

## A split in mandatory embedded implicatures

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Magri (2009) observed that a weak scalar item like *some* is infelicitous when it is contextually equivalent to its stronger scalemate, like *all*.

- (1) Context: *bears form a species*.
  - a. # Some bears are mammals.
  - b. ? All bears are mammals.
  - c. Bears are mammals.

This follows, Magri contends, if exhaustive interpretations of *some* are derived via an operator EXH blind to contextual information and operating on logical strength only.

Magri (2011) argues that this observation extends: weak scalar items are also infelicitous in downward-entailing environments, when the context makes them equivalent to the strong one, as in (2).

- (2) Context: *In Italy, children always inherit the last name of their father*.
  - a. # Every father some of whose children have a funny last name must pay a fine.
  - b. ? Every father all of whose children have a funny last name must pay a fine.
  - c. Every father whose children have a funny last name must pay a fine.

(2) is used as an argument for the presence of embedded EXH, even in downward-entailing environments: at matrix level, EXH is vacuous since (2)b is logically weaker than (2)a ; if EXH can apply inside the restrictor of *every*, a contradiction can be derived locally.

But I argue the facts are more nuanced: under equivalence, certain downward-entailing environments do ban weak scalar items, but others in fact require them. I use the scale *<allowed, required>*: both its items easily embed under negation and it has no homogeneous competitors (cf c sentences in (1) and (2)).

- (3) **Context:** *in this dystopian regime, there is no free choice ; every action is either forbidden or mandatory*.
  - a. # I am allowed to vote for the party.
  - b. ✓ I am required to vote for the party.

Under negation, only the weak *allowed* is felicitous. This pattern is the mirror image of (2) and contradicts Magri (2011)'s claims.

- (4) Negation
  - a. ✓ I am not allowed to vote for the opposition.
  - b. # I am not required to vote for the opposition.

In antecedent of conditionals however, the facts are just as Magri observed them in (2).

- (5) Conditionals
  - a. # If I'm allowed to vote on Friday, Iris will be upset.
  - b. ✓ If I'm required to vote on Friday, Iris will be upset.

*no* offers a useful minimal pair: while "*no p q*" is classically equivalent to "*no q p*", *no*'s restrictor prefers the strong item *required*, while its scope demands *allowed*.

- (6) *What a terrible act of rebellion...*
  - a. # No one who was allowed to vote on Friday did so.

- b. ✓ No one who was required to vote on Friday did so.
- c. ✓ No one who voted on Friday was allowed to.
- d. # No one who voted on Friday was required to.

Generally, restrictors conform to [Magri \(2011\)](#)'s predictions while the scope of negation and negative quantifiers shows the opposite pattern. These facts are perhaps connected to the non-emptiness presupposition of restrictors: these environments are Strawson downward-entailing but not strictly so.

## References

- Magri, G. (2011). Another argument for embedded scalar implicatures based on oddness in downward entailing environments. *Semantics and pragmatics*, 4, 6–1. <https://doi.org/10.3765/sp.4.6>
- Magri, G. (2009). A theory of individual-level predicates based on blind mandatory scalar implicatures. *Natural language semantics*, 17(3), 245–297.