Reconsidering non-negative contexts as a diagnostic for negative concord

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Abstract: Non-negative contexts are often used as a diagnostic for negative concord items, the claim being specifically that these contexts are not suitable hosts for negative concord items. We present an in-depth empirical investigation of how a single polarity sensitive item behaves under negation as compared to in non-negative contexts. To our knowledge, this is the first detailed investigation of its kind. The item we focus on is Turkish *kimse* 'anyone', and beyond the fact that *kimse* can appear in non-negative contexts, it otherwise behaves as a negative concord item. The evidence we collected shows, on balance, that *kimse* has highly parallel behavior across these contexts. We conclude there is no significant difference across contexts, and thus that in principle negative concord items can be licensed in non-negative contexts. Accordingly, the ability of a polarity sensitive item to appear in a non-negative context cannot be a valid cross-linguistic diagnostic for negative concord items.

Keywords: fragment answer ; *kimse* ; NPI ; polarity sensitive item ; Turkish

1. How can we diagnose negative concord?

In the literature on polarity it is widely accepted that negative concord items (hereafter NCIs) belong to a distinct category from other polarity sensitive items. Examples of polarity sensitive items (hereafter PSIs) include weak NPIs, minimizers, and so on.[1] The conditions most widely used to diagnose NCIs are given in (1) (see e.g. Watanabe 2004; Giannakidou 2006; Giannakidou and Zeijlstra 2017; Kuhn 2022).

(1) Conditions for NCI-identification
   a. An NCI can stand alone as a fragment answer.[2]
   b. Outside of fragment answers, an NCI is licensed only by sentential negation.[3]
   c. An NCI has a clause-based locality restriction with its licensing negation.

These conditions lead to the following corollary:

[1] This paper is an expanded version of Gould and Alxatib (2024). For help with this paper, we thank our reviewers and the editors of *Acta Mongolica*, and we again express our gratitude to Ümit Atlamaz, İsa Kerem Bayirli, Ömer Demirok, Emrah Görgülü, and Deniz Özyıldız for generously sharing their knowledge of Turkish with us.

[2] For the purpose of the fragment answer test, we do not consider fragments of just a polarity sensitive determiner itself, but rather the nominal phrase that it heads.

[3] More precisely, an NCI is licensed only by some anti-morphic/anti-additive operators such as sentential negation or 'without' (cf. Van der Wouden 1997), or by some other NCI without sentential negation, although these other licensing options will not be relevant for the discussion here.

(2) Corollary diagnostic of (1): An NCI is not licensed in non-negative contexts.

According to (2), the English weak NPI *any* is not an NCI, because it is licensed in various non-negative contexts, such as polar questions and the antecedents of conditionals. Note also that as regards (1a) and (1c), *any* does not behave like an NCI; see section 4 for further discussion.

The diagnostics in (1) and (2) have been applied to PSIs in various languages with straightforward results, such as the PSI *amwu*-N-*to* 'any N' in Korean (Tieu and Kang 2014; see also, e.g., Giannakidou 2006 on Greek, and Watanabe 2004 on Japanese). However, it is well known that there are examples of PSIs that appear to be NCI-like in many respects, but that are sometimes licensed in non-negative contexts. The item *res* 'anything' in Catalan is an example: *res* is acceptable in some non-negative contexts, such as yes/no questions (3), but it otherwise appears to behave like an NCI.

(3) Li diràs **res**? *Catalan* (Quer 1993:3)
3.SG tell.FUT.2SG anything
'Will you tell him anything?'

Responses to data like (3) include (a) the claim that the PSI is not an NCI in these problematic cases, and is thus evidently homophonous with a genuine NCI (Giannakidou 2006), and (b) the claim that examples like (3) are "exceptional", and that nothing about the example can be used to make any general claims about NCIs (Vallduví 1994). According to these views, the diagnostics above need not be changed.

But what evidence is there that non-negative data like (3) really do not contain an NCI? Ideally, we want to examine the behavior of the relevant PSI in contexts like this, and compare it to their behavior in negative contexts. If there are significant differences between the two, then it may indeed be the case that there are two homophonous items, only one of which is an NCI. We would then have no reason to question the validity of the diagnostics in (1). However, if no significant differences come out of the comparison, then there would be no independent reasons to think that the relevant items in them are different. In that case we would have to conclude that the diagnostics are problematic, since they do not always yield consistent results.

In practice, we find little of this sort of comparison in the literature (cf. Giannakidou 2006:376); the primary evidence of such comparison comes from a limited investigation of Catalan (viz. a comparison across contexts just for point (4e), which involves nominal modification and is discussed shortly in section 2; Quer 1993, 1998). In fact, we are not aware of any detailed empirical investigation of how apparent NCIs behave in non-negative contexts.

In this paper we aim to fill this empirical gap. We report on a detailed case study of the Turkish PSI *kimse* 'anyone', in which we compare its interaction with negation, polar questions, and conditionals. The evidence we collected shows, on balance, that *kimse* has highly parallel behavior across these contexts, leading us to conclude that, at least in some languages, NCIs can be licensed in non-negative contexts. This might not be true for all languages of course: other languages may show clearly contrasting behaviors under negation and in non-negative contexts (possibly Catalan, for example). Accordingly, the licensing alone of a PSI in a non-negative context does not give us a "rough and ready" diagnostic for NCI-status; rather, further detailed

investigation is necessary comparing negative and non-negative contexts.

This paper proceeds as follows: we first introduce the phenomena that we will use to evaluate a PSI's behavior across negative/non-negative contexts (section 2), before providing some background on Turkish *kimse* (section 3), and then making the cross-context comparison in section 4. Section 5 concludes with a revision of the NCI diagnostics above.

2. What types of phenomena do we compare across contexts?

We focus on the following five types of phenomena:

(4) a. Locality restriction: Is there a clause-based locality restriction?
b. Dynamic binding: Can the PSI be the antecedent of a pronoun via dynamic binding?
c. Existence commitment: Does the PSI commit the speaker to a non-empty restriction?
d. Predicate nominals: Can the PSI be used as (part of) a predicate nominal?
e. Nominal modification: Can the PSI be modified by 'almost' or 'absolutely'?

Why are the questions in (4) relevant? In the case of (4a) the answer is simple: (4a) is in fact (1c), a necessary condition for NCI-classification. (4b) is relevant in the context of the discussion of NCI-hood in the literature. Giannakidou (2006:376) seems to suggest that answering (4b) will turn up different results in negative contexts and in non-negative ones, but data with negation are not mentioned (cf. Quer 1998). Further, (4e) has directly been used by researchers to show different behavior under negation and in non-negative contexts (e.g. Quer 1993, 1998; Vallduví 1994), and so is relevant. But more generally, all of (4a-e) have been shown to interact with PSIs in some way, and so collectively they can be used to describe a profile or to give us a "signature" for how a particular PSI behaves.

Before turning to Turkish, we note that some researchers use the kinds of phenomena in (4b-e) directly as diagnostics for NCIs (e.g. Vallduví 1994; Korsah and Murphy 2017; Görgülü 2020). Strictly speaking, (4b-e) are, in the broader literature, putative diagnostics for quantificational force (universal/existential) (Giannakidou 2006). We set aside the issue of whether can (4b-e) can indeed diagnose quantificational force, but as regards using (4b-e) as reliable ways to diagnose NCIs, the literature makes clear that NCIs in different languages have different signatures/profiles for (4b-e) (e.g. Giannakidou 2006; Surányi 2006). Thus using (4b-e) directly as diagnostics for NCIs is not straightforward, and we do not use them for this purpose here (see the appendix for further discussion).

3. Some background on Turkish *kimse*

Setting aside for the moment non-negative contexts, we first establish *kimse* as an NCI in light of (1) (cf. Şener 2007; İnce 2012;Görgülü 2020). Then at the end of the section, we discuss the non-negative contexts we will focus on. As is well known, *kimse* is a PSI (5) (e.g. Kural 1997; Kelepir 2001; cf. (1b)), and *kimse* has been shown to be licensed in fragment answers (6) (e.g. Şener 2007; Görgülü 2020; cf. (1a)).[4]

[4] All *kimse* examples in the main text (modulo conditionals, which are not accepted by all speakers) were tested with four to five speakers, with the exception of (9b) and (10), which were tested with one speaker.

(5) Kimse gel*(-**me**-)di.
KIMSE come*(-NEG-)PST
'Nobody came.'

(6) A: Kim geldi?
who came
'Who came?'
B: Kimse.
KIMSE
'Nobody.'

With regard to a locality restriction as per (1c), we find noticeable variation across speakers (cf. Kayabaşi and Özgen 2018). We focus on two environments for locality effects: relative clauses, and finite indicative complement clauses under the verb *bilmek* 'think'.[5] In relative clauses we find a pattern that indicates a locality effect for most speakers: *kimse* is not licensed in a relative clause that modifies a nominal with matrix negation (7). In (7) we introduce different speaker types a/b/g, which will be used to consistently cross-reference judgments from within the same speaker type. The speaker types in this paper correspond to distinct, within-speaker grammars, but we leave open the question of whether these types also correlate with other dialectal or demographic differences.

(7) [**Kimseyi** gören] bir öğrenciyle konuş-**ma**-dım.
[KIMSE.ACC see.REL] one student.with talk-NEG-PST.1S
'I didn't talk to a student who saw anyone.' **a**/**b**/**g: ***

With finite clauses under *bilmek*, the general pattern again is that we do detect a locality effect involving matrix negation and embedded *kimse*. In (8), with *kimse* as the embedded subject in (8b), what is important is the relative contrast with the control (8a), as negated *bilmek* with a finite complement clause may itself be degraded (cf. Predolac 2017). For speaker types a and b, (8b) is significantly worse.

(8) a. Demet [**Murat** kitap okudu diye] bil-**mi**-yor.
Demet [Murat book read.PST COMP] think-NEG-PROG
'Demet doesn't think Murat read a book.' **α:** ok ; **β:** ?? ; **γ:** ?ok

b. Demet [**kimse** kitap okudu diye] bil-**mi**-yor.
Demet [KIMSE book read.PST COMP] think-NEG-PROG
'Demet doesn't think anyone read a book.' α: ?? ; β: * ; γ: ?ok

Interestingly, for speaker type g, both (8a) and (8b) are marginally acceptable, but when *kimse* appears in object position without accusative-marking, we again find a locality effect (see (18) below for a further comparable example illustrating how the absence of accusative-marking is a grammatical option here). This is indicated in the sharp relative contrast in (9).

(9) a. Demet [Murat atı olan **bir** **çocuk** buldu diye] bil-**mi**-yor.
Demet [Murat horse.ACC be.REL one child found COMP] think-NEG-PROG
'Demet doesn't think Murat found a child with a horse.' γ: ??

b. Demet [Murat atı olan **kimse** buldu diye] bil-**mi**-yor.

[5] The verb *bilmek* has factive and nonfactive uses, but in our data we focused on the nonfactive reading, hence our translation of *bilmek* as 'think' (cf. Predolac 2017:49-50).

Demet [Murat horse.ACC be.REL KIMSE found COMP] think-NEG-PROG
'Demet doesn't think Murat found anyone with a horse.' γ: (?)*

The contrast between subject/object *kimse* in (8)/(9) is reminiscent of the more nuanced locality effect for NCIs discussed by Kayabaşi and Özgen (2018). They focus on similar examples involving *kimse* and the embedding verb *bilmek*, but with accusative-marking on the embedded subject (which they treat as a nominal that is in an ECM-like construction). According to the judgments they provide, when *kimse* is the embedded subject with accusative-marking, it can be licensed by matrix negation on *bilmek*, but when *kimse* is an embedded indirect object following the embedded direct object (again with accusative-marking on the embedded subject), it is not licensed by matrix negation. Further, Kayabaşi and Özgen (2018:97) appear to claim (but data are not given) that in such an ECM-type example, *kimse* as an embedded direct object with accusative-marking is also licensed by matrix negation. They assume that accusative-marked objects (like VP-external subjects) are structurally higher than internal arguments without accusative-marking (cf. Erguvanlı 1984). In their analytical framework, this apparently allows embedded subjects and objects (both accusative-marked) to be sufficiently close to matrix negation for licensing purposes. Along these lines, we can also observe that for speaker type g, (10) is acceptable, with an embedded object *kimse* that has accusative marking. This contrasts with (9b), where object *kimse* has no accusative marking.

(10) Demet [**kimseyi** arı soktu diye] bil-**mi**-yor.
Demet [KIMSE.ACC bee stung COMP] think-NEG-PROG
'Demet doesn't think anyone was stung by a bee.' γ**:** ok

The data here are thus different from those of Kayabaşi and Özgen, as we do not consider ECM-type data, and they claim that when there is no accusative-marking on the embedded subject (like in (8)), long-distance licensing is not possible. Nevertheless, we appear to be seeing a similar pattern, in which structurally higher nominals (but not lower ones) can be licensed long-distance across a clause boundary. This suggests that the more nuanced judgments we find with speaker type g conform to a distinction that can be found with other speakers more broadly.

In sum, we find robust evidence for a locality effect involving *kimse* and negation across speakers, but we also note that there is a speaker type that showed no locality effects with the licensing of *kimse*. We refer to this as a long-distance (LD) variety/speaker type. Thus in this variety, both (7) and (8b) are acceptable (and see note 6 for further data). As regards complement clauses in particular, the data from the LD/g speaker types are significant because they show that in principle the complement of *bilmek* is a domain that allows for PSI-licensing from upstairs negation (i.e. we have no expectation on independent grounds that (8b)/(9b) will be degraded or unacceptable). In what follows, we continue to report data from the LD, as this variety also shows no significant difference between negation and non-negative contexts.[6]

[6] We report here further data illustrating that *kimse* is not subject to a locality effect with negation in the LD variety, as (i)-(iv) are all accepted in the LD. In (i), there is double embedding of finite indicative complement clauses, with matrix negation on 'remember'. In (ii), there is matrix negation on 'say' with a finite indicative complement clause that does not have the complementizer element *diye*; note that such an embedded clause can be indirect speech (cf. Özyıldız 2012). In (iii), there is matrix negation on 'say' with a nominalized embedded clause. And in (iv), *kimse* is embedded in an adjunct island. (iv) was also tested with speaker type γ, and it is clearly degraded <

As for non-negative contexts, we focus on two for *kimse* that are prominently discussed in the literature. The first is polar questions, which can license *kimse*, as in (11) (see e.g. Kelepir 2001; İnce 2012).[7]

The second non-negative context is the antecedent of a conditional, which can also license *kimse* (12) (see İnce 2012; Görgülü 2017). Not all speakers accept (12), though, and so judgments for conditionals here are reported only for speaker types who accept (12) (viz. a/LD), and not for those who do not accept (12) (viz. b/g).

(11) Kimse aradı **mı**?
KIMSE called Q
'Did anyone call?'

(12) Kimse arar-**sa**, bana haber ver.
KIMSE call-COND me news give
If anyone calls, let me know.' α/**LD:** ok ; β/γ**:** *

To our knowledge, only limited research has been done on non-negative contexts for PSIs in Turkish (see Kesici 2019; Kamali and Matsumoto *to appear*). We turn to these contexts in the next section.

4. Comparing *kimse* across contexts

In this section we compare the behavior of *kimse* across negative and non-negative contexts with respect to the phenomena in (4). Continuing on from the previous section, where we saw that there is a locality restriction involving negation, we first consider a locality restriction for questions and conditionals, as per (4a). What we see is that the judgments in non-negative contexts are highly parallel to what we saw with negation. Thus, just as a relative clause induces a locality effect with negation in (7), we see the same effect with a question and conditional (13) (modulo the LD).

?? >, indicating a further locality effect for this speaker type.

(i) Ben [Ayşe [**kimse** işten ayrıldı diye] biliyor diye] hatırla-**mı**-yorum.
1S [Ayşe [KIMSE from.work left COMP] think.PROG COMP] remember-NEG-PROG.1S
'I don't remember Ayşe thinking that anybody quit their job.'

(ii) Tunç [Demet **kimseyi** gördü] de-**me**-di.
Tunç [Demet KIMSE.ACC saw] say-NEG- PST
'Tunç didn't say that Demet saw anyone.'

(iii) Demet [**kimsenin** kitap okuduğunu] söyle-**me**-di.
Demet [KIMSE.GEN book read.NMNL.ACC] say-NEG-PST
'Demet didn't say that anyone read a book.'

(iv) [**Kimse** geldikten sonra] haber ver-**me**.
[KIMSE coming after] news give-NEG
'Don't let me know after anyone comes.'

[7] We note that polar questions are indeed a non-negative context, *pace* Progovac (1994:151), who suggests that such questions in Turkish involve overt negation, as both the question particle and the negative morpheme involve the consonant <m>. Görgülü (2017:60-61)) provides important discussion that challenges this suggestion. First, the question particle and negative morpheme are not actually homophonous, given that they have different vowels. The two elements also appear in different morpho-syntactic positions (cf. the different positions with respect to tense marking in (5) and (11)). It is then possible to use both the question particle and sentential negation in the same question, as Görgülü illustrates, and which he translates as a negated question. Indeed as Progovac (1994:148) herself points out, Turkish polar questions like (11) are not interpreted as negated questions. There is no clear reason, then, to assume that sentential negation is present in the polar question data we consider.

(13) a. [**Kimseyi** gören] bir öğrenciyle konuştun **mu**?
[KIMSE.ACC see.REL] one student.with talked.2s Q
'Did you talk to a student who saw anyone?' α/β/γ**:** * ; **LD:** ok

b. [**Kimseyi** gören] bir öğrenciyle konuşur-**sa**-n, bana haber ver.
[KIMSE.ACC see.REL] one student.with talk-COND-2S me news give
'If you talk to a student who saw anyone, let me know.' α**:** * ; **LD:** ok

And embedding *kimse* in a complement clause under *bilmek* 'think' in a question and conditional in (14)/(15) also degrades the example for some speakers, namely types a/b (cf. Kesici 2019:58-60). This effect appears to be the same for b, and very similar for a, to what we saw in (8). The speaker-internal contrasts found with (8) can be taken to be comparable to those found with (14)/(15), with any difference being a natural minor deviation that can occur in a broader pattern of repeated similarities, such as the repeated similarities across contexts that we will see throughout this section. Interestingly, speaker type g rejects both the baseline (14a) and the *kimse* example (14b) involving a question. There appears to be some sort of confound, independent of *kimse*, then, which makes testing questions in this environment apparently impossible for this speaker type, and so we set such data aside for the purposes of comparing negative/non-negative contexts. The observation that (14a) is ungrammatical or degraded is reminiscent of how matrix negation with *bilmek* can be bad (Predolac 2017), but we leave this as a topic for future investigations. Nevertheless, as far as we have been able to test it, we do see the same locality effect for g across contexts, as was shown with the relative clause data in (7)/(13).

(14) a. Demet [**Murat** kitap okudu diye] biliyor **mu**?
Demet [Murat book read.PST COMP] think.PROG Q
'Does Demet think Murat read a book?' α**:** ok ; β**:** ?? ; γ**:** *

b. Demet [**kimse** kitap okudu diye] biliyor **mu**?
Demet [KIMSE book read.PST COMP] think.PROG Q
'Does Demet think anyone read a book?' α**:** ??/? ; β/γ**:** * ; **LD:** ok

(15) a. Demet [**Murat** kitap okudu diye] biliyor-**sa**, bana haber ver.
Demet [Murat book read.PST COMP] think-COND me give news
'If Demet thinks Murat read a book, let me know.' α**:** ok

b. Demet [**kimse** kitap okudu diye] biliyor-**sa**, bana haber ver.
Demet [KIMSE book read.PST COMP] think-COND me give news
'If Demet thinks anyone read a book, let me know.' α**:** (?)? ; **LD:** ok

In sum, we see a highly parallel locality restriction across contexts.

We next consider whether *kimse* can be the antecedent of a pronoun via dynamic binding (4b). Here we find the same behavior across contexts. The prevailing pattern is that dynamic binding is not possible across contexts (16). In contrast, in the LD dynamic binding is uniformly possible across contexts in (16).

(16) a. O sınıftan **kimseyle$_2$** görüş-me. α/β/γ**:** * ; **LD:** ok
that class.from KIMSE$_2$.with meet-NEG
Ø$_2$ canini yakabilirsin.
pro$_2$'s soul burn.might.2s
'Don't meet up with anyone$_2$ from that class. You might hurt him$_2$.'

b. O sınıftan **kimseyle$_2$** görüştün mü? α/β/γ: * ; **LD:** ok
that class.from KIMSE$_2$.with met.2s Q
Ø$_2$ canını yakmış olabilirsin.
pro$_2$'s soul burned might.2s
'Did you meet up with anyone$_2$ from that class? You might have hurt him$_2$.'

c. Bugün **kimseyle$_2$** konuşur-sa-n, **ona$_2$** selam söyle. α: * ; **LD:** ok
today KIMSE$_2$.with talk-COND-2s 3s$_2$ hi tell
'If you speak to anyone$_2$ today, tell him$_2$ I say hi.'

The availability of dynamic binding here appears to depend on some modal presence across environments – either the modal verb in the second sentence of (16a-b) or the modal base of the conditional in (16c). Thus when there is no modal verb, as in (17), dynamic binding is no longer possible in the LD. We simply note here that, to the extent that dynamic binding is possible with a PSI, it appears to involve some process of modal subordination (cf. also the appendix).

(17) a. *Bugün **kimseyle$_2$** konuş-ma. **Onu$_2$** cezalandırıyorum.
today KIMSE$_2$.with talk-NEG 3s.ACC$_2$ punish.PROG.1s
'Don't talk to anyone$_2$ today. I am punishing him$_2$.'

b. *Partide **kimseyi$_2$** gördün mü? Keşke **ona$_2$** selam söyleseydin.
at.party KIMSE$_2$.ACC saw.2s Q wish.1s 3s.DAT$_2$ hi you.had.told
'Did you see anyone$_2$ at the party? I wish you'd said hi to him$_2$ (from me).'

Third, we consider the issue of existential commitment (4c). To test this, we put 'unicorn' inside a modifier of *kimse* to see whether the speaker is committed to the existence of unicorns (i.e. whether the restriction of *kimse* can be empty). Again, we find parallel behavior across contexts. All speakers consulted find the relevant unicorn sentences acceptable, and for most speakers the sentences do not intuitively commit the speaker to the existence of unicorns (i.e. an empty restriction is possible). There is some minor variation that we discuss here. (a) Speaker types g/LD find (18) acceptable (modulo acceptability of conditionals) with no speaker commitment. (b) Speaker types a/b strongly prefer the expression *tek boynuzlu atı* for 'unicorn', and so for such speakers, we instead report judgments on versions of (18) that were modified. (c) For speaker type a, the modified versions of (18) are given in (19), and these examples do require speaker commitment regarding the existence of unicorns, but again this is uniform across contexts. And (d), speaker type b strongly prefers accusative-marking on *kimse* in the unicorn examples – whereas, as we have just seen, absence of accusative-marking is acceptable for other speaker types in these examples – and so we only report judgments for b on the modified versions of (18) that are given in (20) with accusative-marking, for which again, there is uniformly no speaker commitment.

(18) a. Tekboynuzu olan **kimse** bulamadı.
one.horn.ACC be.REL KIMSE found.ABIL.NEG
'He wasn't able to find anyone with a unicorn.' γ/**LD:** ok

b. Tekboynuzu olan **kimse** bulabildi mi?
one.horn.ACC be.REL KIMSE found.ABIL Q
'Was he able to find anyone with a unicorn?' γ/**LD:** ok

c. Tekboynuzu olan **kimse** bulursa, haber ver.

one.horn.ACC be.REL KIMSE find.AOR.COND news give
'If he was able to find anyone with a unicorn, let me know.' **LD:** ok

(19) a. Tekboynuzlu atı olan **kimse** bulamadı.
one.horn.with horse.ACC be.REL KIMSE found.ABIL.NEG
'He wasn't able to find anyone with a unicorn.' α**:** ok

b. Tekboynuzlu atı olan **kimse** bulabildi mi?
one.horn.with horse.ACC be.REL KIMSE found.ABIL Q
'Was he able to find anyone with a unicorn?' α**:** ok

c. Tekboynuzlu atı olan **kimse** bulursa, haber ver.
one.horn.with horse.ACC be.REL KIMSE find.AOR.COND news give
'If he was able to find anyone with a unicorn, let me know.' α**:** ok

(20) a. Tekboynuzlu atı olan **kimseyi** bulamadı.
one.horn.with horse.ACC be.REL KIMSE.ACC found.ABIL.NEG
'He wasn't able to find anyone with a unicorn.' β**:** ok

b. Tekboynuzlu atı olan **kimseyi** bulabildi mi?
one.horn.with horse.ACC be.REL KIMSE.ACC found.ABIL Q
'Was he able to find anyone with a unicorn?' **b:** ok

In sum, with existential commitment we also find parallel behavior across negative and non-negative contexts.

Fourth, we look at whether *kimse* can be used as (part of) a predicate nominal (4d). In an attempt to create plausibly acceptable examples, we tested sentences with *kimse* as the head noun of a predicate nominal that contains a modifier. None of the examples in (21) allows for PSI *kimse* to be licensed, illustrating a further similarity across contexts.

(21) a. *Murat uçak uçuran **kimse** değil.
Murat planes fly.REL KIMSE is.NEG
'Murat is not anyone who flies planes.'

b. *Murat uçak uçuran **kimse** mi?
Murat planes fly.REL KIMSE Q
'Is Murat anyone who flies planes?'

c. *Murat uçak uçuran **kimse**-yse, haber ver.
Murat planes fly.REL KIMSE-be.COND news give
'If Murat is anyone who flies planes, let me know.'

Finally, we consider whether *kimse* allows for nominal modification with 'almost' (4e). We followed Görgülü (2020) in using the expression *neredeyse* 'almost' in implementing this test.[8]

Here we see (for the first time) some clear divergence across contexts: *neredeyse* is grammatical as a modifier of *kimse* under negation (22a), but ungrammatical in a question or conditional (22b-c).

(22) a. Neredeyse **kimse** gelmedi.
almost KIMSE came.NEG

[8] Görgülü also uses the expression *kesinlikle* 'absolutely' (lit. 'with certitude'). However, *kesinlikle* can also be used as a clausal modifier (meaning "it is certain that…"), and on this use the expression would not be useful for our purposes. We are unsure whether we have been able to elicit a nominal modifier use, and so, pending further investigation, we set aside the 'absolutely' test here.

'Almost nobody came.'

b. *Ogretmenlerinden neredeyse **kimseyi** begeniyor mu?
teachers.her.from almost KIMSE.ACC like.PROG Q
'Does she like almost any (one) of her teachers?'

c. *Ali neredeyse **kimseyi** gorurse, bana haber ver.
Ali almost KIMSE.ACC see.COND me news give
'If Ali sees almost anyone, let me know.'

However, in all the other phenomena exemplified in this section so far, we have seen parallel behavior/strong similarities across contexts. Given this, we do not take the contrast between (22a) vs. (22b-c) as a clear indication for non-NCI status in questions/conditionals. Instead we propose that there are further conditions on 'almost' and PSIs in questions and conditionals that remain to be explored.

Some support for this comes from data with English NPI *any*, which contrasts sharply with *kimse* in not being an NCI. Thus unlike *kimse*, *any* is ungrammatical in fragment answers (23), and is much more easily licensed long-distance (modulo the LD variety), as illustrated in (24).

(23) A: Who came?
B: *Anyone.

(24) a. I didn't talk to a student who saw anyone.
b. Are you certain that anyone read the book?
c. If the police learn that there's anyone hiding in the attic, we'll be in trouble.

Now let us consider nominal modification with *any*. Although perhaps not widely known, English *any* can be modified by 'absolutely' and 'almost' Horn (2000). Examples with almost/absolutely+*any* under negation are not particularly difficult to construct (25). And the same can be said about absolutely+*any* in questions and conditionals (26).

(25) a. I don't think there's absolutely any reason to get upset.
b. I don't think that there is a bathroom almost anywhere in this town that you can use.

(26) a. Is there absolutely anything we're overlooking?
b. If you eat absolutely any meat, you're not vegan. (Horn 2000:85)

Importantly, though, almost+*any* seems impossible in non-biased questions, and LeGrand (1974) reports that almost+*any* is not accepted by all speakers in conditionals (27). What we see, then, is a pattern familiar from *kimse*: 'almost' works well with the PSI under negation, but the combination is less acceptable, or perhaps ungrammatical altogether, in questions/conditionals.

(27) a. *Is there a bathroom almost anywhere in this town that I can use?
b. %If almost anyone has a cold, I catch it. (LeGrand 1974:394)

The parallel we see involving 'almost' between NCI *kimse* and non-NCI *any* suggests that we are looking at something that is independent of concord status. We leave as an open question how to approach the behavior of 'almost' across contexts, but once we take this independent factor into consideration, we are left with a highly uniform pattern of *kimse* behaving similarly across negative and non-negative contexts.

5. Final remarks

In summary, the balance of evidence shows highly parallel behavior for *kimse* under negation and in non-negative contexts. We conclude there is no significant difference across contexts, and thus that in principle NCIs can be licensed in non-negative contexts. Thus *kimse* is an example of an NCI that can be licensed in non-negative contexts, and (28), repeated from (2), cannot be a valid diagnostic for NCIs.

(28) An NCI is not licensed in non-negative contexts. (cf. (2))

This in turn means that the diagnostic criterion in (1b) should be revised as in (29).

(29) Revising the diagnostic criterion (1b):
Outside of fragment answers, an NCI is licensed **at least** ~~only~~ by sentential negation.

Including non-negative contexts in NCI-licensing is in line with, and supports, proposals in Penka (2011) and Zeijlstra (2022). These proposals do not accept (2)/(28). Instead, to quote Penka (2011:75), there is a "somewhat arbitrary" distribution of NCI licensing environments cross-linguistically. These environments need not have any semantic negation, and in these proposals, the distribution of NCIs can be modelled by the somewhat idiosyncratic distribution of syntactic licensing features (subject to cross-linguistic variation). Accordingly, it is entirely possible that other apparent NCIs cross-linguistically are indeed not NCIs in non-negative contexts, and Catalan may indeed give us examples of this. But what we have attempted to demonstrate is that concluding that a particular PSI is not an NCI in non-negative contexts requires a careful and detailed investigation into that item's behavior.

Appendix: Using tests for quantificational force as a diagnostic for NCIs?

It is not straightforward to apply the putative diagnostic tests for quantificational force in (30) as a diagnostic tool for NCI identification (cf. (4b-e)).

(30) a. Dynamic binding: Can the PSI be the antecedent of a pronoun via dynamic binding?
- Yes ⟶ ∃
- No ⟶ ∀

b. Existence commitment: Does the PSI commit the speaker to a non-empty restriction?
- Yes ⟶∀
- No ⟶ ∃

c. Predicate nominals: Can the PSI be used as (part of) a predicate nominal?
- Yes ⟶ ∃
- No ⟶ ∀

d. Nominal modification: Can the PSI be modified by 'almost' or 'absolutely'?
- Yes ⟶ ∀
- No ⟶ ∃

The literature makes clear that NCIs in different languages have different signatures/profiles with regard to the behaviors outlined in (30) (e.g. Giannakidou 2006, Surányi 2006). More precisely, Giannakidou (2006:382) suggests that the only type of NCI we do not see is one that is uniformly $ according to (30). So at best, if any of (30a-d) is to be used as an NCI diagnostic tool, in principle all the tests in (30) need to be done. From this perspective, (30) does not give us a simple one-phenomenon diagnostic test, as it requires a detailed investigation of multiple phenomena.

But more importantly, it is not clear exactly what (30) might be showing with regard to NCI status. To our knowledge, it has not been demonstrated more generally that there exists

a uniformly ∃ PSI according to (30). Until a uniformly ∃ PSI (that is crucially not an NCI) is shown to exist, it is not clear how (30) can be used to identify NCIs. In other words, (30) is intended to empirically distinguish NCIs from other PSIs, but it has never been shown that (30) in fact does so, and so there is no empirical support (or motivation) for using (30) to do so.

To illustrate how finding a uniformly ∃ PSI is not necessarily straightforward, we give some examples with English *any* below. English *any* is a PSI that is canonically held to not be an NCI (cf. (23)-(24)); nevertheless, *any* is not a uniformly ∃ PSI according to (30) (cf. Korsah and Murphy 2017). First, we find a similar effect of modality on licensing dynamic binding as we saw with *kimse* in (16)-(17): dynamic binding is possible with *any* and a modal (31a) (example from Giannakidou 2006:375), but impossible without a modal (31b). There is no existence commitment with *any* (32), and, as mentioned in passing by Korsah and Murphy (2017:24), *any* cannot be part of a predicate nominal (33). Finally, as pointed out in (34), we have already seen how nominal modification of *any* is possible in section 4. In sum, *any* clearly shows mixed ∃/" behavior according to (30).

(31) a. Don't borrow **any book**$_9$ from this Satanic library. Reading **it**$_9$ might warp your mind.
→ ∃
b. *Don't borrow **any book**$_9$ from this Satanic library. Reading **it**$_9$ is dangerous.
→ ∀

(32) Alice hasn't seen any unicorns in town.
→ ∃ (no existence commitment)

(33) Alice isn't { *any / a } student majoring in biology.
→ ∀

(34) Modification of *any* with 'absolutely' or 'almost' is possible: see (25)-(26)
→ ∀

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