

Dissertation title

Free Choice and Negative Polarity: A compositional analysis of Korean Polarity Sensitive Items

Description of the dissertation

The word *any* in English displays a restricted distribution, in contrast to *a* and *every*. For instance, *any* can occur in negative sentences (1a), but not in affirmative counterparts (1b)[\[1\]](#). *A* and *every* do not have such a restriction, as shown in (2).

- (1) a. John did not eat **any** candy.
- b. *John ate **any** candy.
- (2) a. John did not eat **a/every** candy.
- b. John ate **a/every** candy.

In addition, *any* can appear with *at most* phrase (3a), but not with *at least* phrase in (3b). Again, *a* and *every* are fine with both phrases in (4).

- (3) a. At most three kids ate **any** candy.
- b. *At least three kids ate **any** candy.
- (4) a. At most three kids ate **a/every** candy.
- b. At least three kids ate **a/every** candy.

Many researchers have been trying to find the licensing contexts of *any* and discover what is the common property of the contexts (Fauconnier 1975; Heim 1984; Horn 1969, 1989; Klima 1964; Krifka 1990; Ladusaw 1979; Linebarger 1987; Lahiri, 1998; Zwarts 1995, among others). One of the most influential findings has been made by Ladusaw (1979). He proposes that the contexts that license negative polarity items (NPIs) like *any* are downward-entailing. Context X_Y is downward entailing (DE) if and only if from the truth of $X\beta Y$ and the fact that α entails β , the truth of $X\alpha Y$ is obtained. For example, 'going to Penn' entails 'going to a university in Philly' in that if 'John goes to Penn' is true, then 'John goes to a

university in Philly' must also be true. Given this, negation is DE because from the truth of 'John does not go to a university in Philly', we can conclude that 'John does not go to Penn'. *At most* phrase also proves to be DE in the same manner.

The analysis of NPI licensing in terms of DE-ness has been utilized and elaborated in many subsequent approaches (Hoeksema, 1993, Nam 1994, Progovac 1993, Zwarts 1995). Although those approaches are very successful, there are a number of problems they encounter. One of the most serious is that they fail to incorporate so-called Free Choice (FC) reading of *any*. This reading arises in sentences like (5) where *any* occurs in modal auxiliaries and generic statements that are non-DE, signaling the addressee's freedom of choice (Vendler 1967). That is, for every candy *x* (in a relevant context), you have a freedom to choose *x*, and you are permitted to eat *x* in (5a) or you'd find that *x* tastes sweet in (5b).

- (5) a. You may eat **any** candy. (5') a. You may eat every candy.
 b. **Any** candy tastes sweet. b. Every candy tastes sweet.

Two observations have led a number of scholars to propose that there are two lexically different *any*'s: NPI *any* and FC *any* (Carlson, 1980, 1981; Dayal, 1998, 2006; Ladusaw, 1979; Linebarger, 1981). First, FC *any* in (5) is interpreted more like a universal quantifier *every* (compare with examples in (5')), whereas NPI *any* in (3) is more similar to an existential quantifier *a* (compare in (4)). Second, the licensing contexts for FC *any* are non-DE. This ambiguity proposal may be supported by the fact that some languages do manifest two different words: one FC item that never functions as an NPI, corresponding to the FC *any*, and another word corresponding to the NPI *any* in English (see Chierchia 2002 for Italian; Quer 1995 for Spanish and Catalan).

The principle of Occam's Razor, however, supports the more economical hypothesis that there is, in fact, only one *any* rather than two. Moreover, the 'two different *any*'s' theory cannot explain **why, then, the two categories are realized by one single item in many other unrelated languages** (e.g., Dutch, German, Hindi, Tamil etc.). If this is not just an accident, **what is the relationship between NPI-hood and FC-ness? What is the common denominator for both NPI-hood and FC-ness, and what is responsible for the differences of the two in their distribution and quantificational force?**

Korean offers a rare opportunity in this debate, because in Korean one can clearly see that there is a lexical morpheme which is common in both NPIs and FCIs, and that the different particles attached to the morpheme make it into either an NPI or an FCI, as shown in (6). That is, an indefinite morpheme *amwu-* is the indicator of polarity sensitivity, and each particle, *-to* 'also/even', *-lato* 'even', and *-na* 'or' determines negative polarity or (existential/universal) free choiceness.

(6)

	<i>-to</i> 'also/even'	<i>-lato</i> 'even'	<i>-na</i> 'or'
<i>Amwu-</i>	NPI	FCI	FCI

Extending the line of research that focuses on the meaning of PSIs (polarity sensitive items, which include NPIs and FCIs together) to understand why they are licensed in some particular contexts (Kadmon and Landman (1993), Krifka (1995)), this dissertation examines the semantics of each morpheme and particle to discover each micropiece’s contribution to NPI-hood and FC-ness, and to explain why PSIs show such distributional restrictions as in (1,3,5).

Kadmon and Landman (1993) propose that ‘*any* + common noun (CN)’ adds a semantic and pragmatic effect called **Domain-widening** to the corresponding indefinite NP ‘*a* CN’. They argue that *any* widens the interpretation of the CN along a contextual dimension so that it tolerates marginal cases. For instance, while the speaker has in mind only potatoes in a regular domain such as edible potatoes in (7a), (7b) may indicate that the speaker considers relevant contextually marginal potatoes like rotten ones. They account for the distribution of *any* in such a way that *any* is licensed only if such domain-widening creates a stronger statement (**strengthening**). In negative contexts and generic statements, widening the domain of an indefinite like ‘a candy’ or ‘potatoes’ by using *any* leads to a statement that is stronger (3,7), whereas, in positive and episodic sentences, widening makes the statements weaker (compare (7’)). This widening and strengthening view has a great advantage over DE-ness approaches in that it enables a unified analysis of NPIs and FCIs.

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|-----|----|----------------------------|------|----|-------------------|
| (7) | a. | I don’t have potatoes. | (7’) | a. | I have a candy |
| | b. | I don’t have ANY potatoes. | | b. | *I have any candy |

In my previous paper (Choi 2005), I argued that the domain-widening effect is induced by *amwu-* in Korean by showing several diagnostics distinguishing between domain-widening and regular indefinites. The domain-widening function, invisible in other languages, becomes tangible in Korean. As shown in (8), we can detect in Korean both the common part that NPIs and FCIs share (that has led some languages, like English, to have the same word for both) and also the parts that differentiate the two kinds of items (that has caused some other languages, like Catalan, to employ two separate words).

(8)

English:	widening	+	α	<i>any</i>	NPI
	widening	+	β	<i>any</i>	FCI
Catalan:	widening	+	α	<i>cap</i>	NPI
	widening	+	β	<i>qualsavol</i>	FCI
Korean:	<i>amwu</i>	+	<i>to</i> ‘also/even’	<i>amwu-to</i>	NPI
	<i>amwu</i>	+	<i>lato</i> ‘even’	<i>amwu-lato</i>	FCI
	<i>amwu</i>	+	<i>na</i> ‘or’	<i>amwu-na</i>	FCI

[*****END OF EXCERPT*****]

[1] * indicates ungrammaticality.