

**The syntax of negative polarity items in Syrian Arabic
based on the dialect of Deir Ezzor**

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Abstract

Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) are pervasive among languages. Cross-linguistic examination of NPIs continues to shed light on the complexity of this phenomenon. One unfortunate fact is that NPIs in Arabic dialects have seen relatively little examination in comparison with NPIs in other languages, such as English, Dutch, and Greek. The present study aims at contributing to filling this lacuna in research. It is a descriptive and analytical study of the syntax of negative polarity items in the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor, a city on the Euphrates in the north-eastern part of Syria; this Arabic dialect is Mesopotamian and not Levantine. This thesis contributes to the study of NPIs by providing an extensive inventory of these items in an Arabic dialect and a deeper analysis of these items' behaviour and licensing conditions. This study moves beyond the already known negative polarity pronouns and determiners to discuss negative polarity auxiliary verbs and negative polarity lexical verbs. It also expands the discussion of the idiomatic NPIs by discussing minimisers and maximisers. This thesis discusses the largest number of NPIs in any Arabic dialect. It also sheds light on areas where a contribution is needed, such as a thorough examination of the licensing contexts, e.g., the subjunctive and comparatives. This study examines the licensing proposals and concludes that Giannakidou's nonveridicality theory offers the needed account. This study proposes new ways to examine the contexts where the licensing is possible, e.g. considering the details of comparative structures and what makes them licensing environments for NPIs. This study concludes that further research is needed and that researchers should not limit their exploration to testing the proposals that account for the licensing problem. Details do matter, and the details are what we should be looking for.

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Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABS	absolute
ACC	accusative
adj	adjective
AGR	agreement
AP	active participle
ASP	aspect
COMP	complementiser
CON	conditional particle
CONJ	conjunction
COP	copula
CP	complementiser phrase
DU	dual
DAT	dative
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner

DISC	discourse marker
DP	determiner phrase
DzA	Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor
EX.PAR	existential particle
F	feminist
FM	focus marker
FOCP	focus phrase
FP	functional projection
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual
IMP	imperative
IMPF	imperfect
IND	indicative
INDEF	indefinite
IP	inflection phrase
JUSS	jussive
LF	logical form
M	masculine
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic

MOD	modal
NC	negative concord
NCI	negative concord item
NEG	negative marker
NegP	negative phrase
NI	negative indefinite
NOM	nominative
NP	noun phrase
NPI	negative polarity item
OBJ	object
PAR	particle
PART	participle
PAST	past
PRF	perfective
PF	phonetic form
P	plural
POSS	possessive
PP	prepositional phrase
PREP	preposition
PRES	present

PROG	progressive
PRON	pronoun
Q	interrogative marker
QUAN	quantifier
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular
Spec	specifier
SyA	Syrian Arabic
TAG	tag (question tag)
TP	tense phrase
VP	verb phrase

Symbols

- * Ungrammatical sentence
- *(...) Ungrammatical sentence with the absence of the parenthesized expression
- (*...) Ungrammatical sentence with the presence of the parenthesized expression
- \forall Universal quantifier
- \exists Existential quantifier
- \neg Negative operator

List of Transliteration Symbols

Symbol	Phonetic Description	Examples	
ʔ	Voiceless glottal stop	ʔab	Father
b	Voiced bilabial stop	bāb	Door
t	Voiceless dental stop	tārīx	History
ṭ	Voiceless dental fricative	ṭalaṭāʔ	Tuesday
j	Voiced post-alveolar affricate	jāmiʕ	Mosque
č	Voiceless post-alveolar affricate	čəlib	Dog
ħ	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative	ħubb	Love
x	Voiceless uvular fricative	xāṭir	Yoghurt
d	Voiced dental stop	dār	House
ḍ	Voiced dental fricative	ḍahab	Gold
r	Voiced alveolar trill	rūḥ	Soul
z	Voiced alveolar fricative	zalama	Man
s	Voiceless alveolar fricative	səyyāra	Car
š	Voiceless post-alveolar fricative	šiʕr	Poetry
ṣ	Voiceless alveolar emphatic fricative	ṣārūx	Rocket
ḍ	Voiced dental emphatic stop	ḍarūri	Necessary
ṭ	Voiceless dental emphatic stop	ṭālib	Student

z	Voiced dental emphatic fricative	ẓuhr	Midday
ʕ	Voiced pharyngeal fricative	ʕalam	Flag
ġ	Voiced uvular fricative	ġada	Lunch
f	Voiceless labiodental fricative	fār	Mouse
q	Voiceless uvular stop	qanūn	Law
k	Voiceless velar stop	ktāb	Book
g	Voiced velar stop	gilit	I said
l	Voiced alveolar lateral	lāʕib	Player
m	Voiced bilabial nasal	mudīr	Manager
n	Voiced alveolar nasal	nār	Fire
h	Voiceless glottal fricative	hōn	Here
w	Voiced labio-velar approximant	wādi	Valley
y	Voiced palatal approximant	yōm	Day
ā	Low front unrounded long vowel	bārid	Cold
ī	High front unrounded long vowel	jadīd	New
ū	High back rounded long vowel	bidūn	Without
ō	Mid-back rounded long vowel	mōt	Death
ē	Mid-front unrounded long vowel	dēn	Debt
u	High back rounded short vowel	xubuz	Bread

a	Low front unrounded short vowel	fann	Art
i	High front unrounded short vowel	miliḥ	Salt
ə	Mid-central unrounded short vowel	qabəl	Before

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Negation has occupied a significant status in linguistic research cross-linguistically. It is one of a few linguistic phenomena that has fascinated not only linguists but also philosophers and logicians (de Swart, 2010). There are many quotes that shed light on the unique status of negation. One such quote is that of Laurence Horn: ‘Negation is what makes us human, imbuing us with the capacity to deny, to contradict, to misrepresent, to lie, and to convey irony’ (Horn, 2010, p. 1). The enthusiasm expressed by Horn for the investigation of negation is shared by many researchers who explored various aspects of the phenomenon of negation. This phenomenon has proved to be dynamic in the sense that it continues to evolve where some languages tend to develop their ways of expressing negation and that certain linguistic expressions tend to acquire a special relationship with negation and consequently come to express particular meanings in its domain.

Some of the most prominent products of grammaticalisation are related to the negation phenomenon. Grammaticalisation is the process where particular words acquire a new usage or develop a peculiar behaviour; in particular, certain items or structures gradually lose their lexical properties and acquire grammatical functions (Hopper & Traugott, 2003). As a matter of fact, the archetypal example of grammaticalisation is what Dahl (1979) called ‘Jespersen’s cycle’, a reference to Otto Jespersen, who stated a century ago:

‘The history of negative expressions in various languages makes us witness the following curious fluctuation: the original negative adverb is first weakened, then found insufficient and therefore strengthened, generally through some additional word, and this in turn may be felt as the negative proper and may then in the course of time be subject to the same development as the original word.’ (Jespersen, 1917, p.4)

Furthermore, Jespersen (1917) described how some ‘positive words turned into negative ones’ (1917, p.21), as is the case with Spanish *nada* ‘nothing’, originally from Latin *nata* ‘thing’, and *nadie* ‘nobody’, originally from Latin *natus* ‘person’. These words also show affinity to negation in the sense that they do occur with a negative marker even though they themselves indicate a negative meaning. Further research into the behaviour of such items in Spanish and other languages continues to reveal more details about the nature of negation and the peculiar behaviour of various items in its domain. Research also highlights how languages seem to be continuously pursuing ways to strengthen the meaning of negation and make it more emphatic or, in some cases, use it to express a rhetorical meaning. This thesis aims to contribute to the exploration of the interaction between negation and the set of items known as negative polarity items.

The following section, 1.2, sheds more light on the phenomenon of polarity sensitivity by discussing its main types: negative concord and negative polarity. The focus is on negative polarity items. Section 1.3 describes the purpose of the study, which is to contribute to the research on NPIs. Section 1.4 comments on the significance of the study. Section 1.5 describes the language investigated in this study, which is the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor, one of the Mesopotamian Arabic dialects that are spoken in the eastern and north-eastern parts of Syria. The chapter concludes with section 1.6, which describes the structure of the thesis and presents a summary of the following chapters.

1.2. Negative Sensitivity

Natural languages contain expressions which can only occur in specific configurations (Lin et al., 2021). Some of these expressions exhibit affinity to negation. The peculiar behaviour of certain items in the presence of negation has been attracting attention for more than a century. Otto Jespersen (1917), for instance, pointed out that (1) is a perfectly acceptable sentence

whereas (2) is ungrammatical. Jespersen (1917) proposed that the peculiar behaviour of *anyone* is the result of what he called ‘negative attraction’ where certain words, such as *anyone*, are attracted to the negative particle.

(1) Never did anyone see him angry.

(2) *anyone never saw him angry. (Jespersen, 1917, p. 58)

While *anyone* could be said to be *attracted* by negation, according to Jespersen, there are other words which seem to be *repelled* by negation, as is the case in (3). As long as the negation in (3) is not an emphatic denial, the occurrence of *something* is ungrammatical (Szabolcsi, 2004).

(3) I (*don’t) hear something.

The notion of polarity in linguistics was borrowed from the field of physics (Tovena, 2002) to refer to the two opposite grammatical categories: negation and affirmation. The main application of the notion of polarity is to distinguish contexts that are only suitable for particular expressions (Baker, 1970), i.e., contexts which might repel or attract certain expressions in a given language. Those positive and negative contexts provide what linguists have labelled a *licensing context* (Ladusaw, 1979a). Items which exhibit sensitivity to the positive or negative polarity of the domain where they occur are called Polarity Sensitive Items (PSIs).

Something and several other items are ungrammatical in domains that are overtly marked for negation. Such items are often labelled Positive Sensitivity Items (PSIs) or Positive Polarity Items (PPIs). However, such items are viewed as ‘less impressive’ (Horn, 1989, p. 157) compared with the items that show a strong affinity for domains overtly marked for negation, as is the case with *anyone*.

(4) I am *(not) meeting anyone tonight.

Negative Sensitive Items (NSIs) are exciting to study because they demonstrate interesting patterns of occurrence and highlight interesting aspects of semantics and syntax (Hoeksema, 2010). The study of NSIs has contributed to the various linguistic domains, including the typological study of languages. One significant typological difference between languages regarding negation is whether the occurrence of two negative constituents in one clause leads to a single or double negative¹ interpretation. In most varieties of English, such an occurrence leads to a double negative interpretation where the negative constituents cancel each other.

(5) I didn't see nobody = I saw somebody.

However, it is possible to have a single negative interpretation of such structures in some other languages, such as Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian. This phenomenon is known as Negative Concord (NC), a term that is attributed to Labov (1972) (Penka & Zeijlstra, 2010). In (6), the negative pronoun *nessuno* 'nobody' can express negation by itself; however, its occurrence with a negative marker in the sentence is permissible within certain conditions and leads to a single negative interpretation.

(6) Maria **non** ha visto **nessuno**. (Italian)

Maria NEG has seen n-person

'Maria hasn't seen anybody.'

*'Maria hasn't seen nobody.' (= 'Maria has seen somebody') (Penka, 2011, p. 14)

At this stage, we can introduce the term *negative indefinites*. They are found in almost all languages and 'are defined as nominal or adverbial expressions that directly translate "nobody",

¹ The term 'double negation' is used by some linguists (e.g. Dryer, 2005) to describe a sentential negative construction that involves two negative morphemes as it is the case in French: '*Je ne vois pas la lune*' (Dryer, 2005, p. 455). To avoid any confusion, I find the term bi-partite negation more accurate to describe such cases, and I use the term 'double negative' to discuss the interpretation of two negative constituents.

“nothing”, “nowhere”, “never” (...) independently of whether they co-occur with predicate negation’ (Haspelmath, 2005b, p.466). The negative indefinite label is very broad; Haspelmath’s definition deliberately avoided stating that negative indefinites must be inherently negative. In English, for instance, both *nobody* and *anybody* are examples of negative indefinites; however, the former is inherently negative, whereas the latter is not (Bernini & Ramat, 1996). The word *negative* in the label *negative indefinites* is intended to indicate that such indefinites occur according to certain restrictions that involve negation. These restrictions differ from one language to another. Some negative indefinites occur with negation and yield a double negative reading, as is the case in English in the example (5) above. Examples (7) and (8) shed more light on the permissible patterns of *nessuno* in Italian. In (7), *nessuno* is ungrammatical in a post-verbal position without the presence of sentential negation. Furthermore, sentential negation cannot co-occur when *nessuno* is in a pre-verbal position, as in (8).

(7) *(**Non**) ha visto **nessuno**. (Italian)

NEG have.1SG seen n-person

‘I haven’t seen anybody.’ (Zanuttini, 1991, p.108)

(8) **Nessuno** (***non**) ha visto Mario.

n-person NEG has seen Mario

‘Nobody saw Mario.’ (Zanuttini, 1991, p. 112)

It has been highlighted so far that certain items, such as *anyone* in English and *nessuno* in Italian (in a post-verbal position), need to be in the presence of negation to ensure the grammaticality of the sentence containing them. This requirement makes *anyone* and *nessuno* negative sensitive items (NSIs). However, there are apparent differences between them. Italian

does employ items that behave like *anyone* in English, such as *alcuno* ‘anybody’ and *alcunché* ‘anything’ (Zanuttini, 1991, p. 116). This means Italian has two different types of NSIs, while English has only one. Items that exhibit a behaviour similar to *nessuno* have been referred to in the literature as *n-words* and as *negative concord items* (NCIs). It is essential to shed some light on these items and the phenomenon of negative concord to distinguish NCIs from items that are similar to *anyone* in English, which are labelled *negative polarity items* (NPIs).

1.2.1. Negative Concord Items

Items similar to *nessuno* in Italian have been observed in many European languages. For instance, Catalan has *ninú* ‘nobody’, Spanish has *nada* ‘nothing’, Polish has *nikt* ‘nobody’, and Portuguese has *ninguém* ‘nobody’ (Penka, 2011, p. 15). The term ‘n-words’ was first used by Laka (1990), and it was intended to highlight that such items in many European languages begin with ‘n-’ (Zanuttini, 1991; Penka, 2011). In a footnote, Laka (1990) pointed out that the origins of *nada* ‘anything’ and *nadie* ‘anyone’ were not negative words but positive ones. The Latin origins of the two words are *res nata* ‘born thing’ and *homines nati* ‘born (men)’, respectively (Laka, 1990, p. 108). However, the presence of ‘n-’ and the negative meaning of these items have led some researchers to erroneously suggest that these items are morphologically negative or that there are some morphological requirements to classify an item as an ‘n-word’². Consequently, in this thesis, from this point forward, the term NCI is adopted to refer to such items as it is more comprehensive and causes less confusion.

Across negative concord languages, NCIs show two main patterns of occurrence. For instance, in Italian, as shown in (8) above, *nessuno* can occur without a negative marker. This is also the

² For instance, Hoyt (2010), who studied negative concord in Arabic, took the ‘n-’ to be ‘a reflex of the common Indo-European negation morpheme’ (2010, p.12). The lack of a morpheme akin to ‘n-’ (i.e., a negation morpheme, whether one that is currently used to express negation independently or a reflex of a negation morpheme from earlier language stages) in corresponding items in Arabic is also discussed by Hoyt (2010, pp.104-107). However, such a discussion is about a marginal aspect of n-words – a term which should not be used in the case of Arabic in the first place.

case in Spanish, where *nadie* ‘nobody’ can occur freely in a pre-verbal position without a negative marker, whose occurrence makes the sentence ungrammatical, as in (9). However, just like the case of *nessuno* in Italian, when *nadie* is in a post-verbal position, there must be a negative marker in the sentence to allow the grammatical occurrence of *nadie*, as can be seen in (10). Example (11) shows that the occurrence of one NCI in a pre-verbal position allows the grammatical occurrence of another NCI in a postverbal position. This pattern seems to be the norm across Romance languages (Giannakidou, 1997, 2000; Penka, 2011)

(9) **Nadie** (*no) vino. (Spanish)

n-person NEG came

‘Nobody came.’

(10) *(No) vino **nadie**.

NEG came n-person

‘Nobody came.’

(11) **Nadie** (*no) ha comido **nada**.

n-person NEG has eaten n-thing

‘Nobody has eaten anything.’

(Penka, 2011, p. 17)

However, Russian, Polish and Slavic languages show a different pattern where the NCI must always be accompanied by the negative marker (Brown, 1999; Penka, 2011).

(12) Ja **nikogo** *(ne) vižu. (Russian)

I NI-who NEG see

‘I don’t see anyone.’ (Brown, 1999, p.40)³

Giannakidou (2006a) coined the terminology of non-strict and strict negative concord languages to describe Romance and Slavic languages, respectively. Negative concord languages must follow either one of these two patterns (Giannakidou, 2006a; Jäger, 2010; Penka, 2011).

It has been mentioned above that Italian, for instance, has NCIs, such as *nessuno* ‘nobody’, and NPIs, such as *alcuno* ‘anybody’, and the difference between the two is that the former can occur on its own without the presence of negation. Another important distinction between the two is that only *nessuno* and other NCIs can function as a fragment answer to a question and that fragment answer has a negative interpretation (Zanuttini, 1991; de Swart, 2010). *Alcuno*, by contrast, cannot occur as a fragment answer to a question at all.

(13) Chi hai visto? *Nessuno* (Italian)

Who have you seen? Nobody

(14) Chi hai visto? **Alcuno*

Who have you seen? *Anybody (Zanuttini, 1991, p.116)

These details are adequate for our purpose of identifying NCIs. Negative polarity items are discussed in the following section.

³ Brown referred to ‘n-words’ in Russian ‘NI-words’ (1999, p.19).

1.2.2. Negative Polarity Items

1.2.2.1. Observing the Phenomenon and Early Proposals

NPIs are pervasive, and virtually every language has such items (Horn, 2010). The interest in the phenomenon of NPIs goes back about a century and precedes interest in NCIs. In a chapter titled ‘Negative Attraction’, Jespersen (1917) pointed out that while the negative particle would attract certain expressions, such as *anyone* and *ever*, the grammatical occurrences of these items require that the negative particle join the first word in the sentence. In a way, Jespersen phrased a condition on the occurrence of items, such as *anyone* and *ever*, that they are grammatical only when preceded by a negative particle and that the negative particle is in a high position in the sentence, i.e., commanding the NPI. This condition is not far from correct. Later on, generative linguists would attempt phrasing more precise versions of this condition that NPIs need to be preceded or commanded by negation.

One of the prominent later observations is that of Buysens (1959), who accumulated lists of expressions that have special relations with negation. One of these lists was of items which assumed a new meaning in negative contexts, e.g. *backbone* in *she has no backbone* (weak personality); another list was of items whose only remaining meaning is associated with negative contexts, e.g. *brook* in *he could brook no criticism*. While Buysens (1959) used the term negative contexts, he pointed out that these words can also occur in restrictive, interrogative, and conditional contexts. He concluded with a final list of items ‘whose meaning cannot be modified by not’ (1959, p.169), such as *some* and *already*.

What Buysens did was actually list the expressions that belonged to the two categories known now as positive and negative polarity items. His paper is considered the first attempt to categorise polarity items, although he did not use this term (van der Wouden, 2002, p. 64). While Buysens did not provide any theory, his data and comments indicate empirical awareness of the behaviour of NPIs and PPIs. He noted, for instance, that *some* and *already*

are replaced with *any* and *yet* in the presence of negation. This apparent complementary distribution between *some* and *any* will be the subject of interest for later researchers. One of the earliest serious studies of this distribution is that of R. B. Lees (Hoeksema, 2000, p.117).

When R. B. Lees (1960) reviewed the work of D. Bolinger (1957) on interrogative structures and commented that the use of *some* in questions is ‘simply a stylistic variant of a more normal sentence with *any*’ (Lees, 1960, p. 123), Bolinger replied with a rejoinder (1960) discussing *some* and *any*, and many other items that seem to have a restricted distribution, especially between negative and affirmative contexts. Bolinger commented that ‘negation seals strange friendships. A kind of polarizing force attaches itself more or less permanently to some lexeme, pairing it off with another in a negative-affirmative contrast’ (Bolinger, 1960, p.380).

Although Bolinger’s intention was to point out that the differences between *some* and *any* go way beyond style, his rejoinder provided an extensive discussion of items. The data discussed by Bolinger also show that some items are restricted to affirmative contexts, and others are restricted to negative, interrogative and conditional contexts. He highlighted that they do not only exhibit affinity to negation and some other contexts but that they are also banned from affirmative contexts. Bolinger’s rejoinder highlighted some additional important details of the landscape of this phenomenon and supported the discussion with a rich data set.

Investigation into this phenomenon became more focused in the 1960s, starting with the seminal work of Edward Klima (1964) on negation in English, which is renowned for both the significant examples and data that he collected as well as for its historical role in the birth of the serious study of NPIs (Tovena, 2002). Klima’s work was the first systematic treatment of NPIs in the sense of proposing a licensing account (Hoeksema, 2000; Penka and Zeijlstra, 2010; Tovena, 2002). Klima’s work was couched within the dominant generative grammar of the time, shaped by Chomsky (1957), also known as the Standard Theory. This early form of

generative theory assumed that a finite set of phrase structure rules and transformations could account for the infinite grammatical sentences in a given language; this was sought with a high demand for precision (Hoeksema, 2000).

Klima examined negation and associated phenomena in English and formulated a set of transformational rules to account for the described phenomena. He noticed the near complementary distribution between *any* and *some*. Klima noted that specific contexts, in addition to negation, such as interrogatives, conditionals, and restrictives, constitute what he described as ‘a favourable environment’ (Klima, 1964, p. 279) for indefinite quantifiers, which are known now as NPIs. He argued that these contexts contain what he labelled ‘a negative affix’ (1964, p.294) feature, and the grammatical licensing of NPIs is stipulated by the NPIs being linked, through a syntactic relationship, with the negative affix feature.

While Klima’s (1964) work did not provide adequate answers, it was pioneering because it underlined the importance of identifying a feature that unifies the many contexts where NPIs are licensed and identifying the type of relationship between the NPIs and their licensing contexts. This has been known as the *licensing question* of NPIs, as called by Ladusaw (1980). Later researchers (e.g., Ladusaw, 1979a; Linebarger, 1980, Progovac, 1994, and Giannakidou, 1998) employed different approaches and incorporated semantics, pragmatics, and syntax in their endeavour to solve the licensing question. The various approaches to the licensing question are discussed in depth in Chapter Five of this thesis.

1.2.2.2. Expanding the View

Another significant fact that was highlighted in the works of Lees (1960), Bolinger (1960), and Klima (1964) is the importance of compiling data and gradually looking beyond the pair *some* and *any*. With more exploration, notably in the works of Baker (1970), Ladusaw (1979a) and Linebarger (1980), more NPIs and licensing contexts were identified, and this has motivated further research. Until the 1990s, linguists’ focus had been on NPIs in English. In the 1990s,

research about this phenomenon in other languages, particularly Dutch, German, and Greek, started appearing; the description of NPIs in these languages highlighted further the complexity of the phenomenon (Giannakidou & Zeijlstra, 2017).

One of the few things that linguists agree on regarding NPIs is that they exist in many, if not all, living languages (Giannakidou, 2011; Israel, 2000). In one study, Haspelmath (1997), examples of NPIs were collected from one hundred languages. Hoeksema (2000) estimated the number of NPIs in Dutch to be around 500 and suggested that German and English have comparable numbers of NPIs. The numerous instances of NPIs discussed in the various studies indicate that negative polarity items can be of various syntactic categories and that they can also have various licensing contexts.

In Arabic, NPIs were only first investigated about twenty-five years ago in Moroccan Arabic by Elabbas Benmamoun (1996, 1997, 2006). Since then, the investigation of NPIs in the dialects of Arabic has made modest progress where only a few linguists (e.g., Alsarayreh, 2012; Alqassas, 2012, 2015, 2021; Albuarabi, 2021) gave attention to this phenomenon and their interest revolved on almost the same set of items, mainly pronouns, determiners, and minimisers, without exploring the possibility of finding some other NPIs, such as verbs or auxiliaries or verbs. The following section provides examples of NPIs and their licensing contexts.

1.2.2.3. The Many NPIs and their Licensing Contexts

The following are examples of NPIs from English and some dialects of Arabic. The Arabic examples are those discussed in the literature. Moroccan Arabic was studied by Benmamoun (1996, 1997, 2006), Jordanian Arabic was studied by Alqassas (2012, 2015, 2021) and Alsarayreh (2012), and Iraqi Arabic by Albuarabi (2021). NPIs from the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor, the language examined in this thesis, are discussed in Chapter Four. The following examples highlight that NPIs can be from various syntactic categories.

(15) **Nominals**

English: *anyone, anybody*

Modern Standard Arabic: *ʔaḥad* ‘anyone’ and *šayʔ* ‘anything’

Moroccan Arabic: *ḥədd* ‘anyone’

Jordanian Arabic: *ḥada* ‘anyone’ and *iši* ‘anything’

Iraqi Arabic: *ʔaḥad* ‘anyone’ and *kulš* ‘anything’

(16) **Determiners:**

English: *any*

Modern Standard Arabic: *ʔayy* ‘any’

Jordanian Arabic: *ʔayy* ‘any’, *walaw* ‘even’

Moroccan Arabic: *ḥətta* ‘any’

Iraqi Arabic: *ʔayy* ‘any’

(17) **Adverbs:**

English: *ever, until, yet, too, much, in years*

Modern Standard Arabic: *ʔabadan* ‘ever or at all’

Jordanian Arabic: *ʕumur* ‘ever or in someone’s life’⁴

⁴ Alsarayreh (2012) argued that *ʕumur* is an adverbial NPI. The same NPI is used in Syrian Arabic and in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor in roughly the same way. However, I believe that there is evidence which suggests that *ʕumur* is actually a noun. I discuss this in more details in Chapter Four, but for the time being I leave *ʕumur* in the list of adverbs as proposed by Alsarayreh (2012).

(18) **Verbs:**

English: *need, brook*

(19) **Idioms:**

English: *a red cent, a thin dime, a word, a whit, an iota, bat an eyelash, hold a candle to, have a hope in hell, budge an inch, say a word, lift a finger, wild horses*

Modern Standard Arabic: *šarwā naqīr* ‘the price of a stone of a date’, *yuharrik sākinan* ‘to move an inanimate thing or to move a muscle’

Jordanian Arabic and Iraqi Arabic: *fiḥs ʔaḥmar* ‘red cent’

This is only a small list of NPIs from English and some Arabic dialects; if one decides to include examples of NPIs from other languages such as Serbian and Chinese (Progovac, 1994) or Greek and Romanian (Giannakidou, 1998), this list will grow even larger. It is highlighted that ‘there are considerable syntactic differences among NPIs’ (Tovena, 2002, p.27). NPIs can be licensed by overt negation, whether it is direct negation (i.e., clausemate negation) as in (20) or indirect negation (i.e., superordinate negation) as in (21). NPIs are also licensed by negative adverbs, such as *hardly, rarely, and scarcely*, which provide a licensing context in the form of covert negation, as in (22); in direct and indirect questions, as in (23) and (24); in conditional and hypothetical sentences (25); by some adverbial conjunctions, such as *before*, in (26); too-phrases as in (27); in comparatives, as in (28); by some prepositions, such as *without*, as in (29); by adversative predicates (e.g., deny, avoid, doubt, be surprised...etc.) as in (30); and NPIs can be licensed in the restriction of a universal quantifier, such as *every*, as in (31).

(20) I don’t know *anyone* who uses Uber in Colchester.

(21) I don’t think Uber employs *anyone* in Colchester.

(22) I hardly said *anything* that would upset her!

- (23) Have you noticed *anything* usual?
- (24) Do you think she will contribute *a red cent*?
- (25) If you know *anything*, you should call the police.
- (26) He would die before he contributes *a red cent*.
- (27) He is too stubborn *to budge an inch*.
- (28) Eliud Kipchoge ran a marathon faster than *any* other runner *ever*.
- (29) He spent the whole weekend without *lifting a finger* to help his wife.
- (30) I was surprised Susan contributed *a red cent*.
- (31) Every student who *ever* read *any* book on syntax attended the lecture.

Those contexts mentioned above have been found to be licensing contexts for NPIs in English and many other languages, including some Arabic dialects. Studies on NPIs in other languages, such as Romanian and Greek (Giannakidou, 1995, 2006a, 2011), have revealed that NPIs could still occur in far more contexts such as:

- (32) Subjunctive clauses

na akús **kamjá simvulí**, tha su vjí se kaló.

SBJV listen-2SG any advise, FUT you-GEN come-out in good

‘Listen to some advice, it will prove to your advantage.’

(33) Imperatives

rótise **kanénan** idikó.
 ask-you-IMP any specialist
 ‘Ask a specialist.’

(34) Habitual sentences

mas stélni pu ke pu **kanénas** gráma.
 us send.3SG where and where any letter
 ‘He sends us a letter every now and then.’

(Modern Greek; Giannakidou, 1995, p.95)

This shows that NPIs can occur in various contexts, and some of these contexts cannot be classified in any way as negative. This motivated linguists to search for a feature in common between all of these contexts. A thorough discussion of the licensing contexts is offered in Chapter Five, but for the time being, it is useful to briefly mention two proposals that aimed to unify the licensing contexts.

These are Ladusaw’s (1979a) downward entailment and Giannakidou’s (1995) nonveridicality. Both proposals offer definitions of the licensing contexts that go beyond associating these contexts with negation. Downward entailment is a semantic proposal that explains the licensing of NPIs by their occurrence in a context that allows inference from sets to subsets. For instance, *French cheese* is a subset of the *cheese* set. It is clear that (35.A) allows the inference (35.B), but (36.A) does not allow the inference (36.B).

(35) A. No children like cheese.

B. No children like French cheese.

(36) A. Some children like cheese.

B. Some children like French cheese.

The negation, as in (35), and many other contexts, allow inference from subsets to sets, and such contexts constitute licensing environments for NPIs. It is clear that example (31) above contains no negation or a negative meaning; however, the inference from the subset *book on syntax* to the set *books* is possible in the restriction of the universal quantifier *every*.

Ladusaw's semantic theory was both innovative and influential. It continued to receive both supporting and criticising arguments, at least for the three decades following the inception of the idea of downward entailment. It was criticised by some linguists, such as Linebarger (1980, 1987) and Israel (1996). They pointed out that there are some contexts, such as questions and conditionals, which do not allow inferences from subsets to sets. However, this did not stop other researchers from defending it, such as Krifka (1995), and expanding it, such as Kadmon and Landman (1993) and von Stechow (1999). Zwarts (1995) and Giannakidou (1995 and subsequent works) developed the downward entailment into the more inclusive nonveridicality theory, which can account for subjunctives and imperatives.

The nonveridical proposal explains the difference between the contexts that ban the occurrence of NPIs and the contexts that allow the grammatical occurrence of NPIs by the notion of veridicality. Affirmative contexts, such as those created by factive predicates, are veridical as they denote facts or assert facts, whereas (at least in Greek) subjunctives, habituals, imperatives, and affirmative contexts that contain adversative predicates are nonveridical. Giannakidou continued to refine her nonveridicality proposal in her later works. Her work on NPIs in Greek highlights the importance of investigating NPIs cross-linguistically. This thesis aims to contribute to this endeavour by examining NPIs in an Arabic dialect.

1.3. The Purpose of the Study

There is a lacuna in research on the phenomenon of negative polarity in Arabic. The first investigation into this phenomenon in Arabic was about a quarter of a century ago by Elabbas Benmamoun (1996), who examined this phenomenon in Moroccan Arabic. Since then, a few linguists have examined negative polarity in Moroccan Arabic (Benmamoun, 1996, 1997, 2006; Ouhalla, 2002), Egyptian Arabic (Soltan, 2012, 2014), and Jordanian Arabic (Alsarayreh, 2012; Alqassas, 2012, 2015, 2021). It has been very recently highlighted, e.g., by Alluhaybi, 2019 and Alqassas (2021), that the syntax of polarity sensitive items in Arabic has not received much attention.

However, the phenomenon of negative polarity has not been studied in any of the Arabic varieties spoken in Syria, including the Arabic variety spoken in the eastern and north-eastern parts of Syria, such as Deir Ezzor, which is Mesopotamian and not Levantine Arabic. By investigating negative polarity in this Arabic variety, this thesis attempts to fill a lacuna in the research of negative polarity in Arabic dialects.

Furthermore, negation has been studied in some Arabic dialects, such as Egyptian Arabic, Palestinian Arabia, Moroccan Arabic, Jordanian Arabic, and, most recently, Iraqi Arabic (Albuarabi, 2021). Negation has been examined in Syrian Arabic based on the variety spoken in the capital, Damascus. This present study is the first attempt to study negation and negative polarity items in a variant of Syrian Arabic not spoken in Damascus or its immediate surroundings.

Recently, there have been a few studies on negative sensitivity which covered both NPIs and NCIs in Arabic dialects, such as Alqassas (2012, 2015, 2021) and Alsarayreh (2012) on Jordanian Arabic, Albuarabi (2021) on Iraqi Arabic. The present study focuses on NPIs for two main reasons. First, negative polarity and negative concord are two complex phenomena, and

lumping them together comes at the expense of the depth of analysis. Second, the present study takes a different approach than the one adopted by the above-mentioned studies regarding the existence of NCIs in Arabic dialects. The present study agrees with Lucas' warning that 'the Arabic varieties that exhibit true negative concord are fewer than what is claimed in the literature' (Lucas, 2009, p.187).

1.4. The Significance of the Study

The study of negative polarity in a given language sheds light on the possible dependency relations between the NPIs and their licensing contexts, especially the syntactic configurations required for this dependency. NPIs in Arabic have not received the amount and depth of examination that NPIs in other languages (such as English, German, Greek, Chinese...etc.) have received; this highlights one aspect of the significance of this study. This thesis contributes to the study of NPIs by providing an extensive inventory of these items in an Arabic dialect and a deeper analysis of these items' behaviour and licensing conditions. This study moves beyond the already known negative polarity pronouns and determiners to discuss negative polarity auxiliary verbs and negative polarity lexical verbs. It also offers a deeper examination of NPIs, their semantics, and their licensing contexts. Providing more details on the difference in the felicitous occurrence of NPIs allows a preliminary description of the hierarchy of NPIs in an Arabic dialect. Studies of NPIs in Arabic varieties have not thoroughly explored the differences in the strength of NPIs.

Even though the study of Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) has been a major theme in modern linguistics, perhaps since Jespersen (1917), NPIs in Arabic were only investigated in the past quarter of a century by a few linguists, such as Benmamoun (1996, 1997, 2006), Alsarayreh (2012), and Alqassas (2015, 2021). Those linguists focused on answering the licensing question; compiling lists of all NPIs did not receive much attention. That is why the few studies on NPIs

in Arabic dialects documented only a small number of NPIs. This is very different from other languages, where extensive inventories of NPIs have been documented.

For instance, Hoeksema (2005) documented an extensive list of 700 NPIs in Dutch. Hoeksema (2000) estimated the number of NPIs in English to be comparable to Dutch and German. Kürschner (1983) documented a relatively smaller list of 344 items⁵ in German. When it comes to Arabic, the lists are significantly smaller. Soehn et al. (2010) described a process of identifying NPIs in German using some algorithms and a corpus of German sentences; perhaps, one day in the future, a similar process can be carried out on corpora of sentences from Arabic dialects. Carrying out such a process is beyond the scope of this study.

1.5. The Language of the Study

Modern Arabic dialects are categorised into five main groups: Syro-Palestinian, Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Sudanese, the dialects of the Arabian Peninsula, and the dialects of north Africa (Talay, 2011). The Arabic dialects spoken in Syria belong to two distinct groups. The Arabic dialects which are spoken in western parts of Syria, including the capital Damascus, belong to the Syro-Palestinian group, which is sometimes referred to as Levantine Arabic. The Arabic varieties which are spoken in the eastern and north-eastern parts of Syria, including Deir Ezzor, belong to the Mesopotamian group of Arabic dialects. Mesopotamian Arabic dialects are primarily spoken in Iraq and parts of the surrounding countries.

The city of Deir Ezzor is the capital of the governorate that bears the same name in north-eastern Syria. The city is located on the Euphrates River. Before the Syrian civil war erupted in 2011, the population of the city of Deir Ezzor was about 700 to 800 thousand people, with a total of about 1.1 million living in the whole governorate. There are no official estimates, but

⁵ Some researchers, such as Soehn et al. (2010), criticised Kürschner (1983) list and suggested that more than half of the items collected are not NPIs in the sense of being expelled from 'non-NPI-licensing environments' (Soehn et al., 2010, p.932).

my personal estimate is that the current population of the city has shrunk to about 300 thousand people.

To the best of my knowledge, the term Mesopotamian Arabic gained popularity thanks to the seminal work of Haim Blanc (1964), who studied the Arabic varieties spoken in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, and proposed classifying Mesopotamian Arabic dialects into two main sub-groups. This division was based on whether a dialect preserves the unvoiced uvular stop /q/ or changes it into voiced velar stop /g/. The former group of Mesopotamian Arabic dialects would use *qəltu* ‘I said’, whereas the latter would use *gilit* ‘I said’; there is also a difference in the inflectional suffix for singular first-person perfect, *tu* vs *it*. This distinction gave the two groups of dialects their labels.

Generally speaking, the ‘*qəltu*’ dialects are spoken in northern Iraq, particularly in Mosul and parts of north-eastern Syria. The ‘*gilit*’ dialects are spoken in Baghdad and southern Iraq. In some areas where the ‘*qəltu*’ dialects are spoken, there is another contrast between city-dwellers, who use the ‘*qəltu*’ version, and the residents in the surrounding countryside who use the ‘*gilit*’ version (Blanc, 1964; Talay, 2011).

Otto Jastrow, who carried out extensive research into the ‘*qəltu*’ dialects, divided them into four groups: Anatolian, Tigris, Euphrates, and Kurdistan group. The third group includes the Arabic spoken in the city of Deir Ezzor, Syria, and in the cities of Hit and Aana in Iraq (Jastrow, 1978, 1983, 2007; Talay, 2011). From a historical point of view, ‘*qəltu*’ are older and closer to Classical Arabic, whereas ‘*gilit*’ started to emerge about six to eight centuries ago with the nomadic waves that came into Iraq and Syria, i.e., around the time of the Mongolian invasion in the 13th century and the Ottoman conquest in the 15th century (Talay, 2011).

The ‘*qəltu*’ Arabic spoken in the city of Deir Ezzor still contains some Bedouin features, mainly in its phonology. For instance, there are cases where the /g/ replaces the original /q/ as in *gəlb*

instead of *qalb* ‘heart’, but the /q/ is maintained in *ṭabīb qalbiyya* ‘a heart doctor’. There is also the substitution of /k/ with /č/ as in *čān* instead of *kān* ‘he was’. The phenomenon of the affrication of /k/ and /g/ sounds in the presence of front vowels originated in Central Arabic and spread to other areas, including the Syro-Mesopotamian desert (Ingham, 2009; Watson, 2011).

Such phonological changes in the ‘*qaltu*’ dialects, and the Mesopotamian dialects in general, have interested researchers (e.g. Heikki, 2009) who investigated the interaction between the relatively newer Bedouin features with the original sedentary features in the dialect. The Syrian civil war, which started in 2011, caused massive human displacement and, in some cases, meticulously planned demographic changes. These changes, which are still ongoing with no end in sight, are likely to bring about changes in the Arabic dialects spoken in Deir Ezzor and Syria as a whole. This phenomenon could be a subject for future dialectology research. However, the present study focuses on the constant aspects of the dialect, and points out, when necessary, the changes that have been taking place in recent decades. I act as the primary informant for this thesis; there are no written texts in this dialect. I have endeavoured to be as accurate as possible when describing the dialect and its NPIs; to ensure this accuracy, I have unofficially consulted native speakers of the dialects.

1.6. The Organisation of the Study

This introductory chapter has provided a brief description of the phenomenon of negative sensitivity items and its two subsets: negative concord items and negative polarity items. The focus has been on providing a background on the study of NPIs. It described the progression of the exploration of this phenomenon and provided examples of the many NPIs and the many possible licensing contexts. The diverse syntactic categories of the NPIs and their licensing contexts have proved challenging to researchers. Providing an account for the grammatical

licensing question of NPI has been a central topic in this area of linguistic research. This thesis aims to contribute to this research. The thesis has been structured to achieve this goal.

Chapter Two provides necessary information about the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor. While it aims to describe relevant syntactic facts, it also focuses on areas that have received little attention in the studies on Arabic dialects, such as the subjunctive and auxiliary verbs. These two areas are also relevant to the discussion of NPIs, as will be shown in chapters four and five.

Chapter Three discusses sentential negation in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. The negation phenomenon has been discussed in some Arabic dialects, such as Jordanian, Egyptian, and Moroccan. But there has been little research into negation in Syrian Arabic, and no research has been carried out on negation in Arabic in Deir Ezzor, or eastern and north-eastern parts of Syria, which constitute about half the area of the country. This chapter describes standard and non-standard negation in DzA, and explores the relevant generative syntactic hypotheses.

Chapter Four is the core of the thesis and its longest chapter. It discusses the phenomenon of NPIs in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. It lists the various contexts where NPIs can be licensed and provides a discussion of what makes these contexts licensing environments. It refers to the research that has been carried out on some of these contexts. The goal is to move beyond providing a list of licensing contexts, as has been done by recent studies on NPIs in Arabic. The discussion of comparatives and *too*-clauses, in particular, shows the potential gains from such an examination. The chapter also discusses the various NPIs which belong to five categories: negative polarity pronouns, negative polarity determiners, negative polarity auxiliaries, negative polarity verbs, and idiomatic negative polarity expressions. Prior studies on NPIs in Arabic did not cover auxiliaries or lexical verbs, making this study the first such investigation.

Chapter Five moves to reviewing and discussing work on the licensing of NPIs. It reviews the most notable approaches starting with the pure syntactic proposal of Klima (1964). It moves then to cover approaches that incorporated other linguistic disciplines. It covers Ladusaw (1979a), who provided a purely semantic account, Linebarger (1980), who incorporated pragmatics and syntax, Progovac (1994), who attempted another pure syntactic proposal, and Giannakidou (1994 and later works), who formulated the nonveridicality proposal which incorporated semantics, pragmatics, and syntax. Giannakidou's work seems to account better than other proposals when it is applied in the study of NPIs in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor.

Chapter Six is the summary and conclusion of the thesis; it summarises the findings of the thesis and comments on possible areas of future research.

Chapter Two: Some Aspects of the Arabic of Deir Ezzor and Its Syntax

2.1. Introduction

In his work on the grammar of Syrian Arabic, Mark Cowell (1964) stated that ‘all the urban dialects of “the Syrian area” or “Greater Syria”⁶ (...) may be considered variants of one language which we call “Syrian Arabic.” Any one of these dialects, well learned, is an adequate vehicle of spoken communication for the whole area’ (Cowell, 1964, p. xvii). This chapter highlights some of the differences between the Arabic spoken in Deir Ezzor, a large urban centre in Syria, and the Arabic spoken in Damascus. This chapter describes some aspects of the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor (DzA) and comments on some syntactic aspects, notably its clause structure.

Section 2.2 describes general characteristics, such as inflection, gender, number, and verb forms. The description is intended to aid in presenting the data from DzA, which is discussed in the following chapters. Section 2.3 comments on the clause structure of DzA. The level of discussion is adequate to cover the purpose of this thesis, which is the discussion of NPIs and their licensing contexts. Section 2.4 discusses the subjunctive mood in DzA. In the following chapters of this thesis, namely chapters 4 and 5, there is a frequent reference to the subjunctive. Consequently, it is useful to provide a description of this mood and highlight the similarities and differences between DzA and other modern spoken Arabic dialects and Classical Arabic in this regard. Section 2.4 discusses auxiliary verbs in DzA. This section also receives focus as chapter 4 discusses negative polarity auxiliary verbs. Section 2.5 presents the conclusion of the chapter.

2.2. General Morphological Characteristics of DzA

Classical Arabic (CA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) assign either nominative (*-un*), accusative (*-an*), or genitive case (*-in*) to nouns (DPs), adjectives, and adverbs (Fassi Fehri,

⁶ A term used by Cowell to include current Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine.

1993). However, similar to other modern Arabic spoken varieties, the Arabic of Deir Ezzor exhibits a smaller number of suffixes to express agreement than it was the case with Classical Arabic (Versteegh, 2014). For instance, there are no case markers in DzA.

The only case markers that might be noticed are remnants of old usage from Classical Arabic. This is the case of the adverbs *ʔabadan* ‘never’ and *ḥālan* ‘immediately’. In Classical Arabic, adverbs carry the accusative suffix *-an*. However, the morphology of these two adverbs, and a few others, are fossilised in this form, and the morpheme *-an* is without value as the DzA employs a covert case system. Regarding definiteness, DzA is similar to other modern Arabic dialects where the indefinite noun is unmarked, whereas the definite noun is marked by the prefix *al-* or *il-* (Turner, 2018).

As for the number, Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic maintain a number distinction between singular, dual, and plural; verbs, nouns, adjectives, and pronouns carry morphological agreement that corresponds to this number distinction (Ryding, 2005). In DzA, the singular, dual, and plural agreement is still exhibited by nouns, whereas verbs, adjectives, and pronouns exhibit only singular and plural agreement. DzA has only two genders, masculine and feminine. The following table summarises the person, number, and gender agreement that might be carried by the perfective and imperfective forms of the verb *yəqūl* ‘to say’ in DzA.

Person	Number	Gender	Perfective Form		Imperfective Form	
			Affix	Verb+Affix	Affix	Verb+Affix
1 st	Singular	M/F	-tu	qəl-tu	a-	a-qūl
2 nd	Singular	M	-t	qəl-t	t-	tə-qūl
2 nd	Singular	F	-ti	qəl-ti	t- -īn	tə-qūl-īn

3 rd	Singular	M	-	qāl	y-	yə-qūl
3 rd	Singular	F	-t	qāl-t	t-	tə-qūl
1 st	Plural	M/F	-na	qəl-na	n-	nə-qūl
2 nd	Plural	M/F	-tum	qəl-tum	t- -ūn	tə-qūl-ūn
3 rd	Plural	M/F	-u	qāl-u	y- -un	yə-qūl-ūn

Table (1) Agreement carried by the perfective and imperfective forms of the verb

2.3. Clause Structure

Sentence structure in Arabic dialects has been thoroughly discussed by researchers (e.g., Ryding, 2005; Aoun et al., 2010; Wright, 2011). The Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor, just like all other Arabic dialects, uses two main types of sentences: verbal sentences and verbless sentences. Verbless sentences are those that do not contain a lexical verb and are also known as equational sentences and are said to have a covert copula (Ryding, 2005). They are composed of a subject followed by a predicate, which could be a noun phrase, an adjective phrase or any other type of nonverbal predicate (Aoun et al., 2010). Equational sentences in the dialect of Deir Ezzor would not have a lexical verb in the present, as in (1.A) and (1.C); in the past, as in (1.B) and (1.D), they would use an overt auxiliary verb, such as *ṣār*, *ẓall*, *čān* (literally and respectively, ‘he became’, ‘he remained’, and ‘he was’).

(1) A. ʔaḥmad zalama.

Ahmed man

‘Ahmed is a man.’ (i.e. not a boy or teenager)

B. ṣār ʔaḥmad zalama.

become.PRF.3MSG Ahmed man

‘Ahmed became a man.’

C. ʔaḥmad samīn.

Ahmed fat.MSG

‘Ahmed is fat.’

D. ʔaḥmad ʔall samīn.

Ahmed remain.PRF.3MSG fat.MSG

‘Ahmed remained fat.’

The dialect of Deir Ezzor demonstrates six word order alternations of the verbal sentence:

(2) A. ʔaḥmad daras inglizi. (SVO)

Ahmed study.PRF.3MSG English

‘Ahmed studied English.’

B. daras ʔaḥmad inglizi. (VSO)

study.PRF.3MSG Ahmed English

‘Ahmed studied English.’

C. daras inglizi ʔaḥmad. (VOS)

study.PRF.3MSG English Ahmed

‘Ahmed studied English.’

D. il-ktāb ʔaḥmad iṣṭerā-h. (OSV)

DEF-book Ahmed buy.PRF.3MSG-3MSG

‘Ahmed bought the book.’

E. il-ktāb ištērā-h ḡahmad. (OVS)

DEF-book buy.PRF.3MSG-3MSG Ahmed

‘Ahmed bought the book.’

F. ḡahmad il-ktāb ištērā-h. (SOV)

Ahmed DEF-book buy.PRF.3MSG-3MSG

‘Ahmed bought the book.’

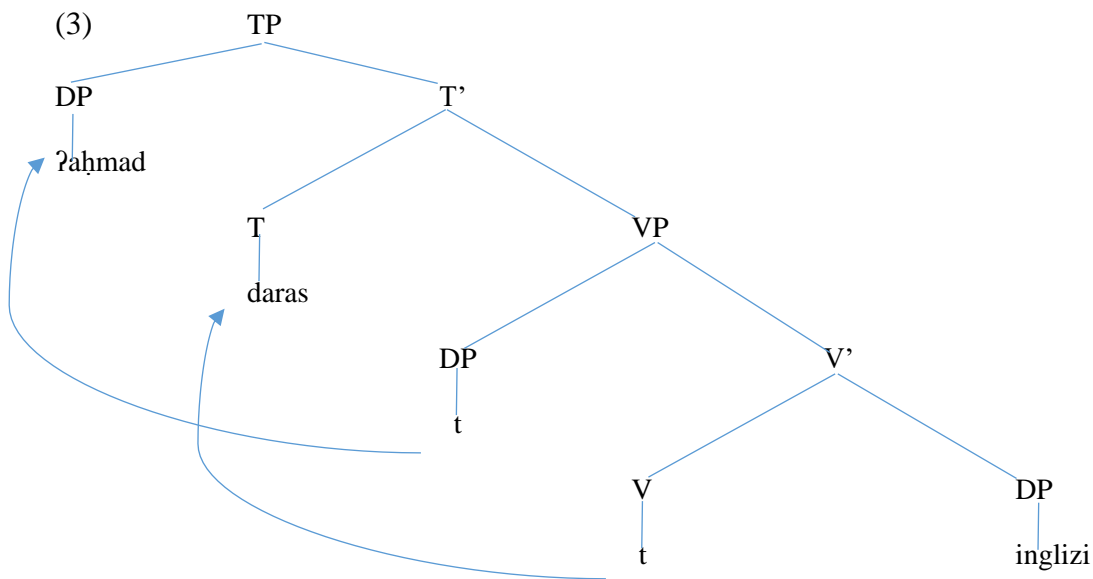
Only SVO and VSO represent unmarked word orders of these six possible word orders; the remaining patterns are marked word orders. I investigate those unmarked and marked word order alternations. My focus is on the type of subjects in those alternations, i.e., whether the subject in these alternations is a genuine subject or a topic. I distinguish between pre-verbal subjects and post-verbal subjects.

Of the two unmarked word order alternations, we can notice that one has pre-verbal subjects (SVO) and the other has post-verbal subjects (VSO). This difference in the position of the subject, pre-verbal or post-verbal, has motivated researchers to propose various classifications and hypotheses; this is an old debate in Arabic linguistics. There are two hypotheses regarding the pre-verbal subject: the Subject Hypothesis and the Topicalisation Hypothesis. The former treats the subject as a genuine subject, whereas the latter considers the subject to be a topic that has been fronted (Aoun et al., 2010).

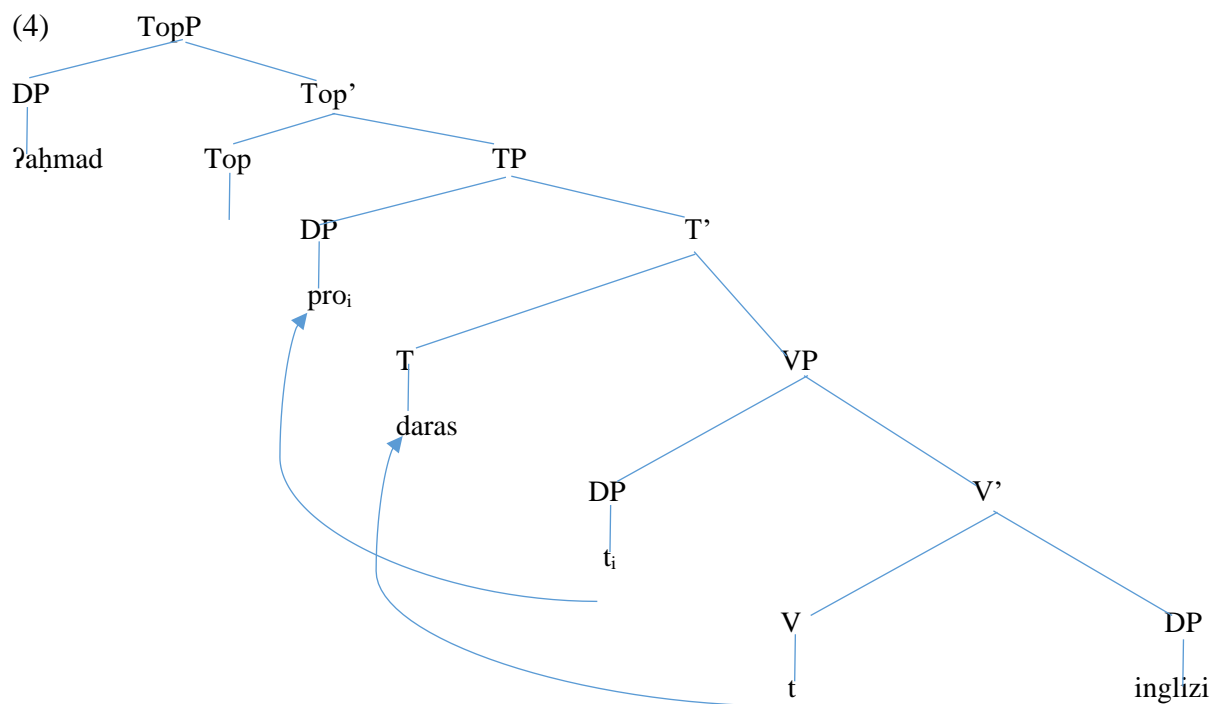
The Subject Hypothesis assumes that the subject and verb respectively originate in the specifier and head positions in VP. This happens for the verb to assign a theta role to the subject. The subject then moves to the specifier position in TP, and the verb, in turn, moves to the head

position in TP. The movement of the subject is caused by the Extended Projection Principle.

According to this hypothesis, sentence (2.A) can be represented as follows:



The Topic hypothesis argues that the verb originates in the head position in VP before moving to the head position in TP. As for the subject, it originates in the A'-domain and binds a null resumptive in the A-domain of the clause. According to this hypothesis, sentence (2.A) is represented as follows:



In this thesis, we adopt the Subject Hypothesis to account for SVO structure. As for the VSO word order, there is a consensus that the subject originates in Spec in VP. There are two views on what happens next; one argues the subject remains in Spec in VP where it originated (Shlonksy, 1997), and the other argues the subject moves to Spec in TP (Aoun et al., 2010). In this thesis, we take the first view to account for the VSO, although selecting a particular stance will not affect the treatment of the topic of the thesis: the phenomenon of negative polarity.

2.4. The Subjunctive Mood

From a morphological point of view, in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor and other modern Arabic vernaculars, there are two verb forms: the perfective and the imperfective. With the perfective form, the past tense interpretation is salient, and there is no need for auxiliaries or a time reference to indicate the past tense; this is similar to Modern Standard Arabic, as discussed by Bahloul (2008, p. 46). Furthermore, this is consistent with Dahl's (1985) examination of aspect, tense and modality, where he highlighted that 'for all languages it holds that "past time reference" characterizes prototypical uses' of the perfective form (Dahl, 1985, p.79). The imperfective form has many uses, and it can be used to refer to the past, present, and future (Aoun et al., 2010).

In Classical and Modern Standard Arabic, there are fixed and stable endings for perfective verbs, whereas imperfective verbs can take different morphological forms which express either of three moods: indicative, subjunctive and jussive⁷; these are known in Classical Arabic as *rafʕ*, *naʕb*, and *jazm*, respectively (Sadan, 2012 p. xi). Sadan defined *naʕb* mood, or subjunctive mood, as denoting 'a hypothetical action or event whose occurrence is dependent on another, such as desire and fear' (Sadan, 2012 p. xi); he also highlighted that this mood is sometimes

⁷ There is a fourth mood, in Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, which is the energetic, which expresses emphasis; but this mood has no effect on the expression of tense or modality (Benmamoun, 2000, p. 157)

used because ‘the speaker’s intention is to express a purpose’ and that this mood ‘involves only a potential occurrence’ (Sadan, 2012, p. 24).

In the conclusion of his discussion of the subjunctive mood in classical Arabic, Sadan judged that the effect of the speaker’s intention expressed in the subjunctive mood in Arabic makes this usage of this mood resemble ‘the usage of the subjunctive mood in languages of other families, such as the Romance languages’ (2012, p.295-296). In his work on French syntax, Jones explained that ‘the term mood is used to denote verb forms which, very roughly, express the attitude of the speaker towards the situation being described’ (Jones, 1996, p. 179).

In his work on the grammar of Arabic, Wright noted that ‘the subjunctive mood occurs only in subordinate clauses. It indicates an act which is dependent upon that mentioned in the previous clauses, and future to it in point of time’ (Wright, 1988, p. 24). He explained further that a verb in the subjunctive mood is governed, i.e., preceded, by one of a number of particles, including *ʔan* (that). This particle follows verbs ‘which express inclination or disinclination, order or prohibition, duty, effect, effort, fear, necessity, permission, etc.’ (Wright, 1988, p. 25).

(5) ʔaradtu wa-ʔaḥbibtu ʔan ʔubayyina (Classical Arabic)

wish.PRF.1SG CONJ-desire.PRF.1SG COMP clarify.IMP.F.1SG

la-hum ʔarīqa l-taʔallumi.

to-3P path.ACC DEF-learning.GEN

‘I wished and desired to make plain to them the path of learning.’

(Wright, 1988, p.25; glosses added)

The morphology of the verb and speaker’s intention, as highlighted by Sadan, and the structure described by Wright facilitate the recognition of a verb in the subjunctive mood in Classical

Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic. However, in modern regional varieties of Arabic, the matter is not straightforward since many of the modern Arabic varieties lack some of the morphological features of Classical and Modern Standard Arabic. It has been claimed that ‘there are no mood distinctions, at least morphologically’ in modern Arabic dialects (Benmamoun, 2000, p. 22).

In his often-quoted work on the grammar of Syrian Arabic, Cowell stated that verbs in Syrian Arabic are inflected for tense, person, number, gender, and mode. Cowell used the term ‘mode’ to refer to indicative, subjunctive, and imperative verb forms. He highlighted that ‘there is no mode inflection in the perfective tense’ (Cowell, 1964, p.173). The indicative and subjunctive moods in Syrian Arabic are distinguished through the presence of the prefix *b-* in the former and its absence in the latter. Furthermore, the verbs in the indicative mood can be preceded by particles, such as *rāḥ*.

(5) A. byākul. (Syrian Arabic)

eat.IMPF.3MSG

‘he eats’ (indicative mood)

B. yākul.

eat.IMPF.SBJV.3MSG

‘he eats’ (subjunctive mood)

(Cowell, 1964, p.176; glosses added)

Cowell explained that the indicative mood is ‘used in assertive predications’ whereas the subjunctive mood is ‘used in optative predications and in various subordinate syntactic positions’ (1964, p.343).

(6) *blāʔi* *taksi b-haš-šāreʕ* ? (Syrian Arabic)

find.IMPF.1SG *taxi* *in-DEM-street*

‘can I find a taxi on this street?’ (Assertive)

lāʔi *taksi b-haš-šāreʕ* ?

find.IMPF.SBJV.1SG *taxi* *in-DEM-street*

‘Shall I find a taxi on this street?’ (Optative)

(Cowell, 1964, p.344; glosses added)

Using the *b*-prefix to express indicative mood is also reported in Egyptian Arabic (Mitchell and El-Hassan, 1994), Jordanian Arabic (Alrashdan, 2015), Levantine, and some other Arabic varieties (Jarad, 2013). However, it is not found in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. Morphologically speaking, the indicative and subjunctive forms of the verb are identical.

However, the distinction between the two moods is possible through the meaning of the verb introducing the subjunctive verb in the subordinate clause. So while the mood in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic is easily identified through the morphology, we have to rely on the structure of the sentence to identify the subjunctive mood in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. In (7), which is from the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, the main verb *yaxāf* ‘he fears’ has a meaning similar to what was described by Wright (1988) above, and it does embed the following verb.

In many other modern Arabic dialects, including Syrian Arabic, the main verb in (7) will be in the imperfective form, with the *b*-prefix, i.e. *bixāf*, while the embedded verb will lack the *b*-prefix to indicate the subjunctive mood morphologically.

(7)	ʔaḥmad	yəxāf	yəʃrif	<i>qiriš məʃdi.</i>	(DzA)
	Ahmed	fear.IMPF.3MSG	spend.IMPF.SBJF.3MSG	penny rusty.MSG	

‘Ahmed dreads spending (even) a rusty penny.’

The absence of morphological marking does not eliminate the distinction between indicative and subjunctive mood. In chapters four and five, the subjunctive structure will be of significant importance in describing the behaviour of NPIs and their licensing.

2.5. Auxiliaries

Tense, aspect, and modality in Arabic dialects have not seen the thorough discussion seen in other languages (Bahloul, 2008). That is why this chapter focuses more on these areas, especially because the variety of Arabic spoken in Deir Ezzor exhibits significant differences from the Arabic spoken in Damascus, which is often taken as the primary example of Syrian Arabic.

The investigation of auxiliary verbs in Arabic dialects might not be an easy task as it might initially seem to be. This has to do with the nature of the class of auxiliary itself, in general, and how it has been defined in English language, in particular. The tendency to compare the auxiliary verbs in Arabic to those in other languages, such as English, and presume that Arabic auxiliaries would demonstrate similar behaviour to those of other languages, might be hindering the investigation rather than assisting it.

First of all, one significant difficulty when it comes to identifying auxiliary verbs in a language is that ‘auxiliary is by nature a category that arises out of diachronic developments in a particular language’s verbal system’ (Brustad, 2000, p.143). This implies that the category of auxiliary might develop differently in different languages, and the particles classified as auxiliaries might be at different stages of development in different languages. These facts should always be observed. Because of this, the following is more of a practical and descriptive

overview of auxiliary verbs in the dialect of Deir Ezzor than a comprehensive theoretical discussion. It starts first by providing an overview of the auxiliary class in Arabic dialects; it then moves to survey auxiliary verbs in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. Next, it provides some discussion of the function of those auxiliaries. After that is an attempt to modify the model proposed by Eisele (1992) to determine the defining features of auxiliaries.

2.5.1. The Auxiliary Class in Arabic Dialects and its Features

In many cases, researchers tried to identify auxiliary verbs in Arabic dialects by searching for the counterparts of English auxiliaries; Brustad (2000) explained that since the category of auxiliary in English contains both modal and temporal verbs, their Arabic counterparts have also been described as auxiliaries. However, ‘the members of these “auxiliary” categories have little in common in either syntactic behavior or function’ (2000, p.143). The many differences between auxiliaries in Arabic and those of other languages are explained, in brief, by Bruce Ingam in his study of Najdi Arabic:

‘When contrasted with the modal auxiliary verbs of English, ‘will’, ‘shall’, ‘can’, ‘must’, ‘need’, the modal suffixes of Turkish or the modal prefixes of Swahili, which are morphologically and distributionally definable classes of elements, the Najdi modals appear as a rag-bag of elements derived from verbs, adjectives and primitive particles and rather vaguely differentiated from certain other elements on the periphery of the group which look like fully-fledged lexemes.’

(Ingam, 1994, pp.117-118)

The fact of the matter is that there are no fully-fledged lexemes that function solely as auxiliaries in Arabic dialects. Most of the auxiliary verbs in the Arabic dialects, including the dialect of Deir Ezzor, are cognates of lexical verbs. An important question here is whether those lexemes, which function as auxiliaries, are members of a syntactic category, similar to

the category AUX in English. This is one area where the difference between Arabic and English is highlighted.

Some linguists, who examined English auxiliaries, propose that there is particular syntactic behaviour that sets auxiliary verbs from other verbs. Pullum and Wilson (1977), for instance, listed the 'criteria for auxiliaryhood' (1977, p.742), which include: (a) Subject-auxiliary inversion, (b) Tag formation, (c) do-support, (d) negative contraction, (E) auxiliary reduction, (f) quantifier floating, and (g) adverb placement (1977, pp.742-743). However, Arabic dialects, in general, and the dialect of Deir Ezzor, in particular, do not have a category of verbs that demonstrates a behaviour similar to those of the English auxiliary; for instance, there is no tag question, do-support, auxiliary reduction, or negative contraction. However, this should not be taken to mean that there are no auxiliary verbs in Arabic dialects, but there is no AUX category.

One fact which must be noted here is that Arabic dialects, more frequently than Modern Standard Arabic, use structures which contain asyndetic verbal constructions or series of verbs; such structures might deceive the examiner who would presume that the first verb in such structures is always an auxiliary. The task then is to identify constructions of auxiliaries and main verbs from other verbal constructions. This could be achieved by defining the features of auxiliaryhood in Arabic.

Eisele (1992) used his findings from Egyptian Arabic to suggest such a distinction. He proposes that the distinction is lexical and not syntactic, i.e., there is no syntactic category 'AUX', but there is a lexical class of verbs which we can call auxiliary verbs. Eisele cited the following as a traditional definition of AUX 'a syntactic category, characterised by syntactic behaviors different from other regular verbs: placement in the sentence, susceptibility to movement rules, attracting NEG, etc.' (Eisele, 1992, p.157).

Eisele underlined that there is a class of verbs which seem to demonstrate certain syntactic and semantic features, but this class of verbs, i.e. auxiliary verbs, is a ‘fuzzy category’ where some of those verbs, i.e. the core members of the class, demonstrate all of those features, while some other verbs, which are on the periphery of the class, demonstrate only some of those features; one such core member is the verb *kān* (Eisele, 1992, p.160). The first and most important of such features, as proposed by Eisele (1992), is ‘the lack of an intervening clause boundary’ (p.160), i.e., those verbs do not take a complementiser⁸. The other features are: subject coreferentiality between the auxiliary verb and the following verb(s); the embedding properties of the auxiliaries, which may admit both modal and non-modal embedding⁹; and the temporal discreteness of the embedded verb, which may or may not have an independent deictic time reference (1992, pp. 160-161).

It is clear that the features proposed by Eisele (1992) are selection and subcategorisation features, and they are significantly different from those listed by Pullum and Wilson (1977) or from what is conventionally believed to be the features of auxiliaries; it is worth noting, for instance, that Eisele does not mention ‘attracting NEG’ as a feature of auxiliaries in Egyptian Arabic. This might have to do with the fact that the negative marker in Arabic might precede the auxiliary verb or the main verb; this is discussed in more detail below.

The features proposed by Eisele are examined by Brustad (2000) in her study of verbs from four major Arabic dialects, Kuwaiti, Syrian¹⁰, Egyptian, and Moroccan Arabic. The cross-linguistic examination concluded that auxiliary verbs in the various dialects vary in the degree to which they show those four features. Brustad, however, did not discuss the first feature of

⁸ Eisele described this feature as the most important because it is the only subcategorisation feature of this class of verbs (Eisele, 1992, p.161).

⁹ Eisele stated that he took this third feature as ‘the weakest indicator of auxiliaryhood than the other features’ (Eisele, 1992, p.161).

¹⁰ The Syrian Arabic in Brustad’s work is based on the Arabic spoken in Damascus and she underlined that the ‘Syrian area is rich in dialect variation’ (2000, p.3).

auxiliary, which Eisele described as the most important. Most of Brustad's discussion focused on how auxiliary verbs can embed the following verb modally or temporally, but this feature, according to Eisele himself, is the weakest of the four features. Brustad also provided some examples where the auxiliary verbs and the embedded verb are not coreferent with the same subject.

- (8) w ṣārū yaʕni kill wāḥid yiʕzimna.
 CONJ become.PRF3P DISC QUAN one invite.IMP.F.3P.1P

‘They started; every person would invite us.’

(Brustad, 2000, p.145; glosses amended)

However, this particular string of words is not an example of one sentence only, but it is a case of two sentences connected together by means of the discourse marker *yaʕni* ‘that is’ which separates the verb *ṣārū* ‘they become’ which is in the plural form, from the singular verb *yiʕzimna* ‘invite us’. This led Brustad to state that non-coreferentiality between subject, and auxiliaries, like *ṣār*, in Syrian Arabic, occurs regularly (2000, p.145).

However, Brustad cited another sentence by the same Syrian speaker¹¹ in a later section, where the same verb, *ṣārū*, shows coreferent agreement with the subject and the main verb. This indicates that the case of subject coreferentiality might not be refuted altogether so simply.

¹¹ Brustad identified the speakers of all the examples used in her book; the speaker in this particular case is given the reference S5.

(9)	killon	šārū	yidiʔʔu	talifōnat	ysallmu	ʕalē-na.
	QUAN	become.PRF.3P	call.IMP.F.3P	telephones	greet.IMP.F.3P	on-1P

‘All of them started to call us up and welcome us.’

(Brustad, 2000, p.151)

Brustad inaccurately presumed that auxiliaries, according to the model proposed by Eisele, ‘do not allow embedded verbs to carry deictic time reference’ (2000, p.144). What Eisele actually proposed is that some auxiliaries (e.g., *kān*, the aspectualisers, and deontic modals) may not allow embedded verbs to have an independent deictic time reference. In contrast, epistemic modals, for instance, may allow embedded verbs to have such a reference. The auxiliary (the epistemic modal *lāzim*) that Brustad used to refute Eisele’s fourth feature was already mentioned by Eisele (1992, p.164) to be allowing embedded verbs to have independent deictic time reference.

Brustad’s discussion reveals that Eisele’s auxiliaryhood model could still be used to distinguish auxiliaries from other verbs, provided that the examiner distinguishes between core and peripheral members of the auxiliary class. However, it might be better to avoid searching for one unified model for all Arabic dialects and to modify Eisele’s model to reflect the peculiarities of every Arabic dialect in isolation.

2.5.2. Auxiliary Verbs in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor

The previous section explained the difficulty of identifying and classifying auxiliary verbs in Arabic dialects. This same difficulty extends to the dialect of Deir Ezzor; in this section, I list all the verbs that I believe demonstrate features similar to those discussed by Eisele (1992) and Brustad (2000). Two main types of auxiliary verbs are found in the dialect of Deir Ezzor: (1) incomplete verbs and (2) verbs of motion.

2.5.2.1. Incomplete Verbs

Dialects of Arabic make use of some verbs which indicate meanings, such as ‘to become’, and ‘to begin’. They indicate entering a state or the beginning of an action, i.e. they indicate some inchoative or ingressive meanings. Brustad (2000) highlighted that those verbs are used ‘to set the time frame for other actions and states’ (p.149); for this reason, she called those verbs temporal verbs. Brustad added that such auxiliary verbs are found across Arabic dialects and that they embed the verbs following them temporally but not modally; some of her examples include *fiḍil* (Egyptian Arabic), *baqa* (Moroccan Arabic), and *zall* (Levant Arabic). *kān* and *ṣār* are also other famous examples.

It must be noted that those temporal verbs, regardless of the morphological variation they show in the various Arabic dialects, seem to be cognates of the class of verbs known as ‘the incomplete verbs’¹² in Classical Arabic (CA) and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Haak (2006) underlined that those verbs, i.e. the incomplete verbs, cover meanings such as ‘to begin’, ‘to be about’, ‘to become’, and ‘to remain’. The incomplete verbs are famous in CA and MSA because they are used in nonverbal predicates where they fulfil a copular function. They have this same function in Arabic spoken dialects. The following are examples from the Dialect of Deir Ezzor

- (10) A. ʔaḥmad ṭifil.
 Ahmed child

 ‘Ahmed is a child.’

¹² Incomplete verbs or ‘*al-ʔaḥwāl an-nāqīṣa*’ is the term used by traditional Arabic grammarians (Haak, 2006, p.217).

B. *čān* *ʔaḥmad* *ṭifil*.

AUX Ahmed child

‘Ahmed was a child.’

C. *ʔaḥmad* *zalama*.

Ahmed man

‘Ahmed is a man.’

D. *šār* *ʔaḥmad* *zalama*.

AUX Ahmed man

‘Ahmed became a man.’

E. *ʔaḥmad* *samīn*.

Ahmed fat.MSG

‘Ahmed is fat.’

F. *ʔaḥmad* *zall* *samīn*.

Ahmed AUX fat.MSG

‘Ahmed remained fat.’

I prefer the term ‘incomplete verbs’ to ‘temporal verbs’ as they are also used to fulfil some modal functions, and not only temporal ones. Because of space limitations, the original aim of this thesis, and because the verbs *čān* and *šār* show more various patterns and functions than other incomplete verbs, the following section focuses on them.

2.5.2.1.1. *čān*

Haak described the verb *kana* as ‘the most prototypical auxiliary verb in all varieties of the language in view of its functions and distribution’ (2006, p.216). Eisele (1992) classified the Egyptian Arabic variant of this verb, *kān*, as a core member of the auxiliary class of verbs; by a core member, Eisele meant that this verb has all four of the features proposed to distinguish auxiliary verbs from other verbs. In the dialect of Deir Ezzor, the auxiliary verb *čān* is a cognate of the verb *kana* from Modern Standard Arabic¹³. The verb *čān* functions as the overt copula for past copular sentences; it is not used in present copular sentences.

(11) A. ʔaḥmad hōn.

Ahmed here

‘Ahmed is here.’

B. ʔaḥmad čān hōn.

Ahmed AUX here

‘Ahmed was here.’

In addition to being used in non-verbal predicates, it is also used as an auxiliary verb where it is followed by the main verb. Haak (2006) underlined that the verb *kān* does not restrict the verb with which it may combine to be in a particular form. Brustad (2000) stated that this verb is different from other verbs as it can embed the three forms of verbs (perfective, imperfective, and participle) (p.149). This is an interesting statement, but Brustad did not provide examples

¹³ The shift from /k/ to /č/ is one of the Bedouin traits in the dialect of Deir Ezzor (Al-Hilal, 2011, p.25).

supporting it. In the dialect of Deir Ezzor, *čān*, as an auxiliary verb, is only followed by imperfective (12.A) and participle¹⁴ (12.B) forms.

(12) A. *čān* *yudrus* *maṣa-hum*.
 AUX study.IMPF.3MSG with-PR3P

‘He was studying with them.’

B. *čān* *nēyim*.
 AUX sleep.PART.3MSG

‘He was asleep.’

The verb *čān* can be followed by a perfective form of the verb, but this is only in cases where *čān* has a modal meaning and not a temporal one. In this particular use, *čān* is used in this particular form only (the third person masculine singular form) with all subjects; note the following sentence.

(13) *čān* *darasti* *ʔaḥsan* *mā* *səhərti*
 AUX study.PRF.2FSG better than stay.PRF.2FSG

‘You should have studied instead of staying up late.’

¹⁴ There are active and passive participle forms of verbs in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, as it is the case with Syrian Arabic. A good discussion of participles in Syrian Arabic is provided by Hallman (2017). The active participle form is formed from the three consonants (C₁, C₂, and C₃) of the root verb using the prosodic template C₁āC₂iC₃ (Hallman, 2017, p.155). However, in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, many active participle forms exhibit a case of *imala*, which ‘involves the change of a long *aa* to an ee-like value in the context of an /i/ in a preceding or following syllable’ (Owens, 2006, p.197). Owens underlined that *imala* is attested in many areas where Arabic is spoken, including Syria (Owens, 2006, p.198). The two long vowels that Owens referred to are represented in this thesis as /ā/ and /ē/, respectively. The prosodic template C₁āC₂iC₃ allows for *imala* in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. That is why the participle form of *nām* ‘sleep’ is *nēyim* and not *nāyim*. The details of *imala* in Syrian Arabic and the Arabic of Deir Ezzor are beyond the scope of this thesis.

Al-Hilal (2011) stated that *čān*, in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, can be used in conditional sentences, where it can be followed by a perfective form (14.A), and it can be used to introduce conditional sentences (14.B).

(14)	A.	law	čintu	ʔaʕrif	sāli	bi-l-musstəʕfa
		CON	AUX	know.IMPF.1SG	Sally	in-DEF-hospital
		čān	zirtu-ha.			
		AUX	visit.PRF.1SG-3FSG			

‘If I had known Sally was in the hospital, I would have visited her.’

(Al-Hilal, 2011, p.120)

B.	čān	ʔab-ūy	štəra	l-sāmi	biskalēt
	AUX	father-1SG	buy.PRF.3MSG	to-Sami	bike
	lāzim	yəʕtri	wāhid	ʔil-i	zəd.
	MOD	buy.PRF.3MSG	one	to.1SG	too

‘Should my father buy Sami a bicycle, he must buy one for me too.’

(Al-Hilal, 2011, p.121; glosses amended)

Al-Hilal mentioned that the ‘imperfective form *yəkūn* (lit. ‘he is’) is rarely used’ (2011, p.33). I agree with what Al-Hilal stated, but I would like to add that most of the few occurrences of *yəkūn* I recorded were in the licensing contexts of negative polarity items. The questions of (15.A) and (15.B), and the negation in (15.C) are known licensing contexts for NPIs. *yəkūn* is grammatical in (15.A), (15.B), and (15.C), but not in (15.D), which is an indicative affirmative sentence, where NPIs are typically banned.

(15) A. min-u rāḥ yəkūn b-il-muḥāḍra?

who-3MSG FUT be.IMPF.3MSG in-DEF-lecture

‘Who will be in the lecture?’

B. rāḥ yəkūn bī čaṭīr ṭullāb?

FUT be.IMPF.3MSG EX.PAR many students

‘Will there be many students?’

C. lā? mā rāḥ yəkūn bī čaṭīr ṭullāb.

no. NEG FUT be.IMPF.3MSG EX.PAR many students

‘No. There will not be many students.’

D. *yəkūn bī čaṭīr ṭullāb.

be.IMPF.3MSG EX.PAR many students

‘There will be many students’

This might suggest that *yəkūn*, the imperfective form of *čān*, is undergoing a grammaticalisation process which might eventually transform it into a full negative polarity item.

2.5.2.1.2. šār

Another auxiliary verb in the dialect of Deir Ezzor that is a cognate of an MSA incomplete verb is the verb *šār* (literally: ‘he became’). We can distinguish two auxiliary meanings of this verb. The first one has the meaning of ‘become, start’, i.e., to refer to some change from a previous stage. With this meaning, the verb *šār* can be used in the perfective or imperfective

forms to refer either to changes that already happened or those that are going to; in both cases, the verb *šār* embeds verbs in their imperfective forms.

- (16) ʔumar issōma šār yəlʕab maʕa il-hilāl.
 Omar Al-Somah AUX play.IMPF.3MSG with DEF-hilal

‘Omar Al-Somah started playing for Al-Hilal.’

However, for the verb *šār* to be used in the imperfective form, it must be used with one or two auxiliary verbs. It can be used with the auxiliary motion verb *rāḥ* to form a structure signalling a future change or future commencement of a new stage.

- (17) ʔumar issōma rāḥ yəṣīr yəlʕab maʕa
 Omar Al-Somah FUT become.IMPF.3MSG play.IMPF.3MSG with
 il-hilāl.
 DEF-hilal

‘Omar Al-Somah will start playing for Al-Hilal.’

It can be used with the auxiliary motion verb *rāḥ* and the incomplete verb *čān* to form a meaning of future in the past to refer to an action/change that was about to take place, but it did not.

- (18) ʔumar issōma čān rāḥ yəṣīr yəlʕab
 Omar Al-Somah AUX FUT become.IMPF.3MSG play.IMPF.3MSG
 maʕa il-hilāl bəs il-mōfawḍāt fišlat.
 with DEF-hilal but DEF.negotiations fail.PRF.3FP

‘Omar Al-Somah was about to start playing for Al-Hilal, but negotiations failed.’

The second meaning of the verb *ṣār* is equivalent to ‘could, be possible, or should’, but the verb here is only used in the imperfective form, *yəṣīr*. This meaning is not temporal, but it is modal. Furthermore, the verb *yəṣīr* seems to occur more in contexts licensing negative polarity items, and it is rare in other contexts.

(19) A. mā yəṣīr tākūl w tnām.
 NEG become.IMPF.3MSG eat.IMPF.2MSG CONJ sleep.IMPF.3MSG

‘You should not eat and sleep.’

B. yəṣīr ʔasāfir ʕəla sōryā?
 become.IMPF.3MSG travel.IMPF.1SG to Syria

‘Is it possible for me to travel to Syria?’

2.5.2.1.3. Incomplete Verbs and Negation

Eisele (1992), in his investigation of the features of auxiliaryhood, does not mention a particular relation between the auxiliary verb and negation to be among the distinguishing four features of auxiliaries. Brustad (2000) did not discuss the relationship between auxiliaries and negation. The fact of the matter is that the negation marker in Arabic dialects can be attached to the auxiliary verb or the main verb. Haak underlined that the relation between the auxiliary verbs and negation should be examined ‘for each of the auxiliary verbs separately’ (2006, p.217).

As for the incomplete verbs in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, negation can be attached to either the auxiliary verb or the main verb, and in some cases there will be a difference in meaning. Compare the following pairs of sentences.

- (20) ʕəli [mā čān yudrus/ čān mā yudrus].
 Ali [NEG AUX study.IMPF.3MSG / AUX NEG study.IMPF.3MSG]
 qabəl-mā ʔab-ūh hača maʕa-h w
 before-COMP father-3MSG speak.PRF.3MSG with-3MSG CONJ
 naşaḥ-u
 advise.PRF.3MSG-3MSG

‘Before his father spoke with him and advised him, Ali was not studying.’

- (21) ʕəli šār yudrus.
 Ali AUX study.IMPF.3MSG

‘Ali started studying.’

- (22) ʔahmed mā šār yudrus.
 Ahmed NEG AUX study.IMPF.3MSG

‘Ahmed didn’t start studying’

- (23) ʕəli šār mā yudrus.
 Ali AUX NEG study.IMPF.3MSG

‘Ali started to not study’ = ‘Ahmed stopped studying’.

Although almost no difference in meaning can be noted for negating *čān*, a clear difference is noted for *šār* with negation. (22) is the negation of (21), but (23) is not. The auxiliary *šār* in (21) and (23) indicates that the subject has indeed started a new stage.

2.5.2.2. Verbs of Motion

Many Arabic dialects use verbs of motion, also known as translocative verbs (Mitchel and El-Hassan, 1994), as auxiliary verbs. Brustad (2000), for instance, reported that the dialects of Kuwaiti Arabic, Syrian Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, and Moroccan Arabic use verbs of motion, with meaning such as ‘to come’, ‘to go’, ‘to sit up’, and ‘to get up’. Such motion meanings are only meant figuratively. They are used to add a variety of meanings to the main verb.

Brustad underlined that auxiliary verbs of motion and the verbs following them should not be thought of as referring to sequential actions but simultaneous ones (2000, p.148). However, Brustad seems to be mixing between serial verbal structures, i.e. asyndetic verbal structures, and structures of an auxiliary and main verb. The following are examples of serial verbal structures from Palestinian Arabic.

(24)	xud	ʔišrab	l-ʔahwe.
	take.IMP.2MSG	drink.IMP.2MSG	DEF-coffee

‘Take the coffee and drink it!’

(25)	hāt	ʔaʕṭī-ni	li-ktāb.
	give.IMP.2MSG	give.IMP.2MSG-1SG	DEF-book

‘Give me the book!’

(Hussein, 1990, p.342; glosses amended)

Such structures are not of auxiliaries and main verbs – even though the first verbs imply some meaning of movement. My focus is auxiliary structures and not serial verbal structures; for a discussion of some of those serial verbal structures, one can see Hussein (1990)¹⁵. In this

¹⁵ Hussein (1990) discussed various serial verbal structures which he classified into those which express aspect, purpose, emphasis, consecutive actions, or even those which function as adverbs.

chapter, I take verbs of motion that express a grammatical aspect as auxiliaries. Other non-auxiliary verbal structures are not of interest to this thesis and might be a topic for future research. The list of auxiliary verbs of motion in the dialect of Deir Ezzor includes *rāḥ*, *qām*, *qaṣad*, *ṣād*.

2.5.2.2.1. *rāḥ*

Just like Syrian Arabic and many other Arabic dialects, the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor uses the motion verb *rāḥ*, literally ‘he went’, as an auxiliary. Blanc reported that *rāḥ* is used in the dialect of Muslim Baghdadi¹⁶ (1964, p.117) followed by an imperfect to indicate a meaning of futurity; Cowell, in his seminal work on Syrian Arabic (1964)¹⁷, stated that *rāḥ*¹⁸, which is followed by an imperfect verb, is a ‘particle of anticipation’ referring to an imminent action in the future (p.322). The same is found in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, and the meaning is equivalent to that of ‘will’ or ‘be going to’. It should be highlighted that in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, *rāḥ* is invariable when it is used as an auxiliary verb of anticipation. It can be said that *rāḥ* is used to express the aspect of the future or anticipation.

(26) ʔaḥmad rāḥ yudrus maṣa samīr.

Ahmed FUT study.IMPF.3MSG with Sameer

‘Ahmed will study with Sameer.’

¹⁶ Blanc (1964) documented the differences between the dialects of Muslim Baghdadi, Christian Baghdadi, and Jewish Baghdadi.

¹⁷ Cowell underlined that the language described in his book is that of the educated city-dwellers of western Syria, in general, and Damascus, in particular.

¹⁸ Cowell reported that the particle *rāḥ* is also available in another form beginning with /l/, i.e. *lāḥ* instead of *rāḥ* (1964, p.322). The latter form is typical of Damascus. Cowell also mentioned some other forms, but those forms merely indicate some phonological variations of the same particle. Blanc (1964, p.118) cited Malaika (1963) who also reported that the dialect of Muslim Baghdadi uses *rāḥ* and *lāḥ* (1963, p.62).

(27) hēba rāḥ tudrus maṣa wafāʔ.

Heba FUT study.IMPF.3FSG PREP Wafaa

‘Heba will study with Wafaa.’

Examples (26) and (27) show that there is no coreferentiality between the subject, the main verb, and the auxiliary *rāḥ*. The auxiliary verb is used in one form regardless of the subject. This contradicts what is proposed by Eisele (1992).

We need to distinguish between the verb *rāḥ* when it is used to give the following verb a future interpretation and where the verb *rāḥ* is part of a serial structure¹⁹. In the first case, the verb *rāḥ* is invariable. In contrast, in the case of serial structures, the verb conjugates according to the subject, but the meaning is not the future but either the present (28) or the past (29); the distinction between present and past is demonstrated by the verb following *rāḥ*.

(28) hēba rāḥt tištari il-kutub.

heba go.PRF.3FSG buy.IMPF.3FSG DEF-books

‘Heba went to buy the books.’ (The interpretation is that Heba is now on her way to buy the books)

(29) hēba rāḥt ištart il-kutub.

Heba go.PRF.3FSG buy.PRF.3FSG DEF-books

‘Heba went to buy the books.’ (The interpretation is that Heba finished buying books)

¹⁹ The verb *rāḥ* can also be used as a main lexical verb in a sentence:

rāḥ ṣa-l-məktab
go.PRF.3MSG to-DEF-office
‘He went to the office.’

It is worth noting that in both cases, i.e. *rāḥ* as an auxiliary or as part of a serial verbal structure, the negative marker, *mā* in our case, precedes the verb *rāḥ*.

- (30) *həba mā rāḥti tištari il-kutub.*
 heba NEG go.PRF.3FSG buy.IMP.3FSG DEF-books

‘Heba did not go to buy the books.’

- (31) *ʔaḥmad mā rāḥ yudrus maʕa samīr.*
 Ahmed NEG FUT study.IMP.3MSG with Sameer

‘Ahmed will not study with Sameer’

It is worth mentioning that the Dialect of Deir Ezzor allows for the occurrence of two auxiliaries in one sentence.

- (32) *čān rāḥti tijī-ni sakta qəlbiyya.*
 AUX FUT come.IMP.3FSG-1SG attack heart

‘I was about to have a heart attack.’

The use of those two verbs, *čān* and *rāḥ*, gives the meaning of future in the past. The structure is similar to what is reported by Brustad (2000) from Egyptian Arabic.

- (33) *kān ḥa-tgī-li sakta ʔalbiyya*
 AUX FUT-come.IMP.3FSG-1SG stroke heart

‘I was going to have a heart attack.’ (Brustad, 2000, p.145; glosses amended)

The particle *ḥa* in Egyptian Arabic indicates the future. One main difference, however, between the behaviour of *čān* in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor and that of *kān* in Egyptian Arabic is that *kān*

is ‘not coreferent with either the feminine subject /sakta/ *heart attack* or the feminine verb’ *hatgīli* (Brustad, 2000, 145). This might indicate that *kān* in Egyptian Arabic is invariable, but it is not so in the dialect of Deir Ezzor.

One final point concerning the use of the verb *rāḥ* as an auxiliary is related to its imperfective form. Even though the imperfective form *yārūḥ* is possible when used as a main verb (34), it is only possible as an auxiliary verb in contexts licensing negative polarity items (35).

(34) ʔaḥmad bukra yārūḥ ʕa-l-maktaba.

Ahmed tomorrow go.IMPF.3MSG to-DEF-library

‘Ahmed is going to the library tomorrow.’

(35) lā yārūḥ yəmšī il-bāš!

NEG go.IMPF.3MSG walk.IMPF.3MSG DEF-bus

‘(I fear) the bus might depart!’ = (I hope we do not miss the bus)

The auxiliary *yārūḥ* in (35) does not express a future aspect, but it seems to embed the following verb with a modal meaning. It must be noted that the verb *yārūḥ* here is negated by *lā* and not *mā*. It has been highlighted above that the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor does distinguish morphologically between the indicative and subjunctive moods of the verb. I believe *lā yārūḥ* could be classified as a fixed expression, something similar to ‘God forbid!’ in English, which requires the subjunctive.

2.5.2.2.2. qaṣad / qām

The auxiliary verbs *qaṣad* and *qām* (literally: ‘he sat’ and ‘he stood’ respectively) are used in a number of Arabic dialects, including the dialect of Deir Ezzor. *gāṣid*²⁰ in Kuwaiti Arabic is

²⁰ *gāṣid* is the participle form and not the perfective form.

used to express indicative mood (Brustad, 2000, p.234). Eksell (1995) reported that *qaṣad*, in *qaṣad yiktob* ‘he is writing’, is used in Syrian dialects to indicate ingressive, durative, or perfective meanings (p.68). Those verbs are invariable and are only followed by verbs in their imperfective forms.

However, I believe that *qaṣad* in the dialect of Deir Ezzor is mainly used to indicate a progressive aspect, particularly something going on at the moment of speaking. In this respect, it is closer to the Muslim Arabic dialect of Baghdad (Blanc, 1964). It has the same function as *ṣam*²¹ in Syrian Arabic, which Cowell (1964) classified as a particle of actuality which he defined as a particle ‘used to designate a state or an activity actually going on at the moment – the true “present” – as opposed to generalities and dispositions’ (1964, p.320).

(36) xalīl ṣam yəṯḥāka maṣa ər-raʔīs.

Khalil PROG speak.IMPF.3MSG with DEF-president

‘Khalil is speaking with the presiden.’ (Cowell, 1964, p.320; glosses added)

This same function is found in the dialect of Deir Ezzor.

(37) sālim qaṣad yəṯfaraj ṣa-l-bərnāmaj.

Salim PROG watch.IMPF.3MSG on-DEF-programme

‘Salim is watching the programme.’

Those two auxiliaries, *qām* and *qaṣad*, can be used with a verb to denote interrupted, off-and-on activities; this is comparable to the English progressive forms as long as they denote a temporal state of affairs and not a permanent situation.

²¹ There are many other forms for this particle; possible forms are *ṣamm-*, *ṣam-*, *ṣammal* (Cowell, 1964, p.320).

(38)	qaṣad	ʔudrus	bi-l-jamʕa	h-al-ʔyyām.
	PROG	study.IMPF.1SG	in- DEF-university	DEM-DEF-days

‘I am studying at the university these days.’

The data I have collected indicate that *qām* and *qaṣad* seem to be used interchangeably without a noticeable difference in meaning. This replication, i.e. using two or more auxiliary verbs or tense or aspect markers with the same function, has been reported in the literature on Arabic dialects. In his study of the development of future tense markers in Arabic dialects, Leddy-Cecere (2020) underlined that there is evident replication, where multiple and parallel future markers ‘arising from etymologically distinct but semantically and functional analogous sources’ (2020, p. 615). This is particularly the case of the future markers derived from verbs meaning ‘go’, such as the participle *rāyih* ‘going’, which is attested in many Arabic dialects, including the dialects spoken in Iraq, Egypt, and Algeria, and the participle *māšī* ‘going’, which is attested in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco (Leddy-Cecere, 2020). In the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, *qām* and *qaṣad* are etymologically different, but their sources show semantic and functional similarities. Leddy-Cecere (2020) argued that this replication is an example of contact-induced grammaticalisation. This grammaticalisation process results from the contact between Arabic dialects where ‘a grammaticalization process occurring in one Arabic variety is transferred to another and repeated using native etymological material’ (Leddy-Cecere, 2020, p. 616). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate further the circumstances of the development of *qām* and *qaṣad*. However, this could be an important topic for future research.

2.5.2.2.3. ʕād

The auxiliary verb *ʕād* (literally: ‘he returned’) is used in the dialect of Deir Ezzor and many other Syrian dialects. In the dialect of Deir Ezzor, it is invariable. It can be followed by perfective (39) or imperfective verb forms (40). It is used only in negative polarity licensing contexts,

negation in particular. Using this auxiliary in a sentence implies that that embedded verb did not take place or will not take place.

(39) mājjid ma-ʕad daras b-il-bēt.

Majed NEG-AUX study.PPRF.3MSG in-DEF-home

‘Majed has not studied at home anymore.’

(40) ma-ʕad ʔanām mitʔaxir.

NEG-AUX sleep.IMPF.3MSG late.MSG

‘I will never sleep late.’

Sometimes, in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, the final long vowel of the negative marker *mā* is elided with the first sound of the following negated verb, which usually undertakes some phonological changes. This happens when the negative marker *mā* precedes the auxiliary verb *ʕād*. Most speakers of the dialect of Deir Ezzor would say *maʕad*; the full form, *mā ʕād*, is also possible but mainly for purposes of emphasis. The use of this auxiliary motion verb in negative contexts means that it should be classified as a negative polarity auxiliary verb, especially because it is ungrammatical in affirmative contexts (41).

(41) *mājjid ʕād daras b-il-bēt.

Majed AUX study.PRF.3MSG in-DEF-home

‘Majed studied at home again.’

2.5.3. Comments on the Use and Behaviour of Auxiliary Verbs

One possible question after the description of the auxiliaries above is why have spoken dialects come to use them? They have not been used in classical Arabic, they are not used in its modernised form, Modern Standard Arabic, and they do not seem to cause a significant change

in meaning. For instance, *rāḥ* implies only an imminent future. The time in the future when the action is going to take place depends, actually, on the meaning of the main verb itself and any time reference in the sentence other than *rāḥ* itself. Compare the following:

(42) ʔaḥmad rāḥ yuṣṭus.

Ahmed FUT sneeze.IMP.F.3MSG

‘Ahmed is going to sneeze.’

(43) il-iqtisād il-yūnānni rāḥ yənhār.

DEF-economy DEF-Greek FUT collapse.IMP.F.3MSG

‘The Greek economy is going to collapse.’

(44) qəṭar rāḥ tnazzim buṭōlt 2022.

Qatar FUT organise.IMP.F.3MSG tournament 2022

‘Qatar is going to organise the 2022 tournament.’

The future reference in those sentences depends on the verbs *yuṣṭus*, *yənhār*, and *tnazzim* and how much time they logically need to take place. In other words, *rāḥ* does not significantly delay the action or make it more imminent. So why do we use it?

One possible explanation is that we use it to strengthen the meaning of the verb itself. The addition of markers, such as *rāḥ*, does not change the meaning of the verb, but they only enhance its verballity. Eksell explained that many particles, such as *qām* and *qaṣad*, have only a weak semantic load, and that is why they are continuously replaced by new ones (1995, p.70). There is a significant difference between, for instance, adding *čān* and adding *qām* or *qaṣad*.

The former definitely changes the meaning of the verb and its interpretation, but the latter two do not do that.

One crucial question here is how Arabic dialects started, at almost the same time, to use verbs of motion, for instance, instead of the particles used in Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, to express meanings such as imminent future, ingressive, or durative? Why did that happen at comparatively the same time, yet Arabic dialects seem to have used different particles to fulfil similar functions?

The answer might be found in grammaticalisation which refers to cases where ‘words from major lexical categories, such as nouns, verbs and adjectives, become minor, grammatical categories, such as prepositions, adverbs and auxiliaries, which in turn may be further grammaticalized into affixes’ (McMahon, 1994, p.160). This happens because speakers find that they need new ways to make their statements stronger; it is a continuous process. As soon as the new words or structures become part of the language, the speakers would search for some new structures and words to strengthen their speech.

2.5.4. A Modification of Eisele’s Analysis

The selection and subcategorisation features proposed by Eisele to be the defining features of auxiliaryhood in Egyptian Arabic seem to apply to the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor after some minor modifications. The main modification is related to the second feature of subject coreferentiality between the auxiliary verb and the following verb; the description of the auxiliaries in the dialect of Deir Ezzor shows that auxiliaries are either in invariable forms (as it is the case with *rāḥ*, *qām*, *qaḥad*, or *ḥād*) or there is coreferentiality between the auxiliary verb, main verb and the subject (as it is the case with *čān* and *šār*). That means that the form of the auxiliary, contrary to the Brustad (2000) seems to be suggesting, is not random.

The other three features of Eisele (1992), i.e., features 1, 3, and 4, do not need significant changes. The auxiliary verbs in the dialect of Deir Ezzor do not take a complementiser; this is consistent with Eisele's first feature, which he described as the most important feature. Modal and temporal embedding is also possible, as the examples above demonstrate. Finally, the above examples also show that the embedded verbs have independent deictic time references than those of the auxiliaries.

The main weakness of the proposed modifications is that the auxiliaries discussed above are only those derived from verbs; other auxiliaries derived from other parts of speech, such as adjectives, were not discussed in this chapter because their discussion is not directly related to the scope of this thesis. A thorough examination is still needed.

2.6. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to introduce some of the characteristics and syntactic features of DzA to pave the way to examine the data in the following chapters. Areas that have been investigated thoroughly in Arabic dialects, such as the clause structure and the various hypotheses of the position of the subject, were discussed in brief. Other areas that have not seen adequate research, such as the subjunctive mood and the auxiliaries, have received more attention in this chapter. I have taken the opportunity in this chapter to describe these two areas because, on the one hand, the subjunctive is relevant to the examination of negative polarity items, and, on the other hand, chapter four discusses negative polarity auxiliary verbs, which have not been examined in the studies on negative polarity in Arabic. That is why it is crucial to describe auxiliaries in general before moving to examine a subset of these auxiliaries.

Chapter Three: Sentential Negation in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses negation in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. The study of negation in Arabic dialects has received considerable attention from researchers; however, there is still a need for more work, especially since research seems to have focused on particular Arabic dialects and tended to take for granted that findings could be generalised to other dialects. Negation in the Arabic dialects spoken in Syria has received little attention. To the best of my knowledge, this chapter is the first discussion of negation in a specific Syrian Arab dialect. This investigation starts by providing a brief typological background in section 3.2. Then it moves to describe negation strategies in the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor in section 3.3. Next, section 3.4 investigates negation in this dialect from a generative approach. Section 3.5 discusses negation as contrastive focus and negative absorption. The penultimate section, section 3.6, comments on negative concord in Arabic. Section 3.7 provides the conclusion to the chapter.

3.2. Sentential Negation in Arabic: Typological Background

All languages have means of expressing sentential negation. For instance, Bernini and Ramat underline that no known language exists without a means to express negation (1996, p.1). However, sentential negation can be realised using various strategies in different languages (Zeijlstra, 2004).

While Payne (1985) tried to simplify the notion of sentential negation by stating that it involves ‘the addition of a negative morpheme to a corresponding positive sentence’ (p. 207), his cross-linguistic examination shows there are four strategies to add the required negative element. The first strategy involves the use of ‘negative verbs’; they are negative markers that have some properties of main verbs, as is the case with the Polynesian language of Tongan. Sentence (2) is the negation of (1).

(1) Na'a ne fai 'a e ngauue. (Tongan)

ASP he do ABS the work

'He did the work.'

(2) Na'e 'ikai ke ne fai 'a e ngauue.

ASP NEG ASP he do ABS the work

'He didn't do the work.' (Payne, 1985, p.209; glosses amended)

The second strategy is the use of a negative marker, with the properties of a finite auxiliary, preceding a lexical verb, as is the case with the Siberian language of Evenki (3). The third strategy is the use of a negative marker particle which immediately precedes the verb and which, in some languages, such as French, is enforced by another negative particle following the verb; (4) is an example of this strategy from Welsh.

(3) Bi ə-cə-w dukuwūn-ma duku-ra. (Evenki)

I NEG-PAST-1SG letter-OBJ write-PAR

"I didn't write a letter." (Payne, 1985, p. 213)

(4) *Nid* yw'r bachgen (*ddim*) yn hoffi coffi. (Welsh)

NEG is-the boy NEG in like coffee

"The boy does not like coffee." (Payne, 1985, p.225)

The fourth strategy is using an affix as part of the derivational morphology of the verb, as is the case with the Turkish *-me-* (Payne 1985, p. 227). Arabic dialects employ the third strategy of sentential negation. Negation in Arabic dialects is predominantly pre-verbal. From a typological point of view, pre-verbal negation is more common than post-verbal, as

investigated by Van Alsenoy and van der Auwera (2014), who reported pre-verbal negation to be found in 71 languages, while post-verbal negation is found in 32 languages; their total sample contained 103 languages. This typological fact lends support to what Otto Jespersen described as a tendency ‘to put the negative word or element as early as possible, so as to leave no doubt in the mind of the hearer as to the purport of what is said’ (Jespersen 1933, p.297 cited in Horn 1989, p.293). Horn (1989) underlined the importance of Jespersen’s statement, which is often referred to in the literature (e.g., Haspelmath 1997; Van Alsenoy and van der Auwera 2014) as the ‘Negative First Principle’.

In some other languages, negative markers can show sensitivity to tense, mood, aspect or the type of clause (Zanuttini 2001); in the case of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), the negative marker shows temporal sensitivity: *lā* (present), *lan* (future), *lam* (past) (Aoun et al. 2010; Benmamoun 2000; Ouhalla 1993; Soltan 2007;). This sensitivity is lost in the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor and other Arabic dialects. From a typological point of view, Arabic dialects can be classified even further in respect of the negative markers they use to form sentential negation.

Researchers who described negation in Arabic dialects, and Modern Standard Arabic, such as Alsarayreh (2012), Aoun et al.(2010), Benmamoun (1991; 2000), Benmamoun & Al-Asbahi (2012), Benmamoun et al. (2013), Brustad (2000), Cowell (1964), Holes (1990), Lucas (2009; 2013), Ouhalla (1993), Shlonsky (1997) and others, distinguish two types of sentential negation: verbal negation and non-verbal negation²²; the latter is used to negate non-verbal predicates, i.e. in equational sentences. Those researchers report that verbal negation can be realised in three different ways: *mā* (Syrian Arabic, Iraqi Arabic, and Arabic dialects of the Gulf), discontinuous negation, also known as two part negation, *ma-š* (Egyptian Arabic, Moroccan

²² Some researchers use different terminology; Brustad (2000, p.282) opted to follow Holes (1990) by distinguishing between sentential negation and predicate negation (verbal negation and non-verbal negation, respectively).

Arabic, and San’ani Arabic), and discontinuous negation *ma-š* with *š* being optional (Levantine Arabic). Abu Haidar’s (1979) study of (Baskinta Lebanese Arabic) and Palva’s (2004) study of negation in es-Salt, Jordan, report that, in certain cases, verbal negation can be realised by enclitic *-š*.

(5) Verbal negation in Arabic dialects:

A. *sālim mā šāf ʔayy wāḥid hnāk.* (Baghdad Iraqi Arabic)

Salim NEG see.PRF.3MSG any one DEM

‘Salim did not see anyone there.’

(Ali 1972, p. 48; glosses amended)

B. *ma-byiʕraf-š yitkallim kuwayyis.* (Egyptian Arabic)

NEG-know.IMPF.3MSG-NEG speak.IMPF.3MSG properly

‘He can’t speak properly.’

(Benmamoun et al. 2013, p.90; glosses amended)

C. *ma timzaḥə-š, iḥki jad.* (Levantine Arabic)

NEG joke.IMPF.2MSG-NEG talk.IMP.2MSG serious

‘Don’t joke, be serious!’

(Benmamoun et al. 2013, p.91; glosses amended)

Non-verbal negation can be realised in two main ways: using *mū* (Syrian Arabic, Iraqi Arabic, Arabic dialects of the Gulf), or combining the two parts of discontinuous negation ‘to form an

independent negative particle’ (Benmamoun et al. 2011, p.123); this independent particle has the following forms *muš* (Egyptian Arabic), *maši* (Moroccan Arabic), *miš* (San’ani Arabic).

(6) Non-verbal negation in Arabic dialects:

A. huwa muš hina. (Egyptian Arabic)

he NEG here

‘He is not here.’

B. huwa maši hna. (Moroccan Arabic)

he NEG here

‘He is not here.’

C. ʔal-ḥadīga miš ḥaliya. (San’ani Arabic)

DEF-park NEG beautiful.FSG

‘The park is not beautiful.’

(Benmamoun et al. 2011, p.123-124; glosses amended)

D. h-al-ḥaki hāda mū ḥəlu (Syrian Arabic)

DEM-DEF-talk DEM NEG nice.MSG

‘That (kind of) talk isn’t nice’

(Cowell 1964, p.386; glosses added)

3.3. Negation in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor

3.3.1. A Note on Syrian Arabic and Levantine Arabic

Before I commence the description of sentential negation in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, I need to underline that negation in the Arabic dialects spoken in Syria has not been studied thoroughly. Generally speaking, what is often mentioned in the literature about Syrian Arabic is cited from Cowell's (1964) major work on the grammar of Syrian Arabic. Cowell underlined that the Syrian Arabic he described is the Arabic variety spoken 'most particularly by the natives in Damascus' (1964, p. vii); Damascus is the capital of Syria and is located in the south-western part of the country. Negation in Syrian Arabic is often sketched in juxtaposition with other Arabic dialects for comparison purposes, where the main subject of study is the other Arabic dialect. Furthermore, as a member of the family of Levantine Arabic, Syrian Arabic and other Arabic dialects which are spoken in Syria might be expected to use discontinuous negation as their primary negation strategy since discontinuous negation is often described as the canonical negation in Levantine Arabic (e.g., Alqassas 2012; Hoyt 2010).

Recently, a couple of researchers, Hoyt (2010) and Alqassas (2012), investigated negation, and some of its associated phenomena, in Levantine Arabic; both of them focused on discontinuous negation, and both of them mentioned that Levantine Arabic is spoken in Syria. However, both of them also admitted that they didn't actually investigate negation in Syria. Hoyt stated that his work 'is based in large part on information collected in Jordan' (2010, p.vi), and Alqassas also stated that most of his 'data is taken from Rural Jordanian Arabic (RJA) and Rural Palestinian Arabic (RPA)' (2012, p.2). What is often mentioned in the literature about Levantine Arabic is not applicable to the Arabic dialects spoken in Syria, especially to the dialects spoken in the eastern and north-eastern parts of the country.

Discontinuous negation, which is often reported as a common negation strategy in various areas in the Levant, is found in Syria, but it is very rare. Behnstedt (2009), for instance, reported that the use of discontinuous negation is attested in the village of Drayj, a small village of about

4000 people in the Qalamun mountainous area west of Damascus, and a stone's throw away from Lebanon²³. There are other rare strategies to form sentential negation in Syria, but they are still more widely used than discontinuous negation (*ma-š*). The Syrian Druze, a minority of roughly half a million in southern Syria, seem to be following the strategies of other Druze in the Levant (cf. Blanc 1953) and form negation using the form *b-imperfect-š*.

(7) Sentential Negation in Druze Arabic dialect (Native Speaker; private conversation)

A. b-tigdar-š.

b-can.IMPF.2MSG-NEG

‘you cannot.’

B. bi-ḥibbi-š.

b-like.IMPF.1SG-NEG

‘I don't like.’

It goes without saying that political borders might mean only little to linguistic practices. Syrians living in South-Western and Southern Syria, i.e. areas adjacent to Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan, seem to be using negation strategies similar to those in neighbouring countries, but those strategies aren't attested in mainstream Syrian Arabic dialects. The following description of sentential negation in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, with reference to sentential negation in

²³ In the Syrian Coast, north-west of Syria, while discontinuous negation is not used, *miš* is used meaning ‘nothing’ and it is mainly used in fragment replies or short statements. The following is from a private conversation with a native speaker of Arabic from the Syrian coast area:

ištağalt	tlāfīn	sini	w	šu	ʕand-i	hala?	?	miš	!
work.PRF.1SG	thirty	year	CONJ	Q	POSS-1SG	now		nothing	

‘I've worked for thirty years and what do I have now? Nothing!’

Syrian Arabic, would show that the strategies of negation bear more similarity to those of Iraqi Arabic and Arabic of the Gulf States than to Levantine Arabic.

3.3.2. Sentential Negation in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor

First of all, sentential negation (8.A) needs to be differentiated from constituent negation (8.B.) and (8.C).

- (8) A. John didn't go away.
 B. John went away not very pleased.
 C. Not many students went away.

To do that, Klima (1964) proposed a set of diagnostic tests to differentiate between sentential negation and constituent negation; he underlined that only sentences with sentential negation would allow positive tag questions, tag with *neither*, and be able to combine with structures beginning with *not even*. However, the recommended set of tests is only applicable to English, and, even with English, these tests are not without flaws²⁴, as can be seen below.

- (9) A. John didn't go away, did he? /and neither did I. /not even for a day.
 B. *John went away not very pleased, neither did I.
 C. Not many students went away, did they? /neither did I /not even for a while.

Applying Klima's tests to the dialect of Deir Ezzor would show that the results are not systematic. Tag questions in the dialect of Deir Ezzor seem to be formed in the same way for declarative and negative sentences (10), and that is mainly through the addition of *mū*. This makes it difficult to distinguish between constituent negation and sentential negation; native speakers of the dialect stated that they don't feel it natural to add the tag question *mū* if the

²⁴ These tests can be even applied to cases where there is no negation: *scarcely any students passed, did they? /and neither did I / not even with cribs* (Payne, 1985, p. 201).

constituent negative marker *mū* is very close to the end of the sentence, as in (11). That's why tag questions are not dependable in this regard.

(10) ʔaḥmad (mā) sāfar imbāriḥ, mū?

Ahmed NEG travel.PRF.3MSG yesterday TAG

‘Ahmed travelled yesterday, didn’t he?’ / ‘Ahmed didn’t travel yesterday, did he?’

(11) ʔaḥmad sāfar il-yōm mū imbāriḥ, mū?

Ahmed travel.PRF.3MSG DEF-today NEG yesterday TAG

‘Ahmed travelled today and not yesterday, didn’t he?’

As for conjoining with *not even* or *neither*, in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, both of them can be replaced with *wala* structures. This test seems to fare better than tag questions. Only sentences containing negation can be conjoined with *wala* structures. Sentences with constituent negation seem to allow only *wala* structures equivalent to the negated constituent, i.e. if the negated constituent is an NP, *wala* should be followed only by an NP. Notice here the ungrammaticality of (13). Sentences with sentential negation don’t seem as restricted. However, increasing the distance, i.e. string of words, between the negated constituent and the *wala* structure could make conjoining with *wala* unacceptable (13).

(12) jamāl sāfar mū imbāriḥ, wala il-yōm.

Jamal travel.PRF.3MSG NEG yesterday NEG DEF-today

‘Jamal travelled neither yesterday nor today.’

(13) *jamāl sāfar mū imbāriḥ, wala daras.

Jamal travel.PRF.3MSG NEG yesterday, NEG study.PRF.3MSG

(14)	*jamāl	rijiʕ		imbāriḥ	mū	taʕbān	w
	Jamal	return.PRF.3MSG		yesterday	NEG	tired.MSG	CONJ
	ʒall	b-il-bēt	wala			jūʕān.	
	AUX	in-DEF-home	NEG			hungry.MSG	

‘Jamal returned yesterday not tired, and he stayed home, and not hungry.’

A better method to distinguish sentential negation from constituent negation is to consider the difference a matter of scope, which actually can be defined as ‘the variable portions of a clause that can be negated’ (Payne 1997, p.293). Based on the previous discussion, I adopt the definition proposed by Penka (2011).

(15) **Sentential Negation:**

Negation taking scope at least above (the existential quantifier binding the event argument of) the main predicate.

(Penka 2011, p.8)

This distinction is what is used here to identify cases of sentential negation in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. Sentential negation can be realised by means of *mā*, *mū*, *lā*, and *pronouns of negation*; constituent negation is realised by means of *mū* only.

3.3.2.1. *mā*

Standard negation in the dialect of Deir Ezzor is realised by *mā*. Payne (1985, 198) defined standard negation as ‘negation that can apply to the most minimal and basic sentences. Such sentences are characteristically main clauses and consist of a single predicate with as few noun phrases and adverbial modifiers as possible’. Examples of such basic sentences in English are those composed of a dummy subject and a zero valency verbal predicate, e.g. *it rains/it doesn’t*

rain. In the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, the most minimal and basic sentences can be composed of an intransitive verb with a null subject, e.g. *nām* ‘he slept’. Such a sentence can only be negated by *mā*.

(16) *mā nām.*

NEG sleep.PRF.3MSG

‘He didn’t sleep.’

The negative marker *mā* is used to negate declarative sentences with verbal predicates, and it can also be used to form special negative imperatives (see section 3.3.2.3). *mā* is used to negate verbs in all tenses; it always precedes the verb, whether it is the main verb or the auxiliary verb (17). *mā* is also used to negate verb-like forms, also known as pseudo-verbs, such as *bidd* (want, need), and verb-like forms expressing possession *ʕind*, *maʕ*, and *ill*. Note that those verb-like expressions show agreement with the subject (18).

(17) *jamāl mā rāḥ yəsāfir il-yōm.*

Jamal NEG FUT travel.IMP.F.3MSG DEF-today.

‘Jamal is not going to travel today.’

(18) *mā ʕind-u maṣāri.*

NEG POSS-3MSG money

‘He doesn’t have money.’

mā is also used to negate the existential predicate particle *bī*, a cognate of *fī*, which is used in Syrian Arabic and some other Arabic dialects. This predicate particle can also show agreement.

(19)	il-məṭmmōra	mā	čān	bī-ha	mašāri	čaṭīr.
	DEF-money box	NEG	AUX	EX.PAR-3FSG	money	a lot

‘There wasn’t a lot of money in the money box.’

While Miestamo (2007) pointed out that existential predicates are often negated by nonstandard negation strategies, in Syrian Arabic and the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, the existential predicates are negated with the same negative marker negating lexical verbs. Syrian Arabic and the Arabic of Deir Ezzor belong to what William Croft (1991) called Type A of languages. Croft’s ternary classification also includes Type B, which employs ‘a special negative existential predicate, distinct from the verbal negator’²⁵ and Type C, which employs ‘a special negative existential predicate, which is identical to the verbal negator’²⁶ (Croft, 1991, p.6). Croft argued that the study of language evolution suggests a directionality of change from Type A to B, B to C, and C to A. Some further investigation should be carried out to find whether Syrian Arabic has recently developed from Type C to Type A or if it is about to develop to Type B. In addition to negating verbs, auxiliaries, pseudo-verbs, and existential predicates, *ma* also negates the indefinite pronouns *ʔaḥad/ḥada* (see section 3.5.2).

3.3.2.2. *mū*

The negative particle *mū* is used to negate constituents or to negate present copular clauses. This is consistent with the pattern shown by other languages; Miestamo (2007) underlined that copular sentences are negated by ‘nonstandard strategies’ (2007, p. 561). The particle *mū* is a counterpart of *laysa* in Modern Standard Arabic, and just like *laysa* it is thought of as a negative auxiliary (Holes 2004; Hoyt 2010, p.94). The tense of past copular sentences is expressed by means of an auxiliary, mainly *čān*, and in this case the sentence is negated by *mā*. From an

²⁵ An example of these languages is Turkish which uses the particle *yok* (NEG.EX).

²⁶ An example of these languages is Tongan which uses the particle *'ikai* which functions both as NEG and NEG.EX

etymological point of view, Holes suggested that *mū*, in the Levant, is a ‘reduced composite’ form of *mā* and *hu/hi* (it, he/she) (2004, p. 243). In the dialect of Deir Ezzor, *mī* is used when the subject of the present copular sentence is overt, singular and feminine. Compare (20) and (21).

(20) həba mī ʔawilah.

Heba NEG tall.FSG

‘Heba is not tall.’

(21) A. wīn həba?

where Heba

‘Where is Heba?’

B. mī hōn.

NEG here

‘(she’s) not here.’

In addition to the fact that speakers find it natural to use *mū* in all contexts, this limited usage of *mī* motivates a distinction between the two particles; *mū* is the unmarked negative auxiliary and *mī* is the marked one. In addition to negating copular sentences, there are two particular cases where *mū* can be used to negate verbal sentences. The first case is that of participles. In the dialect of Deir Ezzor, participle forms are only negated by *mū* (22). This is different from Syrian Arabic, where Cowell (1964) pointed out that *mā* is sometimes used to negate active participles (23). Participles can also be negated by pronouns of negation.

(22) jamāl mū nēyim.

Jamal NEG sleep.RART.3MSG

‘Jamal is not asleep.’

(23) kīf, mā mēštā? l-əššām? (Syrian Arabic)

Q NEG miss.PART.3MSG to-Damascus

‘Aren’t you homesick for Damascus?’

(Cowell 1964, p.384; glosses added)

The second case where *mū* can be used before the verb is usually at the beginning of the sentence; sometimes, this particular form is used to give a meaning similar to a warning or advice rather than plain negation, as in (24) and (25). This particular use is also found in Iraqi Arabic dialects (Abu Haidar 2002; Erwin 1963), and it is also found in Kuwaiti Arabic (Aljenaie 2008 cited in Benmamoun et al. 2013). Erwin (1963) noted that *mū* ‘may sometimes occur immediately before a verb... in which it serves to negate not the verb but the whole sentence’ (1963, p.332).

(24) mū tuqūl l-həba ʕala il-mufajaʕa! (DzA)

NEG tell.IMPF.3MSGG to-Heba PREP DEF-surprise

‘You shouldn’t Heba about the surprise!’

(25) *mū* *taklīn* *lhīn* (Kuwaiti Arabic)

NEG eat.IMPF.2FSG now

‘Don’t eat now.’

(Aljenaie 2008, cited in Benamoun et al. 2013, p. 104; glosses amended)

Finally, it must be highlighted that *mū* doesn’t seem to be restricted to sentences which lack overt subjects, as suggested by Brustad (2000, p.299); the use of *mū* with overt subjects is documented in Cowell’s data (see Cowell, 1964, p. 386).

3.3.2.3. *lā*

While *mā* is mainly used to negate declarative sentences, imperative sentences are negated with the negative particle *lā*; those structures are known as negative imperatives or ‘prohibitives’ (Dahl 2010, p.27). Using a different negative marker to negate imperatives is actually consistent with what is reported by typologists who studied negation. Matti Miestamo, for instance, highlighted that ‘in a clear majority of languages, imperatives use a negative strategy that differs from standard negation’ (2007, p.561). It is also highlighted in the literature that, in addition to using a different negative marker, a different form of the verb is used. Dahl (2010), for instance, stated that there are negative imperatives that exhibit ‘differences in verbal construction’ in comparison with positive imperatives (2010, p.27). This is also attested in the dialect of Deir Ezzor.

Positive imperatives in the dialect of Deir Ezzor employ a minimally marked form of the verb (26); this is consistent with what is described by Palmer, who underlined that the verb form in imperatives is ‘often unmarked or minimally marked even in inflected languages, where the declarative (the indicative) has a full set of inflections’ (Palmer, 1986, p.29). In negative imperatives, the verb is in the imperfective form (27).

(26) nām!

sleep.IMP.2MSG

‘go to sleep.’

(27) lā tnām quddām il-tilifiyyōn.

NEG sleep.IMP.2MSG front DEF-television

‘Don’t sleep in front of the television.’

The primary difference in verb forms is related to the person agreement, and this remark is in line with what Benmamoun pointed out that an ‘important difference between positive imperatives and negative imperatives is that the former lack the person prefix; they are identical in all other aspects’ (Benmamoun, 2000, p.113).

The particle *lā* can also be followed by a perfective form of the verb, and the meaning is not a negative imperative or prohibitive, but that of expressing a wish or advice. This use is also attested in Iraqi Arabic, as reported by Farida Abu Haidar (2002). In (28) and (29), from Iraqi Arabic, *lā* negates a perfective verb preceded by the auxiliary *čān*.

(28) lā čān qəlt l-ʔax-ūk ʕal il-muškli.

NEG AUX tell.PRF.2MSG to-brother-2MSG about DEF-problem

‘You shouldn’t have told your brother about the problem.’

(Abu Haidar, 2002, 5; glosses amended)

(29) lā čān dallatī-ha hal-gadd
 NEG AUX spoil.PRF.2FSG-3SG DEM-extent

“You (female) shouldn’t have spoiled her to this extent!”

(Abu Haidar, 2002, 5; glosses added)

3.3.2.4. Pronouns of Negation

In addition to *mū*, non-verbal sentences can be negated using structures known as ‘pronouns of negation’²⁷ (Hoyt 2010, p. 99) or negative copula (Brustad 2000, p.296). A pronoun of negation can morphologically be decomposed into *mā* followed by *a personal pronoun*. This strategy of combining *mā* with pronouns is attested in many Arabic dialects (Aoun et al. 2010; Brustad 2000; Cowell 1964; Hoyt 2010); see table 2 below.

This pattern is attested in the Arabic dialects spoken in Syria, including the Arabic of Deir Ezzor and Syrian Arabic (the variant spoken in Damascus). However, Syrian Arabic allows for another strategy of forming pronouns of negation. This second strategy has the following structure: *mā* + dative *l* + *pronominal clitic*. The first strategy produces *māni*, and the second strategy produces *māli*. In Syrian Arabic, both forms seem to be used interchangeably, meaning ‘I am not’.

However, in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, it is worth noting that *mani* has a meaning equal to ‘I’m not’, while *mali* has a meaning equal to ‘I haven’t got’. The following examples clarify the difference in meaning between the two forms in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. Furthermore, in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, the *māli* form is relatively newer than *māni*. It can be said that *māni* is the unmarked form, whereas *māli* is a marked form of pronoun of negation.

²⁷ ‘Pronouns of negation’ is a more accurate term than ‘negative pronouns’ which might confuse them with negative indefinite pronouns.

(30) ʔana mā-ni ʕaduw.

I NEG-1SG enemy

‘I am not an enemy.’

(31) ʔana mā-l-i ʕaduw.

I NEG-DAT-1SG enemy

‘I have no enemy.’

From a syntactic point of view, pronouns of negation seem to have the same distribution and usage as *mū*; the difference between *mū* and a pronoun of negation is that the latter induces a stronger meaning of negation, i.e. an emphatic negation. Brustad (2000) suggested that in the case of Syrian Arabic, and unlike other Arabic dialects, the difference between *mū* and pronouns of negation is that the latter are used to negate sentences where the subject is overt, whereas the former is used to negate sentences with a covert subject (Brustad, 2000, p.299). In the dialect of Deir Ezzor, and even in Syrian Arabic data of Cowell (1964), the difference between *mū* and pronouns of negation does not seem to be related to the structure of the sentence; in Cowell’s data (pp.386-388) *mū* and pronouns of negation occur in both types of sentences. In the dialect of Deir Ezzor, the main difference between the two strategies of negation is a pragmatic one.

(32) mā-ntum ʔālʕīn qabəl ma təxlšūn dirrassa. (DzA)

NEG-2P go.PART.2P before COMP finish.IMPF.2P study

‘you aren’t going out before finishing your study’

(33) mā-l-na raḥa-nəttəfeʔ²⁸ ʔabadan. (Syrian Arabic)

NEG-DAT-1P FUT-agree.IMPF.1P ever

‘We’re not ever going to reach an agreement.’

(Cowell 1964, p.388; glosses added)

The following table shows that the pattern of forming pronouns of negation in Arabic dialects, except Syrian Arabic, involves combining *mā* and a *personal pronoun*. Brustad (2000) underlined that pronouns of negation in Syrian Arabic are formed of *mā* and an object pronoun, which usually cliticises on a verb’s ending, and that ‘the Syrian negative copula has developed into a pseudo-verb’ (2000, p.298). While those pronominal parts have the same form of object clitics hosted on verbs endings in Syrian Arabic, e.g. *šāf-ni/šāf-ak/šāf-hum* (‘he saw me’/ ‘he saw you (sm)’/ ‘he saw them’), they also have the same form of possessive clitics, e.g. *səyyārt-i/səyyārt-ak/səyyārat-un* (‘my car’/ ‘your(sm) car’ / ‘their car’). *bidd*, *ʕind*, and *maʕ* are not classified as pseudo verbs only because they host object clitics, but also because they can be preceded by auxiliaries (34); auxiliaries cannot be used with pronouns of negation which shed doubt on Brustad’s classification of them as pseudo-verbs (35).

(34) mā kān biddi bəs hallaʔ šār biddi. (Syrian Arabic)

NEG AUX want.1SG but now AUX want.1SG

‘I didn’t want (then) but now I want.’

²⁸ Cowell added an accent over the vowel to indicate stress; replicating the same technique as used by Cowell wasn’t possible here; boldface is used instead.

(35) *kān mā-nnu mabsōt.

AUX NEG-3MSG happy.MSG

‘He wasn’t happy.’

kān in Syrian Arabic and *čān* in the dialect of Deir Ezzor are used to express past tense in non-verbal sentences. The only way to express the past tense of (35) is through adding *kān* or *čān* to a non-verbal sentence negated by *mū*. This suggests that pronouns of negation are only grammatical in present tense non-verbal sentences and not grammatical in past tense sentences. This, in turn, supports the suggestion that pronouns of negation are used to serve pragmatic purposes.

One final note remains. While used widely in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, marked pronouns of negation are interpreted by speakers as new or an attempt to copy the way Damascenes speak. While those forms of Syrian Arabic have found their way into the dialect of Deir Ezzor, the table below shows that they have undergone some changes to resemble the morphological patterns of the dialect. Note also that there are differences in the length of vowels in the various forms.

Table 2: Pronouns of Negation in Some Arabic Dialects

			Singular		Plural
1 st		Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	māni	Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	miḥna
		Deir Ezzor (marked)	māli	Deir Ezzor (marked)	mānna/mālna
		Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	māni/māli	Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	mānna/mālna
		Kuwaiti Arabic	māni	Kuwaiti Arabic	miḥna
		Egyptian Arabic	ma-nī-š	Egyptian Arabic	ma-ḥnā-š
		Moroccan Arabic	ma-ni-š	Moroccan Arabic	ma-ḥnā-š
2 nd	Masc.	Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	mānta	Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	māntum
		Deir Ezzor (marked)	mānak/mālak	Deir Ezzor (marked)	mānkum/mālkum
		Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	mānak/mālak	Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	mānkun/mālkun
		Kuwaiti Arabic	mint/mant	Kuwaiti Arabic	mintu/mantu
		Egyptian Arabic	ma-ntā-š	Egyptian Arabic	ma-ntū-š
		Moroccan Arabic	ma-nta-š	Moroccan Arabic	ma-ntuma-š
	Fem.	Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	mānti	Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	māntum
		Deir Ezzor (marked)	mānči/mālči	Deir Ezzor (marked)	mānkum/mālkum
		Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	mānik/mālik	Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	mānkun/mālkun
		Kuwaiti Arabic	minti	Kuwaiti Arabic	mintu/mantu

		Egyptian Arabic	ma-ntī-š	Egyptian Arabic	ma-ntū-š
		Moroccan Arabic	ma-nti-š	Moroccan Arabic	ma-ntuma-š
3 rd	Masc.	Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	māhu	Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	mahumma
		Deir Ezzor (marked)	mānu/mālu	Deir Ezzor (marked)	mānhum/mālhum
		Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	mānu/mālu	Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	mānkun/mālkun
		Kuwaiti Arabic	muhu	Kuwaiti Arabic	muhum
		Egyptian Arabic	ma-huwwā-š	Egyptian Arabic	ma-hummā-š
		Moroccan Arabic	ma-huwa-š	Moroccan Arabic	ma-huma-š
	Fem.	Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	māhi	Deir Ezzor (unmarked)	mahumma
		Deir Ezzor (marked)	mānha/mālha	Deir Ezzor (marked)	mānhum/mālhum
		Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	mānha/mālha	Syrian Arabic (Damascus)	mānun/mālun
		Kuwaiti Arabic	mihi	Kuwaiti Arabic	muhum
		Egyptian Arabic	ma-hiyyā-š	Egyptian Arabic	ma-hummā-š
		Moroccan Arabic	ma-hiya-š	Moroccan Arabic	ma-huma-š

3.4. Negation in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor: a Generative Grammar Approach

While many scholars, such as Ouhalla (1990), Benmamoun (1991; 2000), Fassi Fehri (1993), Shlonsky (1997), Soltan (2007), and many others, have studied negation in Arabic dialects using the Transformational Grammar model, negation in Arabic dialects spoken in Syria has not received such an examination. The following might be the first such attempt, even though the purpose is not to present a comprehensive investigation exhausting negation and its correlates. This section aims to investigate the syntactic status of the negative marker and the location of the negative phrase.

3.4.1. The Syntactic Nature of the Negative Marker

The above-mentioned linguists, in particular Ouhalla (1990) and Benmamoun (1991), influenced the work of a generation of Arab scholars as they were the first to follow the proposals of Pollock (1989). Pollock, who comparatively examined the movement behaviour of auxiliary and lexical verbs in French and English in relation to negative markers and VP-adverbs, such as *often* and *souvent*, formulated proposals based on the notions which were ‘proposed in Chomsky (1955) that Tense and Agreement morphemes should be analysed as separate syntactic entities at the abstract level of representation’ (Pollock, 1989, p.420). The differences he observed, especially between infinitival auxiliary verbs and infinitival lexical verbs in French, led him to propose that negative markers do not occupy the same position of VP-adverbs in the structure and that negative markers should also be recognised as a distinct syntactic entity. He proposed a more articulated structure of IP where there are three, and not one, constituents; there are three syntactic heads in three maximal projections: AgrP, TP, and NegP. The negative particle is the head of NegP, and in French it has *pas* in the specifier position; NegP is higher than VP but lower than TP. Pollock’s proposal has been known as the ‘split inflection hypothesis’, and it was later adopted by Chomsky (1995).

Pollock’s seminal work and his proposal that the negative marker is a head have influenced research in the field of negation. Perhaps the first and most important question a researcher

encounters when they start investigating the issue of sentential negation is whether the negative marker is a head or not. To answer such a question, some diagnostic tests have been developed. Researchers have proposed more than one technique employing the same notion underlined earlier by Pollock (1989): a head blocks the movement of another head, which is in a lower position, and if the negative marker is a head, it is expected to block the movement of that head – which is, of course, the verb following the negative marker. Zanuttine (1997, 2001) stressed the validity of such tests and suggested that since forming questions, in many languages, involves a verb movement to C to satisfy the requirements of interrogative features, forming negative questions would provide an opportunity to test whether the negative marker intervenes with the movement of the verb.

Even though this test is based on sound theoretical assumptions, especially as it is supported by cross-linguistic pieces of evidence, discussed especially in Zanuttini (1997), its application to the Arabic of Deir Ezzor might be inconclusive. While there is no verb movement over the negative marker in negative questions (36), which suggests the negative marker is a head, there is no evidence of a verb movement either in affirmative questions (37).

(36) lēš mā ʕattēt ʔaḥmad maṣāri?

why NEG give.PRF.2MSG Ahmed money

‘Why haven’t you given Ahmed money?’

(37) šqad ʕattēt ʔaḥmad maṣāri?

how much give.PRF.2MSG Ahmed money

‘How much money have you given Ahmed?’

Luckily there are other diagnostic tests. Zeijlstra (2004) examined the validity of another test proposed by Merchant (2001). Merchant's diagnostic test '*why not*' is based on checking whether this construction is acceptable in a given language, i.e. whether the language allows for a construction *why + the negative particle* of that language. If the language allows the *why not* construction, the negative marker is not a syntactic head; if the language does not allow this construction, the negative marker is a head, and that language allows the alternative construction *why no*. Merchant (2006) explained that this test is based on 'the standard assumption that *why* is a phrasal adverb (an XP)' and that *no*, a negative adverb phrase, can adjoin to such an XP, while the negative marker cannot (2006, p.21).

Zeijlstra (2004) also tested and confirmed the validity of this test on his sample of languages, as long as the negative marker and *no* are not phonologically identical, as is the case with Spanish and Catalan (40)

(38)	*Perche	<i>non?</i>	(Italian)
	*Giati	<i>dhen?</i>	(Greek)
	Why	neg	
	'Why	not'	
(39)	Perche	<i>no?</i>	(Italian)
	Giati	<i>oxi?</i>	(Greek)
	Why	no	

(40) ¿Porqué no? (Spanish)

Per què no? (Catalan)

Why neg/no

(Zeijlstra, 2004, p.154)

In the dialect of Deir Ezzor, and other Arabic dialects, the negative marker and the word for ‘no’ *laʔ* are not phonologically identical; thus, it is possible to use Merchant's (2001) test.

(41) *lēš māʔ

why NEG

‘Why not?’

(42) lēš laʔʔ

why no

‘why no?’

(41) shows that the construction *why + the negative particle* is not acceptable in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, which confirms that the negative marker is a syntactic head. Furthermore, pronouns of negation (see section 3.3.2.4 above) provide a piece of evidence that confirms that *mā* is a syntactic head since it can host subject agreement inflection and clitics (the dative *l*).

Now that the issue of whether the negative marker is a syntactic head or not is settled, the next logical issue to be investigated is the location of this head. However, before commencing this investigation, it is useful to take a quick look at the relation between negation and tense in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. This is presented in the following section, and the issue of the location of the negative marker is discussed after that in section 3.4.3.

3.4.2. Negation and Tense

One crucial fact about negative markers in world languages is that they have a tendency to ‘occur in the same part of the structure as realizes other types of grammatical information, standardly considered to be the nucleus of the clause’ (Zanuttini, 2001, p.511), such as tense; consequently, the study of the behaviour of negative markers might shed light on the possible interaction between negation and some other elements, mainly tense. The minute details of the interaction between tense and negation could provide evidence of the exact location of the negative marker in the hierarchy of the clause.

Interaction between negation and tense has long been noticed and studied in Modern Standard Arabic (e.g., Benmamoun 1991, 2000; Ouhalla 1993). A distinct form of the negative marker is used with each of the tenses: *lā* is used with the present, *lan* with the future, and *lam* with the past.

(43) *lā* *yuḥibbu* *zayd-un* *al-qirāʔat-a.*
 NEG.PRES like.IMPF.3MSG Zayd-NOM DEF-reading-ACC

‘Zayd does not like reading.’

(44) *lan* *tusāfira* *zaynab-u.*
 NEG.FUT travel.IMPF.3FSG Zaynab-NOM

‘Zaynab will not travel.’

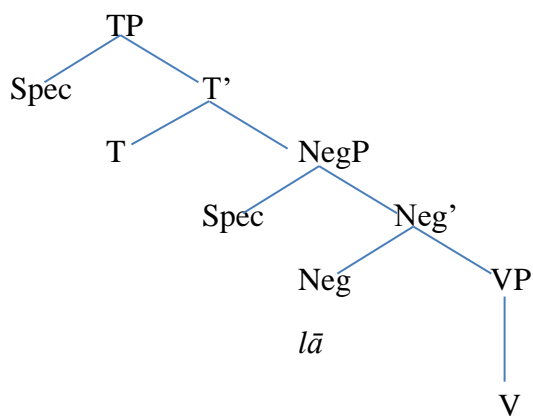
(45) *lam* *yuġādir* *zayd-un* *al-balad-a.*
 NEG.PAST leave.IMPF.3MSG Zayd-NOM DEF-country-ACC

‘Zayd has not left the country.’

(Ouhalla, 1993, p.275; glosses amended)

The phenomenon of temporal negative markers in MSA is not only explained by the fact that the negative marker is capable of hosting tense but it is also supported by the fact that this hosting is obligatory since the negative head blocks the movement of the main verb to T – the necessary movement to establish dependency with tense.

(46)



The above-mentioned interaction marks the tense in MSA, but no such interaction exists in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor. There are some other details about expressing tense in Arabic. One key point highlighted by Ouhalla is that while the perfective form of the verb, in MSA, carries an overt marker of past tense, the imperfective forms ‘do not carry any tense information’ and that ‘tense is encoded separately’ (1993, p.290). As far as negation is concerned, tense in MSA could be encoded into the negative marker. *lā* is unmarked for tense, and for this reason (43) is present tense.

Comrie (1976) highlighted that ‘Arabic has means of indicating specifically Future Tense and Past Tense of the Imperfective’ (1976, p.81) and that in the absence of such means and specific temporal adverbs, the imperfective verb form, by elimination, would indicate present tense. Benmamoun et al. (2013) pointed out that the imperfective verb form occurs in a broad spectrum of contexts. They concluded that ‘present tense at least does not include any morphological change on the elements it interacts with’ (Benmamoun et al., 2013, p.89).

Following Comrie's remarks, *lan* in (44) marks the future tense while *lam* in (45) marks the tense. That is why *lan* and *lam* are often referred to as the temporal variants of *lā* in Modern Standard Arabic.

Benmamoun et al. (2013) highlighted that negative markers in Arabic dialects 'do not host temporal information in the past and future tense sentences' (93). This generalisation extends to the dialect of Deir Ezzor, where the negative marker *mā* is not marked for tense and is used to negate perfective and imperfective verbs in the past, present, and future tenses. While the perfective form of the verb in this dialect marks the past tense as it carries an overt marker, the imperfective verb form could be used in the past, present, or future tenses. It has the following two possibilities.

First, it could mark a present tense if the tense was not encoded separately in the sentence, whether the imperfective verb form is negated by *mā* or not. This also follows Comrie's (1976) remark about present tense by elimination. The following sentence is in the present tense, whether *ma* is used or not.

- (47) (mā) yudrus ʔaḥmad yōm il-jimʕa.
 (NEG) study.IMPF.3MSG Ahmed day DEF-Friday

'Ahmed studies on Friday' / 'Ahmed does not study on Friday.'

Second, the tense is marked separately in the sentence by another verb embedding the imperfective verb form; such verbs are auxiliary verbs.

- (48) (mā) rāḥ yudrus yōm il-jimʕa.
 (NEG) FUT study.IMPF.3MSG day DEF.Friday

'He is (not) going to study on Friday.'

- (49) (mā) čān yudrus yōm il-jimʕa.
 (NEG) AUX study.IMPF.3MSG day DEF.Friday
 ‘He was (not) studying on Friday.’

- (50) (mā) qām yudrus yōm il-jimʕa.
 (NEG) PROG study.IMPF.3MSG day DEF.Friday
 ‘He is (not) studying on Friday.’

Those verbs, *rāḥ*, *čān*, and *qām*, are used in the dialect of Deir Ezzor as auxiliary verbs, and even though all three of them are in the perfective form, each marks a different tense. This tense selection follows strict embedding rules, which are discussed in section 2.5 of this thesis. Having sketched the tense expression in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, it is possible to commence the discussion about the location of the negative marker.

3.4.3. The Location of Negative Marker

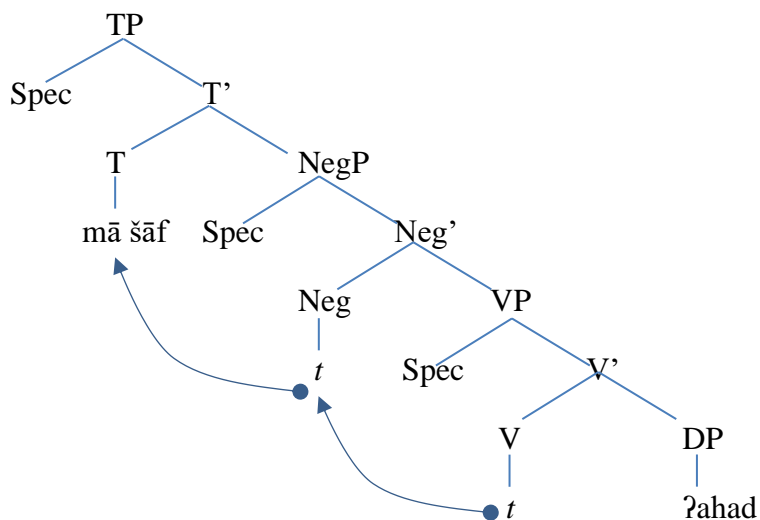
Although NegP, since Pollock’s seminal work, has been assumed to be a universal category, its position differs between languages; some linguists argue for a position below TP, and others argue for a position above TP (Penka, 2011). The location of the projection of the negative marker (NegP) in the Arabic dialects has been discussed in various proposals and hypotheses. Still, such works did not cover Syrian Arabic or any of the other Arabic dialects spoken in Syria, including, of course, the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. Before presenting a hypothesis for the location of NegP in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, it is useful to survey what has been already proposed for other Arabic dialects. If hypotheses related to the status of discontinuous negation

which is provided by the verb; to achieve this and to satisfy tense requirements, the verb in Moroccan Arabic moves to Neg and then both of them move to T. The Arabic of Deir Ezzor is different from Moroccan Arabic. While the negative marker does not seem to need lexical support, there are cases where the verb and the negative marker seem to form one unit, e.g. *mā* + *ʔadri* = *maddri*³⁰ ‘I don’t know. Having all of this in mind, sentence (53) should be represented as illustrated in (54).

(53) *mā* *šāf* *ʔaḥad*.
 NEG see.PRF.3MSG one

‘He didn’t see anyone.’

(54)



3.4.3.2. NegP above TP Hypothesis

Fassi Fehri (1993), Shlonksy (1997), and Soltan (2007) offered a counter-proposal suggesting that the negative marker is above TP. There are pieces of evidence which support the validity of this proposal. First, their proposal highlights that future tense sentences, in many Arabic dialects, are formed by using particles, such as *rāḥ* (Levantine, Syrian, Gulf Arabic), *ḥa*

³⁰ It is also possible to have *mā* and *ʔadri* spelled out separately as *mā ʔadri* but this is attested only when the speaker is emphasising negation ‘*qəltelak mā ʔadri*’ (I told you I don’t know).

(57) mā-fī-š wala ʕayyil hina. (Egyptian Arabic)

NEG-EX.PAR-NEG none child here

‘There is no one child here.’

(Benmamoun et al., 2013, p.99; glosses amended)

(58) mā-ʕindi səyyara. (Gulf Arabic)

NEG-POSS.1sg car

‘I don’t have a car.’

(Benmamoun et al., 2013, p.100; glosses amended)

The third piece of evidence that NegP is higher than TP can be found in the usage of *mū* to negate a whole verbal sentence, as shown in section 3.3.2.2 above; this use is attested in the dialect of Deir Ezzor (24 repeated in 59) and other Arabic dialects, such as Iraqi Arabic (Abu Haidar 2002; Erwin 1963), Kuwaiti Arabic (Aljenaie 2008; Benmamoun et al. 2013). The following examples show that the negative marker is higher than TP.

(59) mū tuqūl l-həba ʕala il-mufajaʔa! (DzA)

NEG tell.IMPF.3MSGG to-Heba PREP DEF-surprise

‘You shouldn’t Heba about the surprise!’

(60) mū gilt uhwa rāḥ (Kuwaiti Arabic)

NEG say.PRF.2MSG he leave.PRF.3MSG

‘Didn’t you say that he left?’

(Benmamoun et al. 2013, p.103; glosses amended)

A fourth indicator could be obtained from Classical Arabic, which allows a form of categorical negation known as ‘*lā al-nāfiyya li-l-jins*’ (Category negating *lā*), which appears to occupy the same position as the complementiser *ʔanna*, and it assigns the subject an accusative case, just like *ʔanna* does (Benmamoun et al., 2013).

(61) lā mudarris-īn ġāʔib-ūn.

NEG teachers-ACC absent.MP-NOM

‘No teachers are absent.’ (Benmamoun et al. 2013, p.101; glosses amended)

Fifth, Ouhalla (1993) argued that the function of the negative marker *mā* in Modern Standard Arabic is to establish contrastive focus and that *mā* is located above TP in a focus projection (see section 3.5.1 below). Sixth, Benmamoun et al. (2013) stressed that ‘the order Neg-Predicate-Subject is not allowed’³¹, and this statement is used to support the hypothesis that NegP is below TP.

However, Benmamoun and Al-Asbahi (2012) examined data from San’ani Arabic, where the negative marker can precede the subject, but this is only possible when the subject is pronominal (62). In the dialect of Deir Ezzor, the order Neg-Predicate is totally acceptable (63).

³¹ What Benmamoun et al. (2013) meant is that the negative marker, in non-verbal sentences, does not precede the subject whether the order is neg-predicate-subject or neg-subject-predicate.

(62) muš hum musāfrīn. (San'ani Arabic)

NEG they travel.PART.3MP

‘They are not travelling.’

(Benmamoun and Al-Asbahi 2012, p. 83; glosses amended)

(63) mū hōn il-muškli.

NEG here DEF-problem

‘The problem isn’t here.’ (that is not the problem)

Finally, Benmamoun et al. (2013) reported an interesting finding from Moroccan Arabic where a new negative marker is emerging; it co-occurs with *mā*, preceding it, and *-š* is dropped. This emerging negative marker definitely occurs above TP.

(64) gaš ma-ta-yskən hna. (Moroccan Arabic)

NEG NEG-HAB-live.IMPF.3MS here

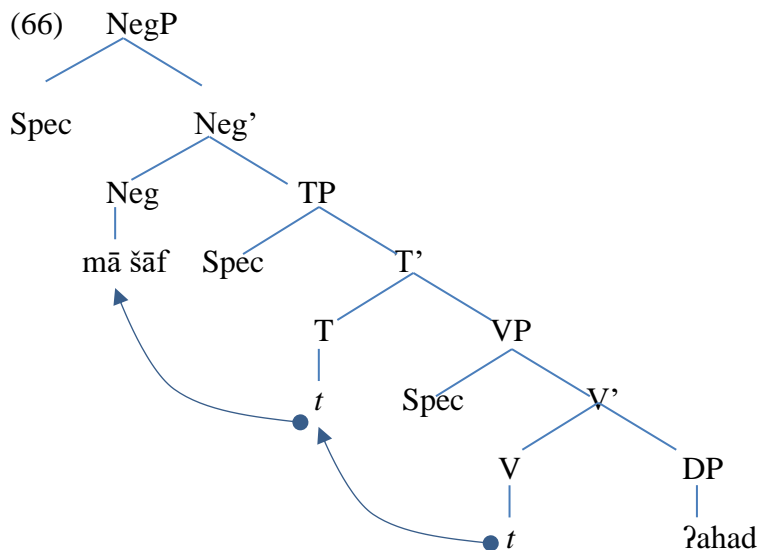
‘He does not live here.’ (Benmamoun et al. 2013, p.106; glosses amended)

Suggesting that the NegP is even higher in the structure, i.e. earlier in the sentence, is also in line with Jespersen’s Negative First Principle (Horn 1989). All the above pieces of evidence indicate that the hypothesis of NegP is higher than TP is stronger than the other hypothesis. Therefore, sentence (65), from the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, should have the representation (66).

(65) mā šāf ḥaḥad.

NEG see.PRF.3MSG one

‘He didn’t see anyone.’



3.5. Other Phenomena

3.5.1. Negation Markers as Contrastive Focus

Modern Arabic dialects use *mā*, with or without an enclitic *-š*, as its standard negation strategy.

This is different from Modern Standard Arabic, where *mā* is mainly used to encode a ‘negative contrastive focus’ into the sentence; ‘by virtue of being a marker of (negative) contrastive focus,’ *mā* also expresses modality (certainty) (Ouhalla, 1993, p.277).

(67) *mā* ʔallafat zaynab-u riwāyat-an.

NEG write.PRF.3FSG Zaynab-NOM novel-ACC

‘Zaynab has not written a novel.’

(68) *mā* riwāyat-an ʔallafat zaynab-u (bal qasīdat-n).

NEG novel-ACC write.PRF.3FSG Zaynab-NOM but poem-ACC

‘It is not a novel Zaynab has written (but a poem).’

(Ouhalla 1993, p.287; glosses amended)

Ouhalla (1993) explained that in (67) *mā* has scope over the whole sentence as it ‘asserts the falsity of the proposition that Zaynab has written a novel’ while in (68) *mā* has scope only over

one constituent, *riwāyat-an* ‘novel’, giving the meaning that what was written by Zaynab is not a novel but something else. For this contrastive focus meaning, *mā* has a feature [+F], in addition to the feature [+NEG], and it occupies the F position of the Focus Phrase (FOCP); this function is similar to those of some Arabic ‘corroborative (or reinforcing) morphemes’ such as *ʔinna* and *qad* (1993, p.280). In (70), the gloss FM stands for focus marker.

(69) šāʕiratu-un zaynab-u (lā riwāʔiyyat-un).

poet-NOM Zaynab-NOM NEG novelist-NOM

‘Zaynab is a POET (not a novelist)’

(70) ʔinna zaynab-a (la-)šāʕiratu-un (lā riwāʔiyyat-un).

FM Zaynab-ACC FM-poet-NOM NEG novelist-NOM

‘Zaynab is a POET (not a novelist)’

(Ouhalla, 1993, p.279; glosses amended)

This [+F] feature is responsible for the movement of the constituent preceded by *mā* to the Spec-FP position, as is the case with *riwāyat-an* ‘a novel’ in (68). In (69), there is no movement, and Ouhalla considered this a contrastive focus *in-situ* similar to echo-questions where no movement is required.

This contrastive focus and the modality meaning are also attested in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, with some differences. Compare the following:

(71) mā təjjwaz ʔaḥmad ʔaltāf ilhām.

NEG marry.PRF.3MSG Ahmed Altaaf Ilahm

‘Ahmed didn’t marry Altaaf, but Ilaham’

(72) *ma ʔaltāf təjjwaz ʔaḥmad ilahām.³²
 NEG Altaaf marry.PRF.3MSG Ahmed Ilham

(73) mū ʔaltāf təjjwaz ʔaḥmad ilhām.
 NEG Altaaf marry.PRF.3MSG Ahmed Ilham

‘It is not Altaaf whom Ahmed married, but Ilham’

(74) təjjwaz ʔaḥmad mū ʔaltāf Ilhām.
 marry.PRF.3MSG Ahmed NEG Altaf Ilham

‘Ahmed married not Altaaf but Ilham.’

(75) təjjwaz ʔaḥmad Ilhām mū ʔaltāf.
 marry.PRF.3MSG Ahmed Ilham NEG Altaf

‘Ahmed married Ilham and not Altaaf.’

While (71) has a negative contrastive focus meaning, similar to what Ouhalla described, the scope of *mā* covers the whole sentence; (72) shows that *mā* cannot be restricted to one constituent. In order to have negative contrastive focus restricted to one constituent, *mū* must be used (73). There is a negative contrastive focus in (74), but not in (75). It seems that the contrastive focus always involves a marked syntactic structure.

3.5.2 Negation Absorption

We have established now that the standard negative marker for verbal predicates is *mā* and for non-verbal predicates is *mū*. The latter is also used to form constituent negation and to establish

³² This sentence is acceptable by some speakers of Syrian Arabic.

negative contrastive focus. However, a sentence such as (76) might seem to violate these generalisations as *mā* is used to negate a pronoun, *ʔaḥad*³³.

(76) ma-ḥad najah.
 NEG-one pass.PRF.3MSG

‘No one passed.’

(77) mā najah ʔaḥad.
 NEG pass.PRF.3MSG one

‘No one passed.’

The main difference between (76) and (77) is related to word order, where the former is SVO, and the latter is VSO; the subject in both sentences is the indefinite pronoun *ʔaḥad*. This phenomenon is also found in Baghdadi Arabic (78) and Cairene Arabic (79).

(78) ma-ḥad kisər il-šibbak.
 NEG-one break.PRF.3MSG DEF-window

‘No one broke the window’ (Ali 1972, p.53; glosses added)

(79) ma ḥaddi-š yiʔraf yiʔra xaṭṭ-i.
 NEG one-NEG can.IMPF.3MSG read.IMPF.3MSG writing-1SG

‘Nobody can read my writing.’

(Haspelmath 1997, p.207; glossed amended)

³³ The vowels at the end of *mā* and beginning of *ʔaḥad* are merged into one shorter vowel.

This phenomenon of the negation shifting to the indefinite pronoun, *ʔahad* in Deir Ezzor, *wāḥid* in Baghdadi Arabic, and *ḥad* in Cairene Arabic, has been referred to as ‘negative absorption’ where the negative marker is absorbed into the indefinite pronoun (Haspelmath 1997, p.205). This negative absorption is only possible when the indefinite pronoun is in a pre-verbal position and is not possible when the indefinite pronoun is in a post-verbal position; this is motivated by the Negative First Principle (Haspelmath 1997). This explains why there is negative absorption in (76), (78), and (79), but not in (77).

This phenomenon of negative absorption is reported to be found in several languages (Van Alsenoy and van der Auwera 2014). One of the parameters of negative absorption is ‘the strength of the absorption’; In Egyptian Arabic (80), it is possible to separate the negative marker and the indefinite pronoun, while in German, Russian, and Spanish, the negative marker and the indefinite pronoun are ‘inseparable’ (Van Alsenoy and van der Auwera 2014, pp.30-31). Example (77) above shows that they are also separable in Deir Ezzor.

(80)	ma-šāf-nī-š	ḥadd.	(Egyptian Arabic)
	NEG-see.PRF.3MSG-1SG-NEG	anyone	
	‘No one saw me.’		

(Van Alsenoy and van der Auwera 2014, p.31; glosses amended)

3.6. Negative Concord

The traditional view held for centuries is that the occurrence of two forms of negation in one construction is expected to produce an affirmative as the two forms of negation cancel each other, or, in the words of Bishop Lowth (1762) cited in Horn (2010, p.111), *destroy each other*; this is traditionally referred to as a double negative reading. However, in some languages, this process of ‘cancellation’ fails, and a reading of a single negation is possible in addition to the

double negative reading, as is the case in French (81); in some languages, only a single negative reading is possible, as in Italian (82).

(81) *Personne (n')a rien fait.* (French)

No one NEG-has nothing done.

(A) 'No one has done nothing' (i.e. everyone did something). (Double negation)

$\neg\exists x\neg\exists y \text{ Do}(x, y)$

(B) No one has done anything. (Negative concord)

$\neg\exists x\exists y \text{ Do}(x, y)$

(de Swart and Sag, 2002, p.373; glosses amended)

(82) *Maria non ha visto nessuno.* (Italian)

Maria NEG has seen n-person

'Maria hasn't seen anybody.'

*'Maria hasn't seen nobody.' (= 'Maria has seen somebody.')

(Penka, 2011, p.14)

From a typological point of view, some languages allow for the occurrence of two forms of negation, producing a single negative reading. This happens in two cases: 'double negation'³⁴ and 'negative concord'; the latter is what is of interest to us here. Labov (1972) highlighted that non-standard English varieties do allow the occurrence of two negative forms, which do

³⁴ 'Double Negation', usually abbreviated as DN, should be distinguished from cases of double negative reading. Double negation is attested in French, which uses *ne* and *pas*, and this is considered the middle stage in the process of replacing a simplex negation with another; this process is known as 'Jespersen Cycle' (Van Alsenoy and van der Auwera, 2014).

not produce a double negative reading; he referred to these cases as negative concord. Penka (2011) proposed the following definition:

(83) **Negative Concord:**

Multiple negative constituents (i.e. NIs³⁵ or negative markers) in a clause contribute only one instance of negation to the interpretation.

(Penka, 2011, 14)

In chapter one, I highlighted that certain items show dependency on negation in the sense that they only occur in negative contexts. These items are called Negative Sensitive Items (NSIs) and are defined as the ‘elements that can only occur in negative contexts’ (Alsarayreh 2012, p.4). Negative constituents that only occur in a negative context without producing a double negative reading are called Negative Concord Items (NCIs). They constitute one of the two subcategories of NSIs; the other category is Negative Polarity Items (NPIs), which is the topic of this thesis. NCIs and NPIs exhibit similarities; however, they have significant differences. Only NCIs can be used to form a negative fragment answer. This distinctive property has been used as a diagnostic test to distinguish between NPIs and NCIs, as in (84) (Alsarayreh 2012; Giannakidou 2006; Hoyt 2010; Penka 2011, 2015; Zeijlstra 2004).

(84) Kto przyszedł? – Nikt. (Polish)

Who came? Nobody. (=‘Nobody came.’)

(Penka 2015, p.307)

³⁵ NIs is the abbreviation Penka (2011) used for ‘negative indefinites’ which is one of the terms used in the literature to refer to constituents, such as the Italian *nessuno* and *niente* and the Spanish *nadie* and *nada* (‘nobody’ and ‘nothing’, respectively). Other common terms are Negative Concord Items (NCIs) (Zeijlstra, 2004) and n-words (Giannakidou, 2006).

The main motive for discussing NCIs in this thesis is that there have been some attempts to examine NCIs and NPIs as one group (e.g., Alqassas, 2021) to provide a unified account for both groups of items. I have objections to this approach and to classifying Arabic dialects as negative concord languages.

First, I need to point out that researchers (e.g., Giannakidou 2006; Penka 2011; Zeijlstra 2004) stress that, from a typological point of view, there can be two types of languages which allow negative concord.

(85) **Types of NC Languages**

- A. Strict NC languages (e.g. Slavic languages) allow the occurrence of NCIs (regardless of their position in the sentence) only with the negative marker; there cannot be a double negative reading.
- B. Non-Strict NC languages (e.g. Romance languages) distinguish the position of the NCIs. A post-verbal NCI obligatorily co-occurs with a negative marker, whereas the co-occurrence of pre-verbal NCI with sentential negation yields a double negative reading.

From a typological point of view, an NC language must contain either Strict NCIs or Non-Strict NCIs. In other words, the NCIs are either forbidden from producing a double negative reading, regardless of their position in the sentence, or they are able to produce the double negative reading when they occur in a pre-verbal position along with sentential negation.

Haspelmath (2005b) reported that negative concord is attested in the majority of the world's languages; his opinion has been widely cited by researchers (e.g., Alsarayreh, 2012; Penka, 2015). Haspelmath's assessment might have encouraged some researchers to argue in favour of classifying a given language as a negative concord language even though the relevant evidence might be insufficient. This is the case with modern Arabic dialects.

3.6.1. Negative Concord in Arabic

Negative concord has been reported in a number of Arabic dialects. For instance, Hoyt (2010) examined negative concord in Levantine Arabic, and Alqassas (2012) and Alsarayreh (2012) examined it in Jordanian Arabic. The discussion of NCIs in Arabic focused on two groups of items: a group of adverbials and the determiner *wala*. Alsarayreh (2012) discussed two groups of the so-called negative concord adverbials. The first group he called ‘never words’, and it includes *bilmarrāh*, *nəhāʔyyan*, and *ʔabadan*; the second group he called ‘not-yet words’, and it includes *lahassa*, *laḥaddəlʔān*, and *baʕid*. He underlined that those NCIs are only acceptable in the following environments: clause-mate negation, without-clauses, before-clauses, and superordinate negation (only in the subjunctive mood).

(86) **bilmarrāh** maryam *(ma)-btōkil tuffāh. (Jordanian Arabic)

NCI-time Mary NEG-eat.IMPF.3FSG apples

‘Mary does not eat apples at all.’

(87) *(ma)-ja **wala** wāḥad.

NEG-come.3MSG NCI-DET one

‘No one came.’

(88) **wala** wāḥad (*ma)-ja.

NCI-DET one NEG-come.3MSG

‘No one came.’

(Alsarayreh 2012, p.151-152; glosses amended)

A closer examination of these items might raise doubts about the accuracy of classifying them as NCIs. Alsarayreh stated these NCIs ‘always must be accompanied by a negative marker

regardless of whether they appear in a post-verbal or pre-verbal position' (2012, p.151). However, these adverbials are attested in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, with the same range of meanings; however, they can occur without a negative marker in an affirmative sentence as can be seen in (89), (90), and (91).

(89) il-kumbyūter xarbān **bilmarrāh.** (Arabic of Deir Ezzor)

DEF-computer break.PART.3MSG totally

'The computer is totally broken.'

(90) wiṣṣəl ṭalātīn ṭālib **laḥaddəlʔān** w **lahassa**

arrive.PRF.3MSG thirty student until now CONJ still

sāʕtīn la-nihāyat il-dawām.

hour.DU till-end DEF-working day

'Thirty students have arrived so far, and it is still two hours till the end of the working day.'

(91) il-yōm rāḥ tifṣal il-mōfawḍāt **nəhāʔyyan.**

DEF-today FUT collapse.IMPF3FSG DEF-negotiations completely

'Today, the negotiations will completely collapse.'

The examples above, which I believe are acceptable in Jordanian Arabic and other Arabic dialects, show that those adverbs do not only occur without sentential negation but that they do not have a negative meaning on their own. This significantly weakens the argument to classify them as NCIs. Hoyt (2010), who studied some of these same items in Levantine Arabic, conceded that their behaviour is not totally systematic.

However, of these six adverbs, *ʔabadan* requires further examination. Lucas underlined that *ʔabadan* ‘never’ is the only clear example’ of an NCI in Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (Lucas, 2013, p.427), with the meaning ‘(n)ever’ or ‘by no/any means’.

(92) A. hal satatruku-nī? (Classical/Modern Standard Arabic)

Q leave.IMPF.2MSG-1SG

‘Will you leave me?’

B. ʔabad-an

eternity-ADV

‘never!’

(Lucas, 2013, p.428; glosses amended)

However, Lucas (2009, 2013) also underlined that the behaviour of *ʔabadan* in modern Arabic dialects is restricted distribution. In Cairene Egyptian Arabic and Palestinian Arabic, *ʔabadan* can be used in interrogatives, as in (93). In such a case, *ʔabadan* is ‘clearly non-negative’ (Lucas, 2013, p.432).

(93) huwwa-nta maʕā-na ʔabadan? (Cairene Egyptian /Paestinian Arabic)

Q-2MSG with-1p ever

‘Do you ever agree with us?!’

(Woidich, 2006, p.349 cited in Lucas, 2013, p.433; glosses amended)

This discussion indicates that these adverbials cannot easily be classified as NCIs and take their presence as an indicator that modern Arabic dialects are negative concord languages.

In addition to these adverbials, researchers often discuss the determiner *wala* as an NCI. Jamal Ouhalla, one of the prominent linguists who investigated negation in Arabic dialects, stated ‘negative concord is typically found in Levantine Arabic, where the negative expression has the form [*wala* N]’³⁶ (Ouhalla, 2008, p.359). Alsarayreh (2012) described the determiner *wala* as a focus particle which is an NCI.

(94) *lā maryam wala salwa najaḥan fī-l-mtiḥān.*

NEG Mary NCI Salwa pass.PRF.3FP in-DEF-test

‘Neither Mary nor Salwa passed the test.’

(Alsarayreh, 2012, p.66; glosses amended)

Lucas (2009, 2013) examined the development of *wala* from Classical Arabic to modern Arabic dialects. He argued that the origin of *wala* is a ‘negative conjunction’ which has undergone important changes till it reached its current situation (2013, p.429). Lucas argued that there is a strong case for classifying *wala* as an n-word, and it is actually more ‘negative than the classic n-words of the Romance languages,’ such as Spanish *ninguno* ‘no one’ (Lucas, 2009, p.211). Lucas made this judgement based on a number of factors, the most important of which is that *wala* can contribute a negative interpretation by itself without the need for a sentential negative marker, as in (95).

() *šwayya aḥsan min wala ḥāga.* (Egyptian/Palestinian Arabic)
 little better than not.even thing

‘A little is better than nothing at all.’ (Lucas, 2009, p. 210)

³⁶ Frederick Hoyt pointed out that similar phenomena might be found also in Cairene Egyptian, but he did not discuss examples (2010, p. 4).

The behaviour of *wala* sheds more doubt on the status of NCIs in Arabic dialects. Its distribution is very different from the other so-called NCIs in Arabic. This poses a typological challenge. Alsarayreh (2012) claimed that the ‘never words’ group and the ‘not yet words’ are strict NCIs, whereas he classified *wala* as a non-strict NCI, the only one in Jordanian Arabic. This implies both strict NCIs and non-strict NCIs are attested in Jordanian Arabic (Alsarayreh, 2012, p. 151), which violates the typological classification and is not reported in any other language. Faced with these complications, I find it useful to recall Lucas’ (2013) warning that ‘Arabic dialects resist straightforward classification as negative-concord or non-negative concord languages’ (2013, p.426). Furthermore, Van Alsenoy and van der Auwera (2014) pointed out that the number of languages with NC is actually significantly smaller than previously believed. This sheds more doubts on the case for classifying Arabic dialects as negative concord languages. Consequently, there is no cause to search for a unified account for these items and NPIs. Because of all these reasons, this thesis focuses on exploring NPIs and leaves the issue of NCIs for a future research opportunity.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has investigated negation in the dialect of Deir Ezzor; it has explained that what is mentioned about negation in Levantine Arabic is not necessarily applicable to the Arabic dialects spoken in Syria, especially the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. It has been shown that standard negation in the dialect of Deir Ezzor is realised through *mā*. Non-standard is realised by *mū*, *lā*, and pronouns of negation. As for the generative grammar approach, the syntactic nature of the negative marker has been examined. It has been argued that the hypothesis suggesting that NegP is higher than TP is stronger than the other thesis and is the one describing the situation in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. Other issues related to negation have also been discussed, including *negative absorption* and *negative concord*. This final section of the chapter focused on highlighting the complexity and unsystematic behaviour of the so-called NCIs in Arabic.

Studying NPIs and NCIs separately is the best option in order to examine the minute and distinct details of each type of the negative sensitive items.

Chapter Four: Negative Polarity Items in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor

4.1. Introduction

This chapter studies negative polarity items (NPIs) in the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor (DzA) with the aim of expanding and enriching the discussion on NPIs in Arabic dialects. This chapter discusses an extensive inventory of negative polarity items in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. To the best of my knowledge, this chapter discusses the largest inventory of NPIs in any Arabic dialect. The chapter also deeply analyses these items' semantics and licensing contexts. This study moves beyond the already known negative polarity pronouns, determiners, and minimisers to discuss negative polarity auxiliary verbs and negative polarity lexical verbs. It also expands the discussion of the idiomatic NPIs by discussing minimisers and maximisers. Providing more details on the difference in the felicitous occurrence of NPIs allows a preliminary description of the hierarchy of NPIs in an Arabic dialect. Furthermore, the chapter also sheds light on areas where a contribution is still needed, such as a thorough examination of particular licensing contexts, e.g., the subjunctive and comparatives. The beginning is with section 4.2, which lists all the licensing contexts of NPIs in the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor. Section 4.3 discusses the NPIs found in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. In some cases, such as nominal NPIs, the discussion is extended to cover other non-NPI uses of these items to highlight the differences between the NPI and non-NPI uses. The possible licensing contexts are listed for each NPI, with some examples. This allows a discussion of the hierarchy of NPIs in the dialect of Deir Ezzor; this is covered in section 4.4. Finally, section 4.5 sums up the chapter.

4.2. Licensing Contexts of NPIs in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor

This section covers the possible licensing contexts for NPIs. Previous sections of this thesis have demonstrated how NPIs, in many languages, can be licensed in contexts other than negation. DzA is not an exception in this regard. In this section, all NPIs in DzA and other Arabic dialects are in italicised bold font as they have not been fully introduced yet.

4.2.1. Clausemate and Superordinate Negation

Clausemate negation is the primary licensing context for all NPIs. This is naturally the case for DzA.

- (1) sāmi mā šāf *ḥada.*
 Sami NEG see.PRF.3MSG anyone
 ‘Sami did not see anyone.’

Superordinate negation also allows a licensing environment for almost all NPIs in DzA.

- (2) mā ʔaʒunn sāmi rāḥ yəʕtṭī-nā *qiriš maṣdi.*
 NEG think.IMPF.1S Sami FUT give.IMPF.3MSG-1P penny rusty.MSG
 ‘I don’t think Sami will give us a rusty penny.’

Superordinate negation, sometimes referred to as a ‘distant negation (Soltan, 2014, p. 189), has been mentioned as a licenser in many Arabic dialects, including Jordanian Arabic (Alsarayreh, 2012) and Egyptian Arabic (Soltan, 2014). However, their examples are clearly a mere denial of the embedded clause.

- (3) ʔaḥmad mā-ʔāl-š ʔin muna fihmit
 Ahmed NEG-say.PRF.3MSG-NEG COMP Mona understand.PRF.3FSG
ʔayy ḥāga.
 any thing
 ‘Ahmed didn’t say that Mona understood anything.’

(Egyptian Arabic, Soltan, 2014, p. 189; glosses amended)

However, such a denial of an embedded clause does not license NPIs in all languages. In DzA, for instance, the minimiser *qiriš maṣdi* ‘a rusty penny’ (equivalent to ‘red cent’ in American English) has only a literal meaning in such a context. Some other minimisers in DzA which lost their literal meaning, such as *wataka* ‘a straw’, are ungrammatical because they have only an NPI meaning.

- (4) mā qəltu sāmi rāḥ yəṣṭṭī-nā qiriš maṣdi/ *wataka.
 NEG say.PRFF.1SG Sami FUT give.IMP.3MSG-1P penny rusty.MSG/straw
 ‘I haven’t said Sami will give us a rusty penny.’

In English, for instance, (5.A) is grammatical, whereas (5.B) is ungrammatical. Linebarger (1980), for instance, explained the difference between such a pair of sentences on the grounds that a verb such as *think* is transparent and allows the scope of negation to affect the verb in the embedded clause. In contrast, the verb *shout* is not transparent.

- (5) A. I don’t think that John lives there anymore.
 B. *I didn’t shout that John lives there anymore.

This phenomenon has been labelled ‘neg-raising’, and it applies only to certain predicates, such as those which express an opinion (Horn, 1971, p. 120). Neg-raising has been a subject of great debate (Collins & Postal, 2014). But it does not seem to have received much attention in studies on Arabic dialects, at least regarding its effect on the licensing of NPIs. This thesis only points out this fact and the need for further research.

4.2.2. *Without & Before* Clauses

In English, NPIs can also be licensed in the clause introduced by the word *without*. Such licensing is possible because the word *without* is a negative conjunction which is antimorphic and capable of licensing almost all NPIs, in English (Horn, 2016) and many other languages,

including Greek (Giannakidou, 2011). The equivalent to *without* in DzA is *bidūn*, and it does license NPIs.

- (6) sāmi najah bidūn musāʕdat *ħada*.
 Sami pass.PRF.3MSG without help anyone

‘Sami passed without anyone’s help.’

Some NPIs are licensed in *before*-clauses in some languages, including English (Landman, 1991) and Japanese (Ogihara, 1994; 1995). Such an occurrence is puzzling, especially that in the same languages where *before*-clauses allow the licensing of NPIs, *after*-clauses cannot allow such licensing. One possible proposed explanation is that only *before*-clauses constitute a downward-entailing context (Landman, 1991).

- (7) A. John read the book before anyone else ever did.

B. *John read the book after anyone else ever did. (Ogihara, 1995, p. 274)

In DzA, *qabəl* ‘before’ clauses, but not *baʕd* ‘after’ clauses, constitute licensing contexts for many NPIs.

- (8) A. sāmi xallaş qabəl *ħayy* ṭālib.
 Sami finish.PRF.3MSG before DET student

‘Sami finished before any (other) student.’

- B. *sāmi xallaş baʕd *ħayy* ṭālib.
 Sami finish.PRF.3MSG after DET student

‘Sami finished after any (other) student.’

4.2.3. Adversative Predicates

Adversative predicates provide an important licensing context for NPIs cross-linguistically. It has been long noted that there are verbs that are ‘covertly negative lexical items with clausal or clause-like complements’ (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, p. 835). Such verbs have been given various designations. Jespersen (1917) called them verbs of negative import. In a recent book-length discussion of such verbs, Iyeyiri called them ‘verbs of implicit negation’ (Iyeyiri, 2010, p.1). Van der Wurff (2011) called them ‘adversative predicates’, which seems to be the most popular term in research on NPIs.

Verbs, such as *refuse*, *avoid*, *prevent*, *refrain*, and others, have in common that they convey meanings of avoidance, prevention, prohibition, denial, doubt, and counter-expectation (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002; Iyeyiri, 2010). Similar verbs in DzA, such as *yənfi* ‘to deny’ and *yəšukk* ‘doubt’, also provide licensing contexts for NPIs. However, the phenomenon of adversative predicates itself has not received much attention in the research on Arabic. The continuous investigation into adversative predicates in other languages, especially English, suggests that this topic might be worthy of investigation in Arabic.

- (9) sāmi nafā inn-u xabar *ḥada*.
 Sami deny.PRF.3MSG COMP-3MSG tell.PRF.3MSG anyone

‘Sami denied that he had told anyone.’

4.2.4. Questions

Questions are also reported cross-linguistically as licensing environments for NPIs. DzA is not an exception in this regard. NPIs can be licensed both in *wh*-questions and in *yes/no* questions.

(10) Wh questions

min-u bāq *wataka?*

who-3MSG steal.PRF.3MSG straw

‘Who has stolen a straw (anything)?’

(11) Yes/no questions

šāf sāmi *ħada?*

see.PRF.3MSG Sami anyone

‘Has Sami seen anyone?’

There are two main approaches to account for the ability of questions to offer a licensing environment for NPIs. One argues that the syntax of questions allows them to host silent expressions, such as negation, that allow them to license NPIs (Guerzoni & Sharvit, 2014). The other approach argues that questions are licensers in their own right (Kadmon & Landman, 2003; Krifka, 1995; Schwarz, 2017). The weakness of the first approach is that it does not account for the ungrammaticality of a sentence such as (13.B).

(12) A. Did Ann eat something or not? Polar

B. Did ANN eat something or BEN? Phrasal

(13) A. Did Ann eat anything or not? Polar

B. #Did ANN eat anything or BEN? Phrasal (Schwarz, 2017, p. 231)

The infelicity of *anything* in (13.B) indicates that the syntax of questions might not hold the answer to the licensing of NPIs; the semantics of the questions might offer an explanation. Only (12.A) and (13.A) have a polar interpretation, while the questions in (12.B) and (13.B) have a phrasal interpretation because these are disjunctive questions (Schwarz, 2017). The

same observation is valid for questions in DzA. (14.A) is perfectly acceptable in DzA, whereas (14.B) is found by many speakers of DzA to be very odd. Such an example is insufficient to provide a conclusive judgement on the source of the polarity-licensing effect of questions in Arabic. In English, for instance, there have been many studies on the licensing of NPIs in questions. However, there has been none in Arabic, although all studies on NPIs in Arabic dialects mention questions as possible licensors of NPIs. This is another point worthy of future investigation.

(14) A. *sāmi* *ill-u* *mruwwa* *willā* *la?* ?

Sami POSS.3MSG patience or no

‘Does Sami have willpower/patience or not?’

B. *#sāmi* *ill-u* *mruwwa* *willā* *ʔahmad* ?

Sami POSS.3MSG patience or Ahmed

‘Does Sami have willpower/patience or Ahmed?’

4.2.5. Restriction of Universal Quantifiers

The licensing of NPIs in some non-negative contexts has been explained on the grounds that such contexts constitute downward entailing environments (Ginnakidou, 2011; Horn, 2016; Homer, 2021; Ladusaw, 1996). One prominent example of such environments is the restriction of universal quantifiers, such as *every* in English, which is an important licensor for NPIs in many languages (Horn, 2016). It is noted that ‘quantifying NPs are presupposition inducing expressions’ and *every* is a strong quantifier as the NP that begins with it is always a presupposition inducer (Geurts & van der Sandt, 1999, p. 269). The presupposition of the noun phrase beginning with *every* is downward entailing, which makes it a licensing environment for NPIs, as is the case in (15) below; the restriction of universal quantifiers has been reported

to be a licensing environment for NPIs in many languages (Ladusaw, 1979a, 1996; Giannakidou, 2011; Zwarts, 1998).

(15) Every customer who had ever purchased anything in the store was contacted.

(Horn, 2016, p. 282)

The restriction of universal quantifiers also allows the licensing of NPIs in DzA.

(16) kull šurṭi ḍarab *ḥada* rāḥ yuṣāqab.
 QUAN policeman hit.PRF.3MSG anyone FUT punish.IMP.3MSG
 ‘Every policeman who hit anyone will be punished.’

4.2.6. *Too*-Clauses & Comparatives

The licensing of NPIs is also possible in excessive clauses, often referred to simply as *too-phrases* (Horn, 2016). Although *too* amplifies the following adjective, it does so with a negative interpretation. The licensing of NPIs in *too-phrases*, as in (17), has also been explained based on the downward entailment presupposition (van der Wouden, 2002).

(17) John is too tired to give a damn. (Linebarger, 1987, p.328)

In addition to *too-phrases*, there are comparatives which also offer a licensing context, as in example (18). Comparatives have also been argued to be downward entailing environments³⁷.

(18) He was taller than we ever thought he would be. (Linebarger, 1987, p. 328)

I mention these two types of licensing environments together because the studies on NPIs in Arabic seem to be merging the two types of licensors as one. For instance, Alsarayreh listed ‘*too-clauses*’ as a possible licensing context (Alsarayreh, 2012, p. 77) and provided (19) as an

³⁷ An important argument in this regard is that of Hoeksema (1983).

example. Soltan used the label ‘comparative too-clauses’ as one licensing context for NPIs in Egyptian Arabic (2014, p.191) and provided (20) as an example.

- (19) l-mtiḥān ʔaṣʕab min ʔənnu maryam tḥill
- DEF-exam too-difficult than COMP Mary answer.IMPF3.FSG
- walaw* suʔāl.
- even question

‘The exam is too difficult for Mary to answer any question.’

(Jordanian Arabic, Alsarayreh, 2012, p.77; glosses amended)

- (20) ʔaḥmad ʔadʕaf min ʔinn-u yiʔūl *ʔayy*
- Ahmed weaker than COMP-3MSG say.IMPF.3MSG any
- ḥāga li-l-mudīr.
- thing to-DEF-manager

‘Ahmed is too weak to say anything to the manager.’

(Egyptian Arabic, Soltan, 2014, p. 191; glosses amended)

However, neither Alsarayreh (2012) nor Soltan (2014) provided any discussion on the nature of such contexts and what makes them capable of licensing NPIs. Furthermore, the labels they use are puzzling. On the one hand, the structures in (19) and (20) are clearly in the form of a comparative. *ʔaṣʕab* ‘more difficult’, in (19) above, and *ʔadʕaf* ‘weaker’, in (20) above, follow

the same templatic pattern of forming comparatives in Arabic as described by Davis (2019)³⁸. However, the interpretation of such structures is not that of comparison but one that expresses a negatively excessive degree in a manner similar to the *too-phrase* in (17). That is why Alsarayreh (2012) labelled this structure ‘too-clauses’, although there is no obvious structure of *too* and *adjective*. Soltan (2014) apparently tried to find a middle ground by labelling the structure ‘comparative too-clauses’. This, however, raises the question of whether Arabic dialects do not have two distinct licensing contexts that correspond to *too-clauses* and *comparatives*.

Based on the data from DZA, I do believe it is possible to identify such structures. Comparative structures can offer a licensing context in DZA. Their structure is comparable to what is described by Alsarayreh (2012) and Soltan (2014), as can be seen in (21).

(21) ʔaḥmad ʔaḍka min ʔayy wāḥid min rabbʕ-u.
 Ahmed smarter than any one from friend-3MSG
 ‘Ahmed is smarter than any of his peers.’

ʔaḥmad ʔabxal min inn-u yəʕtṭī-nā **qiriš məʕdi.**
 Ahmed stingier than COMP-3MSG give.IMPF.3MSG-1P penny rusty.MSG
 ‘Ahmed is too stingy to give us a rusty penny.’

In addition to these comparative structures, proper *too*-clauses are also available in DZA, and they do offer licensing contexts for some of the NPIs. The structure of the *too*-clauses in DZA consists of *bḥill* ‘too/very’, which is modifying a following gradable adjective, and both are

³⁸ In Arabic dialects, words can be traced back to a root which consists of three consonants. From this root many derivations are possible according to patterns. For instance, *baxil* ‘stingy’ has three consonants *b,x,l* and a comparative form *ʔabxal* ‘stingier’ is derived by adding certain vowels. This template can be represented as *aCCaC*. Davis (2019) described *aCCaC* as the primary template in Arabic. Other templates are also possible, but it is beyond the scope of this study to go into their details.

followed by the aspectual morpheme *ta*³⁹, which is followed by a verb. Without this particular requirement, the function of *bḥīll* is only an amplifier of the following adjective without offering a licensing environment for NPIs. Offering a licensing environment has nothing to do with the positive or negative meaning of the adjective itself, as can be seen in (22).

(22)	hāḍa	il-ḥalq	bḥīll	ṣazīz	ṣal-i	ta	ṣaṭṭi-h
	DEM	DEF-earring	too	dear	on-1SG	ASP	give.IMPF.1S-3MSG
	l- <i>ḥayy</i>	maxllūq.					
	to-any	human					

‘These earrings are too dear to me to give to any human being.’

The above sketch of *too*-clauses in DzA is still preliminary, and it needs further scrutiny and a comparative study with Arabic dialects. One detail that is worthy of further investigation is the function of *ta*. In Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, there are subordinating particles, such as *li/kay* ‘for/in order to’, and *ḥatta* ‘so that’, which introduce a verb in the subjunctive mood (Benmamoun, 2000). The second chapter in this thesis mentioned some aspects of the subjunctive mood in Arabic and DzA. It mentioned that in many modern Arabic dialects, such as Egyptian Arabic, Jordanian Arabic, and Syrian Arabic (as represented by the Arabic dialect of Damascus), the indicative mood is differentiated from the subjunctive mood through the presence of the prefix *b-* in the former and its disappearance in the latter (Alrashdan, 2015; Jarad, 2013; Mitchell and El-Hassan, 1994).

The verbs following the comparatives, *ṭhill* ‘solve’ in (19), and *yiḥīl* ‘say’ are missing the prefix *b-*. This raises further questions: is it a requirement of forming a comparative structure

³⁹ *ta* is an aspectual morpheme that generates progressive, habitual, or future reading. The same morpheme is described in some Arabic varieties, such as Moroccan Arabic (e.g. Ouali & Fortin, 2007). In DzA, as can be seen in the example (21) above, this aspectual marker can be separated from the verb stem.

in Arabic to use a verb in the subjunctive mood? Is the licensing of the NPI a result of this subjunctive mood? I mention this possible link between comparatives and too-clauses in Arabic dialects with the subjunctive because one of the facts that Giannakidou (1995) used to construct her nonveridicality proposal was that questions, before-clauses, conditionals and some other contexts that offer licensing environments for NPIs in Greek also share the fact that they allow subjunctive structures. What matters for us now is that the thorough examination of each of the licensing contexts – including whether they share something other than licensing NPIs, such as allowing embedding of the subjunctive – is vital to the study of the polarity phenomenon. Researchers of Arabic dialects should dedicate more efforts to such a pursuit and not stop at merely listing possible licensing contexts of NPIs.

4.2.7. Conditionals

Some NPIs are felicitous in the protasis of conditionals. This fact has been particularly problematic for Ladusaw's (1979a) downward entailment account of NPIs since the protasis of conditionals does not have a downward entailing interpretation (Krifka, 1994; Linebarger, 1980, 1987, 1991). There has been a long debate about whether conditionals can license NPIs because they are counterfactual (von Stechow, 1999). Soltan (2014) reported that NPIs can be licensed in the protasis of counterfactual and non-counterfactual conditionals in Egyptian Arabic. Alsarayreh (2012) did not even mention that there are two possible types of conditionals where NPIs can be licensed. The protasis of conditionals offers a licensing environment for NPIs in DzA. There is a need for more data, but the preliminary judgement is that negative polarity pronouns and determiners seem able to occur in both types of conditionals, whereas the remaining types of NPIs are more felicitous in counterfactual or irrealis conditionals. However, there is a need for more data, especially from other Arabic dialects.

(23)	idā	sāmi	yəlāqi	<i>qiriš</i>	<i>məṣḍi</i>	f-ʔakīd	rāḥ
	CON	Sami	find.IMPF.3MSG	penny	rusty.MSG	so-definitely	FUT
		yəštri		bī-h		mašrüb.	
		buy.IMPF.3MSG		with-3MSG		beverage	

‘If Sami gets a rusty penny, he will definitely buy an alcoholic beverage.’

4.2.8. Habituals & Subjunctive

It has been pointed out that, in some languages, NPIs are felicitous in subjunctive and habitual clauses. Such licensing is extensive in Greek (Giannakidou 1997 and later works). In Arabic, Alsarayreh (2012) stated that both habituals and subjunctives allow the licensing of NPIs in Jordanian Arabic, providing examples (24) and (25) below. However, he did not discuss what constitutes subjunctive or habitual clauses in Jordanian Arabic. Soltan (2014) did not mention these two contexts among the possible licensors of NPIs in Egyptian Arabic.

(24)	maryam	dāyman	btigra	<i>walaw</i>	qiṣṣah
	Mary	usually	read.IMPF.3FSG	even	story
	gabil	ma	tnām.		
	before	COMP	sleep.IMPF.3FSG		

‘Mary usually reads at least one story before she sleeps.’

(25)	batmanna	ʔannu	maryam	tḥill	<i>walaw</i>	suʔāl.
	hope.IMPF.1SG	COMP	Mary	answer.IMPF.3FSG	even	question

‘I hope that Mary would answer at least one question.’

(Jordanian Arabic, Alsarayreh, 2012, pp.76-77; glosses amended)

As for DzA, the subjunctive can provide licensing contexts for some NPIs; (26) is one example. However, there is not a strong case for licensing NPIs in habituals. Some negative polarity pronouns and determiners are found in habituals, but it is difficult to rule out other possibilities. For instance, *ši* in (27) is more likely to be interpreted as ‘something’, and not as the NPI ‘anything’. *walaw* might be the only NPI that can occur felicitously in habituals, as can be seen in (28). Section 4.3.2.2., below, discusses why *walaw* does not have a free choice reading.

- (26) ʔaḥmad yəxāf yəʃrif *qiriš məʃdi.*
 Ahmed fear.IMPF.3MSG spend.SBJV.IMPF.3MSG penny rusty.MSG
 ‘Ahmed dreads spending (even) a rusty penny.’

- (27) ʔaḥmad yudrus kull yōm *ši* ʕan rōssyā.
 Ahmed study.IMPF.3MSG QUAN day thing about Russia
 ‘Every day Ahmed studies something about Russia.’

- (28) kull yōm sāmi yəmši *walaw* ʕašir daqāyiq.
 QUAN day Sami walk.IMPF.3MSG DET ten minutes
 ‘Every day Sami walks at least ten minutes.’

This lengthy discussion of the licensing contexts aims at shedding light on an essential aspect of the phenomenon of NPIs. A substantial number of studies on NPIs in English and many other languages have been devoted to discussing the behaviour of NPIs in different individual licensing contexts. This is not available in Arabic. There are cases where studies on NPIs in Arabic imply that there are no differences between NPIs in respect of the contexts that can license them. This is particularly the case of Alsarayreh (2012), whose examples (pp.75-78) show that the NPI *walaw* in Jordanian Arabic can occur in all possible licensing contexts, but

nothing is mentioned about other NPIs. The differences between NPIs in respect of the range of their licensing contexts have been discussed in the literature (e.g. Zwarts, 1998). In order to pave the way for such an examination in Arabic dialects, it is critical to provide as many details as possible about the licensing contexts and the NPIs. This section in this thesis has highlighted some gaps in the research into this phenomenon. The following section discusses the NPIs in DzA.

4.3. NPIs in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor

There is a motley collection of NPIs in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. They belong to a range of syntactic categories. There are nominal, determiner, idiomatic, verbal, and auxiliary NPIs. I start first by discussing Nominal NPIs.

4.3.1. Negative Polarity Pronouns

Examples of Nominal NPIs in the dialect of Deir Ezzor are the indefinite pronouns *ʔaḥad* ‘anyone, someone’, *ḥada* ‘anyone, someone’, and *šī* ‘anything, something.’

(29) mā najah ʔaḥad.

NEG pass.PRF.3MSG one

‘No one passed.’

(30) mā šift ʔaḥad.

NEG see.PRF.1S one

‘I did not see anyone.’

(31) mā šār šī.

NEG happen.PRF.3MSG thing

‘Nothing happened.’

(32)	ʔaḥmad	mā	katab	š.
	Ahmed	NEG	write.PRF.3MSG	thing

‘Ahmed did not write anything.’

4.3.1.1. ʔaḥad & ḥada

The NPIs *ʔaḥad* and *ḥada* seem to be derived from the numeral *wāḥid* “one”⁴⁰. This seems to be the case across Arabic dialects, such as Moroccan Arabic *ḥadd* (Benmamoun, 1996) and Jordanian Arabic *ḥada* (Alsarayreh, 2012). Furthermore, this tendency in Arabic seems to be consistent with the findings reported by Martin Haspelmath (1997) in his extensive cross-linguistic survey of indefinite pronouns. Haspelmath (1997) reported that the indefinite pronouns derived from *one* are usually pronouns of the ontological category ‘person’ and that those pronouns, like the generic nouns, tend to ‘become restricted to negative polarity and negative functions’ (1997, p.183).

(33)	Catalan	ningu	‘anybody’	
	Maltese	xi ḥadd	‘someone’	
	Kabyle	yiwen	‘one; someone’	
	Welsh	rhyw-un	‘someone’	(Haspelmath, 1997, p.183)

Haspelmath added that *one* is an example of minimal unit expressions; he discussed that such expressions had been “conventionalised for negative-polarity environments” (1997, p. 228).

(34)	English	<i>any</i>	< Old English <i>ænig</i> , based on <i>an</i> ‘one’+ <i>-ig</i>
------	---------	------------	--

⁴⁰ It might sound strange that a particular dialect would have two pronouns with the same meaning and usage; I have noticed that *ḥada* is relatively more recent in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. I have noticed that older speakers would not use it, but they would use only *ʔaḥad*. I myself would use it more often than *ḥada*. *ḥada* seems to be used solely in other Syrian dialects and it might have been borrowed recently by speakers of DzA.

Latin *ullus* ‘any’ < ‘one’

Irish *aon* ‘any’ < ‘one’ (Haspelmath, 1997, p. 228)

The previous examples are also used in conditionals and questions. *ḥada* and *ʔaḥad* in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor seem to show distribution and behaviour similar to what is described by Haspelmath. As for *wāḥid* itself, it exhibits the behaviour of a positive polarity item where it is ungrammatical to occur with sentential negation or other contexts which license NPIs. The exception is emphatic negation or when *wāḥid* is preceded by a negative polarity determiner, such as *ʔayy*, as in (36).

(35) (*mā) saʔal ʕan-ak wāḥid.
 (NEG) ask.PRF.3MSG about-2MSG someone
 ‘Someone asked about you.’

(36) mā saʔal ʕan-ak *ʔaḥad/ḥada* /ʔayy wāḥid.
 NEG ask.PRF.3MSG about-2MSG anyone any one
 ‘No one asked about you.’

(37) saʔal ʕan-i *ʔaḥad* / *ḥada* /* wāḥid?
 ask.PRF.3MSG about-1SG anyone / anyone /someone
 ‘Did anyone ask about me?’

Albuarabi (2021), a recent study of negation in Arabic dialects of Iraq, listed *wāḥid* as an NPI in the Arabic dialects spoken in Baghdad (centre of Iraq), Najaf (south of Iraq), and Mosul (north of Iraq), and described *ʔaḥad* as the equivalent NPI attested in the dialects spoken in Nasiriya, Amarah, and Basra (all in the south of Iraq). However, *ḥada* is not reported in her

data. The difference between *ʔaḥad* and *ḥada* in DzA is that the latter is considered a newer form. In this regard, *ʔaḥad* and *ḥada* are the unmarked and marked forms of the same item.

The NPI *ʔaḥad* and *ḥada* are licensed in negative and non-negative licensing contexts; however, when they are licensed by negation, they have to be in the immediate scope of negation, i.e. they cannot precede negation, as some other NPIs can.

- (38) **ʔaḥad/ḥada* mā saʔal ʕan-ak
 anyone NEG ask.PRF.3MSG about-2MSG

‘No one asked about you.’

These two indefinite pronouns can be licensed in all the licensing contexts discussed in section 4.2. The following are examples of some of these contexts.

- (39) Without
 ʔaḥmad najah bidūn musāʕadat *ʔaḥad*.
 Ahmed pass.PRF.3MSG without help anyone

‘Ahmed passed (e.g. the exam) without anyone’s help.’

- (40) Before clauses
 ʔaḥmad sāfar qabəl inn-u/ma⁴¹ yəšūf-u
 Ahmed travel.PRF.3MSG before COMP-3MSG/COMP see.IMPF.3MSG-3MSG
ʔaḥad.
 anyone

⁴¹ In Arabic, as in many other Arabic dialects, *ma* is a complementiser. In order to show that *ma* here is not a negative marker, I provide this example where another complementiser can be used instead of *ma*.

‘Ahmed travelled before anyone had the chance to see him.’

(41) Adversative predicates

ʔaḥmad	ʔankar	inn-u	darab	<i>ʔaḥad.</i>
Ahmed	deny.PRF.3MSG	COMP-3MSG	hit.PRF.3MSG	anyone

‘Ahmed denied that he hit anyone.’

(42) Restriction of universal quantifier

kull	ṭālib	yuḍrub	<i>ʔaḥad</i>	rāḥ	ʔafṣṣul-u.
QUAN	student	hit.IMPF.3MSG	anyone	FUT	expel.IMPF.1SG-3MSG

‘I will expel every student who hits anyone.’

4.3.1.2. *šī*

As for the indefinite pronoun *šī*, it seems to be based on the ontological category noun *šayʔ* ‘thing’ in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic. The monophthongisation and loss of the final glottal stop of *šayʔ* have been attested in many other Arabic dialects (Lucas, 2018, p. 58). In some Arabic dialects, *šayʔ* lost much of its phonological material and became an enclitic *š* to the negated item and is used with the negator *mā* ‘not’ ‘as a circumfixed construction’ (Esseesy, 2010, p.65).

This phenomenon of bipartite or circumfixed construction *mā-š* is attested in many dialects, such as Palestinian Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, and Moroccan Arabic (Brustad, 2000). Although this structure is not found in Syrian Arabic, the variant of Arabic spoken in the capital Damascus, it is attested in a few sporadic areas in western and central Syria (Wilmsen, 2014). Albuarabi (2021) reported that *mā-š* is attested in the Arabic dialects of southern Iraq, in the

cities of Nasiriya, Amarah, and Basra, but not in Baghdad, in central Iraq, or Mosul, in northern Iraq.

(43) ma-ʔəḥibb-hu-ʃ. (Basrawi Arabic)

NEG-like.IMPF.1SG-3MSG-NEG

‘I don’t like it.’

(Albuarabi, 2021, p. 73; glosses amended)

This phenomenon is not attested in Deir Ezzor, in eastern Syria, which makes it similar to central and northern areas of Iraq where Mesopotamian Arabic is spoken.

According to Haspelmath, minimal unit expressions are commonly found in negative polarity contexts. *ši* is similar to *ʔaḥad* and *ḥada* in terms of being a minimal unit expression. Many of the world languages have some ordinary generic nouns with meanings derived from ‘person’, ‘thing’, ‘place’, ‘time’, which may function as minimal unit expressions and be restricted to negative polarity contexts (Haspelmath, 1997). In DzA, *ši* is primarily restricted to negative polarity licensing contexts.

(44) mā daras ʔaḥmad **ši**.

NEG study.PRF.3MSG Ahmed thing

‘Ahmed didn’t study anything.’

(45) idā šift **ši** xabir il-šurṭa.

CON see.PRF.2SM thing call.IMP.2SM DEF-police

‘If you see anything, call the police’

Just like *ʔaḥad* and *ḥada*, when *ši* is licensed by negation, it has to be in the immediate scope of negation. This explains the ungrammaticality of (46).

- (46) *šī mā daras Ḥamad
 thing NEG study.PRF.3MSG Ahmed

‘Ahmed didn’t study anything.’

In certain cases, *šī* can also be found in affirmative contexts. The counterpart of *šī* in Jordanian Arabic is *išī*. Alsarayreh, in his examination of the licensing of negative sensitive items in Jordanian Arabic, stated that *išī* is undergoing a process of grammaticalisation (Alsarayreh 2012, p.55). The term layering is proposed by Hoeksema (1994) to explain the transformation process of some negative polarity items and how they, gradually, start to be restricted to negative contexts.

‘Layering is in fact so rampant that there are hardly any “pure” NPIs that have no other uses as well. This makes it virtually impossible to automatically detect NPIs in a corpus: first the different uses have to be distinguished.’

(Hoeksema 1994, p.274)

My investigation of the behaviour of *šī* in the dialect of Deir Ezzor shows that its behaviour and distribution are far more complicated than simplifying it by saying that this item is undergoing a process where it will be eventually restricted to negative contexts. Unfortunately, Alsarayreh (2012) did not provide examples of the occurrence of *išī* in affirmative sentences; this prevents a direct comparison with the occurrences of *šī* in affirmative sentences in the dialect of Deir Ezzor.

I can distinguish two possible uses of *šī* in affirmative contexts in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. First, *šī* is used in affirmative contexts with a definite meaning equivalent to ‘a thing, something’. In such cases, it is followed by a phrase, usually a prepositional phrase or an adjective phrase, which makes its meaning definite or specific.

- (47) ləqēt *šī* ʕan il-nafi b-ktāb rādfōrd
 find.PRF.1S thing about DEF-negation in-book Radford

‘I have found something about negation in Radford’s book.’

- (48) qaraʔit *šī* jamīl il-yōm.
 read.PRF.1SG thing beautiful.MSG DEF-today

‘I have read something beautiful today.’

The second possible occurrence of *šī* in affirmative contexts is related to cases where it functions as an ‘indefiniteness marker’, which is the terminology used by Haspelmath (1997, p.22). The indefiniteness marker, *šī* in our case, is added to a stem indicating the ontological category. In Haspelmath’s terminology, the result is a series of indefinite pronouns. In English, for instance, there are three such series:

(49)	English	<i>some-series</i>	<i>any-series</i>	<i>no-series</i>
	Person:	<i>somebody</i>	<i>anybody</i>	<i>nobody</i>
	Thing:	<i>something</i>	<i>anything</i>	<i>nothing</i>
	Place:	<i>somewhere</i>	<i>anywhere</i>	<i>nowhere</i>
	Time:	<i>sometime</i>	<i>anytime</i>	<i>never</i>
	Manner:	<i>somehow</i>	<i>anyhow</i>	<i>no way</i>
	Determiner:	<i>some</i>	<i>any</i>	<i>no</i>

(Haspelmath, 1997, p.21)

Data from the dialect of Deir Ezzor shows that there are three possible such series. One of these series uses *šī* as an indefiniteness marker.

(50)	Dialect of Deir Ezzor	<i>ši-series</i>	
	Person	<i>ši wāḥid</i> ⁴²	‘someone’
	Thing	<i>ši šaġlah</i>	‘something’
	Place	<i>ši makān</i>	‘some place’

This use is found in other areas of Syria and was described by Cowell (1964) in his work on Syrian Arabic; however, he described this use of *ši* as a ‘partitive’. He described some items, which he called ‘partitives’ and defined them as ‘nouns designating indefinite proportions and quantities, sometimes fractions’ (Cowell, 1964, p. 467). Cowell gave examples such as *ši laḥme* ‘some meat’ and *ši bent ḥelwe* ‘a (or some) pretty girl’ (1964, p. 467). Wilmsen also stated that *ši* could have ‘a partitive function marking some indefinite quantity’ (2014, p. 53); however, I disagree with this use of *ši* as indicating a quantity but as indicating indefiniteness or indefinite quality. So *ši laḥme*, in Cowell’s data, in my judgement, means ‘some kind of meat, i.e., mutton, beef, chicken...etc.’ and not ‘some quantity of meat’. Unfortunately, Cowell (1964) did not provide data apart from these phrases, which lack context.

There is another non-NPI use of *ši*, but one which shows a restricted use. While *ši* is licensed as an NPI in interrogatives, meaning ‘anything’, it can also have a particular use in yes/no questions. This use of *ši* is found in some Arabic dialects, such as Syrian Arabic (Cowell, 1964) and eastern Libyan Arabic (Owens, 1984). In yes/no questions, *ši* acts as a discourse marker indicating interrogative. It occurs at the end of the sentence, or at least towards the end of the sentence, where it is followed by adverbial expressions. In (51), the verb *nimt* ‘slept’ is intransitive; *ši* cannot be one of its arguments, and it can be deleted without affecting the

⁴² One relatively newer form that is emerging is *ši ḥada* ‘someone’ where the NPI *ḥada* replaces the PPI *wāḥid*; however, *ši ḥaḥad* is not found.

grammaticality of the sentence. However, in (52), the verb *katabit* ‘wrote’ is transitive, and the NPI *ši* cannot be deleted as it is the object of the verb.

(51) *nimt* *ši* *imbāriḥ?* (DzA)
 sleep.PRF.2MSG DISC yesterday
 ‘Did you sleep yesterday?’

(52) *katabit* *ši* *imbāriḥ?*
 write.PRF.2MSG thing yesterday
 ‘Did you write anything yesterday?’

My focus on the occurrence of *ši* towards the end of the sentence is motivated by Wilmsen’s (2014) claim that *ši* can be used at the beginning of yes/no questions in Syrian Arabic to mark ‘the entire phrase as a question’ (2014, p.53). I have never encountered such use in Syrian Arabic or DzA; the following sentence discussed by Wilmsen (2014) is unnatural to me, and I have never heard it in my city or any other part of Syria.

(53) *ši* *maḥ-ak* *maṣāri?* (Syrian Arabic)
 ši POSS-2MSG money

‘Do you have any money?’ (Wilmsen, 2014, p. 54; glosses amended)

From my personal knowledge of Syrian Arabic, I do not take *ši* to mark a clause as a question, but it adds a particular shade of meaning to the question that is already formed; that is why *ši* can be deleted without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence. The added shade of meaning is that of intimacy, friendliness, or something shared between the speaker and addressee. In this regard, *ši* is similar to the interrogative marker *denn* ‘then’ in German, which is also added to the end of a yes/no question, as in (55), to differentiate it from ‘a plain

information-seeking question which does not reveal any attitude of the speaker' (Bayer & Obenauer, 2011, p. 450) as it is the case with (54).

(54) Wo wohnst du? (German)

Where live you

'Where do you live?'

(55) Wo wohnst du denn?

Where live you DISC

'Where do you live? (I am wondering).'

(Bayer & Obenauer, 2011, p. 450; glosses amended)

The details mentioned above highlight that *ši* has a range of uses, and it is worthy of further research in the future. The following section discusses another category of NPIs in DzA, which is determiner NPIs.

4.3.2. Negative Polarity Determiners

The category of determiner NPIs in the dialect of Deir Ezzor includes *ʔayy* 'any', *walaw* 'even, at least', and *hatta* 'even'. I start with discussing *ʔayy* 'any'.

4.3.2.1. *ʔayy*

As for the determiner *ʔayy*, when it is restricted to negative contexts and negative polarity licensing contexts, its meaning is equivalent to that of *any* in English (56). Just like English 'any', it can be used in affirmative contexts to fulfil the function of a free choice item (FCI)⁴³ (57).

⁴³ The licensing of free choice items is beyond the scope of this thesis.

(56) mā ləqēt ʔayy ktāb.

NEG find.PRF.1SG any.NPI book

‘I did not find any book.’

(57) iktib ʕan ʔayy mōzūʕ.

write.IMP.2MSG PREP any.FCI topic

‘Write about any topic!’

As an NPI, *ʔayy* in DzA can be followed by singular or plural countable nouns. However, as an FCI, *ʔayy* is followed only by a singular countable noun. Furthermore, as an NPI, it does not typically occur in a pre-verbal position, and when it is licensed in the scope of negation, it must be in its scope. A sentence such as (60) is judged as odd by speakers of DzA, but it is not totally dismissed as ungrammatical. It is acceptable, and *ʔayy* has been fronted to increase emphasis. *ʔayy* is still interpreted as being under the scope of negation. As an FCI in DzA, *ʔayy* can be in a pre-verbal position. In Egyptian Arabic, for instance, Soltan (2014) underlined that NPI *ʔayy* could not be in a pre-verbal position.

(58) mā rāḥ ʔaqbal ʔayy ʕuḍur/ʔaddār.

NEG FUT accept.IMP.1SG any.NPI excuse/excuses

‘I won’t accept any excuse/excuses.’

(59) qull-u ʔayy ʕuḍur/*ʔaddār.

tell.IMP.2SM-3MSG any.FCI excuse

‘Give him any excuse.’

(60) ʔayy ʕuḍur/ʔaddār mā rāḥ ʔaqbal

any.NPI excuse/excuses NEG FUT accept.IMPF.1SG

‘I won’t accept any excuse/excuses.’

(61) *ʔayy* muhandis kahraba šāttir yəqdar

any.FCI engineer electricity good.MSG can-IMPF.3MSG

yəššlḥ-u.

fix.IMPF.3MSG-3MSG

‘Any good electric engineer could fix it.’

Lucas pointed out that NPI *ʔayy* in Classical Arabic ‘is always optional and emphatic’ (Lucas, 2009, p. 201). This is true of *ʔayy* in DzA, particularly regarding indicating emphasis, and it is consistent with the argument of Kadmon and Landman (1993) that NPI *any* in English is added to fulfil the requirements of widening and strengthening the meaning; they defined widening: ‘in an NP of the form *any CN*, *any* widens the interpretation of the common noun phrase (CN) along a contextual dimension’ (Kadmon & Landman, 1993, p. 361); they further claimed that *any* is licensed when its widening effect ‘creates a stronger statement’ (1993, p.369). Some researchers (e.g. Dayal, 1995) disagreed with Kadmon and Landman’s arguments about the strengthening and widening analysis of *any*; however, Kadmon and Landman’s contribution is significant as it contributes to the discussion of the semantics of NPIs themselves, and it underlines that occurrence of NPIs in a sentence adds a shade of meaning – or ‘a rhetorical spice’ as Hoeksema described Kadmon and Landman’s ‘strengthening’ effect (Hoeksema, 2010, p. 187). As for *ʔayy* in DzA, the emphatic and widening effect is evident as it is often stressed in NPI-licensing contexts.

Furthermore, *ʔayy* can also function as an indefiniteness marker, similarly to *ši*; it can be attached to ontological category nouns. The result is a phrase with indefinite reading, in line with the data from other languages discussed by Haspelmath (1997).

(62)	Dialect of Deir Ezzor	<i>ʔayy</i> -series
	Person	<i>ʔayy wāḥid</i>
	Thing	<i>ʔayy šaḡlah</i>
	Place	<i>ʔayy makān</i>

Such indefinite nominal phrases in the dialect of Deir Ezzor can occur in negative sentences, in questions, and in other contexts licensing NPIs. It is worth underlining that the determiner *ʔayy* may be used with NPI pronouns, such as *ši*, or *ʔaḥad/ḥada*.

(63)	<i>mā</i>	<i>šift</i>	<i>ʔayy</i>	<i>ṭalib.</i>
	NEG	see.PRF.1SG	any.NPI	student

‘I did not see any student.’

(64)	<i>iḏā</i>	<i>šift</i>	<i>ʔayy</i>	<i>ši</i>	<i>murīb,</i>	<i>xabir</i>	<i>il-šurṭah</i>
	CON	see.PRF.2MSG	any.NPI	thing	suspicious	call.IMP.2MSG	DEF-police

‘If you see anything suspicious, call the police.’

(65)	<i>mā</i>	<i>šār</i>	<i>ʔayy</i>	<i>ši.</i>
	NEG	happen.PRF.3MSG	any.NPI	thing

‘Nothing happened.’

(66) mā šift ʔayy ʔaḥad/ḥada.

NEG see.PRF.1SG any person

‘I did not see anyone.’

Even though ʔayy can occur in questions with its negative polarity meaning, as in (67), it can occur in questions with another meaning and function; it functions as a question pronoun ‘which’ as in (68)

(67) ləqēt ʔayy ktab ʕan il-nafi?

find.PRF.2MSG any.NPI book on DEF-negation

‘Did you find any book on negation?’

(68) ʔayy ktab ištārīt?

which book buy.PRF.3MSG

‘Which book did you buy?’

This phenomenon, i.e. a word that is used as a question word is also used to form indefinite phrases, is not limited to the dialect of Deir Ezzor. Haspelmath (2005) highlighted that ‘indefinites that translate as *any*-indefinites in English’ exhibit a great tendency ‘to be interrogative-based’ (Haspelmath, 2005, p. 191).

Alsarayreh (2012) reported a similar behaviour in Jordanian Arabic, which uses the same determiner ʔayy in almost the same way⁴⁴. Furthermore, similar behaviour is reported in some other languages, such as Mandarin. Li (1992) discussed the occurrences of some wh-words in Mandarin in questions and in negation where they are used as NPIs. Cheng (1997) also

⁴⁴ Alsarayreh (2012) did not comment on the use of ʔayy as an indefiniteness marker, but I presume that use is also found in Jordanian Arabic.

examined wh-words in Mandarin and reported that they can be interpreted as ‘interrogative words, existential quantifiers, and universal quantifiers’ (1997, p.96). Cheng added that the existential quantifier reading of the wh-words is a polarity reading; he provided the following list to show the differences in readings. The following examples show that the behaviour of *ʔayy* is not unique.

(69)	Example	as question words	as quantifiers
	shei	who	anybody
	sheme	what	anything
	na	which	any
	heshi	when	anytime
	nali	where	any place
	zeme	how	any way

(Cheng, 1997, p.96)

4.3.2.2. *walaw*

Another NPI determiner is *walaw* which is a focus article with a meaning similar to ‘even’. In English, there are focus particles, such as ‘only’, ‘also’, ‘too’, and ‘but’; there are also scalar particles, such as ‘even’, ‘let alone’ and ‘merely’, which are all adverbs (König, 2008). However, *walaw* is a scalar focus particle which is a determiner and not an adverb. While *walaw* means ‘even’, it has only one meaning of *even* in English, which is indicating the lowest possible amount, i.e. it indicates the lowest end of the scale. *Even* is more complex than *walaw*, and its complexity is discussed in section 4.3.2.3, which discusses *ħatta*.

This item, *walaw*, probably has the widest distribution of NPIs in DzA; it is licensed in negative contexts and all the NPI-licensing contexts discussed in section 4.2 above. It is also licensed in

imperatives, as in (70). The only context where *walaw* is infelicitous is that of an indicative affirmative clause, such as (71).

(70) kōl walaw luqqma!

eat.IMPF.2SM even.NPI bite

‘Eat at least one bite.’

(71) *ʔaḥmad ištara walaw ktab.

Ahmed buy.PRF.3MSG even.NPI book

‘Ahmed bought at least/even a book’

The occurrence of *walaw* in (70) might raise the question of whether it can function as a free choice item (FCI); this is because imperatives in general, including in English, give rise to free choice interpretations (Aloni, 2007). However, *walaw* is not an FCI. On the one hand, there is the ungrammaticality of *walaw* in affirmative sentences. On the other hand, the meaning of *walaw* is that of indicating a low end of a scale and not indicating a general free choice. Furthermore, it has been highlighted that FCIs, like *any* in English, can be modified with modifiers such as *almost* and *absolutely*, whereas these modifiers cannot modify *some* in English. This contrast was originally observed by Dahl (1970) and underlined again by other researchers, such as Horn (1972) and Kadmon and Landman (1993), as shown in example (72). Giannakidou (2001) described this test as valid for Greek FCIs, which can be modified with *sxedhon* ‘almost’, as can be seen in (73).

(72) Almost/absolutely any owl hunts mice. (Kadmon & Landman, 1993, p.405)

- (73) sxedhon opjosdhipote fititis bori na lisi (Greek)
 almost FCI student can SBJV solve.3SG
 afto to provlima.
 this the problem

‘Almost any student can solve this problem.’ (Giannakidou, 2001, p. 685)

However, *walaw* cannot be modified by modifiers equivalent to *almost* or *absolutely*, such as *təqriban* ‘almost’ in (74); whereas FCI *ʔayy* can be modified, as can be seen in (75).

- (74) *təqriban walaw ktab kāfi li-l-imiṭḥān
 almost even book adequate for-DEF-exam

‘Almost at least one book is enough for the exam.’

- (75) təqriban ʔayy muhandis kahraba šāṭṭir yəqdar
 almost FCI engineer electricity good can.IMPF.3MSG

yəṣṣlḥ-u.

fix.IMPF.3MSG-3MSG

‘Almost any good electric engineer could fix it.’

Consequently, *walaw* is not an FCI despite its wide occurrence. It is a scalar focus particle, and, as a matter of fact, this use is found in Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic. Although *walaw* did not receive much attention from grammarians of Classical Arabic, it was labelled as *ḥarif taqlīl* ‘a minimising item’ in the books on the grammar of Classical Arabic (e.g. Dhanawi, 1999). It functions as a determiner with a distribution similar to that found in modern Arab dialects, including DzA. This discussion of whether *walaw* can function as an FCI will be of

use for the discussion of the nonveridicality account of licensing, in chapter five, in section 5.6.2.1. For the time being, these are some examples of the NPI *walaw* in DzA.

(76) Superordinate negation

mā	ʔaʕtəqid	ʔaḥmad	ləḥḥaq	yudrus
NEG	think.IMPF.1SG	Ahmed	manage.PRF.3MSG	study.IMPF.3MSG
<i>walaw</i>	kilmi.			
even	word			

‘I don’t think Ahmed managed to study even a word.’

(77) Before-clauses

hāda	il-muḥalil	yətwəqqaʕ	il-ḥadaṭ	qabəl
DEM	DEF-analyst	forecast.IMPF.3MSG	DEF-event	before
təssarub	<i>walaw</i>	iššaʕa.		
leak	even	rumour		

‘This analyst can forecast an event before even a rumour gets circulated.’

(78) question

min-u	yətdḍakar	<i>walaw</i>	məʕlūma	wiḥdi	min	il-muḥādra
who-3MSG	remember.IMPF.3MSG	even	idea	one	from	DEF-lecture

‘Who remembers even one idea from the lecture?’

(79) Restriction of universal quantifier

kull ṭālib daras *walaw* sāfa wiḥdi, najah.

QUAN student study.PRF.3MSG even hour one pass.PRF.3MSG

‘Every student who studied even one hour passed (the exam).’

(80) Subjunctive

ʔaḥmad yəxāf yəktib *walaw* kelmi

Ahmed fear.IMPF.3MSG write.SBJV.3MSG even word

wiḥdi ʕan il-ḥukūma.

one about DEF-government

‘Ahmed dreads to write even one word against the government.’

4.3.2.3. ḥatta

The third and final NPI determiner is *ḥatta* ‘even’. It is also used in a shortened form *ḥət*; however, the difference between *ḥət* and *ḥatta* is similar to the difference between *ʔaḥad* and *ḥada*, respectively; the latter is a relatively newer form and one that is often found more in the speech of the educated. *ḥət* can receive stress to imply emphasis. Both share the same distribution in terms of the possible licensing contexts. To the best of my knowledge, *ḥət* is not found in mainstream Syrian Arabic, i.e. the dialect spoken in Damascus. In Moroccan Arabic, for instance, *ḥatta* has a shortened form *ḥat*, as shown in the data of Benmamoun (1997, 2000) and Brustad (2000). However, nothing is said about the differences between the two forms in respect of their distribution and semantics, if there are any.

The behaviour of the counterparts of *ḥatta* in other Arabic dialects has been described in the literature. In Palestinian Arabic, it has been described as an NPI (Hoyt, 2005). However, in

in non-negative contexts where it expresses the opposite meaning, i.e. the highest end of a scale, the highest expected amount, a maximising meaning, or the meaning of inclusivity.

(83) *sāmi* *ʕazam* *ħatta* *ʔaħmad*. (DzA)

Sami invite.PRF.3MSG even Ahmed

‘Sami invited even Ahmed.’

(84) *sāmi* *ma* *ʕazam* *ħatta* *ʔaħmad*.

Sami NEG invite.PRF.3MSG even Ahmed

‘Sami did not invite even Ahmed.’

In (83), the interpretation is that Sami invited many people, including Ahmed. Such a structure implies that Ahmed was the least expected, or perhaps the most difficult, to be invited. Inviting him achieved inclusivity. In (84), the interpretation is that Ahmed was the most expected person to be invited, yet Sami did not invite him; the implicature is that no one else of the group of people that Ahmed is a member of was invited either. The inclusive interpretation of *ħatta* is not available in negative contexts; consequently, it is possible to classify this usage of *ħatta* as a positive polarity item (PPI). These two interpretations can also be labelled *negative even* and *positive even*, respectively.

Having different scalar interpretations of an item with the meaning of ‘even’ is reported in other languages. In the case of English, one item, *even*, has different interpretations between negative and positive sentences; the behaviour of *even* has been a subject of debate (e.g., Horn, 1989; Karttunen & Peters, 1979; Rooth, 1985; Wilkinson, 1996). In Greek, there are distinct *even* items which show different distribution according to the polarity of the sentence. Giannakidou (2006b; 2007) described three items, *akomi me* which is a positive polarity ‘even’, *oute* which is a negative polarity ‘even’, and *esto* which, according to Giannakidou, does not

contribute by itself a positive or negative likelihood which makes it a flexible item. This encourages further examination of the two polarity uses of *ḥatta* in DzA and other Arab dialects. This is a possible topic for future research.

These positive and negative polarity meanings of *ḥatta* are restricted to its use as a determiner when it is followed by a noun. *ḥatta* can also be used as a subordinating particle with the meaning ‘so that’. In Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), *ḥatta* is one of the subordinating particles that are used with the subjunctive mood (Benmamoun, 2000).

- (85) *ḥatta* *yərjjiʕua*.
 Subordinating particle return.SBJV.3MP
 ‘In order for them to return’ (Personal knowledge of MSA)

This usage of *ḥatta* is not found in DzA, although I believe it is available in Syrian Arabic, as represented in the Arabic of Damascus; the discussion of the subjunctive in chapter two highlighted that in DzA, unlike MSA and Syrian Arabic, there are no noticeable morphological differences distinguishing the subjunctive form of the verb. What remains now is commenting on the possible licensing contexts of *ḥatta* in DzA. It is felicitous in all licensing contexts except habituals, where it clearly has an inclusive interpretation, i.e. a positive *ḥatta*, as can be seen in (91). The following are a sample of the licensing contexts.

- (86) Superordinate negation
 mā *ʔaʕtəqid* *rāḥ* *yəsāʕid* *ḥatta* *ʔax-ūh*.
 NEG think.IMPF.1SG FUT help.IMPF.3MSG even brother-3MSG
 ‘I don’t think he will help even his brother.’

(87) Without

il-mašrūf najah bidūn tadaxūl *hatta* ʔaḥmad.

DEF-project succeed.PRF.3MSG without intervention even Ahmed

‘The project succeeded without even the intervention of Ahmed.’

(88) Before clauses

ʔaḥmad ḥall il-muṣādala qabəl *hatta* il-istād.

Ahmed solve.PRF.3MSG DEF-equation before even DEF-teacher

‘Ahmed solved the equation even before the teacher (did).’

(89) Questions

min-u yəsāʕid *hatta* ʔax-ūh b-hal-zamān.

who-3MSG help.IMPF.3MSG even brother-3MSG in-DEM-time

‘Who would help even his (own) brother in these times?’

(90) Conditionals

idā səʕadit *hatta* ʔax-ūy rāḥ ʔatʕāqəb.

CON help.PRF.1SG even brother-1SG FUT penalise.IMPF.1SG

‘If I helped even my own brother, I would be penalised.’

(91) Habituals

ʔaḥmad čān yəštaḡil kull yōm *hatta* b-il-ʕuṭlā.

Ahmed AUX work.IMPF.3MSG QUAN day even in-DEF-holiday

‘Ahmed used to work every day even during holidays.’

4.3.3. Negative Polarity Auxiliaries

There have been a few studies on negative polarity auxiliaries in the literature; the often-discussed examples are the modal auxiliary *need* in English, and its counterparts in meaning and distribution, *brauchen* in German and *hoeven* in Dutch. They all show a restricted distribution and are licensed mainly by negation (Giannakidou & Mari, 2018; Palmer, 1979, 1995; van der Wouden, 2002, 2013). However, the common opinion is that while negative polarity auxiliaries do exist, they are rare (van der Wouden, 2002). As for Arabic dialects, the discussion of negative polarity auxiliaries is even more limited.

The dialect of Deir Ezzor uses some auxiliary verbs which are derived from incomplete verbs and motion verbs. Those verbs are either used to embed the following verb modally or to express an aspect. There are three auxiliaries that can be classified as NPIs. Two of them, *ʕād* and *baqa* (literally, ‘he returned’ and ‘he remained’, respectively), have a relatively wide use, and their forms resemble the forms of lexical verbs. The third, *haggōt* ‘guess’, has a very limited distribution, and it is in a nominal form. I discuss first *ʕād* and *baqa*.

4.3.3.1. *ʕād* & *baqa*

Both *ʕād* and *baqa* are invariable, and they embed the following main verbs in either their perfect, as in (92), or imperfect forms, as in (93).

- (92) mā *ʕād/baqa* katab šifr.
 NEG AUX write.PRF.3MSG poetry
 ‘He did not write poetry anymore.’

- (93) mā *ʕād/baqa* yuktub šifr.
 NEG AUX write.IMPF.3MSG poetry
 ‘He does not write poetry anymore.’

In another study, on Coastal Dhofari Arabic, in southern Oman, Davey (2013, 2016) described *ḥād* as an item that can either function as an inceptive auxiliary verb, which shows no polarity sensitivity according to the discussed data, as in (97), or as an adverbial particle, with the meaning of ‘still, yet, just’, as in (98). Davey underlined that the adverbial particle *ḥād* can carry suffixes that mark agreement in number and gender with the head noun; however, it carries no suffixes when followed by a verb, i.e. when it functions as an auxiliary (Davey, 2016, pp. 247-250).

(97) axīran ḥād yištaḡāl. (Coastal Dhofari Arabic – Oman)

finally PAR work-3MSG

‘Finally, he has started working.’

(Davey, 2016, p. 247; glosses amended)

(98) qālat li ṣāḥabt-hā ḥāda-nī bḡet
say.PRF.3FSG to friend-3FSG PAR-1SG want.PRF.1SG

argāf ṣaḡīra.

return.IMPF.1SG young girl

‘She said to her friend, “I still want to be young”.’

(Davey, 2016, p. 144; glosses amended)

These two cases show that *ḥād* is used as an auxiliary, although its dependency on negation varies from one Arabic dialect to another. Albuarabi (2021), in her literature review, mentioned in passing that *ḥād* is a negative polarity auxiliary in Jordanian Arabic (2021, p. 42). However, she did not provide examples or a source that supports this idea. What is even more puzzling

is that Albuarabi (2021) did not state whether negative polarity auxiliaries are attested in any of the Arabic dialects of Iraq that she examined in her thesis.

Alsarayreh (2012), Alqassas (2012; 2015), and Alrashdan (2015) did not mention *ʕād*, or negative polarity auxiliaries in general, in their coverage of negation and polarity in Jordanian Arabic. This does not imply that *ʕād* is not used in Jordanian or Iraqi Arabic. On the contrary, I believe *ʕād* is attested in the Arabic dialects spoken in Jordan and Iraq. However, my own personal intuition is not adequate to make a judgement about the precise distribution of this item, mainly because there are some significant regional differences inside Jordan, as highlighted by the studies of Alsarayreh (2012), Alqassas (2012), Alrashdan (2015), and inside Iraq as highlighted Albuarabi (2021).

In the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, *ʕād* is licensed in negation and some of the negative polarity licensing contexts. It is, however, not licensed in the subjunctive, *bidūn* ‘without’, or *qabəl* ‘before’, although these two contexts license many NPIs in Arabic and many other languages. Furthermore, *ʕād* has a semantic contribution. In the case of negation, as in (99), it clearly implies that a particular situation ceased to exist. In the case of questions, as in (100), *ʕād* adds a rhetorical meaning to the question indicating that an affirmative response is not expected. When *ʕād* is used in conditionals, it is implied that the situation is unreal.

(99) Clausemate negation

mā	ʕād	nām	min	wajaʕ	snnan-u.
NEG	AUX	sleep.PRF.3MSG	from	pain	teeth-3MSG

‘He stopped sleeping because of his toothache’ (= ‘he couldn’t sleep because of his toothache.’)

(100) Questions

min-u *ʕād* šāf ʔaḥmad?

who-3MSG AUX see.PRF.3MSG Ahmed

‘Who has seen Ahmed again?’

(101) Adversative predicates

ʔašukk inn-u *ʕād* yəjji la-hōn.

doubt.IMPF.1SG COMP-3MSG AUX come.IMPF.3MSG to-here

‘I doubt that he will (ever) come here.’

(102) Conditionals

idā *ʕād* ʕiməll-ha rāḥ ʔaʕarrf-u qīmt-u.

CON AUX do.PRF.3MSG-3FSG FUT know.IMPF.1SG-3MSG worth-3MSG

‘If he did that thing again, I would let him who he really is.’

(102) Restriction of universal quantifier

kull wāḥid *ʕād* hačča bi-l-siyyāsa inšaḥaṭ.

QUAN one AUX talk.PRF.3MSG in-DEF-politics arrest.PRF.3MSG

‘Everyone who ever spoke in politics got arrested.’

The negation marker *mā* and the auxiliary *ʕād* are often merged into one word, *maʕad*, and the two long vowels are shortened, as can be seen in (103). This might be a result of the frequent and compulsory occurrence of the negative marker and the auxiliary verb together. The merged form is actually used more frequently in the dialect of Deir Ezzor, and the separate forms are

used to express emphasis. A merger similar to what is described by Ahmed (2012), between the negative particle, *ʕād*, and the main verb is not possible in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor.

(103) ma-ʕad ʔaja la-hōn.

NEG-AUX come.PRF.3MSG to-here

‘He never came back here.’

As for the negative auxiliary *baqa*, it is similar in meaning and distribution to *ʕād*. It is also derived from the Classical Arabic verb *yəbaqa* ‘remain’. However, unlike the verb *yaʕūd*, which has almost ceased to be used as a lexical verb, some (polarity neutral) forms derived from *yəbaqa* are still possible to be found as main verbs, although their usage is increasing limited to inanimate subjects, as can be seen in (105). However, this does not affect the status of *baqa*, neither as an auxiliary nor as an NPI.

(104) mā **baqa** ʔakaltu sukkar.

NEG AUX eat.PRF.1SG sugar

‘I do not eat sugar (anymore).’

(105) (mā) bəqi zēt bi-l-ʕaḥan.

NEG remain.PRF.3MSG oil in-DEF-plate

‘There is (not) oil left in the plate.’

The semantic contribution of *baqa* is very similar to that of *ʕād*, and they are interchangeable in the abovementioned examples. However, *ʕād* seems to be more common in the speech of the natives of Deir Ezzor. I have pointed out in previous sections that there are cases where newer forms of NPIs, namely ones predominately used in Syrian Arabic, are emerging and gaining ground against NPIs that are exclusive to Deir Ezzor Arabic. This is the case of *ḥada*

and *hatta* that are competing with *ʔaḥad* and *ḥət*, which are the original forms in DzA. The case of *baqa* bears some similarities. As a matter of fact, a cognate of *baqa* is attested in the Arabic spoken in Damascus and many of the western parts of Syria. It appears as *baʔa*. It is reported by Cowell (1964) in his seminal work on Syrian Arabic. He described it as a linking verb, but he stated nothing about its negation dependency, although his data suggests such a dependency exists, as in the following example. However, Cowell (1964) made no mention of *ʕād*, which is not found in his data.

(106) mā baʔa fī ʕənd-i ġēr nəṣṣ ʔannīnet zēt. (Syrian Arabic)

NEG AUX EX.PAR POSS-1SG but half bottle oil

‘I haven’t got but a half bottle of oil left.’

(Cowell, 1964, p. 453; glosses added)

It is possible that *baqa* is finding its way into the Syntax of DzA, although it seems to be more well-established in comparison than *ḥada* – naturally, we cannot compare the frequency of usage between items belonging to different syntactic categories. As for the discussion of negative polarity auxiliaries, the final item in my list is *haggōt*.

4.3.3.2. *haggōt*

The negative modal auxiliary *haggōt* ‘guess’ is peculiar in the sense that it has a very limited distribution even for an NPI where it is licensed almost exclusively by clausemate negation. Furthermore, its use is also almost restricted to first-person subjects, where it carries person, number agreement *haggōt-i*. The usage of *haggōt* is slightly decreasing, although it is not being replaced with a particular item or set of items. Its current usage as an NPI auxiliary is perhaps the last remaining usage of words derived from the original root *hagga* ‘think, guess’. This root is not from Classical Arabic; it is totally different from the root *ḥaka* ‘say, speak’, which is from Classical Arabic. I believe *hagga* to be of a Bedouin origin based on the available pieces

It is possible to find it in interrogatives where the subject is second person. It can occur with negation as a short answer to a question.

(109) Clausemate negation

mā *haggōt-i* ʔaḥmad yəji il-yōm.
 NEG AUX-1SG Ahmed come.IMPF.3MSG DEF-today

‘I don’t think Ahmed is coming today.’

(110) Interrogative

haggōt-ak ʔaḥmad yəji il-yōm?
 guess-2MSG Ahmed come.IMPF.3MSG DEF-today

‘Do you think Ahmed is coming today?’

(111) A short response to a question

A: rāḥ tinjaḥ bi-l-faḥṣ?
 FUT pass.IMPF.2SM in-DEF-exam?

‘Are you going to pass the exam?’

B: mā *haggōt-i!*
 NEG guess-1SG

‘I don’t think so!’

As for the semantic contribution of *haggōt*, there is a hint of expressing unlikelihood. This is clearer when *haggōt* occurs in a short response to a question. The structure *mā haggōti* is used frequently by itself. It is not neutral in the sense of ‘I have no idea’, but it expresses a meaning of ‘I think not’ or ‘it is unlikely’. This pattern of behaviour is similar to some extent to Japanese

evidential modals, which have been described as capable of embedding verbs to indicate different levels of the certainty of the sentence; the meaning ranges from a guess-like certainty, to hearsay, to inferences from observations, which are labelled as ranges of evidential modality (McCreday & Ogata, 2007). Furthermore, Aijmer (2011) reported that there are many epistemic qualifiers in Swedish which embed verbs to indicate different levels of certainty; he also argued that the verb ‘think’ in English has been undergoing grammaticalisation to express epistemic modality with a range of meanings; this is the case in a sentence such (112) where *I would think* has the meaning of ‘I believe’ (Aijmer, 2011, p. 16).

(112) I would think that he is at home. (Aijmer, 2011, p. 16).

This brief discussion above only highlights the need for further research on modality in Arabic dialects. As for the auxiliary *haggōt*, there is still a need for further research before giving it a specific label. The following section discusses negative polarity verbs.

4.3.4. Negative Polarity Verbs

Generally speaking, negative polarity verbs have not received much attention in the studies of negation and polarity; some works on negative polarity (e.g., Hoeksema, 1994; Israel, 1996; Tovena, Déprez & Jayez, 2004) only give examples that confirm the existence of NPI verbs. As for Arabic dialects, there has not been any investigation into negative polarity verbs. However, I have identified four such verbs which exhibit restricted distribution and show a strong affinity to negation in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. By strong affinity, I mean that they occur more frequently in negative contexts than in other NPI-licensing contexts; these verbs are almost banned from occurring in affirmative contexts.

These four verbs are: *yəṭṭiq*⁴⁵ ‘brook, bear (something or someone), stand someone’, *yəṣabbir* ‘give attention to someone, show interest in someone’, *yuwāxiḍ* ‘to blame someone’, ‘to be upset by them, especially because of their behaviour’, or ‘to take note of someone or their behaviour’, and *yəstajri* ‘to dare (do something)’. The verb *yəstajri* has the cognate *yəstarji*, which is found in many current Arab dialects. However, the form used in DzA is closer to the original *yastajri*? in Classical Arabic. The form *yəstarji* found in some other modern Arabic dialects is the result of consonant metathesis, which is a morphological phenomenon found in many languages, including some Arabic dialects (Buckley, 2011).

These verbs occur in perfective and imperfective forms and express past and present tense; however, they cannot be used to form imperative. The following examples demonstrate their distribution in some of their licensing contexts:

First, the NPI-verb *yəṭṭiq*

(113) Clausemate negation:

ʔaḥmad mā *yəṭṭiq* ʔaḥad minn-hum.

Ahmed NEG brook.IMPF.3MSG anyone from-3P

‘Ahmed does not stand any of them.’

⁴⁵ Hallman argued that the imperfective form in Arabic ‘marks the default lexical form of the verb, and is therefore analogous to the English infinitive’ (2015, p. 103) and that is why I list these verbs in their imperfective form where they are inflected to show agreement with a third person, singular masculine subject.

(114) Adversative predicate:

ʔastabʕid	ʔahmad	<i>yəʔʔiq</i>	il-ḥayāt
refute.IMPF.1SG	Ahmed	brook.IMPF.3msg	DEF-life
li-ḥāl-u.			
by-self-3MSG			

‘I find it unlikely that Ahmed can stand living alone.’

(115) Question:

min-u	<i>yəʔʔiq</i>	yəʕʔš	baʕīd	ʕan
who-3MSG	brook.IMPF.3MSG	live.IMPF.3MSG	away	from
ʔahl-l-u ?				
family-3MSG				

‘Who can stand living away from his loved ones?’

(116) Conditionals:

idā	<i>ʔāq</i>	il-ḡurba	sana,	mā	rāḥ
CON	brook.PRF.3MSG	DEF-alienation	year	NEG	FUT
yərjaʕ.					
return.IMPF.3MSG					

‘If he stood living away from home for just one year, he would not come back.’

(117) Subjunctive:

ʔaḥmad	yətmanna	laylā	<i>təṭṭiq</i>	il-ḡurba.
Ahmed	wish.IMPF.3MSG	Layla	brook.IMPF.3FSG	DEF-alienation

‘Ahmed wishes Layla could stand living away from home.’

Second, the NPI-verb *yəṣṣabir*:

(118) Clausemate negation:

laylā	mā	<i>təṣṣabir</i>	ʔaḥad.
Layla	NEG	notice.IMPF.3FSG	anyone

‘Layla gives no attention to anyone.’

(119) Adversative predicate:

ʔaṣukk	layla	<i>təṣṣabir</i>	ʔaḥmad.
Doubt.IMPF.1SG	Layla	NOTICE.IMPF.3FSG	Ahmed

‘I doubt Layla will give attention to Ahmed.’

(120) Conditionals:

idā	layla	<i>ṣabbart</i>	ʔaḥmad	rāḥ	yəṭṭīr	ṣaql-u.
CON	Layla	notice.PRF.3FSG	Ahmed	FUT	fly.IMPF.3MSG	brain-3MSG

‘If Layla gave attention to Ahmed, he would be over the moon!’

(121) Subjunctive:

ʔaḥmad tmanna layla *təṣabbr-u.*

Ahmed wish.PRF.3MSG Layla notice.IMPF.3FSG-3MSG

‘Ahmed wished Layla would have given him attention.’

Third, the NPI-verb *yuwāxiḍ*:

(122) Clausemate negation

ʔaḥmad mā *yuwāxiḍ* layla li-ʔann-u

Ahmed NEG blame.IMPF.3MSG Layla for-COMP-3MSG

yəḥbb-ha.

love.IMPF.3MSG-3FSG

‘Ahmed cannot be upset by Layla because he loves her.’

(123) Conditionals:

iḍā tuwāxiḍ kull wāḥid yətaʔaxar ʕalī-k

CON blame.IMPF.2SM QUAN one delay.IMPF.3MSG on-3MSG

mā rāḥ yəzall ʕind-ak rabbīʕ.

NEG FUT remain.IMPF.3MSG POSS-2SM friend

‘If you reprimand anyone for being late, you have no friend.’

(124) Subjunctive:

ʔaḥmad	yəxāf	<i>yuwāxdūnn-u</i>	li-ʔann-u
Ahmed	fear.IMPF.3MSG	blame.IMPF.3MP-3MSG	for-COMP-3MSG
mā	rāḥ	ʕala	il-ʕiris.
NEG	FUT	on	DEF-wedding

‘Ahmed fears they will rebuke him for not coming to the wedding.’

Fourth, the NPI-verb *yəstajri*:

(125) Clausemate negation:

ʔaḥmad mā	<i>yəstajri</i>	yəxālif	marrt-u.
Ahmed NEG	dare.IMPF.3MSG	disobey.IMPF.3MSG	wife-3MSG

‘Ahmed dare not disobey his wife.’

(126) Questions:

min-u	<i>yəstajri</i>	yəxālif	marrt-u?
who-3MSG	dare.IMPF.3MSG	disobey.IMPF.3MSG	wife-3MSG

‘Who dare disobey his wife?’

(127) Adversative predicates:

ʔašukk	ʔaḥmad	<i>yəstajri</i>	yəxālif	marrt-u
doubt.IMPF.1S	Ahmed	dare.IMPF.3MSG	disobey.IMPF.3MSG	wife-3MSG

‘I doubt that Ahmed dares to disobey his wife.’

(128) Subjunctive:

imm	ʔahmad	tətmanna	<i>yəstajri</i>
mother	Ahmed	wish.IMPF.3FSG	dare.IMPF.3MSG
yəxālif		marrt-u.	
disobey.IMPF.3MSG	wife-3MSG		

‘Ahmed’s mother wishes he dared to disobey his wife.’

That there are only four negative polarity lexical verbs is not surprising. These verbs are believed to be quite rare cross-linguistically. For instance, van der Wouden (2002) stressed that ‘most simple verbs are not polarity items and will never develop into such things’ (2002, p.68). However, Falkenberg (2001), in one of the rare studies on NPI verbs, described the study of negative polarity lexical verbs as a neglected area and underlined that a thorough examination proves that there are several NPI verbs. Falkenberg described four categories of NPI-verbs in German:

(129) Verbs of abstention: such as *anstehen* ‘hesitate’ and *verfehlen* ‘fail’.

(130) Verbs of attraction, such as *dulden* ‘brook, stand for,’ which indicate a strong feeling of repulsion against doing something.

(131) Verbs of privation, such as *entbehren* ‘lack, be devoid of’, which in general express a lack; however, this group of verbs in German are generally archaic.

(132) Impersonal ‘care’ verbs, such as *jucken* ‘itch’ and *schmecken* ‘taste’, which originally denote physical sensations, but their meaning is extended to indicate repulsion.

These verbs have near-synonymous counterparts, which show no polarity sensitivity in their distribution. For instance, the above two abstention verbs have the following counterparts

zögern ‘hesitate’, and *versäumen* ‘fail to do’; however, the NPI verbs of abstention have limited distribution and express a stronger feeling of disinclination (Falkenberg, 2001). Hoeksema (1994) noted that items which indicate intolerance or indifference are likely to evolve into negative polarity items. For instance, in French, some verbs which express intolerance or dislike, behave as NPIs, as is the case with *blairer*.

(133) Je ne peux pas *le blairer, l’encadrer, le supporter, l’avaler, le sentir*

‘I cannot stand him (I cannot BLAIRER, frame, stand, swallow, smell).’

(Tovena, Déprez & Jayez, 2004, p. 406).

By comparing the four NPI-verbs in DzA with the four categories described by Falkenberg (2001), I conclude that *yəṭṭiq*, *yəḥabbir*, and *yuwāxiḍ* are verbs of attraction as they express repulsion against something, someone, or doing something. There are polarity-neutral, near-synonymous verbs to these three verbs in DzA: *yəṭḥammal* ‘tolerate (a physical or emotional experience)’, *yəḥtamm* ‘show interest, care’, and *yəḷūm* ‘blame’. On the other hand, *yəstajri* is clearly a verb of abstention; its neutral counterpart could be *yəqdar* ‘be able to’.

One distinction between NPI verbs and the previous list of NPIs (i.e., the nominal and the determiners) is that we can contemplate their semantics, particularly by comparing NPI verbs' meaning with normal verbs. There is a slight difference in meaning between the NPI verbs and their polarity-neutral counterparts. On the one hand, when they are in licensing contexts, *yəṭṭiq* and *yəstajri* are clearly emphatic in describing the lowest degrees on the scales of the meanings of endurance and courage, respectively. On the other hand, *yəḥabbir* and *yuwāxiḍ* describe something different in their licensing context. They indicate that there is a high degree on the scale of meaning that will not be reached, i.e., they express understatement.

This supports the proposal of Israel (1996) that there are two binary lexical semantic features – quantitative (which can be high or low) and informative (which can be emphatic or

understating). The interaction between the two explains the negative and polarity sensitivity. NPIs can be either low scalar and emphatic or high scalar and understaters. The difference between these two types can be seen in the following sentences:

(134) A. Margo didn't sleep a wink before her big test.

B. Margo didn't sleep much before her big test.

(Israel, 1996, p. 625)

In (134.A), 'a wink' is an NPI that is low scalar and emphatic while 'much' is high scalar and understaters. Both 'a wink' and 'much' are NPIs licensed by clausemate negation in these examples. However, it is obvious that the former indicates a stronger claim of denying that Margo slept any possible amount. In contrast, in (134.B), the latter only indicates that the amount of sleep was not too high. This discussion of the semantics of NPIs is useful for the discussion of the final category of NPIs in this chapter, the negative polarity idioms.

4.3.5. Idiomatic Negative Polarity Items

Just like many other languages and dialects, the dialect of Deir Ezzor uses some idiomatic NPIs. Some of those idiomatic expressions are: *qiriš mašdi* 'a rusty penny', *qiriš manqōb* 'a holed penny', *wataka* 'a straw', *ħiss* 'a sound', *mruwwa* 'patience', *il-jinni il-ʔazraq* 'the blue genie', and *ʕumur* 'life or age'. Idiomatic NPIs have been reported to exist in the literature on NPIs in Arabic dialects; however, only a few items were mentioned, and their discussion has been relatively shallow. For instance, Alsarayreh (2012) and Albuarabi (2021) mentioned only *filas ʔaħmar* 'red cent' as an idiomatic NPI in Jordanian and Iraqi Arabic, respectively. Both of them also mentioned *ʕumur* as a temporal indefinite adverb meaning 'ever'. It is the only adverb with a negative polarity discussed in the literature on negative polarity in Arabic. I believe it is more accurate, at least for DZA, to discuss *ʕumur* as an idiomatic NPI. I explain my reasons below, in section 4.3.5.2.

Alqassas's (2021) recent work, which covers NPIs in Arabic dialects in different countries, makes no mention of idiomatic NPIs. A thorough discussion of idiomatic NPIs could be a chance to look into the semantics of NPIs, and their interpretations in the licensing contexts. This could expand our understanding of the phenomenon, especially since recent studies on Arabic dialects focused almost exclusively on pronouns and determiners.

Idiomatic NPIs are known for having acquired a unique meaning that is different from their literal meaning. This makes them, to some extent, part of the phenomenon of idioms which has been the subject of considerable research (Camacho, 2019; O'Grady, 1998). The phenomenon of idioms is the result of certain words being 'drawn from the lexicon, merged in syntax, and interpreted semantically based on the syntactic structure they appear in' (Camacho, 2019, p. 113).

This is precisely the case of idiomatic NPIs in DzA. On the one hand, these items are almost exclusively used in NPI-licensing contexts. On the other hand, in these contexts, the literal meaning of those items is replaced by a figurative meaning; in some cases, the literal meaning is still available in affirmative contexts. Some idiomatic NPIs have lost their literal meaning altogether, and only the polarity sensitive figurative meaning is available. This indicates another step in the grammaticalisation process that these items have undergone, from polarity-neutral items to negative polarity items. According to their figurative meaning, these idiomatic NPIs can be either minimisers or maximisers (Israel, 2004, 2011). This division also holds for idiomatic NPIs in DzA. The following section discusses minimisers.

4.3.5.1. Minimisers

This list of idiomatic minimisers includes *qiriš mašdi* 'a rusty penny', *qiriš manqōb* 'a holed penny', *wataka* 'a straw, or a scratch', *ħiss* 'a sound', and *mruwwa* 'patience, willpower'. Apart from the last item, all of these items clearly indicate insignificant quantities or amounts. It has been highlighted in the literature that some idiomatic NPIs denote some minimal elements of

certain ontological categories (Krifka, 1995). Such minimum value items have a tendency to become polarity items (Ladusaw, 1996). When these items occur in an NPI licensing context, they clearly indicate a low scalar endpoint and seem to strengthen the interpretation of the whole context (Fauconnier, 1975; Giannakidou, 2002; Israel, 2001, 2004). This phenomenon seems to be pervasive as it has long been noted that ‘nouns designating such concepts as feathers, straws and pips frequently reinforce nouns in representations of popular speech’ (Harris, 1978, p.25).

The pair *qiriš māsdi* and *qiriš manqōb* clearly indicate minimum insignificant quantities. The latter refers to a holed coin which had a minimal value, and which was used before the Independence of Syria in 1946. It is not used anymore, and many people now do not even know what it looks like exactly. These two items are similar to *filās ṣāḥmār* in Jordanian and Iraqi Arabic, which in turn is similar to the NPI minimiser ‘red cent’ in English (135). The figurative meaning is evident in (136), where the use of these items emphasises the meaning. The literal meaning is still possible in certain affirmative contexts, as in (137).

(135) It’s not worth *a red cent*. (Krifka, 1991, p. 150)

(136) hind mā dafʕat *qiriš māsdi* / *qiriš* *manqōb*.

Hind NEG pay.PRF.3FSG penny rusty.MSG penny holed.MSG

‘Hind did not pay a rusty penny/holed penny!’

(137) laqētū *qiriš manqōb* b-ṣandūq nāna.

Find.PRF.1SG holed penny in-box grandma

‘I found a holed penny in my grandmother’s box.’

Also on the list is the NPI *ḥiṣṣ* ‘a sound’. As an NPI, its meaning is figurative, where it indicates a sound or a trace of a human presence or interaction, as shown in the following examples. This

meaning is absent outside licensing contexts. Outside licensing contexts, it could be used to mean ‘voice’ with animate subjects, and the item will often be modified to express a specific reference, as is the case in (139).

(138) min sāfar mā ʔaja minn-u *ħiss*.
 since travel.PRF.3MSG NEG come.PRF.3MSG from-3MSG sound

‘Since he travelled, we heard (received) nothing from him.’

(139) bī *ħiss* waləd zaġīr yəbči.
 EX.PAR voice boy little.MSG cry.IMP.3MSG

‘There is a voice of a crying little child.’

The NPI *wataka* is peculiar as it only exists now as an NPI, and it has no meaning or usage in affirmative contexts. Its most dominant NPI meaning is that of ‘a straw’; in an NPI licensing context, it indicates the absence of anything of a material value, as in (140). However, some speakers use this NPI with the meaning of ‘a scratch’ to indicate that something is totally free from any flaw or harm, as in (141).

Some speakers add a definite article to this NPI, although this seems a matter of choice and does not reflect any syntactic or semantic differences. I have not encountered an NPI, in other languages, that has reached this degree of grammaticalisation while maintaining some semantic properties.

(140) il-xazna fāḍēa mā bī-ha *wataka*.
 DEF-safe empty NEG EX.PAR-3FSG straw

‘The safe is empty; there is nothing (at all) in it.’

- (141) *il-səyyāra* *jadīdi* *w* *mā* *bī-ha* *il-wataka.*
 DEF-car new.FSG CONJ NEG EX.PAR-3FSG DEF-scratch

‘The car is new and flawless.’

What these four items have in common is that their original meaning is that of an insignificant quantity, making them typical examples of minimisers. However, the matter is slightly different for the final minimiser in our list. It is the NPI *mruwwa* which could be translated as ‘patience or willpower’. It is derived from Classical Arabic *murūʔa*, which expresses a range of meanings: ‘chivalry; generosity, magnanimity, manhood, or virility’. In Classical Arabic (CA), *murūʔa* indicates a set of qualities that can be described as high on the scale of good virtues. In Classical Arabic, it is quite a complement to describe someone as endowed with *murūʔa*; however, it is quite an insult to describe someone as being without it.

- (142) *rajul-un* *bidūn-i* *murūʔa.* (personal knowledge of CA)
 man-NOM without-DAT chivalry

‘A man without chivalry’ = ‘a worthless man’

However, in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, and, to the best of my knowledge, in Syrian Arabic as well, only the figurative meaning of *mruwwa* is available. In NPI-licensing contexts, *mruwwa* describes the lack of the patience or stamina that is needed to carry out basic tasks that are expected of a person. Furthermore, *mruwwa* is gender-neutral; the speaker in (143) could be male or female.

- (143) *mā* *ʕind-i* *mruwwa* *ʔaqōm* *min* *il-taxit.*
 NEG POSS-1SG patience stand.IMPF.1SG from DEF-bed

‘I have no willpower/stamina/capability to get out of my bed.’

The use of *mruwwa* does not imply the subject of the sentence is physically incapacitated; the subject only lacks the willpower or stamina to carry out a specified activity, but he or she could be able to do something else. In this regard, and to use the terminology of Israel (2001, 2004, 2011), *mruwwa* does not indicate a low degree on a scale – unlike the previous four minimisers – and it is not emphatic either. It is more accurate to describe it as a high scalar but attenuating minimiser, as is the case with the NPI *much* mentioned in the previous section on negative polarity verbs (section 4.3.4).

The change of meaning and distribution of *mruwwa* from Classical Arabic to the current Arabic dialects in Syria and Deir Ezzor is not unique. This meaning and usage are also found in Lebanese Arabic, from my own personal knowledge of the dialect. However, the term that is more common and unique to Lebanon is *jllādi* ‘patience’⁴⁶ which is also derived from Classical Arabic *jalad* ‘stamina, endurance’; *jllādi* shows the behaviour typical of an NPI; however, I am not in the position to discuss its distribution and behaviour with confidence.

After discussing the origins, usage, and semantic properties of these five minimisers, what remains is mentioning the contexts where they can be felicitous. They occur in many of the licensing contexts except for habitual clauses. The following are some examples of licensing in different contexts.

⁴⁶ For instance, the NPI *jllādi* is very common in Lebanese Arabic to the extent it has recently been used as the name for TV show *illak jllaadi?* ‘do you have any patience?’ by ‘Sout Beirut International’, a Lebanese broadcaster. Also, the Lebanese singer Jamal Manuel Serrano released a song in the summer of 2021 with the title *maa illi jllaadi* ‘I have no patience’.

(144) Superordinate negation

mā ʔazunn-u yəṭbaraʕ b-*qiriš* *məšdi*.
 NEG think.IMPF.1SG-3MSG donate.IMPF.3MSG in-penny rusty.MSG

‘I don’t think that he would donate a red cent.’

(145) Questions

min-u bēnāt-kum ill-u *mruwwa* yəštaḡil
 who-3MSG among-2MP POSS-3MSG patience work.IMPF.3MSG

w yəšāʕid-na.

CONJ help.IMPF.3MSG-1P

‘Seriously⁴⁷, who among you has any desire/willpower to work and support us?’

(146) Conditionals

law čān ʕind-i *wataka* bas, mā čān šift-ni
 CON AUX POSS-1SG straw only NEG AUX see.PRF.2MSG-1SG

hōn.

here

‘If I had something of any value, you would not have seen me here.’ (i.e., I will be anywhere else but here)

⁴⁷ There are two interrogative particles *lēš* ‘why’ and *min-u* ‘who-3MSG’. This structure seems to be restricted to expressing a rhetorical question. I used the word ‘seriously’ to convey the meaning of the sentence.

(147) Subjunctive

ʔašukk	inn-u	rāḥ	yəjēna	minn-u	<i>ḥiss</i>
doubt.IMPF.1SG	COMP-3MSG	FUT	get.IMPF.1P	from-3MSG	sound
bəs	yəsāfir.				
once	travel.IMPF.3MSG				

‘I doubt that we will receive any sound from him once he travels.’ = ‘I doubt he will be in touch in any way with us.’

4.3.5.2. Maximisers

The second group of idiomatic NPIs includes those denoting maximal elements; they denote a maximal limit, but this maximal limit interpretation is governed by negation. If there is no negation, there is no polarity interpretation or a maximal reading. Maximisers have not been reported in the literature on NPIs in Arabic; however, it is highlighted that such items are relatively common universally (Israel, 2011; von Bergen & von Bergen, 1993). Some prominent examples of maximisers in English are in italics in the following examples. They are ungrammatical in the absence of negation.

(148) A. She wouldn’t kiss him *for all the tea in China*.

B. *Wild horses* couldn’t keep me away.

C. We haven’t heard from you *in a coon’s age!* (Israel, 2011, pp. 95-96)

In the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, there are maximisers: *il-jinni il-ʔazraq* ‘the blue genie’ and *ʕumur*⁴⁸ ‘life, age’. Both are licensed by some of the NPI-licensing contexts where they have a figurative

⁴⁸ *ʕumur* has been discussed in some Arabic dialects. Some researchers would transliterate it without the final vowel, or with a geminate /m/ as *ʕummur*. These differences have no effect on its polarity status or semantic/pragmatic interpretation. In the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, the final vowel might be dropped when *ʕumur* carries some agreement affixes

meaning, as is the case in (149) and (150). They are permissible outside NPI-licensing contexts, but only in their literal meaning, as is the case in (151) and (152).

- (149) *il-jinni il-ʔazraq mā rāḥ yəḷāqi-h.*
 DEF-genie DEF-blue NEG AUX find.IMP.3MSG-3MSG

‘The blue genie will not find him!’

- (150) *sāmi ʕumr-u mā daras.*
 Sami age-3MSG NEG study.PRF.3MSG

‘Sami never studied at all.’

- (151) *ʔahmed ʕār ʕumr-u ʔalāʔin sana.*
 Ahmed AUX age-3MSG thirty year

‘Ahmed’s age has become thirty.’

- (152) *šāf il-jinni il-ʔazraq bi-l-manām.*
 see.PRF.3MSG DEF-genie DEF-blue in-DEF-dream

‘He saw the blue genie in a dream.’

The case of *il-jinni il-ʔazraq* is straightforward as the use of this noun phrase fulfils the same function as *wild horses* in English. Such idiomatic NPIs indicate a high degree on a particular scale, such as the scale of strength or capability. Their exclusive occurrence in negative and negative-like contexts strengthens the meaning of these contexts. To continue with the classification of Israel (2004, 2011), such maximisers can be classified as high scalar and emphatic.

As for the case of *ʕumūr*, it is worth noting that it has caused some difficulty for Arab linguists who tried to classify it. For instance, Benmamoun (2006) examined the behaviour of *ʕumūr* in Moroccan Arabic, which shows some similarity to its behaviour in some other Arabic dialects, including the Arabic of Deir Ezzor.

(153) *nādyā ʕəmmər-ha ma-ʒat* (Moroccan Arabic)

Nadia age-3FSG NEG-come.PRF.3FSG

‘Nadia never came.’ (Benmamoun, 2006, 144; glosses amended)

Benmamoun (2006) proposed that *ʕumūr* is a head NPI because it ‘can carry agreement with the subject and can host clitics’ (2006, p.144). Benmamoun, however, did not specify the type of this head. Soltan (2012) examined the behaviour of the same item in Cairene Egyptian Arabic, and he stated that it is derived from the noun *ʕumūr* ‘life, age’ (2012, p. 245), but he also refrained from specifying the type of this NPI. Alsarayreh (2012) proposed that *ʕumūr* is ‘a temporal indefinite adverb’ (2012, p.62). He proposed that this adverb is ‘etymologically derived from the homophonous noun *ʕumūr* which can literally translate as either “life” or “age” (2006, p.62).

I believe that NPI *ʕumūr* should be treated as an idiomatic NPI, not an adverb. First of all, it is not an adverb since adverbs in the dialects of Arabic are not known to carry agreement with the subject or host clitics. There are a few works on adverbs in Arabic. Often quoted works on adverbs in Arabic are those of Fassi Fehri (1997, 1998) (Cinque, 1999). Although Fassi Fehri (1997,1998) focused on the morphosyntactic aspect of adverbs in Arabic (in MSA), he never mentioned anything about adverbs carrying agreement markers. Furthermore, he underlined that ‘Arabic constituents which function as adverbs do not appear to have any specifics or underlying characteristics which would set them apart as a category’ (1998, p.11). This last

statement highlights that there might be difficulty in making a judgement whether a particular constituent is an adverb or not.

Second, treating *ʕumur* as an idiomatic NPI would resolve the puzzle of the agreement suffixes it hosts. *ʕumur* is a noun, which functions as an NPI and provides a maximal reading in NPI-licensing contexts. It is possible, of course, to say that *ʕumur* – or the phrase containing it, such as *bi-ʕumr-i* ‘in my life’ – has an adverbial function⁴⁹. This does not affect its classification as a maximiser NPI. In English, ‘*in days*’ and ‘*in a blue moon*’ are maximiser NPIs (Israel, 2011); they can clearly occupy adverbial positions in a sentence.

Third, there are similar maximisers in other languages. Classifying *ʕumur* as a maximiser would allow it to join that category and offer comparative insight into its behaviour. Israel (2001, p.313) cited some maximisers from French, which are discussed by Larrivé (1996); some of those French maximisers are: *pour tout l’or du monde* ‘for all the gold in the world’, *de memoire d’homme* ‘in living memory’, and *de (toute) sa vie* ‘in his (whole) life’. It is clear that there is a similarity in interpretation between the French *de (toute) sa vie* and Arabic *ʕumur*.

As for the interpretation and implicature of using *ʕumur* in an NPI licensing context, in DZA, *ʕumur* strengthens the interpretation of the sentence, especially in the presence of negation. In the case of questions or conditionals, the use of *ʕumur* adds a figurative touch. Questions containing *ʕumur* are more likely to be figurative rather than information-seeking, whereas conditionals containing *ʕumur* are more likely to indicate an irrealis rather than a realis situation. These points have not been highlighted or discussed adequately in the literature on *ʕumur* in Arabic dialects, such as Benmamoun’s work (2006) on Moroccan Arabic, Soltan (2012) on Egyptian Arabic, and Alqassas (2012, 2015) on Jordanian Arabic. For instance, Alqassas (2015)

⁴⁹ Here I follow Cinque’s (2004) distinction between adverbs which belong to the syntactic category Adv and can have the projection AdvP and adverbial XPs which can be from any syntactic category (PP, DP, AP, QP...ect.) and which can function as an adverbial (Cinque, 2004, p. 683).

Alrashdan, 2015; Alsarayreh, 2012), (Cairene) Egyptian Arabic (Soltan, 2012), and Moroccan Arabic (Benmamoun, 2006), negation in the presence of *ʕumur* is expressed by *mā* only. The presence of *-š* is forbidden, as can be seen in the ungrammaticality of (157.B).

(157) A. ʕumr-i mā-sāfir-t maṣr (Cairene Egyptian Arabic)
 age-1SG NEG-travel.PRF-1SG Egypt

‘I have never travelled to Egypt.’

B. *ʕumr-i mā-sāfir-t-i-š maṣr
 age-1SG NEG-travel.PRF-1SG-NEG Egypt

(Soltan, 2012, p.241; glosses amended)

Bipartite negation is not attested in DzA, and *ʕumur* has no obvious interaction with negation. A final comment on the maximisers is about their possible licensing contexts. They seem to have less distribution than the four minimisers discussed in the previous section. They are not licensed in *without*-clauses, *before*-clauses, or the subjunctive. The following are some examples of their felicitous occurrences.

(158) Questions

lēš *il-jinni* *il-ʔazraq* yəʕrif wīn-u?!
 why DEF-genie DEF-blue know.IMP.3MSG where-3msg

‘Does even the blue genie know where he is?’

(159) Adversative predicates

ʔašukk inn-u *b-ʕumr-u* rāḥ yəltazm
 doubt.IMP.1SG COMP.3MSG in-age-3MSG FUT commit.IMP.3MSG

b-kilmt-u.

by-word-3MSG

‘I doubt that he will ever be up to his word.’

(160) Conditionals

idā	ʔaḥmad	<i>b-ʕumr-u</i>	ʔaja	ʕa-l-muʕid,
CON	Ahmed	in-age-3MSG	come.PRF.3MSG	on-DEF-appointment
rāḥ	ʔaḥṭṭ-u		ʕala	rās-i.
FUT	place.IMPF.1SG-3MSG		on	head-1SG

‘If Ahmed ever came on time, I would put him on my head.’ = ‘show him the utmost respect.’

The previous examples, including those about the licensing of minimisers, show that idiomatic NPIs can occur in a range of different licensing contexts. The behaviour of minimisers and maximisers varies across languages. For instance, Giannakidou (2011) pointed out that minimisers in English seem to occur in a broad spectrum of licensing contexts, whereas minimisers in Modern Greek, Japanese, and Korean show a limited distribution and prefer antiveridical contexts, i.e., overt negation. The variation within the same language variety, as is the case with DzA is not unique. For instance, Camacho (2019) examined minimisers in Spanish and concluded that idiomatic NPIs show variation in respect of the possible licensing contexts. According to the data he discussed, there are weak idiomatic NPIs, which can be licensed in downward entailing contexts and even nonveridical contexts, and strong idiomatic NPIs, which cannot be licensed in nonveridical or downward-entailing contexts but only in anti-additive and antimorphic operators. These points regarding the variation in the behaviour of minimisers cross-linguistically, and within the same language, in some cases, suggest a

thorough examination of the behaviour of idiomatic NPIs is needed and that we should avoid any urge to lump them together, overlooking the minute differences of their licensing.

4.4. The Hierarchy of NPIs

The data in the previous section, 4.3, show that the NPIs in DzA belong to diverse syntactic categories. This is indeed the case in many other languages where this phenomenon has been thoroughly explored. Consequently, it would not be surprising to find that such a diverse set of items behave with slight differences when it comes to the contexts where their licensing conditions are met. On the other hand, there are differences between the licensing contexts of NPIs. Some of these licensing contexts are clearly non-negative; this is the case with questions and nonveridical contexts that ‘have zero negativity’ (Giannakidou & Zeijlstra, 2017, p.5).

There are also some differences within negative contexts. Adversative predicates, as has been pointed out above, are not as strong as clause-mate negation. Superordinate negation, especially in the case of transparent verbs, which allow *neg* raising, is not as strong as clause-mate negation. Jespersen (1917) was among the first linguists to discuss the difference in the strength of negative expressions; he differentiated between *not* and *never*, on the one hand, and *hardly* and *seldom*, on the other, describing the former as strong negative expressions and the latter as weak negative expressions (van der Wouden, 2002, p.28).

Despite these differences between NPIs and between licensing contexts, some consistency can be observed, which makes it possible to classify the different NPIs into groups based on the differences in their behaviour and their licensing contexts. One of the significant contributions to the research on NPIs was made by Zwarts (1998), who proposed a classification of NPIs based on the licensing requirements. He argued that three categories of NPIs can be identified in English and Dutch. He labelled them: weak, strong, and super-strong NPIs. Those are

respectively licensed by downward-entailing expressions (subliminal negation), anti-additive expressions (minimal negation), and anti-morphic expressions (classical negation).

Zwarts explained that if an NPI is licensed only by anti-morphic expressions, it is a superstrong NPI; if it is licensed by anti-additive expressions, it is a strong NPI; if it is licensed in downward entailing contexts, it is a weak NPI. According to Zwarts, the difference in the strength of NPIs is ‘a peculiarity which is intrinsic to the expressions in question and must therefore be accounted for in the lexicon’ (1998, p.189). Zwart’s work constitutes a model that has been followed by some researchers of NPIs (e.g., Giannakidou & Zeijlstra, 2017; van der Wouden, 2002). The following section is a preliminary attempt to use Zwart’s model in classifying NPIs in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor.

4.4.1. Examining the Strength of NPIs in Dza

One area that requires further work in the research of NPIs in Arabic dialects is the issue of the strength of NPIs. The progress in this area is still limited and unsystematic. This is unfortunate because the issue of the strength of NPIs was highlighted by Chris Lucas (2009, 2013) but has not been expanded by recent studies. Lucas’ approach is typological, and his focus has been on the development of negation and associated phenomena in Arabic and Afro-Asiatic languages. He observed that NPIs in Arabic differ in their distribution. In particular, he identified three distribution patterns for NPIs. He described *qaṭṭu* ‘(n)ever’, from Classical Arabic, as a strong NPI that seems to be restricted to negative sentences, as in (161). In contrast, *ʔaḥad* ‘anyone’ is permissible in other licensing contexts, as in (161); this makes it a weak NPI. Lucas (2009) reported that *ʔayy* is ‘the only other candidate for a (weak) NPI’ (Lucas, 2009, p. 201).

(161)	lam	yaʕud	qaṭṭu	(Classical Arabic)
	NEG.PAST	return.IMPF.3MSG	ever	
	‘He never returned.’		(Lucas, 2009, p. 197; glosses amended)	

(162) hal raʔayata ʔaḥad-an.

Q see.PRF.2MSG anyone-ACC

‘Did you see anyone?’ (Lucas, 2013, p.429; glosses amended)

Lucas identified a third item which is the adverb *baʕadu* ‘yet, still’; this item seems even weaker than *ʔaḥad* ‘anyone’ as it can appear in affirmative contexts. Lucas (2009, 2013) labelled this item a semi-NPI which is a term he borrowed from Hoeksema (1994) to refer to ‘items that may occur in veridical, upward-entailing contexts but which are more frequent in the context of negation’ (Lucas, 2009, p. 190). Although *baʕadu* seems to prefer occurring in the scope of negation, as in (163), it can still appear in affirmative contexts, as in (164).

(163) lam yaʔti baʕadu (Classical Arabic)

NEG come.IMPF.3MSG yet

‘He hasn’t come yet.’ (Lucas, 2013, p.429; glosses amended)

(164) huwa baʕadu ʕaḡīr

3MSG yet small.MSG

‘He’s still young.’

(Wehr, 1979 cited in Lucas, 2013, p.429; glosses amended)

The item *baʕadu* is not attested in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor neither as an NPI nor as a polarity-neutral item. However, it is found as *baʕad* in Syrian Arabic, as represented in the dialect spoken in Damascus. It is an NPI, and it shows similar distribution to what is described by Lucas (2009, 2013). One additional point that might be added is that *baʕad* is capable of hosting agreement suffixes, as can be seen in (165).

(165) *həba baʕad-ha zəʕlāni* (Personal knowledge of Syrian Arabic)

Heba yet-3FSG sad.3FSG

‘Heba is still sad.’

The Arabic of Deir Ezzor does not exhibit semi-NPIs that behave like *baʕad*; however, the crucial point here is that providing more details about the distribution of NPIs in a given variety of Arabic allows other researchers to draw comparisons and better understand the distribution of NPIs in the variety they are examining. However, the most recent studies on NPIs in Arabic have not made significant contributions. Albuarabi (2021) on Iraqi Arabic, Alqassas (2012, 2015, 2021), and Alsarayreh (2012) on Jordanian Arabic did not explore the minute differences in distribution between NPIs in the dialects they studied.

In his work on negative sensitivity in Jordanian Arabic, Alsarayreh (2012) differentiated between the licensing contexts for NCIs and NPIs, highlighting that NPIs have a wider distribution and are permissible in more licensing contexts. However, there is no discussion of the distribution differences among NPIs. The way Alsarayreh (2012) compared NCIs and NPIs (mainly on p.74) and his discussion of the nonveridicality approach to the licensing of NPIs clearly indicate that he presumed NPIs in Jordanian Arabia to be a homogenous group with no differences concerning their distribution.

One factor that might have discouraged researchers from attempting to classify NPIs in Arabic is that they identified only a few items. Studies into NPIs in Jordanian, Iraqi and Yemeni Arabic often list six NPIs only: the two negative indefinites, *hada* and *ši*, one or two determiners, *ʔayy*, sometimes in addition to *walaw*, the noun *ʕumur*, which is often labelled as an adverb, and the minimiser *ʕils ʔaḥmar*. Ahmed (2012), who examined negation and NPIs in some Arabic dialects in Yemen, listed only six NPIs and classified them into three groups: weak NPIs, *had*

‘anyone’ and *ši* ‘anything’, a strong NPI *šumr* ‘age, life’, and super-strong NPIs *šād* and *abadan/lašiq* ‘never’. However, her examination did not proceed beyond this point.

However, the data from DzA, which are provided in this chapter, demonstrate that NPIs vary significantly in their distribution. To the best of my knowledge, the following is the first attempt to provide a detailed classification of the licensing contexts of NPIs in a dialect of Arabic. I follow the method proposed by Zwarts (1998).

Zwarts (1998) explained that an antimorphic operator satisfies all four of De Morgan’s laws, listed in (166). An anti-additive operator satisfies only three (166.A, B & D). A monotone decreasing operator satisfies only two (166.A & D) (Zwarts, 1998; van der Wouden, 2002; Giannakidou & Zeijlstra, 2017).

(166) A. $f(X \cup Y) = f(X) \cap f(Y)$

B. $f(X) \cap f(Y) = f(X \cup Y)$

C. $f(X \cap Y) = f(X) \cup f(Y)$

D. $f(X) \cup f(Y) = f(X \cap Y)$

Sentential negation and *without* are examples of antimorphic operators. Negative quantifiers, such as *nobody* in English, are anti-additive. Restriction of universal quantifiers and too-phrases are examples of a monotone decreasing operator. Antimorphic operators are stronger than anti-additive operators, which are stronger than monotone decreasing operators. Nonveridical operators are the weakest (Giannakidou & Zeijlstra, 2017).

The previous table (3) summarises the interaction between NPIs and all the licensing contexts in DzA. Every effort has been made to make this table as accurate as possible, but there is still a need for more research and compiling more data. The table shows that *walaw* ‘even’ is the weakest NPI as it can be licensed by all licensing contexts, including habituais. *walaw* is the only NPI that was agreed on by speakers of the dialect to be acceptable in habituais. Other NPIs have proven to be controversial in this context. On the other extreme, the auxiliary *haggōt* is the strongest NPI as it is primarily licensed by clausemate negation. It can indeed be licensed in questions, but that usage is limited compared to its usage in negative contexts. We have explained how this item has lost many of its functions and meanings. This loss is an aspect of the grammaticalisation process. This raises the question about its future usage. Could it evolve into a discourse marker or maintain its current modal role? Further research is needed.

From table (3), we note that the nominals, the determiners, and the minimisers have the widest distribution as categories as they are licensed by almost all licensing contexts. They are followed by the maximisers, the lexical verbs, and the auxiliaries, which show less distribution, but some of them are still allowed in some of the nonveridical contexts.

One might expect that tracing the occurrence of NPIs in the various licensing context would produce clear and rigid patterns. This is not the case with this table. However, this should not be surprising. First of all, there is nothing in the literature on NPIs that says that all NPIs in a given language behave in the same manner or that NPIs of a particular group show consistency in their occurrence and licensing. For instance, it has been highlighted that certain NPIs have to occur in the immediate scope of negation even though they are fully capable of occurring in licensing contexts which are non-negative. Second, negative polarity is not a static phenomenon; it is dynamic.

Furthermore, while the studies on NPIs describe categories of NPIs that are more likely to occur in certain types of licensing contexts (antimorphic, anti-additive, downward entailing, nonveridical), there is nothing stated directly that any NPI of a given group should be felicitous in all the licensing contexts that share a particular classification. There is variation even within the same group, which can probably be explained by the semantic properties of the NPIs. The variation of NPIs within the same language and within the same group is another area for exploration.

4.5. Conclusion

The chapter described NPIs in DzA. It covered first the licensing contexts and mentioned in brief what has been discussed about them in recent research. Research on NPIs in Arabic tends to overlook the individual licensing contexts even though the exploration of each context could prove to be enlightening. The chapter discussed the possible links between comparative structures and the subjunctive. This discussion will be helpful in the following chapter. This chapter also listed the most extensive inventory of NPIs to be discussed in the research on Arabic dialects. It also explored the negative polarity auxiliaries and negative polarity lexical verbs. Both of them have never been discussed in Arabic.

The chapter discussed the semantics of negative lexical verbs and minimisers. It is a preliminary discussion, but it is an unexplored area in the research on NPIs in Arabic. Furthermore, the chapter discussed cases of grammaticalisation, most notably negative polarity lexical verbs and idiomatic NPIs. It discussed how the idiomatic NPI *mruwwa* ‘patience/willpower’ has acquired a meaning and usage that is different from its original meaning in Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic.

The chapter also discussed the behaviour of negative polarity determiners, *ʔayy*, *walaw*, and *ħət/ħatta*. It discussed their NPI behaviour and other possible non-polarity behaviour, such as

ʔayy functioning as an FCI and an interrogative particle, and *hatta* has a negative and a positive polarity use. Before the conclusion, a table containing all NPIs and their licensing contexts in DzA is presented and discussed. It sheds light on the differences in strength between NPIs. However, further research is needed. With the identification of more NPIs, the image could become clearer.

Chapter Five: The Licensing of Negative Polarity Items in the Dialect of Deir Ezzor

5.1. Introduction

This chapter studies the licensing of negative polarity items in the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor (DzA). The chapter critically reviews the most notable approaches to the licensing of NPIs. This offers us a chance to observe how the study of NPIs has affected and has been affected by developments in the different linguistic domains. This highlights the possible contributions of investigating the phenomenon of NPIs, and that the deeper the investigation, the more significant the possible gains. The validity of the different proposals is judged against the data from DzA. NPIs are an example of the phenomenon of ‘negative dependency’, which is defined as follows.

- (1) ‘A “negative dependency” is a relation that characterizes a linguistic expression α – the negative “dependent” – such that, in order for α to be “licensed,” the presence of negation is required in a clause or sentence. When negation is present, α must be in a particular structural relation to it’ (Ginnakidou & Zeijlstra, 2017, p.1).

However, it has been pointed out, in chapters one and four of this thesis, that NPIs can be licensed in a broad spectrum of contexts, and some of these contexts cannot be said to be negative. Consequently, the endeavour to explain the mechanism of negative dependency of NPIs, and their licensing involves two significant tasks. The first task is to find out what is in common between these licensing contexts, apart from licensing NPIs, i.e., what unifies them as one category. The second task is identifying the nature of the relationship between NPIs and their licensors. These two tasks attempt to answer the questions known as ‘the licensor question’ and ‘the licensing relation question’, respectively (Ladusaw, 1996).

In their endeavour to formulate an account of the licensing question, linguists have resorted to various linguistic disciplines. Each account formulates a set of conditions with the aim of

answering the licenser question and the licensing relation question. The early efforts sought pure syntactic restrictions; later, there were attempts that explored the possibilities of employing semantics and pragmatics. Eventually, syntactic approaches to studying NPIs employed some semantic notions, and the semantic approaches also employed some syntactic notions (Tovena, 2002). Those proposals were not without flaws. One persistent challenge was formulating a proposal that accounts for *all* and *only* the grammatical occurrences of NPIs. This means accounting for all NPIs without proposing an account that allows room for ungrammatical structures, or what is known as over-licensing. The nature of this challenge is demonstrated in the following sections.

This chapter surveys each of those approaches by providing a summary of the basic principles and then applying those approaches to the NPIs in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. The conclusion is that the nonveridicality approach provides more accurate results than previous approaches. The order of the following sections reflects, roughly, the chronological order of the proposals explaining the phenomenon of negative polarity items. The beginning is with section 5.2, which discusses the pure syntactic account that was dominant in the late 1960s, following the seminal work of Klima (1964). Section 5.3 moves to semantics to discuss the works of Ladusaw (1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1983, 1996) and the notion of downward entailment. Section 5.4 discusses Linebarger's (1980, 1987) two-part proposal, which employs syntax and pragmatics. Section 5.5 discusses another pure syntactic account, which is Progovac's (1994) binding proposal. Section 5.6 discusses in depth Giannakidou's (1994 and subsequent works) nonveridicality theory. Finally, section 5.6 provides the conclusion and summary of the chapter.

5.2. A Pure Syntactic Account: Scope of Negation at Surface Structure

Examining the development of the research into the phenomenon of NPIs since the 1960s sheds light on the development of syntactic theory in general. Researchers then were puzzled by the complementary distribution between *some* and *any* – which were later termed a PPI and an NPI,

respectively. The first proposal to account for the behaviour of *some* and *any* was couched within the assumptions of the early transformational grammar. That attempt was provided by the seminal work of Edward Klima (1964) on negation in English. Klima proposed a set of generative rules to account for negation and associated phenomena. One of these rules was called the ‘indefinite incorporation’ rule (1964, p.280)⁵⁰, which was intended to explain the distribution of indefinites, such as *some* and *any*. This rule, sometimes informally referred to as ‘some-any rule’ (Jackendoff, 1969, p.218), postulates that *some* and *any* are allomorphs of the same morpheme and that a morphological transformation, triggered by the presence of *neg*, produces *any* from *some*. Soon researchers (e.g. Lakoff, 1969) criticised this claim and pointed out that *some* and *any* are distinct items.

However, Klima’s proposal has important contributions. First, Klima described the *affective* category, which includes morphemes such as *neg* and others, that provides a trigger for NPIs. This *affective* category is responsible for the grammatical occurrence of *any*. Second, Klima formulated a structural condition on the relationship between the *affective* and *any*, which he called ‘in construction with’. While Klima’s overall proposal was soon criticised, this structural condition, roughly equivalent to c-command, would play a significant role in future research on NPIs.

While neither Klima nor the linguists criticising his proposal made their main primary goal to provide an account for the behaviour of NPIs, their discussions represented the first attempts to formulate such an account. The development in generative grammar, the version known as Extended Standard Theory, provided an important alternative to Klima’s proposal. The new

⁵⁰ In brief, Klima (1964) described two categories of morphemes: indeterminates and affectives. *Some* is an example of the former; *neg*, the degree modifier *too*, and *reluctant* are examples of the latter. When an indeterminate is ‘in construction with’ (the structural relation proposed by Klima) an *affective*, the indeterminate undergoes a morphological transformation into an indefinite form; the most famous example is the transformation of *some* into *any*.

proposal postulates that NPIs are licensed by virtue of being inside the scope of negation and that the licensing relation is held at the surface structure level of the sentence and not the deep syntactic structure.

5.2.1. Jackendoff (1969, 1971, 1972)

In the late 1960s, *Linguistics Wars* broke out, and one of the major debated questions was whether the meaning is determined at *deep* or *surface* structure; Ray Jackendoff was one of the pioneers of *interpretive semantics*, which posits that the semantic interpretation should take into consideration the surface structure (Harris, 1993). Jackendoff's (1969) examination of negation was meant to contribute to that debate where he scrutinised the array of transformation rules of interpreting negation proposed by Klima.

Jackendoff argued that while (2.A) and (2.B) have different deep structures and different meanings, according to Katz and Postal's (1964) Hypothesis, they have the same passivised form (2.C), which is synonymous only with (2.A)⁵¹.

- (2) A. Not many of the arrows hit the target
 B. Many of the arrows didn't hit the target
 C. The target wasn't hit by many of the arrows

(Jackendoff 1969, pp.223-224)

In order to find an alternative view of the interpretation of negation in a sentence, Jackendoff proposed that the assumptions that 'transformations do not change meaning' and 'all semantic information is represented in deep structure' (1969, p.228) should be given up in favour of embracing an approach that interprets negation and quantifiers according to their position in

⁵¹ Lasnik (1972, p.155) questioned this statement by stating that many speakers find (2.C) to be ambiguous with meanings similar to both (2.A) and (2.B).

the surface structure, i.e. after all transformations have taken place. Jackendoff's proposal was later referred to as 'Surface Interpretive Analysis' (Lasnik, 1972, p.151).

While Klima (1964) argued that *neg* is generated in the deep structure as a daughter to S, Jackendoff (1969) provided an alternative view and suggested that, by virtue of an interpretive rule of scope, *neg* is generated at the surface structure and then it is moved up the tree, by virtue of the same rule. This *raising* movement, while optional, is preferred, and it is responsible for interpreting the negation as sentence negation. However, this raising can be blocked if a quantifier is present and, in such a case, the negation will be interpreted as only negating the constituent where it is generated originally, e.g. as VP negation. Jackendoff (1969) explained that the raising rule applies to all logical elements, i.e., quantifiers and *neg*, but that only one logical element 'may occupy any given scope in the interpretation' and that the leftmost element will be moved first. Therefore, in (2.B), above, the presence of *many* in the subject position, i.e. in the leftmost position, blocks the movement of *neg* and reduces its interpretation to VP negation. The raising of *neg* is not blocked in (2.A).

Jackendoff presented an intuitive definition of the scope of negation 'as the part of the sentence which is interpreted as being denied' (1969, p. 229). This definition explains the difference between constituent negation and sentence negation based on the scope of negation, i.e., whether only a part of the sentence or the whole sentence is being negated.

- (3) A. The students didn't come to the lecture, neither did the lecturer.
 B. *Some of the students didn't come to the lecture, neither did the lecturer.

The *neither tag* is one of the diagnostics of sentence negation mentioned by Klima (1964). Since (3.B) is interpreted as VP negation and not as sentence negation, the *neither tag* is not acceptable. The difference between the narrow and wide scope of negation is that in the former only a particular number of constituents are included in the scope of negation, whereas in the

latter the whole sentence is included in the scope of negation (Brandtler, 2006). Jackendoff highlighted that the difference in the interpretation of negation, as wide or narrow scope⁵², is notable in the presence of a quantifier in the subject position.

To account for the patterns of distribution of *some* and *any*, Jackendoff proposed a lexicalist hypothesis that, following Chomsky (1968), does not depend on transformations but on lexical redundancy rules. Jackendoff (1969) posited that *some* and *any* are a lexical pair and the main difference between them is a feature $[\pm X]$ where *some* is $[+X]$, and *any* is $[-X]$; on the other hand, the article *a*, for instance, is unmarked. A semantic interpretation rule, proposed by Jackendoff, interprets the context or sentence and assigns a feature to the item in question; if the feature assigned by the rule is different from the inherent feature, the sentence will be anomalous, as is the case with (4.C).

- (4) A. John bought some candy.
 B. John didn't buy any halvah.
 C. *John bought any house.
 D. John bought a house.
 E. John didn't buy a monkey-wrench.

(Jackendoff 1969, p.232)

In his pursuit of highlighting the role of semantics, Jackendoff pointed out that there is a semantic difference when *a* occurs in a negated sentence or an affirmative one. Even though *a* is grammatical in both (4.D) and (4.E), its meaning is not the same where it has a specific reference in the former and a non-specific in the latter. This difference is captured by *a semantic redundancy rule*.

⁵² Jackendoff (1969) did not use the terms narrow and wide scope but used VP negation and sentence negation, respectively.

The notion of scope is not problematic in itself, where negation is considered ‘an operator’ and ‘the scope of an operator is that part of the [sentence] on which the operator performs its characteristic action’ (Szabolcsi, 2011, p.1605). However, a precise description of the structural relation between *neg* and the quantifiers in its scope needs to be stated. Jackendoff (1969) stated that the correct relation is not ‘command’, as defined by Langacker (1966)⁵³, but that of ‘in construction with’, which was already proposed by Klima (1964, p.297), which Jackendoff (1969, 218) phrased as:

- (5) A node *A* is in construction with a node *B* if and only if the node *C* directly dominating *B* also dominates *A*

However, this type of relation is not established in a sentence, such as (6), where *any* is not in construction with *neg* but commanded by it (Lasnik, 1972, pp.153-154).

- (6) No one smelled anything.

In later works, Jackendoff (1971, 1972) remained a strong advocate of meaning at surface structure and his lexicalist hypothesis, but, to account for cases like (6), he proposed a modified structural relation where the occurrence of *any* is licensed by virtue of being ‘to the right of and commanded by the negative morpheme’ (1971, p. 497). This is known as the *precede-and-command* relation.

5.2.2. Howard Lasnik (1972, 1975)

Howard Lasnik (1972, 1975) also contributed to the debate about the relation between deep and surface structure meanings; his discussion of negation was presented in the framework of ‘interpretive theory’, following the steps of Jackendoff (1969, 1972). Lasnik focused on the

⁵³ The notion of ‘command’: ‘A node *B* *commands* a node *A* if and only if the lowest *S* node dominating *B* also dominates *A*’ (Langacker, 1966, pp.174-175 cited in van der Wouden, 2002, p.84)

notion of the scope of negation and the interaction between this scope and quantifiers, quantificational adverbs, and motivational adverbials.

Lasnik acknowledged that there is no way to determine the scope of negation only on the basis of the deep structure and that the derived linear order is of relevance here (1975, p.285). Lasnik noted, for instance, that one of the effects of occurring in the scope of negation is for the quantifier to be marked as ‘non-referential’ and that the phrase containing it cannot function as a referring expression. The term *referential* means ‘having the linguistic form of a referring expression’ (Lasnik, 1975, p.288). Lasnik’s distinction between referential and non-referential is not different from Jackendoff’s distinction between specific and non-specific. The distinction or contrast between referential and non-referential was first proposed by Quine (1960); the same distinction was termed specific and non-specific by Baker (1966) and Fillmore (1967) (von Hesusinger 2002, p. 248). It happened that Jackendoff used the more modern terminology while Lasnik opted to use the older one.

Lasnik noted that some quantifiers are inherently referential, such as *some* and *several*, while others are inherently non-referential, such as *any*. Some other quantifiers, such as *many*, can have their referentiality feature changed. The scope of negation changes the referentiality feature of the quantifier and other logical elements. In contrast to its occurrence in (7.A), *many* in (8.A) is non-referential, i.e., it cannot make a specific reference, and, consequently, the quantified phrase headed by *many* cannot be expanded upon; compare (7.B) with (8.B). Furthermore, definite pronominalisation, which has ‘quite strict coreference restrictions’ (Carlson 1977, p.429), is not possible; compare (7.C) with (8.C).

- (7) A. Many students attended the seminar.
 B. Many students (namely, John, Bob, Louisa, etc.) attended the seminar.
 C. Many students attended the seminar. They found it useful.

- (8) A. Not many students attended that lecture
 B. *Not many students (namely, John, Bob, Louisa, etc.) attended the seminar.
 C. Not many students attended the seminar. *They found it useful.

However, since *some* and *several* are inherently non-referential, they cannot be in the scope of negation. This explains the ungrammaticality of (9).

- (9) *Not $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{several} \\ \text{some} \end{array} \right\}$ of the problems were solved. (Lasnik, 1975, p.281)

Noting that the scope of negation is not always symmetric, Lasnik tried to formulate some rules that describe when an element can be in the scope of negation. He proposed the ‘not scope rule’ (1975, p. 292), a feature-changing rule, which postulates that for a logical element to be in the scope of negation, *not* must either immediately precede it or at least precede it and command it and both the quantifier and *not* be in the same intonational phrase. The ‘not scope rule’ will mark those logical elements as +negated, and whatever is marked as +negated will be marked as –referential by virtue of a redundancy rule.

Since *any* is inherently non-referential, it must occur in a position that is in the scope of negation. Lasnik proposed that the primary function of the quantifier *any* might be ‘the resolution of potential scope ambiguities’ (1975, p.306). By postulating that *any* can be used to indicate the scope of negation, Lasnik highlighted the special relationship between *any* and negation, i.e., without a scope of negation, *any* will be ungrammatical.

- (10) *I spoke with anyone yesterday (Lasnik, 1975, p. 306)

One of the diagnostics Lasnik used to determine the possible scope of negation is checking whether *any* is allowed to occur in certain positions in a sentence, as in the examples below.

- (11) A. *Any of the problems weren’t solved
 B. *The man who didn’t eat dinner saw any people

C. *That John didn't leave surprised any people

(Lasnik 1975, p.282)

This discussion constituted one of the early attempts to describe the licensing requirements of *any* and NPIs at large.

5.2.3. Evaluation & Application on NPIs in DzA

Jackendoff (1971, 1972) and Lasnik (1972, 1975) posited that a quantifier, like *any*, is grammatical if it is preceded and commanded by negation. The validity of the notion of precede-and-command came under examination by Reinhart (1976). In her seminal study of anaphora and co-referentiality, she proposed two definitions: one is 'syntactic domain', and the other is 'c-constituent command'. The syntactic domain is defined as:

- (12) 'The domain of a node A consists of A together with all and only the nodes that A precedes and commands.'

(Reinhart, 1976, p.10)

- (13) 'Node A c(onstituent)-commands node B if neither A nor B dominates the other and the first branching node which dominates A dominates B.'

(Reinhart, 1976, p.32)

By taking Reinhart's notions into consideration, Jackendoff and Lasnik's licensing condition can be phrased as follows:

- (14) 'Any' (or NPIs) is licensed by virtue of being c-commanded by a negative marker.

This condition seems to account for some occurrences of NPIs in DzA, as is the case in (15). However, some NPIs in DzA can occur in a pre-verbal position which makes them outside the scope of negation, as is the case in (16).

- (15) mā ʔaja ʔaḥad ʕala il-imtiḥān.
 NEG come.PRF.3MSG anyone on DEF-exam

‘No one came for the exam.’

- (16) *il-jinni* *il-ʔazraq* mā rāḥ yəḷāqi-h
 DEF-genie DEF-blue NEG FUT find.IMP.3MSG–3MSG

‘The blue genie will not find him!’

NPIs can be licensed in the absence of a negative marker, as is the case with conditionals, questions, adversative predicates, and the licensing contexts discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, this proposal does not account for the differences in occurrence between some NPIs. The previous chapter highlighted that only *walaw* ‘even’ is felicitous in habituais and that not all NPIs can be licensed in the subjunctives. The modal auxiliary *haggōt* is even more strict about possible licensing contexts. The following section discusses one significant approach to the licensing of NPIs.

5.3. A Pure Semantic Account: Downward Entailment

The semantic approach to the study of NPIs originated in the works of William Ladusaw (1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1983, 1996), who formulated his approach by building on Baker’s (1970) notion of logical entailment and Fauconnier’s (1975a, 1975b, 1978) notion of pragmatic scales. Ladusaw proposed that NPIs are licensed in downward entailing contexts.

5.3.1. C. L. Baker’s Logical Entailment

Baker’s (1970) contribution to the study of polarity items was introducing the use of the notion of ‘logical entailment’ in the explanation of the licensing relation (1970, p.172). He formulated two principles to account for all grammatical occurrences of NPIs and PPIs. The first principle is straightforward:

- (17) 'An NPI is grammatical when it is within the scope of negation, and a PPI is grammatical elsewhere.'

(Baker, 1970, p. 179).

The grammatical occurrence of NPIs outside the scope of negation is what needs to be accounted for. He proposed that such an occurrence is grammatical if the proposition, which contains an NPI outside the scope of negation, entails another proposition where the NPI is indeed within the scope of negation. This constitutes his second principle which he formulated as follows:

- (18) 'Given semantic representations P_1 and P_2 satisfying the following conditions:

(A) $P_1 = X_1YZ_1$ and $P_2 = X_2YZ_2$ where Y is itself a well-formed semantic representation;

(B) P_1 entails P_2 ;

then the lexical representation appropriate to Y in P_2 is also appropriate to Y in P_1 .'

(Baker, 1970, p.179)

One advantage of 'Baker's conjecture', as called by Linebarger (1980, p.38), is that it explains the licensing of NPIs by predicates such as *disappointed*, *relieved*, *surprised*...etc.

- (19) We're surprised that anyone bought anything at all. (Baker, 1970, p.181)

The NPI *any* is grammatical in (19) since it entails something like 'we didn't expect that anyone would buy anything'. However, Linebarger argued that 'one might be surprised at S without ever having thought about the possibility of S' (1980, p. 41), i.e., there is no necessary logical entailment. This objection and the objections against licensing NPIs on account of being inside the scope of negation at surface structure meant further research is needed.

5.3.2. Gilles Fauconnier's Pragmatic Scales

Fauconnier's (1975a, 1975b, 1978) contribution introduced the pragmatic notion of 'scales' in an attempt to provide a definition for the licenser or the trigger of NPIs. Fauconnier (1975a, 1975b) pointed out the similarities of distribution between the NPI *any* and some quantifying superlatives, as is the case with:

- (20) A. John can lift the heaviest weight.
 B. *John can lift the lightest weight.
 C. John cannot lift the lightest weight.
 D. John cannot lift any weight. (Polarity "any")
 E. John can lift any weight. (Free choice "any")

According to Fauconnier, 'quantificational superlatives' correspond to ends of a scale; 'the lightest' and 'the heaviest' represent the two opposite ends of the same scale. Such superlatives are acceptable only in an affirmative or negative context but unacceptable in the other one (1975a, p.189). 'The heaviest' in (20.A) is acceptable in an affirmative context, but 'the lightest', the opposite end of the scale, is not acceptable; it is only acceptable in a negative context. Hence, the ungrammaticality of (20.B).

Fauconnier explained that the negation function is a 'scale reverser', licensing the occurrence of the superlative, as is the case in (20.C). Free choice 'any' and polarity 'any' represent two opposite ends of a scale. The occurrence of polarity 'any' is licensed by the 'scale reverser'. Fauconnier (1978) suggested that negation is not the only scale reverser and that other licensing contexts can also be categorised as scale reversers; that is to say, the sought-after semantic definition of *affective* is that of 'scale reverser' – which seems to be the property in common between negation and, for instance, adversative predicates, such as (21) and (22).

- (21) I doubt John can lift any weight.

(22) I am surprised John can lift any weight.

Ladusaw phrased Fauconnier's notion as follows:

(23) 'If ϕ entails ψ , the result of embedding ψ in an affective context will entail the result of embedding ϕ in that context.'

(Ladusaw, 1979b, p.461)

However, the major problem with Fauconnier's proposal is that it is based on finding a way to interpret a licensing context – such as (24) – as being an end of a scale, which is somehow an attempt to interpret it as negation.

(24) (very) few students have exerted *any* effort to read the assigned chapter before the lecture.

5.3.3. William A. Ladusaw's Downward Entailment

Ladusaw's proposal has been influential in the study of negative polarity items; various linguists, such as Hoeksema (1983, 1986), Israel (1996), and van der Wouden (2002), have built on his hypothesis. Ladusaw underlined the critical need to provide a definition of the semantic property of *affective*, which unifies various expressions beyond the fact of their capability of licensing NPIs, and, at the same time, provides a meaningful distinction between them and other contexts.

In (25), the only obvious thing in common between 'rarely', 'few', and 'only' is that they license NPIs even though they have nothing in common with overt negation, the prototypical licenser of NPIs; the technique of finding an allusion to negation does not provide an answer for the various licensing contexts.

(25) A. I rarely ever buy anything on Boxing Day.

B. Few people ever buy anything on Boxing Day.

C. Only Susan ever buys anything on Boxing Day.

This complexity is highlighted further in (26) and (27). To say that the NPI *ever* can be licensed by *no* and *every*, as is the case in (26.A) and (26.B), would lead to the wrong conclusion that (27.B) should also be grammatical as the licensing for *ever* should be provided by *every*; however, this is clearly not the case. Furthermore, it is not clear what type of structural relation binds the NPI and its licensor, since in (26.A) and (26.B) the NPI *ever* is c-commanded by *no* and *every*, respectively; however, in (27.A) the NPI *ever* is only commanded (and not c-commanded) by *no*⁵⁴; (27.A) is nonetheless grammatical.

(26)

- | | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| A. no student | } | who had ever read anything about phrenology attended the lecture. |
| B. every student | | |
| C. *some student | | |

(27)

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| A. no student | } | who attended the lectures had ever read anything about phrenology. |
| B. *every student | | |
| C. *some student | | |

(Ladusaw, 1979b, pp.459-460)

Ladusaw used the examples above to highlight the need for a different account of the licensing feature and a different definition of scope. To achieve this, he resorted to the notion of entailment and asserted the principal thesis of Baker that ‘a complete theory of polarity

⁵⁴ The notion of command refers to the proposal of Ray Jackendoff (1969), discussed in section 5.2.1 of this chapter. Jackendoff (1969) proposed that negation and quantifiers should be interpreted according to their position in the surface structure, and not the deep structure. However, suggesting that this proposal is what makes (27.A) grammatical means that (27.B) should be grammatical as well. This is of course wrong.

sensitivity must consider the entailments of sentences' (Ladusaw, 1979a, pp.131-132). Ladusaw noted that entailment could take place in two directions: from subsets to supersets and from supersets to subsets; for instance, 'father' is a subset of the superset 'man'. Ladusaw referred to these directions as 'upward entailment' and 'downward entailment', respectively (Ladusaw, 1979b, p.461). 'Not is downward-entailing' (Ladusaw, 1979a, p.113), as can be seen in (28.B).

- (28) A. John is a father \vdash John is a man (Upward entailment)
 B. John isn't a man \vdash John isn't a father (Downward entailment)
 C. man walks slowly \vdash man walks (Downward entailment)
- (29) A. no men walk \vdash no fathers walk (Downward entailment)
 B. every man walks \vdash every father walks (Downward entailment)
 C. some father walks \vdash some man walks (Upward entailment)

(Ladusaw, 1979b, p. 462)

This shows that *some* is an upward-entailing determiner, while *no* and *every* are downward-entailing (Ladusaw, 1979a, p.115). This explains why the NPI is not grammatical in both (26.C) and (27.C), above. Downward entailment is also possible in the scope of some other licensing contexts, such as *some adverbs* in (30.A), *too* (adjective modifier) in (30.B), *be surprised* in (30.C), and verbs such as *fail*, in (30.D); those seem to allow downward entailment from the superset 'book' to the subset 'novel'.

- (30) A. Jamal rarely reads books. \vdash Jamal rarely reads novels.
 B. Jamal is too lazy to read a book. \vdash Jamal is too lazy to read a novel.

C. Susan was surprised Jamal read a book. \vdash Susan was surprised Jamal read a novel.

D. Jamal failed to find a book. \vdash Jamal failed to find a novel.

This motivated Ladusaw to propose the following unifying definition of the licensing contexts:

(31) ‘An expression is *affective* iff it licenses inferences in its scope from supersets to subsets.’

(Ladusaw, 1979b, p. 463)

The examples above show that the licensing is not the result of a particular feature of a particular morpheme, as was suggested originally by Klima (1964). Ladusaw explained that the contributions of lexical items are determined by functions assigned to them. The function that is responsible for allowing the licensing is a ‘monotone decreasing’ function. To the best of my knowledge, it was the mathematician and logician Barwise (1978) who first described the notion of monotone increasing quantifiers and defined them as follows:

(32) A quantifier Qx is monotone (increasing) if it satisfies the condition: for all unary predicates A, B with $A \subseteq B$,

$$QxA(x) \text{ implies } QxB(x)$$

(Banwise, 1978, p.2)

Based on this definition, Ladusaw formulated the definition of *affective* as follows:

(33) An expression δ is *downward-entailing (affective)* iff its denotation δ' is a monotone decreasing function.

$$\delta' \text{ is monotone decreasing } \text{ iff } \forall X \forall Y \square [[X \subseteq Y] \rightarrow [\delta'(Y) \{ \sqsubseteq \} \delta'(X)]]$$

(Ladusaw, 1979b, 467)

Finally, the licensing account is formulated as follows:

- (34) ‘For any two expressions α and β , constituents of a sentence ϕ , α is in the scope of β with respect to an interpretation of ϕ , ϕ' iff the interpretation of α is used in the formulation of the argument to β 's interpretation in ϕ' .’

(Ladusaw, 1970b, p.467)

As for generalised quantifiers, the licensing is established independently for each argument. This explains the behaviour of *every*; while *no* allows downward entailment for the denotations of both of its arguments, *every* allows downward entailment of the NP it heads, i.e., the first argument, but allows upward entailment in the VP, i.e., the second argument. *Some*, on the other hand, does not allow downward entailment in either of its two arguments (von Stechow, 1999).

- (35) A. Some (friend of mine who has **ever* been to Egypt) (took **any* picture there)
- B. No (friend of mine who has *ever* been to Egypt) (took *any* picture there)
- C. Every (friend of mine who has *ever* been to Egypt) (took **any* picture there)

Ladusaw provided a semantic content to the abstract notion of *affective*, which was proposed earlier by Klima (1964) (Tovena, 2002). Ladusaw did not refuse Fauconnier's notion of scale reverser; he argued that ‘a scale reverser is a semantic context which has the effect of licensing downward inferences’ (1979a, p.112). That is to say, Ladusaw's proposal is more inclusive as it also accounts for the cases where an NPI is licensed in a context that seems to represent a low end of a scale, but not exactly an extremity or a minimum of a scale.

5.3.4. Evaluation & Application on NPIs in DzA

Ladusaw's pure semantic approach provides a definition that is broader than the previous syntactic accounts as it accounts for licensing in cases where there is no overt negation. His

proposal would explain the grammatical occurrence of NPIs in DzA in some contexts that are not negative in any way, as is the case with the restriction of the universal quantifier *kull* ‘every’. In (36), *ḥada* is clearly in the first argument of *kull* ‘every’, which is a downward-entailing environment.

(36)	kull	šurṭi	ḍarab	<i>ḥada</i>	rāḥ	yuṣāqab.
	QUAN	policeman	hit.PRF.3MSG	anyone	FUT	punish.IMP.F.3MSG

‘Every policeman who hit anyone will be punished.’

There is a significant problem with the downward entailment approach. It was proposed to unify a broad spectrum of licensing contexts. However, it still does not account for all the possible licensing contexts in DzA. For instance, the subjunctive, habituals, and interrogatives do not create downward-entailing environments (Giannakidou, 2011). The subjunctive and habituals allow the licensing of some NPIs in DzA, as shown in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, whether conditionals constitute downward environments has been a subject of heated debate. For instance, Heim (1984) argued that conditionals are not monotone, and, consequently, cannot constitute upward or downward-entailing environments. The second problem is that Ladusaw’s proposal does not describe any constraint on the relation between the NPI and the licenser. This means the search for a licensing proposal continues.

5.4. Incorporating Syntax and Pragmatics

In the Revised Extended Standard Theory (REST), the locus of interpretation was taken to be at the surface structure. However, in the late 1970s, researchers argued against this claim. The newer Government and Binding theory, which started to emerge gradually in the early 1980s, proposed that Logical Form (LF) is ‘the level of linguistic representation at which all grammatical structure relevant to semantic interpretation is provided’ (Hornstein, 1995, p.3). This line of thinking also emerged in the works of Marcia Linebarger (1980), who underlined

that the syntactic condition on the licensing of NPIs is not stated on the surface structure but on LF. Consequently, Linebarger underlined that NPIs ‘provide empirical evidence about the existence and syntax of LF, a level of linguistic representation at which the logical structure is represented and which is the interface between sentence grammar and semantics’ (Linebarger, 1980, p.2).

5.4.1. Linebarger’s Two-Part Proposal

Linebarger built on the work of Baker (1970) and expanded it in an attempt to provide the sought-after solution for the licensing problem. Her endeavours also aimed at arguing in favour of the existence of the LF, which is the grammar-semantics interface. She employed syntax and pragmatics in formulating a two-part proposal for the licensing problem. Her proposal is based on two notions: *the immediate scope constraint* (ISC) and the *negative implicatum* (NI). In essence, these are refinements of Baker’s (1970) conjecture.

Linebarger argued that the licensing relationship between the negative operator and NPIs takes place on the LF. This contradicts the proposals offered by Jackendoff and Lasnik, which are summarised in the previous section. The difference between S-structure (SS) and the Logical Form (LF) in respect of scope is highlighted by the sentences in (37); sentences similar to (37.A) are noted for their scope ambiguity, which leads to two possible interpretations, and both are grammatical. Both interpretations (37.B) and (37.C) are acceptable to native speakers, and the only way to have two different interpretations of the same (SS) is by having two different (LFs) (Linebarger, 1987, p.333). The two LFs of (37.B) and (37.C) are (37.D) and (37.E), respectively.

(37) A. John does not beat his wife because he loves her.

B. Wide scope reading: John’s love for his wife is not the cause of his beating of his wife.

C. Narrow scope reading: there is a causal relation between John's love for his wife and his not beating her.

D. NOT CAUSE (he loves her, John beats his wife)

E. CAUSE (he loves her, Not[John beats his wife])

Linebarger (1981, 1987) used the evidence of the role of LF to formulate her two-part proposal for the licensing of NPIs. The sentence (38.A) is parallel to (37.A); however, it can only have one grammatical interpretation that is (38.C), which can be represented as (38.E). The other scope interpretation in (38.B), represented in (38.E), is not grammatical.

(38) A. He didn't budge an inch because he was pushed.

B. *Wide scope reading: his moving was not caused by his being pushed.

C. Narrow scope: his not moving was caused by his being pushed.

D. *NOT CAUSE (he budges an inch, he was pushed)

E. CAUSE (he was pushed, Not[he budges an inch])

(Linebarger, 1987, pp.337-338)

In (37.B) and (38.B), the *because* clause is negated, while in (37.C) and (38.C) the *because* clause is not negated. The interpretations of sentences such as (37.A) and (38.A) can be represented as in (39) where S1 is the *because* clause and S2 is the matrix clause.

(39) A. NOT CAUSE (S1, S2)

B. CAUSE (S1, NOT S2)

Linebarger argued that the grammaticality of only sentence (38.C) can only be explained by the requirement of the NPI *budge an inch* to be as close as possible to the sentential negation.

This requirement is met in the representation (39.B). However, in the representation (39.A), the NPI *budge an inch* is ‘semantically distanced’ (Linebarger, 1980, p.45) by the predicate CAUSE from NOT even though the NPI *budge and inch* and NOT are adjacent on the surface structure. Such examples also prove that the relationship between the NPI and NOT on the surface structure is not adequate to establish the licensing relation. Linebarger (1980) described this observation as follows:

- (40) ‘An NPI is acceptable in a sentence S only if in the logical form of S the representation of the NPI occurs only in the proposition over which NOT most immediately has scope.’

(Linebarger, 1980, p.46)

This leads to formulating the syntactic part of Linebarger’s licensing proposal:

- (41) ‘PART (A): THE IMMEDIATE SCOPE CONSTRAINT (ISC)

A negative polarity item is acceptable in a sentence S if in the logical form of S the subformula representing the NPI is in the immediate scope of the operator NOT. An item is in the immediate scope of NOT if (1) it occurs only in the proposition which is the entire scope of NOT, and (2) within this proposition there are no logical elements intervening between it and NOT. “Logical elements” are defined here as elements capable of entering into scope ambiguities; that is, the occurrence of the surface realization of n logical elements in a sentence S results in the association of S with up to n! logical forms expressing the possible and acceptable orderings of these elements.’

(Linebarger, 1980, p. 49)

While the *immediate scope constraint* (ISC) provides a compelling account, it is too strict and leaves many grammatical occurrences of NPIs unexplained. Such cases need rescuing. To account for the grammatical occurrence of NPIs in such sentences, Linebarger reformulated

Baker's (1970) second condition, which is stated in (18) above. Linebarger labelled her version of Baker's (1970) condition *the negative implicatum* (NI), which she defined as follows:

(42) (i) **Expectation of negative implicatum is itself a conventional implicature.** A negative polarity item contributes to a sentence *S* expressing a proposition *P* the conventional implicature that the following two conditions are satisfied.

(ii) **Availability of negative implicatum.** There is some proposition NI (which may be identical to *P*) which is implicated or entailed by *S* and which is part of what the speaker is attempting to convey in uttering *S*. In the LF of some sentence *S'* expressing NI, the lexical representation of the NPI occurs in the immediate scope of negation. In the event that *S* is distinct from *S'*, we may say that in uttering *S* the speaker is making an allusion to *S'*.

(iii) **NI strengthens *P*.** the truth of NI, in the context of the utterance, virtually guarantees the truth of *P*.

(Linebarger, 1987, p. 346)

The NI part of Linebarger's proposal (1980, 1987) accounts for cases that Ladusaw's (1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1983, 1996) downward entailment cannot, such as the licensing of NPIs in conditionals. For instance, it has been mentioned in the previous chapter, section 4.2.7, that conditionals constitute a complicated challenge for Ladusaw's account (Krifka, 1994; von Stechow, 1999). It is difficult to find a way to make inferences from subsets to supersets in conditionals, and the following examples show that not all conditionals allow NPIs.

(43) If you *give a damn* about this marriage, do something to save it.

(44) If you don't do something to save this marriage, then you don't *give a damn* about it.

(45) *If you think Susan had *any* fun, you should have seen Layla.

It is clear that the conditional (43) allows the contrapositive entailment in (44). This means the NPI *give a damn* in (43) is licensed because the NI condition is met, and there is a conversationally relevant entailment, such as (44), where the NPI is in the immediate scope of negation. However, (45) is ungrammatical because there is no entailment which meets the NI condition.

5.4.2. Evaluation & Application on NPIs in Dza

Linebarger's account (1980, 1987) can be simplified as follows. The occurrence of an NPI in a sentence *S* can be licensed if either (1) the NPI in *S* is in the immediate scope of negation at LF or (2) the sentence *S* implicates a proposition (NI) where the NPI can be in the immediate scope of negation. This proposal has been a significant step in the study of the licensing of NPIs. It highlighted the importance of resorting again to syntax and the need for a rescuing strategy to account for cases that do not meet the syntactic requirement.

However, Linebarger's account (1980, 1987) is not without flaws. On the one hand, the NI part of her proposal has proved to allow over-licensing, i.e., allowing erroneous licensing of NPIs (Kadmon & Landman, 1993). For instance, (46.A) is clearly ungrammatical; however, according to the NI condition, it should be grammatical because of the availability of (46.B), which is a relevant entailment where the NPI *anything* is licensed by virtue of meeting the ISC condition.

(46) A. *Even Susan drank *anything* at the party.

B. Susan drank something at the party, although she was the most likely person not to drink *anything*.

On the other hand, there are cases where it is unclear how Linebarger's NI condition can be established. This is the case of licensing NPIs in the subjunctive and habituais in Dza.

(47)	kull	yōm	sāmi	yəmši	<i>walaw</i>	ʕašir	daqāyiq
	QUAN	day	Sami	walk.IMPF.3MSG	DET	ten	minutes

‘Every day Sami walks at least ten minutes.’

In her later works, Linebarger (1991) admitted that the NI condition is prone to over-license. This has encouraged further research into the licensing question. The following major proposal aimed at offering a pure syntactic account. It is discussed in the following section.

5.5. A Return to Pure Syntax: Licensing as a Binding Relation

The debate in the 1970s and 1980s about the licensing of NPIs was marked by a shift from the sole dependence on syntax in two directions: one towards incorporating pragmatics, as in the works of Barker (1970) and Linebarger (1980, 1987), and one towards marginalising syntax in favour of depending on a pure semantic account, as was proposed by Ladusaw (1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1983, 1996). In the 1990s, the development in syntactic theory encouraged a return to a pure syntactic account. The prominent proposal was that of Ljiliana Progovac (1994), who employed the principles of the Binding Theory to account for the licensing of NPIs.

5.5.1. Progovac’s Proposal

Progovac (1994) examined NPIs in Serbo-Croatian and argued that they are anaphoric and are of two main types regarding the relationship with their licensers. After widening the scope of her examination to include studying the occurrences of pronouns and reflexives in English, Serbian-Croatian, Russian, and Chinese, Progovac (1994) argued that the principles accounting for the occurrence of pronouns and reflexives could also account for the licensing of NPIs and PPIs. Consequently, she proposed the following to account for the near complimentary distribution of NPIs and PPIs:

- (48) NPIs are subject to Principle A of the Binding Theory: they must be bound to negation (or other truth-functional operator) in their governing category.

- (49) PPIs are subject to Principle B of the Binding Theory: they must not be bound to negation (or a truth-functional operator) in their governing category.

(Progovac, 1994, pp.6-7)

As for NPIs, Progovac described the governing category to which they should be bound as ‘the first maximal projection containing the NPI and its first potential antecedent’ (1994, p.82). The potential antecedent can either be negation in the *Infl* or a null (empty) polarity operator (Op) in *Comp* (Progovac, 1994, p. 2). In the case of English, Progovac argued that NPIs can be classified according to their possible licensers into two categories. She labelled the first category strict NPIs, which includes NPIs that can only be licensed by clausemate negation. The representative of this category, which Progovac (1994) frequently referred to, is *until* in English. The second category of NPIs is labelled non-strict as they can be licensed by superordinate negation, clausemate negation, and some other non-negative contexts. The prototypical example is *any* in English. According to Progovac, *any*, unlike *until*, can be licensed at long-distance because it can be bound to its licensers even across clauses (1994, p. 55).

To account for long-distance, Progovac argued that some NPIs, such as *any* and QPs, can be licensed by means of a raising option at the Logical Form level to allow the NPIs to be bound to the licenser. This raising and binding may happen in one of two possibilities. Sentence (50.A) represents the first raising possibility, where the NPI is raised to be bound to the negative licenser at IP. The LF of (50.A) is indicated in (50.B).

- (50) A. Mary does not claim that John hurt *anyone*.

B. Mary did not claim [_{CP} *anyone*_i [_{C'} that]_{IP} John hurt t_i]]

(Progovac, 1994, p.82)

Sentence (51.A) is an example of the second possibility where the NPI is raised to occupy the Spec position in the CP in order to be bound to a null operator, which Progovac described as a *null polarity operator* (Progovac, 1994, p. 66). The LF representation of (51.A) is indicated in (51.B).

(51) A. Did John hurt *anyone*?

B. [CP Op has [IP *anyone*_i [IP John hurt t_i]]]

(Progovac, 1994, p.82)

Progovac described the *null polarity operator* as present in questions, conditionals, and non-negative contexts. What these contexts have in common, according to Progovac, is that their truth value is unfixed (1994, p.67). However, Progovac underlined that the raising option might be obstructed when the movement is prohibited by some island constraints. This island-sensitivity accounts for the ungrammaticality of the following sentence.

(52) *I did not make a pie after I received anyone.

(Horn and Lee, 1995, p. 414)

Progovac's proposal looks promising and appealing to those looking for a pure syntactic account to avoid resorting to pragmatics, which could lead to over-licensing, as has been shown in the criticism against the proposals of Baker (1970) and Linebarger (1980, 1987). The following section evaluates Progovac's proposal and tests against data from DZA.

5.5.2. Evaluation & Application on NPIs in DZA

There are theoretical and empirical objections to Progovac's (1994) proposal. The main theoretical objection to Progovac's proposal is related to the assumption that some NPIs are licensed by being raised. There is no explanation why some NPIs can be raised to IP while some other NPIs need to be raised to CP (Horn and Lee, 1995). This objection becomes stronger

if Progovac’s proposal is to be tested against data from other languages. Progovac admitted that it is difficult to propose a unified proposal that is applicable to all languages (Progovac, 1994, p. 85). Furthermore, Progovac’s claim that *until* in English cannot be licensed by superordinate negation has been challenged, as shown in the grammaticality of the following sentence.

(53) I don’t think John will leave **until** tomorrow. (Horn and Lee, 1995, 413)

In addition to these points, data from DZA constitute further challenges to Progovac’s binding proposal. On the one hand, her account does not cover the subjunctive or habituais, which would leave a sentence such as (54) unaccounted for.

(54) ?ahmad yətmanna laylā *təʃfiq* il-ğurba
 Ahmed wish.IMPF.3MSG Layla brook.IMPF.3FSG DEF-alienation

‘Ahmed wishes Layla could stand living away from home.’

On the other hand, Progovac’s proposal that only quantifiers can be raised would lead to the false conclusion that some NPIs, such as idiomatic NPIs or some verbs, can be raised and consequently cannot be licensed by superordinate negation. This would judge (55) and (56) as ungrammatical.

(55) mā ?azunn sāmi rāḥ yəʃtʃī-nā *qiriš məʃdi*
 NEG think.IMPF.1SG Sami FUT give.IMPF.3MSG-1P penny rusty.MSG

‘I don’t think Sami will give us a rusty penny.’

(56) mā ?əʃtəqid layla rāḥ *təʃabbir* ?ahmad.
 NEG think.IMPF.1SG Layla FUT notice.IMPF.3FSG Ahmed

‘I don’t think Layla will give attention to Ahmed.’

This discussion makes it clear that the binding proposal offered by Progovac (1994) is not adequate to provide a solution for the licensing question.

5.6. Incorporating Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics: Nonveridicality

It has become apparent now that an important challenge to the many licensing proposals is that they fail to identify a feature that can unify the wide range of licensing contexts of NPIs, without allowing over-licensing. This weakness of the previous licensing proposals is more significant when they face cross-linguistic data, especially in languages that allow NPI licensing in contexts, such as subjunctive clauses and habituals. Anastasia Giannakidou started from this last point and focused her examination on the behaviour of NPIs in the subjunctive and habituals in Modern Greek in order to formulate a more comprehensive account of the licensing.

5.6.1. Giannakidou's Proposals

One critical inadequacy of Linebarger's (1980, 1987) two-part proposal, which combines syntax and pragmatics, and Progovac's (1994) binding proposal is that they do not offer a clear definition of the feature that unifies licensing contexts. This encouraged some researchers, such as Kadmon and Landman (1993), Krifka (1995), and von Stechow (1999), to continue embracing Ladusaw's downward entailment proposal and highlight further aspects of the semantics of NPIs.

This led Anastasia Giannakidou, in her early works (Giannakidou, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2001), to focus on criticising the downward entailment proposal, especially its inability to account for the licensing of NPIs in the subjunctive and habituals. Giannakidou (1994, 1995, 1997) highlighted that NPIs in Modern Greek, such as *kanénas* 'anyone', are grammatical in a wide range of contexts, such as subjunctive clauses (57), imperatives (58), habitual clauses (59), and even in the scope of some modal verbs (60).

- (57) kánis sa na íse **kanéna** **korítsi** 18 xronón
do-PRES-2SG as-if be-PRES-2SG any girl 18 years

‘You behave as if you are some 18-year-old girl.’

- (58) rótise **kanénan** idikó
ask-you-IMP any specialist

‘Ask a specialist.’

- (59) mas stélni pu ke pu **kanénas** gráma
us send.3SG where and where any letter

‘He sends us a letter every now and then.’

- (60) prépi na ton dhi **kanénas** **jatrós**
must.3SG SBJV him see any doctor

‘A doctor must see him.’

(Modern Greek; Giannakidou, 1995, p.95)

In Modern Greek, NPIs such as *kanénas* are only banned from indicative clauses and the complements of epistemic and factive verbs (Giannakidou, 1994, 1995, 1997, 2011). These two sets of contexts (i.e., those licensing NPIs and those banning NPIs) cannot be differentiated by suggesting that only the contexts of the former set, and not the latter, share some sort of a monotone decreasing function, as defined by Ladusaw in (33) above. Consequently, the first set of contexts, which allow NPIs, do not allow downward entailing inferences and the function or operator they contain is of a different nature.

Giannakidou (1995, 1997) expanded her investigation of the behaviour of NPIs from Modern Greek to Romanian, where she found similar patterns. Based on further examination of the differences between subjunctive clauses and similar contexts, on the one hand, and indicative clauses and complements of certain verbs, on the other hand, Giannakidou (1994, 1995, 1997, 1998) argued that the first set shares the property of being nonveridical. In contrast, the second set shares the property of being veridical. The term *veridicality* comes from the realm of philosophy, and it is related to meanings of truth or, in some cases, existence (Giannakidou, 1995, 1997, 2011). It was first used in the field of linguistics by Montague (1969) to express meanings related to existence; Zwarts (1995) expanded Montague's use of veridicality by linking it to truth entailment; Zwarts offered the following definition of a veridical operator:

- (61) Let O be a monadic sentential operator. O is said to be *veridical* just in case $Op \Rightarrow p$ is logically valid. If O is not veridical, then O is nonveridical. A nonveridical operator O is called *antiveridical* iff $Op \Rightarrow \sim p$ is logically valid.

(Zwarts, 1995, p. 287)

In simple linguistic terms, a veridical sentence is one which expresses or asserts a person's certainty or commitment to truth. In contrast, a nonveridical sentence is one which expresses uncertainty or lack of commitment (Giannakidou, 2011). This link between NPIs' licensing contexts and truth values was mentioned in passing by Progovac (1994), who suggested that the null polarity operator in her binding proposal is available in non-negative contexts, such as conditionals, because their truth value is unfixed (1994, p.67). However, Progovac did not elaborate further on this point. The works of Zwarts (1995) and Giannakidou (1995, 1997, 1998, 2001) aimed to shed more light on this property, which is shared by all the licensing contexts. Just like Ladusaw (1979a, 1979b) proposed that the downward entailment of a particular context is the result of a monotone decreasing function, Giannakidou states the following:

- (62) The (non)veridicality of a sentence is a result of a function F which is embedded in that sentence. If Fp – where p is an arbitrary proposition – entails or presupposes p to be true, then F is veridical. If Fp does not entail or presuppose p to be true, then F is nonveridical. Furthermore, if nonveridical Fp entails ‘not p ’, then F is anti-veridical⁵⁵.

(Giannakidou 2011, p.1676)

The beauty of the works of Zwarts (1995) and Giannakidou (1995, 1997, 1998, 2001) is that it describes negation, which is prototypically anti-veridical, as a subset of nonveridical operators. To clarify, if we take the proposition p =‘Mary saw Dua Lipa’, we can classify the following contexts into veridical, nonveridical, and anti-veridical.

- (63)
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>A. ‘Yesterday Mary saw Dua Lipa’</p> <p>B. ‘Mary says she saw Dua Lipa.’</p> <p>C. ‘Mary thinks she saw Dua Lipa.’</p> | } | are veridical because they entail p |
| <p>D. ‘Mary may have seen Dua Lipa.’</p> <p>E. ‘Did Mary see Dua Lipa?’</p> <p>F. ‘If Mary sees Dua Lipa’</p> <p>G. ‘Mary wishes she saw Dua Lipa.’</p> | } | are nonveridical as they do not entail p |
| <p>H. ‘Mary did not see Dua Lipa’</p> | } | is anti-veridical because it entails ‘not p ’ |

Based on these observations, Giannakidou (2011) proposed ‘the nonveridicality theory of polarity’, which covers the licensing property of NPIs, and their variation in the distribution of NPIs.

⁵⁵ Giannakidou (1998) and earlier works used the term ‘averidical’.

(64) The Licensing Property of NPIs

NPIs appear in nonveridical contexts. Nonveridical contexts include modal, intensional, generic, downward entailing contexts, disjuncts, and non-assertive contexts (questions, imperatives, and the protasis of conditionals).

(Giannakidou, 2011, p.1679)

Giannakidou explained that the licensing of NPIs ‘happens at the scope of an operator that has the licensing property’ (2011, p.1679); she underlined that the ‘licensing translates into a scope condition in syntax’ and this syntactic licensing happens at the LF level, or at the surface structure, for some NPIs (Giannakidou, 2006b, p. 592). Based on the licensing property described in (64) above, the unacceptability of NPIs in affirmative contexts is explained by the veridical nature of these contexts. According to Giannakidou, NPIs’ requirement to be in a nonveridical context accounts for the grammaticality of sentences in (65) and the ungrammaticality of sentences in (66). The verbs in (66) are epistemic and factive; this makes them veridical. In contrast, the verbs in (65) are nonveridical as they do not indicate a commitment to the truth of the embedded proposition (Giannakidou, 1998, 2011).

(65) A. John would like to invite **any** student.

B. John asked us to invite **any** student.

C. John is willing to invite **any** student.

D. I insist that you allow **anyone** in.

(66) A. *John believes that we invited **any** student.

B. *John dreamt that we invited **any** student. (Giannakidou, 2011, p. 1678)

The notion of nonveridicality unifies the broad spectrum of the licensing contexts beyond downward entailment. However, there are still some cases of grammatical occurrences of NPIs, such as (67), which are unaccounted for according to Giannakidou's nonveridicality proposal. In (67.A), the emotive factive verb *regret* is veridical as it is committed to the truth of the proposition *John lifted a finger to help Mary*. In (67.B), *only John said anything* is also committed to the truth of the proposition *John said anything*.

(67) A. John regrets that he lifted a finger to help Mary.

B. Only John said anything.

To account for such cases, Giannakidou (2006b, 2011) proposed a rescuing mechanism⁵⁶, which follows the essence of the pragmatic proposals of Baker (1970) and Linebarger (1980, 1987). She defined the rescuing mechanism as follows:

(68) An NPI α can be rescued in the scope of veridical expression β in a sentence S , if (a) **the global context C** of S makes a proposition S' available which contains a nonveridical expression β ; and (b) α can be associated with β in S' .

(Giannakidou, 2011, p.1687)

The global context C of S is explained by Giannakidou as containing the assertions, presuppositions, and implicatures. Some veridical Expressions, such as *only* and *wish*, can contribute some negative proposition which allows the licensing to occur. For instance, the negative factive verb *regret* conventionally contributes *I wish that not p* , whereas *only y P* conventionally contributes *no x other than y P* (Giannakidou, 2011).

⁵⁶ The rescuing mechanism was labelled *indirect licensing* in Giannakidou (1998) and earlier works.

The proposal of Giannakidou (1994, 1995, 1998, 2006b, 2011) can then be summarised as consisting of a syntactic component, which is the occurrence of the NPI in the scope of an operator, a semantic component, which specifies the nature of the operator that offers the licensing as that of nonveridicality, and a pragmatic component, which allows for the licensing of NPIs that occur in the scope of veridical operators.

5.6.2. Evaluation & Application on NPIs in DzA

Giannakidou's nonveridicality proposal has been acknowledged by many researchers as offering better results when it comes to explaining the behaviour of NPIs in a broad spectrum of licensing contexts, especially cross-linguistically (Lee, 1999; Penka & Zeijlstra, 2010). In this section, the nonveridicality proposal is tested against data from DzA. I start by discussing the semantic component, then the syntactic component, and, finally, the pragmatic component of Giannakidou's nonveridicality theory.

5.6.2.1. The Semantic Component

Some researchers on Arabic dialects, most recently Albuarabi (2021), stated that the nonveridicality model offers an account for the licensing of NPIs in Arabic dialects. This judgement follows the investigation of Alsarayreh (2012) on the licensing of NPIs in Jordanian Arabic. However, I must highlight that Alsarayreh (2012), and subsequent researchers, have only focused on the syntactic aspect of Giannakidou's nonveridicality theory; they only investigated whether the NPI can be in the scope of the nonveridical operator. Furthermore, some researchers on NPIs in Arabic dialects seem to have not grasped the components of the nonveridicality theory. Most recently, Alqassas (2021), who attempted a unifying account of NPIs and NCIs across several Arabic dialects, described nonveridicality as only a semantic model without mentioning its syntactic and pragmatic components. He warned that 'the explanatory adequacy of this semantic approach to polarity sensitivity should not lead us to think that the conceptual intensional interface can handle all issues with licensing polarity items' (Alqassas, 2021, p.104). He proceeded to explain that syntactic configurations play a role in

the licensing of polarity items. Alqassas did not provide any examples where polarity items cannot be licensed syntactically according to the nonveridicality theory; he did not mention its pragmatic component either. The assumptions expressed by Alqassas (2021) encourage another examination of the nonveridicality theory in accounting for NPIs in Arabic.

Furthermore, there has been no discussion of whether all the licensing contexts in Arabic are nonveridical or not. This is another gap in the literature on NPIs in Arabic dialects. I do not claim that I can, in this limited space, account for the nonveridical nature of the licensing contexts. Still, I can attempt to propose answers to the rare but significant points raised in the literature against adopting nonveridicality to account for the licensing of NPIs in Arabic. It has been highlighted in the previous sections of this chapter that the proposals of Ladusaw (1979a, 1979b), Linebarger (1980, 1987), and Progovac (1994) do not provide an account for the licensing of NPIs in DzA in the subjunctive and habituais. Linebarger and Progovac do not describe a specific property that is shared among the licensing contexts, and Ladusaw's downward entailment does not account for these two specific contexts.

The semantic component of the nonveridicality theory covers these two contexts and the remaining licensing contexts in DzA and proposes a unifying property. The licensing contexts in DzA were listed and discussed in the previous chapter, in section 4.2. They include clausemate and superordinate negation, which are antiveridical, and naturally included in the definition of nonveridical operators. Other licensing contexts include *without*-clauses (*bidūn*-clauses in DzA), *before*-clauses (*qabāl*-clauses in DzA), adversative predicates, questions, restrictions of universal quantifiers, *too*-clauses, conditionals, habituais and subjunctives. These contexts can indeed be classified as nonveridical, and their status as nonveridical is not questioned. Consequently, it is better to focus on one problematic area, which is the licensing of NPIs in comparatives.

One objection raised by Lucas (2009) against the application of nonveridicality is that comparatives cannot be said to be nonveridical but are downward entailing (Lucas, 2009, p. 189)⁵⁷. On her part, Giannakidou acknowledged that comparatives could not be described as nonveridical (Giannakidou, 2006b; Giannakidou & Yoon, 2010). However, the solution she proposed is to account for the licensing of NPIs in comparatives through the rescuing mechanism (Giannakidou, 2006b).

However, as far as DzA is concerned, I do not think there is a need to resort to the rescuing mechanism to account for the licensing of NPIs in comparatives. It is useful here to recall that Giannakidou's proposal of the nonveridicality account was motivated by her examination of the subjunctive (Giannakidou, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998). The link between the exploration of the subjunctive and NPIs was motivated by the fact that in Modern Greek the NPIs appear preceded by the subjunctive complement *na*, which, in turn, occur in a wide range of contexts, such as certain prepositions (Greek *prin* 'before', *xoris/dhixos* 'without'), conditional particles, interrogative operators; however subjunctive complements are excluded from the indicative (Giannakidou, 1995, 2011).

That means a large subset of the contexts allowing NPIs in Greek actually contains the subjunctive and the NPI indefinite that Giannakidou examined, such *kanénas*, are actually embedded in a subjunctive clause, as is the case in (69). Giannakidou stated that 'the Greek polarity indefinites are licensed in subjunctive main and complement clauses. Crucially, these items are excluded from indicative clauses.' (Giannakidou, 1995, p. 96).

⁵⁷ Lucas (2009) argument was not against nonveridicality as a whole as he acknowledged, in a footnote, that nonveridicality is still needed to account for the licensing in interrogatives which are not downward entailing (2009, p. 189).

(69) na akús **kamjá simvulí**, tha su vjí se kaló
 SBJV listen-2SG any advise, FUT you-GEN come-out in good

‘Listen to some advice, it will prove to your advantage.’

(Giannakidou, 1995, p. 95)

However, Giannakidou did not make the link between NPIs and the subjunctive a condition in itself, as she is aware that ‘there is no formal subjunctive-indicative distinction’ in many of the world’s languages that allow NPIs to be licensed in a broad spectrum of contexts (Giannakidou, 2011, p. 1678). In section 4.2.6, I raised the question of whether the formulation of comparatives in Arabic dialects, including DzA, involves embedding a subjunctive clause and whether the NPI is actually licensed in that subjunctive clause. I also mentioned that the Arabic of Deir Ezzor does not exhibit a morphologically distinct form for the subjunctive. Some other Arabic dialects, such as Jordanian Arabic and Egyptian Arabic, use the imperfective form of the verb in the subjunctive, while the form known as the *b-imperfective* is reserved for indicative mood (Alrashdan, 2015; Jarad, 2013; Mitchell and El-Hassan, 1994). We are obliged to explore data from other Arabic dialects. The examples from Jordanian Arabic and Egyptian Arabic listed in section 4.2.6, and repeated here, show that comparative structures embed a verb in the subjunctive mood.

(70) l-ntihān ḡaṣṣab min ḡannu maryam tḥill
 DEF-exam too-difficult than COMP Mary answer.IMPF3.FSG
walaw suḡāl
 even question

‘The exam is too difficult for Mary to answer any question.’

(Jordanian Arabic, Alsarayreh, 2012, p.77; glosses amended)

(71)	ʔaḥmad	ʔadʕaf	min	ʔinn-u	yiʔūl	<i>ʔayy</i>
	Ahmed	weaker	than	COMP-3MSG	say.IMPF.3MSG	any
	ḥāga	li-l-mudīr				
	thing	to-DEF-manager				

‘Ahmed is too weak to say anything to the manager.’

(Egyptian Arabic, Soltan, 2014, p. 191; glosses amended)

However, this raises the question of whether embedding the subjunctive is what allows the licensing of NPIs in a comparative structure. Lucas’ (2009) argument against comparatives being nonveridical is that they are downward entailing. However, Hoeksema (1983), who explored comparatives and polarity, and defended downward entailment, underlined that there are two types of comparative structures. The first structure is NP-comparative, where the comparative particle *than* is followed by an NP, as in (72.A). The second type is S-comparative, where the comparative particle *than* is followed by a clausal complement, as in (72.B). We can refer to these two types as phrasal comparative structures and clausal comparative structures, respectively.

(72) A. Moscow is older than Washington.

B. The Sahara was hotter than I had expected it would be.

(Hoeksema, 1983, p. 403)

Hoeksema (1983) argued that in Dutch only S-comparative constructions allow the licensing of the NPI *ook maar*, which he translated as ‘at all/whatsoever’; Hoeksema explained that this is due to different semantics and the different inferences allowed by the two structures. The

details of Hoeksema's argument about Dutch language are not of direct relevance to us here. What is of relevance is that in Arabic dialects, the same observation seems to hold.

The discussion below demonstrates that in Arabic a phrasal comparative structure does not license an NPI, but it could license an FCI. By contrast, a clausal comparative structure does license an NPI, but not an FCI. In the previous chapter, in section 4.3.2.1, I have pointed out that *ʔayy* can function as an FCI in some contexts and as an NPI in others. In section 4.3.2.2, I have argued that *walaw* is an NPI, and cannot be an FCI. The data in section 4.3.2.3 clearly show that *ḥatta* is an NPI. The following two examples show something interesting. In (73), the three determiners *ʔayy*, *walaw*, and *ḥatta* are grammatical in this clausal comparative structure. However, (74) allows only *ʔayy* to be grammatical, and the interpretation is clearly that of an FCI. It is useful to recall Fauconnier's (1975a) view that the difference between free choice 'any' and polarity 'any' is that they represent two opposite ends of a scale. This explains why, in sentences (73) and (74), the FCI function is banned when the NPI function is licensed, and vice versa.

(73) jamāl ʔaḍʕaf min inn-u yuḍrub
 Jamal weaker than COMP-3MSG beat.IMPF.3MSG
 ʔayy /walaw/ḥatta ṭālib
 any /even /even pupil
 'Jamal is weaker than to beat any pupil/even a (single) pupil.'

(74) jamāl ʔaḍʕaf min ʔayy/ *walaw/ *ḥatta ṭālib
 Jamal weaker than any/ *even/ *even pupil
 'Jamal is weaker than any pupil.'

We have observed previously that comparatives in Arabic embed a subjunctive. Now, we have shown that the difference in the structure of the comparatives leads to a difference in whether an NPI can be licensed, as in (73), or banned, as in (74). The NPI is banned from the comparative phrasal structures that do not embed a subjunctive verb. Another piece of evidence, which points to the possible requirement of embedding the subjunctive in the comparative structure to allow the licensing of NPIs, was supplied indirectly by Alsarayreh (2012). In a footnote, Alsarayreh argued that comparatives in Jordanian Arabic do not license NPIs; he provided the following example⁵⁸.

- (75) * Maryam asraʕ min ma **walaw** wāḥid twaqqāʕ
 Mary faster than COMP even one expect.PRF.3MSG
 ‘Mary is faster than anyone had expected.’

I totally agree with Alsarayreh (2012) that the sentence in (75) does not allow a grammatical occurrence of an NPI. However, it is obvious that the comparative structure he provided embeds a verb in the indicative mood in the past tense. This means that while the sentence in (75) might contain a comparative structure, no subjunctive is embedded in it. This again supports the link between the licensing of the NPI and the subjunctive.

This is still a preliminary account of how certain comparative structures can allow the grammatical licensing of NPIs in DzA. This proposal does not refer to downward entailment, but it refers to the fact that subjunctive clauses allow a grammatical occurrence of NPIs, which is a fact that Giannakidou (1994, 1995, 1997, 1998) showed is relevant to the licensing of NPIs in some languages including Greek and Romanian. As for NPIs in DzA, we can conclude that

⁵⁸ Alsarayreh (2012) mentioned this point to argue that there is no need for the pragmatic component of the nonveridicality theory since comparatives are not nonveridical (2012, p.125).

nonveridicality provides the unifying feature of the licensing contexts, i.e., it answers the licenser question mentioned in the introduction section of this chapter.

5.6.2.2. The Syntactic Component

The syntactic component of Giannakidou's nonveridicality theory proposes that the NPIs are licensed by being in the scope of a nonveridical operator. It is not difficult to show that this condition is clearly met for almost all of the licensing contexts, apart from clausemate negation. When an NPI in DzA is licensed in one of the following contexts: *without*-clauses (*bidūn*-clauses), *before*-clauses (*qabəl*-clauses), adversative predicates, questions, restriction of universal quantifiers, *too*-clauses, comparatives, conditionals, habituals, and subjunctive, it is clear that the NPI is contained in these contexts and is in the scope of the nonveridical operator. This indicates that the licensing requirement is met at the surface structure.

This leaves us with the need to explore the licensing by negation. In particular, we need to account for the grammatical occurrence of some NPIs, which are licensed by clausemate negation – i.e., by negation that is in the same clause – but where the NPI is not in the scope of negation at the surface structure. It is useful here to remember the following facts about NPIs in DzA. They belong to the following categories:

- (76) Nominals (or indefinite pronouns): *ʔaḥad/ḥada* 'anyone' and *ši* 'anything'
- (77) Determiners: *ʔayy* 'any', *walaw* 'even', and *ḥət /ḥatta* 'even'
- (78) Auxiliary verbs: *ʕād*, *baqa*, and *haggōt*
- (79) Verbs: *yəṭṭiq* 'brook', *yəʕabbir* 'give attention to someone', *yuwāxiḍ* 'to blame someone, be upset by them', and *yəstajri* 'to dare (do something)'

- (80) Idiomatic NPIs: *qiriš məšdi* ‘a rusty penny’, *qiriš manqōb* ‘a holed penny’, *wataka* ‘a straw, or a scratch’, *ħiss* ‘a sound’, *mruwwa* ‘patience, willpower’, *il-jinni il-ʔazraq* ‘the blue genie’ and *ʕumur* ‘life, age’.

When it comes to negation, most of these NPIs are only licensed in the scope of negation, and the syntactic condition of the nonveridicality theory will be met. There are two exceptions. The first involves cases where the NPI occupies the pre-verbal subject position, which makes it outside the scope of negation at the surface structure. The second exception involves cases where the NPI is not in the subject position (i.e., in the object position) but is focus fronted. Consequently, it is not c-commanded or preceded by the negative operator at the surface structure. These two exceptions can be accounted for by meeting the syntactic licensing requirement at LF.

Regarding the first exception, i.e., the occurrence of an NPI in the subject position, we know the following. The negative polarity nominals cannot occur in the subject position, which means they are always in a post-verbal position; consequently, they are in the scope of sentential negation at the surface structure. Of the three negative polarity determiners, *ʔayy* cannot occur in a subject position, whereas *walaw* and *ħət /ħatta* can occur in a subject position, as can be seen in (81). Although, it must be pointed out that some speakers of the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor, including myself, find the occurrence of *walaw* in the subject position odd.

- (81) *ʔwalaw/ħət /ħatta* *tālib* *mā* *ʔaja* *ʕa-l-muħādra*
 even/even/even student NEG come.PRF.3MSG to-DEF-lecture

‘Not even one student came to the lecture.’

The negative polarity auxiliaries and lexical verbs are naturally in the scope of negation at the surface structure. As for the idiomatic NPIs, the minimisers *qiriš məšdi*, *qiriš manqōb*, *wataka*,

and *mruwwa* can only occupy the second argument position of the verb (i.e., the object), which makes them always in the scope of clausemate sentential negation. Some speakers of the Arabic of Deir Ezzor accept a sentence where *ḥiss* occupies the subject position, as in (82). It is also possible for *ḥiss* to be preceded by the determiner *ḥət /ḥatta*.

- (82) *ḥiss* mā ḥaja minn-ak min yōm sāfrit
 sound NEG come.PRF.3MSG from-2SM since day travel.PRF.3MSG

‘One piece of news never reached us since the day you travelled.’

The maximiser *il-jinni il-ḥazraq* occurs more frequently in the subject position, as in (83).

- (83) *il-jinni il-ḥazraq* mā rāḥ yəlāqi-h
 DEF-genie DEF-blue NEG FUT find.IMP.3MSG–3MSG

‘The blue genie will not find him!’

The presence of the negative determiners *walaw/ḥət /ḥatta*, the idiomatic NPIs *ḥiss* and *il-jinni il-ḥazraq* in the pre-verbal subject position in clauses that contain clausemate negation can be accounted for under the Subject Hypothesis. The subject hypothesis proposes that the subject, such as *il-jinni il-ḥazraq* in (83), actually originates in a post-verbal position, in Spec, VP, but it surfaces in Spec, TP (Alsarayreh, 2012). The Subject Hypothesis means that an NPI in pre-verbal subject position, *il-jinni il-ḥazraq* in our case, is c-commanded by the licenser at LF. This shows that the first exception where an NPI is in a pre-verbal position does not violate the syntactic licensing requirements outlined in the nonveridicality theory (Giannakidou, 2006b).

The second exception involves the fronting of NPIs from their original post-verbal position to a pre-verbal position. The DP *ḥatta ḥax-ūh* ‘even his brother’ is in the scope of superordinate

negation at the surface structure in (84). In (85), the same DP has been fronted to a pre-verbal position. However, it is still c-commanded by the negative marker at LF.

(84) mā ʔaʕtəqid rāḥ yəsāʕid *ḥatta* ʔax-ūh
 NEG think.IMPF.1S FUT help.IMPF.3MSG even brother-3MSG
 ‘I don’t think he will help even his brother.’

(85) *ḥatta* ʔax-ūh mā ʔaʕtəqid rāḥ yəsāʕid-u
 even brother-3MSG NEG think.IMPF.1SG FUT help.IMPF.3MSG
 ‘I don’t think he will help even his brother.’

Based on these examples, we can conclude that the syntactic component of Giannakidou’s nonveridicality theory accounts for NPIs in DzA.

5.6.2.3. The Pragmatic Component

The rescuing mechanism described by Giannakidou (2006b, 2011) is intended to account for the licensing of NPIs in veridical contexts such as restrictives (*only*-structures). *Only*-structures have proved to be challenging to researchers primarily because they are used in English and many other languages. However, based on the data compiled so far, restrictives in the form of *only*-structures do not license NPIs in DzA. There is a need for further research to examine whether there are licensing contexts other than what has been discussed so far.

5.7. Conclusion

Chapter four provided a significant amount of data on the syntactic and semantic aspects of NPIs in the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor. This paved the way for a thorough examination of the licensing requirements of NPIs, which is the topic of this chapter. Examining the licensing requirements involves two areas of work: identifying the nature of the licensing contexts – what is known as the licenser question – and describing the nature of the relation between the licenser and the NPIs and the constraints that allow only the grammatical occurrences of NPIs. This

chapter has reviewed the most prominent approaches to the licensing phenomenon and the general circumstances surrounding the development of each proposal. This allows us to understand the connection between the research on negative polarity and other linguistic research and linguistic theory areas.

The chapter has reviewed first the pure syntactic proposals of Klima (1964), Jackendoff (1969, 1972), and Lasnik (1972, 1975) and proceeded to explore the move from the dependence of pure syntax to pure semantics, as represented by the downward entailment proposal of Ladusaw (1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1983, 1996). The following two proposals shifted back to syntax. Linebarger (1980, 1987) formulated a syntactic licensing condition and a pragmatic rescuing mechanism. Progovac (1994) opted for a pure syntactic account that explains licensing through a binding relationship. The weaknesses and strengths of each of these proposals and how they contributed to the study of NPIs have been discussed in this chapter; the reviewed proposals have also been tested against NPIs from DzA. The previous proposals could not provide a comprehensive account for the licensing of NPIs in DzA. In particular, they could not provide an account unifying all the licensing contexts and failed to account for the licensing of NPIs in the subjunctive. The final approach which has been reviewed is the nonveridicality of Giannakidou (1994 and subsequent works). Giannakidou proposed a semantic definition of the operator licensing NPIs, and that the NPIs are licensed by virtue of being within the scope of a nonveridical operator. An NPI is licensed either at the surface structure or through being c-commanded by the nonveridical operator at LF. Giannakidou also proposed a pragmatic rescuing option to account for cases where NPIs occur in a veridical context.

Giannakidou's nonveridicality model fares much better than previous models when tested against data from DzA. This chapter has focused on the semantic and syntactic components of the nonveridicality model since there is no need for the pragmatic component. The few studies on NPIs in Arabic dialects did not offer a thorough examination of the semantic part of

Giannakidou's theory. The discussion in this chapter has primarily focused on the licensing of NPIs in comparatives since they constituted a challenge for the nonveridicality model. By differentiating between the possible comparative structures in Arabic and linking with our preliminary findings regarding the role of the subjunctive in licensing NPIs, we have proposed an account that includes comparatives as a licensing environment under the nonveridicality proposal. The syntactic part of Giannakidou's model has been tested as well. It has been highlighted that some NPIs meet the syntactic licensing requirement at the surface structure while a few meet it at LF. The second group of NPIs include the ones that can occur in pre-verbal position. Finally, there is no need to apply the pragmatic part of Giannakidou's model. However, further research is still needed to explore whether NPIs can be licensed in restrictive clauses (*only*-clauses), which are veridical.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Final Thoughts for Future Research

The purpose of this thesis has been to contribute to the research on negative polarity items (NPIs) in Arabic because we believe there is a lacuna in the research on this phenomenon in Arabic dialects. The language examined in this thesis is the Arabic dialect of the city of Deir Ezzor, in north-eastern Syria. It is a dialect that has seen very little linguistic research. This highlights the significance of this thesis as a recent addition to linguistic research on Arabic dialects. Furthermore, this thesis has identified and thoroughly discussed an extensive inventory of NPIs. Prior research on NPIs in Arabic dialects focused only on negative indefinite pronouns, determiners, and minimisers. Most studies on NPI, including the most recent ones, such as Alsarayreh's (2012) work on Jordanian Arabic and Albuarabi's (2021) work on Iraqi Arabic, discussed only six NPIs belonging to these three categories. This thesis has expanded the discussion to include negative polarity auxiliaries and negative polarity lexical verbs. It has identified about twenty NPIs and discussed their behaviour and distribution in depth.

The theoretical contribution of the thesis is expanding the discussion on the lexical semantics of some NPIs in Arabic since previous studies focused exclusively on the syntactic part, namely the licensing requirements. It has also highlighted the need to investigate the licensing contexts and examine the behaviour of NPIs in each of these contexts. Pursuing this route is needed to catch up with the research on NPIs in other languages, such as English, Dutch, and Modern Greek. Our overall purpose has been to expand our understanding of the NPIs phenomenon. To achieve this goal, we have organised the thesis into five chapters. The following is a summary of these five chapters.

The thesis began with **Chapter One**, which commented on the attractiveness of the negation phenomenon and negative dependency in the form of polarity sensitivity. This latter phenomenon was explored, and the two subtypes of negative polarity items and negative

concord items were introduced and differentiated. The chapter focused on the study of negative polarity; it traced the origins of the interest in this phenomenon and provided a brief description of the evolution of the research into this topic. This chapter described how researchers first attempted to describe the phenomenon of NPIs by depending solely on syntax, then by resorting to a pure semantic proposal, and eventually by attempting a mixture of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Relevant concepts, namely downward entailment and nonveridicality, were defined in brief to facilitate the description and discussion of NPIs in the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor in chapters four and five. A brief description of the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor (DzA) was provided in this chapter, which also stated the purpose and significance of the thesis and discussed its outline.

Chapter Two provided information about the Arabic dialect of Deir Ezzor. This chapter highlighted some of the unique features of the Arabic spoken in Deir Ezzor; it described some of the syntactic aspects of the dialect, notably its clause structure. The description is intended to aid in presenting the data from DzA. The level of discussion is adequate to cover the needs of this thesis. The chapter also discussed the subjunctive mood and auxiliaries in DzA. Our choice to discuss the subjunctive mood was motivated by two factors. First, this mood has not received adequate attention in the studies on modern Arabic dialects. Second, thanks to Giannakidou (1994 and later works), the study of the subjunctive mood has been closely linked to the study of NPIs. The preliminary discussion of the subjunctive mood in chapter two aimed to aid the discussion in chapters four and five. Chapter two also discussed auxiliary verbs, which are not adequately investigated in the research on Arabic dialects. The study of auxiliaries in DzA also supports the discussion of negative polarity auxiliaries in chapter four.

Chapter Three investigated negation in the dialect of Deir Ezzor. Negation in modern Arabic dialects has been researched relatively well, especially in Jordanian, Palestinian, Egyptian, and Moroccan Arabic. However, negation in Syrian Arabic (the dialect spoken primarily in

Damascus) and other Arabic dialects in Syria has not been researched thoroughly. Chapter three underlined that what was reported about negation in other Arabic dialects is not necessarily applicable to the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. The chapter discussed how standard negation is realised through *mā*, and how non-standard negation is realised through *mū*, *lā*, and pronouns of negation. The chapter also reviewed and evaluated the generative proposals to sentential negation in Arabic. The conclusion was that the hypothesis suggesting that NegP is higher than TP is stronger than the other hypothesis, and it is the one describing the situation in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor. Other issues related to negation were also discussed, such as negative absorption and negative concord. In particular, the discussion of negative concord aimed to highlight, in brief, that there are contradictions surrounding the proposals that some Arabic varieties are negative concord languages. The chapter recommended that views on negative concord in modern Arabic dialects should be re-examined and that the examination of NPIs should be separated from the examination of the so-called NCIs.

Chapter Four is the core of the thesis and its longest chapter. It discussed the phenomenon of NPIs in DzA. It listed the various contexts where NPIs can be licensed and discussed in brief what makes these contexts licensing environments. This discussion was supported by reviewing relevant recent research. We highlighted that research on NPIs in Arabic tends to overlook the individual licensing contexts even though exploring each context could prove enlightening. This discussion aims to encourage the expansion of research on negative polarity in Arabic dialects beyond the conventional focus on the licensing relation between NPIs and their licensors. The discussion of comparatives and too-clauses shows the potential gains from such an examination. The possible links between comparative structures and the subjunctive were briefly discussed to pave the way for a more thorough discussion in chapter five.

Chapter four also listed more NPIs than had been discussed in the research on Arabic dialects. It covered negative polarity pronouns, negative polarity determiners, negative polarity

auxiliaries, negative polarity verbs, and idiomatic negative polarity expressions. In particular, negative polarity auxiliaries and negative polarity lexical verbs have never been discussed in the research on Arabic. The chapter also discussed the semantics of negative lexical verbs and minimisers. It is a preliminary discussion, but it is an unexplored area in the research on NPIs in Arabic. Furthermore, the chapter discussed cases of grammaticalisation, most notably negative polarity lexical verbs and idiomatic NPIs. It discussed how certain idiomatic NPIs, such as *mruwwa* ‘patience/willpower’, acquired a meaning and usage that differs from their original meaning in Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic.

The chapter discussed the behaviour of negative polarity determiners *ʔayy*, *walaw*, and *ħat/ħatta*. It discussed their NPI behaviour and other possible non-polarity behaviour, such as *ʔayy* functioning as an FCI and an interrogative particle and *ħatta* having different negative and positive polarity uses. Before the conclusion, a table containing all NPIs and their licensing contexts in DzA is presented and discussed to highlight the differences in strength between NPIs. However, further research is still needed. With the identification of more NPIs, the image could become more precise.

Chapter Five thoroughly discussed the two parts of the licensing question: the licenser question and the licensing relation question. It critically reviewed the linguistic proposals that aimed to answer these two questions. The various proposals were tested against data from the dialect of Deir Ezzor. Reviewing the various proposals helps highlight the links between the study of negative polarity and other areas of linguistics. Since the 1960s, linguists have offered various proposals to account for the licensing of NPIs. The early proposals, those of Klima (1964), Jackendoff (1969, 1972), and Lasnik (1972, 1975), were inadequate to account for the diverse and dynamic phenomenon of NPIs. However, our discussion highlighted how these early proposals offered us many of the primary notions that shaped the study of NPIs, such as the notion of *affective* and the notions of the narrow and wide scope of negation. The

inadequacy of syntax encouraged incorporating semantics and/or pragmatics. The works of Baker (1970), Ladusaw (1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1983, 1996), and Linebarger (1980, 1987, 1991) have been influential in shaping negative polarity research. Their works underlined that such a complex phenomenon could not be accounted for by virtue of one linguistic discipline.

Furthermore, their discussions highlighted the importance of describing the feature that unifies all licensing contexts. The importance of this last point is highlighted by the fact that Progovac (1994), who was in favour of a pure syntactic account, had to attempt to describe that unifying feature. She proposed that the licensing contexts have in common that their truth values are not fixed. Her proposal was insightful, and it was not far from the nonveridicality proposal offered by Giannakidou (1994 and subsequent works). The works of Progovac and Giannakidou also highlighted the importance of moving beyond the study of NPIs in English.

Our examination of these proposals involved testing them against data from the dialect of Deir Ezzor. Our examination was not passive in the sense of a mere pursuit of a suitable licensing proposal, but it was active in the sense of attempting a theoretical contribution. This contribution came in the form of identifying a solution that accounts for the licensing of NPIs in comparative structures. The licensing of NPIs in comparative structures has long been a challenge to the nonveridicality proposal. This was acknowledged by Giannakidou, and it led some researchers into NPIs in Arabic (e.g., Alsarayreh, 2012; Soltan, 2014) to avoid acknowledging that NPIs in Arabic are licensed in comparative structures. Our exploration of the subjunctive, which started in chapters two and four, allowed us to identify the links between the subjunctive and comparative structures in the dialect of Deir Ezzor and other Arabic dialects. This allows for a comprehensive account of NPIs in the Arabic of Deir Ezzor, where all the licensing contexts of NPIs can be described semantically as nonveridical

The syntactic part of Giannakidou's model was tested as well; we explained that some NPIs meet the syntactic licensing requirement at surface structure while a few of them meet it at LF. This latter group of NPIs include the ones that can occur in pre-verbal position. Finally, we reported that there is no need for the application of the pragmatic part of Giannakidou's model. However, further research is needed to explore whether NPIs can be licensed in restrictive clauses (*only*-clauses) which are veridical.

The lesson we want to highlight is the importance of closer examination of the minute details of the occurrences of NPIs and their intersection with other syntactic structures. One weakness of the research into NPIs in Arabic is that it focused almost exclusively on identifying NPIs and describing the circumstances of their licensing without closely examining the licensing contexts, especially non-negative contexts. We identified, in particular in chapter four, various areas that are still in need of further research. These areas include, for instance, the relationship between the NPIs and conditionals, the possible differences in the behaviour of NPIs between realis and irrealis clauses, and the behaviour of adversative predicates and how they might allow *neg*-raising. Furthermore, the licensing of NPIs in *before*-clauses is another good candidate for further research.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that choosing a particular linguistic topic to explore is not about reaching the destination but about the journey itself and its many findings. Klima, Jackendoff, Lasnik, Baker, Ladusaw, Linebarger, and Progovac did not offer the ultimate licensing account; however, their research and conjectures contributed significantly to the development of linguistic research and theory.

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