Indefinites and Negative Polarity Items in Modern Hebrew

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Abstract: This paper is an account of the distribution of negative polarity items (NPIs) in Modern Hebrew. The NPIs discussed here belong to the *af*/*shum* series of negative indefinites, which corresponds to the *any* series of indefinite pronouns in English. The paper analyzes indefinite and generic contexts, and polarity sensitive properties versus free choice interpretations. I propose that items belonging to the *af/shum* series are ambiguous between negative elements and negative polarity items. This distinction follows Herburger's (2001) ambiguity hypothesis for negative concord elements in Spanish. Furthermore, I propose that these indefinites exhibit a *widening* property in the sense of Kadmon and Landman (1993), which would take affect on a kind scale for *shum*, and on a quantity scale for *af*.

Keywords: NPIs, negative indefinites, free choice, indefinite pronouns, negative concord

1. Introduction

The puzzle concerning the distributional properties of negative polarity items (NPIs), such as the English 'any', has preoccupied researchers since the 1970s, and while solutions have been proposed, a unified cross-linguistic account of the distribution of these items, is yet to have a clear answer. The paper discusses the distributional properties of NPIs in Modern Hebrew (henceforth, MH), specifically those belonging to the *af*/*shum* series of negative indefinites: *af(ehad), shum(davar)*, which correspond roughly to 'any, no(one)', 'any, a single, no/nothing' and 'nothing/anything'. In this account, I focus on indefinite and generic contexts, as well as polarity sensitive properties versus free choice interpretations. Section 2 is a brief introduction to Modern Hebrew language typology, based mainly on work by Glinert (1989) and Schwarzwald (2001), with emphasis on determiners and negatives. Section 3 reviews influential approaches, in both syntax and semantics, with respect to negative indefinites in general, and negative polarity items in particular. Section 4 presents the MH data, and analyzes and points out similarities in comparison to English, in particular, in light of the theoretical approaches discussed in section 3. Section 5 proposes solutions to the distributional puzzle of Hebrew negative indefinites. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. Modern Hebrew (MH) indefinites

In MH, there are at least three items that correspond to the English indefinite pronoun 'any' – *kol*[1], *af* and *shum*. To begin with, an account of MH negatives is necessary for the categorization of NPIs, negative indefinites and negative concord items. Glinert's (1989) provides some generalizations regarding MH negatives. First, Glinert takes *shum* as corresponding to 'no' & *af* to 'not a single…', as in (1):

(1) Lo matsati *shum*/*af* iparon
not found shum/af pencil
'I didn't find *any*/*a single* pencil'

Second, many of these negative items occur without a negation such as *lo* 'not' and *eyn* 'there is not', as free-standing negatives:

(2) *Shum* hitkadmut?
'No progress?'

(3) Mi ba? *Af ehad.*
'Who came? No one'

It should be noted however, that defining these items just as free-standing negatives is a bit unclear. In terms of their distribution, I would rather claim that

[1] Although I am not discussing it in detail, *kol* 'any/every' is important since it seems to be in complementary distribution with items from the *af*/*shum* series, especially in free choice environments. *Kol* with indefinite nouns corresponds to 'every, each' as in (1), where it has a free choice interpretation, while in negative contexts, questions and conditionals (i.e. non-assertive clauses), it corresponds to 'any' as in (2), where it behaves as a polarity sensitive item:

(1) *Kol* barvaz yode'a lisxot.
kol duck knows$_{masc}$ to-swim
'*Every* duck knows how to swim'

(2) Im ra'iti *kol* shinui, lo amarti klum.
if saw-I kol change, not said-I nothing
'If I saw *any* change, I didn't say anything'

these items are context bound and that they can appear in elliptical answers. Herburger claims that in Spanish, when these *n-words* appear in elliptical answers, they have the property of being negative elements (NEs), while univocal NPIs are not possible as elliptical answers[2]:

(4) a. A quién viste?
'Who did you see?'
b. *A *un alma*.
'A soul / *Anybody' (Herburger, 2001: 299)

Herburger's analysis states that NPIs are licensed only in full formed sentences. The contrast between negative elements and NPIs can be seen below:

(5) Who did you see? *No one* [NE] – (i.e., I saw no one)

(6) Who did you see? I didn't see *anyone* [NPI].

In MH, this works in the following way:

(7) Et mi ra'it? – *Af ehad*. [NE]
ACC who saw-you? – no one
'Who did you see? – *No one*.'

(8) Et mi ra'it? – Lo ra'iti *af ehad*. [NPI]
ACC who saw-you? – not saw-I no one
'Who did you see? – I didn't see *anyone*.'

According to this analysis, *af ehad* is not a univocal NPI, thus behaving as NE in elliptical contexts and as NPI in complete sentences. The question is whether in

[2] The ellipsis analysis (what motivates it, restrictions, and so on) needs to be investigated further.

MH, elliptical answers that involve *af ehad*, for example, can still have the polarity sensitive property even though there is no overt NPI licensor.[3]

So far, I have presented a brief overview of MH negative items (indefinites), as they are accounted for in the literature. Since negative indefinites are the goal of this paper, in the next section, I present some of the more influential work done in this area, mostly based on English data. Later on, I apply these theories to MH.

3. NPIs in English

The distribution of negative polarity items has been debated since the 1970s. The following sections present an overview of the major approaches that still take part in this debate, with focus on those relevant to the MH data account. Although this paper concentrates on the semantics of n-words, it is important to mention Klima's (1964) syntactic account, as one of the milestones of the research on the current subject, and one that I believe became the springboard for the semantic perspectives developed later on and discussed in the next chapters.

3.1 Klima's (1964) syntactic approach to negative polarity items

Klima (1964) argued in favor of a syntactic account for the distribution of NPIs and suggested that an NPI must be c-commanded by a 'trigger', such as an overt negation as in (9) or an 'affective' element such as the verb 'surprise', in (10).

(9) John <u>didn't</u> say *anything*.

(10) We were <u>surprised</u> that John said *anything*. (Ladusaw 1979: 459)

[3] An additional fact, pointed out by Glinert 1989, is that "negative" *kol* 'any' requires a negation:

(3) <u>Lo</u> ra'iti *kol*/*af* anan.
not saw-I any cloud
'I didn't see *any* cloud.'

This example is an interesting case in itself. I do not consider *kol* to be a polarity item, since it can appear independently in free choice environments and usually does not seem to need a (negation) licensor. Yet in this case, it takes on the negative polarity properties of *af* and needs the negation in order to be licensed with this interpretation corresponding to the English 'any'. I leave this issue for a future study.

This approach, by holding that 'any' is licensed under negation, seems to account best for the Hebrew data, but unfortunately fails to account for some cases of the English 'any', which can appear in contexts lacking a negation operator, such as questions or the antecedent of conditionals:

(11) Do you have *any* cookies?

(12) If you ever read *anything* by Terry Pratchett, you'll be pleasantly surprised.

These examples point out that there is more to the distribution of the English 'any', than just being c-commanded by a NegP. Thus, the factors that influence the interpretation of 'any' seem to also be semantic and pragmatic in nature, since a pure syntactic account does not offer a satisfactory explanation[4].

3.2 A semantic/pragmatic approach to negative indefinites and polarity items

From the semantic/pragmatic perspective, the different approaches to negative indefinites and polarity sensitive items diverge into semantic accounts, such as Kadmon & Landman's (1993) unified analysis of Free Choice (FC) and Polarity Sensitive (PS) *any*, and those who adopt a more pragmatic view based on scalar implicatures, such as Fauconnier (1975), Horn (2000), and Krifka (1995). The two approaches are presented below.

3.2.1 Free Choice and Polarity Sensitive *Any*

One of the debated issues regarding NPIs has to do with one item in particular – the English 'any'. What makes this item special is that it can appear in two distinct contexts: in generic contexts 'any' behaves like a universal quantifier, while in polarity sensitive contexts, it can function as a polarity item (with existential meaning) that needs to be licensed by an element taking scope over it, such as negation. One approach to this puzzle is proposed by Kadmon and

[4] The above examples also provide evidence in favor of an ambiguity approach to 'any' and its interpretation as either a polarity sensitive or a free choice item.

Landman (henceforth, K&L), who discuss PS and FC 'any', and propose an analysis that would account for the semantic, as well as the pragmatic effects of *any*. PS *any* is exemplified in (13), and FC *any* in (14) below (K&L 1993: 353–4):

(13) I don't have *any* potatoes. [PS – existential meaning]

(14) *Any* owl hunts mice. [FC/generic/universal quantificational force]

The question that arises is how to account for the different behavior of *any*: why does PS *any* have existential meaning, while FC *any* seems to have universal quantificational force? K&L explain this by stating that NPs with *any* are indefinite NPs: (i) NPs with PS *any* are existential. NPs of the form *any* CN (any potato, any potatoes) should be regarded semantically as the corresponding indefinite NP (a potato, potatoes); (ii) NPs with FC *any*, are also treated as the corresponding indefinite NP, but in this case are interpreted generically. FC *any* shares its environment with generic indefinites and are similar in interpretation.

(15) *Any* owl hunts mice. [generic FC any]

(16) *An* owl hunts mice. [generic indefinite]

K&L treat PS and FC *any* as both having the semantic properties of indefinites and claim that *any* adds to the meaning of the indefinite NP the property of 'widening' which contributes a reduced tolerance of exceptions to the context in which it appears (K&L 1993: 359):

(17) Every man who has matches is happy.

(18) Every man who has *any* matches is happy.

Sentence (18) rules out exceptions more strongly than (17) does. "Any matches" implies even broken ones, just as "I don't have any potatoes" may imply "not even rotten ones." The effect of *any* is to widen the domain of quantification – in an NP of the form *any* CN, *any* creates this effect by extending the interpretation of the common-noun phrase. K&L also propose a semantic constraint, lexically associated with *any*, which they refer to as 'strengthening'. This constraint states that the semantic operation associated with *any* must create a stronger statement, and the combination of the widening effect and the strengthening constraint will determine the actual distribution of *any*. 'Stronger' here is defined in terms of entailment. (19) is an example of the licensing of *any* and (20) its representation:

(19) I don't have *any* potatoes ⇒ I don't have potatoes

(20) ¬∃x[potato(x) & I have(x)]
Wide interpretation: I don't have any potatoes, cooking or other.
Narrow interpretation: I don't have cooking potatoes.
(K&L 1993: 370)

The strengthening constraint on *any* requires the context in which *any* is licensed to satisfy a downward inference pattern (K&L 1993: 370). To sum up, K&L formulate a theory about what it is that *any* does, and how that affects the context, semantically and pragmatically. As is shown later in the paper, the 'widening' effect proposed by K&L for 'any' is also a property of the MH *af* and *shum*.

3.2.2 Pragmatic scales

Another approach, first presented by Fauconnier, and later adopted by Horn and Krifka, among others, accounts for the distribution of NPIs and addresses the ambiguity expressed by 'any' in terms of a pragmatic (implicature) scale, where each type of *any* stands at an opposite end of the scale. This analysis explains the ambiguity of polarity items between the negative polarity and the free choice interpretations, using the principle of scalar entailment. The analysis presupposes that polarity items have a single semantic representation for both the negative

polarity and free choice readings. This approach is useful in order to explain the divergence in the meaning of the negatives items under consideration here.

The views looked at so far, taken individually, can only partially account for the MH data. The 'widening effect' will be helpful in accounting for the differences in meaning between *af* and *shum* which seem to overlap in certain contexts, while a scalar indefinites approach could account for their interpretation as free choice or polarity sensitive. The ambiguity of *af*/*shum* could then be accounted for by taking a quantity versus kind scale approach.

3.2.3 Negative Indefinites

Before deciding on an optimal approach for the MH data, I would first like to attempt a classification of the items comprising this data. In order to do this, I briefly present some ideas regarding negative indefinites categories and types, and I try to place the MH items among them.

Along the lines of Herburger's analysis of the *n-words (negative elements/items)* in Spanish, I start by pointing out that MH is a language that exhibits negative concord, i.e., in sentences with multiple negative elements, these elements do not cancel each other out, and the sentence is to be interpreted as semantically negated. Examples of negative concord are illustrated below:[5]

(21) Maria *didn't* say *nothing* to *nobody*. (Non-Standard English)

(22) Maria *lo* amra *shum davar* le *af ehad*. (MH)

(23) *No* m'ha telefonat *ningú*. 'Nobody has telephoned me' (Catalan)

(24) *Lo* hitkasher elai *af ehad*. 'not telephoned me nobody' (MH)

Herburger takes an approach according to which the negative concord puzzle arises from the lexical ambiguity of the items that participate in negative concord.

[5] Examples (21) and (23) are taken from Ladusaw (1992: 1).

These items are ambiguous between an NPI interpretation and a purely negative one.

(25) *Nadie* miraba a *nadie*.
n-body looked at n-body
'*Nobody* looked at *anybody*.' (Herburger, 2001: 290)

In (25), *nadie* is ambiguous between 'anybody' (NPI) and 'nobody' (NE). MH seems to behave in a similar way:

(26) *Af ehad* lo histakel al *af ehad*.
no one not looked-he at no one
'*Nobody* looked at *anybody*.'

What seems curious about the MH example is that although the construction requires sentential negation, the meaning is parallel to that of its Spanish counterpart. Both sentences express the same idea, i.e., that there is no person x, and there is no person y, such that x looked at y. I take this to mean that the sentential negation in MH in this case is semantically vacuous. However, as seen in section 2, some of the n-words in MH require sentential negation in certain environments. The question is, to which of the n-words is this negation particle linked, if not to both, and why? As the next examples show, this is not clear.

(27) John lo histakel al *af ehad*. [NPI in Hebrew]
John not looked-he at no one
'John didn't look at *anybody*.' [NPI in English]

(28) *Af ehad* lo histakel al John. [NE/NPI in Hebrew]
no one not looked-he at john
'*Nobody* looked at John.' [NE in English]

(29) *Mishehu* histakel al John. [PPI in Hebrew]
somebody/one looked-he at john
'*Somebody*/someone looked at John.'

These examples seem to show that the sentential/verbal negation 'not', licenses both the NE and the NPI in Hebrew. In the absence of the negative particle, we have a PPI in subject or object position, instead of an n-word. The next section presents the MH data in more detail.

4. The data

4.1 NPIs in Modern Hebrew

A basic way to check whether a lexical item is polarity sensitive or not, is to examine its behavior under negation. As shown below, items in the *af*/*shum* series appear in the c-commanding domain of negation:

(30) Lo raiti *af* kelev.
not seen-I no dog
'I didn't see *any* dog.'

(31) Lo matsati *shum* siba.
not found-I no reason
'I didn't find *any* reason.'

Af and *shum* cannot appear in the absence of negation:

(32) *Raiti *af* kelev
saw-I no dog
'I saw *no* dog.'

(33) *Matsati *shum* siba
found-I no reason
'I found *no* reason.'

Hence, and according to Klima's theory, these items should behave as NPIs in Hebrew. The next section presents some general remarks regarding items in the *af/shum* series and their distributional properties, and checks the contexts in which they behave as their English and/or Spanish counterparts. I begin by focusing on polarity sensitive properties.

4.2 *Af* & *shum*

Similarly to the K&L account, *af* and *shum* appear in constructions with indefinite NPs, and assume a polarity sensitive interpretation when the meaning parallels that of the English 'any'.

(34) a. *af* kelev
no dog
'*No/Any* dog'

b. *shum* ma'amar
no article
'*No/Any* article'

(34b) can have two distinct interpretations – as in (35) and (36):

(35) I didn't find *any* article. [NPI interpretation]

(36) *No* article was of interest to me. [NQ]

(37) *Shum* ma'amar lo hinyen oti. [NPI/NQ in Hebrew]
no article not interested-$_{masc}$ me
'*No* article was of interest to me.' [NQ in English]

It should be noted that the construction in (37) has a parallel form:

(38) Lo hinyen oti *shum* ma'amar. [NPI]
not interested-he me no article
'I wasn't interested in *any* article.'

The negative quantifier interpretation is a bit problematic, since in MH, in an example such as (37), *shum* could be ambiguous between a NQ, and an NPI reading, as in (38), which can have the following representation:

(39) $\neg\exists x$ (x is an article $\wedge$ x interests me)

For the free choice (generic) interpretation, another indefinite pronoun is used, from the *kol* series. *Af* and *kol* sometimes appear in complementary distribution, the former in polarity sensitive contexts, while the latter appears in generic contexts:

(40) *Kol* pinguin ohev sheleg.
every/any penguin likes snow
'*Any* penguin likes snow.'

The FC versus PS behavior can be found in English with *any*. The existential, polarity sensitive interpretation is shown in (41) and the universal, free choice interpretation, in (42):

(41) Arnie doesn't have *any* cookies.

(42) *Any* owl hunts mice. (K&L 1993)

K&L argue that the polarity sensitive *any*, when in an indefinite '*any* NP' construction ('any cookie') should be regarded semantically as the equivalent indefinite NP ('a cookie'), with an additional semantic property – the 'widening' effect. In MH, *shum*, similarly to the English 'any', achieves the 'widening' effect as proposed by K&L:

(43) Le-Arnie en *shum* ugiot.
to-Arnie' not-have no cookies
'Arnie doesn't have *any* cookies.'

Shum widens the domain of interpretation to include all possible members of a cookies' set (in this case).

4.3 *Af* & *shum* in questions

Contrary to expectations, NPIs in English are licensed without the required negation in rhetorical questions with the expectation of a negative answer, i.e., when there is a negative rhetorical bias, as in (44). This however does not explain the NPIs in (45) and (46) which can have a clear, information seeking meaning.

(44) Are there *any* penguins in the semantics class?

(45) Who has *any* chocolate?

(46) Does Arnie have *any* chocolate?

Other arguments, which discuss NPI licensing in information seeking questions (and this would explain (45) and (46)), argue for two types of NPI licensing in questions: (a) in rhetorical questions with negative bias, the NPI incorporates an *even* interpretation, and (b) in *wh*- questions, which seem to license the NPIs themselves (van Rooy, 2003). In MH, the situation is different. Simple questions seem to exhibit the same properties as declarative sentences, with regards to the licensing of NPIs, i.e., the NPI has to be in the domain of negation. MH also allows preposing for the purpose of achieving an emphasized interpretation. Even so, the NPI is still interpreted under the scope of negation.

(47) Lo raita *af* kelev? Le-betax lo raita *af* kelev.
not saw-you no/any dog for-sure not saw-you no dog
'Didn't you see *any* dog?' 'For sure, you didn't see any dog'

(48) *Af* kelev lo raita? (emphasized)
no dog not saw-you
'You didn't see ANY dog?'

(49) Lo shaxaxta *shum davar*? Tivdok she-lo shaxaxta *shum davar*.
not forgot-you no thing check that-not forgot-you no thing
'You didn't forget *anything*?' 'Check that you didn't forget *anything*.'

There is however a slight difference between the declarative and the interrogative in (47) and (49). It seems that there is an element of surprise in the interrogative constructions containing NPIs, which is absent from the declarative constructions. When asking questions such as (47) and (48), the speaker anticipates the answer and is surprised that it is the opposite of their expectations. One could claim that these are rhetorical questions, but this is not necessarily the case.

Up to this point, I have looked at the NPI interpretation of the *af*/*shum* series. In the next section, I examine some of the more problematic interpretations of items in this series of indefinites.

5. The *af* & *shum* puzzle

The contexts considered here are ambiguous contexts, i.e., those in which there is some difficulty in finding a unified analysis for the interpretations of a polarity item from the *af/shum* series and its distribution.

5.1 *Af* as 'nothing at all', 'no' and 'even'

An interesting property of *af* and *shum* is that they can combine with other items for the expression 'nothing at all'. In the case of *af*, it can combine with *davar* 'thing', for a 'not a thing' / 'nothing at all' interpretation:

(50) *Af* lo *davar ehad* kara po
no not thing one happened here
'*Not a thing* happened here / *Nothing at all* happened here.'

This results in a syntactic structure where the sentential negation *lo* 'not' seems to intervene inside the compound *af davar* 'no thing', 'not a thing', 'nothing'. Another way of interpreting this construction is by assigning a different meaning to its components. Let us say that the compound is not *af davar*, but rather *davar ehad* 'one thing'. In this case, *af* has another meaning, that of 'even'.

(51) Not *even one thing* happened here.

In colloquial Hebrew, *shum* can form the expression *shum klum*, which has the meaning of 'nothing at all':

(52) Ma asit hayom? *Shum klum*.
what did-you-do today? no nothing
'What did you do today? *Nothing at all*.'

This expression can also parallel 'nothing' and it can be replaced by *shum davar* 'no thing'. However, there might be a strengthening effect to the *shum klum* 'nothing at all' expression, emphasizing, in this case, the non-activity.

5.2 *Af* & *shum* in 'before' & 'after' clauses

In English, 'before' clauses license NPIs as shown in (53). It is not clear if the English 'after' clauses license PPIs (54) or simply do not allow NPIs (55).

(53) She called <u>before</u> deciding *anything*.

(54) She called <u>after</u> *something* was decided.

(55) *She called <u>after</u> *anything* was decided.

In contrast to English, MH 'before' clauses license PPIs as in (56). 'After + negation' clauses seem to be a context in which NPIs are licensed:

(56) John azav lifnei shera'a *mishehu*. [PPI in Hebrew]
John left before that-saw-he someone
'John left before he saw *anyone*.' [NPI in English]

(57) John azav axarei she-lo ra'a *af-ehad* / *shum davar* / *klum*.
[NPI in Hebrew]
John left after that-not seen-he no one / no thing / klum
'John left after he didn't see *anyone* / *anything* / *anything*.'

(58) John azav axarei she-*mashehu* kara. [PPI in Hebrew]
John left after that-something happened
'John left after *something* happened.'

However, this can be attributed to the sentential negation, since in the absence of negation, 'after' will still take a positive polarity item, as shown in (58).

5.3 *Af* & *shum* under 'only'

In English, 'only' is said to license NPIs in both the matrix and the restrictor clauses of a declarative, as in example (59) below:

(59) *Only* the students who had *ever* read *anything* about this listened to the lecture.

In MH, on the other hand, in the same type of construction, things work in the following way – in order for two NPIs (e.g., 'ever' and 'any') to be licensed, as in the English counterpart, the NPIs have to be in the c-commanding domain of negation. In the absence of a negation operator in the subordinate clause, the correspondent of the English 'ever' – *pa'am*, can be found, which seems to license a PPI ('something'), as in (60).[6]

[6] In MH, *pa'am* corresponds to the English 'once' and 'ever'. In contexts where it appears as 'ever', this item seems to require/license either a PPI, or a quantifier such as 'some'.

(60) *Rak* hatalmidim she-kar'u *pa'am*$_{\text{-NPI}}$ *mashehu*$_{\text{-PPI}}$ al ze hekshivu…
only the students that-read ever something about this listened…
'*Only* the students who had *ever* read *anything* about this listened..'

(61) *Rak* hatalmidim she-lo$_{\text{-NOT}}$ kar'u *af pa'am*$_{\text{-NPI}}$ *shum davar*$_{\text{-NPI}}$ al…
only the students that-not read not once/never no thing about…
'*Only* the students who had *never* read *anything* about…'

In (61) the negation in the subordinate clause licenses the NPIs, while 'only' does not seem to have any effect. The temporal adverbials 'ever' and 'never', could be considered here as licensers for 'something' and 'nothing', respectively. In MH, *mashehu* 'something' can only appear under 'ever' while *shum davar* 'nothing' appears in the scope of a negative element 'never', as seen in (60) & (61) above.

5.4 *Af* & *shum* in conditionals and modal contexts

One of the questions surrounding these items is whether they can appear in contexts in the absence of sentential negation. As illustrated below, English 'any' can appear in modals contexts and in the antecedent of conditionals, without negation:

(62) It could be *anything*.

(63) Tell me if you hear *anything* about this movie.

In MH, the following modal context can be found:

(64) Ze yexol lihiot *shum davar*. [NE]
this can be nothing
'It could be nothing.'

(64) could be a case where someone is worried and someone else tries to reassure them. When a negation is introduced, as in the example below, this negation is not

a licensor for *shum davar*, rather, its function is to negate the possibility of an event:

(65) Ze lo yexol lihiot *shum davar*. [NE]
this not can be nothing
'It can't be *nothing*.'

With respect to conditionals, Hebrew behaves differently from English, in that NPIs are not licensed without a negation.

(66) Tagidi li im at shoma'at *mashehu* al haseret. [PPI]
$\text{tell}_{\text{2nd.f}}$ to-me if you hear_{f} something about the-movie
'Tell me if you hear *something/anything* about the movie.'

(67) Tagidi li im at lo shoma'at *shum davar* al haseret. [NPI]
$\text{tell}_{\text{2nd.f}}$ to-me if you not hear nothing about the-movie
'Tell me if you don't hear anything about the movie.'

It seems that in modal contexts, items from the *af/shum* series can be interpreted unambiguously as negative elements, as in (64). In conditionals, they need a negative licensor as in (67), otherwise a PPI is required in that position. (64) provides evidence in favor of an ambiguity approach: in certain contexts these items assume the property of being an NE, while in others they exhibit NPI-like behavior.

5.5 *Af* & *shum* as scalar indefinites

Now that items in the *af*/*shum* series can be safely placed in at least two categories, under the roof of negatives indefinites, and can be interpreted either as negative elements or as negative polarity items, depending on the context as well as distributional properties, I turn to the differences in meaning between *af* and *shum*. I attempt to provide an account based on scalar entailment, following a Fauconnier/Horn approach.

In contexts where both *af* and *shum* can be used as polarity sensitive items, intuitively, they can be distinguished in terms of a widening effect. *Af* rules out 'quantity' exceptions more strongly than *shum* does, while *shum* rules out 'kind' exceptions more strongly than *af* does. An utterance such as:

(68) Lo ra'iti *af* anan
not saw-I no cloud
'I didn't see *any* cloud',

would suggest that the speaker did not see a cloud at all, not even one, while:

(69) Lo ra'iti *shum* anan
not saw-I no cloud
'I didn't see *any* cloud',

suggests that the speaker did not see any kind of cloud, fluffy or otherwise.

There are two possibilities that arise here. The first is to have one scale that would provide a unified account of the indefinites in the *af/shum* series. As mentioned earlier in the paper, in Hebrew there are at least three indefinites which correspond to the English 'any' – *af*, *shum* and *kol*. A second possibility is to decide on two separate scales – a quantity scale and a kind scale. Following Horn (1995), I take the elements on a quantity scale to be: *quantity of CN*, for example, *an owl*, *two owls*, etc. The low end of the scale represents the quantity of CN for which a proposition is least likely to hold, i.e., the minimum quantity CN, for example, *an owl*. *Any* associated with a quantity scale may be paraphrased by *even a single* (for count nouns) or *even a bit /even the least bit* (for mass nouns):

(70) a. There isn't *any* person available now.
b. There's isn't *even a single* person available now.

The elements on a kind scale are *kinds of CN*. At the low end of a kind scale, we find the kind of CN for which a proposition is least likely to hold in the given context. As Horn points out, "*any* associated with a kind scale may be paraphrased by *even* + (contextually appropriate) superlative".

(71) a. *Every* puppy is cute.
b. *Even the ugliest* puppy is cute. (Horn, 1995: 11)

For Hebrew, I argue that on a quantity scale, *shum* ranks above *af*, while on a kind scale, the situation is reversed. (72) shows how the quantity scale works with *af*:

(72) a. Lo haya sham *af* kelev.
not was there no dog
'There wasn't *any* dog there.'
b. Lo haya sham *afilu* kelev *ehad*.
not was there even dog one
'There wasn't *even a single* dog there.'

Example (73) shows how the kind scale would work with *shum*:

(73) a. Ani lo ohevet *shum* tapuax.
I not like no apple
'I don't like *any* apple.'
b. Ani lo ohevet *afilu* et hatapuax *haxi ta'im*.
I not like even $_{acc}$the-apple most delicious
'I don't like *even the most delicious* apple.'

A scenario that would distinguish between *af* and *shum* in terms of quantity versus kind interpretations could be the following: let us say that Bert and Arnie are having a party and that Arnie is in charge of bringing the deserts which should include a birthday cake and also different kinds of cookies. So Arnie goes to the

"It's a cakes' and cookies' world" store and comes back disappointed and tells Bert that they did not have even a single birthday cake and that although they did have some cookies, they did not have the cookies that he was looking for (i.e., that he found to be most delicious). In this situation, and assuming they also speak Hebrew, Arnie would say the following:

(74) Lo haita la-hem *af* uga ve *shum* ugiot she-ratsiti.
not had to-they no cake and no cookies that-wanted-I
'They didn't have *any* cake or *any* cookies that I wanted.

In this scenario, *af* is interpreted as 'not even a single, not even one', while *shum* can be interpreted in the sense that they did not have the kind of cookies that he wanted most. Arnie could also say:

(75) Lo haita la-hem *af* uga *(ahat)*.
not had$_{sg\text{-}F}$ to-they no cake (one)
'They didn't have *any/(not even one)* cake.'

(76) Lo hayu la-hem *shum* ugiot.
not had$_{pl}$ to-they no cookies
'They didn't have *any* cookies.'

In (75), it is clear that *af*, especially when strengthened by *ahat* 'one', is interpreted in terms of quantity. *Shum* cannot be found in the same construction; it cannot be compounded with *ahat* 'one'. Although (76) can be also interpreted as "they did not have cookies (in general)," if one takes into consideration the above scenario, it can be said that (76) presupposes that they did not have certain kinds of cookies at the store. This cannot be said for (75).

Based on the examples shown so far, a pragmatic scales approach which takes into account semantic properties such as *widening*, seems best qualified to account for the items in the *af/shum* series of indefinites in Modern Hebrew.

6. Conclusions

The above discussion was meant to provide a descriptive account of the *af*/*shum* 'any' series of indefinites in Modern Hebrew, while focusing on the negative polarity properties of these items. The task of finding a unified analysis for these items remains a complicated one, and for the purposes of the present work, I found it more realistic to discuss some of their properties and the contexts in which they appear in their various interpretations. As it appears, items in the *af*/*shum* series can be almost anything, no pun intended. It was shown that *af*, for example, can function as a determiner, a negative quantifier, a negative polarity item and a negative element. Nevertheless, I argue that items belonging to the *af*/*shum* series are ambiguous between negative elements and negative polarity items, and that they can be accounted for by attributing to them a semantic *widening* property, which would take affect on a kind- and/or a quantity scale.

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