## Negative Polarity Items in the Restrictor of a Determiner

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Negative Polarity Items (NPIs), such as *ever* and *any* are expressions that can only appear in specific linguistic environments, typically in downward-entailing or non-veridical contexts. A downward-entailing environment ensures that if a statement applies to a group, it applies to any smaller group as well (e.g., *No students ever passed the exam* applies to any possible subset of students). Because of these very typical—one could say almost exclusive licensing conditions in determiner-restrictor constructs, the occurrence of NPIs in restrictor of upward-entailing determiners (e.g., *some, many*) remains an underexplored area in naturally occurring data. A restrictor limits what a determiner refers to. For instance, in *Many students who have ever been to Paris enjoyed the trip*, the clause *who have ever been to Paris* specifies which students are being referred to. Since upward-entailing expressions generally do not create the necessary licensing conditions for NPIs like *ever*, their occurrence in restrictors is unexpected to say the least.

This study investigates whether NPIs can be licensed in the restrictor of upward-entailing determiners. Two key hypotheses are tested: (1) Zwarts (1998) proposes that NPIs are only licensed in restrictors if the determiner is monotone decreasing or anti-additive; (2) Sailer (2009) argues that NPIs can also be licensed in restrictors of proportional determiners (e.g., *most, many*) under specific pragmatic conditions, particularly in law-like statements.

To test these hypotheses, we conducted a corpus-based study using Sketch Engine, analyzing data from enTenTen21 and the British National Corpus (BNC). A targeted query extracted sentences where upward-entailing determiners, restrictor clauses, and NPIs co-occurred. The query incorporated optional intervening tokens to maximize relevant search results.

The findings provide little support for Sailer's hypothesis. Across both corpora, only four instances were found where an upward-entailing determiner licensed an NPI in the restrictor. This suggests that while such licensing is theoretically possible, it is extremely rare in natural language use. These results align more closely with Zwarts' stricter licensing conditions. Additionally, as a control, we searched for downward-entailing determiners licensing NPIs in restrictors. No relevant instances were found in the BNC or enTenTen21. The lack of data supporting Zwart's hypothesis raises questions of the practicability as well as the possibility

of NPIs that are licensed in determiner-restrictor constructs in naturally occurring data at all, regardless of the determiner's entailment properties.

To further test these hypotheses, future research could explore more targeted subcorpora, refine search strategies, and investigate cross-linguistic data.