

Research Article

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Request for confirmation sequences in Hebrew

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Abstract: This study reports quantitative findings from a study of 205 Hebrew request for confirmation (RfC) sequences, as part of a comparative Pragmatic Typological project across ten languages. Based on video recordings of casual conversation, this is the first systematic survey of such sequences in Hebrew. We examine linguistic and embodied resources for making an RfC (syntactic and prosodic design; polarity; use of modulation, inference marking, connectives, and tag questions) and for responding to it (response type; use, type, and position of response tokens (RTs); (non)minimal responses; repeat strategies; nodding and headshakes). We find that Hebrew RfCs lack interrogative syntax and are overwhelmingly marked by rising final intonation, frequently marked as inferences, rich in types of connectives and modulators, but infrequently feature tag questions. In responses to RfCs, Hebrew presents a comparatively high rate of disconfirmation, which is often also relatively unmitigated, corroborating Linguistic Anthropological descriptions of Hebrew conversational style. RTs are used in over half of responses, while full repeats are relatively rare. Occasionally, nods and headshakes are found unaccompanied by speech, as exclusively embodied responses. We expand on two negating RTs: the dental click (an areal feature) and the forceful *ma pit'om* 'of course not' (lit. 'what suddenly').

Keywords: Hebrew polar questions, requests for confirmation, (dis)confirmation, response tokens, intonation, final pitch contour, tag questions, interactional linguistics, linguistic typology

1 Introduction

This study surveys request for confirmation (RfC) sequences in Hebrew, analyzing 205 requests and responses in casual spoken Hebrew conversation. As described in the introduction to this special issue (König and Pfeiffer forthcoming), RfCs are turns that introduce a proposition and make (dis)confirmation by another participant relevant. They manifest a relatively flat, recipient-tilted epistemic gradient (Heritage and Raymond 2012, 180), in which the speaker claims partial knowledge concerning the confirmable but treats the addressee as having better access or more rights to knowledge about the matter at hand.

In Section 2, we review previous studies related to Hebrew RfC sequences. Section 3 presents our data. Section 4 surveys the linguistic resources used to build RfCs, whereas Section 5 outlines the linguistic resources used to build responses to these requests. The analyses follow the guidelines provided for all articles in this Special Issue (König and Pfeiffer forthcoming) and highlight what is particular to Hebrew RfC sequences from a comparative perspective, in light of the nine other languages investigated in the larger project of which this study is a part. Section 6 summarizes the main findings and discusses possibilities for future research on Hebrew RfCs.

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2 Literature review

This is the first dedicated study of Hebrew RfCs. We know of only one published study of Hebrew polar interrogative forms based on spoken data, which is Cohen's (2004, 2009) description of the intonation of interrogatives in a small corpus of spontaneous spoken interaction. She describes the use of rising final intonation as the main formal characteristic¹ of Hebrew polar interrogatives.²

The earliest effort to describe the usage of interrogatives in Hebrew based on interactional principles was the pioneering study by Du-Nour (1987, Sections 3.3.1 and 4.2.4), who dealt briefly with both polar interrogatives and tag questions. However, Du-Nour's description was based on the representation of dialogue in plays. Burstein (2021) is a general survey of questions and answers in written Hebrew, but the analysis there is primarily syntactic, and not based on interactional linguistic principles. Even more so than Du-Nour's work, the relation between Burstein's data and spoken language is complicated, since her sources include high-register fiction alongside journalistic interviews, emulating speech to different degrees (*ibid.*, 17). We will therefore briefly present Burstein's and Du-Nour's main findings related to RfCs below, where relevant, and compare them to our spoken data findings.

There are several studies concerning particles that are central to the design of Hebrew polar questions and their responses, and therefore significant for the description of RfCs, as response tokens (RTs, Section 5.2) and/or tag questions (Section 4.6). Miller Shapiro (2012) and Maschler and Miller Shapiro (2016) describe the uses of *naxon* 'right' as both RT and tag, and how these uses have grammaticized from the original verbal meaning, 'to be established, strong, ready'. Michalovich and Netz (2018) describe the use of *naxon* as a tag in the classroom. Shor (2018, 2020) describes the use of *lo* 'no' as an RT and tag question. Ben-Moshe and Maschler (forthcoming) describe the use of dental clicks as RTs. Bardenstein (2020, 77–9) describes the development of *ma pit'om* (lit. 'what suddenly') from a rhetorical question into an exclamation of strong disagreement. Inbar (2021, 408–9) discusses the use of *'o mašehu* 'or something', which may be used as a tag question. Miller (2010) studied the epistemic uses of repetition in Hebrew talk-in-interaction, which bears upon its use in responses to RfCs.

All of these constructions are described as part of wider research projects, and not specifically in RfCs. In what follows, we refer to these studies, and others, when relevant in the analysis sections. The only study contrasting several forms in a paradigm is Greenberg and Wolf's (2019) study of *ken* 'yes', *naxon* 'right', and *legamrey* 'totally' as RTs; however, their approach is entirely introspective, and not useful for our purposes.

3 Description of dataset

The data for this study were selected from the Haifa Multimodal Corpus of Spoken Hebrew (Maschler et al. 2023), which consists of video recordings of adult native speakers of Hebrew, in casual conversation among friends and family. This is a dynamic corpus, currently composed of over 20 h of transcribed video; we used a small part in order to collect 205 tokens of RfC sequences, which we then coded according to the guidelines of the larger comparative project (König et al. forthcoming). In total, we reviewed 2:44 h from 11 different recordings. The median recording provided 17 examples over 12:13 min. The collection involved 32 participants in total, 2–6 per recording. The recordings used were made in the years 2016–2019.

The data were transcribed and segmented into intonation units (Chafe 1994), following Du Bois et al. (1992) and Du Bois (unpublished manuscript 2012), as adapted for Hebrew (Maschler 2017). Each numbered line in the

¹ Ozerov (2019), who focuses on *wh*-questions, argues more generally that prosody marks Hebrew interrogatives rather than lexical means.

² An interactional linguistic dissertation on Hebrew polar questions, all of them RfCs, prefaced by *ma* 'what' and by *'ah* 'oh' is currently in preparation (Matalon forthcoming). Note also that there is much research on Biblical Hebrew interrogatives (e.g., Moshavi 2020), which will not be reviewed here.

Table 1: Syntactic design of RfCs in Hebrew

Syntactic complexity	N (% of RfCs)
Independent clause	144 (70%)
Phrase	48 (23%)
Subordinate clause	9 (4%)
Non-finite verb phrase	2 (1%)
Other	2 (1%)

excerpts below represents an intonation unit. Multimodal transcription generally follows Mondada (2019). Further information about transcription conventions is found in the Appendix.

We collected our Hebrew examples by looking for instances of the type of action defined above – introducing a proposition and making (dis)confirmation by another participant relevant – regardless of the formal characteristics of the turn implementing it. For example, our collection includes RfCs that are not marked as questions by their intonation contour but exhibit the interactional structure we looked for. Note, however, that RfCs may also serve as ‘vehicles’ for implementing additional actions, such as proposing a course of action, or raising a new topic (König et al. forthcoming). RfC sequences were analyzed following the methodology of Interactional Linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2018).

4 Resources for requesting confirmation in Hebrew

4.1 Syntactic design

The syntactic design of a Hebrew RfC predominantly consists of a finite clause ($N = 153$; 75%). Phrases ($N = 48$; 23%) are much less common (Table 1). The great majority of RfCs ($N = 144$; 70%) consist of simple independent clauses; 9 (4%) consist of subordinate clauses, mostly causal or temporal adverbial clauses (Excerpt 6 ‘False Self’ below); 2 more (1%) manifest non-finite verbs, namely infinitival phrases.³

Excerpt 1 ‘Milk Bottle’ illustrates an RfC consisting of a simple independent clause. Preceding this excerpt, Alon and Hillel, a gay couple, have been wondering whether their baby is hungry, and whether to heat up a bottle for him. Some moments later, Alon, having returned from the kitchen with a bottle of milk for the baby, is feeding the baby, and Hillel asks him whether he had indeed heated up the milk:

Excerpt 1 ‘Milk Bottle’, Kibbutz Eshbal 25:24 (#161)

→ 1 Hillel: (3.3) ['a]ta ximamta lo 'et ze
you.MS heat.PST.2MS for.him OBJ this.MS
ktsat be'emet?
a_bit in_truth
you indeed heated
it up for him a bit?

2 Alon: #m#hm.
A-head #hm.
#nod#nod

³ Burstein (2021) provides comparable examples of written polar questions (some of which are RfCs): subordinate clauses (*ibid.*, 77–80), phrases (*ibid.*, 81–8), and infinitival phrases (*ibid.*, 80).

Hillel's RfC *'ata ximamta lo 'et ze ktsat be'emet?* 'you indeed heated it up for him a bit?' consists of a simple independent clause. Hebrew is generally an SVO language (but see Auer and Maschler 2013), and yes–no interrogatives are not distinguished by a characteristic word order. The interrogative is communicated here solely via the rising intonation. The modulator *be'emet* (Section 4.3), which might be translated here by 'indeed', refers back to the men's preceding debate concerning whether or not to go heat up the bottle, ratifying their previous stance (Maschler and Estlein 2008) of planning to do so.

A phrasal RfC is illustrated in Excerpt 2 'Curry Spices'. Eyal is explaining to his friend Mika how to prepare a curry sauce. Mika wants to know specifically what spices he adds:

Excerpt 2 *'Curry Spices', Spinach Recipes 3:06 (#31–32)*

- 199 Mika: *'e[y]ze tavlinim 'ata sam?*
which spices you.MS put.PRS[MS]
what spices do you put [in it]?
- 200 Eyal: (0.6) mts (0.2) kari yarok?,
curry green
green curry?,
- 201 (0.1) ta--mišxa ha-zot?,
OBJ.the-paste the-this.FS
thi--s paste?,
- 202 Mika: (0.1) ke--n.
ye--s.
- 203 'okey.
okay.
- 204 Eyal: jinjer?,
ginger?,
- 205 (0.6) melax.
salt.
- 206 Mika: (0.2) jinjer-- t
ginger g[round]
g[round] ginger
- 207 'e--h,
u--h,
- 208 taxun?
ground?
- 209 # 'o--,
o--r,
- 210 Eyal: l--o, #
NEG
no--,
E-hands #grating#
- 211 Mika: megu+rar.
grated.
E-head +nod
- 213 Mika: 'oke--y.
oka--y.

When Eyal lists 'ginger' as one of the ingredients (l. 204), Mika requests confirmation concerning the type of ginger he uses via the noun phrase *jinjer t 'e--h taxun?* 'g u--h ground ginger?' followed by the conjunction 'o 'or' (l. 206–209); this can be understood as a tag question (Section 4.6), or as the beginning of an alternative,

such as ‘grated ginger’. Due to the overlap with Eyal’s embodied and verbal response (l. 210), there is no way of telling which interpretation was originally intended. In fact, even if she did intend to produce an alternative, Mika may have adapted her construction to the needs of the interaction, recasting it into another RfC shortly thereafter (l. 211). The first RfC is answered in the negative, while Eyal depicts the correct answer with his hands (l. 210); the second is answered by Eyal’s nod (l. 211).

Hebrew adjectives follow the noun they modify: Mika’s noun phrase is produced incrementally here, the disfluencies *t* and *‘e--h* ‘u--h’ (l. 206–207) attesting the cognitive difficulties involved in searching for the adjective *taxun* ‘ground’ (Chafe 1994). Phrasal RfCs in our data generally accomplish understanding checks, clarification requests or, as here, requests for further elaboration. The majority constitute prepositional phrases (20) or noun phrases (16), as in Excerpt 2; fewer constitute adjectival phrases (7) or adverbial phrases (5).

4.2 Polarity

The polarity of Hebrew RfCs is overwhelmingly positive ($N = 177$; 86%), as seen, for example, in Excerpts 1 ‘Milk Bottle’ and 2 ‘Curry Spices’. Negative polarity is far less frequent ($N = 28$; 14%) and is expressed in Hebrew predominantly via the negator *lo* ‘no’ ($N = 26$; cf. Glinert 1989, 271; see examples in Excerpts 8 ‘Wrapping Up’ and 12 ‘Bitter’ below). The negative existential *‘en* ‘there isn’t’ is used twice throughout our data, and the negator *i* is used once, as part of the construction *i efshar* ‘not possible’ (cf. Shor 2020, Section 3).

As in several other languages compared in this project, such as English (Heritage 2002) and German (Deppermann et al. 2024), some negatively formatted Hebrew RfCs are not treated as suggesting a negative-polarity confirmable; instead, participants treat them as suggesting the corresponding positive-polarity confirmable. In such cases, we interpret the negation as a form of modulation, signaling matters of epistemic stance – either increased (Heritage 2002) or decreased certainty (Koshik 2002). This is the case in a majority ($N = 19$; 68%) of negative-polarity RfCs in our collection.⁴ This will be further discussed in Section 5.2.1 ‘Responses to negative-polarity RfCs’.

4.3 Modulation

The category of modulation involves the lexical, morphological, and syntactic resources that the person making an RfC uses in order to position themselves *vis-à-vis* the assumed validity of the confirmable – whether mitigating, reinforcing, or taking some other epistemic stance regarding the confirmable. Forty-one RfC tokens (20% of all RfCs) involve some sort of modulation, which places Hebrew near the middle in comparison to the nine other languages analyzed in this project (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). The variety of Hebrew RfC modulators is great, as shown in Table 2, consisting mostly of negation, epistemic verb phrases⁵ – first- or second-person forms of mental or perception verbs (e.g., *know*, *think*, *understand*, *consider*, *assume*, and *worry*) – adverbs, and particles. These resources express mostly certainty, doubt, or possibility. Resources were sometimes employed in conjunction with another modulation resource; each component was counted separately.

Negation in negative polarity RfCs (Section 5.2.1) is the most common form of modulation ($N = 19$, 46% of modulated RfCs), indicating epistemic stance. Negation sometimes appears alongside other means of modulation.

⁴ The two tokens of the negative existential *‘en* did not indicate epistemic stance or make relevant an opposite-polarity response, but more data are needed to generalize whether this is always the case. In the single token of *i efshar* ‘not possible,’ we do interpret the negation as expressing epistemic stance.

⁵ Miller (2010) has shown that the categories most often involved in the expression of epistemic stance in Hebrew conversation at large (not necessarily in RfCs) are active voice verb phrases and discourse markers.

Table 2: Modulators in Hebrew RfCs

Grammatical form	N (% of modulated RfCs)	Variants
Negation	19 (46%)	<i>lo</i> ‘NEG’ 18, <i>i</i> (‘ <i>efshar</i> ’) ‘not (possible)’ 1
Epistemic verb phrase	9 (22%)	<i>'at betuxa še-</i> ‘[are] you sure [F] that’ 1, <i>'ata lo do'eg še-</i> ‘[are] you not worried [M] that’ 1, <i>'ata yodea</i> ‘you know [M]’ 1, <i>hevanti</i> ‘I understood’ 1, <i>lo yoda'at</i> ‘I dunno [F]’ 1, <i>nagid</i> ‘let’s say’ 2, <i>taxshov še-</i> ... <i>naniax</i> ... <i>nagid hipotetit</i> ‘consider that ... let’s assume ... let’s say hypothetically’ 1, <i>xashviti</i> ‘I thought’ 1
Adverb	8 (20%)	<i>'ulay</i> ‘perhaps’ 2, <i>be'emet</i> ‘really, indeed’ 2, <i>be'etsem</i> ‘in fact’ 1, <i>betax</i> ‘surely’ 1, <i>nagid hipotetit</i> ‘let’s say hypothetically’ 1, <i>siryeshi</i> ‘seriously’ 1
Particle	7 (17%)	<i>kaze</i> ‘sort of’ 5, <i>kaze, ve-ze</i> , ‘sort of and all that’ 1, <i>ke'ilu</i> ‘like’ 1
Other	6 (15%)	<i>'im</i> conditional clause 1, (‘ <i>i</i> ’) <i>efshar</i> ‘(not) possible’ 1, <i>hayta 'amura</i> ‘was supposed to [F]’ 1, <i>rov hasikuyim</i> ‘most likely’ [lit. ‘most chances’] 1, <i>vedvarim ka'ele</i> ‘and things like that’ 1, passive verbal pattern (<i>nif'al</i>) indicating possibility (<i>nimrax</i> ‘smearable, might smear’) 1

Other than the negator *lo* ‘no’ and the hedge *kaze* ‘like’ (lit. ‘like this’; Ziv 1998, Henkin 1999, Maschler 2001), most modulators are found only once or twice throughout our collection. An example of another hedge, *ke'ilu* ‘like’ (lit. ‘as if, Maschler 2002), is shown in Excerpt 12 ‘Bitter’ below. As for adverbial modulators, we have seen an example involving the epistemic adverb *be'emet* ‘indeed’ in Excerpt 1 ‘Milk Bottle’. An example of *'ulay* ‘perhaps’ is given in Excerpt 3 ‘Amsterdam’, in which Eyal and Mika are talking about possible places to move to in Europe. Mika’s partner has been living in Amsterdam for the past several years, and so she often goes there:

Excerpt 3 ‘Amsterdam’, Nordic Hikes 0:00 (#82)

- 1 Eyal: (0.5) *'ulay 'amsterdam?*
perhaps Amsterdam?
- 2 Mika: (0.3) *naxon?*
right?
- 3 Eyal: (0.4) *ki-- lo ba li germanya.*
 because NEG come.PRS[3MS] to.me Germany
becau--se I don't feel like [going to] Germany.

Eyal’s *'ulay 'amsterdam?* ‘perhaps Amsterdam?’ requests confirmation concerning whether his moving to Amsterdam with his partner is a good idea. According to Livnat (2001, Section 3.2.2), *'ulay* can convey deontic modality, thus marking this RfC as a suggestion. Recall, however, that it is not Mika who will go there, but rather Eyal – Eyal is not asking her to accept, but to confirm whether Amsterdam is a good choice, since she has first-hand experience. She indeed confirms with the RT *naxon?* ‘right?’ (Section 5.2). Mika’s use of rising intonation in the RT is unusual (Section 5.2) and a fairly new development in Hebrew. It assigns this confirmation RT an additional function – that of an appeal (Du Bois et al. 1992), inviting Eyal to agree in turn with the confirmable that he himself has put forward. Eyal replies with a reason to prefer Amsterdam – he doesn’t feel like moving to Germany (l. 3).

Another adverbial modulator, the borrowed *siryeshi* ‘seriously’, can be seen in Excerpt 13 ‘Divorce Karma’.

4.4 Inference marking

Speakers sometimes present confirmables as inferences from prior talk. However, in only 19% of the cases ($N = 39$), they deploy a specific lexical resource for marking the inference. This places Hebrew closer to the upper range among the 10 languages investigated in this project (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). The inventory of

Table 3: Inference markers in Hebrew RfCs

Inference marker	N (% of RfCs marked as inferences)	Variants and clusters
'ah 'oh'	14 (36%)	'ah. 1, 'ah, 10, 'ah ken, 'oh yes,' 1, 'ah, 'oy va'avoy. 'oh, oh no.' 1, prosodically integrated 1
'az 'so, then'	12 (31%)	'az, 1, 'az ma? 'so what?' 2, ve-'az 'and then' 2, ve-'az ma? 'and then what' 1, prosodically integrated 6
ke'ilu 'like'	7 (18%)	ke'ilu, 2, maztomeret? ke'ilu 'what do you mean? like' 1, prosodically integrated 4
'amar 'to say'	3 (8%)	'ata 'omer 'you're saying [M] 1, 'at 'omeret. 'you're saying. [F] 1, maztomeret? ke'ilu 'what do you mean? like' 1
'oy 'oh no'	2 (5%)	'oy, 1, 'ah, 'oy va'avoy. 'oh, oh no.' 1
zehu 'that's it'	2 (5%)	zehu, 1, zehu? 1
'okey 'okay'	1 (3%)	'okey, 1
ken 'yes'	1 (3%)	'ah ken, 'oh yes,' 1

inference markers is given in Table 3. Inference markers occasionally appear in clusters; each component in the cluster was counted separately.⁶

We illustrate the three most frequent inference markers in our database, 'ah 'oh', 'az 'so', and ke'ilu 'like'. The most frequent inference marker ($N = 14$; 36% of RfCs marked as inferences) is the change-of-state token (Heritage 1984) 'ah, the Hebrew 'equivalent' of English *oh* (Maschler 1994). Hebrew has a diverse inventory of change-of-state tokens (Ben-Moshe 2022), but 'ah is the most common and unmarked one (the others generally marking some accompanying affective stance, like 'oy 'oh no', which appears twice in our collection). In Excerpt 4 'Japanese Duolingo', Dotan has been complaining to Alex about the difficulty of learning the Japanese writing system:

Excerpt 4 'Japanese Duolingo', Chinese Poetry 0:29 (#83)

- 33 Alex: lama ['a]ta matxil mi-ze?
why you.MS begin.PRS[MS] from-this.MS
why do you start with that?
- 34 (0.2) t[a]txil mi--dibur.
begin.FUT.2MS from-speaking
start wi--th speaking.
- 35 Dotan: (0.5) ' ze--,
u this.MS
u tha--t's,
- 36 du'olingo.
Duolingo.
- 37 Alex: (1.1) 'okey.
okay.
- 38 (0.9) mts 'ah,
mts oh,

⁶ In all tables representing clusters, segmentation of the cluster into intonation units is provided, along with the type of final intonation contour separating the components (rise, fall, level, and truncated). 'Prosodically integrated' refers to cases in which there is no intonation unit boundary following the component, and the component is not in a cluster with any other form.

39 ve-hem kotvim be--,
 and-they.M write.PRS.MP in
 and they write i--n,

40 (0.1) be-yapanit?
 in Japanese?

41 Dotan: (0.1) ken.
 yes.

42 (0.5) hem melamdim 'ot-xa /kode/m
 they.M teach.PRS.MP OBJ-you.MS first
 they teach you /fir/st

43 (0.1) kodem_kol hem matxil-im ba--,
 first_of_all they.M begin.PRS-MP in.the
 first of all they start with the--,

44 'alfabet.
 alphabet.

Alex suggests that Dotan learn to speak before he learns to read (l. 33–34), but Dotan explains that ‘tha--t’s, [the way it’s done on] Duolingo.’ (l. 35–36). Following a long pause, Alex first acknowledges this (l. 37) and after another long pause asks Dotan to confirm his understanding that Duolingo lessons employ Japanese orthography with *ve-hem kotvim be--*, *be-yapanit?* ‘and they write i--n, in Japanese?’ (l. 38–40), and Dotan confirms (l. 41–44). Alex’s RfC is prefaced by ‘ah (l. 38), a change-of-state token, introducing the confirmable as recently inferred from Dotan’s immediately prior utterance (l. 35–36). Another example of ‘ah can be seen in Excerpt 14 ‘Surprise Party’ below.

The second most frequent inference marker in our collection ($N = 12$; 31%) is Hebrew ‘az ‘then/so’, a temporal adverb which may also be deployed as a conjunction and a discourse marker (Maschler 1994, 1997, Yatziv and Livnat 2007, Livnat 2009, cf. Schiffrin 1987 for English *then*). Excerpt 5 ‘Black Speck’ is taken from a family dinner. Dad is telling the rest of the family about an incident that happened at his new workplace, a quality control lab at a sugar factory. The lab workers are investigating a complaint from a baby formula manufacturer, who had purchased some sugar from the factory and found black specks in it. Our excerpt begins as Dad is describing one of the workers indeed finding a black speck in the sugar:

Excerpt 5 ‘Black Speck’, Quality Control Lab 01:53 (#63)

37 Dad: (0.6) be'emet,
 in_truth
 indeed,

38 (0.1) hi mats'a,
 she find.PST.3FS
 she found,

39 +gargir katan,
 speck small
 a small speck,
 M-head +eyes open wide

40 (0.5) 'e--,
 u--h,

41 /šel/ šax+or.
 /of/ **black.**
 M-head +head forward

→ 42 Mom: (0.4) §(0.4) §(0.3) 'az lakaxtem 'oto?
 so take.PST.2MP OBJ.him
 so you took it?

43 Dad: gar§gir 'exad. §
 speck one
 one speck.
 D-hand pinch§....§arc to left--§index f. up§

44 (0.4) ve-'az hi badka,
 and-then she check.PST.3FS
 and then she checked,

45 ma ze ha-gargir ha-/ze./
 what this.MS the-speck the-this.MS
 what is /this/ speck.

While Dad describes the finding of the speck (l. 38–41), Mom displays engagement by opening her eyes wide (l. 39) and leaning forward (l. 41). Dad takes over a second to continue his telling, though during this time he gestures with his left hand in a way that projects further talk (l. 42–43). In overlap with Dad's specification that it was a single speck (l. 43), Mom attempts to provide the continuation of the story herself in the form of an RfC – 'az lakaxtem 'oto? 'so you took it?' (l. 42) – in another display of engagement.

Mom's RfC is prefaced by the discourse marker 'az 'so', introducing the next narrative action as deduced from the previous one (Maschler 1994, 338). Dad does not confirm the RfC, but he does align with Mom's action of continuing the story by moving on to the next narrative event, as reflected by his echoing of 'az within the discourse marker cluster ve-'az 'and then' (l. 44–45).

The third most frequent inference marker found in our database ($N = 7$; 18%) is the discourse marker *ke'ilu* 'like' (Maschler 2002, 2009). Excerpt 6 'False Self' begins with Hilla asking Gaya for clarification of a term she has just used, *išiyut kozevet* 'false self':

Excerpt 6 'False Self', Bet Hakerem 1530 25:33 (#112)

1 Hilla: (0.5) mts ma ze 'išiyut kozevet?
 what this.MS persona false
 mts what's a false self?

2 Gaya: (0.5) (outbreath) (0.2) nu--,
 c'mo--n,

3 ze kmo 'ax šel 'omer,
 this.MS like brother of PSN
 it's like Omer's brother,

4 še-rak x--ayav leratsot 'et kulam,
 that-just must.MS INF.please OBJ everyone
 who always h--as to please everyone,

5 Hilla: m--.
 m--.

6 Gaya: ve-lo,
 and-NEG
 and won't,

7 lo muxan,
 NEG prepared
 won't,

8 latet,
 INF.give
 let,

- 9 la-'išiyut šel-o,
 to.the-persona of-him
 his self,
- 10 latset haxuts-a,
 INF.go_out outside-to
 come out,
- 11 ki —
 because
- 12 Hilla: k[e']i[l]u,
 as_if
 like,
- 13 še-'en lexa 'išiyut.
 that-there_isn't to.you.ms persona
 you don't have a self.
- 14 Gaya: (0.5) ke.
 yeah.

Gaya attempts to clarify the concept by giving the example of Omer's brother, who apparently always tries 'to please everyone', not letting his true self 'come out' (l. 3–4, 6–10). Gaya begins an account with *ki* 'because' (l. 11), but Hilla interrupts requesting confirmation by rephrasing Gaya's explanation: *ke'ilu, še-'en lexa 'išiyut*. 'like, you don't have a self.' (l. 12–13). The discourse marker *ke'ilu* here projects the following discourse as a rephrasal (Maschler 2002) inferred from the preceding talk, reusing the term *'išiyut* 'persona, self'. Gaya confirms this rephrasal (l. 14). This is also an example of an RFC involving a formally subordinate clause (Section 4.1) (beginning with the general Hebrew subordinator *še-* 'that', l. 13), which is here employed as an insubordinate (Evans 2007) clause (cf. Maschler 2018, 2020).

4.5 Connectives

Speakers often use a connective device to mark the link of the RFC to the preceding talk. The category of 'connectives' is broadly understood here, encompassing conjunctions (e.g., *ve-* 'and', *'az* 'then/so', *'aval* 'but', and *ki* 'because') and discourse markers (e.g., *ke'ilu* 'like', *'ah* 'oh', *rega* 'just a moment', and *ma* 'what'), among other resources.⁷ Connectives were employed in 41% ($N = 83$) of RFCs in our collection. This places Hebrew closer to the upper range among the ten languages investigated in this project (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). Table 4 lists the great variety of Hebrew connectives found throughout our database. Connectives commonly appear in clusters (cf. Maschler 1994); each component in the cluster was counted separately.

We have already seen an example of the most frequent connective in the Hebrew collection, *ve-* 'and' ($N = 20$, 24% of all RFCs manifesting connectives) in Excerpt 4 'Japanese Duolingo'. Following the realization that his interlocutor is learning Japanese on Duolingo, marked by the inference marker *'ah*, the speaker adds the RFC *ve-hem kotvim be-, be-yapanit? 'and they write i-n, in Japanese?*' (l. 38–40). The maximally general conjunction *ve-* is employed as a discourse marker here, adding the following action – in this case, an RFC – in the least marked way (Maschler 1994). It is therefore not surprising that *ve-* is the most frequent connective in our data. In this particular instance, it also functions much like the English *and*-preface (Bolden 2010), making an RFC by offering a candidate understanding of the addressee's preceding informing turn and articulating a 'missing' element of that turn.

⁷ Many of these items are also found in the inference marking category. Our coding manual (König et al. forthcoming) allows for double coding in order not to lose information which might become relevant in later analyses.

Table 4: Inventory of connectives in Hebrew RfCs

Connective	N (% of connected RfCs)	Variants and clusters
ve- ‘and’	20 (24%)	<i>‘ah</i> , ve- ‘oh, and’ 1, <i>‘az ma?</i> ve- ‘so what? and’ 1, <i>rega</i> , <i>šniya</i> , <i>šniya</i> , <i>‘av[al]</i> ... ve- ‘just a moment, just a sec, just a sec, bu[t] ... and’ 1, <i>ke’ilu</i> , ve-zehu? ve- ‘like, and that’s it? and’ 1, <i>tsk nu</i> , ve- ‘tsk c’mon, and’ 1, ve-‘az ‘and then’ 1, ve-‘az <i>gam</i> ‘and then also’ 1, ve-‘az <i>ma?</i> ‘and then what?’ 1, ve- <i>ma?</i> ‘and what’ 2, prosodically integrated 10
ma ‘what’	17 (21%)	<i>ma</i> , ‘what,’ 1, <i>‘az ma?</i> ‘so what?’ 1, <i>‘az ma?</i> ve- ‘so what? and’ 1, <i>ma ‘aval</i> , ‘what but,’ 1, <i>ma</i> , <i>še-</i> ‘what, that’ 1, ve-‘az <i>ma?</i> ‘and then what?’ 1, ve- <i>ma</i> , ‘and what,’ 1, ve- <i>ma?</i> ‘and what?’ 1, prosodically integrated 9
‘az ‘so’	14 (17%)	<i>‘az</i> , 1, <i>‘ah</i> . <i>‘az</i> ‘oh. so’ 1, <i>‘az basof</i> , ‘so in the end,’ 1, <i>‘az ma?</i> ‘so what?’ 1, <i>‘az ma?</i> ve- ‘so what? and’ 1, <i>kitser</i> , ‘az ‘anyway, so’ 1, ve-‘az ‘and then’ 1, ve-‘az <i>gam</i> ‘and then also’ 1, ve-‘az <i>ma?</i> ‘and then what?’ 1, prosodically integrated 5
‘ah ‘oh’	14 (17%)	<i>‘ah</i> . 1, <i>‘ah</i> , 6, <i>‘ah</i> . <i>‘az</i> ‘oh. so’ 1, <i>‘ah</i> , <i>‘oy va’avoy</i> . ‘oh, oh no.’ 1, <i>‘ah ken</i> , ‘oh yeah,’ 1, <i>‘ah</i> , <i>ki</i> ‘oh, because’ 1, <i>‘ah</i> , <i>kše-</i> ‘oh, when’ 1, <i>‘ah</i> , ve- ‘oh, and’ 1, prosodically integrated 1
‘aval ‘but’	10 (12%)	<i>‘oy</i> , <i>‘aval</i> ‘oh no, but’ 1, <i>‘aval</i> , ... <i>tagid li</i> , ‘but, ... tell me,’ 1, <i>ma ‘aval</i> , ‘what but,’ 1, <i>rega</i> , <i>‘aval ke’ilu</i> ‘just a moment, but like’, <i>rega</i> , <i>šniya</i> , <i>šniya</i> , <i>‘av[al]</i> ... ve- ‘just a moment, just a sec, just a sec, bu[t] ... and’ 1, prosodically integrated 5, turn-final 1
ke’ilu ‘like’	8 (10%)	<i>ke’ilu</i> , 1, <i>ke’ilu</i> , ve-zehu? ve- ‘like, and that’s it?, and’ 1, <i>ke’ilu</i> , <i>še-</i> ‘like, that’ 1, <i>maztomeret?</i> <i>ke’ilu</i> ‘what do you mean? like’ 1, <i>rega</i> , <i>‘aval ke’ilu</i> ‘just a moment, but like’ 1, prosodically integrated 3
rega ‘just a moment’	7 (8%)	<i>rega</i> , 5, <i>rega</i> , <i>‘aval ke’ilu</i> ‘just a moment, but like’ 1, <i>rega</i> , <i>šniya šniya</i> , <i>‘av[al]</i> ... ve- ‘just a moment, just a sec, just a sec, bu[t] ... and’ 1
ki ‘because’	3 (4%)	<i>‘ah</i> , <i>ki</i> ‘oh, because’ 1, prosodically integrated 2
še- ‘that’	3 (4%)	<i>ma</i> , <i>še-</i> ‘what, that’ 1, <i>ke’ilu</i> , <i>še-</i> ‘like, that’ 1, prosodically integrated 1
‘oy ‘oh no’	2 (2%)	<i>‘ah</i> , <i>‘oy va’avoy</i> ‘oh, oh no’ 1, <i>‘oy</i> , <i>‘aval</i> ‘oh no, but’ 1
zehu ‘that’s it’	2 (2%)	<i>zehu</i> , 1, <i>ke’ilu</i> , ve-zehu? ve- ‘like, and that’s it?, and’ 1
‘okey ‘okay’	1 (1%)	‘okey, 1
basof ‘in the end’	1 (1%)	<i>‘az basof</i> , ‘so in the end,’ 1
hey ‘hey’	1 (1%)	<i>hey</i> , 1
ken ‘yeah’	1 (1%)	<i>‘ah ken</i> , ‘oh yeah,’ 1
kitser ‘anyway’	1 (1%)	<i>kitser</i> , ‘az ‘anyway, so’ 1
kše- ‘when’	1 (1%)	<i>‘ah</i> , <i>kše-</i> ‘oh, when’ 1
lo ‘no’	1 (1%)	<i>lo</i> , 1
m-- ‘mm’	1 (1%)	<i>m--</i> . 1
šniya ‘just a sec’	1 (1%)	<i>rega</i> , <i>šniya</i> , <i>šniya</i> , <i>‘av[al]</i> ... ve- ‘just a moment, just a sec, just a sec, bu[t] ... and’ 1
tagid li ‘tell me’	1 (1%)	<i>‘aval</i> , ... <i>tagid li</i> , ‘but, ... tell me,’
maztomeret? ‘what do you mean?’	1 (1%)	<i>maztomeret?</i> <i>ke’ilu</i> ‘what do you mean? like’ 1

We have also seen examples of the connectives ‘az ‘then/so’ (Excerpt 5 ‘Black Speck’), *ke’ilu* ‘like’ (Excerpt 6 ‘False Self’), and *še-* ‘that’ (Excerpt 6 ‘False Self’). The second most frequent Hebrew connective in our collection is the discourse marker *ma* ‘what’ ($N = 17$, 21%), which has been analyzed as “pointing out a potential inconsistency between incoming information and (assumed) shared knowledge” (Ziv 2008, 356), or as expressing “an evaluation of some currently salient discourse representation as *incredible*” (Ariel 2010, 194). Prefacing polar questions, it has been shown to mark amazement (Maschler 1997) or ‘incredulity’ (Lambrecht 1990), and to request confirmation of a suggested clarification (Maschler and Nir 2014, 546) when employed in final high-rising intonation (Matalon 2023, forthcoming). In Excerpt 7 ‘Just Visiting’, a conversation among five women in their sixties, Shula has been telling about her cousin who is visiting Israel from the USA after a 50-year absence:

Excerpt 7 'Just Visiting', Kiryat Sapir 2:37 (#172)

- 1 Noa: hi ba'a 'ax[a]rey xamišim šana.
she come.PST.FS after fifty year
she came after [an absence of] fifty years,
- 2 hi--,
she
she--'s,
- 3 nosa['a]t-- šavua ha-ba,
travel.PRS.FS week the-coming
leaving-- next week,
- 4 (1.1) ve--,
a--nd,
- 5 Shula: ma,
what,
- 6 hi ba'a rak le-bikur?
she come.PST.FS just to-visit
she came just for a visit?
- 7 Noa: hi ba'a-- le-biku--r,
she come.PST.FS for-visit
she ca--me for a visi--t,
- 8 ve-lir'ot
and-INF.see
and to see
- 9 yeš la gam-- 'e--m
there is to.her also um
she also has-- u--m
- 10 (0.3) 'ima xola,
mother sick
a sick mother,
- 11 be-koma,
in-coma
in a coma,
- 12 šaloš šanim,
three years [now],

Noa tells her friends that her cousin has arrived after a 50-year absence and is returning to the USA next week (l. 1–3). The final intonation contour of this segment is level, indicating that Noa is not done, and the others let her have the floor, but she delays for over a second (l. 4). At this point, Shula steps in and requests confirmation concerning whether the cousin has come ‘only for a visit’ *ma, hi ba'a rak le-bikur?* ‘what, she came only for a visit?’ (l. 5–6). This is a request for clarification, but it carries an implied expectation marked by *rak* ‘only’, that following such a long absence, a person would come for more than ‘just a visit’, perhaps for a longer stretch of time. Indeed, Noa responds that she has come for a visit and also to see her very sick mother (l. 7–12). The incompatibility with Shula’s expectations (Ziv 2006, Ariel 2010, Section 7.4) is additionally marked by *ma*, also expressing the speaker’s incredulity or amazement (Maschler 1997; Maschler and Nir 2014).

4.6 Tag questions

Hebrew employs tags relatively infrequently ($N = 22$; 11%) compared to the nine other languages analyzed in this project (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). Only Korean and Yurakaré manifest a lower frequency of tags than Hebrew. Hebrew tags are generally not integrated prosodically into the intonation unit constituting the RfC, with only a single case showing prosodic integration. The inventory of Hebrew tags is given in Table 5.

Most Hebrew tags consist of lexemes which may also be employed as RTs (Section 5.2), three of them positive (*naxon* ‘right’, *ken* ‘yes’, and *betax* ‘surely’), and one negative (*lo* ‘no’). A third variety consists of the conjunction ‘or’ (Excerpt 2 ‘Curry Spices’, l. 209), often in combination with another item (*ma* ‘what’, *mashehu* ‘something’, *mashehu kaze* ‘something like that’). Inbar (2021, 408–9) discusses the use of ‘*o mashehu*’ or something’ as a marker of hedging and uncertainty, though she does not differentiate between its use in tag questions and elsewhere as a general extender (Overstreet and Yule 2021).⁸ There are probably differences of meaning between the different tags beginning with ‘o’, but additional data are required to make reliable generalizations.

In what follows, we illustrate the two most common Hebrew tags – *naxon* ‘right’ and *lo* ‘no’. The most common tag is *naxon*, as illustrated in Excerpt 8 ‘Wrapping Up’, a get-together among five friends, in which Hanan is on the phone with his wife, who is planning to come over. Hanan is making sure that the evening isn’t about to end before she arrives (or shortly thereafter). It is the two hosts, Inbal and Omri, who reply to his question. The two other guests, Ya’ir and Neta, are engaged in an overlapping exchange, which is omitted from this transcription.

Excerpt 8 ‘Wrapping Up’, Katamon 2 20:17 (#145)

- 1 Hanan: 'anaxnu \$lo be-\$kivun šel lehitkapel 'od me'at,
we NEG in-direction of INF.wrap_up more few
we're not about to wrap [this] up soon,
H-gaze >>-Omri-\$Neta--\$Omri----->
- 2 (0.1) na+xon?
right?
Inbal +2 headshakes
- 3 Omri: */lo/.
NEG
/no/.
O-head *4 headshakes
- 4 Hanan: \$lo.
NEG
no.
H-gaze --Omri-----\$aside-->

Gazing at Omri while on the phone with his wife, Hanan produces an RfC: ‘*anaxnu lo be-kivun šel lehitkapel 'od me'at*, ‘we’re not about to wrap [this] up soon,’ (l. 1) in level intonation, followed by the tag *naxon?* ‘right?’ (l. 2). In this genre of casual conversation among friends, tag *naxon?* (Miller Shapiro 2012, Maschler and Miller Shapiro 2016) indexes the speaker’s epistemic stance of uncertainty, thereby establishing Omri, the gaze-selected recipient (Auer 2018), as the epistemic authority on the matter (Heritage 2002, Heritage and Raymond 2005). As hosts, the epistemic gradient is indeed tilted toward Inbal and Omri in the first place in the matter at hand. Inbal confirms this negative polarity RfC via two headshakes in overlap with the final vowel of the tag (l. 2). Her choice of a non-verbal response may be influenced by her not being selected by Hanan’s gaze, and by her mouth being full at the moment. Omri likewise confirms, almost simultaneously with her, with the response particle *lo* ‘no’ accompanied by four headshakes (l. 3), upon which Hanan breaks eye contact and reports the answer to his wife on the phone (l. 4).

⁸ Du-Nour (1987, 145) and Burstein (2021, Section 9) discuss tag questions in written Hebrew. Both demonstrate all of the varieties shown above except for *betax*, though Burstein does not consider the variety involving ‘o’ as a tag (ibid., 340–1). Both also mention multiple other tags, some of which seem inappropriate for RfCs specifically, and are probably used in other contexts.

Table 5: Inventory of tag questions

Tag	N (% of tags)	Variants
<i>naxon</i> ‘right’	8 (36%)	<i>naxon?</i> 8
<i>lo</i> ‘no’	6 (27%)	<i>lo?</i> 6
‘or’	4 (18%)	‘o, 1, ‘o <i>ma</i> . ‘or what.’ 1, ‘o <i>mashehu?</i> ‘or something?’ 1, ‘o <i>mashehu kaze?</i> ‘or something like that?’ 1
<i>ken</i> ‘yes’	3 (14%)	<i>ken</i> . 1, <i>ken?</i> 2
<i>betax</i> ‘surely’	1 (5%)	<i>betax?</i> 1
Total	22 (100%)	

The second most frequent tag is *lo?* ‘no?’. In contrast to *naxon?*, which may follow both positive- and negative-polarity RfCs, Burstein (2021, 361) observed that tag *lo?* appeared in her corpus of written Hebrew always following questions of positive polarity. The six tokens in our collection all follow positive polarity RfCs as well, as in Excerpt 9 ‘Winter Break’, in which Mika is suggesting that Eyal and his partner take a vacation in Amsterdam (in continuation of Excerpt 3 ‘Amsterdam’ above):

Excerpt 9 ‘Winter Break’, Nordic Hikes 0:42 (#39)

38	Mika:	(0.3)	'o š[e]-tikne	me-'axšav	le-hafsak	
			or that-buy.FUT.2MS	from-now	to-brea[k]	
			or you buy [tickets]	now for [the]	brea[k]	
39			le-xufša-t	semester.		
			to-vacation-of	semester		
			for [the]	semester break.		
40	Eyal:	(0.7)+(0.9)	<u>lo</u> ,			
			NEG			
			no,			
	E-gaze		Mika-up----->			
41			'aval +'az ze	xoref.		
			but then this.MS	winter		
			but then it's	winter.		
	E-gaze		--up--+Mika----->			
42	Mika:	(1.0)	<u>naxon</u> .			
			right.			
→ 43	Eyal:		<u>lo?</u>			
			NEG			
			isn't it?			
44	Mika:	(0.5)	<u>ken</u> .			
			yes.			

Mika suggests that Eyal and his partner buy flight tickets to Amsterdam for the semester break (l. 38–39), which in Israel generally begins in January. Eyal pauses and looks up, displaying a ‘thinking face’ (Harness Goodwin and Goodwin 1986), and then rejects the suggestion with a *lo* ‘no’ (l. 40), providing an account (Pomerantz 1984, Sacks 1987, Robinson 2016, Inbar and Maschler 2023): ‘*aval 'az ze xoref*. ‘but then it’s winter.’ (l. 41). Apparently, visiting Northern Europe in the winter does not seem attractive to Eyal. After a pause of a full second, Eyal’s assertion is confirmed by Mika with a *naxon* ‘right’ (l. 42). Almost simultaneously with the beginning of Mika’s delayed response, in pursuit of response (Jefferson 1981), Eyal transforms his account (l. 41) into an RfC by adding the tag *lo?* ‘no?’ (l. 43) (cf. Miller 2010, 56, Shor 2019, 145), and Mika reconfirms with a *ken* ‘yes’ (l. 44). The nuances expressed by the choice of *lo?* rather than *naxon?* await further study.

This is the only case in our collection where the tag is used to transform a previous action into an RfC. As discussed below, it was more common to find tags as part of the original design of the turn, as seen in Excerpt 8 ‘Wrapping Up’. However, we have two more cases of tag questions following a pause longer than 0.1 s, in both of which the tag likewise functions to pursue a response.

4.7 Prosodic design

Hebrew RfCs are overwhelmingly produced with rising final intonation ($N = 165$; 81%), which is the main formal characteristic of polar questions in spoken Hebrew (Glinert 1989, 270–1, Cohen 2009, 41, Burstein 2021, 57–8). This is likely related to the lack of syntactic or lexical marking of most interrogatives in Hebrew⁹ (cf. Section 4.1). Indeed, Hebrew has a higher percentage of rising intonation in the confirmable than any other language surveyed in this project (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). In this respect, Korean is the most similar to Hebrew among the languages compared. Examples can be seen in Excerpts 1–5, 7. This finding supports Ozerov's (2019) suggestion that prosody marks Hebrew interrogatives in general rather than lexical means, in a way that is not typical in other languages.

RfCs produced in falling intonation ($N = 21$; 10%) are primarily rephrasals or candidate understandings of the preceding utterance (Excerpt 6 'False Self', and Excerpt 2 'Curry Spices', l. 211). Level intonation ($N = 16$; 8%), on the other hand, is almost exclusively found before tags. Out of 22 tags throughout our database, only one is integrated into the intonation unit of the confirmable. Table 6 presents the prosodic design of all confirmables, of confirmables before a non-integrated tag, and of the non-integrated tags.

The final intonation of tags follows the same trends as that of RfCs in general – both are typically produced with rising intonation (86 and 81%, respectively). Non-integrated tags are most commonly ($N = 13$; 62% of non-integrated tags) found following level intonation, which indicates simply that the turn is not complete at the end of the confirmable, but rather the tag is part of its design, as seen in Excerpt 8 'Wrapping Up'. The single case of falling intonation before a tag (5%) was shown in Excerpt 9 'Winter Break', in which the original turn is not designed as an RfC, and the tag recompletes the turn and retroactively transforms it into an RfC. Tags following a confirmable produced in rising intonation ($N = 7$; 33%) seem to be similar to the one following falling intonation, in that they constitute recompletions – though in this case, of a preceding turn designed already as an RfC. Regardless of the intonation contour of the confirmable, however, in most cases ($N = 17$; 77%), there was no intervening pause whatsoever between the confirmable and the tag.

5 Resources for responses to RfCs in Hebrew

5.1 (Dis)Confirmation

Hebrew RfCs are rarely left unresponded ($N = 7$; 3% of all RfCs; e.g., Excerpt 10 'Mamma Mia', l. 3 below). The following sections will thus be based on the 198 RfC tokens (97%) that did receive a response. The responses provided are most often confirmations ($N = 91$; 46% of responses). Both of these findings are in line with the figures found for the other nine languages in this project, as well as with general cross-linguistic trends (Stivers 2022, 16, 18). However, the rate of confirmation in Hebrew is the lowest among all the languages analyzed in this project (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). In Hebrew, the rate of responses that neither confirm nor disconfirm ($N = 44$; 22%, as in Excerpts 5 'Black Speck' and 7 'Just Visiting') is closer to the upper range compared to the other nine languages. Significantly, Hebrew manifests the highest rate of disconfirmation ($N = 63$, 32%).

Furthermore, the strategies of disconfirmation employed in Hebrew can be very direct and unmitigated, and the responder may even take the opportunity of disconfirmation to criticize or ridicule the confirmable offered up. This is despite – or perhaps because of – the fact that our data come from conversations between close friends and family members. This corroborates earlier Linguistic Anthropological studies of Hebrew discourse, such as Katriel's (1986, 2004) or Blum-Kulka's (1992), that claim a high tolerance for disagreement in

⁹ In formal registers, particularly in writing but also in speaking, Hebrew polar questions may begin with the question particle *ha'im* (cf. Glinert 1989, 271). This particle was not found in our collection at all.

Table 6: Prosodic design

Final intonation contour	Confirmable (% of RfCs)	Confirmable before non-integrated tag (% of non-int. tags)	Non-integrated tag (% of non-int. tags)
Rise	165 (81%)	7 (33%)	18 (86%)
Fall	21 (10%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)
Level	16 (8%)	13 (62%)	1 (5%)
Truncated	3 (2%)	—	—
Total	205 (100%)	21 (100%)	21 (100%)

Israeli Hebrew, as well as relatively little concern with recipient face wants (cf. earlier evidence by Levenston 1968).

It is important to clarify that although Hebrew interaction features more disconfirmation and less mitigation of disconfirmation, this is not to say that disconfirmation is the preferred response type, or that it is on par with confirmation. Confirmation remains the most common and preferred response in Hebrew interaction, as in all other languages surveyed; disconfirmation remains dispreferred and more likely to be followed by an account (Section 5.4). This naturally raises the question of which contexts license or favor unmitigated disconfirmations, defying the general preference structure – a fascinating topic for further research.

We provide below two examples of such unmitigated disconfirmation. Excerpt 10 ‘Mamma Mia’, from the same interaction as Excerpt 7 ‘Just Visiting’, involves five close friends, older women who have been meeting once a week for many years. Noa raises a new topic about a movie she recently saw.

Excerpt 10 ‘Mamma Mia’, Kiryat Sapir 0:36 (#166-167)

- 1 Noa: hayiti be-seret 'etmol,
be.PST.1s in-movie yesterday
I went to a movie yesterday,
N-gaze >--Tsila----->
- 2 Tsila: (0.2) 'eyze?
which.MS
which [movie]?
- 3 Noa: 'a#marti lax?
say.PST.1s to.you.FS
did I tell you?
N-chin #points at Tsila
- 4 le-mi 'amarti.
to-who say.PST.1s
whom did I tell,
- 5 #lax 'amarti.
to.you.FS say.PST.1s
[it was] you I told.
N-chin #points at Irit
- 6 Irit: li.
to.me
me.
- 7 Tsila: mama miya?
Mamma Mia?
- 8 Irit: (0.2) l+o,
NEG
no,
N-hand +clap on knee
- 9 mama miya,
Mamma Mia,

Excerpt 11 'Confidential', Quality Control Lab 0:32 (#62)

- 38 Dad: ve-hu ra'a šam,
 and-he see.PST.3MS there
 and he saw there,
- 39 (0.9) gargirim šxorim.
 specks black
 black specks.
- 40 Mom: (0.3) ze sodi?
 this.MS confidential
 this is confidential?
- 41 Dad: §(0.4) §\$lo,
 NEG
 no,
D-hand §twist§brushing away, palm up open hand-->
D-head §blink, head back, brow furrowed
- 42 m[a] pit[']o[m].
 what suddenly
 {-----pp-----}
 of course not.
- 43 Mom: (0.2) §ke'ilu,
 as_if
 like,
D-hand -held-§released,,>
- 44 'im hem 'e--,
 if they u--h,
- 45 be'emet 'os-im fašla?
 in_truth do.PRS-MP slip_up
 actually mess up?
- 46 Dad: (0.5) 'az 'ani 'asbir lax ma hem 'asu.
 so I explain.FUT.1s to.you.FS what they.M do.PST.3MP
 so I'll explain to you what they did.

Mom responds to Dad's telling (l. 38–39) with an RfC: *ze sodi?* 'this is confidential?' (l. 40). Presumably, it seems to her that the baby formula company should hush up such problems. The reason to this is mentioned a few seconds after this excerpt: the 'Remedia affair' a few years back, when a lack of vitamins in a brand of baby formula caused the death of five babies and harmed many others. Dad's answer is a strong, unmitigated negation followed by a dismissal of his partner's RfC. We see here, besides the common negative RT *lo* 'no' (l. 41), a dedicated RT, *ma pit'om* (l. 42), which has been analyzed as a discourse marker expressing strong disagreement (Maschler 2009, 23; Bardenstein 2020, 77–9) and carrying a strong epistemic stance of certainty (Miller 2010, 349). We argue that here it carries also a quality of dismissal, challenging the 'askability' of the question (Stivers 2011). We support this interpretation observing Dad's accompanying embodied behavior: furrowed eyebrows, or frowns (Ekman 1979), which were found to be associated with disaffiliative actions that are at odds with a preceding action expressed by the interlocutor (Kaukomaa et al. 2014), and a brushing away Palm-Up Open-Hand gesture, which has been associated with obviousness (Marrese et al. 2021; Inbar and Maschler 2023).

The expression *ma pit'om* has no exact English equivalent (the translation 'of course not' does not do it justice). Literally, it means 'what suddenly', as in 'where did this question come from, all of a sudden?'. This has crystallized as a discourse marker and is here very much semantically bleached and phonetically reduced (cf. Hopper 1991, Traugott 1995) – Dad produces it very softly, with devoiced vowels, [mpit̪o]. Such dismissals of other participants' assumptions are common enough in Hebrew discourse that an RT dedicated to just this type of move – *ma pit'om* – has emerged in the language (cf. comment on the rarity of epistemically upgraded negative responses in English by Stivers 2011: 88, fn. 6).

Table 7: RTs in Hebrew RFC sequences

RT	N (% of RTs)	Confirming	Disconfirming	Neither	Variants and clusters
<i>ken/ke</i> ‘yes’	45 (40%)	42	1	2	<i>ke</i> . ‘yeah.’ 1, <i>ken</i> . 31, <i>ken</i> , 6, <i>ken ken</i> 1, <i>ken ken</i> , 2, <i>ken ken</i> . 1, <i>ken ken ken</i> . 1, <i>ken ken betax</i> . ‘yes yes, sure.’ 1, <i>ken bidyuk</i> . ‘yes. exactly.’ 1
<i>mhm</i>	6 (5%)	6	—	—	<i>mhm</i> . 6
<i>barur</i> ‘of course’	5 (4%)	5	—	—	<i>barur</i> . 4, prosodically integrated 1
<i>betax</i> ‘sure’	3 (3%)	3	—	—	<i>betax</i> . 1, <i>ken ken betax</i> . ‘yes yes, sure.’ 1, prosodically integrated 1
<i>naxon</i> ‘right’	2 (2%)	2	—	—	<i>naxon</i> , 1, <i>naxon?</i> 1
<i>bediyuk</i> ‘exactly’	2 (2%)	2	—	—	<i>bediyuk</i> . ‘exactly.’ 1, <i>ken bidyuk</i> . ‘yes. exactly.’ 1
<i>lo</i> ‘no’	53 (47%)	2	47	4	<i>lo</i> . 14, <i>lo</i> , 27, <i>lo lo</i> , 1, <i>lo lo</i> . 1, <i>lo lo</i> , 1, <i>lo lo</i> , 2, <i>lo lo lo</i> . 1, <i>lo lo lo</i> . 1, <i>lo ma pit’om</i> . ‘no, of course not.’ 3, <i>tsk lo</i> . ‘tsk no.’ 1, prosodically integrated 1
<i>ma pit’om</i> ‘of course not’ [lit. ‘what suddenly’]	3 (3%)	—	3	—	<i>lo ma pit’om</i> . ‘no, of course not.’ 3
<i>tsk</i> (dental click)	1 (1%)	—	1	—	<i>tsk lo</i> . ‘tsk no.’ 1

In response, following *ke’ilu* ‘like’, Mom begins to elaborate on her previous utterance (Maschler 2002), smiling, that if the sugar factory had actually messed up, they probably wouldn’t want it published, in an attempt to justify the confirmable she has put forward (l. 43–45). Dad promises to explain and proceeds with the telling (l. 46). Again, the interaction continues without any display of some norm of conduct having been breached.

Nevertheless, both here and in the previous excerpt, the speakers do address in some way the disalignment created by the unmitigated disconfirmation – with an account by the disconfirmer in the previous case, and here through an expansion by the disconfirmer (l. 46 ff.). These efforts show that the speakers do strive for alignment and social cohesion, as generally reflected in the organization of dispreferred responses.

5.2 RTs

An RT is defined in this project as the minimal conventionalized form of a language that can be employed for (dis)confirmation. It is a “dedicated answer form ... which [does] not assert a proposition in and of [itself] but [does] confirm one” (Enfield et al. 2019, 288). RTs are used in 60% of Hebrew verbal responses ($N = 113$); this is a moderate amount in comparison to the other languages analyzed in this project (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming).

Responses are often accompanied by nodding or headshakes (e.g., Excerpts 1 and 8, l. 3), but in Hebrew, it is also possible to indicate (dis)confirmation solely through a nod or headshake, as seen in the nodding of Excerpt 2 ‘Curry Spices’, l. 211 and the headshake of Excerpt 8 ‘Wrapping Up’, l. 2 (cf. Du-Nour 1987, 180). This strategy is used infrequently in our collection: we found ten cases of solely non-verbal responses (5% of all responses). In the examples above, the circumstances seem to license the non-verbal response: in Excerpt 2 ‘Curry Spices’, the nod is found at the end of a sequence of phrasal RFCs, when the knowledge gap between speakers has been almost entirely bridged; in Excerpt 8 ‘Wrapping Up’, the headshake is used by a non-selected speaker, preoccupied with chewing. Further study is needed to generalize in which circumstances speakers tend to use non-verbal formats, but it seems likely that they are used in somewhat different interactional circumstances than verbal RTs (pace Enfield et al. 2019).

The inventory of Hebrew RTs is provided in Table 7. Negative RTs are differentiated by a grey background. RTs sometimes appear in clusters; each component in the cluster was counted separately. Table 7 shows that Hebrew speakers employ *ken* ‘yes’ ($N = 45$; 40% of all RTs) and *lo* ‘no’ ($N = 53$; 47%), which have been illustrated in several instances above (Excerpts 2, 4, 6, 8–11), as the unmarked confirming and disconfirming RTs,

respectively.¹⁰ Interestingly, the unmarked disconfirming RT *lo* is more frequent in our database ($N = 53$) in comparison to the unmarked confirming RT *ken* ($N = 45$). This is, of course, related to the fact that the rate of disconfirmation in Hebrew is very high (Section 5.1), but it is also due to the fact that in our collection *lo* appears in every disconfirming response performed with RTs, while there are 15 cases of confirming responses that employ confirming RTs other than *ken*.

Another contributing factor is that in Hebrew, negative polarity RfCs are, depending on context and turn design, confirmed by RTs of either the same or the opposite polarity (see Section 5.2.1). Table 7 reflects this in that the unmarked confirming RT *ken* is occasionally employed for disconfirmation ($N = 1$), whereas the unmarked disconfirming RT *lo* is occasionally employed for confirmation ($N = 2$). Both of these eventualities happen in the case of negative polarity RfCs.

Finally, besides its use to disconfirm (cf. Shor 2018, 110), our collection includes also four cases where *lo* is used in responses that neither confirm nor disconfirm, negating not the request as such but implications or expectations included in it (cf. Ziv 2007, Shor 2020).

5.2.1 Responses to negative-polarity RfCs

As discussed in Section 4.2, some negative-polarity RfCs are interpreted literally and make relevant a matching negative-polarity response. An example of this is shown in Excerpt 8 ‘Wrapping Up’: The RfC *'anaxnu lo be-kivun shel lehitkapel 'od me'at. naxon?* ‘we’re not about to wrap [this] up soon. right?’ (l. 1–2) is *confirmed* by the negative RT *lo* ‘no’ (l. 3). A similar case can be seen in Excerpt 14 ‘Surprise Party’ below, *confirmed* by a dental click.

On the other hand, in some negative-polarity RfCs, the negation is interpreted as an indication of stance, and these RfCs make relevant a reversed-polarity, positive response. This is seen in Excerpt 12 ‘Bitter’, which features a negative polarity RfC *disconfirmed* by *lo* ‘no’:

Excerpt 12 ‘Bitter’, Spinach Recipes 3:57 (#37)

265 Mika: (inbreath) 'aval
but

266 (0.1) ze lo niš'ar lexa 'ax[a]re[y] ze
this.MS NEG remain.PRS.MS to.you.MS after this.MS
don't you end up afterwards with

267 ze lo k[e'lilu nora mar?
this.MS NEG as_if awful bitter
isn't it like awfully bitter?

→ 268 Eyal: (0.6)+(0.6) lo,+
NEG
no,
E-gaze Mika-+aside----+

→ 269 +lama?
why?
E-gaze +Mika-->

270 Mika: (0.5) ki 'aley tered,
because leaves.of spinach
because spinach leaves,

271 lif'amim hem marim.
sometimes they.M bitter
are sometimes bitter.

¹⁰ Burstein, too, discusses *ken* and *lo* as tokens confirming and disconfirming, respectively, polar questions (not necessarily RfCs) in written Hebrew (2021, 110–1, 146–7). She also finds *bediyuk*, *betax*, *naxon*, *barur*, and *ken ken* in her written corpus (ibid., 116–9, 111–2). The remaining RTs of Table 7 are not mentioned by her. See Miller (2010) for the epistemic discourse markers *barur*, *betax*, *naxon*, *bediyuk/bidyuk*, and *ma pit'om* in Hebrew talk in interaction.

Preceding this excerpt, Eyal is recounting the benefits of making a curry with fresh spinach leaves, as discussed in Excerpt 2 ‘Curry Spices’. Employing the negative polarity RfC *ze lo ke’ilu nora mar?* ‘isn’t it like awfully bitter?’, Mika presents a counter-argument (employing DM *aval* ‘but’, l. 265) for using spinach, asking whether this doesn’t leave a very bitter taste in the mouth (l. 266–267). This is apparently Mika’s experience with spinach (l. 270–271), but the epistemic gradient is tilted toward Eyal, the expert on this type of curry.

In contrast to the negative polarity RfCs of Excerpts 8 ‘Wrapping Up’ and 14 ‘Surprise Party’, which make relevant a negative polarity response, and thus receive a minimal negative-semantics RT, with no delay, as a *confirmation*, Mika’s RfC makes relevant an answer of the opposite polarity (cf. Koshik 2002), based on its position in the sequence in which it occurs (Schegloff 1997) and possibly also on prosodic design.¹¹ We interpret Mika’s negation as indicating her epistemic stance of uncertainty, similarly to the co-occurring hedge *k[e]’ilu* ‘like’. Both serve to soften the action Mika is performing, ensuring that she is interpreted as deferring to Eyal and not criticizing his cooking. Eyal appropriately delays his response, looking aside to display a ‘thinking face’ (Harness Goodwin and Goodwin 1986; l. 268), before he *disconfirms* with the negative semantics RT *lo* ‘no’ (l. 268), and expands his dispreferred response (Pomerantz 1984) with an invitation for further elaboration from Mika (l. 269).

5.2.2 Clusters of RTs

RTs are often found in clusters. For the purposes of the cross-linguistic comparison, clusters were coded only if the tokens occurred within a single intonation unit ($N = 6$, 5% of RTs); the only RTs in our collection appearing in such clusters are *ken ken* and *lo lo* (cf. Shor 2020, 592).¹² However, RTs appeared much more frequently in clusters in consecutive intonation units ($N = 17$, 15%) (cf. Maschler 1994). Across intonation units, clusters are more varied: the first token is usually still the unmarked *ken* or *lo*, followed by an RT with a more specialized function, such as *ma pit’om* ‘of course not’ (Excerpt 11 ‘Confidential’). There are only five such clusters involving multiple RTs in our collection, but the tendency to open clusters with *ken/lo* is corroborated by examples from written Hebrew (Burstein 2021, 125).

5.2.3 Confirming RTs

In Excerpt 1 ‘Milk Bottle’, we showed an example of the RT *mhm* – which is not as frequent in Hebrew as in many of the other languages analyzed in this project ($N = 6$; 5% of all RTs). In Excerpt 3 ‘Amsterdam’, we discussed *naxon?* ‘right?’ – the only RT realized in rising intonation in our corpus (cf. Japanese *deshoo?*, Suzuki 2019) – which marks confirmation while also inviting the interlocutor to agree in turn with the RfC that they themselves have in fact put forward in the first place. The RT *naxon* is much more frequent in falling or level intonation. Previous studies (Miller 2012, 2010, 163–7, Maschler and Miller Shapiro 2016) have shown that it marks also epistemic independence (Heritage 2002) with regard to the matter under discussion.

The next most frequent confirming RT following *ken* ‘yes’ and *mhm* is *barur* ‘of course’ (lit. ‘clear’), which carries a strong epistemic stance of certainty (Miller 2010). *Barur* appears to be similar to marked, upgraded forms in other languages (Stivers 2011, 2022, 99) in challenging the ‘askability’ of the question – indicating that the question is morally problematic or that the answer should be available to the asker. In Excerpt 13 ‘Divorce

¹¹ We suspect that when the primary stress is on the negator *lo* (e.g., Excerpt 8 ‘Wrapping Up’), the RfC makes relevant a matching polarity response (cf. Glinert 1989, 271). Shor (2020, 611) supports this interpretation, but more research is needed to show how this interacts with other factors which may draw stress to the negator (ibid., Section 7).

¹² Also counted as a cluster for this purpose was an example of a click (Section 5.2.4) and *lo* in quick succession, but it is more accurate to say that the concept of intonation units is mostly inapplicable to (voiceless) clicks, which do not have an intonation contour.

Karma', Mika is telling Eyal about deterring her partner from buying a used bed that belonged to his ex-wife's sister, who is also getting a divorce. Mika reports asking her partner whether he thinks sleeping on a bed involving so much 'divorce karma' is a good idea:

Excerpt 13 'Divorce Karma', Nordic Hikes 3:14 (#84)

- 232 Mika: (0.2) 'ata xošev še-zo karma tova?
you.ms think.ms that-this.fs karma good
you think it's good karma?
- 233 Eyal: @@@
- 234 Mika: lišon,
INF.sleep
to sleep,
- 235 (0.1) 'al mita,
on bed
on a bed,
- 236 Eyal: @@ @ @ @ @
- 237 Mika: ba-makom haxi,
in-place most
in the most,
- 238 prati ve-zugi ve-'intimi,
private and-coupley and-intimate
private and couple-related
and intimate place,
- 239 (0.3) karma-t,
karma-of
karma of,
- 240 (0.1) hamon hamon girušin? @
lots lots divorce
lots and lots of divorce?
- 241 Eyal: @@@@@@
- 242 Mika: (inbreath) ©'az 'e--,
so u--h,
- 243 (0.3) mts ©'az hiskamnu,©
so agree.PST.1P
so we agreed,
- 244 Eyal: siryesli,
seriously,
- 245 ze mafria lax?
this.ms bother.PRS.ms to.you.fs
it bothers you?
- ➔ 246 Mika: (0.3) barur!
clear
of course!

Eyal initially responds to Mika's karma argument with laughter (l. 233, 236). However, as she begins to move on to the next narrative event (l. 242–243), he overlaps with the RfC *siryesli, ze mafria lax?* 'seriously, this bothers you?' (l. 244–245). Apparently, this seems ridiculous to him, but Mika is of course the epistemic authority regarding her own preferences. By confirming this RfC with *barur* (l. 246), she claims a high degree of certainty and presents the confirmable as obvious, refusing to entertain the implied criticism in Eyal's question, that 'divorce karma' is not a legitimate concern.

5.2.4 Disconfirming RTs

Above we have shown an example of the disconfirming RT *ma pit'om* (Excerpt 11 'Confidential'). Another interesting feature of Hebrew is the use of clicks as disconfirming RTs. Like many other languages from the Mediterranean to South Asia (Gil 2013), Hebrew employs a dental click to signify disconfirmation (Ben-Moshe and Maschler forthcoming). Since the sole negating click in this collection is in a cluster with *lo*, we illustrate with an example from a part of our corpus which was not used for the comparative project. In Excerpt 14 'Surprise Party', Karin is trying, unsuccessfully, to remind Adi of an incident involving a sauna.

- Excerpt 14 *Surprise Party* 1:06
- 101 Adi: (0.1) *ma* *haya?*
 what be.PST.3MS
 what happened?
- 102 Karin: (0.2) *'ah,*
 oh,
- 103 *lo siparti* *lax?*
 NEG tell.PST.1s to.you.FS
 I didn't tell you?
- 104 Adi: tsk
- 105 Karin: (1.0) *lifney kama* *xodašim,*
 before how_many months
 a few months ago,

When Adi asks what happened (l. 101), Karin realizes (as evidenced by the particle *'ah* in l. 102, cf. Section 4.4) that Adi hasn't heard about the incident in the first place, and she asks Adi if this is the case employing the negative polarity RfC *lo siparti lax?* 'I didn't tell you?' (l. 103). Adi responds immediately with a single click (l. 104) – that this is treated as a negative response is shown by Karin's following turn (l. 105), where she begins to recount the incident.

5.3 Position of RTs within the responsive turn

The great majority of RTs in our collection are turn-initial ($N = 105$, 93%). Only two final RTs were found (2%) – this is the lowest rate among all languages analyzed in this project (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). Our collection exhibits a few turn-medial RTs ($N = 6$, 5%). In most of them, the speaker accomplishes another action related to the RfC – co-constructing, repairing, verifying, or displaying the processing of the RfC – before (dis)confirming it with the RT.

5.4 (Non)minimal responses

In 38 of the cases (20% of verbal responses), Hebrew responses are minimal, consisting of an RT or cluster of RTs alone (e.g., Excerpts 1–3, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 13). This places Hebrew closer to the lower end among the ten languages analyzed in this project (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). In 75 cases (40%), the response is expanded past the RT (cluster) (e.g., Excerpts 4 'Japanese Duolingo', 10 'Mamma Mia', and 12 'Bitter').

Responses involving affirmative RTs such as *ken* ‘yes’ were minimal 43% of the time, whereas those involving negative RTs such as *lo* ‘no’ were minimal only 23% of the time. Thus, *lo* is much less likely to be the only component of a response compared to *ken*, showing that disconfirming responses tend to be elaborated and mitigated in Hebrew as well – a language featuring more disconfirmation and less mitigation of disconfirmation – and lending support to theories of preference structure (e.g., Pomerantz 1984). This is illustrated in the expansion past the RT in the dispreferred response of Excerpt 12 ‘Bitter’, where Eyal disconfirms and then expands the dispreferred response by inviting the interlocutor to further elaborate on her RfC.

Expansions past preferred responses are generally deployed for elaboration (e.g., Excerpt 4 ‘Japanese Duolingo’), but they can also be employed for other actions, such as joking, or, when prefaced by ‘*aval* ‘but’, as part of a concessive construction, in which the speaker first acknowledges the validity of the confirmable but then detracts from the acknowledgement (e.g., Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson 2000). In other cases, the (dis)confirmer responds with an RT and proceeds to immediately continue the action they were engaged in before the RfC sequence (in which case it can be considered an insertion sequence).

5.5 Responding by repeat of the RfC

Responses to Hebrew RfCs may include repetition of verbal material from the request ($N = 64$, 34% of verbal responses). In the majority of these, 46 cases (25% of verbal responses), only part of the request was repeated. We have seen examples of this above in Excerpts 7 ‘Just Visiting’, 10 ‘Mamma Mia’, and 5 ‘Black Speck’ (ordered from the most to the least repeated content). Burstein (2021, 135–40, 148, 151–4, 182, 184–5) reviews a variety of repeats answering polar questions in written Hebrew, and concludes that answers most commonly repeat the predicate, and that other constituents may be repeated for further specification. Miller (2010, Section 3.4) describes the use of repetition in Hebrew conversation to express an epistemic stance of increased certainty or to establish independent epistemic authority – as seen, for example, in Excerpt 10 ‘Mamma Mia’, l. 9.

In 11 cases (6% of verbal responses), the request was repeated in full and mostly unchanged.¹³ In seven more cases (4% of verbal responses), the request is repeated in full and further expanded. The rate of full repeats in Hebrew is in the lower range in relation to that of the other languages compared in this project, and it is significantly lower than the two languages which truly favor this strategy, Low German and Yurakaré (Pfeiffer et al. forthcoming). In our collection, all full repeats – both the repeated part of the confirmable and its repetition – consist of a single intonation unit. However, these intonation units are typically syntactically complex: most full repeats consist of full clauses ($N = 9$); only two consist of phrases (similarly, the ‘full expanded’ repeats included 7 full clauses and only 1 phrase).

In Hebrew, repeats can be used to express not only epistemic but also affective stance. In Excerpt 15 ‘Parade’, Dotan has been telling Alex about a group of Australian tourists that he led, ridiculing them for considering the day they saw Prime Minister Netanyahu at some lackluster ceremony (involving 2.5 h of waiting) to be the height of their 3-week visit to the Holy Land:

¹³ For the purposes of our coding, responses were still considered unexpanded full repeats if they included deictic shifts (*you > we*, etc.), switched polarity, omitted connectives or turn-initial elements, and the like (König et al. forthcoming).

Excerpt 15 'Parade', Australians 1:57

- 168 Dotan: (0.1) #še-hem @yaš#vu,
that-they.M sit.PST.3P
that they @sat [around] @for,
A-face #smile-----#
- 169 #(inbreath) (0.1) še'at-ayim va-xe#tsi,
hour-two and-half
two and a half hours,
A-face #smile-----#
- 170 ve-xiku še-ha-'e
and-wait.PST.3P that-the-uh
and waited for the uh
- 171 ve-xiku--,
and-wait.PST.3P
and wai--ted,
- 172 le-bibi netanyahu,
for-PSN PSN
for Bibi Netanyahu,
- 173 #še-y[e]daber!
that-speak.FUT.3MS
to speak!
A-face #smile----->
- 174 Alex: (0.3) @hem hayu ba-mits'ad?@
they.M be.PST.3P in.the-parade
@they were at the parade?
- 175 (0.1) /?/
/?/
- 176 Dotan: (0.6) ve-šhem hayu ba-mišts'ad.\$
amd-they.M be.PST.3P in.the-parade
and they were at the parade.
D-hand \$throwing behind shoulder\$
D-gaze >>--Alex----->>
- 177 \$b[e]seder,
alright
whatever,
D-gaze \$aside--->>
- 178 mits'ad.
{low pitch}
parade.

Alex affiliates with Dotan's ridiculing stance by smiling throughout (l. 168–169, 173). The ceremony also included a parade, and Alex responds by laughingly requesting confirmation regarding this feature of the event which might justify the tourists' excitement – *hem hayu bamits'ad?* 'they were at the parade?' (l. 174). Dotan confirms with a repeat¹⁴ – *ve-hem hayu bamits'ad.*, 'and they were at the parade' (l. 176) – but this repeated material is recontextualized not just as a confirmation, but also as a stance display. This is evidenced by Dotan's accompanying embodied behavior: gaze withdrawal (cf. Kendon 1967, 48, Haddington 2006, Robinson 2020, Pekarek Doehler et al. 2021) and a gesture of throwing away something behind his shoulder (l. 176), which we interpret as expressing dismissal.

¹⁴ According to the project's comparative coding (König et al. forthcoming), this is a 'full expanded' repeat, since Dotan adds the connective *ve-* 'and', which connects this to his previous narration of the tourists' activities that day.

This stance is underscored by the following *b[e]seder* lit. ‘alright’ (l. 177), which Shefer (2021, 17) analyzes as a discourse marker of acceptance which may at the same time express “discontent, even sarcasm ..., roughly paraphrased as a dismissing ‘whatever’.” Dotan follows this with yet another repetition of the word *mits’ad* ‘parade’ (l. 178), this time in a separate intonation unit and in marked prosody, consisting of lower pitch, a fall-to-low pitch movement, and a slightly decreased intensity (cf. Shor and Marmorstein 2024, Section 4.5). This type of repetition highlights the apparent ridiculousness of the original *mits’ad* formulation, suggesting that the event they saw isn’t fit for the term (cf. Raymond 2016, 121), thereby again expressing disdain for the tourists’ experience on that day.

Full repeats in our data are similar in that they allow the speaker to recast the repeated material, e.g., adding stance, claiming independent epistemic access, or prosodically singling out a portion for repair (in disconfirmations) or upgrading (in confirmations).

6 Conclusion

Our study of Hebrew RfC sequences can only provide a general quantitative comparison with the nine other languages investigated in this special issue. It constitutes a starting point for in-depth studies of a variety of features involved in these sequences.

Formally, Hebrew relies on intonation for marking the request more so than any of the other languages analyzed in this project (Section 4.7) – a fact no doubt related to the lack of syntactic marking of interrogatives in Hebrew polar questions. The language makes little use of tag questions (Section 4.6), but relatively often employs inference markers (Section 4.4) and connectives (Section 4.5), which often appear in clusters. Hebrew is rich in types of connectives and modulators (Section 4.3), but the latter appears only moderately in our data in relation to modulators in the other languages analyzed in this project (Section 4.3). The most frequent modulator is the use of negation to indicate epistemic stance (Section 5.2.1).

One of the most intriguing features of the Hebrew language and culture is the high rate of disconfirmation (Section 5.1). The frequent lack of mitigation and accompanying dismissive stance are related prominent characteristics. Affective stance plays a role also in repeats, which responders use to recontextualize parts of the question while (dis)confirming (Section 5.5). However, full repeats are a minor strategy in comparison with RTs, which appear in over half of the responses in our collection. Hebrew is placed in the middle range among the languages investigated in this project with respect to RT employment. In particular, it features two fascinating negative RTs: the dental click, which is shared by many neighboring languages (Section 5.3.4); and *ma pit’om* ‘of course not’ (lit. ‘what suddenly’, Section 5.1), attesting the license for forceful and unmitigated disconfirmation in Hebrew.

A particularly fruitful avenue for future research seems to us to be the possibility of negative polarity RfCs to make relevant both confirmation and disconfirmation employing the same, unmarked negative RT *lo* ‘no’. We suspect that not only sequential position but also prosody – in particular placement of the primary stress of the intonation unit comprising the request – plays a crucial role in determining whether a particular negative-polarity RfC makes relevant a positive- or negative-polarity response as confirmation.

Each one of the particular resources composing the practice of requesting confirmation – modulators, inference markers, connectives, tag questions, RTs, and prosody – awaits detailed investigation. Nonetheless, the methodology employed in the larger project of which this study is a part yielded a refreshing comparative perspective on Hebrew. We hope to have shed some light on the particularities of the ways Hebrew speakers request confirmation and respond to such requests.

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Appendix: Transcription Conventions

Glosses throughout the article are composed of groups of up to five types of lines. **The first line is a transcription**, generally following standard Hebrew orthography; elements that are not pronounced are enclosed in square brackets (e.g., [*a*ta]). We use conventional IPA values, except for *y* for /j/, *š* for /ʃ/, and an uninverted quotation mark (') for the glottal stop phoneme.

The transcription conventions of the Haifa Corpus of Spoken Hebrew are based on those of the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (Du Bois et al. (1992), Du Bois (unpublished manuscript, 2012)), as adapted for Hebrew (Maschler 2017). Each numbered paragraph denotes a single intonation unit (Chafe 1994):

, – comma at end of line – mid-level, mid-rise, mid-fall intonation, regularly understood in Hebrew as “more to come”

, – period at end of line – low fall intonation, regularly understood in Hebrew as final

? – question mark at end of the line – high rising intonation, regularly understood in Hebrew as final and seeking a response from interlocutor (‘appeal’)

?, – a question mark followed by a comma – rising intonation, regularly understood in Hebrew as projecting ‘more to come’ while seeking (minimal) response from interlocutor

! – exclamation mark at end of the line – final exclamatory intonation

∅ – lack of punctuation at end of the line – a fragmentary intonation unit, one which never reached completion.

-- – two hyphens – elongation of preceding sound.

underlined syllable – primary stress of intonation unit.

@ – a burst of laughter (each additional @ symbol denotes an additional burst).

☺bab☺ – text bracketed by smileys is produced with a smile.

(in regular brackets) – nonverbal action constituting a turn.

/words within slashes/ indicate uncertain transcription.

/????/ – indecipherable utterance.

a square bracket to the left of two consecutive lines indicates the beginning of overlapping speech, two speakers talking at once.

alignment such that the right of the top line

is placed over the left of the bottom line

indicates latching, no interturn pause.

The second (optional) line is a gloss, following the Leipzig Glossing Rules (www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php), with the exception of gender and number being glossed only on verbs and pronouns, not nouns or adjectives, in the interest of legibility. Person, gender, and number are abbreviated into single, unseparated letters, such as 3_{fs} – third person feminine singular, 1_s – first person singular (not marked for gender). Square brackets in the gloss line indicate a ∅ morpheme, such as *matxil* ‘begin.PRS[MS]’.

Other abbreviations used are FUT – future, INF – infinitive, OBJ – object, PRS – present, PSN – personal name, PST – past, NEG – negation.

The third (optional) line indicates prosody {in *italic curly brackets*}, using musical notation, e.g., {*pp*} for *pianissimo* (very soft), or **transcriber’s comments**.

The fourth line contains an English translation.

Finally, one or more (optional) lines indicate multimodal aspects of interaction in blue font, following Mondada 2019:

+nod A punctual embodied action is described following a single symbol in the following line (one symbol per participant and per type of conduct), synchronized with corresponding stretches of talk.

\$pointing\$ Prolonged embodied actions are described between two identical symbols.

—> Described embodied conduct continues across subsequent lines

—# until the same symbol is reached.

>>— Described embodied conduct begins before the line’s beginning.

Participants are identified by the first letter of their name followed by the part of their body that is transcribed, e.g., A-face and A-hands for Alex.