

Free Choice Items and Evaluative Reading

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In my talk, I will focus on the Evaluative Reading (ER) of linguistic items that have a Free Choice Interpretation (FCI) in modal contexts (see 1 for FCI and 2 for EI):

- (1) *Puedes traer cualquier libro.* 'You can bring me any book.'

Existential Inference: You can bring me a book

Free Choice Interpretation (FCI): For each book you can bring me that book.

Postnominal *cualquiera* has an Evaluative Reading (ER) in episodic (see 2) and predicative contexts (see 3). It describes speaker's attitude towards some entity, for example that the speaker finds some book unremarkable (see 2) or some film (very) bad (see 3) (see Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez-Benito 2011:29, Fălăuș 2015, Chierchia 2006: 543, Vlachou 2007 for EI):

- (2) *Juan compró un libro cualquiera.*

Existential Meaning: Juan bought a book.

ER: the book is not remarkable (according to the speaker).

- (3) *La pelí es re cualquiera.* 'The film is very bad'. (Argentinian Spanish)

The question I will address in the talk is whether FCI and ER have a common source and how one interpretation is derived from another. Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez-Benito 2011 assume that *cualquiera* is lexically ambiguous. One possibility is to assume that the ambiguity can be reduced to some contextual specification. However, this hypothesis is puzzling given that not all FCIs can trigger ER. If ER were just triggered contextually, we would expect to encounter this reading in any language that allows FCIs as long as we can insert FCIs in an appropriate context. Moreover, we would encounter this reading at any diachronic stage of Spanish and other Romance language that allow ER in synchrony. We will test these predictions and see how to solve the puzzle.

Alonso-Ovalle, Luis, & Paula, Menendez-Benito 2011. 'Expressing Indifference: Spanish Un NP Cualquiera, in Neil Ashton, Anca Chereches, and David Lutz (eds.), Proceedings of the 21st Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference, 333–52.

Chierchia, Gennaro 2006. Broaden your views: Implicatures of domain widening and the "logicality" of language. *Linguistic Inquiry* (37), 535–590.

Fălăuș, Anamaria. 2015. Romanian epistemic indefinites. In Alonso-Ovalle, Luis & Paula Menéndez-Benito 2015 (eds.) *Epistemic Indefinites: Exploring Modality Beyond the Verbal Domain*. Oxford University Press.

Vlachou, E. 2007 Free Choice In and Out of Context: Semantics and Distribution of French, Greek and English Free Choice Items. Utrecht: LOT.