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# Delimiting the class of free choice items in a comparative perspective: Evidence from the database of French and Greek free choice items

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## Abstract

This study argues that free choice items (FCIs) form a distinct class of lexical items. Just like other lexical items, they are associated with alternatives. Their core semantic property is that they have descriptive contents that bring information on these alternatives. In doing so, they form three interpretational categories: (1) full set FCIs, or else FCIs that express widening, require that all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered, (2) subset FCIs that express ignorance require that unknown alternatives are considered and (3) subset FCIs that express absence of preference require that non-preferred alternatives are considered. FCIs meaning components are encoded in the form of semantic features in the individual items and give rise to three grammaticality conditions for the class of FCIs. FCI grammaticality is analyzed in terms of a two-way feature satisfaction of the FCI's feature requirement vis à vis the alternatives under consideration.

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## 1. Introduction

The study of free choice items (FCIs) has occupied a central position in formal linguistics over the last fifty years. The appeal of FCIs is enormous for many reasons. On the one hand, their study is directly related to the concept of free(dom) of choice that has occupied logicians and philosophers (cf. Locke, 1689). As originally explained by Vendler (1967:80) in relation to the English item *any*, freedom of choice “succeeds in blending indetermination with generality”. In the sentence below, for instance, the speaker allows her addressee to pick a card freely:

(1) *You can take any card.*

On the other hand, their distribution is restricted to certain contexts. This property immediately surfaces when one considers the distribution of the English indefinite *any* in affirmative episodic contexts (2–3). The category of affirmative contexts contains episodic contexts (3), contexts with the verb *to be* (4), contexts with factive predicates (5) and contexts with existential constructions (6). I follow Giannakidou (2001) in calling *episodic* (2–3) the contexts that refer to exactly one event.

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- (2) \**He took any card.*
- (3) *Yesterday, I saw John.*
- (4) *He is a professor of physics.*
- (5) *I am happy that John became a professor.*
- (6) *There is a lot of dust in this room.*

In view of data as in (1) and (2), one would like to know why *any* is ungrammatical in affirmative episodic sentences while it is grammatical in modal sentences. The answer to this question is even more crucial when one compares the FCI *any* to the regular indefinite *a* which is grammatical in affirmative episodic sentences<sup>1</sup>:

- (7) *He took a card.*

The data above are crucial not only for the analysis of *any*, itself, but also for all studies that attempt to define the properties of FCIs. In view of the different behavior between FCI and non-FCI indefinites, one wonders whether FCIs form a *class* of items with common properties that make them differ from other lexical items (like the indefinite *a*, for instance). The answer to this question is the goal of the present paper.

Certain scholars working on the distribution of FCIs attempted to answer to this question by arguing that FCIs are lexical items with a common grammaticality condition that universally accounts for their distribution. The English FCI *any* which has deeply influenced these studies has also been characterized as polarity sensitive item (PSI) in English.<sup>2</sup> The most discussed characteristic of *any* that led scholars to classify it in the set of PSIs was that, just like negative polarity items (NPIs) (like *lift a finger* (9)), it is grammatical in negative sentences (8) and ungrammatical in affirmative ones (2):

- (8) *He did not take any card.*
- (9) a. \* *He lifted a finger.*  
b. *He did not lift a finger.*

Since the meaning of freedom of choice has been first discussed in relation to the English PSI *any* by Vendler (1967), many researchers followed a unitary approach for this item (see Giannakidou (2001) for a list of languages that have morphologically distinct FCIs and NPIs). The polarity sensitivity tradition has, therefore, deeply influenced the theory on FCIs and researchers that attempted to answer to the abovementioned question.

In the remainder of the present section, I first present briefly the following most prominent approaches in the polarity sensitivity tradition: (a) the theory of Klima (1964) which proposed that PSIs are licensed by a c-commanding relation between an element and a negative operator and (b) the theory of Ladusaw (1979) which suggested that PSIs are grammatical only in downward entailing contexts. I further discuss the theory of nonveridicality and non-episodicity (Giannakidou, 2001) and the theory of non-individuation (Jayez and Tovenca, 2005) that attempted to account for FCI distribution by proposing a universal grammaticality condition. It will be shown that the grammaticality of certain FCIs in affirmative sentences poses a challenge for both theories.

The common line underpinning analyses on polarity sensitive items is that their distribution is conditioned by the presence or absence of a specific sentential operator. PSIs are thus said to be licensed or anti-licensed (or anti-triggered) by the semantics of sentential operators (cf. Ladusaw, 1979).<sup>3</sup> Klima (1964) was the first to suggest a licensing condition for PSIs by arguing that, like *any*, these items are grammatical if and only if they are in construction with (or c-commanded by) a negative operator, namely when found in sentences that are “similar to negatives” (Klima, 1964:311). This category includes sentences that contain negative words (10), adverbs like *only* (11), negative predicates (12) as well as interrogative sentences (13):

- (10) *Nowhere has anybody been hit by anyone.*
- (11) *Only young writers ever accept suggestions with any sincerity.*
- (12) *He is unable to find any time for that.*
- (13) *Who expects him to write any more novels?*

<sup>1</sup> *Regular* is a term that serves to refer to non-FC (in)definites throughout the paper.

<sup>2</sup> *Any* is not the only English item that has been characterized as FCI. Dayal (1997) and Von Stechow (2000) suggested that the English free relatives (FRs) with the particle *ever* (*wh-ever*) are FCIs too, expressing ignorance and indifference. We will come back to the notions of ignorance and indifference in section 5.

<sup>3</sup> The notion of *anti-licensing* has been initially introduced in the literature on PSIs to characterize items that are not grammatical in the scope of negation (Ladusaw, 1979). This notion has been introduced in the literature on FCIs by Giannakidou (1997, 2001).

Ladusaw (1979) suggested that PSIs are grammatical if and only if they are found in downward entailing (DE) contexts, namely contexts allowing inference from sets to subsets in their scope. The sentence below, for instance, is a typical example of a downward entailing context because it infers that all kinds of ice cream are excluded: the speaker did not eat Italian ice cream, Spanish ice cream, and so on.

(14) *I did not eat ice cream.*

According to Ladusaw, conditional contexts, contexts with negative words like *nobody*, with *few* and *not* are downward entailing contexts:

(15) *If you eat ice cream, I will give you 10 euros.*

(16) *Nobody ate ice cream.*

(17) *Few students ate ice cream.*

(18) *The students did not eat ice cream.*

It is inferred from (15) that if the addressee eats Italian or any other kind of ice cream, the speaker will offer 10 euros. (16) means that nobody ate Italian ice cream, Turkish ice cream, or any other kind of ice cream. In (17) it is inferred that few students ate Turkish, Spanish or any other type of ice cream. (18) means that the students did not eat any kind of ice cream. According to Ladusaw (1979), the NPI *any* is grammatical in the sentences below because they are downward entailing:

(19) *If anyone ever catches on to us, we're in trouble.*

(20) *No student who had ever read anything on phrenology attended the lecture.*

(21) *Few students who had ever read anything on phrenology attended the lecture.*

(22) *John won't dance with anyone.*

As Klima and Ladusaw did for PSIs, the theory of nonveridicality and non-episodicity by Giannakidou (2001) and the theory of non-individuation by Jayez and Tovenà (2005) attempted to account for FCI distribution by proposing a universal grammaticality condition.<sup>4</sup>

Mainly based on the distribution of the Greek FCI *opjondhipote* (*o-dhipote* hereafter), the theory of nonveridicality argues that FCIs are nonveridical items and grammatical only in nonveridical and non-episodic statements. As opposed to veridical statements, nonveridical statements do not imply the truth of their proposition. According to this theory, FCIs are ungrammatical in veridical and episodic statements: contexts with existential constructions, with factive predicates and affirmative episodic contexts with the adverb *yesterday* are veridical. Consider the behavior of *o-dhipote* in affirmative episodic sentences as in (23), in modal sentences as in (24) and in sentences with stative predicates as in (25):

(23) \**Xthes i Maria apandise pragmatika otidhipote.*  
Yesterday the Maria answered really FCI.what

(24) *Boris na paris opjodhipote fruto!*  
May-2SG SUBJ take-2SG FCI.which fruit  
"You may take any fruit!"

(25) *I Ariadni gnorizi opjondhipote sto tmima.*  
The Ariadni knows FCI.whom to-the department  
"Ariadne knows anybody in the department."<sup>5</sup> (from Giannakidou, 2001)

According to the theory of nonveridicality and non-episodicity for FCIs, (23) is ungrammatical because *o-dhipote* occurs in an episodic sentence with the veridical operator *yesterday*. Also, it is grammatical in the modal sentence in (24) and the stative sentence in (25) because, according to this theory, these sentences are nonveridical and non-episodic. It should be noticed that veridicality is a property of sentential operators on Giannakidou's account; it does not characterize affirmative contexts that do not or cannot contain such an operator.

Focusing on the behavior of the French FCIs *tout* and *n'importe quoi* (*n'importe qu-* hereafter), the theory of non-individuation (Jayez and Tovenà (2005) argues that FCIs are irreferential and proposes that they are therefore

<sup>4</sup> Dayal (1998) also proposed essential connection (see also Jayez and Tovenà, 2005) and contextual vagueness as two licensing constraints for *any* in cases in which it is subtriggered (namely when it is "saved" in otherwise hostile contexts when modified by a relative clause, a prepositional phrase, an adjective (LeGrand, 1975)) and in modal sentences. Since the goal of the paper is to delimit the class of FCIs by studying their semantics and distribution in a variety of contexts, Dayal (1998) is not discussed in detail here (see also Choi and Romero, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Certain speakers put stress on *opjondhipote* in this context.

grammatical if and only if the sentence does not convey a referential situation, “a situation in which particular individuals in the current world satisfy the sentence” (Jayez and Tovena, 2005:56). In opposition to affirmative episodic sentences, generic sentences are typical examples of sentences that do not refer to particular individuals in the real world. On the non-individuation account, this difference explains the contrast below:

- (26) *N'importe qui/tout étudiant sait ça.*  
 FCI.who/ FCI student knows this  
 “Any student knows that”.
- (27) \**Hier Marie a apprécié n'importe quel livre.*  
 Yesterday Mary has appreciated FCI.which book

Due to the theory of nonveridicality and non-episodicity and the theory of non-individuation, a lot of progress has been made in our understanding of the phenomenon of FCIs. They both aimed to delimit and well define the properties that FCIs share. Independently of the different nature of their analyses, both theories converge in that they proposed a semantic property that can be assigned to both the item as well as to the context as the crucial factor for the grammaticality of FCIs. The reader can see that *boris* in (24) is nonveridical even in the absence of *opjodhipote*. *Idem*, (26) is irreferential even in the absence of *n'importe qui*. However, the grammaticality of certain FCIs in affirmative sentences (28) is a problem for both of them. Also, the ungrammaticality of the Greek FCI *o-dhipote* in necessity and volitional modal sentences (see Aloni, 2003 on *any*) which are nonveridical (29–30) is not accounted by the theory of nonveridicality:

- (28) *Marie a vraiment répondu n'importe quoi.*  
 Mary has really answered FCI.what  
 “Marie answered just anything”. (from Jayez and Tovena, 2005)
- (29) \**Prepi na fas opjodhipote fruto.*  
 Must SUBJ eat-2SG FCI.which fruit
- (30) \**Thelo na pandrefto opjondhipote.*<sup>6</sup>  
 Want-1SG SUBJ marry-1SG FCI.whom

In view of the data in (27–28) the crucial question is raised why *n'importe qu-* is grammatical only in certain types of affirmative episodic sentences. Also, the data in (23) and (28) raise the question why *n'importe qu-* and not *o-dhipote* is grammatical in affirmative sentences. The different distributional properties of FCIs make the answer to the question of whether FCIs form a distinct class of items even more urgent. If they do, then these items should have at least one common core property.

This paper is laid out as follows: section 2 describes the free choice item database (FCID). Section 3 presents the empirical scope of the current study. Section 4 shows that there is no universal (anti-)licensing condition for FCIs. Section 5 presents the interpretational categories of FCIs. It proposes that FCIs form a distinct class of items associated with three semantic features and discusses the predictions that one can make on the FCIs of the languages of the world. Just like other lexical items, they are associated with alternatives. Their core semantic property is that they have descriptive contents that bring information on these alternatives. In doing so, they form three interpretational categories: (1) full set FCIs, or else widening FCIs, require that all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered, (2) subset FCIs that express ignorance require that unknown alternatives are considered and (3) subset FCIs that express absence of preference require that non-preferred alternatives are considered. Section 6 argues that FCIs have different distributional properties because they have different descriptive contents, encoded in terms of semantic features in the items themselves. The FCIs' semantic features require that different sets of alternatives are considered each time. From this, it is predicted that only the contexts that satisfy item's semantic requirement(s) are good contexts. Since FCIs belong to three different interpretational categories, this prediction takes the form of three different grammaticality conditions. FCI grammaticality is analyzed in terms of a two-way satisfaction of the FCI's feature requirement vis à vis the alternatives under consideration. Section 7 presents the conclusion.

The database has a wide empirical scope and fulfills two primary goals. One, to create a first tool of reference for the phenomenon “FCI”, independently of a specific research question. With this goal in mind, I established what I call “non-linguistic” fields (like “text type” and “author”). Two, to construct a mechanism that would allow one to approach the question of the FCI distribution. Hence the creation of “linguistic” fields (like “contextual semantic properties”), to be

<sup>6</sup> *O-dhipote* becomes grammatical in volitional modal sentences when subtriggered (Vlachou, 2007).

discussed in detail in the following section. Since the main aim of the paper is to delimit the class of FCIs, the presentation of both the results (sections 4–6) as well as of the FCID parts that are relevant to these results (section 2) is necessary.

In contrast to the wide empirical scope of the database, the paper aims to delimit the class of FCIs by investigating how FCIs interact with a variety of contexts. I have therefore decided to leave outside the scope of this paper items and examples that are not helpful in this direction. For the reader to become acquainted with the content of the database, all items investigated in the database are first presented in section 2.3 and then used to define the empirical scope of the paper in section 3.

## 2. A database for free choice items

### 2.1. Rationale

Faced with the different distributional properties of FCIs in affirmative sentences (section 1) it is difficult to know what is the right generalization to make. It is risky to make generalizations based on one item from one language. If we do, it might well be the case that we force data to verify a hypothesis instead of letting data lead us to new insights. As Saebo (2004) (consider also Aguilar Guevara et al., 2011) accurately noticed, the situation in semantics is even more critical than in syntax because semanticists work on intuitions that are less black and white than in syntax.

Making generalizations on the phenomenon of FCIs requires a proper empirical basis. In order to render results more reliable, our empirical basis should contain data from different sources. Also, in cross-linguistic comparisons and generalizations, data from different languages are required. Further, a basis that assembles linguistic and non-linguistic information is required. Haspelmath (1997:7), who studied the indefinite pronouns of one hundred forty languages, rightly observes: “linguistic typology is indispensable for our goal of explaining linguistic phenomena and of detecting significant generalizations. The fundamental problem is to state generalizations at the right level of generality”.

For all these reasons, this study required a mechanism that would allow the use of a big amount of data by taking into account (a) as many combinations of context and item as possible, (b) language-specific but also cross-linguistic similarities and variations, (c) linguistic and non-linguistic information. Regarding the question of FCI distribution, such a mechanism would eventually lead to new insights toward possible context and item combinations and allow the detection of ‘gaps’ in their distribution. Therefore a free choice item database was constructed to provide the first basis of systematically collected data with FCIs, while fulfilling all the conditions above. The program used was Microsoft Access 2000. At the time of writing the FCID is not publicly accessible. The annotation of data in the FCID was done by myself between October 2003 and January 2004.

### 2.2. Collection of data and methodology

The FCID contains French and Greek data. Its entries were collected from the French and Greek corpora called *Frantext* and *Hellenic National Corpus* (HNC), respectively. The reader can find general information about the two corpora in Table 1. These are currently the most elaborate corpora of French and Greek, containing a wealth of data from written texts, available on the web.<sup>7</sup>

The FCID currently contains a total of 2300 entries from French and Greek; 1112 Greek examples and 1188 French examples. French entries are from texts published in the period 1950–2000 and Greek entries are from texts published in the period 1990–2000.

The purpose of the selection procedure was to include as many examples as possible from as many context-item combinations as possible, while letting examples lead me toward new insights. Some FCIs were more often used in the corpora compared to other FCIs. In order to include in the FCID comparable numbers of all FCIs and context-item combinations while preserving a randomization algorithm, the following selection procedure was devised: (1) I used Table 2 (to be explained in the following paragraph) to determine the number of each FCI's entries in the FCID, (2) I used random selection to select the examples from the two corpora and (3) when I came across an example of a combination that was not represented in the random selection, I considered this example for inclusion in the FCID. Since these examples would affect the results, they were kept below 5% of the total examples selected for each item.

Due to the large number of examples found in the corpora, only a percentage was selected for inclusion in the database (as presented in Table 2). These percentages also needed to yield comparable numbers of examples for various items. So the greater the number of examples of an item in the corpus, the smaller the percentage. I aimed for a figure of about 50 examples for each item. Table 2 was developed while keeping this information in mind and taking into account the number

<sup>7</sup> The facts in Table 1 are from <http://www.frantext.fr> and <http://hnc.ilsp.gr> as of August 2009.

Table 1  
Information about Frantext and HNC.

	Frantext	HNC
Availability	Internet; membership required	Internet; membership required
Media	Mainly literary books	Books, newspapers, periodicals, miscellaneous
Text type	Approximately 80% fiction texts and 20% scientific texts	(Non-)fiction, advertising, official, information, discussion
Size	3737 texts, 210,000,000 words	50,824 texts, 47,013,924 words
Century	16th–20th	20th, mainly after 1990

Table 2  
Percentages for French and Greek FCIs.

Number of entries in the corpus	Percentage
French	
<60	100%
61–150	50%
151–400	20%
401–1000	10%
1001–2000	6%
2000<	2%
Greek	
<50	100%
50–100	50%
100–200	20%
200–500	10%
500–1000	6%
1000<	1%

of entries for each item in the corpora. For example, if a French FCI had 150 entries in Frantext, then from Table 2, 75 examples of this item were registered in the database.

### 2.3. Empirical scope of the database

#### 2.3.1. Item selection criteria

The determination of the selection criterion of items was one of the most complicated tasks in the database's set-up. This was due to the absence from the literature of a formal criterion of what “counts” as FCI, namely what are the core properties distinguishing it from other linguistic items. The absence of such a criterion made it impossible to automatically detect FCIs in the HNC and Frantext corpora.

The decision which item to include in the database was made in three steps while items already analyzed in the literature as FCIs were my starting point. As the reader may recall from section 1, the English items *any* and *wh-ever*, the Greek item *o-dhipote* and the French items *n'importe qu-* and *tout* have been characterized as FCIs. In the first step, a search was mounted for all possible translations of *any* and *wh-ever* into French and Greek, of *n'importe qu-* and *tout* into Greek and of *o-dhipote* into French. Further, French items which are semantically equivalent to *n'importe qu-* and Greek items which are semantically equivalent to *o-dhipote* were collected. This way of selecting the possible FCI candidates generated a heterogeneous list of items both semantically and morphologically. Its greatest part contained items composed by *qu-* in French (cf. *qui, que, quoi, quand*, etc.) and items composed by *o-* in Greek (cf. *opjos, opja, opu*, etc.). These elements morphologically correspond to *wh-* elements (cf. *who, what, when*, etc.) in English.

In view of the absence of a formal criterion for FCI and the heterogeneity of items that appeared on the initial list, each individual item was examined separately. The item *je ne sais qui* (hereafter *je ne sais qu-*) was one of the most interesting cases. This item was included in the FCID but, for reasons given below, will not be examined here in detail.

- (31) *Prenez je ne sais quel traitement contre la toux, mais bon sang*  
 Take-2PL FCI.which medicine against the cough but good blood  
*arrêtez de tousser tout le temps!*  
 stop-2PL to cough all the time  
 “Take whatever medicine against coughing, but, for god sake, stop coughing all the time!”

- (32) *Prenez n'importe quel traitement contre la toux, mais bon sang*  
 Take-2PL FCI.which medicine against the cough but good blood  
*arrêtez de tousser tout le temps!*  
 stop-2PL to cough all the time  
 "Take whatever medicine against coughing, but, for god sake, stop coughing all the time!"
- (33) *A ce moment Raoul et je ne sais qui ont débouché d' une rue*  
 At this moment Raoul and FCI.who have-3PL come.out from a street  
*dont je n'ai jamais pu retenir le nom.*  
 which I not have-1SG never could retain the name  
 "At this moment, Raoul and whoever else came out of a street whose name I have never been able to remember". [DB]<sup>8</sup>

This item behaves like the prototypical French FCI *n'importe qu-* in imperatives (31–32) and has an ignorance flavor in affirmative episodic contexts (33), just like *wh-ever* (see note 2). The speaker in (31–32) advises her addressee to take a medicine. The speaker's addressee is free to choose the medicine she prefers, as long as she stops coughing. The speaker in (33) is ignorant about the identity the person who came out of the street with Raoul. Since it is semantically equivalent to already documented FCIs (*n'importe qu-* and *wh-ever*) in both of the above uses, it was included in the list of items studied in the database.<sup>9</sup>

In the second step, I had to ensure that I would register entries that would show the distribution of items in as many contexts as possible. As far as French is concerned, the list contained items like *n'importe qu-* that are formed by a *wh-* item, but also items that are not (which, as explained below, have been excluded from the database). It contained the items *tout* and *le moindre* (Jayez and Tovená, 1999):

- (34) *Tout chat chasse les souris.*  
 FCI cat hunts the mice  
 "Any cat hunts mice".
- (35) *Marie est très compétente. Elle connaît la moindre référence sur la question.*  
 Marie is very competent she knows FCI.which reference on the question  
 "Marie is very competent. She knows any references on the question".

Moreover, the initial list also contained items formed by a negative word, the concessive marker *que*, the demonstrative pronoun *ce* and the verbal form *soit*, the third singular of the subjunctive form of the verb *être* "to be":

- (36) *Personne ne pourra échapper à son regard dans aucun lieu que ce soit,*  
 Nobody not be.able.FUT-3SG escape to his look in no place  
*puisque le ciel, la mer et la terre sont ébranlés, quand il les visite.*  
 since the sky the sea and the earth are shaken when he them visits  
 "Nobody will be able to escape from his look since the sky, the sea and the earth are quaked when he visits them".  
 [FRA]<sup>10</sup>

The largest part of the list with Greek items contained items formed by a *wh-* item, just like *o-dhipote*:

- (37) *Pire i kivernisi epitelous kapia apofasi se afto to thema? Oxi, dhen*  
 Took-3SG the government finally some decision to this the subject no not  
*pire opjadhipote apofasi.*  
 took-3SG FC.which decision  
 "No, they did not take any decision".

<sup>8</sup> The acronym *DB* indicates that an example is extracted from the FCID.

<sup>9</sup> The French item *je ne sais qu-* is interesting for the ongoing discussion on the relationship between FCIs and epistemic indefinites (Menéndez-Benito and Ovalle, to appear), that is, indefinites that "either require the speaker not know the identity of the referent or require her to know it" (Jayez and Tovená, 2006:217). It shows that languages possess a special kind of "epistemic free choice type of item" (see Jayez and Tovená, 2006:218).

<sup>10</sup> [FRA] indicates example found in *Frantext* not included in the database.

As explained above, the possible translations of items that had already been analyzed as FCIs in the literature into French and Greek were my starting point. Since the English item *any* can also be translated into Greek items like *KAMIA* that belong to the *KA-* series (Giannakidou, 1997), these items have also been included in the initial list of possible FCI candidates.

- (38) *Pire i kivermisi epitelous kapia apofasi se afto to thema? Oxi, dhen*  
 Took-3SG the government finally some decision to this the subject no not  
*pire KAMIA apofasi.*  
 took-3SG any decision  
 “No, they did not take any decision”.

Since (a) registering all items that are possible translations of items that had already been analyzed as FCIs in the literature was not possible within the time limit of the database project and (b) the biggest part of the initial list that was generated contained mainly *wh*-items (as explained at the beginning of the present section), I included mainly those French and Greek items which are formed by a *wh*- element, to be presented in the following sections.

In the third step, I had to ensure that I studied a list of relatively homogeneous *wh*-items, the way they are used in language and their interpretational properties. Initially, forms of items not so frequently used were excluded. One of my goals in the database set-up was to establish the frequency in which FCIs appear in a given context. Consequently, I was not interested in studying FCIs specialized only to one type of context. French and Greek possess items that express free choice but have limited distributional properties that make their use seem rather exceptional. The inclusion of these items in the FCID (rarely used anyway) would eventually lead to questionable results as far as the frequency in which FCIs appear in a given context. The item *quelconque*, for instance, is not so frequently used when immediately preceded by the indefinite *un* “a” and by the adverbs *très* “very”, *assez* “enough” and *plus* “more”. In these forms, *quelconque* has a rather qualitative use and its distribution is confined to special contexts as the ones below. Therefore, these forms were not included in the FCID.<sup>11</sup>

- (39) *C'est un quelconque parmi les nôtres* [. . .].  
 This is a whoever among the ours  
 “He is just one of ours”. [FRA]
- (40) *Oui, il avait été cet Alexis capable de tout pour une petite Nina,*  
 yes this had-3SG been this Alexis capable of everything for a little Nina  
*très quelconque, et qu' il avait décidé d'épouser à l'étranger, s'ils*  
 very common and that he had-3SG decided to marry at the abroad if they  
*y arrivaient.*  
 it managed-3PL  
 “Indeed, that Alexis was able to do everything for a very common little Nina, whom he had decided to marry abroad, if they would manage to”. [FRA]
- (41) *Elle m'a paru assez quelconque.*  
 She me has looked quite common  
 “She looked quite common to me”. [FRA]
- (42) *Quant à la note, vous la payez quand vous voulez, si vous êtes un habitué*  
 As for the bill you it pay-2PL when you want-2PL if you are-2PL a usual  
*ou un ami d'habitué, et la payer vous vaut autant de remerciements qu'un*  
 or a friend of usual and it pay you cost-3SG as many thanks as a  
*don, seriez-vous l'hôte le plus quelconque.*  
 donation would.be-2PL you the host the most insignificant  
 “As for the bill, you pay whenever you want, if you are a usual customer or a usual customer's friend, and paying it brings you as many thanks back as a gift would have, should you be the most insignificant guest”. [FRA]

<sup>11</sup> As will be explained in section 3, sentences that contain an indefinite article, a nominal phrase (NP) and *quelconque* (namely the item *un NP quelconque*) are included in the database.

## 2.3.2. French items

The database contains French items that form four different morphological paradigms. The first morphological group has items formed by *n'importe qu-*, analyzed as existentials by Jayez and Tovena (2005). These items contain the negative particle *n'* (*ne*), the third singular form of the verb *importer* “matter” and *qu-* which corresponds to the English *wh-*.<sup>12</sup>

- (43) *N'importe laquelle de celles-ci peut être définie à partir des trois autres.*  
 FCI.which of these here can-3SG be defined from the three others  
 “Anyone amongst them can be defined on the basis of the other three”. [DB]

The second morphological group of French items currently contained in the database is formed by *wh-* items followed by the particle *conque* “ever” and is of two types. The first is formed by an indefinite article (*un, une*), a nominal phrase and *quelconque*. *Quel* is the adjectival form of *qu-* “what/which” and *conque* means “ever”. Hereafter, I will refer to these items as *un NP quelconque*. The second type is formed by the pronoun *qui* “who” and the particle *conque*:

- (44) *Villamartin est un patelin quelconque dont les rues blanches se coupent à angle droit sur une pente ardue [...].*  
 Villamartin is a.small.village FCI.which of.which the roads white REFL  
 cut-3PL at angle straight on a slope steep  
 “Villamartin is just a small village whose white streets cross each other at a straight angle on a steep slope”. [DB]
- (45) *Quiconque fait du journalisme accepte ces devoirs.*  
 FCI.who does of.the journalism accepts these obligations  
 “Any journalist accepts these duties”. [DB]

The third morphological paradigm of French items is formed by the concessive marker *que*, the demonstrative pronoun *ce* and *soit*, the third singular of the subjunctive form of the verb *être* “to be”, or the subjunctive form of a verb. Hereafter, items in this paradigm are termed *qu- que ce soit* (Corblin, 2010 for a recent analysis):

- (46) *Ce n'était plus possible de lui parler de quoi que ce soit.*  
 It not was-3SG anymore possible to him talk about FCI.what  
 “It was impossible to talk to him about anything anymore”. [DB]
- (47) *Grâce à la dissuasion nucléaire et quel que soit l'enjeu, la grande guerre nucléaire ne devrait pas avoir lieu.*  
 Thanks to the deterrence nuclear and FCI.which at stake the big war  
 nucléaire ne devrait pas avoir lieu.  
 nuclear not should-3SG not have place  
 “Thanks to the nuclear deterrence, and no matter what is at stake, the big nuclear war should not take place”. [DB]

To the fourth group of French items belong syntactic amalgams (Lakoff, 1974; Kluck, 2011) that are formed by the first singular personal pronoun *je*, the negative marker *ne*, the first singular form of the verb *savoir* “know” and a *qu-* “wh-” item (*je ne sais qu-*):

- (33) *A ce moment Raoul et je ne sais qui ont débouché d'une rue dont je n'ai jamais pu retenir le nom.*  
 At this moment Raoul and FCI.who have-3PL come.out from a street  
 dont je n'ai jamais pu retenir le nom.  
 which I not have-1SG never could retain the name  
 “At this moment, Raoul and whoever else came out of a street whose name I have never been able to remember”. [DB]

<sup>12</sup> *N'importe où* “wherever” is not formed by a *qu-* item. However, it was included in the FCID to investigate the entire morphological paradigm of items with *n'importe*. The same holds for *où que (ce soit)* and for *je ne sais où*. Crucially, the use of *quand*, *combien* and *quel* is not productive in the formation of FCIs. Currently, Frantext does not contain any occurrence of *n'importe combien* and *n'importe quelle heure* while it has only 100 occurrences of *n'importe quand*. The same is true for *combien que* and *quand que*. Pescarini (2010) also observed that many speakers tend to put a preposition between *n'importe* and *quel*:

i. *N'importe chez quel parent les enfants habitent.*

FCI.whom at parent the kids live

“The kids live at both parents.”

(from <http://www.encare.be/pdf/franse%20website/AFLinfo01.pdf>, found in Pescarini, 2010)

## 2.3.3. Greek items

Four classes of Greek *wh*-items are registered in the FCID. First, all items which are formed by a *wh*- relative pronoun (*opjos*, *opja*, *opjo*), the particle *dhi* “indeed” and the particle *pote* “ever” (*o-dhipote*) were registered.

- (48) *Opjodhipote orghano bori na peksi ta panda.*  
 FCI.which instrument can-3SG SUBJ play-3SG the everything  
 “Any instrument can play everything”. [DB]

It is worth pointing out that *o-dhipote* can participate in the formation of a relative clause (RC) that may contain a concessive marker like *ki/ke an* “and if” or *ke na* “and SUBJ”:

- (49) *Pola ergostasia stin Alvania exun leilatithi apo*  
 Many factories to.the Albania have-3PL been.destroyed from  
*o,tidhipote metaliko boruse na metaferthi.*  
 FCI.which metallic could-3SG SUBJ be.transported-3SG  
 “Many factories in Albania have been destroyed by anything metallic that could be transported”. [DB]
- (50) *Sta idiotika sxolia epitrepete na fitun pedhia apo*  
 To.the private schools is.permitted SUBJ study-3PL children from  
*opjodhipote sinikia ki an proerxonde.*  
 FCI.which district and if come.from-3PL
- (51) *Den bori na dhexti o Proedhros tis Dhimokratias prokiriksi*  
 Not can-3SG SUBJ accept-3SG the President the Democracy proclamation  
*ekloghon o,tidhipote ke na pi o prothipurgos.*  
 elections FCI.what says the Prime.Minister  
 “Whatever the Primer Minister may say, the President of Democracy cannot accept the proclamation of elections”. [DB]

The second group of Greek items is formed by *o-dhipote* preceded by either an indefinite article (*enas* (M), *mia* (F), *ena* (N)) or a definite article (*o* (M), *i* (F), *to* (N)) in the singular and a definite article in the plural (*i* (M, F) *ta* (N)). They are referred to as *enas/o o-dhipote*:

- (52) *O Ed Wood (1922–1978) theorite o xiroteros skinothetis tu Amerikanikou*  
 The Ed Wood (1922–1978) is.considered the worst film.director the Americal  
*kinimatografu olon ton epoxon. Ekane ta panda monos tu: paragogi, senario,*  
 cinema all the seasons did-3SG the all alone his production scripts  
*skinothesia ke xrisimopiise ton opjodhipote ja ithopio.*  
 staging and used-3SG FCI.which for actor  
 “Ed Wood (1922–1978) is considered to be the worst film director of the American cinema ever. He did everything alone: production, scripts, staging. He also used just any actor.” [DB]

The third group of Greek items includes free relatives formed by a bare (without *ever*) *wh*- item followed by sentential concessive markers (53–55). Items belonging to these two paradigms are termed *o-ki an* and *o-ke na* respectively. Although, as shown above, *o-dhipote* can form FRs with a concessive marker, this use of *o-dhipote* was not examined separately because this item forms FRs with a concessive marker whose interpretation does not differ from the interpretation of those without a concessive marker. This is illustrated by the comparison between (50) above and (55) below. Therefore sentences in which *o-dhipote* forms FRs with or without a concessive marker are considered as instances of the use of *o-dhipote*.

- (53) *Kat'arxas ta klasika erga dhen borun na kakopiithun, jati*  
 At start the classic works not can-3PL SUBJ be.mistreated-3PL because  
*sinexizun na iparxun stin klasiki tus morfi o,ti ke na*  
 continue-3PL SUBJ exist-3PL to.the classic their form FCI.what  
*kani enas skinothetis.*  
 does a film.director  
 “Whatever a director may do, classic works cannot be mistreated; they continue having their classical form”. [DB]

- (54) *Tha stiriksume tis epilojes tis dhiikisis opja ki an ine afti.*  
 Will support-1PL the choices the administration conc.FCI.which is this  
 “We will support the choices of the administration's personnel, whoever they may be”. [DB]
- (55) *Sta idiotika sxolia epitrepete na fitun pedhia apo opjadhypote sinikia proerxonde.*  
 To.the private schools is.permitted SUBJ study-3PL children from  
 FCI.which district come.from-3PL  
 “In private schools, studying is allowed for students, whatever district they come from”.

The fourth Greek morphological paradigm of FCID items is composed by the duplicated form of the Greek bare *wh-* item *o-* (*o- o-*). This type of item has been included in the FCID because it can be translated into the FCI *just any* in English.

- (56) *Pulise to spiti su oso oso ke fije*  
 Sell-2SG-IMP the house your FCI.how.much and leave-2SG  
*apo tin Elada to sindomotero dhinato.*  
 from the Greece the soonest possible  
 “Sell your home at just any price and leave Greece as soon as possible.” [DB]

## 2.4. Fields

Below, information on the fields “Contextual semantic properties”, “Form” and “Item properties” is given. The different fields were introduced and briefly discussed in section 1.

### 2.4.1. Contextual semantic properties and form

Information about the semantics and pragmatics of the context is provided (see Fig. 1). The table “main clause” presents the semantic/pragmatic properties of the main clause, referred to as “main clause”. In the table “subordinate clause”, the semantic/pragmatic properties of the subordinate clause are given. In the table “form”, the form of the crucial operator is registered. In the example below, for instance, the FCI appears in an independent clause. Therefore, in this case only the “main clause” table is filled.

- (57) *Tu n'avais pas besoin de faire quoi que ce soit. Il suffisait d'être là.*  
 You not had-2SG not need to do FCI.what it sufficed-3SG to be there  
 “There was no need to do anything. You only had to be there”. [DB]

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Access interface for entering FCID data. The main form is titled "Microsoft Access - [ENTER TEXT DATA]". It contains several input fields and tables:

- Original Title:** Agar
- Translated Title:** Agar
- Preceding context:** (empty)
- Text:** - Tu n'avais pas besoin de faire quoi que ce soit, il te suffisait d'être là.
- Translation:** There was no need to do anything. You only had to be there.
- Function:** 2
- Part/speech:** 3
- Position:** 3
- Contextual Semantic Properties:**
  - Main Clause:** A table with 160 rows and 2 columns. The first row is "downward entailing context" with a value of 8. The second row is "antimorphic context" with a value of 160. The third row is "agentive predicate" with a value of 1. The remaining rows have values of 1.
  - Subordinate Clause:** A table with 160 rows and 2 columns. All rows have a value of 1.
- Form:** A table with 23 rows and 2 columns. The first row is "not" with a value of 1. The remaining rows have values of 1.
- Item properties:** A table with 10 rows and 2 columns. The first row is "widening" with a value of 9. The second row is "DescrOut" with a value of 11. The third row is "Varin" with a value of 10. The remaining rows have values of 1.

Fig. 1. FCID main data entry form.

The exact determination of the “crucial” contextual semantic property to be registered is difficult in cases where the item is found in a sentence with more than one operator. In (57) for instance, the sentence has a necessity modal operator *avoir besoin* “need” and an antimorphic operator *ne...pas* “not”. In this case for example, *ne...pas* is the crucial operator, since *qu- que ce soit* is ungrammatical in necessity modal sentences (compare 57–58). For this reason, only the form *not* is registered in the table “form”. Compare:

- (58) \**Tu avais besoin de faire quoi que ce soit.*  
 You had-2SG need to do FCI.what

Setting up the field of contextual semantic properties had two goals. The first was to discover to what extent modal contexts, DE contexts, affirmative, generic and interrogative contexts, involved in the discussion of polarity sensitive items (cf. section 1), are good or bad for French and Greek FCIs. The second was to explore new tendencies concerning the distribution of FCIs. For this reason, the field “contextual semantic properties” contains two kinds of linguistic information: (1) information on contextual semantic properties that are already known as crucial for FCIs (modality for instance) and (2) information on contextual semantic properties that have not been discussed in the literature on these items (agentivity for instance).

More precisely, information is provided on contexts analyzed as crucial in the literature on PSIs. “Modal context”, “affirmative context”, “downward entailing context”, “interrogative context” and “generic context” appear in the field “contextual semantic properties”. Moreover, I examined to what extent some of the subclasses of contextual semantic properties are problematic for French and Greek FCIs. The general classes of contexts (above) were therefore divided into subclasses whenever it seemed necessary. Consider for instance the general class of modal contexts which include possibility and necessity modal ones. Epistemic possibility, deontic possibility and ability modal contexts belong to the subclass “possibility modal context” (Geurts, 1999). Epistemic necessity and deontic necessity modal contexts belong to the subclass “necessity modal context”. Volitional modal contexts are another subclass of modal contexts. Following Aloni (2003), I take necessity and volitional modal contexts to introduce existential quantification over propositional alternatives. Epistemic and deontic modality express the way modal worlds are accessible to speakers (Kratzer, 1991). Epistemic modality expresses the possibility or necessity of a proposition's being true given what the speaker knows. Deontic modality expresses what one prefers, allows, or what is expected or required according to a relevant code of behavior. We will come back to both forms of modality in section 5.

Furthermore, affirmative episodic contexts, existential contexts, contexts with copula sentences and factive contexts are subclasses of the general class “affirmative context”. Also, there are many forms of downward entailing contexts.

A variety of linguistic units comprise the phenomenon of subtrigging (note 4). Therefore I have a separate class in the “contextual semantic properties” field called “item modification” in which I registered all linguistic units that modify the FCIs in the examples, currently in the database.

The pragmatics of the context is also a difficult factor to determine for obvious reasons. In order to examine whether pragmatics plays a crucial role in the distribution of a given FCI in a given context, I replaced this FCI with others. Whenever this change influenced the well-formedness of the sentence under investigation, I aimed to find out what causes the pragmatic clash and registered the part of the context that is relevant for this clash. For instance, the comparison between the example in (59) and the sentence (60) in which I interchanged *n'importe qu-* with *qu- que ce soit*, reveals that the continuation *mais conformément à ce que laissaient prévoir les caractères sociologiques de ces indécis: niveau de vie, résidence, religion* is the crucial pragmatic factor to the well-formedness of (60):

- (59) *Le choix n'a pas été fait n'importe comment mais conformément à ce*  
 The choice not has not been made FCI.how but in accordance with this  
*que laissaient prévoir les caractères sociologiques de ces indécis:*  
 were.leaving-3PL predict the characters sociological of these indecisive  
*niveau de vie, résidence, religion.*  
 level of life residency religion  
 “The choice was not made randomly but in accordance with the sociological profile of these indecisive persons: standard of living, residency, religion”. [DB]

- (60) #*Le choix n'a pas été fait de quelque manière que ce soit mais*  
 The choice not has not been made FCI.how but  
*conformément à ce que laissaient prévoir les caractères*  
 in accordance with this that were.leaving-3PL predict the characters  
*sociologiques de ces indécis: niveau de vie, résidence, religion.*  
 sociological of these indecisive level of life residency religion

Table 3  
The interpretational categories of FCIs.

Widening FCI	Indiscriminacy FCI	Indistinguishability FCI	Low-level FCI	Ignorance FCI	Indifference FCI
<i>Qu- que ce soit, n'importe qu-, o-dhipote</i>	<i>Enas/o o-dhipote &amp; n'importe qu-</i>	<i>N'importe qu-, un NP quelconque &amp; enas/o o-dhipote</i>	<i>O-o-, n'importe qu-</i>	<i>Un NP quelconque, o- ki an</i>	<i>o- ki an</i>

Sentences like (59) are examples of the phenomenon of denial negation (Horn, 1989, 2000). Negation scopes over the whole sentence. The author asserts that the choice was arbitrary (Horn, 2000). Crucially, as shown below, the combination of negation and *n'importe qu-* does not always yield a denial negation effect in negative sentences:

- (61) *La porte du Temple doit rester fermée! ergotait la Gazette. On n'ouvre pas à n'importe qui!*  
The door of.the Temple must stay closed quibbled-3SG the Gazette one  
not opens not to FCI.who  
“The door of the Temple must stay closed! quibbled the Gazette. We should not open to anybody!”. [DB]

In this sentence, *n'importe qui* has various interpretations. Crucially, it is not necessarily synonymous to *an arbitrary person*. On the contrary, it can be synonymous to *nobody*.

#### 2.4.2. Item properties

As explained at the beginning, one of the goals in setting up the database was to discover factors that might influence FCIs distribution. Therefore the differences among FCIs were one parameter I took into account. Working on the database revealed that French and Greek FCIs have six descriptive contents that are not mutually exclusive. For the reader to get a first idea of the relevant facts, Table 3 presents the interpretational categories of FCIs. More discussion will follow in section 5.

### 3. Empirical scope of the paper

In contrast to the wide empirical scope of the database, this paper aims to delimit the class of FCIs by investigating how FCIs interact with the contexts that have already been discussed in the literature on PSIs. Items and examples that are not helpful in this direction are beyond the scope of this paper.

On the one hand, the database contains FCIs that present a very restricted distribution. On the other, it contains FCIs that cannot appear in the scope of sentential operators. For these reasons, the study of FCIs belonging to any of these two groups is beyond the paper's empirical scope.

For instance, *quiconque* will not be considered here since its distribution is restricted mainly to generic contexts:

- (45) *Quiconque fait du journalisme accepte ces devoirs.*  
FCI.who does of.the journalism accepts these obligations  
“Any journalist accepts these duties”. [DB]
- (62) *\*Tu peux inviter quiconque.*  
You can-2SG invite FCI.whom
- (63) *\*Il n'a pas parlé à quiconque.*  
He not has not talked to FCI.whom
- (64) *\*J'ai parlé à quiconque.*  
I have-1SG talked to FCI.whom
- (65) *\*Est-ce qu'il a parlé à quiconque?*  
Is this that he has talked to FCI.whom

Moreover, since the distribution of *je ne sais qu-* is basically restricted to affirmative episodic and modal contexts and since this paper investigates how FCIs behave in a variety of contexts, this item is not investigated here.

- (31) *Prenez je ne sais quel traitement contre la toux, mais bon sang arrêtez de tousser tout le temps!*  
Take FCI.which medicine against the cough but good blood  
stop to cough all the time  
“Take whatever medicine against coughing, but, for god sake, stop coughing all the time!”

- (33) *A ce moment Raoul et je ne sais qui ont débouché d' une rue*  
 At this moment Raoul and FCI.who have-3PL come.out from a street  
*dont je n'ai jamais pu retenir le nom.*  
 which I not have-1SG never could retain the name  
 "At this moment, Raoul and whoever else came out of a street whose name I have never been able to remember".  
 [DB]
- (66) *\*Il n'a pas vu je ne sais qui.*  
 He not has not seen FCI.who
- (67) *\*Est-ce qu'il a vu je ne sais qui?*  
 Is this that he has seen FCI.who
- (68) *\*Je ne sais quel chat chasse les souris.*  
 FCI.which cat hunts the mice

The French concessive FCIs that are not formed by *ce soit* and the bare concessive FCIs composed by *ke na* in Greek are grammatical only when they are not embedded under a sentential operator:

- (47) *Grâce à la dissuasion nucléaire et quel que soit l'enjeu, la grande guerre*  
 Thanks to the deterrence nuclear and FCI.which at stake the big war  
*nucléaire ne devrait pas avoir lieu.*  
 nuclear not should-3SG not have place  
 "Thanks to the nuclear deterrence, and no matter what is at stake, the big nuclear war should not take place".  
 [DB]
- (53) *Ka'arxas ta klasika erga dhen borun na kakopiithun, jati*  
 At start the classic works not can-3PL SUBJ be.mistreated-3PL because  
*sinexizun na iparxun stin klasiki tus morfi o,ti ke na*  
 continue-3PL SUBJ exist-3PL to.the classic their form FCI.what  
*kani enas skinothetis.*  
 does a film.director  
 "Whatever a film director may do, classic works cannot be mistreated; they continue having their classical form".  
 [DB]
- (69) *\*Je veux faire quoi qu' il ait dit.*  
 I want-1SG do conc.FCI.what he has said
- (70) *\*Thelo na kano o,ti ke na mu ipe.*  
 Want-1SG SUBJ do-1SG FCI.what me said-3SG

In contrast to these types of FCIs, the concessive FCI which is formed by the concessive marker *ki an* and the concessive FCI *qu- que ce soit* appear in a variety of contexts. For instance, *qu- que ce soit* is grammatical in the negative and possibility modal sentence in (46) and *o- ki an* is grammatical in the interrogative sentence in (71). Since the paper's stated goal is to delimit the class of FCIs by examining their semantic and distributional properties in a variety of contexts, there will be no further investigation of Greek concessive FCIs formed by the concessive marker *ke na* and French concessive FCIs that do not contain the form *ce soit*. The study's empirical scope covers items appearing in Table 4.

- (46) *Ce n'était plus possible de lui parler de quoi que ce soit.*  
 It not was-3SG anymore possible to him talk about FCI.what  
 "It was impossible to talk to him about anything anymore". [DB]

Table 4  
 Empirical scope.

French	Greek
<i>qu- que ce soit</i>	<i>o-dhipote</i>
<i>n'importe qu-</i>	<i>o- ki an</i>
<i>un NP quelconque</i>	<i>enas/o o-dhipote</i>
	<i>o- o-</i>

- (71) *Pistevete sto jirisma tis tixis i sto oti o anthropos bori*  
 Believe-2PL to.the turn the chance or to.the that the human.being can-3SG  
*na petixi o,ti ki an epidioksi?*  
 SUBJ succeed-3SG FCI.what wants  
 “Do you believe in fate or that the human being can achieve whatever he wants”? [DB]

Finally, to examine exactly how FCIs interact with context, the results discussed in the remainder of the present paper are based solely on examples with one operator. Regarding generic contexts, only those examples in which FCIs occupy a subject position are taken into account. For the same reason, although it would be interesting to examine how subtrigging influences FCI distribution, results on the behavior of FCIs in affirmative sentences (cf. section 1) take into account only not subtrigged uses of FCIs (cf. note 4).

#### 4. Absence of a universal (anti-)licensing condition

Setting up a database for a linguistic phenomenon gives one the opportunity to validate observations and hypotheses that have already been made in the literature on this phenomenon but also pinpoint yet unnoticed facts. Even in the case of databases with the restrictions of the FCID discussed in section 2 (i.e. (a) relatively small size, (b) based only on two corpuses among which one (Frantext) contains only literary texts, (c) 5% of the entries of each FCI in the FCID is not randomly selected), one can make observations on the frequency in which FCIs tend to appear in both licensing as well as anti-licensing contexts, discussed in the literature (section 1), as well as on other tendencies. The FCID results below demonstrate that there is no universal (anti-)licensing condition that accounts for the distribution of FCIs.

##### 4.1. Results on distributional frequencies

As Fig. 2 shows, the set of items under consideration is more frequently used in modal sentences while its proportion of appearance in generic, downward entailing, affirmative and interrogative sentences is lower: 60% of the FCID entries contain FCIs that are found in a modal sentence, 10% of entries contain examples with FCIs in a generic sentence, 15% in a DE sentence, 7% in an affirmative sentence, 5% in an interrogative sentence and 3% in another type of sentence.

This outcome is crucial because it is related to existing proposals that discuss the affinity of free choice items to modal sentences (Aloni, 2003; Dayal, 1998; Vlachou, 2009). However, modality is not the only operator under which FCIs are grammatical:

- (72) *Avant de dire quoi que ce soit, elle prit le cendrier en matière plastique par*  
 Before say FCI.what she took the ashtray in material plastic on  
*terre, là où Adam l'avait déposé, et le vida*  
 ground there where Adam it had placed and it evacuated-3SG  
*dans le seau à ordures.*  
 in the basket of garbage  
 “Before saying anything, she took the plastic ashtray on the ground, there where Adam had placed it, and emptied it into a trash can”. [DB]

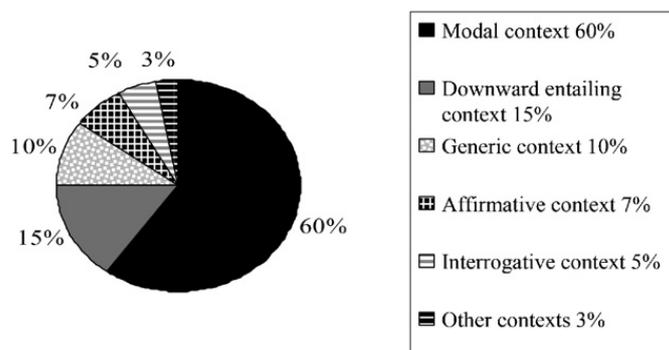


Fig. 2. FCIs in modal, generic, DE, affirmative and interrogative sentences.

More importantly, Fig. 2 indicates that FCIs are grammatical in all contexts discussed in the literature of the polarity sensitivity tradition, both licensing (DE (73), modal (74), generic (76), interrogative (77–78)) as well as anti-licensing (affirmative (74)) ones.<sup>13</sup>

- (73) *Provinciaux et petites-bourgeoises viennent profiter du buffet gratuit dès dix-huit heures et, sans risque de rencontrer qui que ce soit.*  
 People from provinces and women of middle class come-3PL profit of the buffet free from eighteen hours and without risk to meet FCI.who  
 “From six o’clock in the evening, people from provinces and middle class women come to profit from the free buffet without risking meeting anyone”. [DB]
- (74) *Oh, tante Berthe, je suis un monstre, pardonnez-moi... j’ai perdu la tête, j’ai dit n’importe quoi... C’est cet air que vous aviez, si froid, si hostile...*  
 Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster excuse-2PL-me I have-1SG lost the head  
 I have-1SG said FCI.what it is this air that you had-2PL  
 so cold so hostile  
 “Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster. Excuse me but I lost my mind. I said just anything... You are so cold, so hostile...” [DB]
- (75) *I anthropi afti tora dulevun ja tus amerikanus ke bori na exun opjadhypote thesi ston kratiko mixanismo.*  
 The people these now work-3PL for the Americans and can-3SG  
 SUBJ have-3PL FCI.which position to.the governmental mechanism  
 “These people are now working for the Americans and may already occupy any governmental position”. [DB]

<sup>13</sup> In (73–78) one example of each relevant context-item combination is given. Affirmative episodic contexts are not the only type of affirmative contexts in which the FCIs that are grammatical in affirmative sentences appear; they are also grammatical in affirmative sentences with stative predicates as the sentences with existential constructions (ii, iii) and copula predicates (iv–vi) below show (Vlachou, 2007):

- ii. *Au loin galope un homme qui n’a que trois prénoms.*  
 To.the long runs a man who not.has only three names  
*Un peu plus loin encore il y a n’importe qui. Beaucoup plus loin encore*  
 little bit more long more there is FCI.who lot more long again
- iii. *il y a n’importe quoi.*  
 there is FCI.what  
 “In the distance runs a man who has only three names. A little bit further still there is just someone. Much further there is just something”. [DB]  
*Il y a un scribe quelconque [...].*  
 There is a scribe FCI.which  
 “There is some scribe.” [DB]
- iv. *En somme ce n’est pas des trésors que vous cherchez. C’est n’importe quoi.*  
 All in all this not is not treasures that you search this is FCI.what  
 “All in all, you are not searching for treasures. It is just rubbish.” [DB]
- v. *Villamartin est un patelin quelconque dont les rues blanches se coupent à angle droit sur une pente ardue.*  
 Villamartin is a small-village. FCI.which whose the streets white REFL cut to angle straight  
 on a bench steep  
 “Villamartin is just a small village whose white streets cross each other at a straight angle on a steep slope.” [DB]
- vi. *O choros itan o opjodhipote. Itan i fones i sinithismenes otan tragudhusan se parees oli mazi.*  
 The choir was-3SG FCI.who was-3SG the voices the usual when were.singing-3PL  
 in groups all together  
 “The choir was just ordinary people; the usual voices that were singing all together in groups.” [DB]

Since poetry allows the writer to use only part of the semantic properties of lexical items, one might wonder whether the example in (ii) is indicative

of the use of *n’importe qu-* in sentences with existential constructions. The following example shows that it is:

- vii. *Dans ton sac, il y a n’importe quoi.* (Francis Corblin pc.)  
 In your bag there is FCI.what  
 “In your bag, there is just anything.”

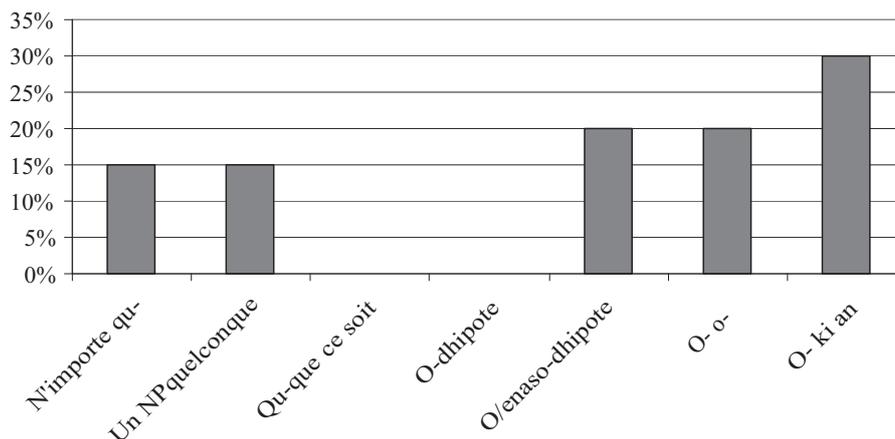


Fig. 3. The majority of FCIs appear in affirmative sentences.

- (76) *Enas opjosdhipote anthorpos dhen bori na thimate 1.000*  
 FCI.which human being not can-3SG SUBJ remember-3SG 1.000  
*onomata ke epitheta ke malista mias ke mono idikis katigorias*  
 first names and last names and specifically one and only special category  
*anthropon.*  
 human beings  
 “Not just any human being can remember 1.000 first and last names of one category of human beings”.
- (77) *Kata ti simerini sinandisi tu Prothipurghu me ton Proedhro tis*  
 During the today's meeting the Prime Minister with the President the  
*Dimokratias, ipirkse opjadhipe niksi ja to thema ton*  
 Dimokratias, there.was-3SG FCI.which allusion for the subject the  
*ekloghon?*  
 elections  
 “Was there any allusion to the subject of elections during today's meeting between the Prime Minister and the President?” [DB]
- (78) *A-t-il un jour fait quoi que ce soit pour les rapprocher?*  
 Has he a day done FCI.what for them bring-closer  
 “Has he ever done anything to reconcile them?” [DB]

To be able to estimate the importance of this result one would like to know how great is the set of FCIs that are grammatical in affirmative sentences. If, for instance, only one of the items were grammatical in affirmative sentences, grammaticality in affirmative sentences (a) would be viewed as an exceptional phenomenon, (b) would concern only one particular item (or a minority) and (c) would certainly not characterize the general set of FCIs. Certainly, the greater the set of FCIs that are grammatical in affirmative sentences, the greater the importance of such results, to study their distribution.

Zooming in on the data that exemplify the FCIs grammaticality phenomenon in affirmative sentences clarifies that (a) it is not an exceptional phenomenon, (b) it does not concern only one particular item but (c) it characterizes the general set of FCIs, with two exceptions.

Fig. 3 shows that the majority of FCIs studied in the database are grammatical in affirmative sentences: (a) 15% of FCI occurrences in affirmative sentences in the FCID are occurrences of *n'importe qu-*, (b) 15% of FCI occurrences in affirmative sentences in the FCID are occurrences of *un NP quelconque*, (c) there is no occurrence of *qu- que ce soit* and *o-dhipote* in affirmative sentences in the database, (d) 20% of FCI occurrences in affirmative sentences in the FCID, are occurrences of *enas/o o-dhipote*, (e) 20% of FCI occurrences in affirmative sentences in the FCID are occurrences of *o- o-*, (f) 30% of the occurrences of a FCI in affirmative sentences in the FCID are occurrences of *o-ki an*.<sup>14</sup> Examples of *n'importe qu-*, *un NP quelconque*, *enas/o o-dhipote*, *o- o-* and *o-ki an* in affirmative sentences follow (see also note 13):

<sup>14</sup> Fig. 3 shows how big is the percentage of the occurrence of a FCI in affirmative sentences in the database (and not in the original corpuses). Examination of the frequency a FCI appears in affirmative sentences in these corpuses would be worthwhile and would eventually show that the grammaticality of a FCI (like for instance *n'importe qu-*) in affirmative sentences is not exceptional. However, as explained in section 2, random selection strengthens the importance of results for the discussion on the FCI distribution that follows. Fig. 3 does not therefore consider the frequency a FCI appears in affirmative sentences in the original corpuses.

- (79) *[...] fait à Orly: Société I...C...P... Je ne savais pas ce que signifiaient  
made in Orly: Society I C P I not knew-1SG not this that meant-3PL  
les initiales. J'ai avalé ma salive, j'ai dit.  
the initials I have-1SG swallowed my saliva I have-1SG said  
-c'est une agence de publicité.  
this is an agency of advertisement  
Et alors?  
And then?  
J'ai répondu n'importe quoi: -International Caravaille Publicité.  
I have-1SG answered FCI.what International Caravaille Advertisement  
"[...] in Orly: Society I...C...P... I didn't know the meaning of these initials. I swallowed my saliva I said:  
- It's an advertisement agency.  
- And so what?  
I answered just anything: International Caravaille Advertisement". [DB]*
- (80) *Jean-François chantonna sur un air quelconque: Je  
Jean-François murmured-3SG with FCI.which I  
l'appelais ma rose de Bou Saod [...].  
her was.calling-1SG my rose of Bou Saod  
"Jean-François murmured with some kind of rhythm: 'I was calling her 'my rose of Bou Saod'". [DB]*
- (52) *O Ed Wood (1922–1978) theorite o xiroteros skinothetis tu Amerikanikou  
The Ed Wood (1922–1978) is.considered the worst film.director the Americal  
kinimatografu olon ton epoxon. Ekane ta panda monos tu: paragogi, senario,  
cinema all the seasons did-3SG the all alone his production scripts  
skinothesia ke xrisimopiise ton opjodhipote ja ithopio.  
staging and used-3SG FCI.which for actor  
"Ed Wood (1922–1978) is considered to be the worst film director of the American cinema ever. He did everything  
alone: production, scripts, staging. He also used just any actor." [DB]*
- (81) *Pulise to spiti tis oso oso ja na ton plirosi.  
Sold-3SG the house her FCI.how.much for SUBJ him pay-3SG  
"She sold her house at just any price in order to pay him". [DB]*
- (82) *Opjos ki an ipe kati kako ja sena, tha ton skotoso.  
FCI.who said-3SG something bad for you will him kill-1SG  
"I will kill whoever said something bad about you." [DB]*

The examples below show that *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* are ungrammatical in affirmative sentences:

- (83) *\*Efagha otidhipote.  
Ate-1SG what.FCI*
- (84) *\*J'ai mangé quoi que ce soit.  
I have eaten what.FCI*

#### 4.2. Other results

The FCID also shows three tendencies related to the question of FCI distribution. First, they do not appear in all kinds of DE, modal, affirmative, generic and interrogative sentences. For instance, while they are found in possibility modal sentences, *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* are not found in necessity modal sentences:

- (85) *Il est parfaitement possible à qui que ce soit de comprendre ces choses  
It is perfectly possible to FCI.who to understand these things  
facilement en recueillant un certain nombre de constatations exactes à leur  
easily collecting a certain number of findings exact to their  
sujet.  
subject  
"It is perfectly possible for anybody to understand these things easily by collecting a certain number of exact  
findings about them". [DB]*

- (86) *Pote dhen pistepsa oti i arxei trajiki ine mono ja*  
 Never not believed-1SG that the ancient tragedy.writers are-3PL only for  
*anixto teatro. Ta ergha me mia pagkosmiotita borun na pexthun*  
 open.air theater the pieces with a universality can-3PL SUBJ be.played-3PL  
*opudhipote.*  
 FCI.where  
 “I never believed that tragedies can only be played in open air theaters. World famous pieces can be played anywhere”. [DB]
- (29) \**Prepi na fas opjodhipote fruto.*  
 Must SUBJ eat-2SG FCI.which fruit
- (58) \**Tu avais besoin de faire quoi que ce soit.*  
 You had-2SG need to do FCI.what

As explained in the previous section, *n'importe qu-* can be grammatical in affirmative contexts. However, there are affirmative contexts in which it cannot appear. For instance, it does not appear in affirmative sentences with predicates such as *feel* and *appreciate* in the FCID: the affirmative episodic sentences that contain *n'importe qu-* in the FCID are mainly sentences with predicates such as *say* and *answer* (74, 79). As (27) and (87) demonstrate, *n'importe qu-* is problematic in affirmative episodic sentences that contain the predicates *feel* and *appreciate*.

- (74) *Oh, tante Berthe, je suis un monstre, pardonnez-moi... j'ai perdu la tête,*  
 Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster excuse-2PL-me I have-1SG lost the head  
*j'ai dit n'importe quoi... C'est cet air que vous aviez,*  
 I have-1SG said FCI.what it is this air that you had-2PL  
*si froid, si hostile...*  
 so cold so hostile  
 “Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster. Excuse me but I lost my mind. I said just anything... You are so cold, so hostile...”.
- (79) *J'ai répondu n'importe quoi: -International Caravaille Publicité.*  
 I have-1SG answered FCI.what International Caravaille Advertisement  
 “[...] in Orly: Society I...C...P...I didn't know the meaning of these initials. I swallowed my saliva I said:  
 - It's an advertisement agency.  
 - And so what?  
 I answered just anything: International Caravaille Advertisement”. [DB]
- (27) \**Hier Marie a apprécié n'importe quel livre.*  
 Yesterday Mary has appreciated FCI.which book
- (87) \**J'ai senti n'importe quelle douleur.*  
 I have felt FCI.which pain

There are various ways to characterize these predicates. For instance, one could argue that *appreciate* and *feel* are stative predicates while *say* and *answer* are dynamic. As the reader may recall from section 1, the theory of nonveridicality proposed stativity as a crucial criterion for the grammaticality of FCIs. However, the grammaticality of *n'importe qu-* in stative sentences (note 13) shows that stativity is not a relevant criterion for its distribution.

The indefinites *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* occur only in those generic sentences where the predicate is not kind-denoting (88, 90), namely where the predicate does not refer only to the kind denoted by the subject of the sentence, but also to all individual instances of that kind. (89) and (91) show that both items are ungrammatical in generic sentences with kind-denoting predicates.

- (88) *Opjadhipe ghata exi ura.*  
 FCI.which cat has tail  
 “Any cat has a tail.”
- (89) \**Opjosdhipote rinokeros zijizi tesseris tonus kata meso oro.*  
 FCI.which rhino weighs four tons on average
- (90) *Quelque chat que ce soit a une queue.*  
 FCI.which cat has a tail  
 “Any cat has a tail.”
- (91) \**Quelque rhinocéros que ce soit pèse quatre tonnes en moyenne.*  
 FCI.which rhino weighs four tons on average

Second, the FCID brings to light also results on the role of the sentential operator in the FCIs distribution. The theories discussed in section 1 were based on the assumption that FCIs need a sentential operator in order to be grammatical. The FCID shows this is not true. Crucially, items appearing in affirmative sentences do not need a sentential operator to be grammatical. As shown above (79, 80, 52, 81, 82), *n'importe qu-*, *un NP quelconque*, *enas/o o-dhipote* and *o- o-* are grammatical in affirmative episodic sentences where there is either no visible sentential operator or a default existential operator (Heim, 1982).

Finally, the pragmatics of the context plays a significant role in FCIs distribution:

- (92) *Personne fait jamais attention à quoi que ce soit sur un parking de*  
 Nobody does never attention to FCI.what on a parking of  
*supermarché, l'endroit rend les gens à moitié cinglés.*  
 supermarket the place makes the people to half crazy  
 “Nobody ever pays attention to anything in the parking lot of a supermarket. The place makes people almost crazy”. [DB]
- (93) *Dhen exi stin Ellada opjathipote sinandisi me opjodhipote Ellina*  
 Not has-3SG to.the Greece FCI.which meeting with FCI.which Greek  
*aksiomatuxo, ipa.*  
 dignitary said-1SG  
 “As I said, in Greece, he does not have any meeting with any Greek dignitary”. [Wid, DB]
- (60) *#Le choix n'a pas été fait de quelque manière que ce soit mais conformément*  
 The choice not has not been made FCI.how but in accordance  
*à ce que laissaient prévoir les caractères sociologiques de ces*  
 with this that were.leaving-3PL predict the characters sociological of these  
*indécis: niveau de vie, résidence, religion.*  
 indecisive level of life residency religion
- (94) *#I epiloji dhen ejine me opjondhipote tropo ala simfona me*  
 The choice not was.made with FCI.which way but in.accordance with  
*ta osa proevlepan i kinoniologiki xaraktires afton ton anapofasiston.*  
 the what predicted the sociological characters these the indecisive

Both *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* are grammatical in negative sentences (92–93). However, they are not grammatical in all of them (60 and 94). A quick glance at the data above immediately reveals that there should be something in the pragmatics of the negative sentences in (60 and 94) that blocks *qu- que ce soit* and *o-dhipote*: it is not negation per se that blocks them. The sentence *Le choix n'a pas été fait de quelque manière que ce soit/I epiloji dhen ejine me opjondhipote tropo* asserts that no choice at all was made. However, this meaning clashes with the continuation *mais conformément à ce que laissaient prévoir les caractères sociologiques de ces indécis/ala simfona me ta osa proevlepan i kinoniolojiki xaraktires ton anapofasiston* which presupposes that a choice has been made. This pragmatic clash is responsible for the unacceptability of these sentences.

Another argument that supports this hypothesis is that (94) becomes fine either when *opjondhipote* is preceded by an indefinite determiner or when stressed:

- (95) *I epiloji dhen ejine me enan opjondhipote/OPJONDHIPOTE tropo*  
 The choice not was.made with FCI.which way  
*ala simfona me ta osa proevlepan i kinoniologiki xaraktires afton ton*  
 but in.accordance with the what predicted the sociological characters these the  
 indecisive  
*anapofasiston.*  
 “The choice was not made randomly but in accordance with the sociological profile of those who were interested: standard of living, residency, religion”.

The sentence *i epiloji dhen ejine me enan opjondhipote/OPJONDHIPOTE tropo* means that the choice was not made in a random way. Since there is no pragmatic clash with the continuation *ala simfona me ta osa proevlepan i kinoniolojiki xaraktires ton anapofasiston*, the sentence above is well-formed (see also section 5).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Stressed items are not in the scope of the current study (section 3) and will not be further examined.

### 4.3. Discussion

The results above are crucial as they show that there is great variation in the distribution of FCIs. First of all, the grammaticality of the majority of French and Greek FCIs studied in the FCID in affirmative sentences is the crucial counter-argument for existing theories that attempt to provide a single condition for the distribution of all FCIs (section 1).

The grammaticality of the majority of FCIs in affirmative sentences is not taken into account by the theory of non-individuation (Jayez and Tovenà, 2005) which analyses the irreferential uses of FCIs. The theory of nonveridicality (Giannakidou, 2001) which predicts that FCIs are grammatical in a given sentence if and only if there are apparent nonveridical operators faces challenges. First, FCIs are not grammatical only in nonveridical sentences; they are grammatical in veridical sentences too. (80) can be characterized as a veridical sentence as the veridical operator *hier* “yesterday” is natural in such context:

- (80) *Hier, Jean-François chantonna sur un air quelconque: Je*  
 Yesterday Jean-François murmured-3SG with a.rhythm FCI.which I  
*l'appelais ma rose de Bou Saod [ . . . ].*  
 her was.calling-1SG my rose of Bou Saod  
 “Yesterday, Jean-François murmured with some kind of rhythm: ‘I was calling her ‘my rose of Bou Saod’”.

Second, FCIs can be grammatical even in contexts without an operator. On the one hand, certain FCIs are odd in an affirmative sentence with the veridical operator *hier* “yesterday” (74).

On the other hand, the examples in (79, 80, 52, 81, 82) demonstrate that certain FCIs do not need a sentential operator in order to be grammatical in a given sentence.

- (74) *Oh, tante Berthe, je suis un monstre, pardonnez-moi. . . j'ai perdu la tête,*  
 Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster excuse-2PL-me I have-1SG lost the head  
 (??hier) *j'ai dit n'importe quoi. . . C'est cet air que vous aviez,*  
 yesterday I have-1SG said FCI.what it is this air that you had-2PL  
*si froid, si hostile. . .*  
 so cold so hostile  
 “Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster. Excuse me but I lost my mind. I said just anything. . . You are so cold, so hostile. . .”.

The results of the database actually show that there does not exist a unique licensing or anti-licensing condition that predicts the distribution of all FCIs. Licensing requires there to be a certain semantic property shared by both the context as well as the item. To my knowledge, affirmative, negative, modal, generic and interrogative sentences do not share common semantic properties. Therefore, it is not possible to formulate a licensing condition that accounts for FCI distribution. An anti-licensing condition is not applicable either since FCIs appear in all kinds of contexts with all kinds of sentential operators (cf. Fig. 2). Frequent appearance of FCIs in modal sentences is only a tendency and cannot serve as an argument toward the hypothesis that there is a must relation between all FCIs and modal contexts. Moreover, the condition of licensing requires operators that allow the presence of FCIs. However, the fact that a considerable amount of French and Greek FCIs do not need a sentential operator to appear in a given affirmative sentence is a serious challenge to any theory that tries to universally account for FCI distribution in terms of a single licensing condition.

Further, a valid version of an anti-licensing condition would presuppose the existence of a well defined set of contexts in which all FCIs cannot appear. However, the previous section results indicate that such a set does not exist. French and Greek FCIs present the following puzzling distributional pattern. Though the general set of FCIs appears in all contexts, certain FCIs are ungrammatical in their subclasses. The reader may remember that, although *qu- que ce soit* and *o-dhipote* are grammatical in possibility modal sentences (85–86), they are ungrammatical in necessity modal ones (29, 58). *N'importe qu-* is ungrammatical in affirmative episodic sentences with the predicates *appreciate* and *feel* (27, 87). *O-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* are grammatical only in generic sentences that are not kind-denoting (88–91). *Un NP quelconque, enas/o o-dhipote, o-o-* and *o-ki an* are grammatical in affirmative sentences (79, 80, 52, 81, 82) while *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* are not (83–84). To my knowledge, necessity modal sentences, affirmative episodic sentences with predicates such as *appreciate* and *feel* and generic sentences with kind-denoting predicates do not share any common semantic property.

Based on the different behavior of FCIs in affirmative sentences, one can provide more than one grammaticality condition for FCIs. As for *qu- que ce soit* and *o-dhipote*, for instance, one could argue that they are anti-licensed if and only if they are found in affirmative and necessity modal sentences. Although the strategy of proposing more than one FCI

Table 5  
Distributional puzzle of FCIs.

	<i>Qu- que ce soit &amp; o-dhipote</i>	<i>N'importe qu-</i>	<i>Un NP quelconque, enas/o o-dhipote, o- o-, o- ki an</i>
Grammatical in	Possibility modal (85–86), the negative in (92–93), interrogative (77–78), generic sentences with non-kind denoting predicates (88, 90)	The affirmative sentences in (74, 79)	Affirmative sentences (80, 52, 81, 82)
Ungrammatical in	Necessity modal (29, 58), affirmative (83–84), the negative (60, 94), generic sentences with kind denoting predicates (89, 91)	The affirmative sentences in (27, 87)	

grammaticality condition is on the right track and will be adopted in section 6, this specific form of anti-licensing is not. Blocking by pragmatic factors is an issue for such a condition: these items can become ungrammatical even in negative contexts in which they are otherwise grammatical because of pragmatic factors (60, 93). Consequently, arguing that affirmative and necessity modal contexts are the only bad contexts for *qu- que ce soit* would not be a good strategy to follow.

The data discussed so far lead to the distributional puzzle in Table 5 and allow one to make the following predictions. One, there is more than one grammaticality condition for FCIs. Two, *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* have the same distributional behavior because they have the same semantic properties. Both predictions are borne out in section 6.

### 5. The interpretational categories of free choice items

Vlachou (2007) constitutes the first systematic analysis of the interpretational categories of French and Greek FCIs. She attempted to examine the semantics of FCIs in a variety of contexts through the comparison between FCIs and non-FC indefinites and definites and proposed that FCIs are associated with six descriptive contents that give rise to six interpretational categories and defined these meaning components. Vlachou's analysis left open the question whether FCIs form a distinct class of items that share a common semantic property.

The present section reanalyzes FCIs' descriptive contents in a synthetic way and proposes that FCIs form a class of lexical items with three interpretational categories. Just like other items, they are associated with alternatives. The common core property of FCIs is that they have descriptive contents that bring information on the alternatives under consideration. Depending on the set of alternatives under consideration, FCIs belong to three big interpretational categories: FCIs that express widening, FCIs that express ignorance and FCIs that express absence of preference.

Since Vlachou (2007) is the first detailed analysis of the interpretational categories of French and Greek FCIs and since her study showed that negative sentences are sentences in which all FCI descriptive contents are available, we will first examine Vlachou's six FCI descriptive contents as they emerge mainly in negative sentences in sections 5.1 and 5.2. In section 5.3 we propose a novel synthetic analysis of the FCIs' interpretational categories.<sup>16</sup> Section 5.4 discusses the predictions that one can make on the FCIs of the languages of the world.

#### 5.1. Evidence from Greek

Consider the following data:

##### **O-dhipote**

- (96) *Dhen exi stin Ellada opjadhipe sinandisi me opjodhipote Ellina*  
 Not has-3SG to.the Greece FCI.which meeting with FCI.which Greek  
*aksiomatuxo, ipa.*  
 dignitary said-1SG  
 "As I said, in Greece, he does not have any meeting with any Greek dignitary". [DB]

<sup>16</sup> The French FCIs under consideration do not belong to the interpretational category of indifference FCIs. Since Greek possesses items of this interpretational category, it is presented first.

- (97) *Dhen exi stin Ellada sinandisis me Ellines aksiomatuxus, ipa.*  
Not has to.the Greece meetings with Greek dignitaries said-1SG  
“As I said, in Greece, he does not have meetings with Greek dignitaries”.

**Enas/o o-dhipote**

- (98) *Dhen prokite ja ena opjodhipote atixima ala ja atixima ipsistis simasias.*  
Not the.point.is about FCI.which accident but for accident paramount importance  
importance  
“This is not just any accident but an accident of paramount importance”. [DB]
- (99) \**Dhen prokite ja ena atixima ala ja atixima ipsistis simasias.*  
Not the.point.is about an accident but for accident paramount importance
- (95) *I epiloji dhen ejine me enan opjondhipote tropo ala simfona*  
The choice not was.made-3SG with FCI.which manner but in.accordance  
*me to kinoniko profil ton endhiaferomenon: viotiko epipedo, toposdiamonis,*  
with the social profile the interested standard of living, residency,  
*thriskia.*  
religion  
“The choice was not made randomly but in accordance with the sociological profile of those who were interested: standard of living, residency, religion”.
- (100) \**I epiloji dhen ejine me enan tropo ala simfona*  
The choice not was.made-3SG with a manner but in.accordance  
*me to kinoniko profil ton endhiaferomenon: viotikoepipedo, topos diamonis,*  
with the social profile the interested standard of living, residency,  
*thriskia.*  
religion

**O- o-**

- (101) *Dhiaole, afti dhen ine opja ki opja. [. . .] Ja na valis tetia jinekara*  
Damn.it she not is FCI.who for SUBJ put-2SG such woman.magn  
*se kluvi tha prepina to fisas to paradhaki.*  
in cage will must SUBJ it blow-2SG the money  
“Damn it! She is not just any woman! One must have a lot of money in order to “tame” such a woman!” [DB]
- (102) \**Dhiaole, afti dhen ine mja jineka. [. . .] Ja na valis tetia jinekara*  
Damn.it she not is a woman for SUBJ put-2SG such woman.magn  
*se kluvi tha prepina to fisas to paradhaki.*  
in cage will must SUBJ it blow-2SG the money

**O- ki an**

- (103) *Dhen psifisa opjon ki an itan stin arxi tis listas. Psifisa ton k.*  
Not voted-1SG FCI.who was to.the start the list voted-1SG the Mr.  
*Papadopoulo epidhi ixekani pola ja to xorio mu.*  
Papadopoulos because had-3SG done many for the village my  
“I did not vote for whoever was at the top of the ballot. I voted for Mr. Papadopoulos because he had done a lot of things for my village.”
- (104) *Dhen psifisa ton ipopsifio pu itan stin arxi tis listas. Psifisa ton k.Papadopoulo epidhi ixekani pola ja to xorio mu.*  
Not voted-1SG the candidate who was to.the start the list voted-1SG the  
Mr Papadopoulos because had-3SG done many for the village my  
“I did not vote for the candidate who was at the top of the ballot. I voted for Mr. Papadopoulos because he had done a lot of things for my village.”
- (105) *Dhen perno idhisi ap' o,ti ki an jinete.*  
Not take-1SG news from FCI.what happens  
“I do not take wind of what ever happens around me.” [DB]
- (106) *Dhen perno idhisi ap'afto pu jinete.*  
Not take-1SG news from this that happens  
“I do not take wind of what happens around me.”

Vlachou (2007) argued that *o-dhipote* belongs to the interpretational category of *widening* FCIs. Consider the example in (96): it asserts that the person in question does not have any meeting at all with any Greek dignitary. Speaker's claim is valid for all possible meetings and dignitaries, without any exception. For this reason, in the hypothetical case when the person in question had even one quick meeting with a Greek (not so important) dignitary, this sentence would be false. In (97), however, this would not be the case: the subject may have had a quick meeting with a Greek (not so important) dignitary and, still, utter this sentence.

*O-dhipote* is an indefinite which, just like regular indefinites, is associated with a set of alternatives of the relevant type, that is, a set of alternative witnesses for the variable that it introduces. The alternatives of the relevant type are always context dependent and cannot be defined out of context. When the FCI contains an NP, the alternatives of the relevant type are NP dependent. In the case at hand, for instance, we have sets of dignitaries and meetings, respectively. This use of the term *alternatives of the relevant type* applies throughout the paper.

Vlachou (2007) argued that *o-dhipote* differs from other indefinites in that it induces *widening*, that is, indicates that speaker's claim is true for the whole (wide) set of alternatives that includes even those that one does not normally consider. In other words, widening signals that all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered. This indication is not available in the case of regular indefinites. This is why the claim in (97) is less strong than the claim in (96).

Vlachou (2007) was not the first to bring the meaning of widening in the discussion on FCIs. Along the same line of reasoning, Kadmon and Landman (1993) had proposed that the English item *any* differs from regular indefinites in that it induces widening (see also Chierchia, 2006 for Italian). Also, Dayal (1998) proposed that the FCI *any* is a modal that quantifies over all possible individuals of the relevant kind.

(107) *I do not have any potatoes.*

Widening is part of the semantics of the item itself and not of the context. Otherwise, *aksiomatuxus*, alone, would also express widening in the same context where *o-dhipote aksiomatuxus* does (96–97). However, it does not. This meaning component survives even in affirmative contexts:

(108) *O Janis efaje ena pjato pu tu prosefere i Maria.*

The John ate a dish that him offered-3SG the Maria  
“John ate a dish that Maria offered him.”

(109) *O Janis efaje otidhipote tu prosefere i Maria.*

The John ate FCI.what him offered-3SG the Maria  
“John ate whatever Maria offered him.”

While (108) means that Janis ate a meal that Maria offered him, (109) means that Janis ate all meals that Maria offered, without exception: each time that Marie prepared something, Janis ate it. If she prepared a salad, he ate a salad, and if she prepared a spinach pie, he ate a spinach pie. Thus, an iterative/conditional interpretation is available here.

Cases as the one in (109) are examples of subtriggering which will not be studied here (section 3). It is however worthwhile noticing that one could argue that *otidhipote* expresses widening in (109) because of the RC *pu tu prosefere i Maria* “that Maria offered him” which behaves like the restrictor of a hidden conditional construction, as just shown. This is actually a hypothesis first pursued by Jespersen (1965) and LeGrand (1975) for *any* (see also Giannakidou, 2001 for *o-dhipote* and *any*). However, Geach (1972) observed that the semantics of the RC depends on its antecedent. In general, as the following example with the widening FCI *any* indicates, when combined with or introduced by widening FCIs, RCs behave like restrictors of a conditional construction not only in an affirmative context but also in generic ones.

(110) *Any gentleman who is grossly insulted must send a challenge.*<sup>17</sup>

Besides the fact that, whenever a widening FCI combines with a RC, the RC behaves like the restrictor of a conditional construction, the comparison between (111) above and (112) below on the one hand, and (109) and (110), on the other, also reveals that (1) when RCs combine with regular indefinites, they function either as restrictors or as modifiers and that (2) the fact that the RC behaves as restrictor in (109) is due to the semantics of *o-dhipote* and not vice versa.

(111) *A gentleman who is grossly insulted must send a challenge.*

<sup>17</sup> Vlachou (2007) has shown that *any* and *o-dhipote* share the same semantic and distributional properties, except for the fact that *o-dhipote* introduces free relatives. To clearly show the meaning of the relative, itself, in cases in which it combines with a widening FCI, an example with the English widening FCI *any* is given here.

Consequently, widening is expressed even in affirmative sentences (and this is not due to the semantics of the context as shown above). The question why the RC behaves only as a restrictor when combined with widening FCIs remains open for future research.<sup>18</sup>

Crucially, due to their semantics, widening FCIs belong to the category of FCIs with universal force already analyzed by Dayal (1998), Chierchia (2006) and Corblin (2010). As it will be shown in the remainder of the current section, the key characteristic property of widening FCIs (that distinguishes them from other interpretational categories) is that they indicate that all of the alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, should be considered.

According to Vlachou (2007), the item *enas/o o-dhipote* does not express widening. If it did, the sentence *dhen prokite ja ena opjodhipote atixima* (98) would mean that there has been no car accident, that there has been no crash, or, more generally, that there has been no accident. However, the phrase *ala ja atixima ipsistis simasias* “but about an accident of paramount importance” indicates that there has been an accident and that this accident is of paramount importance. Consequently, *ena opjodhipote atixima* cannot possibly express widening.

*Enas/o o-dhipote* is associated with disparaging, or else, depreciative readings. It can be paraphrased as *an average, ordinary accident* in (98). Here it is asserted that the accident in question is not an ordinary accident that happens in everyday life but it can be distinguished from other accidents in that it has specific properties (it is of paramount importance) that make it differ (be distinguished) from ordinary accidents. In view of this meaning, Vlachou (2007) argued that *ena opjodhipote atixima* belongs to the interpretational category of *indistinguishability* FCIs that describe the quality of an entity. Contrary to the widening FCI *o-dhipote*, the indistinguishability FCI *enas/o o-dhipote* does not indicate that all the alternatives of the relevant type (accidents for the case at hand) are considered. Instead, it signals that only those alternatives of the relevant type that can be characterized as average are considered. The well-formedness of (98) and the ill-formedness of (99) shows that *enas/o o-dhipote* is an indefinite that has additional semantic properties that make it “survive” in exactly the same context the indefinite *ena atixima* cannot.

According to native speakers’ intuitions, indistinguishability is not the preferred reading in (95). If it were, it would mean that the choice was not made in an average way but in accordance to the sociological profile of the interested people in question. However, since a) indistinguishability characterizes the quality of an entity and b) the sentence *ala simfona me to kinoniko profil ton endhiaferomenon: viotiko epipedo, topos diamonis, thriskia* does not describe *the quality* of the way in which the choice in question was made but the *way* in which it was made, indistinguishability does not emerge in this sentence.

*Enan opjondhipote tropo* does not express widening either. On a widening reading, all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered. Consequently, if this NP expressed widening, (95) would mean that the choice was not made in any possible way. However, in this sentence it is asserted that an implicit agent made a choice and that the choice was not random; the agent took into account the standard of living, residency and religion. Consequently, *enan opjondhipote tropo* does not express widening.

The speaker in (95) is concerned with *the way* in which the choice in question was made. The prepositional phrase (PP) *me enan opjondhipote tropo* can be paraphrased by the PP *me enan tixeo tropo* “in a random way” or with the adverb *tixea* (“randomly”, “haphazardly”). That is, *enan opjondhipote tropo* expresses *indiscriminacy* and belongs to the category of indiscriminacy FCIs in this example. This meaning component has been first assigned to *just any* by Horn (2000). In the example below, for instance, the speaker argues that she does not want to randomly choose with whom to sleep anymore.

(112) *I do not want to sleep with just anyone anymore.*

According to Vlachou (2007), indiscriminacy implies that an agent makes a choice randomly without following a certain criterion. On this reading, the alternatives under consideration are equally probable to be chosen by an agent. Consequently, an indiscriminacy FCI is not associated with all possible alternatives of the relevant type (all possible ways to make a choice for the case at hand). Normally, there are alternatives that we do not select randomly because they have certain characteristics and others that we do select randomly. Indiscriminacy indicates that the FCI is associated with that subset of the alternatives of the relevant type that can be randomly selected by an agent. Consequently, since the predicate (*prokite ja* “is about”) is non-agentive, indiscriminacy is not expressed in (98).

As in the case of widening, both indistinguishability and indiscriminacy are inherent to the item and expressed in affirmative sentences:

<sup>18</sup> This leaves open the questions why (a) *o-dhipote* is ungrammatical in affirmative episodic contexts (if it is not combined with a RC) and (b) FCIs behave differently when combined with a RC that expresses accidental connection with the main predication (see note 4). Section 6 deals with the first question. Since the phenomenon of subtrigging is beyond the scope of current study (section 3), we will not deal with the second question here.

- (52) *O Ed Wood (1922–1978) theorite o xiroteros skinothetis tu Amerikanikou*  
 The Ed Wood (1922–1978) is considered the worst film director the American  
*kinimatografu olon ton epoxon. Ekane ta panda monos tu: paragogi, senario,*  
 cinema all the seasons did-3SG the all alone his production scripts  
*skinothesia ke xrisimopiise ton opjodhipote ja ithopio.*  
 staging and used-3SG FCI which for actor  
 “Ed Wood (1922–1978) is considered to be the worst film director of the American cinema ever. He did everything  
 alone: production, scripts, staging. He also used just any actor.” [DB]

(52) either means that Ed Wood used an average actor or that he chose an actor randomly. In other words, *ton opjodhipote* is not associated with all the alternatives of the relevant type (actors). Instead, it is associated only with average or randomly chosen alternatives. Here, the use of *ton opjodhipote* is referential, just like the use of *enan ithopio* below. In addition, it specifies that the value of the existential quantifier is to be found only in the subsets of average or randomly chosen actors. This last piece of meaning is not available in the case of the regular indefinite NP *enan ithopio*:

- (113) *Xrisimopiise enan ithopio.*  
 Used-3SG a actor  
 “He used an actor.”

The fourth interpretational category of FCIs proposed by Vlachou (2007) is the category of *low-level* FCIs. To this category belong FCIs that have a disparaging descriptive content and are associated with “low-level”, or else bad, alternatives.

Take a look at the data in (101–102). *Opja ki opja* does not express widening, indistinguishability or indiscriminacy. (101) asserts that the woman in question is not below a norm of goodness. On the contrary, she is a “high-level” woman. The fact that if one wants to “tame” her, one needs a lot of money to do so, makes the woman in question elevated above a certain norm of goodness. The use of the Greek suffix *ara* that magnifies the meaning of the NP *jineka* “woman” makes the “high-level” value of the woman in question sharper. According to Vlachou (2007), although indistinguishability could also be an appropriate reading for the context at hand, the item *o- o-*, by itself, characterizes entities as being below a norm of goodness, or else as being “low-level”: *opja ki opja* is synonymous with *mia parakatiani jineka* “second class woman”. Consequently, *opja ki opja* is not associated with all possible alternatives of the relevant type. Instead, it is associated only with “low-level” alternatives.

The descriptive content of low-level is inherent to the item, itself, and expressed in affirmative sentences as well. In the sentence below, for instance, *oso oso* means that the person in question sold her house at a price which was below a certain norm.

- (81) *Pulise to spiti tis oso oso ja na ton plirosi.*  
 Sold-3SG the house her FCI.how for subj him pay-3SG  
 “She sold her house at just any price in order to pay him.”

As in the case of the regular indefinite *mia timi* below, (81) refers to the price at which the person in question sold her house. In addition, it is indicated that this price belongs exclusively to the subset of low-level prices. This last piece of information is not available in the case of *mia timi*.

- (114) *Tu edhose mia timi.*  
 Him gave-3SG a price  
 “He gave him a price.”

Also, (101) becomes ill-formed when *o- o-* is replaced by the indefinite NP *mia jineka* (102). This verifies the hypothesis that its semantics differs from that of its corresponding regular indefinite. If the second sentence were well-formed, it would mean that the woman in question is not a woman. This is a pragmatically strange interpretation. Therefore, (102) is ill-formed.

*Ignorance* and *indifference* FCIs are the last two interpretational categories of FCIs discussed in Vlachou (2007). Before Vlachou, Dayal (1997) and Von Stechow (2000) had assigned the meaning of ignorance to the English item *wh-ever* (note 2) in sentences as the one below (see also Menéndez-Benito and Ovalle, to appear) and had argued that, in this use, the item is associated with an epistemic modal basis.

- (115) *There's a lot of garlic in whatever (it is that) Arlo is cooking.*

Vlachou (2007) argued that, on an ignorance reading, the speaker in (103) asserts that she did not vote for an unknown candidate; she voted for Mr. Papadopoulos because he had done a lot for her village. In other words, *o-ki an* is a definite with the additional semantic component of ignorance in (103). It therefore belongs to the category of *ignorance FCIs* and indicates that the set of alternatives considered is not the set of all possible candidates (who could, in general, have been at the top of the ballot when the agent voted). Instead, it signals that the alternatives considered are those alternatives that are unknown to the agent. The candidate for whom the speaker actually voted (Mr. Papadopoulos) does not belong to the subset of unknown candidates. Far from that, that the agent knows him well as he had done a lot for her village.

Von Fintel (2000) argued that ignorance is not the only meaning of *wh-ever*. He argued that it also expresses absence of preference for a particular entity on behalf of an agent, or else, indifference and discussed the possibility of analyzing *wh-ever* as a quantifier over deontic worlds in sentences as the one below (see also note 2):

(116) *Zack simply voted for whoever was at the top of the ballot.*

Based on von Fintel's analysis, Vlachou (2007) argued that the definite FCI *o-ki an*, belongs to the interpretational category of *indifference FCIs* as well. On an indifference reading, (103) means that the speaker did not vote indifferently for the candidate who was at the top of the ballot, simply because he was at the top in such a way that she would have done the same if the person who was at the top of the ballot were different. She voted for Mr. Papadopoulos because he had done many things for her village. On this reading, *o-ki an* is not associated with all possible candidates who might, in general, have been at the top of the ballot when the agent voted. Instead, it is associated only with those candidates that the agent may have chosen indifferently had she not voted for Mr. Papadopoulos.<sup>19</sup>

Although indiscriminacy and indifference are quite similar notions, Vlachou (2007) argued that they differ in that the first implies that an agent chooses without following a certain criterion, while the second implies that an agent chooses (no matter which) entity simply because it satisfies the predicative property.

Vlachou (2007) argued that *o-ki an* expresses also widening in (105). As the widening FCI *o-dhipote*, *o-ki an* has a universal force on this reading. The speaker asserts that she does not get wind of all the things that happen around him. Every time something happens, the speaker does not understand it. The event that happens every time may be relevant or not; the speaker does not get wind of it. At each point in time that something happens, there are alternative things that may have happened. Ignorance is also expressed in (105). On this reading, the speaker argues that she does not get wind of the unknown things that happen around him. Indifference expresses the way in which an agent makes a choice. Since the predicate *perno idhisi* "get wind" is not agentive, indifference does not emerge in this sentence. Widening is not expressed in (103). As explained above, widening FCIs have a universal interpretation which is not available in (103). Otherwise, (103) would mean that for all possible candidates at the top, Zack did not vote for them. However, this interpretation would exclude the possibility for Mr. Papadopoulos to be the candidate who was at the top of the list. And there is nothing in this sentence that excludes this possibility.

Widening, indifference and ignorance are inherent to *o-ki an* and expressed in affirmative contexts as well:

(117) *Efagha o,ti ki an etimase i Maria.*  
Ate-1SG FCI.what prepared-3SG the Maria  
"I ate whatever Maria prepared."

On a widening reading, it is asserted that the speaker ate all the meals that Maria prepared. On an ignorance reading the value of the meal(s) that Maria prepared is unknown to the speaker. On an indifference reading, the speaker ate indifferently the meal(s) that Maria prepared.

Ignorance, widening and indifference are lost when one replaces *o-ki an* with a definite as shown in (104) and (106). (104) means that the speaker did not vote for the person who was at the top of the ballot but for Mr. Papadopoulos who had done many things for her village. In opposition to what happens in (104), nothing is said in (105) about the way the speaker chose for Mr. Papadopoulos or about whether the subject knew the candidate at the top of the ballot. Idem, in (107) nothing is said about whether the speaker would get wind of all the things that might happen around him without exception (widening) or whether the speaker knows the thing that happens around him (ignorance).

To summarize, Vlachou (2007) argued that, just like other (in)definites, Greek FCIs are associated with alternatives. They differ from them in that they have inherent descriptive contents. In doing so, they form six interpretational categories: widening FCIs, indiscriminacy FCIs, indistinguishability FCIs, low-level FCIs, ignorance FCIs, indifference FCIs.

<sup>19</sup> There has been a long debate on whether the ignorance and indifference flavors of *wh-ever* is part of its presuppositional content. The reader is referred to Vlachou (2007: sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3) for a recent discussion on this point.

## 5.2. Evidence from French

Consider the data below:

**Qu- que ce soit**

- (118) *On ne renonce pas petit à petit à quoi que ce soit.* Mark Twain  
 One not renounces not little by little to FCI.what Mark Twain  
*disait: 'rien de plus facile que de renoncer au tabac. J'y*  
 was.saying.3SG nothing of more easy than to renounce to the tobacco I it  
*renonce tous les matins'.*  
 renounce.1SG all the mornings  
 One does not stop anything little by little. Mark Twain used to say: “there is nothing easier than stopping smoking. I stop smoking every morning”. [DB]
- (119) *On ne renonce pas petit à petit à quelque chose.*  
 One not renounces not little by little to something  
 “One does not stop something little by little”.

**N'importe qu-**

- (59) *Le choix n'a pas été fait n'importe comment mais conformément à ce*  
 The choice not has not been made FCI.how but in accordance with this  
*que laissaient prévoir les caractères sociologiques de ces indécis:*  
 that were leaving.3PL predict the characters sociological of these indecisive  
*niveau de vie, résidence, religion.*  
 level of life residency religion  
 The choice was not made randomly but in accordance with the sociological profile of these indecisive persons:  
 standard of living, residency, religion.
- (120) *#Le choix n'a pas été fait d'une manière mais conformément à ce*  
 The choice not has not been made FCI.how but in accordance with this  
*que laissaient prévoir les caractères sociologiques de ces indécis:*  
 that were leaving-3PL predict the characters sociological of these indecisive  
*niveau de vie, résidence, religion.*  
 level of life residency religion
- (121) *Le malade était archifoutu, seulement voilà, ce n'était pas*  
 The patient was-3SG hopeless only it not was-3SG not  
*n'importe quel malade. C'était Malaussène. [...] mais Malaussène,*  
 FCI.which patient it was-3SG Malaussène but Malaussène  
*c'est Malaussène.*  
 it is Malaussène  
 “The patient was hopeless, but he was not just any patient. He was Malaussène. [...] but Malaussène is Malaussène”. [DB]
- (122) *#Le malade était archifoutu, seulement voilà, ce n'était pas*  
 The patient was-3SG hopeless only it not was-3SG not  
*un malade. C'était Malaussène. [...] mais Malaussène,*  
 a patient it was-3SG Malaussène but Malaussène  
*c'est Malaussène.*  
 it is Malaussène
- (61) *La porte du Temple doit rester fermée! ergotait la Gazette. On n'*  
 The door of the Temple has to stay closed quibbled-3SG the Gazette one not  
*ouvre pas à n'importe qui!*  
 opens not to FCI.who  
 “The door of the Temple must stay closed! quibbled the Gazette. We should not open to anybody!” [DB]
- (123) *La porte du Temple doit rester fermée! ergotait la Gazette. On n'*  
 The door of the Temple has to stay closed quibbled-3SG the Gazette one not  
*ouvre pas à des visiteurs!*  
 opens not to visitors  
 “The door of the Temple must stay closed! quibbled the Gazette. We should not open to visitors!”

**Un NP quelconque**

- (124) *On retrouve bien cette attitude dans ce jeu de cache-cache signalé par Mme Montessori chez les petits: il ne s'agit point de trouver le partenaire à un endroit quelconque, mais bien à une place déterminée par avance; si l'adulte se cache vraiment, l'enfant est déçu!*  
 One finds indeed this attitude in this game of hide and seek signaled by Mme Montessori for the kids not should-3SG not at all to find the partner at a place FCI.which but well at a place determined in advance if the adult REFL hides really the kid is disappointed  
 “One finds this attitude in this game of hide and seek by kids, noticed by Mme Montessori: the partner should not hide in an unknown place but in a place which is determined in advance; if the adult hides for real, then the child is disappointed.
- (125) *#On retrouve bien cette attitude dans ce jeu de cache-cache signalé par Mme Montessori chez les petits: il ne s'agit point de trouver le partenaire à un endroit, mais bien à une place déterminée par avance; si l'adulte se cache vraiment, l'enfant est déçu!*  
 One finds indeed this attitude in this game of hide and seek signaled by Mme Montessori for the kids not should-3SG not at all to find the partner at a place but well at a place determined in advance if the adult REFL hides really the kid is disappointed
- (126) *Cette journée de Noël ne différait pas beaucoup d'un dimanche quelconque: deux sardines, la part de crème de gruyère et l'orange supplémentaire au déjeuner, la promenade l'après-midi au lieu du matin, et puis c'est marre!*  
 This day of Christmas not differed-3SG not much of a Sunday FCI.which two sardines the part of cream of gruyère and the orange supplementary to the lunch the walk the afternoon in the place of the morning and after it is boring  
 “This Christmas Day did not differ much from an average Sunday; two sardines, the helping of gruyère cream and the additional orange for lunch, the walk of the afternoon instead of in the morning and then I was bored!” [DB]
- (127) *#Cette journée de Noël ne différait pas beaucoup d'un dimanche deux sardines, la part de crème de gruyère et l'orange supplémentaire au déjeuner, la promenade l'après-midi au lieu du matin, et puis c'est marre!*  
 This day of Christmas not differed-3SG not much of a Sunday two sardines the part of cream of gruyère and the orange supplementary to the lunch the walk the afternoon in the place of the morning and after it is boring

Vlachou (2007) argued that *qu- que ce soit* belongs to the interpretational category of widening FCIs. The speaker in (118) asserts that one does not stop something gradually and that this holds independently of the nature of one's habit. In other words, this item signals that speaker's claim is true for the wide set of alternative habits that includes even habits difficult to stop. The following information brought into the semantics of the sentence by *quoi que ce soit* in (118) is missing from (119): “speaker's assertion holds independently of the nature of one's habit”. The speaker in (119) does not tell us anything about whether this general rule applies even to difficult, exceptional things.

As in the case of *o-dhipote*, widening is inherent to *qu- que ce soit* and expressed even in affirmative sentences. While (128) means that the speaker ate all the meals that Marie offered her, without exception, (129) means that the speaker ate one single plate that Marie offered her.

- (128) *J'ai mangé quoi quoi que ce soit que Marie m'a offert.*  
 I have eaten FCI.what that Marie me has offered  
 ‘I ate anything that Marie offered me.’
- (129) *J'ai mangé un plat que Marie m'a offert.*  
 I have eaten a meal that Marie me has offered  
 ‘I ate a meal that Marie offered me.’

Contrary to what happens with regular indefinites, the widening FCI *qu- que ce soit* brings the following information to the semantics of the sentence: all alternatives of the relevant type, without any exception, are considered.

Just like *enas/o o-dhipote* and *o-o-*, *n'importe qu-* is associated both with widening as well as with disparaging readings (low-level, indiscriminacy, indistinguishability). In the second case, it restricts quantification to randomly chosen, average or bad alternatives. Following Vlachou (2003)'s and Jayez and Tovena (2005)'s analysis of indiscriminacy for *n'importe qu-*, Vlachou (2007) argued that *n'importe comment* expresses indiscriminacy in the sentence in (59) which asserts that an implicit agent made a non-arbitrary choice: the agent took into account the standard of living, residency and religion of the indecisive people. In this case, *n'importe qu-* is associated only with alternative ways in which the agent chooses something randomly (and not with all possible ways in which one makes a choice).

The regular indefinite *une manière* "a way" does not express indiscriminacy and is therefore ungrammatical in (120). Otherwise, this sentence would have the pragmatically weird interpretation that the choice was not made in a way but in accordance with the sociological profile of the indecisive people. For this reason, (120) is pragmatically weird. Crucially, as a reviewer accurately notices, (120) becomes well-formed when *manière* is modified by the adjective *arbitraire* "random" (*d'une manière arbitraire* "randomly").

Vlachou argued that, besides indiscriminacy, *n'importe qu-* expresses widening, indistinguishability and has the descriptive content of low-level, as well. Indiscriminacy expresses the way in which an agent makes a choice. Consequently, since the predicate *est* "is" is not agentive, it is not expressed in (121). As is the case in (59) for *n'importe comment*, *n'importe quel malade* is not semantically equivalent to the regular indefinite *un malade* "a patient" (122). If it were, the phrase *ce n'était pas n'importe quel malade* would mean that Malaussène is not a patient. However, the previous phrase (*le malade était archifoutu* 'the patient was hopeless') indicates that Malaussène is a patient. For this reason, (122) is ill-formed.

*N'importe quel malade* has two possible interpretations in (121): indistinguishability and low-level. On the first, *ce n'était pas n'importe quel malade* means that the patient is not average but someone who is distinguished from the other patients. In this case, *n'importe quel malade* is associated only with average alternatives. As for the reading of low-level, *n'importe quel malade* refers to the quality of Malaussène as patient (and not to the question of whether he differs from other patients or not). On this reading, *n'importe quel malade* is synonymous to *bad patient* and associated only with bad alternatives. Indistinguishability and the reading of low-level are not the preferred readings of *n'importe comment* in (59) because the context (*mais conformément à ce que laissaient prévoir les caractères sociologiques de ces indécis*) indicates that its descriptive content describes the way a choice has been made and not the (average or bad) quality of the choice.

Low-level, indiscriminacy and indistinguishability are expressed in (61). On the first reading, the speaker asks from her addressees not to open the door of the Temple to bad persons. On the second, the speaker urges her addressees not to open randomly the door of the Temple. On the third, speaker's addressees should open the door to well distinguished persons. *N'importe qu-* expresses also widening in certain contexts, and (61) is one of them. On this reading, the speaker asks from her addressees not to open the Temple door, and no visitor is an exception to this general rule.

Widening is not expressed in (59) and (121). Otherwise, the first would have the following pragmatically weird interpretation: the choice was not made at all but in accordance to the sociological profile of these indecisive people while the second would mean that the patient in question is not a patient but a patient.

The above data demonstrate that *n'importe qu-* belongs to the categories of indiscriminacy, indistinguishability, low-level and widening FCIs. Indiscriminacy, indistinguishability, widening and the meaning of low-level are inherent to *n'importe qu-* and are expressed in affirmative sentences as well:

- (74) *Oh, tante Berthe, je suis un monstre, pardonnez-moi... j'ai perdu la tête,*  
 Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster excuse-2PL-me I have-1SG lost the head  
*j'ai dit n'importe quoi..C'est cet air que vous aviez,*  
 I have-1SG said FCI.what it is this air that you had-2PL  
*si froid, si hostile...*  
 so cold so hostile

"Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster. Excuse me but I lost my mind. I said just anything... You are so cold, so hostile..." [DB]

- (130) *J'ai mangé n'importe quel plat que Marie a préparé.*  
 I have eaten FCI.what meal that Marie has prepared  
 'I ate any dish that Marie prepared.'

*N'importe quoi* expresses indiscriminacy, indistinguishability and low-level in (74). On the first, the speaker chose randomly what to say. On the second, the speaker said a very average thing. On the third, she said a bad thing. Here, we have a referential use of an existential quantifier. On top of that, we have the indication that the value of the existential quantifier belongs to the set of randomly chosen, average or bad alternatives.

In (130) both widening as well as the disparaging readings of *n'importe qu-* are expressed (see Jayez and Tovenà, 2005 on the meaning of indiscriminacy in these uses). On an indiscriminacy reading, the speaker chose randomly the dish that Marie prepared. On an indistinguishability reading, she ate an average dish that Marie prepared. On a low-level reading she ate a bad meal that Marie prepared. On a widening reading, she ate all the meals that Marie prepared. Each time that Marie prepared something, the speaker ate it. If she prepared a salad, she ate it, and, if she prepared pork, she ate it.

Having inherent descriptive contents, *n'importe qu-* differs from regular indefinites in that respect (74, 130 and 131). In contrast to what happens in (74), we do not have reference to randomly chosen, average or low-level alternatives in (131). Here, the set of alternatives contains possible jokes (in general) that the speaker could have said. Consequently, contrary to regular indefinites, *n'importe qu-* brings information on the set of alternatives under consideration; regular indefinites do not.

(131) *I said a joke.*

In view of the meaning of *n'importe qu-* in the affirmative sentence in (74), one wonders why *n'importe qu-* is associated only with disparaging (depreciative) readings (and not widening) in this affirmative sentence (a point already made by Jayez and Tovenà, 2005 with relation to the reading of indiscriminacy). As will be argued in section 6.1 in relation to the widening FCIs *qu- que ce soit* and *o-dhipote*, widening is blocked in this kind of contexts for semantic reasons.

Also, the only way to get widening in (130) is through an iterative/conditional interpretation which is not available in the case of the other readings of *n'importe qu-*, as shown in (74). The semantic difference between (74) and (130) is another argument that reinforces the validity of the hypothesis that it is due to widening that a RC that combines with a widening FCI has always a conditional interpretation (section 5.1). When widening is not present then no conditional/iterative interpretation is available. Otherwise, (74) would mean that each time that something came to speaker's mind, she said it. However, this is far from being the meaning of the sentence with *n'importe qu-* in (74).

Finally, *un NP quelconque* also differs from regular indefinites: it is an indefinite with the additional meaning components of ignorance (124) and indistinguishability (126). In doing so, it restricts quantification to unknown or average alternatives.

It is a general rule that when we play with children we cannot hide at places that children ignore completely. The speaker in (124) means that the places where we hide should not be completely unknown by the children but determined in advance. In other words, the kid has to be given the possibility to search in two or three particular places without however knowing in which one his partner is. Otherwise, children get disappointed. The meaning of the participle *déterminée* “determined” contrasts with the ignorance reading of *un lieu quelconque* in (124). In this example, the descriptive content of the FCI describes the epistemic state of the children. *Un lieu quelconque* is synonymous to *un lieu inconnu* “an unknown place”, expresses ignorance and indicates that the alternatives considered are not all possible places, in general, but those unknown by the kids.

Ignorance is not the only descriptive content of *un NP quelconque* as shown in (126). It is argued in this sentence that the Sunday in question was not different from an average Sunday. As it happens on an average Sunday, the speaker ate two sardines, some guyère cream, an orange and made a walk. *Un dimanche quelconque* expresses therefore indistinguishability in (126): it describes the quality of an entity and is synonymous with *an average Sunday*.

Indistinguishability is not available in (124) and ignorance in (126). If indistinguishability were expressed in (124), then this sentence would mean *the children do not search for their partner in a place which is average but in a place which is determined in advance*. However, this would be a pragmatically weird interpretation. If ignorance were expressed in (126), this sentence would mean that the Sunday in question was not different from a specific Sunday that the speaker does not know. However, the context forces an indistinguishability reading because the properties of the Sunday in question are contextually given (*deux sardines, . . .*). In this way, *un dimanche quelconque* does not indicate one's knowledge about a specific Sunday but the way in which one views this Sunday.

Both indistinguishability and ignorance are inherent to *un NP quelconque* and expressed in affirmative sentences as well:

(132) *En bas, il trouve un type debout qui attend, un type quelconque, plutôt miteux, pas un habitué.*

Downstairs he finds a man standing who waits a man FCI. which rather dingy not a regular

dingy not a regular

“Downstairs, he finds a man standing and waiting, an average/an unknown man, rather down-at-heel, not a regular” [DB]

(132) asserts that the subject in question found a man standing and waiting, an average/an unknown man.<sup>20</sup> Here we have a referential use of an existential quantifier. In addition, *un NP quelconque* does not refer to all possible men of the world; instead, it specifies that the man under consideration belongs exclusively either to the subset of average men or to the subset of unknown men. Just like regular indefinites (132), *un NP quelconque* is associated with alternatives. It differs from them in that it restricts the set of alternatives either to those that are average or to those that are unknown. Regular indefinites like *un endroit* and *un dimanche* are not associated with average or unknown alternatives. This is why (125) and (127) are ill-formed.

To summarize, Vlachou (2007) argued that just like other indefinites, French FCIs are associated with alternatives. They differ from them in that they have inherent descriptive contents. In doing so, they form five interpretational categories: widening FCIs, indiscriminacy FCIs, indistinguishability FCIs, low-level FCIs and ignorance FCIs.

### 5.3. Synthesis

The six interpretational categories of FCIs proposed by Vlachou (2007) (see also Vlachou, 2009, 2010) above make one wonder whether it is possible to analyze their descriptive contents in a synthetic way so that we can see in what respect (if at all) FCIs resemble to each other. If FCIs form a class of items, then there should be at least one common property that these items share.

The comparison between regular (in)definites and FCIs has shown that, just like other lexical items, FCIs introduce a set of alternatives of the relevant type, that is, a set of alternative witnesses for their variable (see section 5.1). One could argue that association with alternatives is the common point that all FCIs share. However, this cannot possibly be considered as the semantic core property that distinguishes FCIs from other lexical items: as shown in sections 5.1 and 5.2, association with alternatives is a property shared by other lexical items as well. For this reason, one cannot argue that this characteristic is the core property of FCIs.

A closer look at the French and Greek data above demonstrates that, besides the fact that they are associated with alternatives, they have inherent meaning components that commonly bring information on these alternatives. This property is not available in the case of regular (in)definites. For instance, as the reader may recall from section 5.1, the widening FCI *o-dhipote* is associated with alternatives and, on top of that, brings the information that all the alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, should be considered.

As also noticed in that section, FCIs that do not express widening do not bring this kind of information to the semantics of the sentence. Instead, they are associated with alternatives (just like other (in)definites FC or not) and, on top of that, each one of their readings specifies that the value of the FCI under consideration belongs to one of the subsets of the alternatives of the relevant type (average, bad, randomly chosen, unknown alternatives or alternatives that are chosen simply because they satisfy the predicative property). As the reader may recall from section 5.2, the item *un NP quelconque*, for instance, is associated with alternatives (just like other (FC-) indefinites) and, on top of that, specifies that the value of the FCI belongs either to the subset of average or to the subset of unknown alternatives. When the FCI does not express widening, it is not the case that all of the alternatives of the relevant type are considered. Instead, it brings the information that its value belongs to a restricted set of alternatives.

Depending on the alternatives under consideration, FCIs form two big interpretational categories: *full set* and *subset* FCIs. Just like regular (in)definites, *full set* FCIs are associated with alternative witnesses for the variable that they introduce. In addition to this, and in opposition to other (in)definites, they share the feature “all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered”. That is, they signal that the total amount of the alternatives of the relevant type, without any exception, is under consideration. To this category belong all FCIs that express widening like the Greek items *o-dhipote* and *o-ki an* and the French items *qu- que ce soit* and *n'importe qu-*. Regular indefinites do not signal that the whole set of alternatives, without exception, is considered. For this reason, they cause different meaning effects from their corresponding FCI counterparts:

- (96) *Dhen exi stin Ellada opjadhypote sinandisi me opjodhipote Ellina*  
 Not has-3SG to.the Greece FCI.which meeting with FCI.which Greek  
*aksiomatuxo, ipa.*  
 dignitary said-1SG  
 “As I said, in Greece, he does not have any meeting with any Greek dignitary”. [DB]
- (97) *Dhen exi stin Ellada sinandisis me Ellines aksiomatuxus, ipa.*  
 Not has to.the Greece meetings with Greek dignitaries said-1SG  
 “As I said, in Greece, he does not have meetings with Greek dignitaries”.

<sup>20</sup> According to certain native speakers, ignorance is not possible in (132). The same applies to example (80), to be discussed in section 5.3.

Subset FCIs do not indicate that all the alternatives of the relevant type are considered (their features will be shortly discussed). To the opposite, they indicate that only a subset of the alternatives of the relevant type is considered. In other words, the meaning component of subset FCIs restricts the domain of quantification. To this category belong all FCIs except for widening ones: indiscriminacy, indistinguishability, ignorance, indifference, low-level FCIs. Regular (in)definites do not belong to these interpretational categories. For this reason, they cause different meaning effects from their FC-counterparts:

- (74) *Oh, tante Berthe, je suis un monstre, pardonnez-moi. . . j'ai perdu la tête,*  
 Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster excuse-2PL-me I have-1SG lost the head  
*j'ai dit n'importe quoi. C'est cet air que vous aviez,*  
 I have-1SG said FCI.what it is this air that you had-2PL  
*si froid, si hostile. . .*  
 so cold so hostile  
 "Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster. Excuse me but I lost my mind. I said just anything. . . You are so cold, so hostile. . ." [DB]
- (131) *I said a joke.*
- (80) *Jean-François chantonna sur un air quelconque: Je*  
 Jean-François murmured-3SG with a.rhythm FCI.which I  
*l'appelais ma rose de Bou Saod [. . .].*  
 her was.calling-1SG my rose of Bou Saod  
 "Jean-François murmured with some kind of rhythm: 'I was calling her 'my rose of Bou Saod'". [DB]
- (133) *I heard a rhythm.*

In (74), *n'importe quoi* is an existential quantifier. It refers to the specific thing that the speaker uttered. On top of that, it specifies that the thing that the speaker uttered belongs to one of the following subsets of the alternatives of the relevant type: average, bad or randomly chosen things. In other words, in opposition to full set FCIs, subset FCIs restrict the domain of alternatives to only those that satisfy the property described by their descriptive contents and indicate that the value of the FCI is to be found in this restricted set. In the case of the regular indefinite *a joke* (131) the variable is also associated with alternatives. However, there is nothing that informs us about the nature of the alternatives under consideration.

Idem, *un air quelconque* in (80) is an existential quantifier. It refers to the specific rhythm that Jean-François murmured. On top of that, it specifies that this rhythm belongs exclusively either to the subset of banal or to the subset of unknown rhythms. The regular indefinite *a rhythm* (133) is also associated with alternatives. However, there is nothing that specifies the nature of the alternatives under consideration. Consequently, just like regular (in)definites, subset FCIs are associated with alternative witnesses for the variable that they introduce. In addition to this, and in opposition to other (in)definites, they restrict this set of alternatives to one of its subsets.

The properties of FCIs sketched above demonstrate that they form a distinct class of lexical items. FCIs have, inherently, at least one descriptive content available even in affirmative sentences. They commonly bring information on the alternatives under consideration. This is their core semantic property:

- (134) *The core semantic property of the class FCIs*  
 FCIs are lexical items that have descriptive contents that bring information on the alternatives under consideration.

Subset FCIs are associated with at least one subset of the alternatives of the relevant type. One wonders whether it is at all possible to further analyze their descriptive contents (ignorance, indiscriminacy, indifference, low-level, indistinguishability) in a synthetic way so that we can see in what respect (if at all) they resemble to each other. A closer look at subset FCIs descriptive contents reveals that, depending on the nature of the subset of alternatives with which they are associated, they have different semantic features: the category of subset FCIs can be further divided into two subcategories.

To the first subcategory belong ignorance FCIs, like *un NP quelconque* and *o-ki an*, namely FCIs that are associated only with unknown alternatives and have the feature "unknown alternatives are considered". In the sentence below for instance, *un endroit quelconque* is translated by *an unknown place*. It brings the information that the alternatives under consideration are not all the alternatives of the relevant type (all possible places for the case at hand). Instead, it signals that the alternatives belong to the subset of unknown places.

- (124) *On retrouve bien cette attitude dans ce jeu de cache-cache signalé par Mme Montessori chez les petits: il ne s'agit point de trouver le partenaire à un endroit quelconque, mais bien à une place déterminée par avance; si l'adulte se cache vraiment, l'enfant est déçu!*  
 One finds indeed this attitude in this game of hide and seek signaled by Mme Montessori for the kids not should-3SG not at all to find the partner at a place FCI. which but well at a place determined in advance if the adult REFL hides really the kid is disappointed  
 “One finds this attitude in this game of hide and seek by kids, noticed by Mme Montessori: the partner should not hide in an unknown place but in a place which is determined in advance; if the adult hides for real, then the child is disappointed.”

To the second subcategory of subset FCIs belong those FCIs that are associated with average, bad, randomly chosen alternatives or alternatives that are chosen simply because they satisfy the predicative property described by the RC. These FCIs are commonly associated with disparaged (depreciated) alternatives. To use terms already coined in relation to FCIs in the literature on *wh-ever* in section 5.1, they are associated only with alternatives that are not particularly preferred by an agent. In other terms, these FCIs signal *absence of preference* and have the feature “non-preferred alternatives are considered”.

When an agent makes a random choice (indiscriminacy), the alternatives at hand are equally probable to be chosen. One may very well have particular preferences for particular entities. In the case of indiscriminacy, however, it is indicated that the individuals under consideration are the ones for which the agent does not have any particular preference: on this reading, the agent chooses an entity simply because it happens to be the first available entity to choose. Consequently, indiscriminacy FCIs indicate that the alternatives under consideration do not belong to the set of individuals that an agent prefers; instead, they belong to the set of individuals for which the agent does not have any preference.

In the case below, for instance, there is a contextually given preferred way to make a choice (*in accordance with the sociological profile of those who were interested: standard of living, residency, religion*). *Enan opjondhipote tropo* is associated with all these possible ways that can be randomly chosen by an agent, and, therefore are not the preferred ones.

- (95) *I epiloji dhen ejine me enan opjondhipote tropo ala simfona*  
 The choice not was.made-3SG with FCI. which manner but in. accordance  
*me to kinoniko profil ton endhiaferomenon: viotiko epipedo, topos diamonis,*  
 with the social profile the interested standard of living, residency,  
*thriskia.*  
 religion  
 “The choice was not made randomly but in accordance with the sociological profile of those who were interested: standard of living, residency, religion”.

Non-preferred entities are not necessarily bad. The property of indistinguishability (averageness), for instance, is assigned to entities that are not particularly preferred, but are not bad either. An average student, for instance, is not a preferred student, although she is not a bad student either. She is not a preferred student because she does not have the properties that we expect from a good student to have.

On an indistinguishability reading, *ton opjondhipote* below signals that the alternatives under consideration belong to the subset of actors for whom the agent does not have any particular preference. Ed Wood might very well have had a particular preference for a big star. But he might not have been able to reach her.

- (52) *O Ed Wood (1922–1978) theorite o xiroteros skinothetis tu Amerikanikou*  
 The Ed Wood (1922–1978) is. considered the worst film. director the Americal  
*kinimatografu olon ton epoxon. Ekane ta panda monos tu: paragogi, senario,*  
 cinema all the seasons did-3SG the all alone his production scripts  
*skinothesia ke xrisimopiise ton opjodhipote ja ithopio.*  
 staging and used-3SG FCI. which for actor  
 “Ed Wood (1922–1978) is considered to be the worst film director of the American cinema ever. He did everything alone: production, scripts, staging. He also used just any actor.” [DB]

Consequently, indistinguishability FCIs belong also to category of those FCIs that are associated with alternatives that are not preferred by an agent.

Non-preferred entities can also be low-level (bad) entities. An entity is characterized as bad by an agent if it has all the properties that she does not expect it to have. In the example below, for instance, the FCI *opja ki opja* indicates that the possible alternatives under consideration are the women who are not particularly preferred by an agent (and not all possible women in the world). Consequently, low-level FCIs are also associated with alternatives that are not preferred by an agent.

- (101) *Dhiaole, afti dhen ine opja ki opja. [. . .] Ja na valis tetia jinekara*  
 Damn.it she not is FCI.who for SUBJ put-2SG such woman.magn  
*se kluvi tha prepi na to fisas to paradhaki.*  
 in cage will must SUBJ it blow-2SG the money  
 “Damn it! She is not just any woman! One must have a lot of money in order to “tame” such a woman!” [Low, DB]

Finally, when an agent chooses an entity out of a set of alternatives simply because it satisfies the predicative property (indifference), she does not prefer that particular entity. It might very well be the case that she has particular preferences for particular individuals: she simply chooses that entity because it happens to satisfy the predicative property, in such a way that she would have chosen another entity, had it satisfied that property.

In the example below, for instance, *opjon ki an* requires that the alternatives under consideration are those for which the agent does not have any particular preference. It is asserted that the agent did not choose among those alternatives for which she does not have any special preference. Instead, she voted for Mr. Papadopoulos who had done a lot of things for her village. Indifference FCIs are therefore associated with alternatives that are not particularly preferred by an agent.

- (103) *Dhen psifisa opjon ki an itan stin arxi tis listas. Psifisa ton k.*  
 Not voted-1SG FCI.who was to.the start the list voted-1SG the Mr.  
*Papadopoulo epidhi ixē kani pola ja to xorio mu.*  
 Papadopoulos because had-3SG done many for the village my  
 “I did not vote for whoever was at the top of the ballot. I voted for Mr. Papadopoulos because he had done a lot of things for my village.”

FCIs form a class of lexical items that differ from other items in that they are all associated with inherent descriptive contents that bring information on the alternatives considered. FCIs differ among each other in that they have different semantic features that signal that different sets of alternatives are considered. They form two big interpretational categories: full set and subset FCIs. To the first category belong widening FCIs, that is, those that have the semantic feature “all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered”; to the second category belong FCIs that have either the feature “unknown alternatives are considered” or the feature “non-preferred alternatives are considered”:

#### 5.4. Predictions

From a typological point of view, one would like to know whether one can predict whether there exist other interpretational categories of FCIs with other semantic features in the languages of the world that are not contained in Table 6. As the reader may recall from section 5.1, FCIs have been analyzed as modal expressions (see also note 2). The properties of the FCIs interpretational categories above provide one more strong evidence for the validity of this hypothesis and allow one to make predictions on the FCIs of the languages of the world.

Table 6  
The class of FCIs.

Core property	FCIs bring information on the alternatives under consideration		
Inter. categories	Full set	Subset	
Features	All alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered	Unknown alternatives are considered	Non-preferred alternatives are considered
Desc. contents	Widening	Ignorance	Absence of preference
Greek and French	<i>O-dhipote, o- ki an, qu- que ce soit, n'importe qu-</i>	<i>O- ki an, un NP quelconque</i>	<i>Enas/o o-dhipote, o-o-, o- ki an, n'importe qu-, un NP quelconque</i>

Dayal (1998) proposed that the FCI *any* is a universal quantifier over all possible individuals of the relevant kind. Moreover, Dayal (1997) and Von Stechow (2000) argued that, on an ignorance reading, *wh-ever* is associated with an epistemic modal basis. Also, Von Stechow (2000) discussed the possibility to analyze *wh-ever* as a quantifier over deontic worlds on an indifference reading.

The descriptive content of subset FCIs indicates association with either an epistemic modal basis or a deontic modal basis. In the case of ignorance, quantification is on alternatives that are not known. This is why the modal basis here is epistemic, as Dayal (1997) and Von Stechow (2000) argued for *wh-ever*. In the case of FCIs that express absence of preference, we have quantification on alternatives that are not preferred (or expected). Absence of preference indicates that the FCI is associated with deontically accessible worlds. Deontic modality is concerned with what is preferred, expected or required according to a relevant code of behavior (section 2). This is why, in the case of FCIs that express absence of preference, the modal basis is deontic (see Von Stechow, 2000 on *wh-ever*). In opposition to those of other FCIs, the descriptive content of full set FCIs does not signal association with only one kind of modal basis. Consequently, full set FCIs can possibly be associated with all kinds of modal bases (epistemic, deontic, other).

The results above demonstrate that FCIs are associated with the two major modal bases (epistemic and deontic) detected in the languages of the world (see Kratzer, 1991 for discussion) and allow one to make predictions on the class of FCIs. More precisely, it is predicted that, cross-linguistically, there are three different types of FCIs that are associated with three different semantic features: (1) FCIs that do not indicate association to only one kind of modal basis (feature: all alternatives, without exception, are considered), (2) FCIs that are associated with an epistemic modal basis (feature: unknown alternatives are considered) and (3) FCIs that are associated with a deontic modal basis (feature: non-preferred alternatives are considered).

While it is possible to predict that the FCIs of the languages of the world fall into any of these three categories and have the abovementioned features, it is not possible to predict for each and every language the existence of FCIs that have the six FCI descriptive contents proposed in Vlachou (2007). French is a good example since indifference is not among French FCIs' descriptive contents (section 5.2 and note 16). However, this language does have FCIs that belong to the interpretational category of FCIs that express absence of preference (Table 6). Vlachou's six-way distinction of FCIs descriptive contents is thus not followed below.

As far as the (im)possible clustering of FCIs descriptive contents is concerned, the data above show that one can find FCIs that express (a) only widening (*o-dhipote, qu- que ce soit*), (b) only absence of preference (*o- o-, enas/o o-dhipote*), (c) widening and absence of preference (*n'importe qu-*), (d) ignorance and absence of preference (*un NP quelconque*), and (e) widening, ignorance and absence of preference (*o- ki an*) (see Tables 3 and 6). In other words, the data above predict all possible combinations of descriptive contents in one item except for the couple widening-ignorance (and not absence of preference). Also, there is no FCI that expresses only ignorance. It is not clear from the data above why French and Greek present these two impossibilities. More crosslinguistic data will shed light to this issue and help us understand whether these impossibilities are idiosyncratic or universal.

## 6. The distribution of free choice items

Here, the distribution of FCIs as it has been sketched in Table 5 is analyzed. On the one hand, section 6.1 explains the different behavior of FCIs in affirmative sentences (sections 1 and 4) and proposes the general pattern that determines FCI distribution. On the other hand, sections 6.2–6.4 undertake the analysis of the distribution of each individual item while section 6.5 presents FCI distribution in a synthetic way.

Since all FCIs are associated with alternatives and bring information on the alternatives considered (section 5), one could argue that reference to alternatives is a grammaticality condition on a par with other characterizations such as nonveridicality and irreferentiality (section 1). However, since reference to alternatives is a property shared by other lexical items, it cannot be considered as a grammaticality condition for FCIs.

FCIs' different features (Table 6) are responsible for their different distributional properties and for the existence of more than one grammaticality condition for FCIs, already necessitated by the data discussed in section 4. By the end of the current section three grammaticality conditions for FCIs will have been proposed. FCIs are grammatical only in contexts that satisfy their feature requirement. FCI grammaticality is analyzed in terms of a two-way feature satisfaction of the FCI's feature requirement vis à vis the alternatives under consideration.

### 6.1. The general pattern

As the reader may recall from section 4, the grammaticality of certain FCIs in certain types of affirmative sentences is one of the main puzzling facts in FCIs distribution. Tables 5 and 6 demonstrate that only subset FCIs appear in affirmative sentences; full set FCIs cannot. This is due to their different semantic features. As explained in the previous section, full set FCIs have the semantic feature "all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered". This feature

takes the form of a requirement. The item itself indicates that all the alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered and requires that the context satisfies this requirement.

Negation is a downward entailing operator that allows inferences from sets to subsets and universally quantifies over each and every alternative of the FCI variable. In a negative context, speaker's claim is true for any of the subsets under consideration. In the example below for instance, it is argued that for all kinds of ice cream, it is true that the speaker did not eat ice cream.

(14) *I did not eat ice cream.*

In such a context, speaker's claim is true for all possible individuals, without any exception. Consequently, the feature “all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered” is satisfied by the semantics of negative sentences. This is the reason why widening is expressed and the full set FCI *quoi que ce soit* is grammatical in negative contexts:

(118) *On ne renonce pas petit à petit à quoi que ce soit. Mark Twain*  
 One not renounces not little by little to FCI.what Mark Twain  
*disait: 'rien de plus facile que de renoncer au tabac. J'y*  
 was.saying.3SG nothing of more easy than to renounce to the tobacco I it  
*renonce tous les matins'.*  
 renounce.1SG all the mornings  
 One does not stop anything little by little. Mark Twain used to say: “there is nothing easier than stopping smoking. I stop smoking every morning”. [DB]

Since affirmative sentences do not allow inferences from sets to subsets, they do not quantify universally over the FCI variable; in this way, they do not satisfy the widening FCIs' feature requirement “all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered”. If they did, (135) would mean that the speaker of the sentence ate a rotten apple, a green apple, all possible apples. However this is not the case. This is the reason why full set FCIs like *o-dhipote* and *qu-que ce soit* are ungrammatical in affirmative sentences (83–84).

(135) *I ate an apple.*

(83) \**Efagha otidhipote.*  
 Ate-1SG what.FCI

(84) \**J'ai mangé quoi que ce soit.*  
 I have eaten what.FCI

The feature “all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered” is not available in the case of subset FCIs. This is why they can be grammatical in (certain types of) affirmative contexts:

(74) *Oh, tante Berthe, je suis un monstre, pardonnez-moi... j'ai perdu la tête,*  
 Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster excuse-2PL-me I have-1SG lost the head  
*j'ai dit n'importe quoi... C'est cet air que vous aviez,*  
 I have-1SG said FCI.what it is this air that you had-2PL  
*si froid, si hostile...*  
 so cold so hostile  
 “Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster. Excuse me but I lost my mind. I said just anything... You are so cold, so hostile...” [DB]

As the reader may recall from section 5.2 the question was raised why disparaging readings and not widening survive in affirmative sentences as in (74). Widening is not expressed here because the requirement that all alternatives, without exception, are considered is not satisfied in these cases. As it will be argued in the following sections, disparaging readings survive in all contexts that are not in contradiction with them, and the context in (74) is one of them.

FCIs have different distributional properties because they have different descriptive contents, encoded in terms of semantic features in the items themselves. The FCIs' semantic features (Table 6) require that different sets of alternatives are considered each time. From this, it is predicted that only the contexts that satisfy item's semantic requirement(s) are good contexts. Since FCIs belong to three different interpretational categories, this prediction takes the form of three different grammaticality conditions in the remainder of the present section.

This way of approaching the different distributional properties of FCIs in affirmative sentences (but also in other types of sentences as shown below) gives credit to more recent theories that adopt an heterogeneous view on FCIs. For instance,

by observing that solely existential FCIs are grammatical in affirmative sentences, Chierchia (2006) correctly predicts that the French existential FCI *n'importe qu-* is grammatical in affirmative sentences (see also Vlachou, 2003, 2005, 2006; Menéndez-Benito, 2005; Lazaridou-Chatzigoga, 2007, 2009).

## 6.2. O-dhipote and qu- que ce soit

The FCIs *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* have exactly the same distributional properties (Table 5) because they belong to the same interpretational category of widening (full set) FCIs. By doing so, they share the feature “all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered”. From the previous section it is predicted that they are grammatical only in contexts that satisfy their feature requirement and share the same semantic feature with them. In other words, they are grammatical in all contexts that provide universal quantification over all FCI alternatives, without exception.<sup>21</sup>

More precisely, possibility modal sentences, generic sentences with non-kind denoting predicates, negative and interrogative sentences provide universal quantification over all alternatives introduced by the indefinite they contain. This is why *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* are grammatical in these sentences.

Let me start with the behavior of widening FCIs in the possibility and necessity modal sentences:

- (85) *Il est parfaitement possible à qui que ce soit de comprendre ces choses*  
 It is perfectly possible to FCI.who to understand these things  
*facilement en recueillant un certain nombre de constatations exactes à leur*  
 easily collecting a certain number of findings exact to their  
*sujet.*  
 subject  
 “It is perfectly possible for anybody to understand these things easily by collecting a certain number of exact findings about them”. [DB]
- (86) *Pote dhen pistepsa oti i arxei trajiki ine mono ja*  
 Never not believed-1SG that the ancient tragedy.writers are-3PL only for  
*anixto teatro. Ta ergha me mia pagkosmiotita borun na pexthun*  
 open.air theater the pieces with a universality can-3PL SUBJ be.played-3PL  
*opudhipote.*  
 FCI.where  
 “I never believed that tragedies can only be played in open air theaters. World famous pieces can be played anywhere”. [DB]
- (29) \**Prepi na fas opjodhipote fruto.*  
 Must SUBJ eat-2SG FCI.which fruit
- (58) \**Tu avais besoin de faire quoi que ce soit.*  
 You had-2SG need to do FCI.what

A proposition is identified with a set of possible worlds in which it is true in possible world semantics. Suppose that we have a set  $A_w$  of possible worlds. Aloni (2003) analyzed possibility modal operators as universal quantifiers over a set of alternative propositions which are true in at least one of the possible worlds in the set  $A_w$ . According to Aloni, when the modal sentence contains an indefinite, alternative propositions are defined in terms of the alternative values of this indefinite:

- (136) *The possibility modal operator* (Aloni, 2003)  
 $\diamond \phi$  is true iff every alternative induced by  $\phi$  is compatible with the relevant set of worlds in  $A_w$

The possibility modal operator is a universal quantifier over alternative propositions defined in terms of alternative values of the indefinite that they contain. Consequently, we also have universal quantification over all alternative values of the variable introduced by this indefinite, without exception. The widening requirement being satisfied, full set FCIs are grammatical in possibility modal sentences (85–86).

The validity of this hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that the full set FCIs *qu- que ce soit* and *o-dhipote* are ungrammatical in necessity modal sentences (29, 58). Aloni (2003) analyzed necessity operators as existential quantifiers

<sup>21</sup> As they belong to more than one interpretational categories, the distribution of *n'importe qu-* and *o- ki an* (which also express widening) is studied in the following sections.

over alternative propositions. As mentioned above, when the modal sentence contains an indefinite, alternative propositions are defined in terms of the alternative values of this indefinite:

(137) *The necessity modal operator* (Aloni, 2003)

$\Box\phi$  is true iff at least one alternative induced by  $\phi$  is entailed by  $A_w$

Since necessity modal operators are existential operators over alternative propositions defined in terms of the indefinite that they contain, they do not satisfy the widening requirement. For this reason, widening (full set) FCIs are ungrammatical in necessity modal sentences.

The validity of the hypothesis that only when widening is satisfied by the context are *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* grammatical is further reinforced by their behavior in generic sentences:

(88) *Opjadhypote ghata exi ura.*

FCI.which cat has tail

“Any cat has a tail.”

(89) \**Opjosdhipote rinokeros zijizi tesseris tonus kata meso oro.*

FCI.which rhino weighs four tons on average

(90) *Quelque chat que ce soit a une queue.*

FCI.which cat has a tail

“Any cat has a tail.”

(91) \**Quelque rhinocéros que ce soit pèse quatre tonnes en moyenne.*

FCI.which rhino weighs four tons on average

Widening requires that all the alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered. Whether generics are universal quantifiers is a debatable issue (see Carlson and Pelletier, 1995:1–124). What is important here is that in the generic sentences in (88) and (90), even a regular indefinite is universally interpreted:

(138) *A cat has a tail. = Every cat has a tail.*

Consequently, all alternatives introduced by the widening FCI are considered in these sentences. The requirement of widening being satisfied, (88) and (90) are well-formed.

Although widening is expressed in generic sentences (as just explained), widening FCIs cannot appear as subjects of generic sentences with kind-denoting predicates because here we do not have universal quantification over all alternatives, of the relevant type, without exception. The predicate *zijizi tesseris tonus kata meso oro/pèse quatre tonnes en moyenne* applies only to the kind ‘rhino’ and not to each individual element of this kind. In other words, only the *class* of rhinos, in general, and not each individual rhino, separately, weighs four tons on average. Widening FCIs require that all alternatives of the relevant type, individually (without exception), are considered. The kind-denoting predicate *zijizi tesseris tonus kata meso oro/pèse quatre tonnes en moyenne* does not satisfy this requirement. This is the reason why (89) and (91) are ill-formed.

The validity of this hypothesis is further reinforced by the behavior of *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* in the negative sentences in (92–93). As explained in the previous section, widening is expressed in negative contexts because the FCI variable is universally quantified in these sentences.

(92) *Personne fait jamais attention à quoi que ce soit sur un parking de*

Nobody does never attention to FCI.what on a parking of

*supermarché, l'endroit rend les gens à moitié cinglés.*

supermarket, the place makes the people to half crazy

“Nobody ever pays attention to anything in the parking lot of a supermarket. The place makes people almost crazy”. [DB]

(93) *Dhen exi stin Ellada opjadhypote sinandisi me opjodhipote Ellina*

Not has-3SG to.the Greece FCI.which meeting with FCI.which Greek

*aksiomatuxo, ipa.*

dignitary said-1SG

“As I said, in Greece, he does not have any meeting with any Greek dignitary”. [DB]

Although the semantics of negation satisfies the widening requirement, the pragmatics of the sentence does not satisfy it in (60) and in (94) because it does not allow universal quantification over all all alternatives without exception. If widening were available in these sentences, they would mean that the choice was not made in any possible way (widening) but in accordance with the sociological profile of these indecisive people. This interpretation is contradictory, widening is blocked, and, therefore, widening FCIs are blocked therein (see also section 2).

- (60) #*Le choix n'a pas été fait de quelque manière que ce soit mais conformément*  
 The choice not has not been made FCI.how but in accordance  
*à ce que laissent prévoir les caractères sociologiques de ces*  
 with this that were.leaving-3PL predict the characters sociological of these  
*indécis: niveau de vie, résidence, religion.*  
 indecisive level of life residency religion
- (94) #*I epiloji dhen ejine me opjondhipote tropo ala simfona me*  
 The choice not was.made with FCI.which way but in.accordance with  
*ta osa proevlepan oi kinoniologiki xaraktires afton ton anapofasiston.*  
 the what predicted the sociological characters these the indecisive

The interrogative sentences in (77–78) demonstrate that, when the overall properties of the context satisfy the widening requirement, both *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* are grammatical:

- (77) *Kata ti simerini sinandisi tu Prothipurghu me ton Proedhro tis*  
 During the today's meeting the Prime Minister with the President the  
*Dimokratias, ipirkse opjadhipe niksi ja to thema ton*  
 Dimokratias, there.was-3SG FCI.which allusion for the subject the  
*ekloghon?*  
 elections  
 “Was there any allusion to the subject of elections during today's meeting between the Prime Minister and the President?” [DB]
- (78) *A-t-il un jour fait quoi que ce soit pour les rapprocher?*  
 Has he a day done FCI.what for them bring-closer  
 “Has he ever done anything to reconcile them?” [DB]

According to Hamblin (1973) (see also Aloni, 2003), the meaning of a question represents the set of all propositions for which the truth value is under consideration. When an interrogative sentence contains an indefinite, these propositions are defined in terms of the possible values of the variable that this indefinite introduces. Since the meaning of an interrogative sentence represents the whole set of propositions for which the truth value is under consideration and these propositions are defined in terms of the alternative values of this indefinite, we have universal quantification over FCI alternatives, without exception. Widening (which requires that all alternatives of the relevant type are considered) is satisfied by the semantics of interrogative sentences and, therefore, the sentences above are well-formed.

The validity of this hypothesis is further reinforced by the affirmative sentences in (83–84). As explained in section 6.1 widening FCIs are ungrammatical in affirmative sentences because the widening requirement is not satisfied by the semantics of these sentences.

- (83) \**Efagha otidhipote.*  
 Ate-1SG what.FCI
- (84) \**J'ai mangé quoi que ce soit.*  
 I have eaten what.FCI

As predicted in section 4.3, *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* have the same distributional properties because they share the same semantic feature (“all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered”). They are grammatical if and only the context shares the same feature, that is, provides universal quantification over all FCI alternatives, without exception. As it will be shown in the following sections, the situation is not the same for the FCIs that belong to other interpretational categories.

6.3. *N'importe qu-*

Consider the data below:

- (74) *Oh, tante Berthe, je suis un monstre, pardonnez-moi... j'ai perdu la tête,*  
 Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster excuse-2PL-me I have-1SG lost the head  
*j'ai dit n'importe quoi... C'est cet air que vous aviez,*  
 I have-1SG said FCI.what it is this air that you had-2PL  
*si froid, si hostile...*  
 so cold so hostile  
 "Oh, aunt Berthe, I am a monster. Excuse me but I lost my mind. I said just anything... You are so cold, so hostile..." [DB]
- (79) *J'ai répondu n'importe quoi: -International Caravaille Publicité.*  
 I have-1SG answered FCI.what International Caravaille Advertisement  
 "[...] in Orly: Society I...C...P...I didn't know the meaning of these initials. I  
 swallowed my saliva I said:  
 - It's an advertisement agency.  
 - And so what?  
 I answered just anything: International Caravaille Advertisement". [DB]
- (27) *\*Hier Marie a apprécié n'importe quel livre.*  
 Yesterday Mary has appreciated FCI.which book
- (87) *\*J'ai senti n'importe quelle douleur.*  
 I have felt FCI.which pain

According to Table 6, *n'importe qu-* belongs both to the interpretational category of full set FCIs as well as to the category of subset FCIs that express absence of preference. Widening is not available in the examples above for the same reason it is not in (83–84). *N'importe qu-* is grammatical in the affirmative sentences in (74, 79) because the context satisfies its requirement that only alternatives that are not particularly preferred by the agent are considered. The speaker means that she said something and that, among the things that she could have said, she does not prefer what she said. In opposition to what happens in the case of widening FCIs, satisfaction here is achieved not because both the context as well as the item share the same semantic feature (otherwise the meaning of absence of preference would survive even in the absence of *n'importe qu-* in (131) below). Instead, in (74, 79) we have satisfaction because the semantics of the context is not in contradiction with item's semantic feature.<sup>22,23</sup>

- (131) *I said a joke.*

The widening requirement is not satisfied in (27, 87) for the same reason it is not in (83–84). The requirement that only non-preferred alternatives are considered is in contradiction to the semantics of the predicate *a apprécié* "appreciated" that requires that the alternatives under consideration should be the preferred ones. Normally, when one appreciates a theory, one prefers it contra other theories. Since the requirement that only non-preferred alternatives are considered is not satisfied by the context, absence of preference is not expressed in (27). Since neither the requirement that all alternatives

<sup>22</sup> The impossibilities below are due to the fact that the use of *quand*, *combien* and *quel* is not productive in the formation of FCIs (note 12):

viii. *#Hier soir il a donné au serveur n'importe combien comme pourboire.*

Yesterday night he has given to.the servant FCI.how.much as pourboire

ix. *#Hier soir tu es rentrée n'importe quand/ à n'importe quelle heure.*

Yesterday night you are-2SG came.back FCI.whenever/to FCI.which hour

x. *#Un peu plus loin, il y a n'importe quelle chose.*

A bit more long there FCI.which thing

<sup>23</sup> A reviewer suggests that examples like (79) involve the possibility of interpreting *n'importe qu-* as a cognate object of the verb (respond/give a response) in affirmative episodic sentences. Data as the one below from Vlachou (2007) show that *n'importe qu-* can also be used in subject position in affirmative episodic contexts:

xi. *N'importe qui pouvait gratter. N'importe qui a gagné.*

FCI.who could scratch FCI.who has won

"Anybody could participate by scratching. A poor guy won.

(title of the film of Eric Latigau *Un ticket pour l'espace*)

of the relevant type, without exception, are considered nor the requirement that only non-preferred alternatives are considered is satisfied, *n'importe qu-* is ungrammatical in (27).

The validity of this hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that (87) is also ill-formed. The meaning component of absence of preference requires that only non-preferred alternatives are considered. However, if absence of preference were expressed, this sentence would mean that the subject felt a non-preferred pain which is a pragmatically weird interpretation since it is not possible to distinguish among preferred and non-preferred pains. For this reason, this meaning does not emerge either. Since neither the requirement that all alternatives, without exception, are considered nor the requirement that only non-preferred alternatives are considered is satisfied by the context, *n'importe qu-* is ungrammatical in (87).

Summarizing, the distribution of the French FCI *n'importe qu-* reinforces the validity of the hypothesis that a FCI is grammatical only in contexts that satisfy its descriptive contents' requirement vis-à-vis the alternatives under consideration. In opposition to the widening FCIs *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit*, *n'importe qu-* is grammatical in (certain types of) affirmative sentences because it belongs to the interpretational category of subset FCIs as well.

As a full set FCI, the distribution of *n'importe qu-* reinforces the validity of the hypothesis that widening FCIs are grammatical in contexts that satisfy their semantic feature's requirement, that is, in contexts that provide universal quantification over the variable that they introduce. As a subset FCI that expresses absence of preference, it is grammatical if and only if the context satisfies the requirement "non-preferred alternatives are considered". In opposition to what happens with *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit*, *n'importe qu-* is grammatical even in cases in which it does not share the same semantic feature(s) with the context. In these cases, grammaticality is the result of the absence of semantic clash.

#### 6.4. *Enas/o o-dhipote, o- o-, o- ki an, un NP quelconque*

Consider the data below:

- (52) *O Ed Wood (1922–1978) theorite o xiroteros skinothetis tu Amerikanikou*  
The Ed Wood (1922–1978) is considered the worst film director the American  
*kinimatografu olon ton epoxon. Ekane ta panda monos tu: paragogi, senario,*  
cinema all the seasons did-3SG the all alone his production scripts  
*skinothesia ke xrisimopiise ton opjodhipote ja ithopio.*  
staging and used-3SG FCI.which for actor  
"Ed Wood (1922–1978) is considered to be the worst film director of the American cinema ever. He did everything alone: production, scripts, staging. He also used just any actor." [DB]
- (80) *Jean-François chantonna sur un air quelconque: Je*  
Jean-François murmured-3SG with a.rhythm FCI.which I  
*l'appelais ma rose de Bou Saod [..].*  
her was.calling-1SG my rose of Bou Saod  
"Jean-François murmured with some kind of rhythm: 'I was calling her 'my rose of Bou Saod'". [DB]
- (81) *Pulise to spiti tis oso oso ja na ton plirosi.*  
Sold-3SG the house her FCI.how.much for SUBJ him pay-3SG  
"She sold her house at just any price in order to pay him". [DB]
- (82) *Opjos ki an ipe kati kako ja sena, tha ton skotoso.*  
FCI.who said-3SG something bad for you will him kill-1SG  
"I will kill whoever said something bad about you." [DB]

In opposition to the widening FCIs *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit*, *enas/o o-dhipote, o- o-, o- ki an* and *un NP quelconque* are grammatical in the affirmative sentences above because their semantic requirements are satisfied in these contexts. *Ton opjodhipote* is grammatical in (52) as there is nothing in the context that blocks the feature "non-preferred alternatives are considered". In this sentence, it is asserted that the film director in question chose an actor that he does not particularly prefer.

The same is true for (80). There is nothing that blocks the semantics of *un NP quelconque* in this sentence. *un NP quelconque* may express either ignorance or absence of preference in (80). Under the first reading, the author does not remember the exact rhythm that Jean-François used. Under the second, the author asserts that Jean-François murmured with an average (not particularly preferred) rhythm.

There is nothing in the context that blocks the semantics of absence of preference in (81) either. For this reason, *oso oso* is grammatical therein. The speaker claims that the subject sold her house at a price that she does not like in order to pay the person in question.

*Opjós ki an* is grammatical in (82) under a widening or an ignorance reading. As explained in section 5.1, when a widening FCI combines with a RC, this clause behaves like the restrictor of a hidden conditional construction. Since the widening FCI introduces a relative clause that behaves as a conditional, all the alternatives that it introduces, without exception, can be its value in such a context. The speaker in (82) menaces her addressee that she will kill no matter who said something bad about her: if x said something bad about her, she will kill x; if y said something bad about her, she will kill y. Under an ignorance reading, the speaker does not know the person(s) who said something bad about her addressee. Since the semantics of the context satisfies both the widening as well as the ignorance requirement, *o- ki an* is grammatical under both readings in (83).

The distribution of *enas/o o-dhipote*, *o- o-*, *o- ki an* and *un NP quelconque* reinforces the validity of the hypothesis that a FCI is grammatical only in contexts that satisfy their descriptive contents' requirement vis-à-vis the alternatives under consideration. In opposition to *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit*, *enas/o o-dhipote*, *o- o-*, *o- ki an* and *un NP quelconque* are grammatical in affirmative sentences because they have different semantic properties.

The distribution of the above FCIs indicate that a FCI that belongs both to the interpretational category of ignorance FCIs as well as to the category of items that express absence of preference is grammatical if and only if the context satisfies (at least one of) the following two requirements: 1) alternatives that are not preferred by an agent are considered, 2) unknown alternatives are considered.

In opposition to what happens with *o-dhipote* and *qu- que ce soit* and as with *n'importe qu-* feature satisfaction does not involve sharing of the same semantic feature(s) by *enas/o o-dhipote*, *o- o-*, *o- ki an* and *un NP quelconque* on the one hand and the context on the other. Instead, FCI grammaticality is the result of the absence of semantic clash.

### 6.5. Synthesis

FCIs have semantic features. They check whether the context has a certain property that satisfies their feature(s)' requirement vis à vis the alternatives considered: a) "all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered", b) "unknown alternatives are considered", c) "non-preferred alternatives are considered" (Table 6).

Feature satisfaction can be translated in two ways. One way is to have a context that has also, by itself, the meaning component (or else feature) required. This is what happens with full set (widening) FCIs. Widening FCIs are grammatical in those contexts that satisfy the following semantic requirement: "all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered" (section 6.1). Negative sentences provide universal quantification over the FCI variable. Consequently, independently of the indefinite that they contain the semantic requirement that all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered is satisfied in these contexts:

- (92) *Personne fait jamais attention à quoi que ce soit sur un parking de*  
 Nobody does never attention to FCI.what on a parking of  
*supermarché, l'endroit rend les gens à moitié cinglés.*  
 supermarket the place makes the people to half crazy  
 "Nobody ever pays attention to anything in the parking lot of a supermarket. The place makes people almost crazy". [DB]

This type of feature satisfaction reminds us of the phenomenon of feature checking (Chomsky, 1995). As in these cases, item's semantic features are checked against the semantic features of the context and both the item as well as the context share the same feature. In the case of widening FCIs, the feature of universal quantification over all FCI alternatives, without exception, is shared both by the item as well as by the context:

- (139) *Grammaticality condition for free choice items that express widening*  
 A FCI that expresses widening requires that all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered and is grammatical if and only if the context satisfies this semantic requirement, that is, provides universal quantification over all its alternatives, without exception.

Although their proposals were different, this is more or less the spirit along which existing licensing theories have been developed. As the reader may recall from section 1, the notions of nonveridicality/non-episodicity (Giannakidou, 2001) and non-individuation/irreferentiality (Jayez and Tovena, 2005) can be assigned both to the item as well as to the context. A context is nonveridical or irreferential even in the absence of a FCI. However, this type of feature satisfaction covers widening FCIs only. There is also a second way to have feature satisfaction. And this type of satisfaction is not taken into account by existing licensing conditions. That is, we can have a context that does not have a specific semantic feature that fulfills the FCI requirement. Here, again, the FCI checks its semantics against the semantics of the context. However, it

does not find the same feature on the context. Instead, the FCI is grammatical in this case *because there is no conflict* between its semantics and the semantics of the context. This is the case of subset FCIs. For instance, it is not the case that the subset FCI *oso oso* is grammatical in the affirmative sentence in (81) because the context *has* the feature “non-preferred alternatives are considered”; if this were the case, then this feature would be present also if *oso oso* were absent. However, as shown in (140), this is not the case.

- (81) *Pulise to spiti tis oso oso ja na ton plirosi.*  
 Sold-3SG the house her FCI.how.much for SUBJ him pay-3SG  
 “She sold her house at just any price in order to pay him”. [DB]
- (140) *To pulise akriva.*  
 It sold-3SG expensive  
 “He sold it at a very high price.”

*Oso oso* is grammatical here because the sentence *can be* associated with non-preferred alternatives. In the same way of reasoning, *un air quelconque* is grammatical in (80) not because the context has the feature(s) “unknown alternatives are considered” or “non-preferred alternatives are considered”. Instead, it is grammatical because there is no clash between these features and the context.

- (80) *Jean-François chantonna sur un air quelconque: Je*  
 Jean-François murmured-3SG with a.rhythm FCI.which I  
*l'appelais ma rose de Bou Saod [...].*  
 her was.calling-1SG my rose of Bou Saod  
 “Jean-François murmured with some kind of rhythm: ‘I was calling her ‘my rose of Bou Saod’”. [DB]

In opposition to what happens with full set FCIs, in the case of subset FCIs there is no contextual feature that predicts the ungrammaticality or the grammaticality of subset FCIs. We can only formulate a condition that demonstrates the crucial semantic feature of the item but it is not possible to delimit the contexts in which subset FCIs are (un)grammatical:

- (141) *Grammaticality condition for free choice items that express ignorance*  
 A subset FCI that expresses ignorance requires that alternatives that are not known are considered and is grammatical if and only if the sentence satisfies this requirement.
- (142) *Grammaticality condition for free choice items that express absence of preference*  
 A subset FCI that expresses absence of preference requires that alternatives that are not preferred are considered and is grammatical if and only if the sentence satisfies this requirement.

Examples as the one below demonstrate that if none of the semantic requirements of a FCI is satisfied then the FCI is ungrammatical. As a full set FCI *n'importe qu-* is blocked below because the affirmative context does not provide universal quantification over all its alternatives. As subset FCI that expresses absence of preference it is blocked because the combination of its semantics with the semantics of the context causes a semantic clash. Otherwise, this sentence would mean that the subject felt a pain that she does not prefer. This is a pragmatically weird interpretation, since there are no preferred and non-preferred pains. Since the context satisfies neither the widening requirement nor the requirement of absence of preference, *n'importe qu-* is ungrammatical:

- (88) *\*J'ai senti n'importe quelle douleur.*<sup>24</sup>  
 I have felt FCI.which pain

<sup>24</sup> A reviewer notices that *n'importe qu-* remains problematic in this sentence even when the NP *douleur* is replaced by the verb's cognate object, *sensation* “sensation” (xii) that denotes something for which one can have a preference. However, the sentence in (xiii) shows that the ungrammaticality of (xii) is not due to *n'importe qu-*. Instead, the examples in (xiii–xiv) show that (xii) is ungrammatical because the verb *sentir* “feel” is not combinable with its cognate object.

xii. *\*J'ai senti n'importe quelle sensation.*

I have felt FCI.which sensation

xiii. *\*J'ai senti une sensation.*

I have felt a sensation

xiv. *J'ai senti une douleur.*

I have felt a pain

As it has been argued in section 4, it is impossible to formulate a licensing condition that predicts the distributional behavior of all FCIs. The different distributional properties of FCIs made the question of whether FCIs form a distinct class of items even more urgent. FCIs form a distinct class of items. Their semantic core property is that they have descriptive contents that bring information on the alternatives under consideration. The crucial property that distinguishes FCIs among each other and reflects their different distribution is that they require that different sets of alternatives are considered.

Chomsky (1965) proposed that lexical items come with selectional restrictions that make them “picky” on the context in which they appear. The analysis above shows that, just like other lexical items, FCIs have selectional restrictions that make them “picky” on the context in which they appear. Depending on their inherent descriptive content(s), FCIs have the following semantic features that require that different (sets of) alternatives are considered: (a) “all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered”, (b) “unknown alternatives are considered”, and (c) “non-preferred alternatives are considered”. A FCI is grammatical if the context satisfies its semantic requirement vis à vis the alternatives considered. Feature satisfaction is made possible in two ways. One, both the item as well as the context share the same semantic feature. This is the case of full set FCIs. Two, the context does not have the same semantic feature with the item but its semantics is not in contradiction with it. This is the case of subset FCIs.

## 7. Conclusion

Free choice items (FCIs) form a distinct class of lexical items. Just like other lexical items, they are associated with alternatives. Their core semantic property is that they have descriptive contents that bring information on these alternatives. In doing so, they form three interpretational categories: (1) full set FCIs, or else widening FCIs, require that all alternatives of the relevant type, without exception, are considered, (2) subset FCIs that express ignorance require that unknown alternatives are considered and (3) subset FCIs that express absence of preference require that non-preferred alternatives are considered. FCIs meaning components are encoded in the form of semantic features in the individual items and give rise to three different grammaticality conditions for the class of FCIs. FCI grammaticality is analyzed in terms of a two-way feature satisfaction of the FCI's feature requirement vis à vis the alternatives under consideration.

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