

## Parasitic licensing & diagonalization

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Parasitic licensing is the phenomenon where weak Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) can intermediate in the licensing of strong NPIs that would otherwise remain unlicensed (see Klima 1964; den Dikken 2006; Hoeksema 2007). Take the strong NPI *in years* that is only licensed in anti-additive environments like *nobody*, and not in non-anti-additive, (Strawson) downward entailing contexts like *only*, as in (1)a,b. Strikingly, inclusion of a weak NPI *any* renders the licensing of *in years* by *only* fine again, as in (1)c.

- (1)a. Nobody has read the New York Times in years.
- b. \*Only Mary has read the New York Times in years.
- c. Only Mary has read any newspaper in years.

In the literature, such cases of parasitic licensing have been discussed, though not yet fully understood (see den Dikken 2006; Hoeksema 2007). In this paper, we address the following question: why is it that NPIs like *in years* can be rescued by means of parasitic licensing? We show that this is due to the fact that NPIs like *any* are inherently uncertain, and we demonstrate that a treatment of uncertainty along the lines of Stalnaker (1978, 2004) provides a natural account for the above-discussed facts.