

A fresh look at the compatibility between *any* and veridical contexts: The quality of indefiniteness is not strained



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Abstract

The primary source of polarity sensitivity is generally assumed to lie in the interpretative properties of sentences, whether these are formulated in terms of downward entailments, nonveridicality or scalar presuppositions. By means of an extensive examination of corpus data, the dependency of the occurrence of the polarity item *any* on the property of nonveridicality proposed in the most recent study dealing with this topic (Giannakidou and Quer, 2013) is shown to be contradicted by the occurrence of *any* in the context of episodic past perfectives, progressives, affirmative existentials and predicates expressing epistemic attitudes. These are argued to support an analysis of *any* as expressing arbitrary choice of an indefinite occurrence (Duffley and Larrivé, 2010), in the same vein as the notion of arbitrariness proposed by Jayez and Tovenà (2007) and the indiscriminacy value put forward by Horn (2005). Veridical contexts are shown to be possible with *any* when emphasis is placed on utter indiscriminacy of reference, as indicated by the lexical content of the main verb, focus particles such as *just*, or other discursive markers of indiscriminacy. Lexical characteristics of polarity items are thus shown to play an important role in accounting for polarity sensitivity, which cannot be reduced to a scope constraint requiring a nonveridical operator.

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1. Introduction

Along with *ever*, *any* is standardly cited in the literature as a “model case of negative polarity item” (Eckardt and Seiler, 2013:13). However, it is noteworthy that this item also occupies pride of place in the literature on free choice (cf. Aloni, 2007; Carlson, 1981; Chierchia, 2006; Dayal, 1995, 1998, 2009, 2013; Dayal and Veneeta, 2004; Giannakidou, 2001; Giannakidou and Quer, 2013). While many authors treat the NPI and the FCI as two separate items, the last and most recent study cited above follows in the footsteps of Partee (2004), Kadmon and Landman (1993) and Lee and Horn (1994) in moving toward a unification of the negative polarity and free choice uses of *any* by treating this item as a special kind of indefinite. Arguing that *any* is “a combination of an NPI with a free choice component in it,” Giannakidou and Quer (2013:132) place this determiner squarely among the indefinites. The complete formulation of their definition of the meaning of *any* is as follows:

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- a. *Any P* is an extensional indefinite of the form $P(x)$, where x is an individual variable.
- b. The x variable is dependent: it cannot be bound by a default existential, unless there is another nonveridical operator above the existential. If the nonveridical operator is a Q -operator, then the Q -operator binds the x variable, as is standardly the case with indefinites.
- c. Domain exhaustification implicature of *any*

If *any* is in the scope of an operator contributing a set of worlds W :

$\forall d \forall D_{any} \forall w$ in W . $Q(d)(w)$ and no other member of the domain d' is such that $Q(d')(w)$; where D is the domain of the FCI, and Q is the main VP predicate.

The proposal in (a) that *any* is an extensional indefinite that does not introduce a new referent appears intuitively correct.¹ Furthermore, it frees one from the conundrum of having to adjudicate as to which value is more fundamental between the existential found in *You can pick any number* and the universal in *You must correct any mistakes*, as it is not obvious how one of these two values could be derived from its contrary.

Regarding (b), the constraint formulated above runs into obvious difficulties with *only*-clauses (e.g. *Only Mary solved the problem*), where the entailed positive proposition (e.g. *Mary solved the problem*) demonstrates the veridicality of the context, but where *any*, along with other weak polarity items (*ever*, *lift a finger*, etc.), is grammatical (*Only Mary solved any of the problems*). Giannakidou has addressed this issue (2006:595) by invoking the notion of 'rescuing': *any* can sometimes be 'rescued' inside the scope of a veridical operator "if that operator additionally makes a nonveridical inference available in the global context of the sentence" (i.e. *No one else but Mary solved any of the problems*). Rescuing implies that the polarity item "does not, strictly speaking, become legitimate in a structure but is merely tolerated in it" (2006:592). The distinction postulated between licencing and rescuing appears problematic however: how is one to distinguish between an item being used 'legitimately' and its use being 'merely tolerated' in a given context if both types of use are attested? Such a distinction seems more like a stipulation motivated by a desire to rescue the theory rather than the polarity item. Moreover, we have uncovered new empirical data that shows *any* occurring under veridical operators with no nonveridical inference available in the global context of the sentence, as in (1) below, from the British National Corpus (henceforth BNC):

- (1) With the conciseness of mathematics, I can therefore write [mathematical formula]. You can see that I am representing **any** vector V as a superposition of two standard vectors 1 and 2.

Also contentious is the claim formulated by Giannakidou and Quer in (c) that the free choice implicature associated with *any* is conditional upon this determiner being in the scope of an operator contributing a set of worlds such as a modal or a generic. No such operator can be argued to be present in the following context from the Time Magazine Corpus (henceforth TIME) which involves an episodic past perfective:

- (2) A Columbia University psychiatrist reports that students come to him to find out what is wrong with them if they are not having intercourse. "My virginity was such a burden to me that I just went out to get rid of it," a junior at the University of Vermont revealed to a Boston sex counselor. "On a trip to Greece, I found **any** old Greek and did it so it wouldn't be an issue any more."

The usage illustrated in (1) and (2) raises a number of interesting questions. Regarding (1), how can *any*, predicted to occur only in nonveridical contexts by Giannakidou and Quer, be found in veridical environments? And how can the notion of free choice be compatible with a one-off occurrence, as is the case in (2)? There seems to be more to the story here than the simple triggering of a free choice implicature by the presence of an operator contributing a set of worlds, as *any* itself appears to be responsible for introducing the notion of multiple possibilities in this context. These uses call for a re-examination of Giannakidou and Quer (2013)'s analysis and for further reflection on the exact nature of *any*'s meaning.²

¹ Although we will be somewhat critical of the framework in which Giannakidou and Quer's analysis is set, we are nevertheless in agreement with their conclusion that *any* is better classified among the indefinites than among the universals. Consonant with its historical origins (*an/aen* + adjectival suffix *-ig*), we will be working here on a hypothesis which implies that *any* evokes a referent as having merely the quality of the indefinite, i.e. of being a representative exemplar of a category, which means that the referent is completely indistinguishable from and interchangeable with all the other members of its category (cf. Duffley and Larrivé, 2010, 2012a). This ties in with Giannakidou and Quer's (2013:120) notions of "referential deficiency" and "low referentiality", although our approach differs from theirs in being non-formal.

² Our analysis will part company with Giannakidou and Quer's on two general points which should be mentioned before getting into the nitty-gritty of the particular issues regarding *any*. The first of these concerns the fact that the object of our attention will be the English word *any* and not the abstract notions of negative polarity or free choice. As far as English is concerned, the latter are essentially non-linguistic categories, each of which covers only part of the uses of *any*, a fact which has the unfortunate effect of obscuring the underlying unity of meaning attached to this linguistic form. From the epistemological point of view, moreover, such categories are descriptive rather than explanatory: what stands in a causal relation to the use of *any* by

On the empirical level, the main objective of this study will be to assess the role of veridicality in the distribution of *any*. The distribution of this item is claimed by Giannakidou and Quer (2013:124, Table 1) to exclude veridical contexts, i.e. progressives, episodic past perfectives, affirmative existential structures and epistemic propositional attitude verbs. As *if*-clauses are left in a sort of limbo between veridical and nonveridical status in their study, as only “the last four rows” of the table are said to correspond to “the veridical space”, which would imply that *as if*, five rows from the bottom, is to be classified as nonveridical. On the other hand, if one applies the analysis of epistemic propositional attitude verbs proposed in Giannakidou (1998, 1999, 2002, 2011), according to which the latter are claimed to be veridical because in the believer’s epistemic model the proposition believed is true, *as if*-clauses would perhaps have to be taken to manifest veridicality since they introduce an ‘as if’-world imagined by some individual in which the proposition imagined is true, an interpretation which is comforted by the fact that in Table 1 *any* is indicated as being excluded from such contexts. If they are indeed taken to be veridical, however, *as if*-clauses should disallow *any*, a prediction which is not supported by the data, as shown by the following attestation:

- (3) It’s definitely professional, as if you were working in **any** office. It’s gotta be quiet. [the speaker is describing how things have to be in order to be authorized by her company to work at home] (Corpus of Contemporary American, henceforth COCA)

On the theoretical level, our study will address first of all the question of the relation between the notions of ‘nonveridical operator’ and ‘operator contributing a set of worlds’ in the description of the *any*’s meaning proposed by Giannakidou and Quer (2013:132). It is not entirely clear from their discussion whether the operator contributing a set of worlds in (c) corresponds or not to the nonveridical operator in (b). Our understanding is that the free choice implicature requires that *any* be in the scope of an operator that is both nonveridical and world-contributing at the same time. Most nonveridical operators do also introduce a set of worlds: this is the case for non-epistemic modals, generics, imperatives, volitional verbs, directives, intensional predicates, conditional protases and futures. Negation however is nonveridical (antiveridical in fact) and therefore licences *any*, but since it does not contribute a set of worlds, it should not trigger a free choice implicature. This does not square however with the meaning observed in a use such as (4):

- (4) He is not just **any** actor.

Here what is negated is the free choice notion which would place the actor referred to on the same footing as all the other members of the acting profession. Does this mean that *just* somehow contributes a set of worlds here, thereby triggering the free choice implicature? We have argued elsewhere that the role of *just* is to treat the indiscriminacy evoked by *any* as an untranscended minimal value on a scale of selectiveness (Duffley and Larrivée, 2012a:34).³ How does this relate to an

a speaker of English is the basic meaning associated with this determiner. A scientific, i.e. causal, explanation of usage with *any* must consequently seek the semantic unity underlying all of the uses of this linguistic form – the meaning that caused the speaker to choose it as an appropriate means for achieving their communicative goal. One of the aims of this study will therefore be to bring out the unity behind both the ‘free choice’ and the ‘negative polarity’ uses of *any*. In this respect, as mentioned above, it will go in the same general direction as the analysis of Giannakidou and Quer (2013), who treat this determiner as an indefinite existential with a free choice implicature, as well as that of Horn (2000, 2005), who also classifies *any* as an indefinite.

The second general issue that needs to be raised in order to situate our study is that we will not be subscribing here to the distinction made by Giannakidou and Quer (2013:122; 130) between “agrammaticality,” which is determined by Logical Form seen as regulated exclusively by the grammar, and “infelicity,” which is taken to be mere pragmatic oddness. Based on this distinction, they claim that a sequence such as (a) below is ungrammatical because it violates a grammatical licencing condition on negative polarity items, while (b), uttered in a context in which there is only one cookie, is merely infelicitous and “doesn’t damage the sentence as badly as the unbound polarity variable does”:

- (a) Bill bought any presents.
 (b) Eat any cookie!
 The average English speaker however would be far more mystified upon hearing (b) in a situation in which there was only one cookie in sight than by (a), for which one could conceivably imagine a context in which it would make sense; cf. (c):
 (c) He bought any ticket to any NBA game in the league. (www.gamefaqs.com)

Giannakidou and Quer seem moreover to have unwittingly begged the question of the existence of a real distinction between agrammaticality and infelicity by only giving a context for (b), which biases the discussion toward a pragmatic treatment of this sequence, while (a) is treated as if people could make sense of it outside of any context. Regarding the purported agrammaticality of (a), moreover, our data shows that in some situations episodic past perfective predicates are indeed compatible with *any*. This suggests that the supposedly grammatical licencing condition on NPI *any* in (a) is in fact semantico-pragmatic, i.e. it depends on the speech situation and the communicative intention of the speaker, just like the oddity of (b) in a situation with a lone cookie. We are thus in agreement with Israel (2011), for whom polarity is essentially a pragmatic phenomenon.

³ Horn (2000) also treats such uses as “anti-indiscriminative”.

analysis in terms of sets of possible worlds? Another sort of question is raised by epistemic propositional attitude verbs such as *believe*. These are treated as veridical by Giannakidou and Quer (2013:124) and claimed to be inimical to *any*. However, unlike the other veridical contexts in their table, these predicates contribute a set of belief-worlds in which the proposition believed is held to be true by the believer. Our data does contain cases where *any* is attested with epistemic propositional attitude verbs, as in:

- (5) I personally felt anger, as I believe he looks like **any** other person and should be treated like any other person. (myautisticmuslimchild.wordpress.com)⁴

What do these indicate about veridicality as a licensing condition on the use of *any*? How does the fact that such operators are both veridical and a set-of-world-contributors affect their compatibility with this determiner? Such questions need to be addressed both on the theoretical and empirical levels, and this study aims to contribute to the discussion of them using new data that has not been discussed before.

The theoretical consequences of the unexpected attestations in (1)–(5) above are clear. If the distribution of *any* is not uniformly dependent on a licensing contextual inference, then either there is a property of exceptional contexts that rescues *any*, or there is contextual lexical convergence with the semantic value of this determiner. The first approach is adopted by both Giannakidou and Quer (2013), who invoke nonveridicality, and Horn (2001), who claims that licensing can be effected by pragmatically salient negative implicatures, which would cover the case of sarcastic *as if*-clauses of the type illustrated in (6):

- (6) As if I was going to give him **any** money!⁵

However, the occurrence of *as if* in (3) above is not sarcastic, and so cannot be accounted for by either Horn's, Giannakidou and Quer's or Camp's account. Consequently, the second approach will be followed here, and it will be proposed that in (3) the import of the sentence is to evoke any office indiscriminately and that in a case such as (2) the verb *found* and the adjective *old* are in semantic resonance with the idea of indiscriminate arbitrary choice expressed by *any*. If the lexical meaning perspective is correct, one would expect specific choice-related items to occur with particular frequency; if the contextual value approach is correct, one would expect recurring implicatures to arise. Our exploration of the distribution of *any* in veridical contexts will start with the well-known phenomenon of subtrigging.

2. Episodicity and subtrigging

Any discussion of the compatibility of *any* with veridical contexts necessarily leads into the question of subtrigging. Termed thus by LeGrand (1975), modification by a relative clause is widely believed to 'rescue' *any* in episodic past environments:

- (6) a. *Mary read **any** book.
b. Mary read **any** book that was on the reading list.

The notions of 'episodic' and 'nonepisodic' have been explicated by Krifka et al. (1995:2; 36), who distinguish between "particular" (episodic) and "characterizing" (non-episodic) predications. The latter is defined as corresponding to "propositions which do not express specific episodes or isolated facts, but instead report a kind of general property, that is, a regularity which summarizes groups of particular episodes or facts." Episodic sentences, in contrast, involve "existential closure": they report on "a specific event or occasion." Characterizing sentences are said to be "typically stative," whereas "most often particular sentences are nonstative," although Krifka et al. also recognize a category of "episodic statives" exemplified by *Simba is in the cage* and described as expressing properties of limited duration and patterning with other episodics with respect to features such as the *ser/estar* distinction in Spanish.

An important issue which arises with subtrigging is the role of the relative clause following *any N*. One position expressed in the literature is that the relative has the effect of limiting the otherwise unbounded reference of the determiner. Thus Dayal (1995, 1998, 2009), who treats *any* as a universal quantifier with the added dimension of quantification over possible individuals (1998) or fluctuation (2009), views the subtrigged relative clause as required in

⁴ It should be pointed out that this example does not contain any local licenser of *any*.

⁵ Camp and Hawthorne (2008) and Camp (2012) argue that it is only when the negative attitude is part of the semantic content explicitly signaled by a linguistic form that licensing of NPIs occurs. Thus sarcastic *as if* is claimed to semanticize an illocutionary force of 'denial' that licenses items like *any*, whereas bare sarcasm not tied to any linguistic form does not.

order to restrict *any*'s wide-ranging fluctuation so as to avoid contradiction with the particular reference of the episodic sentence. Chierchia (2006:564–565) agrees with Dayal regarding the restrictive role of the subtriggering relative clause, although he defines *any* as an indefinite existential with widening all the way down to the very smallest domain triggering enrichment in the form of anti-exhaustiveness. On the other hand, Giannakidou (1998, 1999) and Quer (2000) present *any* as encoding attributivity, which allows for variation across all possible worlds in which the variable meets some descriptive condition imposed upon it. In this view, the free choice item requires opening up a broader range of reference which the episodic event is too narrow to provide, and the relative clause contains a subjunctive that furnishes the required variation across different worlds. Are these two groups of authors in contradiction with one another, or are they saying the same thing in different ways? Dayal's own position on the question has evolved from the first camp toward the second in recent times: in Dayal (2013) she treats *any* not as a universal but as an indefinite existential whose modal base must allow the FCI's exhaustified alternatives to all be "live possibilities," a constraint that she terms "Viability"; in this view the subtriggering relative is argued as in Quer to contain a subjunctive which introduces the plurality of worlds needed to satisfy the Viability Constraint. Giannakidou and Quer (2013) do not discuss subtriggering, but one may presume that their position is consistent with Quer (2000).

On top of the ambiguity as to the role of the relative just alluded to, the alleged necessity of the presence of such a clause has not been empirically examined beyond the occasional self-produced counterexample such as (7):

- (7) Mary confidently answered **any** objections.
(Dayal, 1998:446, example 31a)

Attestations of unmodified *any* do however occur in uncontrovertibly episodic contexts such as (8):

- (8) that is kind of curious huh? How we have the same number in our names. I just picked **any** old number.
Funny how things like that happen.
(www.smashboards.com)

Such uses have been approached by Choi and Romero (2008:95) through the notion of "agentivity," a notion relatable to Horn (2000)'s description of *any* as involving indiscriminacy and which they define as implying agent indifference regarding the identity of the referent.

Agentivity does seem to allow compatibility between *any* and episodic contexts. However, in order to satisfy the presupposition of variation that they postulate for polarity sensitive items, Choi and Romero hold that in uses such as (8) above there must be an essential link here between being the set of numbers and having one member of the set picked by the speaker, and so their analysis presupposes that there is some sort of genericity underlying agentive contexts in the form of a general condition governing the choice. This would imply however that it is because it was a number that the number in question was picked, which unfortunately does not correspond to the situation in (8), where the speaker might just as well have picked a letter as a number for her user name. Such examples bring out the need to examine more closely the notions of genericity and essential link, as well as Jayez and Tovená's (2010) analogous concepts of regularity and dependency between properties, and how they relate to the meaning of *any*.

In order to do this, Hoeksema's (2010:856) proposal that "fine-grained corpus analysis" is needed in order to shed light on the "complex distributional patterns" found with polarity items will be taken to heart here. The study of actual occurrences may reveal dimensions that have not been observed so far in the competing attempts to provide a formal-semantic account. Why this has not yet been done may have to do with the relative rarity of certain configurations, which requires both a large source of data and an efficient search tool allowing one to go beyond a mere collection of particular lexical items. Fortunately, this can now be achieved thanks to developments in corpus linguistics and the availability of large grammatically tagged corpora such as those found on the Brigham Young University website. We will be using the corpora of modern English (19th–21st century) available on this site, viz. the Corpus of Contemporary American (COCA), the British National Corpus (BNC), the Time Magazine Corpus (TIME) and the Corpus of Historical American (COHA), adding up to a sum total of slightly over a billion words. In these we propose to examine the following structures:

- (a) past-tense verb + *any* + noun + relative clause
- (b) past-tense verb + *any* + noun not followed by a relative clause
- (c) past-tense verb + *any* + *of* + noun
- (d) *just* + past-tense verb + *any* + noun not followed by a relative clause
- (e) past-tense verb + *any* + adjective + noun not followed by a relative clause
- (f) progressive + *any* + noun
- (g) affirmative existential + *any*
- (h) epistemic propositional attitude verb + *any*

(i) *as if + any*

(a) will provide data to test the hypotheses proposed regarding subtrigging and the role of the relative clause. (b) will allow us to see if there are any cases of unsubtrigged episodic past perfective predicates that have not been mentioned in the literature. (c) will provide material concerning partitive constructions. (d) will allow us to collect data on agentivity. (e) will provide a test of Dayal's (1998:445) claim that a prenominal adjective is insufficient to rescue *any* in an episodic context. (f) will gather a dataset to test whether *any* can occur in other veridical contexts besides episodic past perfectives, viz. with progressives. (g) will examine yet another veridical context, existentials. (h) and (i) will look at more controversial veridical contexts in order to see what usage is actually attested in such environments and what this implies for Giannakidou and Quer's analysis. We will begin by a look at the role of the contribution of the relative clause in subtrigged constructions (section 3), followed by an examination of episodic predicates in unsubtrigged contexts (sections 4–7), before turning to the other types of context. The examination of data is conducted with the question in mind of whether context or lexical value can be identified as a potential determinant of the unexpected uses.

3. Past-tense verb + *any* + noun + relative clause

A total of 989 occurrences of the subtrigged construction were found in the four corpora analyzed. Although the immense majority were nonassertive, i.e. negative, conditional, etc., and therefore nonveridical, 71 contexts were collected which were veridical and therefore possibly episodic, a couple of representative examples of which are given below:

- (9) He offered **any** student who could stump him fifty bonus points. (COCA)
 (10) But last week Bush's jaw still tightened and his eyes narrowed when he uttered **any** sentence that had Saddam's name in it. (TIME)

All 71 assertive occurrences turned out to be nonepisodic however: thus (9) refers to all students who could stump him and (10) to all sentences containing Saddam's name that were uttered by Bush last week. These results seem to confirm the analyses of Quer, Jayez and Tovena and Giannakidou that subtrigging introduces some form of genericity, and to go against Chierchia and the early Dayal's hypothesis that the relative clause introduces a spatio-temporal restriction that prevents *any* from ranging over all possible worlds. This observation will be nuanced however in the light of the data presented in the next section.

4. Past-tense verb + *any* + noun not followed by a relative clause

A total of 2158 examples of this structure were collected from the four corpora. The great majority of these contexts were nonveridical, as in (11) and (12) below:

- (11) To my surprise, not a single parent raised **any** concerns. (COCA)
 (12) and maybe the kid was on his way home for dinner, if there was **any** dinner. (COCA)

Although some authors such as Giannakidou (2002) treat certain negatives as episodic, we will not consider them to belong to this category here, as in our view the non-occurrence of an event does not constitute an event. Twenty cases were found however in which the predicate was positive and therefore possibly episodic. Of these, a total of nineteen were generic-type statements covering all candidates falling into the category denoted by the noun following *any*. Two typical examples are given below:

- (13) An ordinary stowaway would have to pilfer the stores to survive; not so Spar. The crew ought to have no objection to his presence. Still. . . superstition ruled **any** ship. (COCA)
 (14) A large yellow dot emerged halfway up the strip. So, she thought, there is something in the specimen. When she was certain that she'd seen all there was to see, she placed the same strip in the water jar and noted **any** changes. After a fluorescence scan and the final dip in the iodine solution, Kendra was ready to identify the drug. (COCA)

The data thus seems to confirm once again the analyses of Quer, Jayez and Tovena and Giannakidou that the use of *any* is linked to some form of genericity or regularity. In addition, such uses allow a comparison of subtrigged and unsubtrigged constructions. Thus in (14) above the range of reference would certainly be restricted by appending a relative clause such as *that exceeded a 5% margin of error*, which seems to support the early Dayal (1998, 2009) and Chierchia (2006)'s intuitions about subtrigging introducing a spatio-temporal restriction. However, the reference inside this less extended

category would still be of the generic type, i.e. the sentence would describe something applicable to all changes exceeding 5%. This is confirmed by the fact that all 71 of the assertive contexts found with subtrigging were characterized by this type of reference. So both approaches seem to have some truth to them, although they are coming at the question from two different angles.

The genericity approach ran into a problem however with one example from the corpus, in which an unsubtrigged *any* was not generic but episodic. This is shown in (15):

- (15) He stood on the steps of the hotel, clad in the most exquisite of grays, tapering down to the most brilliant of boots. He had a white rose in his buttonhole, and his great black dog was lying at his feet (. . .). The American's careful attire contrasted rather oddly with his fallow face, and with the bony hand that rested against the column. He was a young man, but he looked **any age** that morning. (COHA)

This sentence describes the way the young American in question looked at a particular moment in time (that morning) and so does not evoke a regularity or general rule of any kind but corresponds rather to Krifka et al.'s category of episodic statives. To ensure that this use was not a hapax, the sequence "looked any age" was googled (search performed on February 2, 2012); 8 examples were obtained which clearly referred to a particular point in time, as in (16):

- (16) At that moment, Dick looked **any age** between thirty and forty, and active enough to tire out far younger men. (news.google.com)

Similar usage has also been observed by Horn (2000:180), who cites the following three attestations:

- (17) She was faceless to me. . . , so that she seemed any woman. . . And she closed her eyes so that I was **any man**, in the dark. (short story 'Kites!' by Marilyn Sides, from *The Island of the Mapmaker's Wife and Other Tales* (1996))
 (18) Opposite: **any child** in Englewood (caption of photo in *New York Times Magazine*, July 29, 1996)
 (19) . . . the voices in 'Foxfire' are generic teenage suburban, without accent or personal inflection. We are in **Anywhere**, U.S.A., which is really the same place as nowhere on earth (from a *New York Times* movie review, August 23, 1996)

Besides calling into question the generic nature of all past contexts with *any*, the type of usage attested in (15) and (16) is also problematic for Choi and Romero's notion of agent indifference, which is not applicable at all to a state such as looking any age, nor does there seem to be any essential link or dependency between properties holding between the set of ages and having one age correspond to the person's appearance. The idea expressed is rather that of the impossibility of attributing a definite age to the person referred to because of his indeterminate appearance. This fits quite nicely with our hypothesis that *any* denotes radical indiscriminacy among the members of a set.

5. Past-tense verb + *any* + *of* + noun

Dayal (2013:2, 11) claims that *any* is unacceptable in episodic contexts with partitive constructions such as **Any of these students danced* since the Viability Constraint is violated due to the fact that in an episodic statement "there is only one accessible world, the world of evaluation, so there are no subsets where only *a* is a student and danced and only *b* is a student and danced." Although not frequent, two examples of this type of structure were found among the 1852 occurrences of this sequence that occurred in the corpus:

- (20) In 2003, Congress introduced the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act, which banned any Burmese imports, opposed loans to the regime, froze **any of** its US assets, and denied its leaders entry visas. (COCA)
 (21) He reviewed the relations of the Mormons to the Federal government; assumed that General Johnston and the army were under his control; pledged his word that they should not be stationed in immediate contact with the settlements; and gave assurances, also, that no military posse should be employed to arrest a Mormon until every other means had been tried and had failed. At the close, he invited **any of** their number to respond. Various persons immediately addressed the audience in almost frantic speeches, concerning the murder of Joseph and Hiram Smith at Carthage, the persecution of the Saints in Missouri and Illinois, the services rendered by the Mormon Battalion to an ungrateful country during the Mexican War (. . .). (COHA)

This calls into question Dayal's claim (2013:12) that "a plurality of worlds is a precondition for Viability." Here, in spite of the fact that there seems to be only one accessible world, the notions of a freeze that applied indifferently to whatever US

assets Burma possessed and of an open invitation made indiscriminately to whoever might wish to respond are discernible in both of these uses. Once again, the examination of corpus data shows that the question of the incompatibility of *any* with episodic predicates cannot be determined in a contextual vacuum. In some episodic statements, despite the verbal event being tied down to a particular moment in time, the referent of the *any* NP can still have the property of being indistinguishable from all other members of its category.

6. Past-tense verb + *any* + noun with *just* and other devaluating expressions

Duffley and Larrivé (2012a) bring to light the existence of a number of collocations of *any* in which focus is brought to bear on the utterness of the indiscriminacy evoked by this determiner, often giving rise to the evocation of a low value on a scale. This was found to occur with adverbs such as *just*, adjectives such as *piddling*, *dinky* and *little*, expletives such as *damn*, *goddam* and *bloody*, and derogatory nouns such as *slob*, *jerk* or *twit*. These observations would seem to tally with Choi and Romero's notion of agentivity as involving indifference as to the choice of referent. In principle however, it would seem logical that that a focus on the utter indiscriminacy of some agent's choice should not necessarily be incompatible with the notion of episodicity. And indeed this did turn out to be the case. Although the majority of the fourteen uses found with this sort of focus were nonepisodic, as in (22):

- (22) Maria had long been aware of disparities in the ways her parents were raising her and her brothers. Franklin and Bobby took **any damn** courses they pleased in high school, while Ethel and Don Rossi had insisted she register for Typing and Home Economics. (COCA)

two were found which were clearly episodic past perfective:

- (23) For, poverty crushing, his mother nagging, he (=Anton) was made to swallow his pride, his hope to become a motor mechanic. At the youth employment he begged just **any job**. The factory built electric generators. A private concern, it employed some fifty men, mostly tradesmen, fitters or winders, and two apprentices – lads of around Anton's age with fathers working for the firm. It was that sort of place, closely knit, tight, and all go: working to horns, starting at eight and ending at five. Tuesday and Thursday you worked late, until seven-thirty; and there was Saturday and Sunday too, if you wanted – and Anton wanted.⁶ (BNC)
- (24) A Columbia University psychiatrist reports that students come to him to find out what is wrong with them if they are not having intercourse. "My virginity was such a burden to me that I just went out to get rid of it," a junior at the University of Vermont revealed to a Boston sex counselor. "On a trip to Greece, I found **any old Greek** and did it so it wouldn't be an issue any more." (TIME) [(2) above]

These corroborate Vlachou's observation (2007:69) that *any* is possible in a veridical context such as *So I just said anything to fill in the silence*. In both of the cases from our corpus, a one-time action was performed with complete agent indifference as to its object. In (23) this idea is expressed by *just any* through the notion that the agent did not make any effort to exceed the minimal degree of selectiveness corresponding to *any*, and in (24) by *any old* through the inclusion of even decrepit, not-so-desirable exemplars as possible choices (cf. Duffley and Larrivé, 2012a:31–32; 35). These uses show that emphasis on absolutely unconstrained freedom of choice can be exploited to insist on the utter indiscriminacy with which an episodic event was performed. Most often however the notion of qualitative indefiniteness will be taken to cover generically whatever falls within a certain category, whence the impression of a rule or regularity according to which, if a given entity satisfies the criteria for category membership, the predicate applies to it indiscriminately. This accounts for the need to add a relative clause specifying the condition that has to be met in order for the rule to apply, in cases where the noun itself does not suggest such a criterion such as (6a) above. Moreover, this analysis also allows us to understand the reasons behind Dayal (1998:444)'s impression that "subtriggered *any* is compatible only with the essential reading of the relative clause," according to which it is by virtue of having the property denoted by the relative clause, and not accidentally, that the main predicate applies to a referent. Thus in (6b) above, it is solely by virtue of its being included on the reading list that a book was read by Mary. In the view proposed here, the fact that *any* evokes complete interchangeability among all books with the property of being on the reading list leads to the understanding that it is on the basis of this property that a book was read by Mary. In other words, this reading is crucially dependent upon the lexical value of utter indiscriminacy expressed by *any*.

⁶ It has been suggested to us by one of the anonymous readers that the sense expressed here is nonepisodic (i.e. 'begged to be able to take any job'). This would correspond rather to the construction of *beg* with the preposition *for*; in the sentence above, *any job* is the direct object of *beg* and denotes that which was obtained by the episodic action of begging, as confirmed by the description given in the ensuing context of the nature of the job thus obtained.

7. Past-tense verb + *any* + prenominal adjective

The corpus data used for this study also provided a means of testing Dayal's (1998:445) claim that a prenominal adjective is insufficient to rescue *any* in an episodic context, because of the alleged need for two events to be correlated in order to appropriately delimit the ultra-broad range of *any*. As usual, the great majority of the 840 occurrences of this structure found in the corpus were nonassertive. Of the 10 assertive contexts found, eight were nonepisodic. Two representative examples are given below:

- (25) Prior to each session, the school psychologist reviewed this information and also provided visual feedback via graphed data (see Figure 1) on Tony's progress and answered **any** other questions. (COCA)
- (26) From 11 o'clock in the morning to 11 at night the building welcomed **any** Allied sailors. A restaurant on the ground floor was open to the public. (COHA)

Two attestations were found however which seem episodic:

- (27) During his campaign, President Bush often touched what is commonly termed the "third rail" of politics – changing the Social Security system. And he survived **any** political shock. (COCA)
- (28) He laughed at the coming storm, while the eagle flew by with a shriek, and the cattle sought **any** casual shelter. (COCA)

In (27) the degree of shock is left vague and the assertion of Bush surviving it applies indiscriminately to whatever political shock there was, no matter how great. In (28) there is both indiscriminacy and virtuality: the adjective *casual* brings out the notion of agent indifference as to which shelter was chosen and the meaning of the verb *seek* implies ignorance not only of the type of shelter that would be found but of whether any shelter would actually be found at all. Adjectives implying agent indifference are often derogatory in nature; other adjectives found in Internet sources in episodic contexts with no subtrigging included *random* (29), *bloody* (30) and *flea-infested* (31):

- (29) So I just said **any** random number. "97?" Everyone burst out laughing. Mr. Ramos sighed and shook his head. (www.wittyprofiles.com)
- (30) "You told me to pick a song!" "So you picked **any** bloody tune without thinking. Good bye." "Wait!" "Yes?" "Then why did you pick that song?" (quizilla.teennick.com)
- (31) Suddenly, a tremendous pressure built up in his stomach and he decided to waddle into the hen house to lie down. Hygiene had never been exactly important to him, so he just picked **any** old flea-infested nest and sat down, sweating. (www.fanfiction.net)

Often such adjectives are associated with the adverb *just*, as in (29) and (31), but not necessarily, as can be seen from (30) where *bloody* occurs all by itself.

Moreover, it is not necessary for an adjective to be inherently devaluating in order to rescue *any* in an episodic context; the following Internet example shows *vacant* performing this role:

- (32) I jumped the last few steps at the bottom of each flight, landing lightly on my feet as I scurried down to the Great Hall. I let out a sigh of relief as I entered, finding it still full of life, and food. I sat down in any **vacant** spot on the bench, shoveling food into my mouth, not too concerned about what I was eating.
"McGonagall came around." Oliver's voice said as he sat down in front of me. He extracted my time table from his bag, which looked about as organized as mine, and handed it to me. (www.harrypotterfanfiction.com)

Here the adjective provides the only condition that was applied for the episodic choice. In this context however, the quality of being vacant implies indifference as to whether it was somebody else's seat or not. An example of the adjective *open* performing the same function in conjunction with the adverb *simply* has also been found:

- (33) We simply boarded the train with our tickets and picked any **open** seat. (members.virtualtourist.com)

Dayal's claim must therefore be nuanced, in that prenominal adjectives emphasizing complete indiscriminacy of choice allow unsubtriggered *any* to make sense in an episodic context. This notion seems to resonate with predicates evoking seeking or selection (*pick* in particular), which are particularly frequent in this configuration.

8. *Any* with progressives

Of the 1135 attestations of *any* one or two words to the right of a progressive form, 22 were found in subtriggered structures, as in:

- (34) Although Pigou is mainly cited for his insights concerning negative spillovers such as smoke, it is clear that he is discussing **any** situation where a decision-maker acts without taking full account of all costs and benefits. (COCA)

Here the action of discussing applies indiscriminately to all situations in which a decision-maker acts without taking full account of all costs and benefits. Since the referent of the NP is both generic and hypothetical here, one might argue that this sentence is nonveridical. However, the author in question is really performing the action of discussing in his text, and so the predicate would have to be recognized as veridical in this respect. It would seem that the performance of the action of discussing in a precise instance is compatible with the object under discussion being treated as qualitatively indefinite, i.e. as corresponding to whatever object satisfies the condition of having the property specified by the subtriggering subordinate clause. This has the effect of both conditionalizing the referent and representing it as indistinguishable from all the other referents possessing the relevant property. The indiscriminacy hypothesis thus does a respectable job of accounting for the mixed impressions associated with *any* in this type of usage.

Six cases of non-subtriggered *any* were also found with progressive main predicates. These fell into four subtypes:

(a) *paraphrasable by 'all possible'*:

- (35) Hoyle says the residents are using **any means** to stop the project, simply because they don't want it. (COCA)

(b) *paraphrasable by 'all'*:

- (36) Yes, on *Fatal Attraction* we had single women who were upset at us, in that we were portraying **any single woman** as a psychotic. And on *Basic Instinct* we had gays and lesbians, militant gay and lesbian groups – ACT-UP and GLAD – who initially – not so much against the film, but in terms of the portrayals of gays and lesbians in films, in general. (COCA)
- (37) With the conciseness of mathematics I can therefore write [deleted formula]. You can see that I am representing **any vector V** as a superposition of two standard vectors 1 and 2. (BNC)

(c) *paraphrasable by 'one or some, no matter which'*:

- (38) Needless to say, the mainstream computing functions of the company are all IBM but, unlike the previous example, there was little evidence of a stable software environment. People were using **any** of a large range of software products to perform what appeared to be the same basic tasks. (BNC)

(d) *paraphrasable by 'whatever x or x's there was/were, if there were any x's'*:

- (39) That would only suggest that the weather conditions are keeping **any remaining fires** very close to the ground. (COCA)
- (40) The first official announcement to the public was made on the lunchtime BBC news on the Friday. It made no mention of a fire, and referred only to "overheating". As far as danger to the local population was concerned, it said that "a North East wind is blowing across the Windscale factory and is taking **any radioactive dust or vapour** out to sea". (BNC)

(a)–(c) are incontrovertibly veridical from the viewpoint of the real existence of an ongoing action at a certain point in time. The qualitatively indefinite nature of the objects of these actions gives rise to a coverage of all conceivable possibilities in (35), to a statement painting all the members of the category with the same brush in (36) and (37), and to the evocation of a random choice in (38). In (39) and (40) veridicality is more controversial, as these two sentences evoke conditions making

it impossible for any member of the category ‘fires’ or ‘radioactive dust or vapour’ to escape the application to them of the actions ‘keep close to the ground’ and ‘take out to sea’. How a progressive predicate denoting an action currently under way could be compatible with nonreferentiality of the noun phrase direct object remains to be seen however, and is a topic for further research that we cannot undertake here, although the discussion of (34) above opens up some avenues of reflection.

9. Affirmative existential structures

Affirmative existential contexts did turn out to be inimical to *any*, except with a certain type of phrase. Of the 147 examples of *any* one or two words to the left of the sequence ‘*there* + the verb *be*’, all but one corresponded to a structure with *any* followed by a noun expressing the notion of quantity:

- (41) There are **any** number of ways to engage voters. (COCA)
- (42) There were **any** amount of things you could write about in Summer. (BNC)
- (43) There is **any** quantity of bosh let loose on poor long-suffering humanity, and labeled Science (COHA)

In such sentences there is incontrovertibly an assertion of existence, and consequently they must be classified as veridical, but that whose existence is asserted is construed hyperbolically as a countless number of ways to engage voters, a limitless amount of topics to write about in summer and an incalculable quantity of bosh passed off as science. The treating of no one quantity as distinguishable from any other is exploited in these utterances to convey the impossibility of pinning down the quantity to an easily definable number, thereby suggesting innumerability. The only example that did not fit into the type just described was (44):

- (44) There’s always the day when, you know, you get really frustrated, and you say, ‘Why am I doing this? Why? You know, this isn’t worth it. We’re not accomplishing what I came here to do. It’s too hard, the people there won’t cooperate.’ I guess you get that in any job, you know, **there’s any job** where you say, ‘Take this job and you can have it. I’m sick of it.’ (COCA)

This seems to be a case of an “extended existential” with the same structure as *There’s one guy who keeps interrupting* (cf. Huddleston and Pullum, 2002:1395–1396): it is equivalent to *In any job, you say, ‘Take this job and you can have it. I’m sick of it.’* It is also possible that the *any* following existential *there* may be echoic here, repeating the previous one in *you get that in any job*. Whatever the case may be, this use is a hapax and may even be a ‘performance error’, as we were unable to find any other parallel structures either in our corpus or on the Internet.

10. Epistemic attitude predicates

Giannakidou (1998, 1999, 2011) argues that epistemic attitude verbs such as *believe*, *imagine*, *dream* and *say* are all veridical. The argument underpinning this analysis is that sentences are not true or false in isolation but always with respect to some individual and the latter’s epistemic state; thus a proposition believed by Billy to be true is true in all belief-worlds compatible with what Billy believes (cf. Giannakidou, 1999:385 ff.). Giannakidou and Quer (2013) are consistent with this analysis in claiming that *any* is impossible in such settings. The data shows however that this claim is not quite accurate. In the majority of epistemic attitude contexts, *any* is indeed licenced by a modal or a subtriggering subordinate clause, as in:

- (45) My father still believes that medical science can solve **any** childhood problem. (COCA)
- (46) Although the typical American (like maybe your mother or Aunt Mildred and Uncle Roy) believes that education should be useful (What are you going to do with that degree?), the typical liberal arts professor teaching at an American college or university believes that **any** major (field of study) that “trains” its students (rather than developing their minds) is unworthy. (COCA)

However two cases were found where the context did not contain any such licencer and which would have to be taken as veridical according to Giannakidou and Quer’s framework. Of these, one involved a representation of the noun following *any* as a possible event that might come to pass, as in:

- (47) Taft was dismissive of military officers, while MacArthur believed **any** civilian intrusion into military affairs was an abomination. (COCA)

Here *any* is used to cover whatever sort of civilian intrusion might occur, no matter how insignificant. The occurrence of *any* seems to be licensed by *believe* here, as the unembedded sequence *Any civilian intrusion into military affairs was an abomination* does not sound natural if not prefaced by this matrix predicate.

As there was a lot of dead wood in the results obtained from the BYU corpora, searches for certain specific strings of words were carried out on the Internet. These brought to light a use with the verb *imagine* which was also problematic for Giannakidou and Quer's account:

- (48) I learned to persevere because in my young mind I imagined I was **any** one of those plants sitting baking under the sun and thirsty for a drink.
(eatocracy.cnn.com)

The clause under the epistemic verb does not seem possible without the operator *imagine* here. This shows, *contra* Giannakidou and Quer, that *any* can occur in the scope of purportedly veridical epistemic attitude predicates. What is interesting, though, for our analysis is that the qualitative-indefiniteness indiscriminate-choice view of *any* allows one to understand how such uses are possible: the partitive defines a range here in which total indiscriminacy of reference obtains, as for the purposes of the mental exercise performed by the speaker in the situation depicted in (48) it does not matter which of the plants he imagined himself to be.

11. As *if*-clauses

As mentioned above, Giannakidou and Quer (2013:124) leave *as if*-clauses in a sort of limbo between veridical and nonveridical status. If one extends the analysis of the epistemic attitude verb *imagine* to *as if*-clauses, however, the latter would have to be classified in Giannakidou and Quer's framework as veridical, an interpretation which is supported by their excluding English *any*, the Greek NPI *kanenas* and the Greek FCI *opjosdhipote* from this type of clause in their Table 1. As far as *any* is concerned however, our data shows the table to be inaccurate, as a search for *as if* followed by *any* within a range of 1–9 words to the right of this conjunction turned up 500 examples of the structure in question (117 examples of the raw total of 617 had to be excluded because *any* was licenced either by a modal or a subtriggering relative clause). Of these 500 attestations, 326 were of the ironic type illustrated in (49):

- (49) “You're still young in spirit, and that's what counts.” As if adding a second cliché to the first carried **any** kind of rhetorical weight. (COCA)

In this context, the implication conveyed is that adding a second cliché to the first carried no rhetorical weight at all: *as if* is used here to attribute to someone an imaginary intention to do something which is impossible or absurd, and *any*'s role is to evoke all possible forms of the NP's referent indiscriminately, much as in negative contexts. Indeed, Horn (2001) argues that in such usage *as if* signals an ironic negative implicature which, because it is the point of the utterance, licences *any*.

Alongside this rhetorical use of *as if*, there were 51 cases in the corpus in which one could argue that a real comparison was being made, even though it is clear that the speaker implies that the action expressed by the *as if*-clause is not actually realized:

- (50) Then Marie's friend arrives to take her home, and I head down my own empty street. The lights sway in a breeze and flash from yellow to red to green again as if there were **any** traffic to guide. (COCA)

Here *any* indiscriminately covers all of the possibilities that the conjunction *as if* declares to be purely imaginary.

The most frequent type besides the context given in (50) also involves a virtual referent, but, unlike (49) and (50), this referent is felt to have some possibility of really existing. 80 cases of this type were found, which can be divided into the following subtypes:

(a) *Forward-looking predicates (31 cases)*

- (51) He felt her, up and down her ski clothes, as if expecting to find and set **any** broken bones himself. (COCA)

(b) *Nouns denoting contingent entities (31 cases)*

- (52) When I tapped softly at her door, she said, “Come in!” in a pained and petulant tone, as if **any** interruption was wearisome to her. (COHA)

(c) *To*-infinitives denoting prospectivized events (17 cases)

- (53) The ducks were silent until the hawk had passed and then quacked as if to warn **any** others in the vicinity. (COHA)

(d) Nouns modified by the adjective **possible** (1 case)

- (54) And then, as if to cut short **any** possible protest that Edestone might presume to make, he turned. (COHA)

Within the first category, the three most frequent forward-looking predicates were verbs of challenging/daring (7 occurrences), expressions of readiness (6 cases) and verbs expressing expectation (5 contexts). Here are examples of the first two types, to complete the example with the verb *expect* in (51) above:

- (55) They scowled, a straight line of them, some with their arms linked as if to challenge **any** intruder into their home. (COHA)
- (56) Susan started up hastily, and seizing a mantle from the chair beside her, stood resolutely, as if prepared for **any** emergency. (COHA)

The import of *any* in such contexts is to indiscriminately cover whatever specimen of the nominal category might happen to materialize. Among the subcategory of nouns denoting contingent entities, the most frequent type was nouns denoting actions which might or might not actually be performed, as in (52) above (11 cases). The next most frequent types were human emotions or mental states (6 occurrences) and entities that are freely produced by humans such as words (6 attestations also):

- (57) “O, Sam!” she exclaimed, “be they gone, and have not they scalped you?” “You can look for yourself, wife,” answered Sam, passing his fingers through his shock of hair, as if to satisfy **any** doubts of his own. (COHA)
- (58) Her voice is somehow harsher, as if she were forcing **any** passion back down her throat so I won’t hear it. (COCA)
- (59) “I can’t believe such arrogance! It’s as if you think **any** word you say is a straight, direct window on truth – no matter where it’s said! It’s mad – it’s playing God!”

These are similar to contexts with forward-looking predicates, in that *any* covers indifferently whatever contingency may happen to arise. The role of the determiner is analogous in the context with a *to*-infinitive illustrated in (53), where the actualization of the infinitive’s event is prospectivized in a clause expressing the purpose of the ducks’ quacking and *any* ensures anticipatory coverage of whatever referent might actually exist or arise in the immediate future.

The next most frequent type involved restrictors like *just* or devaluating expressions like *fool*:

- (60) He planned ahead what he would say, and he determined to discuss three points: 1. That a principle is more important than a case because it can be applied to many cases. 2. That the Lone Star Battalion offered only make-believe, but it is dangerous to meddle with anything except in its real state. 3. That to them the real issue of war, with its far off causes, could not possibly be clear, and they ought therefore not to meddle with it. Then suddenly, **just** as if **any** definite formulation at once removed the possibility of error, Dr. Houghton felt a renewed sense of his responsibility. (COCA)
- (61) Is the end of Route 1 somewhere south of here, we ask him. He stares at us. “Ain’t no south that way,” he says, pointing south as if **any fool** knows even the south ends somewhere. (COCA)

In (60) someone is acting as if things were simpler than they actually are, i.e. as if as little as the mere formulation of a definite statement was sufficient to banish all possibility of error. Here *any* conveys the idea that the naïve Dr. Houghton thinks that somehow infallibility is characteristic of all definite formulations indistinctly, no matter how unfounded they might be. In (61) the devaluating noun *fool* conspires with *any* to cover all people, no matter how stupid they might be, as at least being aware of the fact that the south has to end somewhere. The adjective *old* was found in a similar function in 7 cases, once in combination with the diminutivizing adjective *little*:

- (62) He walked and talked in the most unassuming manner, acting as if he were just **any old** Greg. But the common-demeanor stood in sharp contrast to the sheer brilliance and precision Greg Maddux produced on a pitching mound. (COCA)

- (63) wouldn't do to go about stabbing people in the wrong place, just as if the appendix might be **any little old** where, would it? (COHA)

Such epithets extend the undifferentiated coverage of *any* even to items that are very low on the scale of worth.

The fourth most frequent type of usage in *as if*-clauses involved expressions of ordinariness (cf. Duffley and Larrivée, 2012a:36). The most common adjective conveying this sort of idea was *other*, as in:

- (64) Many hikers think they can climb Mount Shasta as if it were **any other** hike. Wrong. (COCA)

The notion of qualitative indefiniteness is particularly clear here, as the idea is that the hikers referred to wrongly think that there is no difference between Mount Shasta and any other hiking mountain. The adjective *ordinary* was found 4 times in this type of usage:

- (65) Well, maybe one day he and Cynthia can become a normal father and daughter. It's in the realm of possibility, and there are even signs. Yesterday, for example, she actually called him Daddy once without any irony or sarcasm or whatever – just Daddy, as if he were **any ordinary** Dad, making an endearing fool of himself as he tried to be entertaining to her friends. (COCA)

One case was also found of an adjective denoting a quality treated as characteristic of all of the members of a certain profession indiscriminately:

- (66) Here's what I'll do. I'll go back to London, I'll move to a new district, I'll start seeing Sophie on a regular basis, I'll do my job as if I were **any competent** lawyer. (BNC)

Here the person intends to behave in a way that is indistinguishable from any other normal member of the legal profession.

Closely related to the idea of indistinguishability from all the other members of a category is the notion of interchangeability conveyed by the adjective *other* when used in contexts in which ordinariness is not involved. Thus in (67) below, the import of the utterance is that even in the United States people often speak as if one could compare the New World Symphony by Dvorak to whichever symphony one likes by the same composer and it would not sound any different:

- (67) Even in the United States, the relationship between the New World and the "New World" Symphony is too often downplayed – as if this symphony sounded like **any other** by Dvorak. (COCA)

This type of use of *other* was attested 10 times in the corpus. Another way of evoking interchangeability that also turned up in the data was by means of alternatives:

- (68) Unfortunately, to many employers, it looks as if **any** invitation, **either of labor to management or of management to labor**, to sup at a common table is likely to result not only in the disappearance of the food but also of the dishes, and in the destruction of the table as well. (TIME)

In one case, the alternatives were humorously depicted low-end-of-scale entities:

- (69) Instead of sending Christmas cards this year, quite a number of the world's leaders are saying their greetings in person. Last week, in an extraordinary burst of summitry, it seemed as if **any President or Prime Minister worth a Gallup poll** was either visiting someplace else or playing host to a foreign visitor – with everybody packing bags for still more trips to come. (TIME)

This hyperbolic expression extends *any*'s undifferentiated coverage to all top governmental officials worth a damn, no matter how obscure.

Less colourful was the next most frequent context type – partitives – with 7 occurrences. Here the idea is simply that of there being no difference between the members of the category denoted by the noun following *of* as far as the imaginary *as if*-scenario is concerned:

- (70) The easy height he speaks from in his *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, as if he were equal to **any** of the company there assembled. (COHA)

Two less frequent context types, each with 3 occurrences, round out the picture:

(a) *Nouns expressing a kind or type*

- (71) When society gets enlightened enough to treat the victims of sex crimes as if they were the victim of **any type** of crime, then we should follow and can follow and will follow. But we're not there yet.⁷ (COCA)

(b) *Nouns introduced by **such***

- (72) “Virginia, eh?” he inquired belligerently. “You all think that’s the only state there is, don’t you? Well, let me tell you something: we call him that in Georgia, too, and down Florida way, where my friend here comes from, they call him the same. Virginia ain’t got no patent on nicknames, not as I’ve heard.” He rose unsteadily, as if to challenge **any such** claim. (COHA)

In type (a), the meaning of the noun increases the extension of the noun phrase by means of generalization, with *any* being used to erase any distinctions between various types of the entity denoted by the generic noun. In (b), the word *such* plays a similar role: it extends the coverage of the noun phrase to all entities that belong to the same kind as the concrete case that was just evoked, whence the rhetorical flavour of this usage (cf. also the use of *such* with negation as in *I will do no such thing*, where what is in the scope of the negation is extended beyond the specific thing that has just been proposed to anything of a similar nature, thereby suggesting a principled rejection of the proposal).

Lastly, a few particular cases are worthy of mention. In the two contexts below, *any* is responsible all by itself for the conveying of the notion of ‘just any old’ or ‘just any ordinary’:

- (73) It was astonishing to her that he came in and told her his day, as usual, forking his food and waving the fork to show her when he had been his most witty and amusing, as if it were **any day**. (BNC)
- (74) ROB: “Where are we staying?” Augusta rifles through a large purse that bears a striking resemblance to the one she was carrying in the earlier scenes and pulls out a crumpled envelope from which she extracts an itinerary. (NAME OF THE BEST OLD HOTEL IN VENICE) – NOTE: At this point we should feel as if this is **any couple** on a holiday. (COHA)

What is interesting here is that reference is made in these contexts to one particular day or one particular couple, and *any*’s qualitative indefiniteness represents that day or couple as utterly indistinguishable from all the other members of its category. The context below is interesting for the light that the lexical items used along with *any* cast on the latter’s meaning:

- (75) Almost forgetting for the moment all thoughts of Moby Dick, we now gazed at the most wondrous phenomenon which the secret seas have hitherto revealed to mankind. A vast pulpy mass, furlongs in length and breadth, of a glancing cream-colour, lay floating on the water, innumerable long arms radiating from its centre, and curling and twisting like a nest of anacondas, as if blindly to clutch at **any hapless object** within reach.

The notions of ‘clutching at’ and ‘hapless’ bring out the randomness that accompanies the lack of discrimination of the groping squid’s tentacles described in this passage: if some object ends up being seized, it will be due to sheer bad luck on the part of the victim and not to any goal-directed action on the part of the squid. The adverb *blindly* for its part refers more directly to the squid’s inability to distinguish between possible targets for grabbing.

12. Discussion

The novel data brought to light in this study go well beyond the existing characterizations of *any*. The application of Giannakidou and Quer (2013)’s licencing condition of nonveridicality to *any* leads to the conclusion that this determiner should be excluded from episodic past perfective sentences, progressives, affirmative existentials and predicates expressing epistemic attitudes. The same conclusion flows from Dayal (2013)’s notion of Viability and Quer (2000)’s analysis in terms of distributivity. Our corpus data shows however that *any* is possible in all of these environments, with usage being restricted to quantitative NPs in existentials. Thus, for example, *any* occurs with an episodic past perfective in (76) and an episodic state in (77):

⁷ Note that *any* must also be stressed in this use to bring out the free choice reading.

- (76) I wanted to invest more than my usual 2 seconds on my appearance just so I could be sure I didn't have a giant rude finger gesture on the back of my standard band t-shirt. I was running out of time so I grabbed **any** t-shirt and raced from my room. As I was about to leave the house my mother, who had come to watch the twin dongos said 'why are you wearing that shirt?' When I looked at it I realized my error. I grabbed the band shirt of the Implants, however some people may mistake me for a walking advertisement for breast implants. I changed and we were out the door. (meetthehallbutts.com/tag/twins/)
- (77) The American's careful attire contrasted rather oddly with his sallow face, and with the bony hand that rested against the column. He was a young man, but he looked **any** age that morning. (COHA)

The effect with the action verb *grab* is to evoke a one-shot choice which is indifferent as to which particular member of the category is involved; with the episodic stative *look*, the effect is to depict the young man in question as looking an indeterminate age, i.e. one indistinguishable from any other age.

The examples just discussed also call into question Jayez and Tovená's (2010:56–57) proposal that the use of free choice items is associated with the notion of a rule, regularity or "uniform law", as this hypothesis does not seem applicable to usage in episodic contexts. On the other hand, their notion of "equity," defined in terms of each member of the set being equal to the others inasmuch as it could have been chosen instead of the one selected, comes closer to the mark. We also substantially agree with Jayez and Tovená's (2010:58) take on subtrigging, which turns on the notion of a dependency between properties. Thus in uses such as *Any student who cheated was expelled*, a dependency is indeed established between being a student who cheated and being expelled. Sæbo's (2001:784) intuition that subtrigging introduces a conditional clause also seems relevant here: the role of the subtrigging relative is that of specifying a condition motivating the indiscriminate application of the consequence to whatever entities satisfy that condition, whence the impression of a dependency between properties brought out by Jayez and Tovená. Dayal (1998), on the other hand, views the relative clause from the extensional point of view, and sees it as limiting the range of reference by introducing a spatio-temporal restriction that prevents *any* from ranging over all possible worlds. This does indeed bring out the denotational side of the question, but not the fact that within the range of reference marked out by the subtrigging the coverage is nevertheless universal, the import of such constructions being that whatever entity fulfills the condition laid down by the relative clause automatically and indiscriminately falls under the consequence expressed by the main predicate. This is *any*'s real contribution to the overall message: it indicates that whatever the entity one might like to choose that meets the condition specified by the subtrigging relative clause, the consequence applies to it indiscriminately (cf. Duffley and Larrivé (2010)'s notion of the arbitrary choice of an indefinite occurrence and the indiscriminacy value proposed by Horn (2005)). Herein lies moreover the ultimate explanation for the impression that *any* is associated with a "regularity" (Jayez and Tovená, 2007), a "principle" or "policy" (Savin, 1974:333), or a "law-like proposition" (Vendler, 1967:95–96), a type of sense effect which was observed to be the case in all of the subtrigged sentences found in the corpus.

In the absence of a subtrigging, however, there are no additional strings attached besides the fact of belonging to the category denoted by the noun following *any*, and so the condition-governed rule-application interpretation is much less salient, occurring in less than 50% of the non-subtrigged past contexts in our corpus. The crucial factor in this case is the lexical content of the noun following *any*. If the noun denotes something that can be thought of as occurring or materializing in the situation referred to, the conditional interpretation arises. This has been observed with nouns such as *question* (78), *change* (79), *inconsistency* (80), *noise* (81), *risk* (82), *movement* (83) and *reward* (84):

- (78) Two role-play sessions were conducted before the experimenter delivered feedback or answered questions so that the effects of the didactic instruction alone on teacher performance could be evaluated. The experimenter then delivered feedback and answered **any questions**. (COCA)
- (79) A large yellow dot emerged halfway up the strip. So, she thought, there is something in the specimen. When she was certain that she'd seen all there was to see, she placed the same strip in the water jar and noted **any changes**. After a fluorescence scan and the final dip in the iodine solution, Kendra was ready to identify the drug. (COCA)
- (80) In the final phase, we reviewed all of the judgment process information. This included the type of information required for each judgment, different conclusions given different situations, and the linkages among the judgments and the evidence. We discussed and resolved **any inconsistencies**. (COCA)
- (81) "My primary job," Settlemayer says, "was to shelve books. But my secondary job was to go next door and get the firemen to put out kids who made **any noise**." (TIME)
- (82) the sanguine minority whose faith in the future of the mine accepted **any risks**. (COHA)
- (83) to endure the throbbing misery in his head, the awful floating sensation which followed **any movement**. Fighting against that, he tried to remember just what had happened. (COHA)
- (84) Scholars thus were left to pursue "pure" research, while corporations reaped **any rewards**. (COHA)

In all of these sentences one can paraphrase the original sentence with a conditional structure: in the case of (84), the paraphrase would be ‘if there were any rewards, corporations reaped them.’ If the noun refers to an already-existent entity, however, there is no impression of a condition-governed rule or regularity, although *any* does convey a sort of genericity through the notion of the statement being true indiscriminately of whichever member of the category denoted by the noun one might choose to consider. This was observed to be the case with the nouns *ship* (85) and (movie) *shoot* (86):

- (85) An ordinary stowaway would have to pilfer the stores to survive; not so Spar. The crew ought to have no objection to his presence. Still... superstition ruled **any ship**. (COCA)
- (86) the flashes of inspiration that enabled her to solve the inevitable emergencies that plagued **any shoot**. (COHA)

Here the indistinguishability between category members denoted by *any* implies that one can pick whichever *x* one likes – whichever ship one likes in (85) – and the statement is true of that *x*, e.g. superstition ruled that ship. These data show that the impression of a law, rule or regularity is not inherent to the meaning of *any*, but is rather the product of the interaction between the latter and certain contextual factors.

The condition-governed-rule effect can occur with nouns denoting existent entities if they can be conceived as having to materialize in a certain situation in order for the main predicate to apply to them. This is the case for example in (26) above (*From 11 o'clock in the morning to 11 at night the building welcomed any Allied sailors*), where the Allied sailors have to show up at the building in question in order to be welcomed. This is confirmed by the possibility of adding a subtriggering relative clause such as *who showed up* without modifying the overall message expressed. No impression of the implicit presence of such a subtrigger is felt in (85) or (86) above however.

It should be noted in addition that the condition-governed-rule impression is absent even from subtriggered constructions if the relative clause denotes pure randomness of choice, as in:

- (87) Because we didn't bring the auger, we just picked **any hole we could find** and started to fish. (www.nait.ca)
[situation = ice-fishing]
- (88) So I just grabbed **any server that was walking by** and said “Can you call our server!” He asked me why and I informed him “Well, we need to order.”
(www.yelp.com)

Here the relative clause is simply in semantic harmony with *just* in emphasizing complete indifference as to which hole was chosen for ice-fishing or which waiter was grabbed as he walked by. Such contexts could be characterized as involving no discriminatory criterion governing the choice and do not involve any impression of the application of a rule or regular policy at all. No impression of a regularity is felt either in usage with episodic statives such as (77) above: here reference is simply made to an age which is utterly indistinguishable from any other age. These examples also show that veridicality is not in itself an obstacle to the use of *any* as long as there is a justification for the lexical value of this determiner to be called upon.

It is hoped that the discussion above has brought additional clarification to the issues of the compatibility of *any* with veridical contexts, the conditions required for the free choice reading and the phenomenon of subtriggering. The fact that *any* has been attested in all of the four veridical contexts identified by Giannakidou and Quer (2013) means that nonveridicality cannot be held to be a licencing condition for the use of *any*. What is more, the free choice reading has been found with progressives, episodic past perfectives and existentials, an observation which is problematic for Giannakidou and Quer's claim that this interpretation requires *any* to be in the scope of an operator contributing a set of worlds. The clearest counterexample to this claim is represented by episodic past perfectives, as in (23) and (24), which involve only one real past world, and with which *any* depicts the object of a one-shot choice as being randomly selected, thereby implying complete agent indifference as to the actual item chosen.

We are in agreement however with Giannakidou and Quer that *any* is best situated in the general category of indefinites. This would provide an explanation for the long-standing tradition going back to Klima (1964) of treating *any* as the counterpart of the indefinite determiner *some* that occurs in affective contexts:

- (89) I need **some** coffee/I don't need **any** coffee.

While the comparison between these two determiners cannot be pursued here, we would propose that indefiniteness exists in a very different form in *some* than in *any* however. As argued in Duffley and Larrivée (2012b), *some* represents the NP's referent as assumed to be particular, yet left unidentified. This accounts for the derogatory effect observed in uses such as *Some Mr. Wilson called for you*, which is not present with the indefinite article, and for *some's* affinity with disparaging epithets like *idiot* and *jerk* (e.g. *Some jerk left the door open! A jerk left the door open*): the fact of not bothering

or not needing to specify the identity of a potentially specifiable referent can have the effect of implying indifference or insignificance. In questions, *some* has another effect, that of presupposing the existence of a particular referent to which the predicate applies (cf. *Did you say something?*). Interrogatives with *any*, in contrast, cover all possible referents indiscriminately. In negation, *some* denotes a particular but non-identified referent to which the negative predicate applies (*He only got 95% on the exam because he didn't get some question in Section C right*); *any* on the other hand delivers a qualitatively indefinite referent interchangeable with all the other members of its category and so the negation is felt to apply indiscriminately to the whole set, thus producing the effect of blanket coverage (*He didn't get any question in Section C right*). We would argue that *any* represents an even greater level of abstraction than either *some* or the indefinite article: while *some* evokes a particular but unspecified or unidentified referent, and the indefinite article signals reference to a representative exemplar of the category denoted by the following noun phrase (*A man carrying a placard was arrested*), *any* denotes an entity as having merely the quality of representative exemplarity, i.e. complete indistinguishability from all the other members of the category in question (*Any man carrying a placard was arrested*), thereby evoking absolute equity or indifference of application of the predicate.

It should be clear from the account proposed here that lexical characteristics play a considerable role in accounting for polarity sensitivity. While both context type and lexical value need to converge for a felicitous sequence to emerge, the lexical value of an item like *any* plays a primary role in accounting for both standard usage and less frequent occurrences. It is because *any* expresses utter indistinguishability of one member of a category from all the other members thereof and possibility of indiscriminate selection that this item is found mostly in nonveridical contexts, while not being barred from veridical ones in which the notion of indiscriminate reference and qualitative indefiniteness is emphasized. This is not to advocate a radical lexicological perspective or to deny the relevance of general grammatical interpretative categories. However, general categories of the latter sort cannot be taken as sufficient by themselves to account for the fine-grained distinctions and subtle-shaded combinations found in the actual usage of natural languages, which are also predicated on the lexical content provided by the linguistic items making up the utterance. The precise nature of this content can only be perceived through a careful observation of a substantial quantity of real data, however, with the context necessary to help screen out what comes from an item like *any* and what derives from the context in which it is used. In the court of the empirical verification of linguistic theories, this gives a whole new meaning to the expression *habeas corpus*.

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