specifically exemplified. The M-principle says not to use a marked expression without reason. The deduction that the hearer is then allowed to make is that a marked expression is never unmarked.

Levinson did not believe that semantics was autonomous from pragmatics. Generalized conversational implicatures do appear to have a role in the truth-conditional content of utterances. He sees clear examples of this in deictic expressions. In examples like *Holland is a beautiful country, you should come here*, the word *here* relies on the I-principle. The speaker is trying to be as efficient and brief as possible when describing a place. It now gets the interpretation of *the country where I live*. (Chapman 2011, 99-102)

2.1.3 The implicatures from the operators

What kind of Implicatures can be derived from argumentative operators such as *barely*? Grice would most likely recognize a conventional implicature. The implicature is part of the semantic meaning of the word. The speaker commits to the meaning and in doing so the utterance gives rise to entailments (Potts 2005, 11) These, in contrast to conversational implicatures, cannot be cancelled, as can be seen in the example **it barely rained, in fact (it is possible) it didn't*.

Another kind of implicature can also occur as is visible with the following example:

(1) *Sam barely passed the test.*

The uttering of (1) would commit the speaker in a way to the truth of:

A: Sam came close to not passing the test.

B : Sam did pass the test.

Horn refers to element A as the proximal component, and to element B as the polar component. Element B is an entailment of (1) and if it is false, (1) will also be false. Following Grice's maxim of quantity, it would be misleading to assert (1) if A is true but B is false. This line of inference is known as a scalar implicature (Horn 2011, 4). Horn created scales that consist of terms that are put in a sequence of increasing informativeness, such as *some, many, most, all*. People would be in their right to infer from *he eat most of the candy* that the person in question did not eat all of the candy. If the latter was the case the speaker could and would have been more informative by using the word *all*. (Geurts 2010. 50)

Entailments can be either upward or downward. Downward entailment means that if a certain relationship is true for X, it will also be true for any subgroup of X. A subgroup of a term would be placed on the left of that term on a Horn scale. An example of an upward entailment that is based on the negative strength of *barely* is shown in sentences 2 and 3 below. The use of *barely* makes that the same implicature can be inferred as when a true negation, *he does not eat*, had been uttered.

(2) *He barely eats meat, let alone pork.* 'hij eet nauwelijks vlees, laat staan varkensvlees.'

(3) ** He barely eats pork, let alone meat.* **'hij eet nauwelijks varkensvlees, laat staan vlees'*

The entailment here is made explicit by the phrase *let alone*. When someone does not eat meat, or barely eats meat, people can easily infer that that person than also does not eat a kind of meat such as pork. The other way around, as seen in (3), makes for an infelicitous sentence. (Horn 2011,7,8) In the Dutch translation this effect seems to be even more noticeable due to the concretization in the translation of *pork* 'varken' to *varkensvlees* 'pork's meat'. Still, the effect of the operators is the same in both languages.

2.1.4 Intersubjectivity

Not only the meaning of an utterance is important in communication, but it is also necessary that participants of the conversations understand it in the same way. A distinct feature of human communication, what some even believe to set us apart from other animals, is the notion of intersubjectivity. In the most basic and straightforward terms it can be described as the “sharing of experiential content (e.g., feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and linguistic meanings) among a plurality of subjects.” (Zlatev et al 2008, 1) Problems in the coordination are solved by mutually shared understandings or in other words, conventions. These work because people will always assume that others follow the rules as well and know that people will expect it from them in return. Key elements of intersubjectivity are the being ‘mutually shared’ and referentiality, the methodical use of a certain signal to draw the attention of the other person to a particular happening of the world. (Verhagen 2008, 307,308) It is what enables a triadic relationship in human communication between the speaker and the hearer in their joined attention for an external object. Human language is thus not only about inducing behaviour as is the case for animals. The question would then be whether people all get a similar feeling about the force of the operators.

Conventions are created on multiple levels of common ground, corresponding with different sources of shared knowledge. On the highest level of a shared culture, people of the same culture will have a mutual understanding about the meaning of common nouns. When persons have a shared personal history, they will make their own conventions on proper names. If the speaker then mentions a first name of a third person, the hearer will understand who is being talked about, even when there are many other people with that same first name. Finally on the level of a communication event, there is the establishing of meaning of deictics. Words like, *I, he, here, today*, will shift their specific meaning from one conversation to another.

2.2 Argumentativity

Next to analysing the meaning and usages of *nauwelijks* and *amper*, this thesis also wants to try to compare them on their argumentativity. But what does this actually entail? The theory of argumentativity in the language system, created by Ascombre and Ducrot, has the opposite idea on the meaning of language than the informative view. They think that the constant of the ordinary words is not their information, but, what they call, the argumentative orientation, which makes that an expression gives an argument towards a certain conclusion. Ascombre states it as follows: “The informative values (meaning) on the surface are an illusion and do not have to appear at the deep level (meaning). At such a level only values and operators that we call argumentative will appear. Any informative (surface) indications will necessarily be derived from them.” (Ascombre 1989, 14)

Ascombre and Ducrot noted that utterances with the exact same informational value can lead to very different conclusions. (Iten 2000, 666)

A: *There is a small chance it will work, so let's not risk it.

B: There is little chance it will work, so let's not risk it.

The sentences A and B give the same information. The only difference is that the phrase *a small chance* in A is written as *little chance* in B. However, the conclusion drawn in utterance A, *a small chance* would be considered illogical, and infelicitous.

C: There is a small chance it will work, so let's just do it.

D: *There is little chance it will work, so let's just do it.

The utterances C and D have the same first parts in the sentences as respectively A and B, but an opposite conclusion is drawn. Here it would seem that the phrase *little chance* is inappropriate and contradictory to the outcome. It can thus be said that *a small chance* leads to positive conclusions, whereas the verdicts on *little chance* are more negative. The phrases have opposing 'argumentative orientation'.

This concept of the *argumentativity within language* is an extra layer to the meaning of words within the language itself. It is not in the explicit, truth-conditional semantics of the phrases, nor does it result from the context as is the case with pragmatic inferences. It seems to fall outside the borderline of semantics and pragmatics as seen with Gricean and neo-Gricean theories. The theory of argumentativity within language is a non truth-conditional theory and it does not see the context as the deciding factor in the interpretation of an utterance. It does not clearly explain how or why people come to the specific conclusion, but it is agreed that it happens on default, and thus is in that sense similar to the generalized conversational implicatures of Levinson (Iten 2000, 696, 697).

However, contextual suppositions do play an important part in the theory of argumentativity. The approach talks about topoi and topical fields. The difference with pragmatics is that the argumentative theory sees these suppositions as part of the semantic meaning of a word and not as being pragmatically constructed and they are found to be necessarily scalar (Iten 2000, 697). Topoi can be categorized as continuous rules of inference that the speaker will deem to be shared by the hearer. (Bruxelles 1995, 100) The hearer is directed to a certain conclusion by appealing to such a mutually shared standard that the mentioned object is part of (Verhagen 2008, 315).

We will look at the following conversation:

1: Do you believe he will pass this semester?

2: Well, he managed to pass all his tests last semester.

We hold the general idea in our culture that when someone passes a test, person will also pass other tests. The topos is that “if someone passed a test, it is more likely that he will be able to pass other tests than that he will not.” (Verhagen 2008, 316)

A topical field refers to the two entities that are connected by the topos. It includes a classification which relies on an uttered implicit judgment and conforms to a manner of viewing a specific rule or area of reality, known as a conceptual field. Therefore, a topical field can best be explained as a pair of terms, in which the first one states a conceptual field and the second a guiding rule on the gradation of the field. (Bruxelles et al 1995, 104)

If we now go back to the example of *a small chance* and *little chance*, the difference in argumentative direction can more easily be explained. The difference is not actually that they won't allow for the same conclusion, but that they do not allow for the use of the same topoi. (Carel and Ducrot 1999, 7) Where *a small chance* opens topoi similar to *having a chance and thus a reasonable opportunity of not too big of a risk*, *little chance* will invoke topoi similar to *not having a chance and taking unnecessary and impossible risks*. The bigger the chance, the more risk people are licenced to take. Similarly, a simple word as *chair*, *there are chairs in the room*, seems to carry the general assumptions that chairs, being made to sit on, should be comfortable. The word will move the direction of the utterance towards conclusions such as *there are chairs in the room, and they are very snug* rather than *there are chairs in the room, and they are hard as rocks*.

How could we explain the argumentativity of the variables for this thesis, the Dutch *nauwelijks*, *amper* and English *barely*, *hardly* and *scarcely*? They can be put as the functional opposites of the Dutch *bijna* and the English *almost*. This is shown here with the following examples with *nauwelijks* and *barely*, but they could be replaced by *amper* and *hardly* or *scarcely* with the same general effect.

1 : *The student almost passed his first test, so the teacher was hopeful about the second.*

1': 'De student had bijna zijn eerste toets gehaald, dus de docent was hoopvol voor de tweede'.

2: **The student almost passed his first test, but the teacher was hopeful about the second.*

2': **'De student had bijna zijn eerste toets gehaald, maar de docent was hoopvol voor de tweede'.*

Informatively, by using *bijna/almost*, the speaker indicates that the student did not pass his test. However, it seems to direct us towards a positive conclusion. Sentence 1 sounds perfectly logical, where sentence 2 does not, even though when looking solely at the information you would expect it to be. It evokes the same outcome as *the student passed his first test*.

3: **The student barely passed his first test, so the teacher was hopeful about the second.*

3': *'De student had nauwelijks zijn eerste toets gehaald, dus de docent was hoopvol voor de tweede'.

4: *The student barely passed his first test, but the teacher was hopeful about the second.*

4': 'De student had nauwelijks zijn eerste toets gehaald, maar de docent was hoopvol voor de tweede'.

Nauwelijks and *barely* give the information that the student actually passed the test, yet sentence 3 would seem illogical to people. *Barely* and *nauwelijks* lead to the same conclusions as *the student did not pass his first test*, although not as strongly.

Next to different argumentative orientation, we can thus also distinguish between differences in argumentative strength. A real affirmative, *having passed*, would be the maximum positive strength and a candid negation the maximum negative strength. On the constructed scale in between these maxima, *almost* and *barely* can then respectively be categorized as semi- positive and semi-negative.

Words as *almost* and *barely* are categorised as *argumentative operators*. These are terms that can only be explained by referring to their argumentative value. It can be particles such as *moreover* or *therefore*, on the argumentativity of which there is general consensus, but it can also be morphemes that might not be as easily considered as such. (Bassano and Champaud 1987, 176)

Nouwen (2006) gives a more explanatory definition of *almost*, saying that "Almost p is true if and only if there is a world which is not very different from the actual world in which p is true" (Gerrevink 2007, 231) It is explained by the example of *This blog has become almost a diary*. This utterance is true when another world exist in which the mentioned blog has an extra property of a diary than in the reality and thus actually is a diary in this fictional world. The speaker wants the hearer to be aware of this very small difference. (Gerrevink 2007, 231) He wants to point to the conclusion that the blog is a diary, however, he cannot truthfully say that. Lying would be a violation of the Gricean maxim of quality and thus uncooperative behaviour.

We can use Nouwen's definition of *almost* to write a similar one for *barely*. 'Barely p is true if and only if there is a world which is not very different from the actual world in which p is not true'. The emphasis is again put on the very subtle distinction between the two worlds. However, here the speaker would preferably say *the blog has not become a diary*, but cannot do so without lying. Let's take the situation that someone wants to declare that a soccer player is a bad striker. The best way to support this claim is by saying *he did not score a goal, he is a bad striker*. However, it is possible

that the mentioned player did score a goal, perhaps with some luck, making this an untrue statement. The utterance would need to lose some of its strength. The speaker could say *he barely scored a goal, he is a bad striker*. He would then still be honest and informatively correct, yet the small difference between the fictional world where the said player did not score and the real world, make it a valid argument for the intended conclusion.

The first chapter discussed the problems that people will face when translating. The translation should have a similar effect on its reader as the original. So do the operators have similar effect or does one have a stronger argumentative force? To see how *nauwelijks* and *amper* can best be translated into English, we will look at their linguistic usage and argumentativity and that of their English counterparts.

Chapter 3: Corpus analysis

We will try to answer the research question by comparing Dutch and English as these languages are closely related and have operators that semantically overlap. The operators I will look at are the following:

Dutch argumentative operators: *nauwelijks, amper,*

Engels argumentative operators: *barely, hardly, and scarcely*

The research will consist of both a corpus analysis and a survey among native speakers of Dutch and English. We will now begin by looking at the corpus analysis and then discuss the online survey. For both we will first explain the methodology that was used before outlining and discussing the results.

3.1 methodology

Firstly a corpus analysis will be conducted of the online contextual dictionary 'Reverso Context', <http://context.reverso.net/vertaling/>. This dictionary shows examples from millions of translations between 11 languages from many different types of texts, ranging from conversations, official documents to websites. They do not give the exact number of words that the corpus contains. The used language can be both formal and informal. The corpus further covers a whole variety of domains, from medical to industrial documents to sometimes even legal. They encourage people to keep sharing possibly interesting texts with them.

The corpus will make it possible to identify how *nauwelijks* en *amper* are generally translated into English and determine which translation is the most common. Furthermore, we will determine in

what kind of context and linguistic environment the different operators are used. We will decide what word in the sentence they are combined with and determine whether it is a noun, a verb, an adjective or a number. This is mostly the word that follows variable, however it will become clear that the Dutch syntax allows for a bit more variation. It is then more difficult to truly determine what word the operator actually refers to.

Ultimately, we analysed a total of 75 translations of first *nauwelijks* and then *amper* from the corpus of Reverso Context. We divided the sentences into groups of 25 for translations with *barely*, *hardly* and *scarcely*. This gave a total of 150 translations and 300 examples of the operators to get a picture of their linguistic environment.

Furthermore, this thesis was also interested in whether one of the variables might be more frequently used than the others. We looked at the number of occurrences in multiple online corpora. For the English operators, the four following corpora were consulted. The British National Corpus is a 100 million word corpus of both written and spoken British English collected from newspaper, journals and orthographic transcriptions. The second Corpus of Contemporary American English is a collection of more than 520 million words that come from popular magazines as much as academic texts. Thirdly, the American National Corpus contains 22 million words in American English that are among other sources compiled from tweets and emails. Finally, the Corpus of Global Web-based English has the biggest collection with 1.9 billion words from different varieties of English from 20 countries. The frequency of the Dutch operators was compared through the corpus of OpenSonar and the Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands. OpenSonar is a 500-million words corpus of contemporary written Dutch, compiled from both conventional and new media. It is executed by the universities of Leuven, Gent, Nijmegen, Tilburg, Utrecht and Twente. Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands is compiled by over 800000 texts from newspapers, such as NRC Handelsblad and De Standaard, journals, magazines and judicial material. This corpus also gave the option to see the word or lemma that follows the searched term, giving extra insight into the context of the word.

One problem arose while determining the linguistic environments of the operators by analysing the corpus. There is a difference between the Dutch and English syntax that made determining what word the Dutch operator were linked to harder than for the English terms. In the Dutch sentences it would happen that the operator referred to the verb of the utterance, but was placed in front of the noun connected to the verb. This would not happen in the English translations. The English grammar dictates that modifiers, such as *barely*, *only* or *just*, be placed directly before the term it modifies, where the Dutch syntax seems to allow for more options for their placement.

The Reverso Context corpus gave the following example:

ik kan amper mijn voeten voelen can in Dutch also be expressed as *ik kan mijn voeten amper voelen*, but the English translation *I can barely feel my feet* cannot be said as **I can feel barely my feet*.

The same goes for the Dutch sentence *zij kon nauwelijks die zak energierepen optillen*. This can just as correctly be uttered as *zij kon die zak energierepen nauwelijks optillen*. However, in the English translation *She could barely pick up that bag of protein bars* the placement of *barely* can again not be altered to **She could pick up barely that bag of protein bars*. The change of placement in the Dutch sentence allows the speaker to put the emphasis on a different part of the sentence, on the object rather than the action or vice versa. Words that are considered informatively more important are commonly put more in the back of the sentence and less important, already known, information in the beginning. This is known as the left-right principle (ANS). In the analysed sentences, we found 29 instances with *nauwelijks* and 30 with *amper* where this happened. There thus does not seem to be a difference here between the two Dutch operators.

3.2. Results Corpus

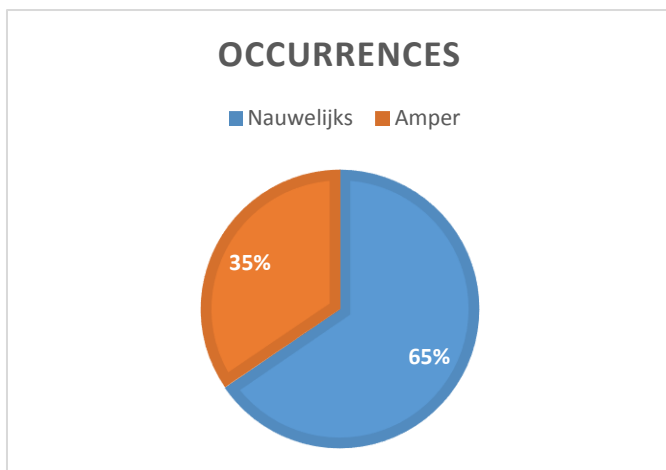
We will now discuss the results of the analysis of the online corpus. How are the operators generally translated? Their linguistic environment will also be analysed. Later on these results can then be compared to the answers given in the online survey.

3.2.1. General frequency

The occurrences of the operators in the online corpora are outlined in table 1 for the Dutch terms and in table 2 for the English words. The distribution of the total amounts of the occurrences is then made visible in the graphs 1 and 2 below.

	Nauwelijks	Amper
Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands	61818 (69.7%)	26851 (30.3%)
OpenSoNar	47462 (60.6%)	30843 (39.4%)

Table 1. Occurrences of *Nauwelijks* and *Amper* 78305

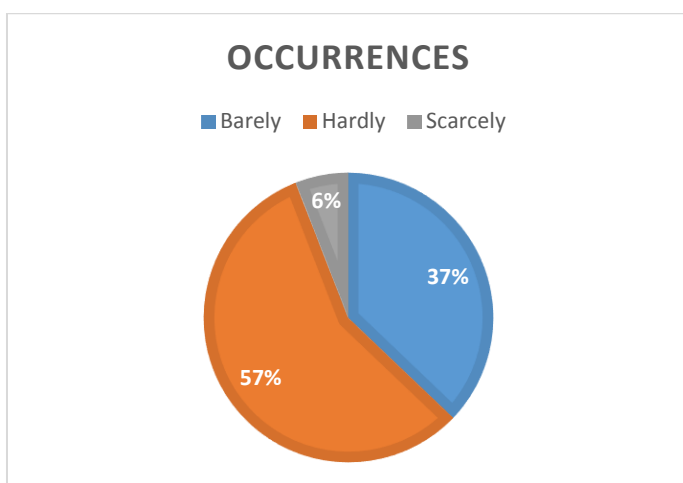


graph 1. Distribution of *Nauwelijks* and *Amper*

The Dutch terms *nauwelijks* and *amper* show a very clear picture. In both corpora *nauwelijks* is used about twice as much as *amper*. If this is representative for the daily speech of people, it could mean that the use of *amper* is more marked than *nauwelijks* and would then more strongly affect the utterance in which it is used. The difference between the two operators is smaller by a rather big margin in the corpus of OpenSonar. This might be the result of the fact that this corpus is compiled for the biggest part, namely 78%, by Belgian sources. There thus will be a strong Flemish influence.

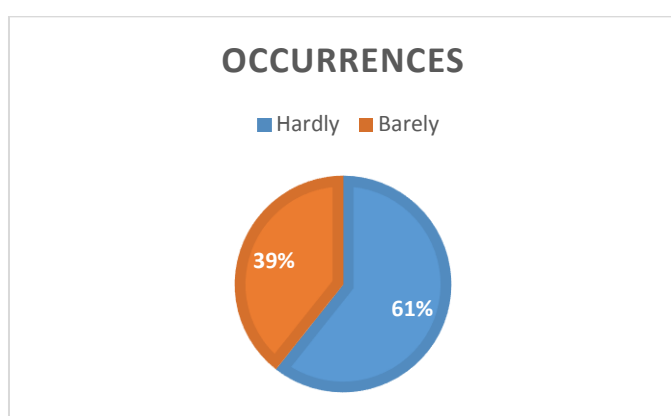
	Barely	Hardly	Scarcely
British National Corpus	2160 (17.9%)	8323 (69.1%)	1559 (12.9%)
COCAE	25258 (46.4%)	25740 (47.3%)	3463 (6.4%)
American National Corpus	280 (32.3%)	495 (57%)	93 (10.7%)
Corpus of Global Web-based English	51005 (35.4%)	85798 (59.5%)	7431 (5.2%)

Table 2. Occurrences of Barely, Hardly and Scarcely



Graph 2. Distribution of *Barely*, *Hardly* and *Scarcely*

We can draw two clear conclusions from the data of the English operators as presented in Table 2 and Graph 2. The first trait that stands out is the small amount of occurrences of *scarcely*. The term is only found a tenth of the times that *hardly* occurred. It can thus be a more marked term, signalling a more decisive conclusion, as might also be the case for *amper*. We will try to determine this later on in the survey. The difference in occurrences between *scarcely* and the other two English operators is the smallest in the British National Corpus. Here *scarcely* is used 12.9% of the times, compared to 17.9% for *barely*. In the Corpus of Contemporary American English, this difference is respectively 6.4% to 46.4%. *Scarcely* could thus be more commonly used in British English than in Standard American English, or even International English. However, this would require more sociolinguistic research that is outside the scope of this thesis.



Graph 3 *Barely vs Hardly*

If we were to take *scarcely* out of the equation, focusing solely on *barely* and *hardly*, we can see a rather similar distribution to the Dutch operators, as visible in graph 3 above. *Hardly* occurs roughly in the same percentage as *nauwelijks* and *barely* is comparable to *amper*.

The second conclusion on the frequency of the English operators is that *hardly* is the most commonly used. In all the corpora *hardly* was found to have the most occurrences, and would thus be comparable with *nauwelijks*. We will try to see later if a higher amount of occurrences correlates with the operator being less marked. The M-principle of Levinson, as we saw earlier, states that people do not use marked expressions without reason. So if someone uses a less common term, such as *scarcely*, that thus might be more marked, people will more quickly draw stronger inferences from it.

3.2.2. Translations

We have outlined and discussed the general frequency of the different operators and compared them. This thesis will now look at how the terms are generally translated. Table 3 and 4 below show the five most often found translations for *nauwelijks* and *amper* in the corpus Context Reverso.

Table 3 (left) Translations of *nauwelijks* , Table 4 (right) translations of *amper*

Nauwelijks	occurrences	Amper	Occurrences
Barely	2242	Barely	1662
Hardly	1835	Hardly	579
Scarcely	248	Only	117
Very little	90	Scarcely	90
Only	84	Very little	32
total	4489	Total	2444

Both *nauwelijks* and *amper* are mostly translated with the same five English terms: *barely*, *hardly*, *scarcely*, *very little* and *only*. The Dutch term are both most often translated with *barely*, followed by *hardly*.

When looking more closely at *nauwelijks*, the difference in amount of translations with *barely* and *hardly* is rather small. Both options are readily chosen and thus seem similarly practicable. There is a big gap between *hardly* and the third option *scarcely*, a drop from 1835 occurrences to 248.

Amper appears to be mostly translated with *barely*. There then is quite a big gap between *barely* and *hardly*; the number of found examples goes down from 1662 to just 579. So, where *nauwelijks* did not seem to have one preferred translation, *amper* does seem to have one main translation. The most frequently found English term *hardly* is contrastingly the second preferred translation.

Tables 5-7 below outline the found, possible translations of *barely*, *hardly* and *scarcely*.

Barely	occurrences
Nauwelijks	2260
Amper	1753
Bijna niet	152
Nog maar net	37
Slechts	35
Ternauwernood	34
total	4237

Table 5 Translations of *Barely*,

Hardly	occurrences
Nauwelijks	1997
Amper	649
Bijna (niet)	353
Moeilijk	147
vrijwel (niet)	45
Total	3191

Table 6 Translations of *Hardly*

Scarcely	occurrences
Nauwelijks	252
Amper	56
Vrijwel (niet)	5
Totaal	313

Table 7 Translations of *Scarcely*

All three English operators are mostly translated with *nauwelijks* and secondly by *amper*. However, they do also have other possible translations that do differ. A probably typical Dutch phrase that is sometimes used instead of the operators is *bijna niet* ‘almost not’. In simplest terms, it conveys that something actually is the case, but almost had not happened. Here the translator would need to make an adaptation to the text, comparable to what Langeveld outlined as an antonymic translation.

The corpus showed, for example, the English sentence *you can barely keep them open* with the Dutch translation *je kunt ze bijna niet open houden*. More literally, the Dutch sentence says **you can almost not keep them open*. However, in English this would be considered as an infelicitous sentence. This thesis will continue with discussing the translations of the English operators.

Barely, similarly to *nauwelijks*, does not seem to have one, highly favoured translation. The difference between the amount of translations with *nauwelijks* and *amper* is quite small, 2260 versus 1753. The third option *bijna niet* ‘almost not’ is only used a tenth of this, 152 times. The other options are *nog maar net* ‘only just’ and *ternauwernood* ‘narrowly’. The emphasis is all on the fact that what in reality turned out positive could easily have been negative. It should be mentioned that *ternauwernood*, as Rieborn 2012 found, has a very particular usage. It is mainly used with ‘verbs of achievement’, such as *overleven* ‘survive’. It sometimes even appeared to have a positive argumentative orientation. So the translator will have to keep this in mind when translating *barely* with *ternauwernood*.

Hardly does have one main translation that stands out. It is three times more often translated with *nauwelijks* than with *amper*. The other translations are *bijna (niet)* ‘almost (not)’, *moeilijk* ‘difficult’ and *vrijwel (niet)* ‘practically (not)’. There is again the meaning of the very small difference between the actual and mentioned world, but *hardly* sometimes seems to put emphasis on the difficulty of the action as well, on how much effort was needed. A good example of this would be *I can hardly hear you* ‘ik kan je moeilijk verstaan’. The speaker wants to express that he has trouble making out what the other person is saying, likely wanting him to speak up more.

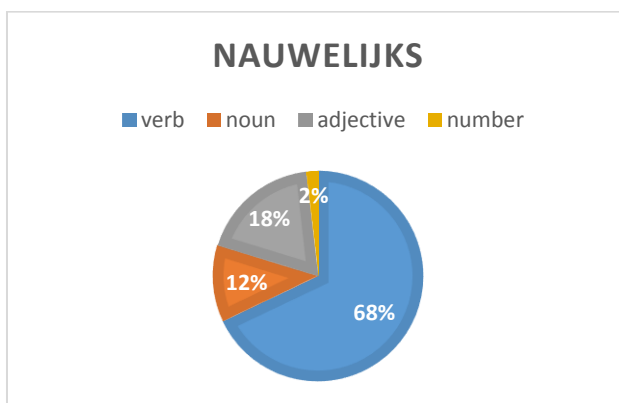
Scarcely clearly occurred less and also has a smaller variety of found translations. Next to *nauwelijks* and *amper*, the only other translation is *vrijwel (niet)* ‘practically (not)’. *Vrijwel* is then in the sentence combined with a negation. *He scarcely said a word* would be translated with *hij zei vrijwel geen woord*, literally meaning *he said practically no word*. This could mean that *scarcely* has a more rigid meaning than the other operators, this mainly being the indication of the small difference between reality and the described world. The term appears to be the least common which means that people use it less and might not know it as well as the others, resulting in a smaller amount of possible usages.

In both the Dutch and the English language, one of the operators seems to be open to multiple, equally sufficient translations, while the others have one, clearly more favoured and accepted translation. *Nauwelijks* and *barely* then being the former and *amper* and *hardly* and *scarcely* being

the latter. It could be expected that a more common term is open to larger variety of translations. This does seem to be the case for the Dutch operators where the more frequently used *nauwelijks* seems to have more options for translation. However, the English term *hardly*, that was most often found in the corpora, has one clearly preferred translation and *barely*, which occurred less, has multiple. *Nauwelijks* and *barely* were mostly used in translations.

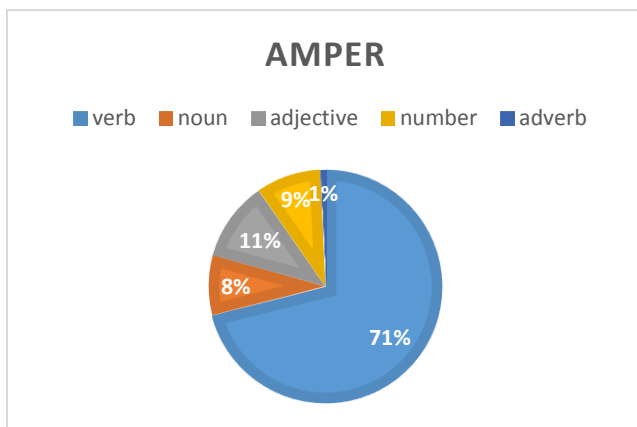
3.2.3. Linguistic environment.

We have discussed how common the terms respectively are, how often they occur and how they are mostly translated. We will now look further into their linguistic environments. How are they actually used? We analysed the sentences from the corpus and decided what word the operators most closely related to, or referred to. This was in most cases the word following the operators, but there were some exceptions in the Dutch sentences. We determined what part of speech (verb, noun, adjective) these words, connected to the operators, were. Numbers were categorised as a separate part of speech. The results for the Dutch terms are outlined in graph 4 and 5, the linguistic environment of the English operators are visible in graph 6, 7 and 8.



graph 4 linguistic environment of *Nauwelijks*

As visible in graph 4, *nauwelijks* most often refers to a verb. An easy example of this would be *ik kan hem nauwelijks horen* 'I can barely hear him'. In almost one fifth of the sentences *nauwelijks* was found in combination with an adjective, as in *we hebben nauwelijks genoeg eten voor ons eigen gezin* 'We barely have enough food for our own family'. It would sometimes occur with a noun, for example *hij is nauwelijks een dokter* 'he is barely a doctor'. *Nauwelijks* might be rather easily combined with an adjective, but it only very rarely seems to refer to a number. *We hebben nauwelijks 3 uur gehad* 'we have had barely 3' hours seems to be a rarity. People would probably more easily say *3 uur was nauwelijks voldoende tijd* '3 hours was barely sufficient time'.



graph 5 linguistic environment of *Amper*

Graph 5 above shows a slightly different distributions in the linguistic environment of *amper*. One similarity with *nauwelijks* is that *amper* also mostly occurred in combination with a verb, and in an almost similar amount of sentences. *Ik kan je amper horen* 'I can barely hear you' should thus mostly like just as easily be mentioned as *Ik kan je nauwelijks horen*. However, in the rest of the sentences the distribution for *amper* seems to be more evenly divided. It occurred in rather similar numbers with all parts of speech. *Amper* is used less often with adjectives than *nauwelijks*, however, it does appear noticeably more often with numbers. It is thus likely that people could just as correctly say *we hebben amper 3 uur gehad* 'we have had barely 3 hours' as *3 uur was amper voldoende tijd* '3 hours was barely sufficient time'. *Amper* was used only slightly less when referring to a noun than *nauwelijks*.

The Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands gives a list of the words mostly occurring after the searched term. The top 20 of these lists for *nauwelijks* and *amper* are outlined below in the tables 8 and 9.

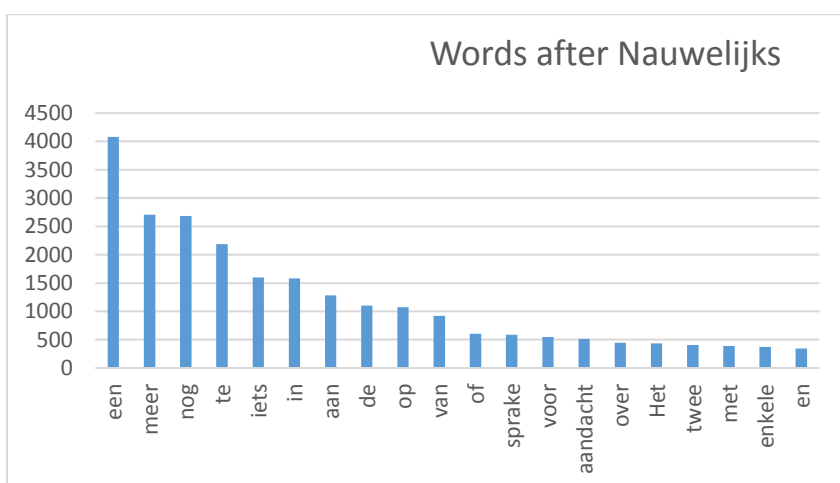


table 8

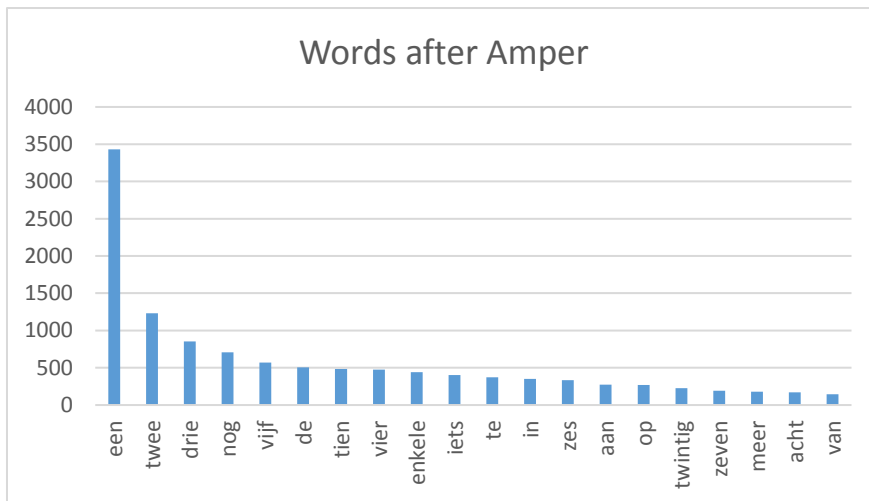
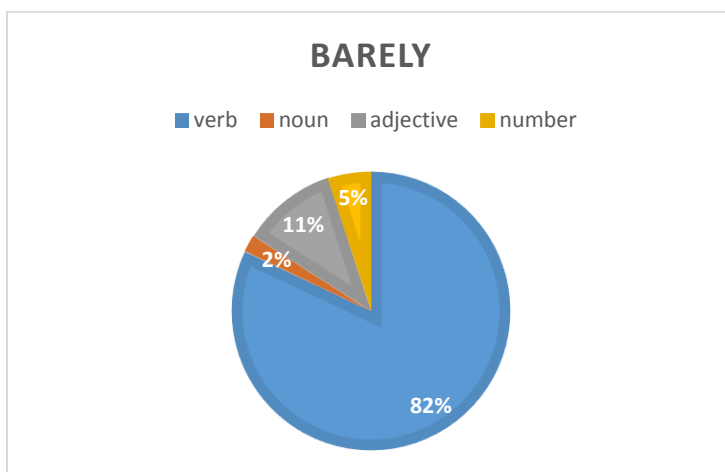


Table 9

Nauwelijks seems to occur mostly with particles and adverbs, such as: *een* ‘a’, *nog* ‘still’, *meer* ‘(any)more’, *iets* ‘something’ and *te* ‘too’. The particles are mostly put in front of a noun and in our own analysis this would thus be noted as the operator being linked to a noun. Other words down the list were *denkbaar* ‘thinkable’, *mogelijk* ‘possible’, *geloven* ‘believe’, *zichtbaar* ‘visible’ and *kunnen* ‘can’.

There is a clear characteristic of *amper* visible in table 9. Half of the terms in the top 20 of mostly used words after the operator are numbers. This seems to be a distinctive feature of *amper* that makes it different from *nauwelijks*.

How do the Dutch terms compare to their English counterparts? We will discuss them first separately and then determine if a correlation between a Dutch and English operator is visible.



graph 6 linguistic environment of Barely

We can see in the graph 6 above that *barely* is mostly used to talk about a verb, by an even larger majority than was seen with either of the Dutch operators. *Barely* is furthermore used with adjectives in an amount similar to *amper*. The number of its occurrences in combination with

numbers was higher than that was found with *nauwelijks* but smaller than with *amper*. Another difference with the Dutch operators is the very small number of sentences where *barely* is linked to a noun.

Context Reverso gives a list under the search results of likely combinations with *barely* that the searcher might be interested in. They are shown in table 11 below.

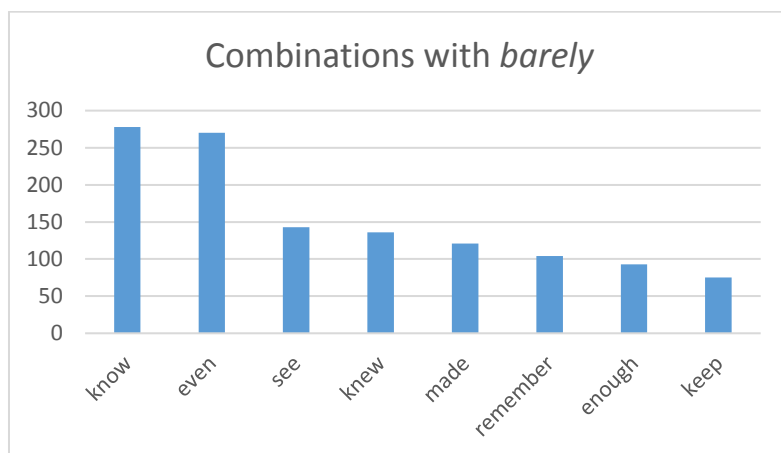
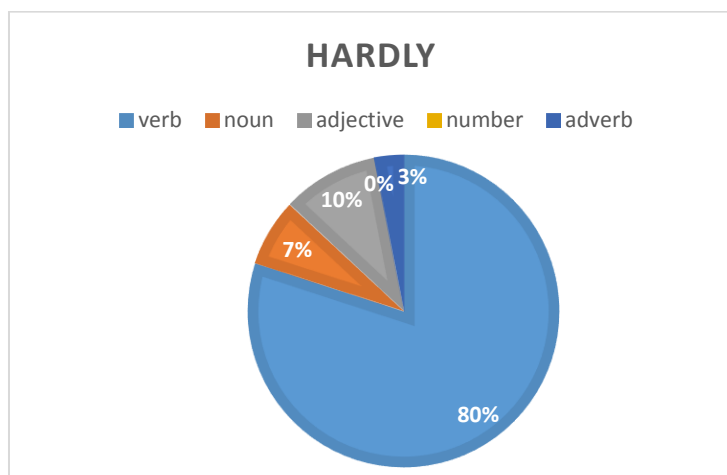


table 11, combinations with *Barely*

The verb that is clearly very common in combination with *barely* is *to know*; it is commonly put with *barely* in both present and past tense. Other words are *see*, *remember*, *made* and *keep*. These are all sorts of mental, psychological actions, about registering something in the mind. Examples of sentences found with *barely* are *I can barely remember those days* and *that's barely enough time to say hello*.



graph 7 linguistic environment of *Hardly*

The linguistic environment of *hardly* is outlined in graph 7 above. There are two noticeable similarities with *barely*. It has a very high percentage of references to a verb, again higher than the Dutch operators. *Hardly* further has a comparable amount of found linkages to adjectives. However, there are also some differences. *Hardly* is more often used in combination with nouns, and is thus slightly more similar to the Dutch operators in this aspect than *barely*. A very visible particularity of

hardly is that it seems to be the only operator that does not occur with a number in any of the analysed examples. It seems similar to *amper* in terms of references to verbs or nouns, but *amper* seems to be particularly used with numbers.

Just as for *barely*, Context Reverso also provides a list of common combinations for *hardly*, as outlined in table 12 below.

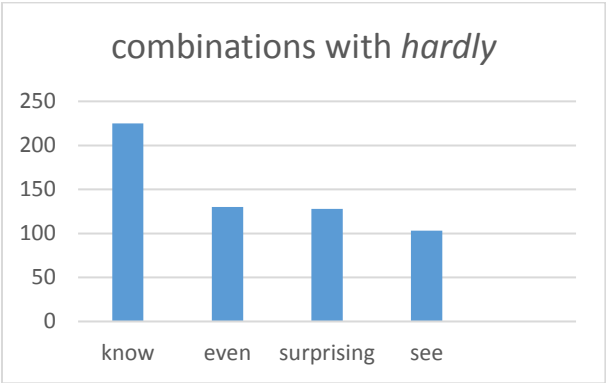
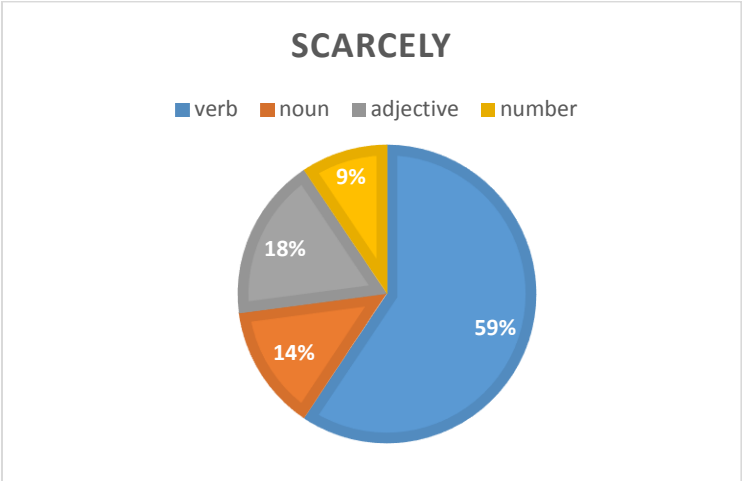


table 12, combinations with *Hardly*

It further gives a list of terms that people searching for *hardly* might be interested in: *hardly any*, *hardly ever*, *hardly think*, *hardly call* and finally *hardly knew*. Other used words are *think*, *call* and *surprising*. Similarly to *barely*, *hardly* seems to be commonly combined with the verb *to know* and is also easily linked with verbs of mental processes. Some of the more typical sentences with *hardly* from the corpus would thus be *it's hardly surprising the hysteria's rising* and *there was hardly anything in the register*.



graph 8 linguistic environment of *Scarcely*

As seen in graph 8 above, the linguistic environment of *scarcely* seems to be very different from that of the Dutch operators as well as from the other English operators. It is the most variable and versatile of all of them. Though it seems to be slightly more similar to the Dutch than the English operators. *Scarcely* has the smallest number of references to verbs and the highest to nouns. It has

the same amount of occurrences with numbers as *amper*, but is more similar to *nauwelijks* in terms of relating to adjectives and nouns. It thus appears to combine characteristics of both the Dutch operators.

There were no common combinations with *scarcely* given in the corpus as was the case for the other operators. But looking at the words *scarcely* was linked to in the analysis did show a few terms that occurred multiple times, namely: *mentioned, believable, allowed, a year*. Sentences with *scarcely* that can be considered more typical were *the issue of respect for human rights is scarcely mentioned*, and *in scarcely a year we managed to get the controversial and complex legislation carefully onto the statute book*. A function that was seen multiple times with *scarcely* was the indication of time, how long ago something happened. The operator was combined with *a week ago* or as in the example *a year ago*.

One feature that kept reoccurring in the sentences of the corpus was the use of verbs about ability such as *can, could* and *be able to*. In the total of 300 sentences, they were found 73 times, so in 24.3% of the sentences. For the English operators these kind of verbs occurred 32 times with *barely*, 23 times with *hardly* and 18 times in combination with *scarcely*, where in the Dutch sentences we saw them 32 times with *amper* and 41 with *nauwelijks*. The verbs about ability would seem to be slightly more common in the Dutch sentences than in the English utterances. *Barely* appears to be most similar to the Dutch operators of all three English terms.

All in all, it has become clear that the operators are mostly used in reference to a verb, around 70% of the times for the Dutch terms, and even 80% for *hardly* and *barely*, and then a smaller 60 % for *scarcely*. Next to verbs, they are then secondly linked with adjectives. *Barely, scarcely* and *amper* are also combined with numbers. There are partial correlations between the Dutch and English operators. If we were to decide on suitable translations based solely on the linguistic environments, *nauwelijks* could be translated with *hardly*, both mainly combined with verbs, adjectives and nouns, and *amper* could be translated with *barely*, seen both mostly refer to verbs, adjectives and also numbers. *Hardly* seems similar to *amper* in respect to nouns and adjective, but it misses the combination with numbers. *Scarcely* would also be a suitable translation for both Dutch terms, as it is more often used with nouns, adjectives and numbers than the other English operators. Furthermore, the operators did appear to have preferred words that they were combined with. Most of the verbs that were found with the operators had to do with mental processes such as *know, remember, think* or an indication of time. If the operators really do have specific words that they are mainly combined with, then these combinations could easily be processed by people on default.

Chapter 4. Online survey

4.1 Methodology

Having analysed the online corpora, we will now look at the online survey that was conducted in two different versions. One English version to see the differences between *barely*, *hardly*, and *scarcely* was for native speakers of English, and a Dutch version for *nauwelijks* and *amper* for native speakers of Dutch. Both consisted of two similar parts. Sentences used in the survey were drafted from the corpus of Rerverso Context.

In the first part the participants were asked to choose one of the operators to fill in the blank in a sentence. Examples 1 and 2 show sentences from the English and Dutch survey.

1: *I can ... read what you have written.*

2: 'Ik kan ... lezen wat je geschreven hebt'.

The results of the corpus analysis were incorporated into the questions of this first part, and will either be supported and strengthened or possibly disproved and challenged. In order to test the findings of the corpus analysis, we put in two sentences in which the operator was connected with a number, two sentences with a noun, three sentences with a verb, three sentences with an adjective and two sentences where the syntax of Dutch and English was different.

The second part of the survey attempted to discover possible differences in argumentative strength. All of the operators have a negative argumentative direction, but do they all point to this conclusion with the same force? This part of the questionnaire will help answer this question so that afterwards a comparison can be made between Dutch and English.

The participants were asked to complete sentences containing one of the operators and a conjunction such as *but* or *so*, as examples 3 and 4.

3: *Many were boys barely 16 years old, so ...*

4: 'Velen waren jongens van amper 16 jaar oud, dus...'

Later they will be given the same sentence again, but with a different operator.

Thus, sentence 3 would be turned into example 5.

5: *Many were boys hardly 16 years old, so...*

The differences between the given answers, the drawn up conjunctive clauses, to the similar sentences will tell us whether there is a perceived difference in argumentativity of the operators. The more definite and conclusive the clauses are, the stronger the argumentative strength will be.

Moderators such as *maybe* and *sometime*, or *could* would show the sentence to be weaker, so to say, than when words such as *never*, *surely* or *shall* are used.

6: *It is hardly worth responding to, so I think I should just ignore it.*

7: *It is scarcely worth responding to, so I shall just ignore it.*

For example, sentence 7 has a more definite conclusion than sentence 6, which becomes visible in the comparison of *I think* in 6, showing still a slight hesitation, with *I shall* in 7, expressing a certainty. This would then indicate that *scarcely* has a stronger negative argumentative force than *hardly*. This method is very subjective and does not give hard, measurable statistics of the argumentative strength, but it can be an useful indicator for it. If the results show no difference in argumentativity between the operators, it could either mean that the method was not adequate enough or that people do not sense any difference in the strength of the words. It is possible that there is only a linguistic difference between them.

To distract the participants from these similar sentences, we also put in a few dummy sentences with phrases such as *very little*, *rarely* and *bijna niet* 'almost not' and *ternauwernood* 'narrowly'.

8: *Ik kon het bijna niet geloven, maar...* 'I could barely believe it'

The Dutch version had three pairs of similar sentences and four dummy sentences, making it a total of ten. The English survey was a bit more complicated because there are three variables. Three times three variables plus the four dummies would mean thirteen sentences, which would probably be a bit too much for people to stay focused and, moreover, three similar sentences would also be too marked. *Barely* and *hardly* were found in the corpus analysis to be more frequently used than *scarcely*, so it was decided to focus more on them. We took two sentences with *barely* and two with *hardly* and then we paired one of each of these with *scarcely* and with each other. This gave eight sentences to which three dummies were added, making it a total of eleven questions.

After having first determined the respective distinctness in strength for the Dutch operators and English operators, we will be able to determine if there are correlations between the languages.

The sentences used for the pairing were:

1: I ... got 10 hours of sleep last night, so

2: He ... attends classes, but

3: It is ... worth responding to...

The English survey thus has an extra sentence, namely:

4 He ... knows how to turn that thing on, but...

The surveys consisted out of a total of 22 sentences, twelve in the first part and ten or eleven in the second part, to make sure that it would not take people too long to finish and get tired.

Sanford and Moxey (2004) did a rather similar research into the psychological properties of quantifiers such as *few*, *not many* and *nearly all*. They also made use of sentences with a complement set reference. However, rather than having people come up with the complement themselves, they gave the participants full sentences and let them decide on whether they were correct or not. They could then make a ranking of the natural language quantifiers based on the found acceptability.

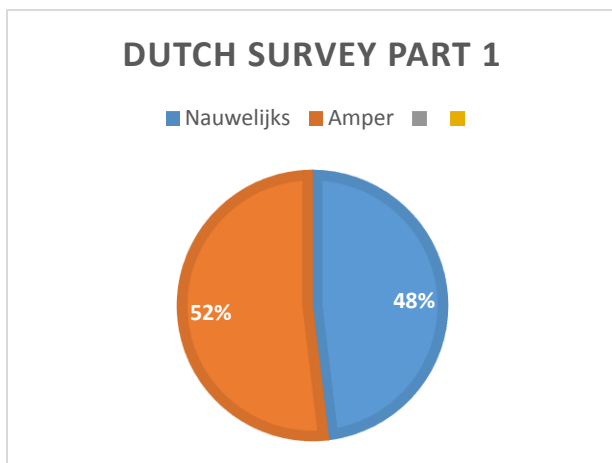
On the basis of the corpus, our hypothesis for the first part of the survey is that *nauwelijks* will be most often found, and that the English *barely* will be most favoured. In the second part, we believe that *amper* will be found to have a stronger argumentative strength than *nauwelijks*, possibly because it has a more distinctive and limited usage. Furthermore we suspect that *hardly* will be the strongest of the English operators, followed by *scarcely* and finally *barely*.

4.2 Results survey part 1

We will first look at the first parts of both the Dutch and the English survey before continuing with the second part of the surveys.

In the end a total of 35 participants filled in the Dutch survey. This means that a total of 420 sentences were filled in for the first part.

The distribution of all the answers of the first part of the Dutch survey is outlined in graph 9 below.



Graph 9, results of Dutch survey part 1

Amper seems to be used slightly more often than *nauwelijks*, 218 against 202 occurrences respectively, although it is as good as a 50/50 divide. This would go against what was found in the online corpora. However if we look at the sentences separately, visible in table 10 below, it might not be that clear cut.

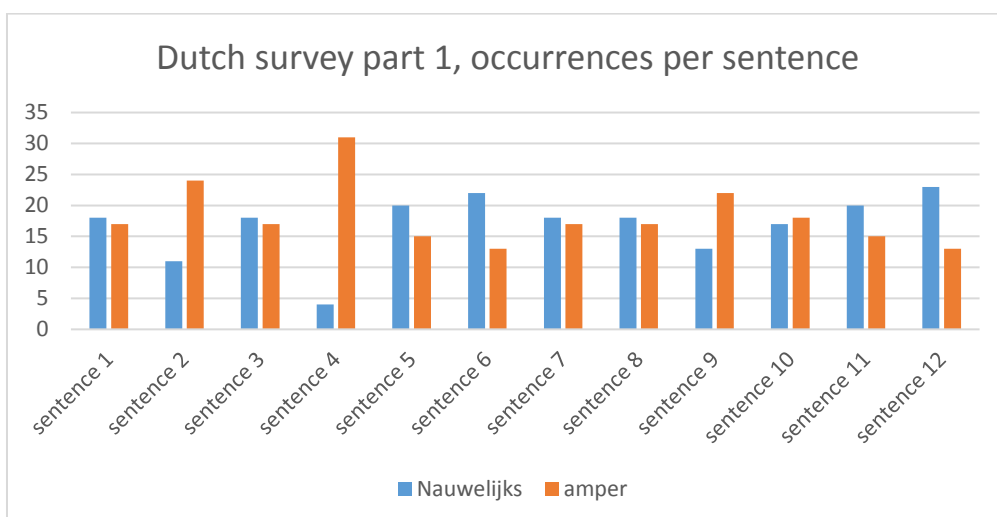


table 10

In eight of the twelve sentences *nauwelijks* was preferred over *amper*. However, for five of the sentences, the amount of occurrences was seventeen versus eighteen, thus basically a 50/50 divide. The one sentence that seems to have tipped the overall number to favour *amper* is number 4 *velen waren jongens van ... 16 jaar oud*. Almost all participant filled in *amper*, confirming its feature of being used with numbers, or in this case more specifically with age. Other significant sentences would be 2,6,9,and 12. Question 2 *ze zeggen dat Poirot zo intelligent is dat hij ... menselijk is* was also mostly answered with *amper*. For sentence 6 *ik kan me het ... herinneren, om eerlijk te zijn* and for question 12 *ze zijn die hoge prijs ... waard!* a majority of the people did choose *nauwelijks*.

Amper was found most often with the words: *menselijk* 'human', *16 jaar* '16 years old' and *een half miljoen* 'half a million'.

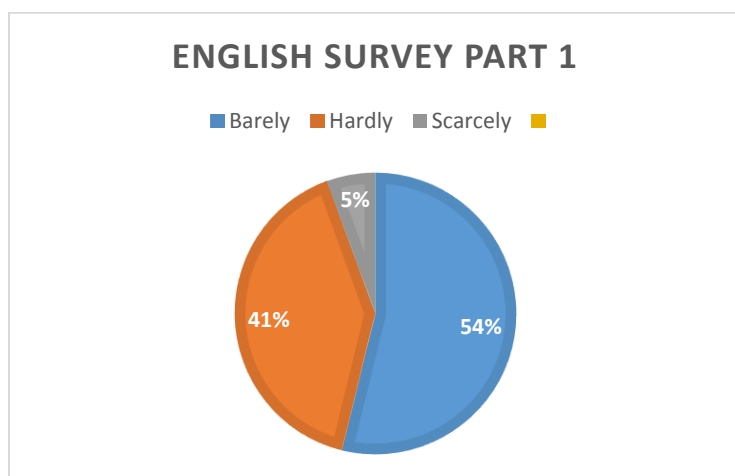
Nauwelijks was mostly used with the terms: *een competitie* 'a competition', *herinneren* 'remember', *ademen* 'breathe' and *waard* 'worth'.

The results were equally divided between the two operators when used in combination with *voelen* 'feel', *lezen* 'read', *vergelijkbaar* 'comparable', *betalen* 'pay' and *een debat* 'a debate'.

All in all, *amper*, in accordance with the corpus analysis, was chosen in combination with numbers by almost all participants. *Nauwelijks* was mostly found with the verb *remember*, which was also identified in the corpus as a common combination with *barely*. The sentences with a 50/50 divide were mostly with verbs, which was the most commonly found part of speech in the corpus for both operators.

However, apart from sentence 4, people are rather divided in their choice, and it would thus seem that in practice they do use the terms rather interchangeably.

A total of 24 people filled in the English survey, giving an amount of 288 sentences to be analysed. The distribution of all the answers are given in graph 10 below.



Graph 10, results of English survey part 1

Scarcely is only used in a very few occurrences, as was to be expected. However, opposite to what was found in the analysed corpora, *barely* was filled in more often than *hardly*. This does correspond with *barely* being the mostly used translation.

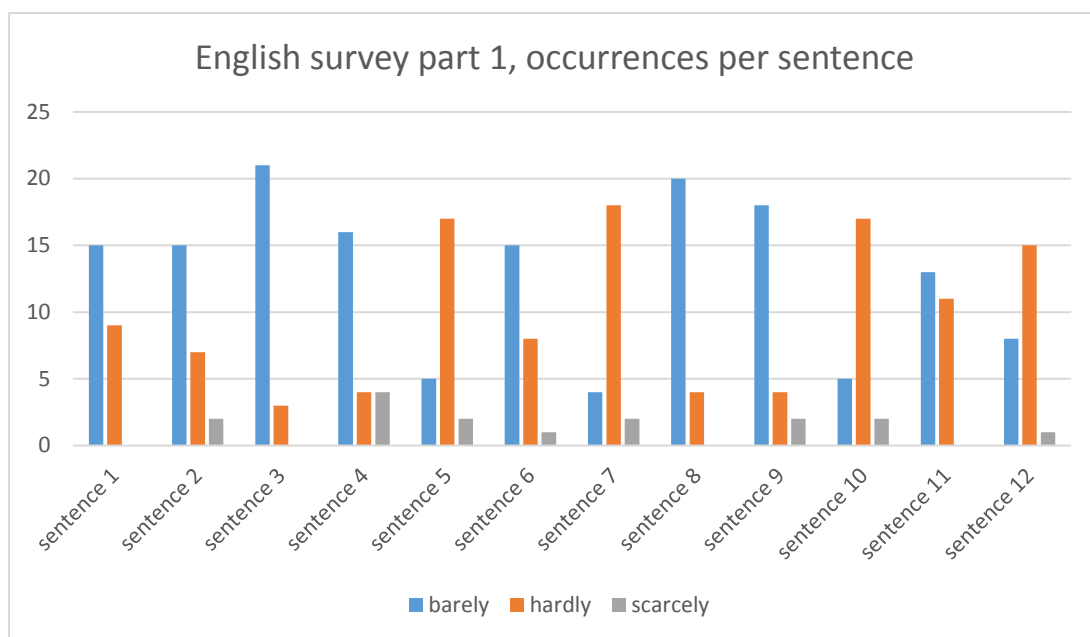


table 11

In table 11 above, the answers to the English questions are outlined. *Barely* was clearly preferred in sentences 3, *I can ... feel my feet*, 8, *this ... pays for the fertilizer* and 9 *we are ... half a million over*. *Hardly* was mostly used in sentences 5 *there has been ... any debate at all*, 7, *the standards are ... comparable, let alone transferable* and also question 10 *well, it's ... a competition, sheriff*. The sentence that got the largest input of *scarcely*, though still small, is number 4 *many were boys ... 16 years old*. The results do appear more clear-cut than those of the Dutch survey; the differences between the answers to a question are bigger and there is always one operator clearly preferred in the given sentence. This could indicate that the English operators all have a more particular usage than the Dutch operators.

Barely was filled in the most in eight of the sentences and in combination with the terms: *read, human, feel, 16 years, remember, pays, half a million* and *breathe*. It seems to be most common in those sentences in which the operator was to be linked to a noun. In the corpus this feature was found to be more common for *hardly*. However, the link with *remember* that was seen in the corpus, was also found in the survey. Furthermore, both sentences combining the operator with a number were completed with *barely*.

Hardly was used mostly with the words: *any debate, comparable, a competition* and *worth*. As was previously seen in the corpus analysis, *any* was a word commonly combined with *hardly* and this was thus also visible in the results for sentence 5. Sentence 10 is a rather similar construction in which *hardly* is combined with a stressed noun. This thus seems to be a function more common for *hardly* than for the other English operators.

If we compare the answers of the Dutch and the English survey, we can firstly see that the sentences that were most often answered with *amper* were all mostly answered with *barely*, and secondly that of the four phrases that were filled in mostly with *nauwelijks*, two were mainly answered with *hardly* and two with *barely*. The former is not very surprising seen that both operators were the ones found to connect with numbers. *Barely* was also found as the main translation of *amper*. The second observation would correspond with *hardly* and *barely* being equally popular as translation for *nauwelijks*.

4.3 Results survey part 2

We will now discuss the answers of the second part of the survey, in which the participants were asked to come up with conjunctive clauses to similar pair sentences containing a different operator. We will try to identify a difference in argumentative strength between the operators. The answers to the two similar utterances were put side to side and then rated with : - - , - , - + , + or ++ .

If the answers were equal, they were both classified as - +. If both adhered to the negative argumentative strength but one was considered stronger, as in *I am exhausted* compared to *I am a bit sleepy today* , the strongest one would be ranked as - - and the slightly weaker one as - . If the answers actually did not adhere to the negative strength and mentioned a more positive conclusion, they would be awarded a + / ++ grading. Finally, if one of the answers pointed to a negative conclusion and the other to a positive, they were respectively given a – and a + classification.

We will first outline the findings for the Dutch sentences.

The answers to the first Dutch sentence, *ik kreeg nauwelijks/amper 10 uur slaap vanacht, dus...*, were given the following ranking.

	Nauwelijks	amper
- -	1	7
-	8	2
+ -	12	12
+	0	1
++	2	1

The results above should be read as follows. Firstly, half of the pairs had similar answers for *nauwelijks* and *amper* and, secondly, *amper* provoked more decisive answer than *nauwelijks* no less than seven times, where *nauwelijks* only lead to a more direct conclusion once.

Most of the answers were in the range of *ik ben moe* 'I am tired', thus following the negative direction of the operators despite the fact that ten hours of sleep would generally be considered long. In the half of the answers that did show a difference, we can thus see that *amper* appears to mostly lead to a more definite conclusion than *nauwelijks*. *Nauwelijks* would lead to conclusions such as: *ben ik niet erg wakker* 'I am not really awake' and *ik ben moe* 'I am tired'. *Amper* would then provoke answers like: *val ik bijna in slaap* 'I am almost falling asleep' and *ik ben erg moe* 'I am very tired'. Moreover, *nauwelijks* would sometimes lead to more positive conclusions such as: *dat is heel veel!* 'that is a lot!' and *ik ben best uitgerust* 'I am rather well rested'. This example would thus show that the argumentative value of the operators more often wins out over the informative value of ten hours of sleep than the other way around.

The second Dutch sentence, *hij komt nauwelijks/amper naar de lessen, maar...*, got the following classifications.

	Nauwelijks	Amper
- -	4	7
-	7	4
+ -	13	13
+	0	0
++	0	0

Similar to the first sentence, half of the answers were as good as identical, mostly in the trend of *haalt toch goede cijfers* 'still gets good grades'. *Amper* again seems to more often lead to stronger conclusions than *nauwelijks*, although the difference is smaller than was seen with the first sentence. *Nauwelijks* would trigger conclusions such as *haalt alsnog het tentamen* 'still passes the exam', where *amper* incited answers such as *haalt alsnog een tien voor het tentamen* 'still gets an A on the exam'. There were no positive conclusions found, so the negative direction of the operators was always adhered to.

We classified the answers given to the third sentence, *het is het nauwelijks/amper waard om op te antwoorden, dus....*, as follows:

	Nauwelijks	Amper
- -	2	6
-	6	2
+ -	15	15
+	0	0
++	0	0

This final sentence pair led to the most similar answers but *amper* did again seem to incite stronger answers. The conclusions drawn were mostly comparable to *'ga ik het ook niet doen'* 'I won't do it' For *nauwelijks* we found the answers *met tegenzin doe ik het* 'I do it reluctantly' and *zou ik dat niet doen* 'I wouldn't do that', where *amper* provoked conclusions such as *slechts met grote tegenzin doe ik het* 'I only do it with great reluctance' and *laat ik het hierbij* 'I leave it with this'. In the first sentence we saw instances where participants ignored the negative argumentative orientation, due to the high informative value of ten hours of sleep, but that was not the case in this final sentence pairing.

All in all, the results would indicate that *amper* has a slightly stronger argumentative strength than *nauwelijks*, though most often they are considered to be equal. It might thus not hold for all people.

So how do the Dutch operators compare to the English operators? We will first discuss the two sentences that paired *barely* and *hardly*. Subsequently, we will then look at how *scarcely* relates to them.

The two sentences that compared *hardly* and *barely* were: *He barely/hardly attends classes, but...* and *He barely/hardly knows how to turn that thing on, but...* . The answers were graded in the same way as those of the Dutch survey. The results of these two sentence pairs are outlined here below.

	Barely	Hardly
- -	3	5
-	5	3
+ -	5	5
+	0	0
++	0	0

	Barely	Hardly
- -	1	3
-	2	3
+ -	6	6
+	3	0
++	0	0

In both of the sentences *hardly* would seem to more often trigger stronger conclusions than *barely*, though the difference in numbers is very small. The first sentence got responses in terms of *he is smart* or *he still passes*. Differences could be found when for example *barely* got the conclusion *he still passed the course* and *hardly* led to the answer *he still gets high marks*. The second sentence got a wide range of different answers that were thus sometimes hard to compare. *Barely* was answered with *he managed to complete the task anyway* or *somehow he managed to ride the motorcycle to Amsterdam* where *hardly* was then given conclusions such as *he could after reading the manual* and *he knows how to turn on other things*. People thus were not always sure whether someone had actually been able to turn the thing on.

So where should *scarcely* respectively be placed? The sentence used to compare *hardly* and *scarcely* was: *It is hardly/scarcely worth responding to, so....* . The responses were ranked as follows:

	Hardly	Scarcely
- -	7	0
-	1	7
+ -	5	5
+	0	1
++	0	0

Hardly was generally given more conclusive remarks. Most answers were close to *I won't respond*. Conclusions given to *hardly* were *I didn't respond at all* and *I am going to ignore her and bake the*

cake my way where the sentence with *scarcely* was completed with *I didn't respond* and *I'll just leave it*.

The survey then asked the question *I barely/scarcely got 10 hours of sleep last night, so...* to determine the respective argumentative strength of *barely* and *scarcely*. The results are outlined below.

	Barely	Scarcely
- -	5	3
-	3	4
+ -	2	2
+	2	1
++	1	3

Though the difference is not as big as with *hardly*, *barely* also seems to be argumentatively stronger than *scarcely*. However, the small numbers do make it harder to draw definite conclusions. The answers were generally similar to the ones found in the Dutch version and in the range of *I am tired*. Examples of conjunctive clauses provoked by *barely* were *I am exhausted* and *I can't function properly today* and respectively *I am very tired* and *don't expect much productivity from me today* by *scarcely*. However, there were also answers such as *I should sleep less* and *I have had enough sleep*, thus not corresponding with the negative argumentative orientation of the operator but following instead the semantic value of a large ten hours of sleep. As was also seen in the Dutch version, the argumentative value more often wins out over the informative value than vice versa. However, in the English answers, the informative value was more often adhered to than in the Dutch ones.

If we were thus to compare all three English operators on their argumentative strength, it would seem that *hardly* has the strongest effect, followed by *barely* and that *scarcely* is the weakest of the three.

If we were now to compare the Dutch and English operators, it becomes apparent that the Dutch participants more often gave as good as identical answers to *nauwelijks* and *amper* than the English people did to the English operators. This could indicate that the Dutch indicators are more similar and thus can be used more interchangeably than their English counterparts. However, it is also possible that the Dutch participants were more confused about the similar sentences and could not

easily come up with different answers. This being said, comparing the indicated argumentative strength of the operators, it would appear that *amper* is most similar to *hardly* and that *nauwelijks* is more comparable to *barely*. *Scarcely* is likely also a better translation for *nauwelijks* than for *amper* based on argumentative strength, but it should be kept in mind that it was different in its found frequency and linguistic environment.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The main goal of this thesis was to identify the possible differences between the Dutch terms *nauwelijks* and *amper* and their English counterparts *barely*, *hardly* and *scarcely* to then determine their translatability.

The operators have similar semantic meanings and thus do not create the same problems as *realia*, whether the translator decides on a method of domestication or opts for a method of foreignization. Furthermore, they are also the same part of speech in both languages and should therefore not require the translator to adapt the text with one of Langeveld's mentioned changes. There might be other terms in the sentence that make this necessary. However, if the English operators were to be translated with the Dutch phrase *bijna niet*, an adjustment that is similar to an antonymic translation would have to be made. The difficulty in translating the operators lies mostly in maintaining the strength of the original text.

From a pragmatic point of view, there seem to be similar kinds of implicatures that can be derived from the Dutch and English operators. Grice would most likely say they give rise to conventional implicatures. Next to this, following the maxim of quantity, they can also create scalar implicatures. The polar component leading to the inference that something did not happen and the proximal component with the intended meaning that something came close to not happening.

The research into the actual differences between the operators, consisted of an online corpus analysis and a Dutch and English online survey to try to find possible differences between the Dutch and English operators and determine their respective argumentative strength.

In the first part of the research, multiple corpora were analysed to establish the general frequency of the Dutch and English operators and the corpus Context Reverso was used to look at the linguistic environment of the operators. In the English corpora, there was a clear difference between especially the British and American corpus in the distribution of the respective frequency of the operators. This thesis did not look further into the distinction between British and American English. It would be interesting for further research to see if the operators are found to be used differently in the

different varieties of English. If there really is such a clear distinction, translators should be aware of them when translating a Dutch text for either an American or British audience. The Dutch corpora showed rather big differences in the found numbers of occurrences of *amper* en *nauwelijks*. *Amper* was found most often in both corpora, but the disparity was clearly bigger in the Corpus Hedendaags Nederland than in the corpus of OpenSonar. The latter is carried out by the universities of Leuven and Gent among others and 78% of its texts are from Belgium sources, so there might be a strong Flemish influence that was not further analysed in this thesis. It would be a good topic for further research to see if *amper* is more frequently used in Flemish than in Standard Dutch.

The first part of the survey asked the participants to choose between the different operators in a sentence. This method shows the general frequency of the operators and could possibly corroborate the linguistic environment found in the online corpus analysis. The surveys were answered by 35 and 24 people for Dutch and English respectively. This makes it hard to rule out that different aspects in the sentences, other than the intended word(s) to be combined with the operator, or external factors might have influenced the choices of the participants. The difference between *amper* and *nauwelijks* is very subtle and people might have different notions about how they differ. They can have a personal preference.

The second part of the essay asked the participants to come up with conclusions to incomplete sentences. It should be said that the survey can only be considered as an indicator of the respective argumentative strength. It is a very subjective notion without specific indicators and is thus hard to categorise. Some given answers to the pair sentences were about different topics, such as *he barely knows how to turn the thing on, but he is a computer genius* and *he hardly knows how to turn that thing on, but he makes a great cup of tea*. It is then difficult to determine the respective argumentativity, especially when some answers might be meant ironic. Furthermore, as mentioned, the survey was not answered by a large group of people and some participants did leave some of the sentences in the second part empty. Especially in the English survey the number of sentence pairs that could be compared for the argumentative strength was restricted. This made that the differences were sometimes very small, making it hard to draw a definitive conclusion. We decided personally on the respective strength of the answers given by the participants, so it is possible that the results would differ if another person was to rank them.

Rieborn (2012) did a similar kind of research in her thesis on the Dutch terms *nauwelijks*, *amper* and *ternauwernood*. She also did a combination of a corpus analysis and a survey. In her survey people were asked to rate the correctness of sentences on a scale of 1-5. It is thus rather similar to the methodology that Sanford and Moxley (2004) used in their study on *few* versus *a few*. She found that

nauwelijks and *amper* were very similar and both had a negative argumentative orientation. *Nauwelijks* was more often used in a 'neutral' construction and in combination with explicit negation, where *amper* was more commonly used in quantifying constructions. *Ternauwernood* did seem to be more particular. It was used predominantly with 'verbs of achievement' such as *overleven* 'survive' and *ontsnappen* 'escape' and it had an almost positive argumentative orientation. It is more accurately translated with *narrowly*. Because it has such a distinctive and different usage, we chose not to focus on it further in this thesis. Where Rieborn in her research wanted to determine the argumentative orientation of the operators, we already assumed the negative orientation of them and tried to identify their respective argumentative strength. Because of this different focus, we thought a different approach would be more suitable. However, other methodologies could also definitely be tried. The scoring of the different sentence pairs could also be compared. However, we believed that this would more easily lead to more similar results. Having the participants grade the acceptability of given sentences rather than having them come up with their own answers would solve the problem of possibly being bias when deciding personally on the respective argumentative strength of given answers.

In order to get a more precise indication of the argumentative strength of the operators, a wider scaled questionnaire should be conducted among a bigger group of people. It could then also be an idea to have multiple versions of both the Dutch and the English survey. These different versions could then ask the questions in different sequences and maybe also alternate the conjunctions *but* and *so*. This would then help prevent the people to be influenced by the order in which they have to fill in their answers.

A factor not included in the research that would be interesting for further research is the use of the operators in different registers. Is *nauwelijks* or *amper* used more in spoken speech? Which of the operators would be most common in written speech? Moreover, it could be that *scarcely* is mainly used in more formal situations that were not questioned in the survey. One operator might be considered more polite than another.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The main research question of this thesis was: The Dutch argumentative operators *nauwelijks* and *amper* and their English semantic counterparts, *barely*, *scarcely* and *hardly*, all have a negative argumentative orientation, but how are they possibly different and how could they best be translated?

Their difference does not appear to be in the semantics or in the pragmatics, the implicatures that can be inferred from the operators. So this thesis looked for differences in the linguistic environments and in the argumentative strength. A good translation is about transferring both content and strength of a text. There should be a dynamic equivalence so that readers from the source text and from the target text get a similar understanding.

In the corpus analysis, it became clear that *nauwelijks* and *hardly* were respectively used the most of the operators. *Scarcely* was found to have the lowest general frequency. *Nauwelijks* and *barely* were mostly used in translation and both had multiple common translations. *Amper* and *hardly* both only had one main term that they were translated with. The operators were all mostly used in combination with verbs, the English even more so than the Dutch ones, with the exception of *scarcely*. *Amper* was commonly used with numbers, which was also found for *barely* and *scarcely*. Both *amper* and *scarcely* were also used for the framing of time, as in *scarcely a year ago* ‘*amper een jaar geleden*’. Verbs that the operators were used with often involved mental processes, such as *know, think, and remember*. The sentences also very often contained verbs such as *can* and *could*. Still, it is possible that the operators are used in certain fixed combinations with specific words that people would have to know by heart in both languages to translate them properly.

The goal of the first part of the survey was to corroborate the findings of the corpus analysis. There were similar results, but also some differences. The participants of the survey mostly used *amper* and *barely*. However, in the Dutch survey *nauwelijks* was used the most in the majority of the sentences, but *amper* was very strongly used in the two sentences containing a number and thus had more occurrences over all. The found feature of *amper* with numbers was thus confirmed. The sentences with a high amount of responses with *amper* were in the English survey mostly answered with *barely*. *Hardly* was commonly used in combination with a noun such as *it is hardly a competition* where in the Dutch survey the results of these sentences was evenly divided among the two operators.

The second part of the surveys did appear to indicate respective differences in argumentative strength. For the Dutch operators, as was predicted, *amper* seemed to have a stronger argumentative strength, leading to more decisive conclusions. *Hardly* turned out to be the strongest English argumentative operator, followed by *barely*. *Scarcely* seemed to trigger the least definite conclusions and, moreover, its answers ignored the negative argumentative direction the most often. *Amper* and *hardly* would thus probably more easily lead to the polar component of the scalar implicature and *nauwelijks* and *barely* more quickly to the proximal component. Through these pairings, a translation based on the argumentativity would be possible.

All in all, it would seem that *nauwelijks* can best be translated with *barely* seen that the linguistic environments and argumentativity are rather similar. Even though their general frequency was not decisive with different findings in the corpus analysis and survey. *Amper* is in terms of its argumentativity most likely best translated with *hardly*. However, in terms of its linguistic environment it turned out to be more comparable to *barely*, and its very clear feature of being combined with numbers seems to be best translated with *scarcely*.

Hij heeft nauwelijks een goal gescoord is thus most closely translated with *he barely scored a goal*. The intensity and intended meaning will most likely be similarly perceived, probably then close to the reading of *he came close to not scoring a goal*. However, if we take the reading of *nauwelijks* as *he only just (managed to) scored a goal*, with the intended meaning of the polar component of a scalar implicature, thus *he basically did not score a goal*, it can better be translated with *he hardly scored a goal*. Furthermore, in the situation where *nauwelijks* is combined with a noun, as in *het is nauwelijks een competitie*, it would also be more appropriately translated with *hardly, it is hardly a competition*.

Comparatively, *hij heeft amper een goal gescoord* would be more accurately translated with *he hardly scored a goal* when taking into account the voice and strength of the text. The reading will be closer to *he did not score a goal* than when *nauwelijks/barely* was used. However, the feature of *amper* of being combined with numbers would correspond most closely with *scarcely*. *Hij heeft amper 2 goals gescoord* is thus best translated with *he scarcely scored 2 goals*. However, as mentioned, if *scarcely* really is used much less often in American English, the translator should be careful not to overuse the term when translating for an American audience. He might then be best advised to use *barely* instead.

The differences between the operators thus are very small and people do seem to use them rather interchangeably. The choice for one term over the other in a translation cannot be seen as a real mistake and will not lead to a wrong reading as was seen with *few* and *a few*. However, the translator would still do well to keep the dissimilarities in mind because the term might still lead to a different feeling in the text. It could then still lose something in translation. This would then only strengthen the bad reputation of translators. In the end, it might be best to accept that translations will never be perfect and embrace the differences between all the languages with their own particularities.

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Appendix :

Dutch Survey

Opdracht 1, Kies voor het gebruik van 'nauwelijks' of 'amper' op de lege plek in de volgende 12 zinnen.

- 1: Ik kan ... lezen wat ik geschreven heb.
- 2: Ze zeggen ook dat Poirot zo intelligent is dat hij ... menselijk is.
- 3: Ik kan ... mijn voeten voelen.
- 4: Velen waren jongens van ... 16 jaar oud.
- 5: Het is ... een competitie, Sheriff.
- 6: Ik kan 't me ... herinneren, om eerlijk te zijn. Het gebeurde lang geleden.
- 7: De normen zijn ... vergelijkbaar, laat staan overdraagbaar.
- 8: Van die prijs, kunnen we ... de mest betalen, laat staan de zaden.
- 9: We zitten er ... een half miljoen over.
- 10: Er is ... een debat geweest.
- 11: Ik doe maar een fractie van wat jij doet en ik kan ... ademen.
- 12: Ze zijn die hoge prijs ... waard!

Opdracht 2, maak de volgende zinnen zo logisch en passend mogelijk af.

- 1: Ik kreeg nauwelijks 10 uur slaap vannacht, dus...
- 2: De vrouw overleefde ternauwernood de val, maar...
- 2: Hij komt amper naar de lessen, maar...
- 3: Het is het nauwelijks waard om op te antwoorden, dus...
- 5: Zij kon het bijna niet geloven, maar...
- 6: Ik kreeg amper 10 uur slaap vannacht, dus...
- 7: Ze konden nog maar net de eerste drie vragen doornemen, dus...
- 8: Hij komt nauwelijks naar de lessen, maar...
- 9: Het is het amper waard om op te antwoorden, dus...
- 10: Ik weet bijna niets van je, maar...

English survey

Task 1, fill in the gap of these 12 sentences with either barely, hardly or scarcely.

1: I can ... read what you've written.

2: They say that Poirot is so intelligent he is ... human.

3: I can ... feel my feet.

4: Many were boys ... 16 years old, so they are not allowed to drink for another 2 years.

5: There's been ... any debate at all.

6: I can ... remember, to be honest. It was a long time ago.

7: The standards are ... comparable, let alone transferable.

8: This ... pays for the fertilizer, let alone the seeds.

9: We're ...half a million over.

10: Well, it's ... a competition, sheriff.

11: I'm only doing a tiny bit of what you do, and I can ... breathe.

12: At such prices, they're ... worth the picking.

Task 2, complete the following sentences as logically and fitting as possible.

1: I barely got 10 hours of sleep last night, so...

2: He hardly attends classes, but...

3: The girl rarely talks to him anymore, so...

4: It's scarcely worth responding to, so...

5: He barely knows how to turn that thing on, but...

6: Almost no building was left unbroken, but...

7: I scarcely got 10 hours of sleep last night, so...

8: He barely attends classes, but...

9: The little boy only just managed to catch the bug, so...

10: It's hardly worth responding to, so...

11: He hardly knows how to turn that thing on, but...

Results of the second part of the Dutch survey

Question 1a: Ik kreeg nauwelijks 10 uur slaap vannacht, dus...

Question 1b: Ik kreeg amper 10 uur slaap vannacht, dus...

Answers to question 1a	Answers to question 1b
<p>Nu ben ik moe Nu ben ik moe dat is heel erg veel! ga ik vanavond vroeg naar bed. Ik ben best uitgerust ik ben moe ben ik niet erg wakker Ik ben erg moe ik functioneer vandaag slecht ben ik moe. ik neem nog een kop koffie. Ik ben moe ik ben moe.</p> <p>ik ga vanavond vroeg naar bed. ben op. ik ben nog steeds moe. ik ben niet veel waard. maak ik soms een spelfoutje.</p> <p>voor mij nog niet genoeg vandaag ben ik niet op mijn best. ga ik vanavond wat eerder naar bed.</p> <p>Ik ben moe Heb nog een middagdutje gedaan. Ik heb niet goed geslapen Ik ben doodmoe Ik voel mij niet helemaal uitgerust.</p> <p>Ben ik nog moe ik ben moe</p> <p>ik ben vandaag erg moe. Ben minder fit dan gehoopt.</p>	<p>Nu wil ik nog meer slapen Nu ben ik moe vanavond ga ik vroeg naar bed. ga ik vanavond vroeg naar bed. Ik ben erg moe ik ben erg moe val ik bijna in slaap</p> <p>ik lig er vanavond eerder in. ben nu heel moe. voel ik me vandaag heel moe. Was ik moe</p> <p>ik ben heel erg moe. ben op. ik ben nog steeds moe. ik ben niet veel waard. ik mag niet klagen.</p> <p>heb ik meer slaap nodig ik ben vandaag niet op mijn best.</p> <p>Ben kapot. Ik heb niet goed geslapen Ben ik moe Voel ik mij niet uitgerust.</p> <p>Ben ik nog steeds moe ben ik moe</p> <p>ik ben erg moe vandaag. Ben minder fit dan gehoopt</p>

Question 2a: Ik kreeg nauwelijks 10 uur slaap vannacht, dus...

Question 2b: Ik kreeg amper 10 uur slaap vannacht, dus...

Answers to question 2a	Answers to question 2b
<p>Is wel het lievelingetje van de docent Haalt wel al zijn vakken dat is niet erg. haalde toch nog een voldoende. Heeft zijn tentamen gehaald wel naar voetbaltraining haalt alsnog het tentamen</p> <p>toch doet hij het goed. haalde wel de toets. toch haalt hij tien op zijn proefwerken Haalt hoge cijfers</p> <p>kan wel altijd alle vragen beantwoorden. hij snapt het wel. hij haalt toch al zijn tentamens hij snapt het wel. dat doen professoren van de uni wel vaker.</p> <p>haalt toch tien ging toch.</p> <p>Red het toch behoorlijk. Haalt goede cijfers Haalt toch een voldoende Haalt wel goede cijfers.</p> <p>Maar slaagde wel voor het examen haalt wel goede cijfers</p> <p>haalt wel goede cijfers. Haalt goede cijfers voor de toetsen.</p>	<p>Haalt het vak waarschijnlijk toch wel Haalt wel al zijn vakken haalt toch goede cijfers. heeft toch nog een voldoende gehaald. Heeft zijn tentamen goed gehaald wel naar voetbaltraining haalt alsnog een tien voor het tentamen Het lukte hem om het tentamen te halen toch heeft hij goede resultaten. haalde toch hoge cijfers. toch ging hij. Haalt hoge cijfers haalt toch goede cijfers.</p> <p>heeft wel alle vakken gehaald. haalt zijn tentamens toch. hij haalt toch al zijn tentamens. snapt de stof wel goed. zal vast wel weer zitten huilen bij de examens.</p> <p>haalt wel tien, ra ra ging toch. desalniettemin behoort hij tot de besten van de klas</p> <p>Haalt wel goede cijfers Haalt toch altijd de examens. Hij haalt goede cijfers Haalt waarschijnlijk toch een voldoende Haalt wel goede cijfers.</p> <p>Hij slaagde wel voor het examen haalt wel goede cijfers</p> <p>haalt wel al zijn vakken. Haalt wel goede cijfers</p>

Question 3a: Het is het nauwelijks waard om op te antwoorden, dus...

Question 3b: Het is het amper waard om op te antwoorden, dus...

Answers to question 3a	Answers to question 3b
<p>Ik hou mijn mond Laat ik het zitten neem ik de moeite ook niet. verzin ik maar wat. Dat doe ik dus ook niet ga maar gewoon verder laat maar zitten Ik zeg niets ik doe het dan ook niet. dus zoek het maar zelf uit. liet ik het zitten. Doe ik het niet ik laat het maar gaan.</p> <p>ik heb maar niks gezegd. lekker laten gaan. houd ik maar mijn mond. houd het vooral kort. doe ik het lekker niet.</p> <p>laat maar met tegenzin doe ik het. je moet de moeite niet nemen.</p> <p>Ik houd mijn mond Negeer hem. Antwoord ik niet Krijg je van mij niets te horen Zou ik dat niet doen.</p> <p>Bespaar ik mij de moeite negeer ik het.</p> <p>ik doe er ook geen moeite voor. Niet doen.</p>	<p>Dat doe ik ook zeker niet Liet ik het zitten dat doe ik dan ook niet. verzin ik maar wat. Dat doe ik nu dan ook niet doe maar gewoon niet laat maar zitten</p> <p>laat ik het maar zitten. zoek het maar uit. vind ik het de moeite niet. Doe ik het niet</p> <p>ik heb maar niks gezegd. ik zou er geen aandacht aan besteden. houd ik maar mijn mond. houd het vooral kort. ja.</p> <p>negeer 't maar slechts met grote zin doe ik het.</p> <p>Heb ik het met een kort antwoord afgedaan. Doe ik dat niet Zeg ik niets Laat ik het hierbij.</p> <p>Bespaar ik mij de moeite negeer ik het</p> <p>daarom doe ik het ook niet.</p> <p>Hierbij een kort antwoord. Niet doen.</p>

Results of the second part of the English survey.

Question 1a: He barely attends classes, but...

Question 1b: He hardly attends, but...

Answers to question 1a	Answers to question 1b
<p>He's smart He does a lot of work at home his marks show he is making good progress. he is still progressing well. he could still answer the questions. He gets the highest grades. He always does the homework</p> <p>still gets good grades.</p> <p>passed anyway</p> <p>he still passed the course</p> <p>He passed his exams</p> <p>his grades are good. still has a 4.0 GPA.</p>	<p>He is smart He does lots of work at home somehow he still passes his exams. he is getting very good at yoga nonetheless. he knows everything. He's smarter than the rest of us. He always passes all his exams his grades are impeccable. he still gets good grades</p> <p>he passed anyway</p> <p>he still gets high marks he's really smart. Passed his exams he still passes. he manages to pass class. he still gets good grades.</p> <p>Still gets good grades</p>

Question 2a: He barely knows how to turn that thing on, but...

Question 2b: He hardly knows how to turn that thing on, but...

Answers to question 2a barely	Answers to question 2b
<p>Uses it all the time He uses it every day he's a computer genius. at least he is trying something new. he managed to complete the task anyway. He's still trying. Somehow he managed to ride the motorcycle to Amsterdam he was able to use it well. makes it work anyway.</p> <p>somehow he managed to drive it successfully</p> <p>he is great with over things</p>	<p>I don't understand why these are the same questions He has to use it every day! he makes a great cup of tea! he somehow gets good results with it. he could after reading the manual. He tried to anyway. He knows how to turn on other things</p> <p>gets it going anyway.</p> <p>he made a success of it anyway</p>

<p>he is so clever. It worked after trying several times somehow he still got it to work. the car was given to him by his father, so he uses it. still manages to cook pasta.</p> <p>He still tries</p>	<p>thankfully it works</p> <p>He tried hard to get it on.</p> <p>he uses it anyway. still manages to make it work.</p>
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Question 3a: It is scarcely worth responding to, so...

Question 3b: It is hardly worth responding to, so...

Answers to question 3a scarcely	Answers to question 3b
<p>She said nothing I won't do so I wouldn't bother making the effort. I'll just leave it. I just kept quiet. Forget it. It is best to ignore it I won't. I probably wont.</p> <p>I won't</p> <p>I don't I'm going to ignore it. I didn't respond I won't. I will ignore his comment. you can put it of till later</p> <p>I never do</p>	<p>She did not respond. I won't do it don't waste your time. I am going to ignore her, and bake the cake my way. I didn't bother to. Don't worry about it. It's best to leave it</p> <p>i won't.</p> <p>I won't</p> <p>why would you bother</p> <p>lhr didn't respond at all</p> <p>I will not. I'd advise you not to.</p>

Question 4a: I scarcely got 10 hours of sleep last night, so...

Question 4b: I barely got 10 hours of sleep last night, so...

Answers to question 4a scarcely	Answers to question 4b
<p>I'm tired I am still quite tired don't expect much productivity from me today. I feel fine, because 10 hours is loads. I'm very tired. I don't want to go out today. I still feel tired, since I continue to prefer more sleep</p> <p>I should sleep less.</p> <p>I'm pretty well-rested</p> <p>I need a lot of coffee</p> <p>I'm very tired</p> <p>I am sleepy today. I've had enough sleep.</p>	<p>I am tired I am really tired I can't function properly today. don't laugh, but I am very tired today. I'm exhausted. I'm tired. I'm not rested, because I prefer to sleep longer I am knackered. I'm complaining about nothing.</p> <p>I'm pretty rested</p> <p>I am exhausted I'm quite tired. I'm very tired I still wish I was asleep. I am exhausted. I'll be needing a lot of coffee.</p> <p>I'm still tired</p>