

Negative properties of quantifiers in English and Swedish

Eva Klingvall, Fredrik Heinat

Abstract: In this paper we report the results from two small-scale studies on monotone decreasing (negative) quantifying expressions (QEs) and their negative polarity properties. Some approaches to QEs view polarity item licensing and clause polarity (affirmation/denial) as distinct phenomena. Here, we investigate if this distinction holds for monotone decreasing QEs. In two studies (one on English and one on Swedish), we tested to what extent the abilities of QEs to license negative polarity items (NPIs) and to give rise to clause level denials go hand in hand. Native speakers of English and Swedish rated sentences with quantified subjects (e.g. *few*, *not all*) and NPIs (e.g. *yet*, *until*) or polarity sensitive material. The results show that both dimensions of negativity are subject to variation within each language but seem to follow each other to a high degree across the two languages, and that QEs with the same logical properties can still be negative to different degrees.

Key words: Negative Polarity Item, clause level denial, monotone decreasing quantifiers, acceptability judgements, negative strength.