Polarity and *wh*-constructions

Topics
As the title suggests, in this class we are going to look at a number of related issues having to do with either polarity or *wh*-constructions, or both. The class will have the following macro-structure.

Part 1: Issues in the analysis of negative and positive polarity items and negative concord.
Part 2: Intervention effects in polarity licensing and *wh*-constructions.
Part 3: Polarity in questions, free relative clauses, free choice interpretations.

This is a fairly wide range of topics, concerning issues in both syntax and semantics of the phenomena in question. In fact, many of these phenomena have competing syntactic and semantic accounts, raising the interesting question how these may be told apart.

Prerequisites
Syntax I and Semantics I.

Requirements
Active class participation, several group presentations, term paper.

Presentations
Participants will be asked to form groups of up to three students. In each class session, one group will give a 20 minute presentation. Here are some of the things you can do in your presentations:

- Bring up your own questions or comments concerning the lectures or readings.
- Collect and present questions or comments from other seminar participants.
- Introduce additional relevant material, including readings you’d like to discuss.
- Present possible term paper topics or discuss various stages of your term paper.

Readings
For each session, one or two obligatory readings will be assigned. These will be made available online or in the Hill library for copying. Additional recommended readings will be made available as well.
Some references

1. State-of-the-art readings


2. Classic readings on polarity items


3. Studies of particular polarity items


August 29, 2003


Haspelmath, Martin: 1997, Indefinite Pronouns, Oxford University Press, Oxford. [A cross-linguistic study of indefinite pronouns, including negative polarity items]


4. Negative polarity items and even

Barker, Laura and Elena Herburger: 2000 ‘Even even can be an NPI: Facts from Spanish’, GUWTPL.


Schwarz, Bernhard: 2003, ‘Scalar additive particles in negative contexts’, unpublished manuscript, University of Texas at Austin.


5. Negative Concord


6. Positive polarity items


[http://semanticsarchive.net/Archive/jUwM2UwN]

7. Studies of particular negative polarity contexts


8. Polarity items in questions


9. Negative dependencies and surface structure


10. Intervention effects and negative islands


Guerzoni, Elena: 2003, ‘Intervention effects on NPIs and feature movement: Towards a unified account of intervention’, unpublished manuscript, MIT.


11. Syntax and semantics of free relative clauses


[http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~dayal/ever.pdf]


[http://www.yale.edu/linguist/faculty/IATL_paper_for_publication_RTF.rtf]


12. Free choice interpretations


Haspelmath, Martin: 1997, Indefinite Pronouns, Oxford University Press, Oxford. [A cross-linguistic study of indefinite pronouns, including free choice items]


