Chapter Five

Negative Polarity Items in Yemeni Arabic

5.1 Introduction:

The study of negative polarity items (NPIs) has drawn considerable attention ever since Klima (1964). The phenomenon has been tackled within various linguistic frameworks and many proposals have been provided to explain the idiosyncratic behavior of these items with respect to other lexical items.

NPIs are expressions that can be licensed in negative and negative-like environments, namely non-veridical contexts (Giannakidou, 1998). Consider the NPI any in English:

1. a. I did not kill anyone.

   b. *I killed anyone.

The majority of studies on NPIs are dedicated to the investigation of the triggers of NPIs and to the establishment of a unified account that can capture the variation in the licensing conditions and can apply cross-linguistically. The legacy of these studies that appeal variously to syntax, semantics and pragmatics are detected in the works of Klima (1964), Ross (1967), Jackendoff (1969), Baker (1970), Ladusaw (1979), Linebarger (1980, 1987), Progovac (1992, 1993, 1994), van der Wouden (1997), Giannakidou (1998, 2008), Hoeksema (2000), Zeijlstra (2004), Moscati (2006), Kumar (2006) and others.
The main issue that these studies encounter is the diverse triggers that lack a common feature, i.e. NPIs are licensed in negative sentences, yes/no questions, conditional sentences, adversative predicates, comparatives, restrictive clauses of universal quantifiers, monotone decreasing elements like \textit{few}, and the like. Although they are grouped under the classification of explicitly negative as well as non-negative contexts, it was not easy to locate a common syntactic property that unifies the non-negative environments, except the lack of an overt negative feature. Consequently, establishing an account within a particular linguistic framework is always associated with several problems. In my view, approaching the phenomenon from both a syntactic and semantic perspective might overcome these issues and provide a better explanation. In this chapter, I follow the line of reasoning presented by Giannakidou (1998) in which she could successfully capture the disparity among the NPI triggers by grouping them under the umbrella of nonveridicality. Based on this, I attempt to establish a minimalist account and claim that NPIs are licensed by a nonveridical operator that enters into a multiple Agree relation with the element that gives rise to nonveridicality and NPIs. The operation Agree applies to the matched goals simultaneously where the probe does not stop when locating the closest matching goal but continues probing until valuing the unvalued feature of the NPI within the vP.

NPIs in Arabic have not been in the focus of much recent work, at least to my knowledge. NPIs in the context of negation are discussed in Benmamoun (1997) for Moroccan Arabic. Other works such as Hoyt (2005) and Lucas (2009) focused only on some of the lexical properties of these items.
The goal of this chapter is to point out all the distributional and categorial properties of NPIs in YA and their licensing conditions, at one extreme, and to bring to light many pertinent and significant aspects, at the other. Though I restrict my research to YA, the findings and the conclusions I reach may apply to a wide range of dialects spoken in the Arab world.

The discussion reveals that NPIs can occur in both negative and non-negative contexts, but it is also observed that not all the contexts that trigger NPIs in English can do so in YA. The account, which I offer in this chapter appeals to both syntax and semantics; it explains the dependency between the licensor and the licensee in terms of Agree mechanism. Besides Giannakidou (1998), I adopt some insightful ideas from Chomsky (2000, 2001), Pesetsky and Torrego (2007), Bošković (2007) and Hiraiwa (2001). I claim that NPIs are licensed by a non-overt nonveridical operator posited in CP; this operator comes from the lexicon specified for unvalued/interpretable feature, it enters into multiple Agree with the elements that have the value nonVer and NPIs. In this vein, NPIs will be licensed when their nonVer feature is valued and deleted by the valued nonVer operator.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section 5.2 introduces a brief overview of the studies that dealt with the polarity phenomenon within various linguistic frameworks. Section 5.3 discusses the distribution of NPIs in YA. It highlights the contexts that serve as proper environments of NPIs in YA. There, I attempt to classify NPIs according to their strength of occurrence. Section 5.4 is concerned with the discussion of the licensing conditions of NPIs in which I attempt to incorporate Giannakidou (1998) and Pesetsky and Torrego (2007). In section, 5.5, I offer an Agree-based account where I
argue that NPIs, in general, are licensed by a nonVer operator located in ForceP. The relation between the licensor and the licensee is regulated by Agree relation, in particular multiple Agree. Section 5.6 concludes the discussion.

5.2 An overview of previous accounts:

I will note down some of the key points of seminal works that tackled the polarity phenomenon from semantic, syntactic and pragmatic points of view.

5.2.1 The semantic approach:

Ladusaw (1980) claims that NPIs are licensed in Downward Entailing (DE) contexts. These contexts license inference from a superset to a subset. The licensing hypothesis is formulated as follows:

2. δ is a trigger for NPIs if and only if δ is downward entailing.

(from Ladusaw 1980:113)

The context of negation is downward entailing since it maintains the above-mentioned distinction. Consider these examples:

3. John never eats vegetables for dinner → John never eats a green vegetable for dinner.
4. No men walk → no fathers walk.

*Vegetable* is a superset that entails the subset *green vegetable* and the superset *men* entails the subset *fathers*. The direction of the entailment does not proceed from the subset to the superset but vice versa. For instance, *no fathers walk* does not entail *no men walk* but *no men walk* entails *no fathers walk*. Therefore, the inference is claimed to be downward entailing.
Further, Ladusaw (1980) claims that most of the triggers of NPIs are also downward entailing. These contexts are not negative in nature but can license NPIs within their scope like the context of few; adversative predicates, comparatives and the restriction of universal quantifiers. Consider these examples:

5. a. Few people say anything.

   b. Frank denied that he said anything.

   c. Bill runs faster than I ever could.

   d. Everyone who knew anything about the accident spoke to the police.

The DE approach to NPIs has been accepted in the literature and its mainstream is pursued by many linguists who appeal to semantics rather than syntax in accounting for NPI licensing. However, this approach has some issues. For example, yes/no questions can license NPIs, but they are not DE. This constitutes a gap in the hypothesis since they prove the DE approach inadequate. To group the licensing contexts of NPIs, Giannakidou (1998) argues against DE. She states that polarity sensitivity comprises much more diversity than a characterization in terms of DE or negation can account for. The analysis she offers accounts for a variety of PIs, namely affective polarity items, a general classification in which NPIs constitutes a subset.

As known, PIs are allergic to affirmative and negative contexts. The polarity sensitivity and the semantic dependency that holds between the licensor and the licensee constitutes the core idea in Giannakidou's proposal; an extensive study that includes all types of polarity items like the affective polarity items, free choice items, positive polarity items and subjunctive relative clauses. These contexts are parallel in the sense
that they are sensitive to certain environments (the definition of polarity items from Giannakidou 1998: 42):

6. (Polarity Item)

i. A polarity item \( a \) is an expression whose distribution is limited by sensitivity to some semantic property \( \beta \) of the context of appearance.

ii. \( \beta \) is (non)veridicality.

Semantic dependency is defined as follows:

7. (Semantic dependency)

An expression \( \alpha \) is semantically dependent on an expression \( \beta \) iff, for the proper interpretation of \( \alpha \), a certain relation \( R \) must hold between \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \).

The definition translates the semantic dependency in terms of a relation between the PI and its trigger, i.e. the relation that holds between an NPI and its licensor.

The efficacy of Giannakidou’s (1998) proposal lies in its ability to account for a wide range of PIs and to establish a unified account within the semantic perspective; this account seems plausible compared to the previous one in terms of DE. The appeal to the notion of (non)veridicality\(^{23}\) has played a major role in defining the contexts that license PIs. This notion is defined approximately as the following:

8. (non)veridicality

Let \( Op \) be a monadic propositional operator. The following statements hold:

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\(^{23}\) (Non) veridicality is used since Montague (1969) to define some properties of verb classes, as reported by Giannakidou herself.
i. $Op$ is veridical just in case $Op \ p \rightarrow p$ is logically valid. Otherwise, $Op$ is nonveridical.

ii. A nonveridical operator $Op$ is antiveridical just in case $Op \ p \rightarrow \neg p$ is logically valid.

(from Giannakidou 1998:20, p.106)

This definition captures three defining properties: veridicality, nonveridicality and antiveridicality. Giannakidou (1998) argues that an $Op$ is veridical iff whenever $Op \ p$ is true, $p$ is true too (where $p$ is an arbitrary proposition). An operator is nonveridical iff whenever $p$ is true, $p$ may or may not be true; it does not entail the falsity of $p$ either, it is the antiveridical operator that is concerned with the falsity of $p$. These notions are illustrated by examples, for instance, *yesterday* and the conjunction *and* are veridical. Consider these examples: (from Giannakidou 1998:22-26):

9. I Theodora efije xthes. → Theodora efije
   the Theodora left.3sg yesterday
   ‘Theodora left yesterday.’ → Theodora left.

10. Jacob sang and Ruth cried. → Jacob sang.
    Jacob sang and Ruth cried. → Ruth cried.

*Perhaps* and the disjunction *or* are nonveridical:

11. Isos i Roxani na efije
    Perhaps the Roxanne sub left.3s
Perhaps Roxanna left. \(-\rightarrow\) 'Roxanne left.'

12. Jacob jumped or Ruth fainted. \(-\rightarrow\) Jacob jumped

Jacob jumped or Ruth fainted. \(-\rightarrow\) Ruth fainted.

Antiveridical operators are represented by sentential negation:

13. Frank did not bring flowers. \(\rightarrow\)

It is not the case that Frank brought flowers.

These are the key points in Giannakidou's proposal that I am going to adopt in this chapter. This proposal is more comprehensive than DE in grouping the licensing conditions under the umbrella of nonveridicality.

It is worth emphasizing that the focus in this chapter will be on NPIs and I will not pay much attention to the other PIs. I will attempt to confine the discussion to the notion non-veridicality in accounting for the variation in the licensing conditions of NPIs.

5.2.2 The syntactic approach:

The syntactic account is built on the c-command relation that holds between the licensor and the NPI, which seems to be compulsory in most of the contexts and apply to most languages. In English, as discussed at length in the literature, the NPI anyone requires a c-commanding negative operator to be licensed, as in:

14. a. The man did not speak to anyone.

b. *anyone did not speak to the man.
The ungrammaticality of (14b) is the logical consequence of the realization of *anyone* above its licensor. This observation was at the heart of the discussion of NPIs; many proposals were built on this core idea. One of the linguists who pursued this idea is Ljiljana Progovac, her works (1992, 1993, 1994) appeal to the late binding theory. The dependency between NPIs and negation, such as the need of a clause-mate negative licensor led to the claim that NPIs are identical to anaphors and subject to the principle A of the binding theory. Progovac (1994), based on data from English and Serbo-Croatian, argues that NPIs in English are subject to principle A while they can be subject to principle B in Serbo-Croatian. The typical binder of NPIs is negation and the governing category is the clause in the case of English, and both the sentence and the clause in case of Serbo-Croatian. Consider these examples:

15. John did not see anything

16. a. Milan ne postuje *ni(t)ko-ga.*

   milan not respects no-one.Acc

   'Milan does not respect anyone.'

   (from Progovac 1994: 153)

b. Ne tvrdi-m da *i(t)ko* postuje Marij-u

   not claim-1S that anyone respects Mary.Acc

   'I don't claim that anyone respects Mary.'

   (from Progovac 1994:158)

On the other hand, contexts that license NPIs in the absence of an overt negative operator like adversative predicates, yes/no questions and the like are claimed to host an abstract *neg* operator in the Comp position. Evidence for the presence of the abstract operator in Comp position is illustrated by the following example:

17. a.* I denied anything.
These predicates cannot license NPIs within their clausal boundaries, but they can do so within their clausal complements that mean that the embedded C⁰ is involved in the licensing condition. Based on this, it is claimed that all the non-negative contexts that license NPIs can host a non-overt operator. Later on, Progovac (1993) claims that this operator might be an abstract neg since the truth-value of these contexts is indeterminate. The operator is characterized by [+/- choice]; the minus choice is responsible for the NPI licensing. Further, she divides the licensing conditions into two parts: i) direct licensing by a clause-mate negative marker and ii) indirect licensing by an abstract operator in C⁰ that might have a negative feature. The parallelism between anaphors and NPIs is evident to be in conformity with the c-command relation and the locality restriction.

The critique to the binding approach to NPIs is based on evidence from languages in which the c-command requirement at the Spell-out is not mandatory for the licensing of NPIs, and the licensing is satisfied by an occurrence of NPIs above NegP. The point is that this approach cannot be applied cross-linguistically. For instance, languages such as Hindi and Dutch do not respect these constraints as pointed out by Kumar (2006) and Hoeksema (2000). Consider these examples:

18. maiN-ne *kissi bhii* sTuDeNT ko nahiiN dekh-aa  (from Kumar 2006:45)

I-ERG some even student to NEG see-PERF

'I did not see any student.'

19. Ik heb hem *in Jaren* neit gezien  (from Hoeksema 2000:72)
I have him in years not seen

'I have not seen him in years.'

The boldfaced constituents are NPIs generated above the negative operator; this piece of evidence casts doubt on the binding approach to NPIs and its ability to capture the parametric variation among languages. Establishing a unified account for the phenomenon of polarity seems ridden with problems since the licensing is not cross-linguistically determined overtly.

5.2.3 The pragmatic approach:

Based on Baker (1970), Linebarger (1980) offered an analysis that appeals to both syntax and pragmatics to account for the wide range of licensing contexts of NPIs. Linebarger (1980) distributes the contexts of NPI licensors into two parts: direct licensing by a c-commanding negative marker and indirect licensing by negative implicature. The former requires NPIs to be in the immediate scope of NOT. In other words, there must not be a logical element that intervenes between the NPI and its licensor at LF. For example, clausal adverbials like because and other types of adverbial expressions can intervene between NOT and the NPI at LF. In that case, the immediate scope constraint will be violated. The immediate scope constraint is formulated as follows:

20. The immediate scope constraints (ISC) (from Linebarger 1980:13, p. 30)

A negative polarity item is acceptable in a sentence S if in the logical form of S the sub-formula 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; the occurrence of the surface realization of \( n \) logical elements in a sentence \( S \) results in association of \( S \) with up to \( n! \) Logical forms expressing the possible and acceptable orderings of these elements.

(21) illustrates how this constraint operates

21. *He did not budge an inch anymore often than he stood his ground.

(from Linebarger 1980:14)

The adverbial clause ‘anymore...’ intervenes between the idiomatic NPI budge an inch and NOT at LF because this clause is also negated. Accordingly, this behavior deprives budge an inch from being in the immediate scope of negation so the ISC is violated. In the second part of her analysis, Linebarger (1980) argues that the contexts that license NPIs in the absence of negation implicate negation, i.e. pragmatic implicature. Consider this example:

22. I was surprised that she contributed a red cent. (from Linebarger 1980:1, p.106)

According to her, this example implicates negation since it can be rephrased as follows:

23. I had expected her not to contribute a red cent.

This analysis works out to some extent because it handles part of the problem, but leaves some issues unexplained. In other words, not all the contexts entail negation, for instance, yes/no questions and conditional sentences do not have determinate truth values, but they can license NPIs.
In conclusion, in this section, I aim at pointing out the major lines followed to account for the polarity phenomenon. The discussion reveals the following points:

i) There is no adequate account that can apply cross-linguistically.

ii) Appealing to an individual linguistic framework cannot capture all the variation.

iii) The syntactic-pragmatic approach is not adequate too.

iv) A compromise between syntax and semantics may offer a better explanation to the polarity phenomenon.

5.3 NPIs in Yemeni Arabic:

Here, I will examine the different aspects of NPIs in YA and attempt to focus on the properties, which have not been discussed yet in the literature. The distribution of NPIs and the environments that license them will be discussed in detail. A brief discussion will be dedicated to the types and distribution of NPIs and their logical strength based on the fact that negation becomes the obligatory licensor of some NPIs while it is optional for others.

5.3.1 The types and distribution of NPIs:

NPIs are not restricted to a particular category of words; they can be nouns, verbs and adverbs. In this subsection, I will confine the discussion to three lexical categories that function as NPIs: nominal NPIs like had ‘anyone’, shiy/hagah ‘anything’, NPI adverbs like abadan/lashiq ‘ever/at all’ and the adverb-like NPI `umr ‘in one’s life/ever’ and the NPI auxiliary-like `add24 `still/anymore`.

24 The lexical properties of `add are discussed in Chapter 3.
It is worth pointing out that nominal NPIs in YA are not lexically parallel to *anyone* and *anything*; however, they share the same polarity property. The point is that *had* correlates with ‘one’ and *shiy* with ‘thing’. The lexical item that is similar to ‘any’ is represented by *aiy*; this item can be distributed as a free choice item. Its combination with *had* is not necessary for satisfying the polarity requirement but it is necessary to strengthen the meaning and to restrict the domain of *had* to express a similar meaning to ‘not even one’, conversely to the freedom of choice which is considered as a domain widening. Moreover, *aiy* is optional in negative contexts but compulsory in the non-negative ones, i.e. contexts of free choice. Notice that the discussion of free choice items is outside the scope of this chapter. However, I will try to sketch some of their properties.

24. a. *(aiy)had mumkin ya?malha

    anyone may do.3ms

    ‘Anyone can do it.’

b. quul la-h *(aiy) hagah

    say.2ms to-him anything

    ‘Tell him anything.’

The asterisk mark indicates that *aiy* is compulsory in these contexts. I think that the behavior of *aiy* indicates that there is no ambiguity between free choice items and negative polarity items in YA, because they have different distributions.

Now let us come back to NPIs. These items are licensed in a variety of contexts in which negation is a subset of the licensors. They are not all subject to the c-command
The occurrence of nominal NPIs in the context of negation respects the c-command relation rigorously. NPI adverbs/adverbial-like exhibit a distinct behavior with respect to each other:

26. a. ma-sharuh-sh alqaryah abadan (TD)

neg-fut.go.1s-neg the village at all

‘I will not go to the village at all.’

b. la taguul la-hum lashiq anna-k batesafir alhind (HD)

neg 2.tell.ms to-them at all that-2ms fut.travel.2ms the India

‘Do not tell them at all that you will travel to India.’
Lashiq in the Hadhrami dialect is the equivalent of abadan in other dialects and both exhibit the same behavior, i.e. abadan and lashiq are licensed in the c-commanding domain of negation. On the contrary, 5.umr appears out of the scope negation at the Spell-Out. Consider these examples:

27. a. 5umr-i ma sharibt 6amr

ever-my neg drink.past.1s wine

'I have not had wine ever

b. 5umr 5ali ma shirb 6amr

ever ali neg drink.past.3ms wine

'Ali has not had wine ever.'

5umr is always associated with a focus feature and a phonological stress which might be the reason for its occurrence above NegP. Therefore, I assume that 5umr moves to a focus position above NegP. This will be discussed in detail later. It is worth noting that NPIs in YA do not all exhibit the same behavior, for instance, the NPI 5aad 'still/anymore' is always contingent to the main verb, even it merges with the negative marker in some dialects. Consider these examples:

28. a. ma-5aad-yazuur-na-sh

neg-anymore-visit.pres.3ms-us-neg
'He does not visit us anymore.'

b. *Saad ma-yazuur-na-sh

anymore neg-visit.pres.3ms-us-neg

In sum, this sub-section aims at illustrating the distribution of NPIs and the different lexical categories that can function as NPIs in YA. The discussion in the next section will determine the contexts that allow and disallow NPIs in comparison to English. I also demonstrate that negation does not always c-command NPIs.

5.3.2 Constraints on the occurrence of NPIs:

In accordance with Giannakidou (1998), NPIs are triggered in non-veridical contexts, a comprehensive notion that includes all the licensing conditions. Syntacticians are satisfied by listing the contexts that have this property. For instance, Hoeksema (2000) notes down the following contexts as proper licensors of NPIs in English: negative sentences, interrogative sentences, the antecedent of conditionals, result clauses dependent on too, comparative clauses, restrictive relatives modifying universals, superlative NPs, the scope domain of elements like few, rarely, seldom and the like, complements of adversative predicates such as deny, forbid and the like, and various exclamative constructions with a negative implication. Consider these examples:

29. a. Do you think I could ever trust you? (from Hoeksema 2000:3)

b. If you think I could ever trust you, you’re wrong.

c. I love you more than I could ever say.

d. Fred is too smart to ever admit he wrote the pamphlet.
e. Few people ever admit they’re wrong.

f. Fred was the first to ever swim across the Adriatic.

g. All I could ever do was gnash my teeth and obey.

h. Only Fred has ever swum across the Adriatic.

i. Fred denied ever having had an affair with Edna.

j. Who would ever trust Fred?

k. Like I would ever trust Fred! Yeah right.

Obviously, a wide range of environments functions as proper licensors for NPIs. The situation will presumably differ in YA. Here, I will examine some of these environments and demonstrate whether they are appropriate triggers for NPIs in YA, on one hand. On the other hand, the logical strength of these items will be measured based on whether they are strictly licensed by negation or by other triggers too. The classification of NPIs into strict and non-strict, or weak and strong is fundamentally built on these conclusions.

Van der Wouden (1997) classifies NPIs in conformity with the logical strength into weak, strong and super-strong. This taxonomy is dependent on the licensing of NPIs in three types of contexts:

i) The licensing by monotone decreasing operators like few, hardly, etc.

ii) The licensing by anti-additive operators like nobody and never

iii) The licensing by anti-morphic operators or classical negation like NOT.
The distribution does not include all the non-negative contexts but it is restricted to negative contexts and contexts that imply negation as in (i). It is worth noting that van der Wouden’s classification will not be followed here because it does not account for the various triggering contexts but I adopt its core idea, namely the logical strength of NPIs. Notice that no statistical study that investigates the number of NPIs or their licensors in Arabic is done; therefore, this attempt is a preliminary investigation aiming at establishing the corner block for future studies. Now, it is difficult to make any strong generalization but I intend to provide evidence that the distinction holds.

I will include the following contexts in my investigation: yes/no questions, the antecedent of conditionals, adversative predicates, comparative sentences, the context of few, result clauses dependent on too, the restriction of universal quantifiers and the context of only. Negative contexts will not be discussed by virtue of the fact that all NPIs are licensed by negation. The examples listed above are sufficient to demonstrate the behavior of NPIs in the context of negation.

5.3.2.1 Yes/no questions:

Nominal, verbal and NPI adverbs will be examined respectively in this context.

30. a. shi25 had maľ-ah faluus? (AbD)

QP one with-him money

‘Does anyone have money?’

b. shi gaab la-kum ?ali hagah/shiy maľ-ah?

\footnote{\textit{shi} is a question particle widely used in the Abyani dialect and it should not be confused with the NPI \textit{shiy}.}
QP bring.past.3ms to-you ali thing with-him

‘Did Ali bring you anything with him?’

c. shi ūaad yashtiqil fi ashshirkah?

QP still work.pres.3ms in the company

‘Is he still working in the company?’

d. *shi shiribit shahi ūaxdhār abadan

QP drink.2ms tea green at all

e. ūumra-k akalt dhufda'yah

ever-your eat.past.2ms frog

‘Have you ever eaten a frog?’

In (30c), ūaad is felicitous in yes/no questions only if it is interpreted as ‘still’, a positive polarity item; therefore, I exclude ūaad ‘anymore’ from the context of questions. In (30d), abadan ‘at all’ is also ruled out in this context. To sum up, ūaad and Abadan are not allowed in this context.

5.3.2.2 The antecedent of conditionals:

It is also observed that NPIs are not all licensed in the antecedent of conditionals, as the following examples illustrate:
31. a. idha saʔal had ʔel-i, qul-la-h musafer

if ask.past.3ms anyone about-me, tell.2ms-to-him traveler.1s

‘If anyone asks about me, tell him that I am traveling.’

b. idha ʔataak shiy, shilla-h

if give.past.3ms thing, take.2ms-it

‘If he gives you anything, take it.’

c. Idha ʔaada-h yashtaqil fi ashshirkah, mumkin yasaʔadi-k

if still-3ms work.pres.3ms in the company, possible help.pres.3ms-you

‘If he still works in the company, he may help you.’

d. *idha yashtaqil fi ashshirkah abadan, mumkin yasaʔada-k

if work.pres.3ms in the company at all, possible help.pres.3ms-you

e. ?? idha ʔumra-k zurit misr, kunt shuft ʔalahraam

if ever-your visit.past.2m Egypt be.past.2m see.past.2ms the pyramids

‘If you have ever visited Egypt, you would have seen the pyramids.’

As for sentence (31c), however, when it is grammatical, ʔaad does not yield a NPI interpretation, i.e. it yields a positive polarity interpretation. abadan is ruled out conditional sentences as in yes/no questions. (31e) seems odd so I will exclude a
\$umr$ from this context. To conclude, only nominal NPIs are licensed in the antecedent of conditionals.

5.3.2.3 **Adversative predicates:**

Adversative predicates such as *deny, doubt, forget* and the like are reported in the literature to imply a negative proposition. Consequently, they are considered as a proper licenser of NPIs. Let us examine this assumption:

32. a. ashuk ann had yaqdir ya\$mal-ha

\textit{doubt.1s that one can.pres.3ms do.pres.3ms-it}

‘I doubt that anyone can do it.’

b. ankar annu-h sawwa hagah qalat

\textit{deny.past.3ms that-3ms do.past.3ms thing wrong}

‘He denied that he did anything wrong.’

c. ankar annu-h \$aada-h yasawwi hagaat qalat

\textit{deny.past.3ms that-he still-3ms doing.3ms things wrong}

‘He denied that he is still doing wrong things.’

d. *ankar annu-h sawwa hagah qalat abadan

\textit{deny.past.3ms that-3ms do.past.3ms thing wrong at all}

e. ?? ankar annu-h \$umra-h sawwa hagah qalat
deny.past.3ms that-3ms ever-his do.past.3ms thing wrong

As illustrated by the above examples, nominal NPIs are licensed in adversative predicates, while the other items are not properly licensed in this context.  Saad is exhibiting the same behavior as before and yielding the meaning of the positive polarity item 'still', while Sumr and abadan are bad in this context.

5.3.2.4 Comparative sentences:

Interestingly, comparative sentences do not seem to be licit contexts for the occurrence of NPIs because the free choice item is compulsory in this environment. In other words, had and shiy must be associated with aiy 'any' to maintain the grammaticality of the sentence. Consider these examples:

33. a. 'Ali atwal men *(aiy) had fi assaf

'Ali taller than any one in the class'

b. assahhah afdhal men *(aiy) shiy fi addunia

'the health better than anything in life'

'The health is better than anything in life.'

This behavior indicates that comparatives only license free choice items, not NPIs. The other verbal and NPI adverbs are ruled out due to probably semantic constraints.

5.3.2.5 The context of few:
NPIs in YA are not licensed in the context of few:

34. a. *naas qaleel yaqdiru yaqtalu had
   people few can.pres.3mp kill.inf.3mp one
   ‘Few people can kill anyone.’

   b. *naas qaleel ta’amu shiy men haqana alakal
      few people taste.past.3mp thing from our food
      ‘Few people tasted anything from our food.’

If a context disallows nominal NPIs, it will consequently rules out the other NPIs. For the lack of space, I will not note down any of the examples in which the other NPIs are not licensed. As illustrated, the context of few is not a proper licensor for NPIs in YA.

5.3.2.6 Result clauses dependent on too:

It is worth noting that result clauses like (29d) cannot be represented by ‘too’ in YA. In other words, instead of saying ‘too smart’, the comparative form ‘smarter’ is preferred. This restriction is due to the mechanism YA employ in expressing comparison, which is definitely distinct from English. Consider the following example:

35. a. mohammed athka men ann ya‘traf la had ba garimata-h
    mohammed smarter than to admit.inf.3ms to one with crime-his
    ‘Mohammed is too smart to admit to anyone that he committed a crime.’
b. abn-i athka men ann yaqul hagah ṣeeb

son-my smarter than to say.inf.3ms thing shame

‘My son is too smart to say anything shameful.’

The other NPIs are unacceptable in this context perhaps for semantic or pragmatic reasons.

5.3.2.7 The restriction of universal quantifiers and the context of only:

In this context, NPIs seem to be anomalous because this environment cannot contain an NPI within its domain and even the attempt to form a sentence equivalent to (29g) is not possible.

36. *kull illi ana qadrit ʿumr-i asawwee-h kan ahiz rasee wa amshi

all which I can.past.1s ever-my do.past.1s-it be.past nod.inf.1s head-my and walk.inf.1s

Similarly, only cannot license NPIs in their domain for the same reasons:

37. *bas/faqat ʿumr ṭali agaa ala alwaqit

only ever ali come.past.3ms on the time

It can be concluded that these contexts cannot license NPIs as well.

To sum up, it is demonstrated that the licensing of NPIs is subject to parametric variations among languages. The main points of this discussion can be summarized as follows:
i) There is no parallelism between NPIs in English and their counterparts in YA with respect to the triggering contexts of NPIs.

ii) Negation licenses all NPIs in YA.

iii) NPIs range from weak to strong based on being or not being strictly licensed in the context of negation.

iv) The ban on the occurrence of NPIs in some contexts might be ascribed to some semantic or pragmatic constraints.

The following table sums up the contexts that allow and disallow NPIs in YA:

Table 4

The Licensing Contexts of NPIs in YA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The context</th>
<th>Proper licenser</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negation</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes/no questions</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antecedent of conditionals</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversative predicates</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparatives</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The context of few</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The result clauses dependent on too</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The restriction of the universal quantifier</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The context of only</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the discussion is confined to a limited number of contexts, in particular, three types of NPIs, it uncovers several crucial points relevant to the polarity phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, NPIs range between a strict and non-strict or weak and strong, this rests on the assumption that some NPIs are restricted to the context of negation while others are not. The distribution of NPIs according to their strength is pointed up in Table 5:

Table 5

The Distribution of NPIs according to their Strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPI</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>strong</th>
<th>Super-strong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>had</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shiy</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$a^a^a$</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$umr$</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abadan/lashiq</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table indicates that nominal NPIs are weak by virtue of being licensed in various contexts. The verbal NPI *$a^a^a$* and the NPI *abadan/lashiq* are super-strong by virtue of being restricted to the negative context. The other NPI *$umr$* is strong by virtue of being licensed by negation and in other contexts but banned in some context compared to the nominal counterparts.

The next section is concerned with discussing the licensing conditions of NPIs:

5.4 The licensing conditions of NPIs:
As mentioned, Giannakidou (1998) attempts to capture the variation in the licensing environments of NPIs by the term non-veridicality; non-veridical contexts include negative sentences, yes/no questions, conditional sentences, adversative predicates and the like. The (non)veridicality distinction is a general line of reasoning that covers the broad variability among the licensors of NPIs, it amalgamates the miscellaneous types of licensing contexts. The magnitude of this generalization lays in the capacity of incorporating diverse syntactic structures into one semantic class, namely, non-veridical contexts. In syntactic terms, it can be assumed that these contexts share a non-veridical feature that can be represented by an operator, presumably situated in CP.

The presence of a covert operator in Comp position that is claimed to be responsible for the licensing of NPIs in non-negative contexts has been articulated in the works of Progovac (1992-1994), to the best of my knowledge. The categorial feature of the operator was not specified explicitly. Progovac claims that it might be specified for a negative feature due to the indeterminate nature of these constructions. I consider this neither to be sufficient nor is it empirically supported because the majority of these environments does not imply negation. However, that there is an abstract operator in the CP projection that takes over the semantic property of these syntactic structures seems more plausible. Accordingly, I claim that the non-overt operator in CP is specified for [+non-veridical] feature and I argue that NPIs are licensed by this operator.

In what follows, I will address the question pertaining to the accurate position of this operator, building on Rizzi’s (1997) proposal, namely the split CP hypothesis. Rizzi (1997) argues that the left-periphery of the clause can host interrogative, focus, topic, and
relative operators; therefore, it is required that CP be split up into multiple sub-projections as illustrated in (38):

The topic phrase is iterative in some languages in the sense that a sentence can have more than one topic phrase, like Italian, while the focus phrase is not iterative and is unique. The focus phrase can host focus constituents and Wh-phrases in its specifier position; its head accommodates an abstract focus element or an auxiliary verb in case of questions. To follow, the FinP is postulated to host mood distinctive forms and the TopP is far away from hosting this operator for the same reasons. The point is that those positions are occupied by operators that do not resemble the non-veridical operator, precluding the generation of this operator in any of these functional projections. It is also

\[26\] The asterisk indicates that topic phrases are potentially iterative.
distinguished from them in that it is not generated via movement but merged in that position and lacks any morphological marking. Consequently, ForceP remains the most plausible position to host the non-veridical operator; evidence in favor of this is furnished by interrogative constructions, which are deemed non-veridical. Hosting the interrogative operator in FocP blocks the generation of the non-veridical operator in that position or in FinP. Put differently, the non-veridical operator, since it captures the entire proposition of the clause, cannot be generated until the end of the derivation, i.e. higher than FocP. Subsequently, ForceP seems to be the optimal position for accommodating such an operator.

Consequently, I argue that NPls are licensed by a non-veridical operator and this operator is generated in ForceP.

This proposal also accounts for NPls that do not respect the c-command relation strictly at the surface word order like ُعمر ‘ever/in one’s life’, which is always positioned higher than negation. Consider these examples:

39. ُعمر-ي  ما-شيرب  شاي خرى (AdD)

ever-my neg-drink.past.1s tea green

‘I have not drunk green tea ever.’

A question that arises is: why does ُعمر exhibit such behavior? To answer this question, let us throw some light on the lexical properties of this item. Here, I will point out the syntactic constraints and its etymology.
First, this word is etymologically derived from the noun سُُمّرُ *age/life*. *Sumr* in this sense occurs in the following context (positive context):

40. käan Σُُمّرُ-يََِِ sit seniin lamma safīret alhind.

be.past.3ms age-my six years when travel.past.1s the india.

'I was six years old when I traveled to India.'

Notice that the possessive pronoun *my* on *Sumr* agrees with the null subject:

41. a. Σُُمّرُ-يََِِ ma giit mat?axer

ever-1s neg come.past.1s late.1s

'I have never come late.'

b. Σُُمّرُ-حَمََ ma gaw mat?axreen

ever-3mp neg come.past.3mp late.3mp

'They have never come late.'

The suffixes in the boldfaced letters are in fact morphological representations of the possessive pronoun; they are always suffixed to nouns, not adverbs, a point to consider in this discussion. Therefore, I argue that *Sumr* is a nominal constituent that functions as an adverb at the semantic level; though it implies an adverbial meaning, its lexical and morphological properties emphasize its nominal status. In (42), *Sumr*
appears to host a possessive suffix or be followed by a noun indicating possession.

Consider the boldfaced elements:

42. a. ūmrā-ḥa  ma zaarat-na

ever-her neg visit.past.3fs-us

‘She has never visited us.’

b. ūmr Najwa  ma zaart-na

ever Najwa neg visit.past.3fs-us

‘(Lit. In Najwa’s life, she has not visited us)/Najwa has never visited us.’

This behavior is exhibited only by nouns as illustrated by (43):

43. a. baita-ḥa, kassarawuu-h albaladiyah

house-his demolish.past.3mp-it the municipality

‘Her house, the municipality workers demolished it.’

b. bait Najwa, kassarawuu-h albaladiyah

house Najwa demolish.past.3mp-it the municipality

‘Najwa’s house, the municipality workers demolished it.’

Verbal and adverbial categories cannot host possessive pronouns; this property is restricted to nouns.
The categorial status of ṭumr is controversial as Benmamoun (2000) argues that this word is a verbal element because it can take non-nominative clitics or, as indicated by the gloss, an object clitic. Consider this example:

44. ṭammar-u ma-za (from Benmamoun 2000: 15, p.74)

never-him neg-come.past.3ms

‘He never came.’

This suffix, according to him, resembles the clitic on verbal elements, as in:

45. latam-u ala ḥadd-u

slap.past.3ms-him on cheek-his

‘He slapped him on his cheek.’

If the agreement morpheme, which is suffixed to ṭumr or ṭammar in Moroccan Arabic is a manifestation of the object agreement, then, it must be interpreted as an object which does not happen. The data from YA furnish a strong piece of evidence for the observation that this morpheme is a possessive pronoun rather an object clitic and ṭumr is better to be counted as a noun rather an adverb or a verb for the reasons listed above.

The polarity usage is manifested in non-veridical environments in which ṭumr tends to express a similar meaning to ever/in one’s life. Generally, ṭumr-agr expresses adverbial meaning; however, it is a nominal constituent composed of a noun and a
possessive pronoun. Literally, it means ‘one’s life’, but when it occurs in negative contexts, it implies a meaning akin to ‘not even once in my life’.

46. ُلمر-i  ma ṭaklat maal had

ever-my neg eat,past.1s money one

‘(Lit. I have never eaten anyone’s money/ not even once in my life, I have taken anyone’s money.)’

It is also observed that the occurrence of this NPI is subject to certain syntactic constraints. First, it must be licensed by a clause-mate negative marker:

47. *ma qaal ann ُلمر-h raah aden.

neg say,past.3ms that ever-his go,past.3ms Aden

‘He did not say that he ever went to Aden.’

Second, ُلمر seems to be restricted to the past tense; it is not preferred to appear with other tenses and it does not have to be e-commanded by negation. Consider this example:

48. a. ُلمر-i ma ُقمال shiy qalat.

ever-my neg do,past.1s thing wrong

‘I have never done anything wrong’

b. *ُلمر-i ma aُقمال shiy qalat
In general, the occurrence of this item in non-veridical contexts aligns it as an NPI. The purpose of pointing out the nominal properties of $\$umr$ is to reinforce the idea that this item is not merged directly in the Spec, FocP, but derived via movement.

The discussion reveals that the lexical properties of $\$umr$ are nominal rather than adverbial, making the ground solid for the assumption that $\$umr$ is not merged directly to the Focus phrase but it is moved to that position. Consider this configuration:
(49) shows \(\textit{\text{\text{fumri}}}\) as an NP that is generated within a PP, the reason is that there is a preposition that is not realized phonologically sometimes. The derivation proceeds by moving \(\textit{\text{\text{fumri}}}\) overtly to the spec of vP because it has a focus feature that needs to be
deleted before the Spell-Out. It moves afterwards to the spec of FocP, this movement makes it scope over its licensor and consequently the c-command condition becomes irrelevant here. Nevertheless, if we assume that the actual licensor of NPIs is a nonveridical operator, the movement is still within its domain, which I argue above to reside in ForceP. *Sumr* provides evidence for the claim that the real licensor of NPIs is a covert nonveridical operator in CP and negation is one of the contexts that gives rise to nonveridicality. In what follows, I will discuss the mechanism in which this operator works to license NPIs.

5.5 An Agree-based account for the licensing of NPIs:

I claim that NPIs are licensed by a non-overt operator, which I call henceforth nonVer. This operator as mentioned earlier resides in ForceP. The relation between this operator and NPIs is regulated by the Agree mechanism.

Chomsky (2000, 2001) develops a phase-based model of syntactic computation where he defends the hypothesis that the derivation proceeds cyclically phase by phase. He claims that only vP and CP are phases because vP is a complete thematic complex and CP is a complete clausal complex. Locality constraints are regulated by Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC). This principle is stated as follows:

50. Phase Impenetrability Condition

The domain of H is not accessible to operations at ZP; only H and its edge are accessible to such operations. (from Chomsky 2001: 14)

However, this version of PIC allows the interpretation to take place at the next higher phase: Bošković (2007) argues that Agree is not subject to PIC. He supports his
arguments with evidence from languages like Chukchee that establishes a long distance Agree relation between a verb in the matrix clause and an object in the embedded clause and presents other examples from English as well. He claims that phases and PIC affects the syntax-phonology interface, in that case, PIC constrains only Move, but not Agree. Accordingly, I claim that NPIs agree with the nonVer operator without moving to Spec, vP to escape PIC as the latter has no effect on Agree.

Recall that in Chapter 4, I attempted to account for Neg-Raising phenomenon within the MP framework basing mainly on Pesetsky and Torrego (2007) where they argue against the valuation/interpretability biconditional in Chomsky (2000, 2001). I still maintain their stance in this chapter. Let us recall some of their main ideas; P & T (2007) claim that features do not have to be unvalued/uninterpretable at the same time and Agree is feature sharing. Their arguments against interpretability/valuation biconditional are based on evidence that some features come from the lexicon valued/uninterpretable or unvalued/interpretable. For instance, V has valued/uninterpretable T feature while Tns has interpretable/unvalued feature. The presence of an interpretable T feature on Tns is because Tns has the locus of semantic interpretation while the presence of valued T feature on V is because verbs bear the morphology of Tns, for instance, some Latin verbs come from the lexicon with past-tense form but they are used to refer to the present. Accordingly, only unvalued features act as probes while goals need not be inactive if they do not have an unvalued feature of their own since an uninterpretable feature on a goal can render it inactive so it can participate in further syntactic operations. In this vein, they maintain Chomsky’s view that valuation matters for syntax while interpretability matters for semantics.
Since NPIs are not always licensed by negation, we cannot claim that NPIs enter the derivation specified for an uninterpretable/unvalued negative feature because that will require Agree with a negative operator, which is not always the case. It is obvious that the feature that unifies all the licensors of NPIs must be broader than being just a negative operator. I mentioned previously that a nonVer operator in ForceP is responsible for the licensing of NPIs; I will discuss now the features of this operator and how the mechanism of Agree works with this regard. It is worth noting that non-veridicality, however, is a semantic notion; it is also a result of the interaction between several syntactic factors. In other words, nonveridical contexts include negative contexts, interrogatives, antecedent of conditionals, adversative predicates and so forth. Interrogative sentences are non-veridical because of the presence of a lexical element, for instance, a question particle. Negative sentences are nonveridical because of the presence of a negative element and so forth. Accordingly, what is responsible for making a context non-veridical will enter into Agree with the nonVer operator in ForceP.

In what follows, I will discuss the mechanism of Agree that holds between the nonVer operator and NPIs in the course of derivation. I claim that Force$^0$ hosts an il]nonVer feature because the locus of the semantic interpretation of nonveridicality is carried by this functional node. This feature can act as a probe since it carries an unvalued nonVer feature. It gets valued when it enters into Agree relation with a valued feature of a lexical item that is responsible for marking a context nonveridical like negative markers, question particles, adversative predicates, antecedents of conditionals, etc. If this analysis is on the right track, I further assume that lexical items that give rise to nonveridicality are specified for u[\text{val}] nonVer feature. I also assume that NPIs are
specified for u[ ] nonVer for some reasons. One is that NPIs do not carry the semantics of nonveridicality. The other is that NPIs do not mark a context nonveridical but that is dependent on other lexical items as mentioned above. The nonVer feature will enter into multiple Agree relation, in the sense of Hiraiwa (2001)\(^{27}\), with a lexical item that carries a valued nonVer feature then with an NPI simultaneously. This operation will result in valuing the nonVer feature on both the operator in ForceP and the NPI, and by virtue of this operation, NPIs are licensed and the derivation converges. Consider this configuration:

\[ 51. \left[ \text{ForceP} \left[ \text{nonVer} \right] \left[ \text{lexical item} \text{nonVer} \text{val} \right] \text{vP} \text{...} \left[ \text{NPI} \text{nonVer} \text{val} \right] \text{vP} \text{...} \right] \]

The nonVer operator enters into Agree relation with any lexical item that has the value of nonveridicality like *if* or question particles and so forth, then it proceeds simultaneously to value the features of the NPI in vP. This operation demonstrates the dependency that holds between NPIs and its licensors since the licensing of those polarity items is parasitic on other factors, which I claim in this chapter to be a nonveridical operator in ForceP.

Now let us consider how this account works empirically. First, consider negative contexts:

52. a. mish kalt hagah

\(^{27}\) \text{MULTIPLE AGREE/MOVE} (from Hiraiwa 2001:7)
MULTIPLE AGREE (multiple feature checking) with a single probe is a single simultaneous syntactic operation; AGREE applies to all the matched goals at the same derivational point \textit{derivationally simultaneously}. MULTIPLE MOVE (movement of multiple goals into multiple specifiers of the same probe II) is also a single simultaneous syntactic operation that applies to all the AGREEd goals. According to this definition, Agree does not result in deactivating the probe once it is valued but it probes for the other matching goals until they all get valued.
The derivation proceeds as follows. Given that only unvalued features can probe, Neg cannot send a probe to the NPI hagah. The derivation proceeds until CP is built up and the nonVer operator is merged at Force and starts probing for valuation. This operator can value its unvalued feature through the application of Agree with the negative element in Neg. At this point, it is not rendered inactive because it does not result in an
immediate Agree; it probes for the next goal resulting in matching with the NPI. This mechanism is followed in all the contexts that license NPIs.

Let us now examine how NPIs are licensed in the context of yes/no questions in YA. Consider this example:

53. shi had dhaya' faluus?

QP anyone lose.past.3ms money

‘Has anyone lost money?’

This sentence will have the following configuration:

54.

ForceP
   Spec
     Force'
       Force''
         FocusP
           Focus'
             Spec
               Focus'
                 TP
                   T'
                     T''
                       vP
                         v'
                           VP
                             NP
                                faluus

                       shi u[ val] nonVer
                       had u[ nonVer dhaya']
                       dhaya'
                       dhaya'}
The [ ] nonVer feature in ForceP sends a probe to the question particle in FocusP, at the same time it probes for the next goal the NPI had in the Spec of vP where it agrees with it. The gist of multiple Agree is the valuation of the unvalued features of both the nonVer operator and had in Spec, vP. The dotted line refers to the process of multiple Agree that holds between the nonVer operator, the question particle and the NPI. Likewise, the rest of the lexical elements that give rise to nonveridicality will enter into the same relation.

It can be said that this proposal is more comprehensive than the previous ones since it appeals to both syntax and semantics. Interestingly, it covers all the licensing contexts of NPIs by appealing to nonveridicality and provides a syntactic account that is based on the recent trends in the MP framework.

5.6 Conclusion:

This chapter offers a broad investigation into the study of polarity items in YA and sheds light on many aspects regarding the distribution of NPIs and their licensing conditions. It discusses three categorial items of NPIs and points out the variation of logical strength among them.

I built my account on Giannakidou (1998), Pesetsky, and Torrego (2007). I also appealed to Bošković (2007) and Hiraiwa (2001). The non-veridicality distinction of the licensing environments suggested by Giannakidou (1998) is a semantic characterization to the triggering contexts of NPIs; the strength of this assumption lies in its ability to comprehend a wide range of contexts compared to the previous accounts. In the light of this proposal, I argue for the existence of a nonVer operator in ForceP that bears [ ] feature deemed to be responsible for NPIs licensing. This operator enters into multiple
Agree relation with NPIs and the elements that give rise to nonveridicality. I argue that NPIs bear an $u[\ )$ nonVer feature that is valued via multiple Agree with the nonVer operator and the lexical item that renders any context nonveridical. The outcome of the process will result in licensing NPIs in both negative and nonnegative contexts.

To sum up, I attempt to provide a syntactico-semantic analysis for NPIs licensing that is more comprehensive than the previous accounts. The reason is that it unifies the wide range of contexts of NPIs licensing under the term nonveridicality and it provides an explanation for the dependency between NPIs and their licensors within the minimalist framework.