On *-ever*

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-ever free relatives cross-linguistically have three main readings: ignorance, indifference, and non-modal. With an *ignorance* reading, there is an inference that the speaker does not know what the free relative refers to (1). Under an *indifference* reading the uniqueness requirement of the EFR no longer holds (2). The third reading is a *non-modal* one where ignorance or indifference are not conventionalized.

(1) Whichever movie is playing at Phoenix Picturehouse (#namely Blade Runner) is very popular.

(2) Whichever movie plays at Phoenix Picturehouse is very popular.

(3) In those days, whatever Parker wrote was always violent.

The literature on the semantics of *-ever* free relatives (henceforth EFRs) has mostly focused on the their semantics as a whole (e.g. variability between ignorance and indifference readings (Hirsch, 2016; Šimík, 2018), universal or definite semantic core (Iatridou and Varlokosta, 1998; Tredinnick, 2005)). The compositional contribution of the generalizing element (e.g *-ever*) in terms of how it relates to other uses of such elements is less well understood, with *-ever* sometimes even taken as non-compositional (reported by Šimík 2020, exceptions being Dayal 1995, 1997, von Fintel 2000; Lauer 2009; Condoravdi 2015). For instance, it is not clear whether English *-ever* is the same as the NPI *ever*, and if so, how the NPI meaning correlates with the *-ever* free relative.

In this talk, I present a cross-linguistic survey of counterparts of *-ever* in languages with *-ever* free relatives, examining how their semantic properties correlate with the range of readings available to *-ever* free relatives. I focus on three languages: Old Avestan, Hindi, and English. I show that the generalizing morpheme in Old Avestan *-ever* free relatives (and similar constructions) is a free choice item, composed from the NPI *ci-* and the additive morpheme *-ca*, which is responsible for pre-exhaustification of the alternatives of *ci-*, thereby licensing the NPI in a non-SDE environment following (Chierchia, 2013; Szabolcsi, 2017; Kirby, 2021; Mitrović, forthcoming).

(4) [**yōi**   mōi səraošəm dąn   **ciias=cā**]   upā.jimən
    REL.NOM.PL me respect.ACC give.3PL *ci*.NOM.PL=CONJ attain.3PL
    hauruuātā
    integrity.ACC
    'Whosoever gives me respect will attain integrity.' (Y 45.5)

(5) a. LF for EFR in 4: $O_{exh}[ca\text{-}[ci\text{-}[\lambda x[x \text{ gives me respect}]]]]$

   b. $ALT_4 = \Diamond(\{\text{person}_a, \text{person}_b, \ldots, \text{person}_n\} \text{ gives me respect})$.

   c. $ALT_4^{\text{Pre-Exh}} = \{\Diamond(\text{only person}_a \text{ give me respect}), \ldots, \Diamond(\text{only person}_n \text{ gives me respect})\}$

   d. $O(ALT_4^{\text{Pre-Exh}}) = [\Diamond(\text{person}_a) \wedge \cdots \wedge \Diamond(\text{person}_n) \wedge \neg \Diamond(\text{person}_a \wedge \cdots \wedge \text{person}_n)$

I then expand on a similar proposal for Hindi *bhii* by Dayal (2019), and explore how such ideas can unify the uses of *ever* as an NPI and the free relative-based *-ever* in English. Finally, I discuss ideas about how the choice of this generalizing morpheme can affect the possible readings of an *-ever* free relative across languages.

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