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Inverse-scope and Semi-PPIs: Evidence from Hebrew

Overview: Polarity Sensitive Item (PSIs) are commonly divided into two classes: Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) and Positive Polarity Items (PPIs). I argue based on evidence from Hebrew that a third class of PSIs should be recognized, which I propose to call semi-PPIs. Such items can occur in both affirmative and negative contexts, but they cannot scope below negation when they are not c-commanded by it at surface structure. However, as is the case with PPIs (Szabolcsi 2004), the illicit structure can be rescued if it is embedded under an NPI licenser, or if certain elements scopally intervene between negation and the semi-PPI. This licensing condition accounts for the restricted availability of an inverse-scope reading of sentences in which Hebrew *kol* 'all' precedes the clausal negator.

Data: In some languages (e.g. French, Persian, Turkish and Japanese), sentences in which a universal quantifier in subject position precedes the negative marker have an inverse-scope interpretation, in which the quantifier scopes below negation. The classic example in English is the proverb *All that glitters is not gold*, which can be paraphrased as *Not all that glitters is gold*. Results of an extensive corpus study suggest that in Hebrew such inverse-scope interpretation is unavailable in an unmodified declarative matrix clause (1a). However, when the entire constellation is embedded in an environment that licenses NPIs, inverse-scope becomes available (e.g. under an emotive factive predicate in 1b).

(1) a. kulam   lo   xatmu.
        everyone   NEG   signed
        'Everyone didn't sign.' (*kol*>NEG ; *NEG>*kol*)

    b. xaval   še-kulam   lo   xatmu.
        pity   that-everyone   NEG   signed
        'It's a shame that everyone didn't sign.' (*kol*>NEG ; NEG>*kol*)

The polarity sensitivity of the inverse-scope reading is surprising, given that *kol* 'all' does not appear to be polarity sensitive in other respects. In object position, it can occur in both affirmative and negative contexts (2a). In subject position, it can scope below negation when constituent negation is used (2b).

(2) a. (lo)   pagašti   et   kol   ha-studentim.
        NEG   I.met   ACC   all   the-students
        'I have(n't) met all the students.' (NEG>*kol*)

    b. (lo)   kol   ha-studentim   avru   et   ha-mivxan.
        NEG   all   the-students   passed ACC   the-exam
        '(Not) all the students passed the exam.' (NEG>*kol*)

Also note that other subjects in Hebrew (e.g. the NPI *iš* 'anyone') can reconstruct below negation (3), so it is not the case that Hebrew does not allow scope reconstruction.

(3) iš   lo   xašav   še-mašehu   kaze   bixlal yaxol   likrot.
    anyone   NEG   thought   that-something such   at.all can   happen
    'No one thought that something like that can even happen.' (NEG>*iš*)

Similarity to PPI-rescuing: Szabolcsi (2004) observes that PPIs can survive below negation when an additional NPI licenser is present. She analyzes PPIs as endowed with two dormant NPI features: a strong-NPI feature (which requires an anti-additive licenser) and a weak-NPI feature (which requires a Strawson-DE licenser). These features remain dormant (i.e. do not require licensing), unless activated by a strong-NPI licenser. In (4a), negation activates both NPI features, but licenses only one of them, which results in ungrammaticality. In (4b), another licenser is present (i.e. *surprised*), and it licenses the second weak-NPI feature of *some*, which rescues the illegitimate constellation (Szabolcsi 2004: 10).

(4) a. *John didn't call someone.*   (*NEG>*some*)
    b. *I am surprised that John didn't call someone.*   (*surprised*>NEG>*some*)

Proposal: I propose to extend Szabolcsi's theory to incorporate semi-PPIs, represented by Hebrew *kol* 'all'. Since *kol* can scope below negation in object position (2), it doesn't qualify as a bona fide PPI. However, Szabolcsi's analysis can be adapted to *kol* if we assume that *kol* has: (i) a single dormant

weak-NPI feature; (ii) a licensing requirement of c-command by the licenser at surface structure. The second condition has been suggested in the literature (see e.g. Linebarger 1980) to account for the unacceptability of English *any* and similar NPIs in subject position, e.g. **Anyone didn't see me.* While the c-command condition undergenerates in some cases (e.g. falsely predicts the unacceptability of *Finding any green vegetables is impossible there*, see De Swart 1998), for our purposes we can use it as an approximation.

Accounting for the data: These two conditions capture the scope possibilities of *kol* with respect to negation. In non-negative contexts (2), *kol*'s dormant weak-NPI feature is not activated. When *kol* is in the direct scope of negation and c-commanded by it at PF (2), negation activates the dormant feature and licenses it. In subject position (5a), *kol* reconstructs below negation at LF, which activates its dormant feature but doesn't license it due to the c-command requirement. However, when an additional NPI licenser is present, it licenses the activated feature (5b).

(5) a. kol   ha-studentim   lo   avru   et   ha-mixan.
         all   the-students   NEG   passed ACC   the-exam
         'All the students didn't pass the exam.' (*kol*>NEG ; *NEG>*kol*)

    b. xaval še- kol   ha-studentim   lo   avru   et   ha-mivxan
         pity   that-all   the-students   NEG   passed ACC   the-exam
         'It's a shame that all the students didn't pass the exam.' (*xaval*>*kol*>NEG ; *xaval*>NEG>*kol*)

Another case where PPIs can survive below negation is when another operator such as *always* scopally intervenes between negation and the PPI and prevents the activation of the dormant features (Szabolcsi 2004: 21). Similarly, *kol* in subject position can scope below negation when an intervener is present. For example, (6) has a surface scope reading that every member of the community is sometimes unhappy about the decisions, and an inverse-scope reading that not always everyone is happy (but it might be that some people are always happy with whatever is decided).

(6) kulanu   lo   tamid   merucim   me-haxlatot   ha-kehila.
      all.of.us   NEG   always happy   from-decisions.of   the-community
      'All of us are not always happy with the decisions of the community.'
      Surface scope: (*kol*>NEG>*tamid*)   Inverse-scope: (NEG>*tamid*>*kol*)

Further issues: Szabolcsi (2004: 21) notes that the correlation between intervention in NPI licensing and in PPI shielding is not perfect. The example she gives is that *often* blocks NPIs (**He hasn't often called anyone*) but doesn't seem to shield PPIs (*He has(*n't) often called someone*). In Hebrew, we also see the opposite pattern, where operators such as *behexreax* 'necessarily' don't block licensing of NPIs like *ey pa'am* 'ever' (7a), but shield PPIs like *kvar* 'already' (7b) and semi-PPIs like *kol* (7c).

(7) a. lo   behexreax   neda   **ey**   **pa'am** et   ha-tšuva.
         NEG   necessarily   we.will.know   some   time   ACC   the-answer
         'We won't necessarily ever know the answer.' (NEG>*behexreax*>*ey pa'am*)

    b. hem   lo   *(behexreax)   **kvar** kiblu   et   ze.
         they   NEG   necessarily   already received   ACC   it
         'They haven't necessarily received it yet.' (NEG>*behexreax*>*kvar*)

    c. ani   madgiša   še-**kol** ze   lo   behexreax   šlili   be-eyn-ay.
         I   stress   that-all this   NEG   necessarily   negative   in-my-eyes
         'I stress that all of this is not necessarily bad, in my opinion.' (NEG>*behexreax*>*kol*)

Theoretical implications: These results suggest that there exists a previously undiscovered class of PSIs, i.e. semi-PPIs. What sets these items apart from other PSIs is that they can occur in both affirmative and negative contexts. However, their polarity sensitivity becomes evident in negative contexts when they are not c-commanded by negation at surface structure. Further research is needed in order to identify items in other languages that belong to this class.

References:
De Swart, Henriëtte. "Licensing of negative polarity items under inverse scope." 1998.
Linebarger, Marcia Christine. *The grammar of negative polarity*. 1980.
Szabolcsi, Anna. "Positive polarity – negative polarity." 2004.