Hebrew Exclusives: A Core meaning and Varying Parameters

Dina Orenstein (dinaorenstein@gmail.com) and Yael Greenberg (yaelgree@gmail.com)

Bar Ilan University

This paper offers a core semantic operation of three exclusive particles in Hebrew, *rak, stam* and *be-sax ha-kol*, and a characterization of four parameters along which the core operation can vary. In previous papers Orenstein, and Orenstein & Greenberg have already looked at some characteristics of each of these exclusives. We are now in a position to sketch a fuller and more general picture of exclusivity in Hebrew, which, in addition to accounting for a wider range of similarities and differences between the three particles, has more general implications towards the study of exclusivity cross linguistically, the characterization of alternative sensitive and scalar operators besides exclusives, projective meanings, etc.

Data: *rak, stam* and *be-sax ha-kol* seem to yield an identical semantic effect in sentences like (1), namely convey that a)Rina is a clerk b) she does not have a better profession (e.g. she is not a lawyer or an accountant):

(1) *Rina rak/be-sax ha-kol/stam [pkida]F. ("Rina is EXC a clerk")*

But there are interesting differences between these particles, as illustrated below:

***stam*:** Unlike *rak* and *be-sax ha-kol*, *stam* is less naturally compatible with numerals (2), and with associates which are considered too high on the relevant scale, (e.g. 'the vice president') (3). In addition, unlike *rak*, the prejacent of *stam* tends not to project (4):

(2)higiu rak / be-sax ha-kol / #stam 20 iS ("EXC 20 people arrived")

(3) hu rak/be-sax ha-kol/??stam sgan ha- nasi ("He is EXC the vice president")

(4) Rina rak / stam kanta garbayim? ("Did Rina EXC buy socks?", (That Rina bought socks is inferred with *rak*, but not with *stam*).

***be-sax ha-kol*:** unlike *rak* and *stam*, *be-sax ha-kol* yields an approximative reading with Upper closed adjectives (but not with Lower-closed ones) (5). On this reading the prejacent does not project (6). In addition, when combined with numerals it differs from *rak* in being felicitous against a "lower expectation" context (7). This, however, is impossible when the numeral is part of nonadditive measure expressions (Schwarzschild 2006) which do not track part-whole structures, like *20 degrees* (8):

(5) *ha-xeder be-sax ha-kol naki/ #meluxlax* ("The room is EXC ("more or less") clean / #dirty"

(6) ha-xeder be-sax ha-kol naki? (Is the room EXC ("more or less") clean?) (no inference that the room is clean)

(7) tsipiti Se-yihiyu 10 anaSim , basof hayu be-sax ha-kol/#rak 20 / ("I expected that 10 people will arrive. Eventually there were EXC 10")

(8) tsipiti le-10 maalot ve-basof hayu #be-sax ha-kol / #rak 20 (I expected 10 degrees, but eventually there were EXC 10).

Main claim: *rak, stam* and *be-sax ha-kol* are all scalar exclusive operators. The core operation we define is in the spirit of other scalar approaches to exclusives (Beaver & Clark 2008, Kadmon & Sevi 2011, Roberts 2011, Coppock & Beaver 2011), but includes some revised components

(motivated in detail in Orenstein & Greenberg 2013). It includes two 'not at issue' components (a) the prejacent is weaker than all contextually salient potential alternatives (i.e. those true in some accessible world, subsuming 'expected' alternatives). (b) the prejacent is true in w_0, and one 'at issue' ('asserted') component: (c) the prejacent is the strongest true alternative in w_0 . We derive the differences between the three particles from the different specification of four parameters, summarized in the following table:

Particle	**Type of scale**	**Position of p on the scale**	**Origin of alternatives**	**Evidential summing up components**
rak	entailment/evaluative	neutral	contextual	No
stam	evaluative	low	contextual	No
be-sax ha-kol	entailment/evaluative	neutral	contextual/internal	Yes

Accounting for the data: *stam* is incompatible with entailment based scales, e.g. those naturally triggered by numerals (2) and is infelicitous with 'vice president' (3), which is perceived as located high on a salient scale of professions, since p must be 'low'. Unlike ***rak*** its prejacent tends not to project since, unlike what happens in entailment-based scales, where negating or questioning the assertion can never conflict with the prejacent, allowing the latter to project, with evaluative scales such conflicts are possible and even common. E.g. questioning the assertion of (4) with *rak* amounts to raising the possibility that Rina bought other things in addition to socks, thus entailing she bought socks. In contrast, with *stam* this amounts to raising the possibility that Rina bought something more important / expensive than socks (instead of socks) thus leading to the conclusion that she did not buy socks.

As for ***be-sax ha-kol***, one parameter that distinguishes it from the other exclusives is its ability to operate on scales of 'internally provided' alternatives, and not only on contextually provided ones (cf. Chierhcia's 2010 between 'scalar' and 'subdomain' alternatives). Thus, for example, with (5), the alternatives that *be-sax ha-kol* operates on are different interpretational versions of the prejacent itself, namely of $\exists d\ d \geq stand(clean) \wedge clean(the\ room)(d)$ (following, e.g. Kennedy & McNally (2005)), where *stand (clean)* is given different values. Since the scale for *clean* is U(pper)-closed, the salient standard is the maximal end point in a cleanness scale. What is presupposed, then, that 'the room is maximally clean', which is true in some accessible world, is stronger than p. In addition, p (now re-interpreted as "the room has a cleanness degree lower than maximal") is taken to be true in w_0, and the assertion is that any stronger alternative than p is false in w_0. Following McNally (2011), Sassoon & Toledo (2011)) proposals that the standard with U-closed adjectives can be lower than the salient maximal endpoint, we get the 'approximative' reading of (5), where the degree of cleanness of the room is lower than the maximal, but high enough to be considered 'clean'.

The prejacent does not project here since both the 'at issue' and the 'not at issue' levels interact in influencing its (re-)interpretation, and thus cannot be properly distinguished wrt the target of the question operator. This reading is blocked with *dirty* since its salient standard is minimal, and hence cannot be lowered. In addition, unlike (7) with *rak*, which is infelicitous since the contextual alternative is weaker than p (thus leading to a ps. failure), *be-sax ha-kol* can ignore this contextual alternative, and relate only to 'internally provided' alternatives. In

this case, the ‘at least’ interpretation of the numeral (“there were at least 20 people”) triggers salient propositions of the form T*here were 21 or 22 or 23… people*, all of which are epistemically possible and stronger than the prejacent. Asserting that these stronger propositions are false thus leads to the conclusion that precisely 20 people arrived. Finally, the consideration of ‘internal’ alternatives is possible in (7) but not in (8), since, unlike *20 people*, *20 degrees* is a nonadditive measure expression, which does not track part whole structure, and hence basing the statement on a ‘summing up’ operation is impossible there.