

The Expression of Indefinite Pronouns in English

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Abstract:

This article is devoted to the expression of indefinite pronouns in English. Indefinite pronouns are pronouns that are used to refer to someone or something in a general way, without being specific about whom or what you're referring to. The main group of indefinite pronouns is formed by various combinations of no-, any-, some-, and every- with -thing, -one, and -body (e.g., "anything").

Keywords: indefinite, pronouns, specific, someone, somebody, something, group, definite, person.

Introduction. Indefinite pronouns do not refer to a definite person, place or object. In the English language, there is a special group of indefinite pronouns formed using a quantifier or distribution, preceded by *any*, *some*, *every*, *no*.

Indefinite pronouns with *some* and *any* are used to describe an indefinite or unfinished number, just as *some* and *any* are used independently.

In English indefinite pronoun occupies the same place in a sentence as a noun.

Examples:

"Well, perhaps we can arrange to go *somewhere*." (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 92)

"That sounds like *somebody* that can act, doesn't it?" said Quincel.

"Yes, it does." (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 97)

Literature review. Professor Michael S. Hart is the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with *anyone*. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 309)

He would accept the situation with all its difficulties; he would not try to answer the objections which cold truth thrust upon him. He would promise anything, everything, and trust to fortune to disentangle him. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 125)

Affirmative sentences

In affirmative clauses, indefinite pronouns with *some* are used to describe an indefinite number, indefinite pronouns with *every* are used to describe the full number, and pronouns with *no* are used to describe the absence. Indefinite pronouns with *no* are often used in affirmative clauses with a negative value, however, such clauses are not negative because they lack the word *not*.

Examples: mustn't think because I indulge you in some things that you can keep *everybody* waiting. I won't have it." (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 126). "Somebody said that you went out riding with him and that he came here every night." (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 135). Finally, seeing that no one was coming, he turned and went back to his cab. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 143). "Carrie," she called, "Carrie," but her own voice sounded far away, and the strange waters were blurring everything. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 51). She came away suffering as though she had lost something. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 51). Hurstwood's residence could scarcely be said to be infused with this home spirit. It lacked that toleration and regard without which the home is nothing. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 53). Trucks and vans were rattling in a noisy line and *everywhere* men were shielding themselves as best they could. He scarcely noticed the picture. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 142). It was the first time that Hurstwood had had a chance to see her facing the audience quite alone, for nowhere else had she been without a foil of some sort. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 113).

Literature review. Any and the indefinite pronoun derived from it can be used in affirmative clauses with a value close to every: whichever person, whichever place, whichever thing, etc.

Examples:

"There you go again," he observed. "One would think I never did *anything*, the way you begin." (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 117). "It's not so," said Carrie, "and I'm not going with *anybody* else. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 137). "You'd better do that," he said. "There's no use your packing up now. You can't go *anywhere*." (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 138).

Negative sentences. Negative clauses can only be formed with those indefinite pronouns that include *any*.

Examples:

"Oh, no," said Carrie. "I would take anything to begin with. "I don't have anything to eat. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 152). "No," said Lola, "not very often. You won't go anywhere. That's what's the matter with you." (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 277). There was an earlier exodus this year of people who were anybody to the watering places and Europe. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 118).

Research methodology. Many negative clauses that include indefinite pronouns with *any* can become affirmative clauses with a negative value using an indefinite pronoun with *no*. However, with such a transformation, the meaning itself changes: a sentence that includes indefinite pronouns with *no* stronger, and can carry an emotional burden such as protection, despair, anger, etc.

Examples:

Neutral: "No, you didn't," she contradicted, suddenly recovering her voice. "You didn't do anything of the kind." (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 135).

Protection: She knew what it was to meet with people who were indifferent, to walk alone amid so many who cared absolutely nothing about you. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 79).

Despair: I have nobody to talk to.

Protection/anger: Still she delighted to convince herself that there was nothing she would like better. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 43).

Negative questions:

Indefinite pronouns with *every*, *some*, and *any* are used to form negative sentences. Answers to such questions are "yes" or "no".

Analysis and results. Pronouns with *any* and *every* participate in the creation of the present question, while the pronoun *some* in the question assumes that we know or guess the answer.

Examples:

"Didn't find *anything*, eh?" said Hanson. "No." (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 46). "Will you have enough to buy in *anywhere* else?" asked Carrie. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 205). Is everyone here? Signs were everywhere numerous. (T. Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 7).

These questions can become rhetorical if made negative. Anyone who asks a question of this kind expects a "no" answer.

Some and the pronouns that come from it are used only in those questions to which we think we already know the answer, or in other kinds of so-called questions (invitations, requests, etc). The person who asks such questions is waiting for the answer "Yes".

Examples:

Are you looking for someone?

Have you lost something?

Are you going somewhere?

Could somebody help me, please? = request

Would you like to go somewhere this weekend? = invitation

These questions can be even more definite if they have a negative form. In this case, the questioner is confident that he will receive the answer "Yes".

Examples:

Aren't you looking for *someone*?

Haven't you lost *something*?

Aren't you going *somewhere*?

Couldn't *somebody* help me, please?

Wouldn't you like to go *somewhere* this weekend?

The study has come to the conclusion that, in English, the indefinite feature exists in the pronoun, not in the article, and the article has a syntactic function rather than a semantic one. The study shows also that, semantically, indefiniteness in English function is internal to the language system. Syntactically, the indefinite item is obligatory in certain positions to perform different functions. Pragmatically, the indefinite item acquires additional meaning from the context in which it occurs.

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