

The Hebrew adverbial *bixlal*

O advérbio hebraico bixlal

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Abstract: The Modern Hebrew adverbial *bixlal* (at all/any/actually/in fact/even/anyway/in general/generally/altogether/in the first place) seems puzzling from a synchronic point of view since it functions both as a NPI *lo...bixlal/bixlal lo* (not...any/at all) and as a Discourse Marker(DM) in positive environments¹, being interpreted either as an ‘in general’ DM when focused (stressed) or as an ‘actually’ DM when unfocused (unstressed). As a result, it has been the focus of various papers examining both its semantics and discursive use (Migron 2003, Ziv 2012, Greenberg and Khrizman 2012, Kadmon and Sevi, 2014, as well as its possible grammaticization path (Tsirkin-Sadan 2015). The Solution that we offer is that *bixlal* is a polysemy and its multiple meanings difference can be explained diachronically. We shall provide historical evidence as well as provide bridging examples which explain the shift from one stage to another down the grammaticization path.

Keywords: Usage-Based Grammar. Grammaticization. Negative Polarity items (NPI).

¹ We define DMs as operators which argumentatively predict the elements that follow them in the discourse.

Ruti BARDENSTEIN (The Tel-Aviv University Israel)
ruti.bardenstein@gmail.com

Resumo: No hebraico moderno, o advérbio *bixal* (de todo / qualquer / realmente / de fato / mesmo / de qualquer maneira / em geral / geralmente / completamente / em primeiro lugar) parece enigmático de um ponto de vista sincrônico, vez que funciona tanto como um Item de Polaridade Negativa (IPN) *lo...bixlal/bixlal lo* (não...somente/de nada) quanto como um Marcador Discursivo (MD) em contextos positivos, sendo interpretado como um MD “em geral”, quando focalizado (ênfase prosodicamente) ou como um MD “de fato”, quando desfocado (sem ênfase). Como resultado, tem sido foco de vários artigos, que examinam a sua semântica e uso discursivo (MIGRON, 2003, ZIV, 2012, GREENBERG; KHRIZMAN 2012, KADMON; SEVI, 2014), bem como o seu possível percurso de gramaticalização (TSIRKIN-SADAN, 2015). A solução que nós oferecemos é que o *bixlal* é uma polissemia e a diferença de seus significados múltiplos pode ser explicada diacronicamente. Proveremos provas históricas, bem como forneceremos exemplos de bridging (ambíguos) que explicam a mudança de um estágio para outro no percurso de gramaticalização.

Palavras-chave: Gramática baseada no uso. Gramaticalização. Item de Polaridade Negativa (IPN).

Introduction

In this paper, we argue for two main claims regarding the grammaticization path of the Hebrew adverbial *bixlal*, which have led to its polysemous nature:

A. *bixlal*'s semantic change is motivated pragmatically via the operator's widening function. *bixlal* functions as a widening operator, since its very early occurrence in the Mishnah (3rd century) to its use in Modern Hebrew.

B. We shall argue that a frequent occurrence of *bixlal* within the rectification construction ‘*lo x, ela y*’ in Hebrew (‘*not x, but y*’) created a strong association between this adverbial and the function of rectification, which paved the way for a dramatic semantic change, turning it into a rectification marker. Once reinterpreted as a rectification marker, it can be used to indicate rectification even in the absence of the complete construction. In other words, the rejected content (X) within the construction: ‘*bixlal lo x, ela y*’ (‘*at all not x, but y*’), which is contextually accessible, is negated in a predictable way, based on the rectification marker *bixlal*, which gradually ‘took on negation’, since it was so often used as a Negative Polarity Item (NPI) in rectification constructions². The reduced construction (‘compactization’) in which *bixlal* has become a rectification marker is exemplified in (1):

² NPIs (see LADUSAW, 1996) are negation strengthening operators, which strengthen the original negation operator and can appear in environments associated with a particular grammatical polarity of negation.

(1)

A: '*bixlal loX, elaY*' ('at all not X, but Y')

>Compactization:

B: '*bixlal Y*' (interpreted as 'not at all X but Y').

Though the claim that the operator *bixlal* has taken on negation seems somewhat dramatic, there are many similar cases discussed in the literature, mainly those of Jespersen (1917). Jespersen introduced the Jespersen's Cycle (JC), a term coined by Dahl (1979). The JC is a series of syntactic processes of change which describe the historical development of the expression of negation in a variety of languages, from a simple pre-verbal marker of negation, through a discontinuous marker. (elements both before and after the verb) and in some cases through subsequent loss of the original pre-verbal marker:

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

Jespersen has called this kind of operation "negative attraction" and has discussed various negative expressions in various languages. The most cited one is the case of French *pas*, originally meaning 'step'. In its initial stage, *pas* had been used as a NPI with the verb 'walk' ('I don't walk/ do a step') and later on it has broadened its use as a more general NPI, strengthening other negated verbs such as 'know': *je ne sais pas* ('I don't know anything'), or 'say': *je ne dis pas* ('I don't say anything'). Later, the NPI has been 'bleached' (weakened) thus creating a strong association between negation and the NPI *pas*, which gradually became part of the negation operation: '*je ne sais pas*' ('I don't know'). In addition, *pas* (In colloquial French) has gone through the cycle in which the explicit negation operator *ne* has become only optional, since *pas* has been so strongly associated with the negation: *je sais pas* ('I don't know'). Lastly, as exemplified in (2), *pas* had become an operator of negation itself and can be used to operate independently as a negation operator.

- (2)
- Je **n'ai** meme *pas* ('I didn't walk/take a step')
- I
- Je **ne** sais *pas* ('I don't know anything')
- II
- Je **ne** sais *pas* ('I don't know')
- ↓
- Je **n'ai** meme *pas* pu faire un *pas* ('I didn't walk, not even a step')
- III
- Je sais *pas* → J'sais *pas* ('I don't know')
- IV
- pas* possible ('not possible')
- #*pas* possible *pas*

In stage II above, the negative operator *ne* collaborates with *pas* as to mark negation. We claim this is crucial for *pas* to become the negative operator itself. We call this stage “merging”. A construction in which the explicit negation operator + the NPI frequently co-occur, thus allowing for “merging” to happen and later for the NPI to become the negative operator itself. Interestingly, unlike the notion of a “pre-verbal” negation operator becoming a “post verbal negation operator”, we claim that the focus of attention should be given to the NPI itself and not the negation operation as a whole. Thus, the post-verbal NPI's collaboration with the negation might precede some non-motion verbs, as can be observed in (3):

- (3) **Ne** *pas* être fier ('don't be proud')

Though *pas*' transformation into a negation marker is not complete, (since it often cannot scope over motion verbs), it can, however, occur pre-predicatively, as in stage IV above, or (along with the negation marker *ne*), *pas* can occur pre-non motion verbs, as in (3). *pas* also cannot be used in the same utterance for the two different functions (once as the negation operator and once as a NPI), as shown in stage IV. Although *pas* can operate as the negation operator along with another (different) NPI, it cannot occur with the *pas* as a NPI.

In Spoken Palestinian Arabic (SPA), a somewhat similar process

is revealed with the NPI *iši* ('thing')³. However, as exemplified in (4), the grammaticalization path of *iši* is somewhat different than that of French *pas* and might be perceived as 'more progressed', mainly due to the fact that SPA *iši* has turned into a verbal suffix *š*, unlike French *pas*, which hasn't gone through similar phonological changes and cannot modify most French verbs:

- (4)
- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| ma fih iši | (‘there is not a thing’) |
| I | |
| Mafiš | (‘there is nothing’) |
| II | |
| mafiš muškili | (‘there is no problem’) |
| mafiš ‘indi | (‘I don’t have’) |
| III | |
| fiš muškili | (‘there is no problem’) |
| fiš ‘indi | (‘I don’t have’) |
| IV | |
| ba’arafiš | (‘I don’t know’) |
| V | |
| ba’arafš walla- iši | (‘I don’t know anything/ not a thing’) |

Once again, the notion of ‘pre-verbal’ or ‘post verbal’ seems redundant. It is more about the transformation of *iši* ('thing') from a noun, into a NPI and later as a negation operator, which has become part of the verb itself in SPA (as a suffix morpheme *š*), rather than a ‘post-verbal negation operator’.

We shall argue that in the case of *bixlal*, *bixlal* has evolved dramatically since its first occurrence in the Mishnah (Rabbinic Hebrew) since it was used as a NPI around the 19th century, later “taking on negation” within the rectification construction, thus transforming it into a rectification marker in the discourse (a rectification DM). In addition, in the case of *bixlal*, it has become a sentential adverbial negation operator and therefore can ‘freely precede verbs’. Let us now examine *bixlal* in its initial stage:

³ See Lucas (2007) for a Jespersen’s cycle analysis.

Stage I: PP head- ‘be/ba-klal’: “In the rule”

Bixlal, originally pronounced *ba/be-klal*, is not a biblical word. It first appears in the Mishna (3rd century) as a PP head which is composed of the preposition – *be/ba* (‘in’) and the noun *klal* (‘rule’). Its meaning is therefore: ‘in (the) rule’, often interpreted as ‘as part of all’ or ‘included in the category’ as in (5):

- (5) *še-had-delo’in be-klal yarak*
 that-the-gourds in-rule-of vegetables
 ‘Gourds are included in the category of vegetables’ [Mishna, Nedarim 7a]

In Rabbinic Hebrew, the Mishnah (the “oral Torah”), actually includes a variety of laws that the Jewish man or woman may adopt and obey. Amongst those rules are the categorizations of what is considered a fruit and what is considered a vegetable. In (5) above, the Halachic law is of what is considered a vegetable and states that gourds are included in the category of vegetables according to the rule. *bixlal*’s function here is thus to **widen a category** to which a Halachic law applies, (TSIRKIN-SADAN, 2015; GREENBERG; KHRIZMAN, 2012), since once adding another member to the category of vegetables, it actually widens. This use is also evident (more or less in the same way), in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud, around the 5th century, such as with the inclusive *until* as shown in (6):

- (6) ‘ad ‘etsem ha-yom heze [...] ‘ad ve-’ad **beklal**
 Until bone DEF-day this [...] until and-until **in**
the rule
 ‘Until this very day, **including** this very day’ [Babylonian Talmud, Suka 3]

Stage II: adverb biklal: “in general”

In Medieval Hebrew (15th century) *biklal* is a PP-derived adverb, meaning “in general”. It is included in constructions of *biklal u-bifrat* (‘in general and in particular’) and in its early tended to modify phrases, rather than full clauses, as in (7) (TSIRKIN-SADAN, 2015):

(7) ha-leb hu 'iqar qiyum ha-ba'al-xay ve-hu kli
'The-heart he core existence of the living organism and is a vessel

Lehagia ha-xayut' el kol ha-'avarim **biklal**
to make arrive the life to all the body parts **in-general**
ve-la-moax **bifrat**
and-to the-brain **in-particular'**
[Rabbi Yosef Albo, sefer ha- 'ikarim, A:6, Spain, 15th Century]

We argue that *biklal* can be interpreted in (7), which is a bridging example, as in its original meaning. However, this interpretation is only left for inference. Thus, we shall argue that the explicature of (7) is in fact (7a)⁴:

(7a) haleb hu ...**kol** ha-'avarim **biklal** [**evarey guf ha'adam**]
ve- la-mo'ax bifrat.
'The heart is..**all** organs included [**in the organs of the human body**] and the brain in particular'

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⁴ The term *explicature* was coined by Sperber & Wilson (1986) in Relevance Theory to characterize 'an explicit assumption in the discourse, based on Grice's *implicature*.

In other words, (7a) was originally stated explicitly and was later left for inference. This is probably because of the frequent use of *biklal* in the fixed construction (Goldberg 1995), along with *bifrat* ('in particular'), with which *biklal* has a category-specimen relations (SEVI; KADMON. 2014)⁵. Within those construction, it can be said that *biklal* had "taken on generalization", which no longer requires the co-occurrence of *all* and *biklal*.

In the 18th century and early 19th century, *biklal* was still used as a sentential adverbial (scoping over full clauses, rather than just phrases).

However, it no longer depended on its following binding within the construction '*biklal u-prat*'. It is used independently, as shown in (8).

(8) Eixut ha-gšamim **bixlal**

⁵ Sevi & Kadmon discuss the Modern use of this construction, which was inherited in Revival Hebrew.

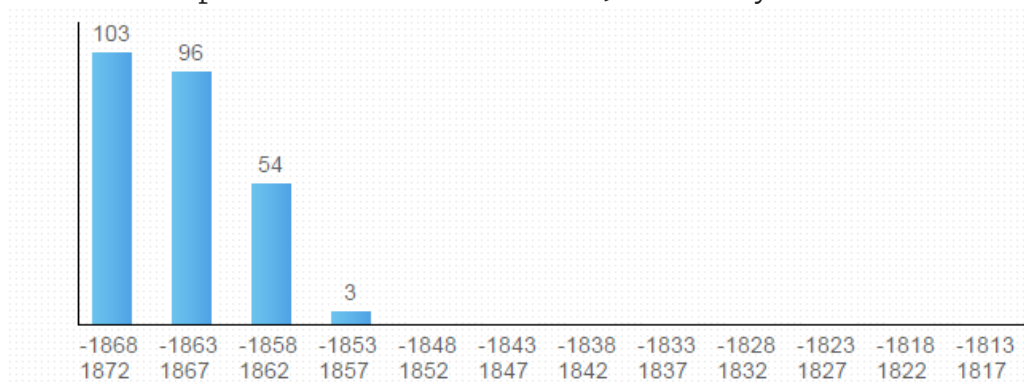
‘The quality of the rains **IN GENERAL**

[Hame’asef, October 16th, **1808**]

We argue that the widening function here too leads to a categorical widening. *Bixlal* at this stage indeed includes a category-specimen relation, but still functions as a widening operator. This widening operation is what pragmatically drives the change.

Stage III: NPI *bixlal*: “at all”/”altogether”/”any”

With Revival Hebrew (RH) (late 19th century), all of *bikal*’s previous uses were inherited into RH but it had been phonologically changed and has been pronounced *bixlal*. This is due to Eli’ezer Ben Yehuda’s work in reviving the spoken Hebrew language (which was not spoken for approximately 2,000 years and existed only within written religious texts (The bible, Mishnah, Talmud etc.). The following graph (1) shows *bixlal*’s interaction with the negation operator *lo* (up until then it only occurred within constructions of negation in Halachic laws, mostly with the existential negation operator ‘ein (‘there is not’/’you cannot’), as shown in (9)), and we do not find evidence for the adjacency of *bixlal* and *lo* prior to mid–end of the 19th century.



Graph 1 - Number of occurrences *bixlal lo*, in years

Taken from: National Library of the Tel–Aviv University site

(9) ve ha- kitnit eino bi-klal yarak
 and DET- legume NEG in-rule-of vegetables
 ‘Legume is not included in the category of vegetables’
 [Mishna, Nedarim 7a]

As evident in (1), it is only around the late 19th century that *bixlal lo* (‘not at all’/’not any’/’actually not’) had emerged. This historically

proves that *bixlal*'s use as a NPI began with RH, as in (10):

- (10) Ha-mixsur **bixlal lo** haya gadol kol kax ba-šanim ha-
'axronot
'The trade **wasn't actually** so big at all in the last few years'
[Hamegid, first year, p.45, 1857]

Still a sentential adverbial, *bixlal* at this stage can precede the negation operator and widens the scope of an accessible 'discursive negation' (either existential or not), therefore strengthening it⁶.

Now, let us focus on example (10). The widened negation with *bixlal* could be interpreted in two ways:

⁶ We shall define 'strengthening of discursive negation' as one of three cases:

- (a) Strengthening of a previous negation in the discourse, as in (11)
(b) Strengthening of a 'commonly sloppy' negation use, as in (12)
(c) Strengthening of a rejection of a common-ground assumption, as in (13).

(A) Ein li kesef le'orex din ve-ein li kesef **BIXLAL**

'I don't have money for a lawyer and I don't have money **AT ALL**'

[Law guide, 29.12.12]

In (A), the speaker says: 'I don't have money for a lawyer'. Now, it could have been the case that the speaker (a divorcing father) would have money for other things which are 'not a lawyer'. Therefore, by using the second widened negation 'I don't have money AT ALL', the speaker cancels any such understandings (e.g 'not for the groceries', 'not for clothes' etc.)

Example (B) is a scenario in which Ruti (the mother) has a 2\$ bill in her purse, but uses the negation 'sloppily' since she is only rejecting the fact that she has *enough* money for the movies⁷:

(B) Avishai: 'ima, ani tsarix kesef leseret hayom

Avishai: "Mom, I need money to the movies tonight"

Ruti: 'Ein li kesef'

Ruti: "I don't have money"

[Casual conversation, 14.12.15],

When using a widened negation operator 'AT ALL', the speaker cancels a sloppy understanding of the use of the negation, as in (B2):

(B2) Ruti: Ein li Kesef **BIXLAL** (=afilu lo šekel)

Ruti: 'I don't have (any) money **AT ALL!**' (=not even a dollar)

[Following Kennedy & McNally's approach to the interpretation of 'The Theater is empty tonight' in a scenario where a few people are present in the theater].

In (C), however, there exists a pre-supposition that a model is in fact pretty. But this discursive pre-supposition or common-ground background assumption is rejected. What the widening operator *bixlal* does, is to strengthen this rejected assumption:

(C) Dugmanit lo yafa **bixlal**

'A model not pretty **at all!**'

[<http://bookcity.co.il/book.asp?id=29609>]

Next, once the use of *bixlal lo* as a negation strengthener was semmanticized, *bixlal lo* could be used to strengthen predicative, descriptive negation with no background claims what so over, as in (D):

(D) Lihiyot me'amen ze **bixlal lo** pašut

'Being a coach is **at all not** easy

[Oded Katash, <http://www.tlvtimes.co.il>]

In (D14) there is no discursive pre-supposition that being a coach is easy (or not). The speaker is merely using a strong negation operator.

1. Not **in general** (not so big in general)
2. Not **AT ALL** (0 big)

This, in fact, serves as a bridging context which explains the shift of *bixlal*, from being an “in general” adverb into serving as a NPI to strengthen the negation. Therefore, from this point onwards, *bixlal* can be used as a NPI, widening an accessible negation in the discourse.

This use of *bixlal* can also occur without explicit negation operators, but with implicit negation only. This occurs in cases where there is use of a “negatively charged” word, such as *different*, or *separate* etc. In addition, *bixlal* as a NPI can also occur in conditional constructions (11) and in question constructions (12), which are known environments for hosting NPI (‘Downward Entailing Contexts’)⁷:

⁷ See Ruth Burstein (2004): all about questions that do not ask

(11) Mcati po et ‘inyanay svuxim ve-hakol be-’irbuvia [...] ve-hineny ‘osek be-berur ha-xešbonot- **‘im bixlal** yihiye efšar levareram

‘I have found here my business messy and everything in disorder [...] and I engage in clarifying the bills- **if at all** it is going to be possible to clarify them’

[Ahađ Ha’am’s letter to Mordechai Ben Hillel Ha-Kohen, Warsaw, March 19, 1897, Tsirkin-Sadan, 2015]

(12) Kešem še-’ein anu ‘itanu yode’a ma mikol ha-ma’asim hapnimiyim šel ota erc beštey hašanim ha’axronot, **eix bixlal** na’asim šam kol hadvarim ve-im hem na’asim

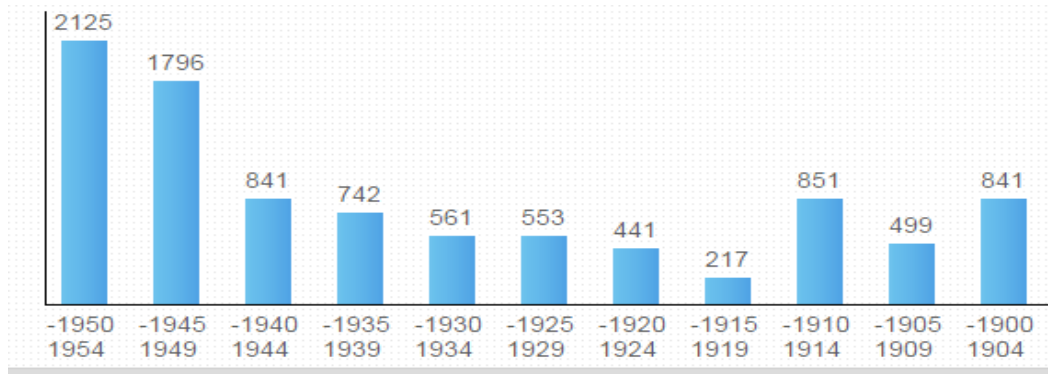
‘Just like nobody knows what among all these internal affairs of that country in the last two years, **how** everything is **even** done over there and if it is done’

[Yosef Haim Brenner, 1920]

In (11), it is implied that it might be the case that clarifying the bills would **not** be possible in the first place. In (12) it is implied that the speaker does **not** know how internal affairs are done in that nation, and is **not** aware of how things are done (if they are done) in the first place.

This implied negation in (11–12) is what Ladusaw (1996) calls ‘Negatively Biased’. The negation in those examples is implied.

Since its first use in the 19th century, *bixlal* has been increasingly popular, as can be seen in (2). This graph shows the use of *bixlal lo* from the year 1900 to the 1950s. Nowadays, *bixlal* as a NPI is used in almost 60% of *bixlal*’s occurrences in general (859 cases were examined in the Tel–Aviv University Corpus (MA’AMAD)).



Graph 2 – the use of *bixlal lo* from the year 1900 to the 1950s

Stage IV: The Rectification Construction:

‘*bixlal lo X, ela Y*’ (‘not at all/even X, but Y’)

In Modern Hebrew (20th century), there is initial evidence for the use of the Rectification Construction, as in (13)⁸:

(13) Nimtsa še hasrefa **bixlal lo** hitxila
be–

Šetax **ISRAEL**, ela be–šetax **HA-HEFKER**

‘It has been found out that the fire **actually did not** start in
the **ISRAELI** territory, but in **NO MAN’S LAND**’

[ma’ariv, October 21st, 1954]

The Rectification Construction is composed of four parts⁹:

⁸ There is no evidence of the use of the Rectification construction (‘*bixlal lo X, ela Y*’) prior to Modern Hebrew. There is, however, the use of the frequent Talmudic ‘*ein biklal ela ma šebifrat*’, (with an existential negation operator), whose interpretation is ‘not in the rule, but only its specifics’. No evidence at all is given to the occurrence of the Rectification construction with *bixlal* as a NPI.

⁹ Mann and Thompson (1985) have defined relations within parts of texts and have named the ‘not x, but y’ construction the antithesis construction, which is composed of a satellite (‘not x’) and a nucleus (‘but y’).

- A. An accessible pre-claim or pre-supposition in the discourse [X]
- B. Satellite: The rejection of 'X'
- C. Corrective **ela** (but): the connective/mediator between the satellite and the nucleus (D)
- D. Nucleus: An alternative claim 'Y'

The rectification construction, as like other construction, was first compositional in nature. Within time it became a frequent discourse pattern, and thus, had become a construction¹⁰. As an element in a frequent discourse pattern *bixlal* could have function as a descriptive-negation operator. But once a construction had been created: '*bixlal lo X, ela Y*', then *bixlal* is no longer used descriptively or predicatively, but rather meta-discursively, or argumentatively, as part of an external-linguistic reality (Anscombe & Ducrot (1977)). Within the construction, *bixlal* can no longer be focused, or stressed. The focus shifts to the rectified element 'X' and the rectifying element 'Y'. It is a construction within the meta-discourse level, functioning mostly as a correction device of an accessible pre-claim or a pre-supposition in the discourse, either of the speaker herself (correcting herself in a monologue), of the addressee (correction within a dialogue), or a correction of an accessible pre-supposition within the discourse¹¹. *Bixlal*'s widening function at this stage is no longer solely of the scope of the negation, **but rather of the contrast** between the rectified element 'X' and the rectifying element 'Y'.

Stage V: Compactization

bixlal lo X, ela Y *bixlal Y*
 (at all not/not at all X, but Y actually Y)

In late 1970s, early 1980s, there has been quite a syntactic-discursively motivated dramatic development within the Rectification Construction.

Due to a frequent occurrence of *bixlal* within the rectification construction, a strong association between *bixlal* and the function of rectification was created, turning *bixlal* into a rectification marker (a

¹⁰ For more about a 'frequent discourse pattern' see Ariel (208).

¹¹ See Maschler (2009) for Discourse Markers within the meta-language level.

discourse marker of rectification). Once reinterpreted as rectification marker, it could be used to indicate rectification even in the absence of the complete construction, as in (14). We shall further argue that this had been made possible in two sub-stages:

A: *bixlal* as a NPI gradually “taking on negation”, as in other Jespersen’s Cycle NPIs. As a result, the explicit rejection operator *lo*, along with the rejected element ‘X’, had been left for inference. Unlike other Jespersen’s cycles, here *bixlal* is constructionally argumentative and therefore takes on **the rejection of the rectified element** and not negation per-se.

B: *Ela* as a connector (mediator) between the rejected ‘X’ and its replacement alternative ‘Y’, is left for inference as well. This happened due to the fact that *ela* in Modern Hebrew functions as a NPI as well and needs an explicit negation operator in order to occur¹². In addition, once the rejected element is left for inference, there is no need of a ‘mediator’ since there are no longer two explicit elements to mediate between. This use of *bixlal* is often translated in previous research as *actually*¹³.

(14): Zo Ha-drex le-kahir. Haderex le-kantara hi **bixlal**
ba-kivun

Ha-hafux!

‘This is the road to Cairo. The road to Qantara is **actually** in the other direction!’

[ma’ariv, March 31st, 1980]

We argue that this quite dramatic construction-reduction has been made possible due to ‘discourse coherency’. It is more coherent within a dialogue to first reject an accessible pre-claim or an accessible pre-supposition in the discourse and only then justify its rejection by providing an alternative, rectifying element¹⁴.

Speakers always have the option of simply providing an alternative claim directly within the discourse, thus implying rectification. But

¹² For more about the grammaticization path of *ela* (but) and its function in the different stages of Hebrew see Bardenstein (forthcoming).

¹³ See Migron (2003), Greenberg and Khrizman (2012), Sevi and Kadmon (2014), Tsirkin-Sadan 2015.

¹⁴ See Du-Bois (2015) for more about ‘dialogic syntax’.

this option (which is sometimes taken by speakers) is less ‘discourse coherent’. Interestingly so, the reduced construction ‘*bixlal* Y’, “kills two birds in one shot”. On the one hand, it provides a short rectification within the discourse, while on the other hand signaling the addressee that rectification is about to occur using *bixlal* as a discourse marker, or rectification marker. Another Modern Hebrew example (15), from the year 2015 demonstrates this ‘reduced-use’ of *bixlal*:

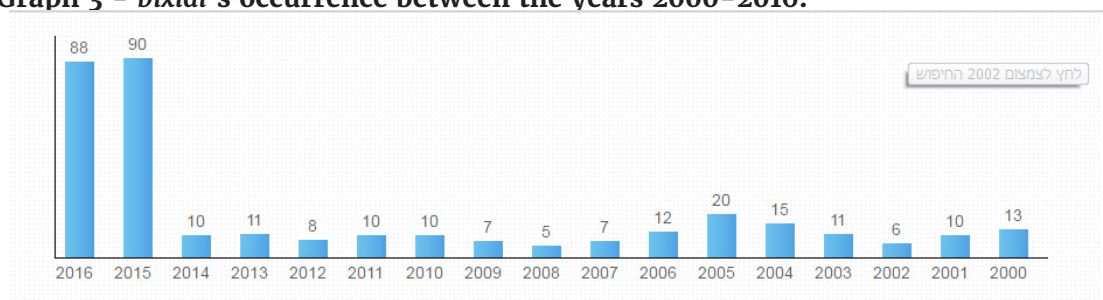
(15) Ha-rofi'm nidhamu! Ha-gidul ha-sartani hu **bixlal**
ka'akua

‘The doctors were astounded! The tumor is **actually** a tattoo!’
[Walla health, 22.5.15]

Stage VI: Widened Contrast Marker

We argue that the use of *bixlal* in the last two years (2015–2016) has risen greatly (as shown in (3), due to the fact that it had been transformed into a “free” contrast marker between two elements in the discourse, **no longer depending on rectification** relation between those elements. i.e, the first element ‘X’ is no longer rejected and substituted with another alternative ‘Y’. What *bixlal* does in this stage is simply mark and widen the contrast between two elements within the context. Therefore, *bixlal* still functions as a widener, but this widening relation is not dependant on the relation of rectification, but only on the relation of contrast between two elements in the discourse. For example, (16) was said about a psychiatrist who was hospitalized herself in a mental hospital. The use of *bixlal* in (16) widens the contrast between the element ‘doctor’ and the element ‘patient’ in this context.

Graph 3 – *bixlal*'s occurrence between the years 2000–2016.



(16) Ha-rof'a še-la hayta bixlal ha-metupelet še-la
'Her DOCTOR was actually/in fact herPATIENT!'
[Lady Globes, December, 2014]

As evident in (16b), since *bixlal* is a sentential adverbial, it can always occur following the contrasted elements, still functioning as a marker and a widener of contrast.

(16b) Ha-rof'a še-la hayta ha-metupelet še-la **bixlal**
'Her doctor was her patient in fact/actually'

In the phonological arena, since *bixlal* has been much more frequently used, the pronunciation of *bixlal* has also changed, especially in informal speech, and in colloquial Hebrew speakers tend to shorten it into something like “*b(e)xlal*”, in order to widen such contrast .

Ziv (2012) claims, the use of *bixlal* might convey disapproval. This use of *bixlal* translates as ‘anyway’, as in (17):

(17) matay habxina hazot bixlal
'When is this exam anyway?'
[Ziv, 2012]

Stage VII: widened Contrast marker + NPI

As a cyclic closer, *bixlal* can occur twice in the same sentence—first as a contrast marker and secondly as a NPI. This is exemplified in (18):

(18) Menaše **bixlal** ein lo kešer le-ze **bixlal**
'Menaše actually has **nothing** to do with it **at all**'
[<http://www.tora-manhiga.org.il/show.asp?id=39569>]

We argue that in (18), the first *bixlal* is a sentential adverbial, scoping over the entire sentence, and the second *bixlal* is a NPI, widening the scope of the negation ('nothing'), thus strengthening it. Since *bixlal* came to mark contrast within the discourse relatively recently, examples like (18) are quite rare. We could only find two such examples in our corpus.

Conclusions

This article has presented the Rectification Cycle of *bixlal* in Hebrew, whose persistence function is widening (“once a widener, always a widener”). It is WHAT is being widened that changes. This cycle is in fact unidirectional and therefore it is actually more like a **continuous spiral**, ever changing.

We have shown in this article that *bixlal*'s diachronic semantic change is motivated pragmatically via the operator's function, in this case – widening. From a categorical widener, *biklal* became a generalizing operator and a NPI, widening the scope of the negation. Then, it occurred within the Rectification Construction in which it widened the contrast between the rejected element 'X' and its provided alternative 'Y'. In addition, another motivation for change is *bixlal*'s frequent interaction with the negation, which has created a strong association between *bixlal* and the function of negation, or rejection. Within the Rectification construction, *bixlal* did not only “take on negation”, as in various languages discussed by Jespersen (1917), but actually “**took on rectification**” and became a rectification marker. As discussed above, this has allowed the use of *bixlal* as a general contrast marker, creating the possibility of two *bixlals* to co-occur, each in a different use, closing up the circle, or more precisely, the spiral.

A similar cycle (or spiral) of rectification is also evident with other sentential adverbials in Hebrew (such as *kvar* (already) and *davka* (actually)). We shall conduct a thorough examination of those adverbials in future research. From a brief cross-linguistic examination, it is evident that this path of grammaticization has probably occurred in other languages such as Russian **voobšê** and Polish **vogule**. These two languages share all of the different meanings of *bixlal*. A historical examination is in need to diachronically provide evidence for such analysis.

In addition, it might be the case that non-widening elements which have been used to strengthen negation have evolved into rectification markers. Among which are English *actually* which can be used to rectify an accessible pre-claim or a pre-supposition in the discourse, as in (19):

- (19) According to a new study published in the Journal of marketing research, intrusive advertising may **actually be**

BAD for business

[<https://contently.com/strategist/2016/06/07/study-shows-publishers-actually-lose-money-running-bad-ads>]

In (19), a discourse pre-supposition that advertising is **good** for business is rejected and substituted for a claim that intrusive advertising might actually be **bad** for business. English *actually* shall also be examined diachronically in future studies. In addition, though English *at all* has evolved similarly to *bixlal* in its initial stages (see example (20)), *at all* cannot be used as a reduced (compact) rectification marker or a contrast marker (yet).

(20) Trump's official position is that the star on the image was not a star of David **at all, but rather** a "Sheriff's star" or perhaps *just* a "*plain star*"

[<http://www.vox.com/2016/7/5/12095130/donald-trump-anti-semitism>]

In (20), following the famous poster in which Hillary Clinton was shown with a star which was perceived to be a Star of David, Trump rejected that claim and provided an alternative which claimed that the star on the image was a plain star, or a sheriff's star.

In English, the connector or mediator between the satellite and the nucleus of the Rectification Construction can be *but*, *but rather* (20) or *rather than* (21), among other rectificational options.

(21) Dishonest media is trying their absolute best to depict a star in a tweet as the Star of David **rather than** a Sheriff's Star, or *plain STAR!*

[<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/749961528422625281>]

Lastly, taking a closer look at examples such as (232–24) reveal that certain adverbials such as English *just* or Hebrew *rak* (just/only) might function as "intensifying downtoners" – on the one hand down-toning the rectifying element, or the nucleus of the construction as '**just** a plain start' in (20), and on the other hand, widening the contrast between the rejected claim and its alternative. Thus, function as well as widening adverbials.

In future studies we intend to investigate all of the above. The

function of rectification, which is one of the most common discourse constructions in Hebrew (AZAR, 1999) seems fascinating and calls for more elaborative analysis.

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