

# Different roads to Verum

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# Introduction: Verum Focus

- Means of insisting on the truth of a proposition via a prosodic pattern that places stress on the auxiliary.
- It emerges in contexts where the statement was already doubted:

German: (1) A: *Ich kann mir nicht vorstellen, dass Peter den Hund getreten hat.*

I can me not imagine that Peter the dog kicked has  
'I cannot imagine that Peter kicked the dog.'

B: *Peter HAT den Hund getreten.*

Peter has the dog kicked  
'Peter did kick the dog.'

# Verum focus targets T

- Verum accent may fall on tensed verbs when there is no overt auxiliary. If there is, verb stress is only interpreted as an instance of predicate focus.

(3) a. *Karl SCHREIBT ein Buch.*

Karl write a book

‘Karl IS writing a book.’

(as opposed to NOT writing one)

b. *Ich habe einen Roman GESCHRIEBEN.*

I have a novel written

‘I have WRITTEN a novel.’

(as opposed to READING a novel)

# Previous analyses: Focus activates a Verum Op.

- Höhle (1992) proposed that any indicative sentence contains a Verum operator in the left periphery that expresses the speaker's belief in its realness.
- Verum accent targets this element, while being observed on near overt heads such as T or C.

(4)  $\llbracket \text{VERUM}(p) \rrbracket = \llbracket \textit{it is true that } p \rrbracket$

$\llbracket \text{VERUM}(p) \rrbracket^f = \{ \textit{it is true that } p, \textit{it is not true that } p \}$

- Licensing condition: stressing the truth of a sentence is trivial, unless someone else has doubted it. This derives the licensing context seen in (1-2).

(Höhle 1992, Romero and Han 2004, Lohnstein and Stommel 2005, Gutzmann and Castroviejo Miró, a.o.)

# Previous analyses: Verum without focus

- Gutzmann et al. (2020) argue that Verum has its own accent which does not go through focus mechanisms.
- Tone languages with separate operators for focus and Verum

Bura (Chadic)      Focus: (5) *Kilfa an tí Kubílí másta akwa kwasúku.*

fish    foc    rel Kubili buy    at    market

‘It’s FISH that Kubili bought at the market.’

Verum: (6) *A’á, Pindár (kú) sá mbal náha.*

yes Pindar verum drink beer yesterday

‘Yes, Pindar DID drink beer yesterday.’

- Verum operators remove “not p” from the QUD

# Previous analyses: Focus without Verum

- Alternative views propose that Verum focus can be minimally derived from available focus theories (e.g., Rooth 1992, Schwartzschilde 1999) **without** assuming truth operators.
- In this view, the licensing of Verum Focus follows from general conditions of focus, such as (7).

(7) *Appropriateness condition on free focus* (Katzir 2013:5) :

Each sentence must have a focus alternative in the context.

## Previous analyses: Focus without Verum

- Goodhue (2018) showed that assuming  $\neg p$  as a necessary antecedent derives three patterns of licensing for Verum Focus accent:

Antecedent	VF accent	Example
Negative claim: $\neg p$	Obligatory	A: <i>Naomi didn't buy wine.</i> B: <i>She DID buy wine.</i>

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Polar question: $\{p, \neg p\}$	Optional	A: <i>Did Naomi buy wine?</i> B1: <i>She bought wine.</i> B2: <i>She DID but wine.</i>



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Unrelated	Infelicitous	A: <i>Is everything set for dinner?</i> B1: <i>Naomi bought wine.</i> B2: # <i>Naomi DID buy wine.</i>

# Today

- Show that Hebrew provides a clear case of verum meanings that are generated through focus alternatives without a verum component.
- Suggest that Verum strategies are diverse (non exhaustive typology):

	Verum operator	Focus
<b>Overt Verum phrases</b> (English <i>indeed</i> )	✓	%
<b>Stressed Aux.</b>	?	✓
<b>Stressed Affirmatives</b> (Hebrew KEN)	×	✓

# Verum focus in a language with no Auxiliaries

- Most Hebrew sentences lack auxiliaries.
- Verum focus may be expressed either by stress on the verb or through stressed *ken* ‘yes’ particle insertion.

Hebrew: (8) A: *xašavti*      *še-Amal*      *lo*      *ohevet*      *marak*.

think.PST.1SG COMP-Amal NEG like.PRTC.F soup

‘I thought Amal didn’t like soup.’

**B1:** *amal*      ***OHEVET***      *marak*.

Amal like.PRTC.F soup

‘Amal LIKES soup.’

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‘I thought Amal didn’t like soup.’

**B2:** *amal KEN ohevet marak.*

Amal yes like.PRTC.F soup

‘Amal DOES like soup.’

# Other focused affirmative particles

- Focus affirmatives are not unique to Hebrew:

Spanish: (9) *A Lola **SÍ** le gusta baila-r.*

DAT.PREP Lola yes DAT.3SG like.3SG dance-INF

‘Lola DOES like to dance.’

Yiddish: (10) *Amal ot **JO** liib jojx.*

Amal have.1SG yes love soup

‘Amal DOES like soup.’

# Licensing condition: recent doubt

- Hebrew stressed *ken* has the same licensing condition as Verum focus, i.e., it depends upon on a negative alternative in the preceding context:

(11) A: *ma naxin le-aruxat erev?*

what make.SUBJ for-meal.of evening

‘What should we make for dinner?’

B: *amal (\*KEN) ohevet marak.*

Amal yes likes soup

‘Amal (\*DOES) likes soup.’

# Licensing condition: recent doubt

- The antecedent may contain the negative alternative implicitly.

(12) A: *Amal sonet et rov ha-oxel ha-temani.*  
Amal hate.PRTC.F ACC most DET-food DET-Yemen  
'Amal hates most Yemenite dishes.'

B: *hi KEN ohevet MARAK.*  
she yes like.PRTC.F soup  
'She does like soup.'

# Licensing condition: recent doubt

- When there is no antecedent, the negative alternative is accommodated as an inference:

(13) *hi KEN nesu'a.*  
she yes married  
'She IS married.'

Inference: (1) *someone said that  $\neg p$*   
(2) *speaker wondered whether  $p$*



# The distribution of *ken*

- Hebrew differs from, e.g., Spanish, in having a free use of constituent negation, which allows the same distribution for *ken*.

(14) a. *ze me'od lo raxok.*

this very NEG far

‘It’s very much not far.’ [me’od > ¬]

b. *ze lo me'od raxok.*

this NEG very far

‘It’s not very far.’ [¬ > me’od]

(15) a. *at kcat ken ašema.*

you bit yes guilty

‘It seems you are guilty.’ [kcat > ken]

b. *at ken kcat ašema.*

you yes bit guilty

‘You are a bit guilty.’ [ken > kcat]

# Low interpretation of stressed ken?

## High KEN

(16) (a) *ze KEN ha-of ha- metubal.*

this YES DET-chicken DET-seasoned

‘this IS the seasoned chicken

(17) (b) *ani KEN roca lalexet.*

I yes want go.INF

‘I DO want to go.’

## Low KEN

(a) *ze ha-of ha-KEN metubal.*

this DET-chicken DET-yes seasoned

‘this the SEASONED chicken

(b) *ani roca KEN lalexet.*

I want yes go.INF

‘I want to go, though.’

no interaction  
with truth value

# Licensing conditions?

- Sentence-KEN and constituent-KEN vary in the inference they generate:

	Statement	Inference
High KEN	(16b) <i>This chicken is KEN seasoned.</i>	The chicken's seasoning was doubted.
	(17b) <i>I KEN want to go.</i>	The speaker's desire was doubted.

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	(17b) <i>I KEN want to go.</i>	The speaker's desire was doubted.
Low KEN	(16a) <i>This is the KEN-seasoned chicken.</i>	There is another chicken that's unseasoned.
	(17b) <i>I want to KEN go.</i>	Going was debated.

# Proposal: Constituent polarity

- Hebrew stressed *ken* varies from overt Verum particles like English *indeed* or Bura *kú* in having no Verum meaning.
- This is evident in its ability to modify constituents that aren't truth-conditional.
- Stressed *ken* restrict the alternatives set of adjectives to the *P/not P* binarity
- Focusing an adjective without *ken* generates a broader set of alternatives:

(20) *ze ha-of ha-METUBAL.*  
 this DET-chicken DET-seasoned  
 'This is the SEASONED chicken.'

(21)  $\llbracket 20 \rrbracket^f_{\langle e, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle} = \{\text{seasoned chicken, spicy chicken, lemon chicken...}\}$

# Proposal: Cross-categorial polar alternatives

$$(19) \quad \llbracket ken \rrbracket (P)_c = P$$

$$c = \llbracket [ken]^F (P) \rrbracket = \{P, \neg P\}$$

$$\llbracket \text{This chicken KEN is seasoned} \rrbracket^f_{\langle s, t \rangle} =$$

{chicken is seasoned, chicken is **not** seasoned} Inference: Someone said  $\neg p$

$$\llbracket \text{KEN seasoned} \rrbracket^f_{\langle e, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle} =$$

{seasoned, **not**-seasoned}

Inference: Complementary set  $\neg P$

# Distinction from stressed auxiliaries

- Although stressed *ken* may raise an inference that the speaker asked themselves a polar question, stressed *ken* cannot respond to actual ones:

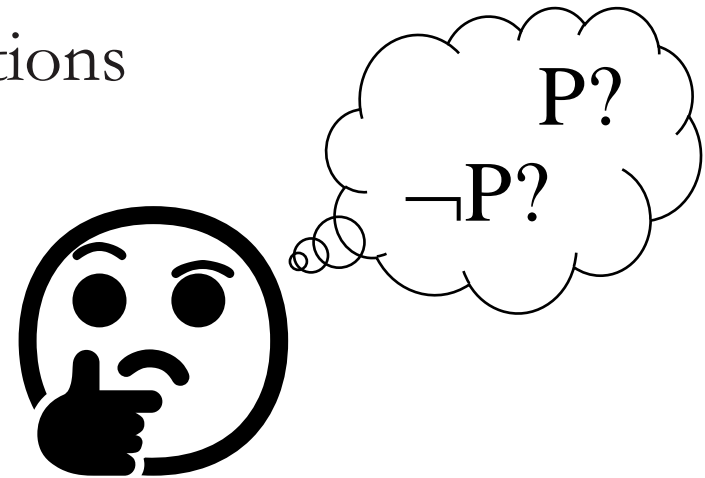
(22) A: *hiamznt pica?*  
order.2SG.PAST pizza  
'Did you order Pizza?'

B: (\**KEN*) *hizmanti.*  
yes order.1SG.PAST  
'I did.'

- Why do internal polar questions license stressed *ken*, but actual ones do not?

# Distinction from stressed auxiliaries

- The difference: wondering about polar questions usually includes considering both options.



- Stressed *ken* cannot access the alternatives in questions' denotation (unlike stressed auxiliaries)



# Verum components

	Insists the truth of the utterance	Requires a negative alternative	Answers polars questions
Overt Verum phrases (English <i>indeed</i> )	✓	✗	✓
Stressed Aux.	✓	✓	✓
Stressed Affirmatives (Hebrew KEN)	✓	✓	✗

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Stressed Aux.	✓	✓	✓	?	✓
Stressed Affirmatives (Hebrew KEN)	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓

# Thank you

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