The exceptive construction in Palestinian Arabic

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1. Introduction

The aim of this talk is to present an analysis of the exceptive construction (EC) in Palestinian Arabic (PA) that accounts for its salient characteristics and then to draw some theoretical implications in conclusion. More specifically, we propose to analyze exceptive phrases as *focus*-marked constituents licensed or controlled by a sentential negation that marks scope over the tensed sentence, and the exception conjunction *illa* 'except/but' that specifies the left edge of the focused constituent implies or entails subtraction or exclusion from a contextual domain of quantification. Rather than taking the *in-situ* focus-interpretation approach to EC (cf. Rooth 1985, 1992), we argue for a covert movement of *illa* XP to the designated [Spec, NegP] position at syntax-semantics interface (cf. Wagner 2006, 2012; Erlewine & Kotek 2018) in order to capture the thought that focus-sensitive operators like *bass* 'only' and its bipartite counterpart *Neg…Except/But* quantify over (alternative) propositions (cf. von Fintel & Iatridou 2007).

2. Main data

The exception conjunction *illa* 'except/but' can attach to the left edge of DP, as in (1a), CP, as in (1b, c, d), or *v*P, as in (1e), controlled by a sentential negation *maa* that marks scope over tensed phrases. Constituent negation, however, cannot license *illa* XP in its scope, as in (1f).

(1) **XP left-edge attachment of *illa* 'except/but'**

a.

*(***maa**)	baas-*at*	*zeenab*	***illa***	*rašiid*
Neg	kiss-Pst-3FS	Zenab	Exc	Rashid

"Zenab only kissed Rashid."

b.

maa	*bi-t-ʔaamin*	*zeenab*	***illa***	*ʔinn-ha*	*raḥ*	*t-kuun*	*ʕaayš-i*
Neg	PRES-3FS-believe	Zenab	Exc	that-CL-3FS	FUT	3FS-be	alive-3FS

"Zenab only believes that she will be alive."

c.

maa	*b-it-fakkir*	*zeenab*	***illa***	*keef*	*t-xalliṣ*	*taʕliim-a*
Neg	PRES-3FS-think	Zenab	Exc	how	3FS-finish	study-her

"Zenab only thinks how to finish her study."

d.

maa	*raḥ*	*ti-njaḥ*	*zeenab*	***illa***	*iða*	*b-tu-drus*	*mliiḥ*
Neg	FUT	3FS-succeed	Zenab	except	if	PRES-3FS-study	well

"Zenab will not succeed except if she studies well."

e. ***maa*** *kaan-at* *zeenab* ***illa*** *tu-drus* *l-al-imtiḥaan*
Neg be-PST-3FS Zenab Exc 3FS-study for-the-exam
"Zenab was only studying for the exam."

f. ****miš*** *kθiir* *niswaan* *baas-u* ***illa*** *rašiid*
Neg many women kiss-Pst-3FPL Exc Rashid

(2) ***illa* DP can independently front or undergo *wh*-movement across Neg in EC**

a. ***illa*** *rašiid* ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab*
Exc Rashid Neg kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab
"Only Rashid did Zenab not kiss."

b. ***illa*** *meen* ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab*
Exc who Neg kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab
"Only who did Zenab not kiss?"

illa DP movement across sentential negation yields *reversal* in meaning: (1a) means that Zenab kissed no one but Rashid, whereas (2a) means that Zenab kissed everyone but Rashid. It is self-evident that the complex expression *illa* DP forms a constituent, given the assumption that movement is a reliable and valid test for constituency.

(3) ***illa* DP movement to pre-tensed position in Neg-less sentences generates *only*-sentence interpretation**

a. **baas-at* *zeenab* ***illa*** *rašiid*
kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab Exc Rashid
"Zenab kissed but Rashid."

b. ***illa*** *rašiid* *baas-at* *zeenab*
Exc Rashid kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab
"Only Rashid did Zenab kiss."

(4) ***Emphatic* sentential-operator meaning of *illa* in answering yes/no questions**

a. *baas-at* *zeenab* *rašiid*
kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab Rashid
"Did Zenab kiss Rashid?"

b. *aa* (~~*baas-at-u*~~)
yes (kiss-Pst-3FS-CL-3MS)
"Yes (, ~~she kissed him~~)."

c. *aa* ***illa*** (~~*baas-at-u*~~)
yes Exc (kiss-Pst-3FS-CL-3MS)
"Yes, of course (~~she kissed him~~)."

d. ***illa*** *baas-at-u*
Exc kiss-Pst-3FS-CL-3MS
"Of course, she kissed him."

(5) ***illa* may attach to the complex NP headed by the noun *ɣeer* 'other'**

a. *baas-at* *zeenab* ***ɣeer*** *rašiid* (Yes-no question)
kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab other-than Rashid
"Did Zenab kiss other than Rashid?

b. *laʔ* ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab* ***illa*** ***ɣeer*** *rašiid* (Answer)
No Neg kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab Exc other-than Rashid
"No, Zenab kissed only Rashid."

(6) **Modal operator meaning of *illa***

a. ***illa*** *(-ma)* *t-buus* *zeenab* *rašiid*
Exc (~~that~~) 3SF-kiss Zenab Rashid
"Zenab should definitely kiss Rashid."

b. ***illa*** *(-ma)* *zeenab* *t-buus* *rašiid*
Exc (~~that~~) Zenab SF-kiss Rashid
"Zenab should definitely kiss Rashid."

c. ***illa*** *(-ma)* *raḥ* *zeenab* *t-buus* *rašiid*
Exc (~~that~~) FUT Zenab 3SF-kiss Rashid
"Zenab will definitely kiss Rashid."

(7) ***illa* can express mathematical subtraction**

a. *is-seeʕa* *issa* *xamsi* ***illa*** *sit* *daʔaayiʔ*
the-watch now five Exc six minutes
"The time now is five to six minutes."

(8) ***illa* cannot attach to a DP-complement selected by a preposition**

a. ****maa*** *bi-t-xaaf* *zeenab* *min* ***illa*** *allah*
Neg PRES-3FS-fear Zenab Prep Exc Allah

b. ***maa*** *bi-t-xaaf* *zeenab* ***illa*** *min* *allah*
Neg PRES-3FS-fear Zenab Exc Prep Allah

3. Proposal

To account for the generation of exceptive sentences such as (1a), we propose structure (9a) and the subsequent covert movement of *illa Rašiid* to its designated [Spec, NegP] position in (9b).

(9) a. [$_{TnsP}$ *maa baas-at* [$_{NegP}$ ~~***maa baas***~~$_{Neg}$ [$_{vP}$ *zeenab* ~~***baas***~~ [$_{RP}$ √~~BOS~~ [$_{DP}$ [$_{Exc}$ ***illa***] [$_{DP}$ *rašiid*]]]]]

b. [$_{TnsP}$ ***maa*** *baas-at* [$_{NegP}$ [$_{DP}$ [***illa***] [$_{DP}$ *rašiid*]]$_1$ ~~***maa baas***~~ [$_{vP}$ *zeenab* ~~***baas***~~ [$_{RP}$ √~~BOS~~ [$_{DP}$ [x_1]]]]]

The exception conjunction *illa* is taken to be an alternative-inducing adjunct left-adjoined to the focused DP *rašiid,* resulting in a complex DP *illa rašiid.* At syntax-semantics interface, since the 'associate' DP *rašiid* enters a sisterhood relation with its focus-sensitive operator *illa* through adjunction structure, it undergoes a covert focus-movement to the designated [Spec, NegP] position, 'dragging' along *illa* with it, due to the prohibition against *illa*- stranding in PA syntax. Both *illa* and *maa* constitute operators that operate on different constituents: *illa* operates on the (semantic) XP-argument associate, *rašiid*, whereas *maa* on the (semantic) propositional argument [*baasat zeenab* [x_1]]. We don't see any conceptual necessity to postulate a focus phrase layer, for instance, immediately higher than the left periphery of the tensed phrase only to capture the focused constituent-displacement (or fronting) of a DP constituent such as *rašiid*. It suffices to assume that the covert movement is an instance of quantifier-raising, QR, which is driven either by (a) checking the formal features of the Neg head (in the sense of Chomsky 1995) through AGREE operation or (b) the necessity to obtain the right configuration for the interpretation of the quantificational nature of the DP *illa rašiid* in order to capture the truth-conditional import of the semantic relation between the Neg operator and the exceptive operator *illa*.

The formal licensing condition on the occurrence of *illa* DP is satisfied, because it falls with the scope of a sentential negation, the latter being moved to the higher Tns head in narrow syntax, thus meeting the requirement of the c-command relation. The further movement of *illa* DP across the Neg-Tns complex evokes *reversal* in meaning as (2a, b) above illustrate. Moreover, we see no conceptual necessity to apply operator-formation to get the complex operator *Neg-But maa-illa*, which corresponds to the synthetic operator *bass* 'only' and its English counterpart *only*, because natural languages may exhibit both the synthetic and analytic encoding of complex semantic/logical concepts. In addition, *illa*-raising to the immediately higher Neg-Tns is costly, given the validity of the Economy Principle both in narrow syntax and syntax-semantics interface. We will elaborate further on the fact that the focused associate cannot be moved further than the licensing marker Neg, if we intend to express or convey the *bass* ('only')-sentence reading in the next section.

4. Evidence for the proposal

(10) **Exclusion of the covert indefinite nominal *ḥada* ('one') from (9)**

a.	***maa***	*baas-at*	*zeenab*	*ḥada*	***illa***	*rašiid*
	Neg	kiss-Pst-3FS	Zenab	one	Exc	Rashid

"Zenab didn't kiss anyone except/but Rashid."

b.	***illa***	*rašiid*	***maa***	*baas-at*	*zeenab*	*ḥada*
c.	**ḥada*	***illa***	*rašiid*	***maa***	*baas-at*	*zeenab*

The exclusion of the covert indefinite nominal *ḥada* in (9), postulated by (some) analyses of the French counterpart *Ne…Que* construction (cf. van Fintel & Iatridou 2007; O'Neil 2011; Homer 2015) is motivated by the grammaticality contrast between (2a) and (10b-c). In the former, *illa* DP-fronting is licit, whereas it is illicit in the latter. It is assumed that the ungrammaticality of the strings in (10b, c) is due to a violation of the c-command condition between *maa* and the complex DP *illa rašiid* in *ḥada illa rašiid*.

(11) **Intervention of universal quantifiers blocks *illa*-licensing by sentential negation**

a.	****maa***	baas-*at*	*kull*	*mara*	***illa***	*rašiid*
	Neg	kiss-Pst-3FS	every	woman	Exc	Rashid
b.	****maa***	*kull*	*mara*	baas-*at*	***illa***	*rašiid*
	Neg	every	woman	kiss-Pst-3FS	Exc	Rashid
c.	*kull*	*mara*	***maa***	baas-*at*	***illa***	*rašiid*
	every	woman	Neg	kiss-Pst-3FS	Exc	Rashid

"Every woman did not kiss but Rashid/kissed only Rashid."

The licensing of *illa* DP by the sentential negation *Neg* is blocked if a universally quantified expression intervenes between the licenser *Neg* and the licensee *illa* DP*,* thus disallowing the right syntactic configuration from which the exclusive meaning can be read off, hence rendering the string ungrammatical. The occurrence of the universal quantifier *kull mara* in pre-Neg-Tns position, as in (11c), however, renders the sequence grammatical. (Universal quantifiers functioning as *topics* are allowed to occupy a sentence-initial base-generated position in PA.)

(12) **Evidence for the adjunct-analysis of *illa***

a.

maa	*baas-at*	*zeenab*	***illa***	***γeer***	*rašiid*
Neg	kiss-Pst-3FS	Zenab	Exc	other-than	Rashid

"Zenab didn't kiss other than Rashid."

b.

maa	*baas-at*	*zeenab*	***γeer***	*rašiid*
Neg	kiss-Pst-3FS	Zenab	other-than	Rashid

"Zenab didn't kiss other than Rashid."

c.

γeer	*rašiid*	***maa***	*baas-at*	*zeenab*
other-than	Rashid	Neg	kiss-Pst-3FS	Zenab

"Other than Rashid, she didn't kiss." OR "Only Rashid did Zenab not kissed."

It is a remarkable fact that *illa* can left-adjoin to the nominal complex *γeer rašeed* 'other than Rashid' headed by *γeer*, since the *illa*-less (12a) can convey the *only* sentence interpretation alone, as shown in (12b). However, *illa* DP contrasts with *γeer* DP with respect to its interpretation when its fronting across sentential negation applies: the former fronting must evoke *reversal* in meaning, as in (2b), whereas the latter fronting does not necessarily evoke such reversal, as shown in (12c). (12c) can mean (a) Zenab kissed everyone but Rashid or (b) Zenab kissed no one but Rashid. Intonational contour can disambiguate between the two readings. The lack of semantic equivalence between the two atoms is clearly displayed by the grammaticality contrast in their distribution in postverbal position: *illa* DP cannot occur independent of its sentential negation licensor, while *γeer* DP can, as shown in (13).

(13) a.

*baas-*at*	*zeenab*	***illa***	*rašiid*
kiss-Pst-3FS	Zenab	Exc	Rashid

b.

baas-*at*	*zeenab*	***γeer***	*rašiid*
kiss-Pst-3FS	Zenab	other-than	Rashid

"Zenab kissed other than Rashid."

The semantic contribution of the presence of *illa* in (12a) is to reinforce or emphasize the uniqueness of Rashid's exclusion from the set of individuals that Zenab (could have) kissed. The utterer of (12a) in the relevant context may also convey the denial of expectation that Zenab kissed someone else, besides Rashid. It is possible to achieve the same effect with the reduplication of *illa* in answering the yes-no question (14c), as in (14d).

(14) a.

baas-at	*zeenab*	***γeer***	*rašiid*
kiss-Pst-3FS	Zenab	other-than	Rashid

"Did Zenab kiss other than Rashid""

b.

laʔ	***maa***	*baas-at*	*zeenab*	***illa***	***γeer***	*rašiid*
No	Neg	kiss-Pst-3FS	Zenab	Exc	other-than	Rashid

"No, Zenab didn't kiss other than Rashid."

c.

maa	*baas-at*	*zeenab*	***illa***	*rašiid*
Neg	kiss-Pst-3Fs	Zenab	Exc	Rashid

"Didn't Zenab kiss but Rashid?

d.

mbala	***maa***	*baas-at*	*zeenab*	***illa***	***illa***	*rašiid*
Yes	Neg	kiss-Pst-3Fs	Zenab	Exc	Exc	Rashid

"No, Zenab didn't kiss but Rashid."

PA syntax features the juxtaposition of the exceptive marker *illa* and the synthetic exclusive *bass* 'only' in the same context, as shown by the answer (15b) to the yes-no question (15a).

(15) e. **maa** *baas-at* *zeenab* ***bass*** *rašiid*
Neg kiss-Pst-3Fs Zenab Exc Exc Rashid
"Didn't Zenab kiss only Rashid?"

f. *laʔ* ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab* ***illa*** ***bass*** *rašiid*
No Neg kiss-Pst-3Fs Zenab Exc only Rashid
"No, Zenab didn't kiss but Rashid."

Thus, the presence of *illa* immediately preceding the non-identity marker *ɣeer* 'other than', the exceptive marker *illa* or the exclusive marker *bass* 'only' constitutes a strong evidence for the adjunct-analysis of *illa* in PA exceptive sentences, since *bass* can easily be shown to be an adnominal adjunct left-adjoined to the focused associate DP.

(16) **Further evidence for the adjunct-analysis of *illa***

a. *baʕd-ak* *b-t-ḥibb-ni*
still-CL-2MS PRES-2MS-love-Cl-me
"Do you still love me?"

b. ***illa*** *baʕid-ni*
of-course still-CL-1S
"Of course, I still do."

c. ***ṭabʕan*** *baʕid-ni*
Naturally still-CL-1S
"Naturally, I still do."

d. ***bass*** *baʕid-ni*
sure still-CL-1S
"I sure/only still do."

The occurrence of *illa* in pre-tensed position in answers to yes/no questions, as in (16b) lends further support for the adjunct-analysis, since its meaning is synonymous with the adjunct *tabʕan* 'naturally/of course", as in (16c). Surprisingly, the focus-sensitive marker *bass* 'only' may occupy the pre-tensed position, evoking the same meaning, as in (16d).

The exclusive marker *bass* 'only' in (16d) is a grammaticalization of the Modern Standard Arabic prepositional phrase *bi-stiθnaaʔ* 'with exception'. Adjunct formation (or 'adverbs') in PA can be the outcome of the merge of a preposition and a bare noun such as the prepositional phrase *b-ʔadab 'with courtesy'*. Sentences (16b) and (16d) naturally raise the challenge to provide a reasonable account for such a distribution of exceptive/exclusive markers with (epistemic) modality-like meaning or reading. One plausible account is to posit an evidential (epistemic) modality phrase, EvidP, immediately higher than the TnsP projection and assume that *illa* in (16b) occupies the specifier of EvidP, in accordance with the *uniform* adjunct-analysis of *illa*. The possible postulation of a richer syntactic structure for PA sentences in the relevant context comes from the fact that the TnsP-left edge position may host or attract quantificational expressions by fronting in narrow syntax, as illustrated in (17).

(17) a. *baas-*at* *zeenab* ***wala*** *(ayya)* *ḥada*
kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab Neg any one
"Zenab didn't kissed anyone."

b. ***wala*** *baas-at* *zeenab* *(ayya)* *ḥada*
Neg kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab any one
"Zenab didn't kissed anyone."

c. ***wala*** *(ayya)* *ḥada* *baas-at* *zeenab*
Neg (any) one kisse-Pst-3FS Zenab
"Zenab didn't kiss anyone."

PA, unlike English or Dutch, cannot express sentential negation by a negative quantifier in a postverbal position, as shown in (17a); however, *wala-raising* to sentence-initial position 'rescues' its well-formedness by having Neg in a *scope*-taking position, as shown in (17b). The other option to salvage (17a) is to front/raise the whole negative quantifier to the TP-left edge position, as in (17c). Emphatic negatives with a single semantic negation reading, as in (18a), provide further evidence for the observation that the TnsP-left edge position is a scope-position, once we consider the semantic effect of negative object fronting in (18b).

(18) a. ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab* ***wala*** *(ayya)* *ḥada* (**Single**-negation reading)
Neg kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab Neg any one
"Zenab didn't kissed anyone."

b. ***wala*** *(ayya)* *ḥada* ***maa*** *baas-at* *zeenab* (**Double**-negation reading)
Neg any one Neg kiss-Pst-3FS Zenab
"Zenab didn't kiss no one."

The presence of *wala* in the scope of the Neg *maa* in (18a) has the semantic function of expanding the domain of quantification, just like *any* and its PA counterpart *ayya* (cf. Kadmon & Landman 1993), and to s*trengthen* its negative force. However, fronting it with its host across the pre-negative-tensed position retains its *universal* quantificational force, as in (18b), hence brining about the double negation reading. It is therefore plausible to hypothesize that negative-licensed elements such as *illa* occupying a postverbal position 'win' their free (universal) quantificational force, once they escape the sentential Neg control, as shown in (2a) above. The *only*-interpretation of (2a) above demonstrates that syntactic structure does contribute to the meaning determination/individuation of lexical items in natural language.

(19) **Covert movement and quantifier-raising parallelism: clause-boundedness**

a. **ana* ***maa*** *fakkar-it* *ʔinnu* *zeenab* *baas-at* ***illa*** *rašiid*
I Neg think-Pst-1S that Zenab kiss-Pst-3FS Exc Rashid

b. ***ši*** ***mara*** *fakkar-at* *ʔinnu* ***kull*** ***zalami*** *zeenab* *baas-at-u*
Some woman think-Pst-3FS that every man Zenab kiss-Pst-3FS-CL-3MS
"Some woman thought that Zenab kissed every man."
* Every man >> Some woman

PA requires that the licensing condition of *illa* DP by a sentential negation be clause-bound (or local), as shown in (19a). One can infer from such a requirement that covert movement is analogous to QR in that the latter is also constrained by clause-boundedness (or locality) condition, as the unavailability of wide scope reading of the universal quantifier *kull zalami* 'every man' in

the embedded clause with respect to the existential quantifier *ši mara* ‘some woman’ in the matrix clause illustrated in (19b).

(20) **Covert movement and preposition-stranding prohibition in PA**

a.	**zeenab*	***maa***	*b-t-irkin*	*ʕala*	***wala***	*ayya*	*ḥada*
	Zenab	Neg	PRES-3FS-count	on	Neg	any	one
	“Zenab counts on no one.”						
b.	**zeenab*	***maa***	*b-t-irkin*	*ʕala*	***illa***	*rašiid*	
	Zenab	Neg	PRES-3FS-count	on	Exc	Rashid	
	“Zenab only counts on Rashid.”						
c.	*zeenab*	***maa***	*b-t-irkin*	*ʕala*	*rašiid*		
	Zenab	Neg	PRES-3FS-count	on	Rashid		
	“Zenab doesn’t count on Rashid.”						
d.	*meen	*zeenab*	***maa***	*b-t-irkin*	*ʕala*		
	who	Zenab	Neg	PRES-3FS-count	on		
	“Who doesn’t Zenab count on?						

The ungrammaticality of the strings in (20) shows the fact that PA disallows preposition stranding in narrow syntax and at syntax-semantics interface. The focused negative DP *ayya ḥada* ‘anyone’ in (20a), being F-marked, needs to undergo a covert movement to its designated position and this is ruled out due to the prohibition against preposition-stranding (of *ʕala* ‘on’) in PA syntax. The same reasoning applies to (20b). The attachment of *illa* to a focused constituent that cannot move to its designated [Spec, NegP] position does not enable the generation of a well-formed configuration structure for the *bass*-sentence meaning at syntax-semantics interface, since the presence of the preposition *ʕala* blocks such a movement (cf. Smeets and Wagner 2018). That PA does not permit preposition-stranding in narrow syntax is self-evident, as shown in (20d).

(21) **Contrastive meaning of *illa***

a.	*i-ftaḥ-i*	*l-baab*	*wa-ʔilla*	*ba-kisr-u*
	IM-open-2FS	the-door	and-Exc	NonPST-break-1S-CL-it
	“Open the door! Otherwise I (will) break it.”			

b.	*zeenab*	***miš***	***bass***	*baas-at*	*rašiid*	***illa***	***kaman***	*baas-at*	*amiir*
	Zenab	Neg	only	kiss-Pst-3FS	Rashid	Exc	also	kiss-Pst-3FS	Amir
	“She didn’t only kiss Rashid, but also kissed Amir.”								

One salient feature of the meaning of *illa* is contrast. The contrast relation displayed in (21a) implies that the (implicit) propositional content that the operator *wa-ʔilla* operates over is in contrast with the *polarity* of the previous proposition. The implicit negation present in *wa-ʔilla* seems to be capable of reversing the polarity of the previous sentence/proposition into a negative one: you won’t open the door. The source of conditionality meaning in (21a) is due to the use of the conjunction marker *wa* ‘and’ as a kind of complementizer. Further evidence that lends support to the intuition that *illa* inherently encodes (logical) contrast comes from the construction that features the sequence *not only…but also…*, as shown in (21b).

The contrast manifested in (21b) is related to the proposition that Zenab only kissed Rashid and the proposition that she (Zenab) kissed both Rashid and Amir. (21b) denies the assertion or presupposition that Zenab kissed Rashid in the previous discourse by the use of the (meta-

)linguistic negation *miš* and the connective *illa* 'but" exhibits contrast by the "correction" or reversal in meaning expressed by the proposition that Zenab also kissed Amir. The exclusive marker *bass* can express overt contrast when it juxtaposes two propositions that convey opposing emotions (love vs. hate, for example), as demonstrated in (21c). We conclude that these markers are in fact two sides of the same logical/linguistic coin, once the exceptive marker occupies the right syntactic configuration.

(21) c.

zeenab	*baas-at*	*rašiid*	***bass***	*hiba*	*atl-at-u*
Zenab	kiss-Pst-3FS	Rashid	but	Hiba	kill-Pst-3FS-CL-3MS

"Zenab kissed Rashid but Hiba killed him."

d.

zeenab	***bass***	*baas-at*	*rašiid*
Zenab	only	kiss-Pst-3FS	Rashid

"Zenab only kissed Rashid."

(22) **Evidential/epistemic modal meaning of *illa***

a.

illa	*(ma)*	*t-mut*	*ši*	*yom*
Exc	that	2MS-die	some	day

"You definitely should die someday."

b.

(*inti)*	*il-ik*	***illa***	*t-kun-i*	*mabṣuṭ-a*
you-2FS	Prep-CL-2FS	Exc	2FS-be-2FS	content-FS

"You can sure/definitely be content."

c.

(*inti)*	*il-ik*	***bass***	*t-kun-i*	*mabṣuṭ-a*
you-2FS	Prep-CL-2FS	only	2FS-be-2FS	content-FS

"You can sure/only/just be content."

Sentences (22a) and (22b) also suggest that *illa* can acquire different interpretations (or senses) when it is set free from the sentential negation control. Just like the exclusive marker *bass* in (22c), *illa* evokes an evidential epistemic modality (or *emphasis*) in the construction. One may invite the thought that *illa* encodes exclusivity when it occupies a configurational position that scopes over a propositional/sentential constituent, as (2a) and (3b) above demonstrate. If we assume that exclusives such as the PA *illa* are *conventionally* associated with focus in the sense of Rooth (1985, 1992), then they quantify over alternative propositions with respect to the focused constituent. What prevents us from advocating the general thesis that the use of *illa* always triggers alternatives, however, is the use of *illa* in (7) above, where it only expresses the *minus* sign in arithmetic, i.e., the subtraction operation.

(23) **Further evidence for the contrastive meaning of *illa***

a.

zenaab	*ribḥ-at*	*l-looṭo*	(Someone drives home the news that Zenab won the lotto)
Zenab	win-Ost-3FS	the-lotto	

"Zenab won the lotto."

b.

illa	***illa***	(A response by a surprised receiver of that news)
Exc	Exc	

c.

illa	*aa*	(A response by a surprised receiver of that news)
Exc	yes	

The fascinating sentences (23b) and (23c) are very enlightening when it comes to the explication of the conventional/lexical meaning of *illa*. Given *illa*'s main semantic component is contrast or *polarity* reverser, on the one hand, and the general knowledge that the realization of the

propositional content of (23a) has a very low probability, on the other, it is no wonder that the response in (23b) or (23c) entails a counter-expectation and hence an immediate disbelief expressed by the utterer. To utter a linguistic expression that combines two opposing values triggers a contradiction in terms or more precisely a violation of some principle of logic. The first *illa* in (23b) implies rejection (reversing the positive polarity of (23a), while the second implies consent or confirmation, as is clearly shown in (23b) by the emphasis/confirmation expressed by the second *illa*, which is synonymous with the confirmation operator *aa* 'yes' in (23c). The fall-rise intonation encoded in both responses embodies a surprise and disbelief attitude by the utterer.

(24) **Rhetorical questions license the distribution of *illa* DP**

a. ***meen*** *fawwat* *l-gool*
who score-Pst-3MS the-goal
"Who scored the goal?"

b. ***meen*** ***illa*** *meesi* (~~*fawwat*~~ ~~*l-gool*~~)
who Exc Messi (scored the-goal)
"Who but Messi (~~scored the goal~~)?"

c. ***ma*** *ḥada* ***illa*** *meesi* (~~*fawwat*~~ ~~*l-gool*~~)
Neg one but Messi
"No one but Messi (~~scored the goal~~)."

In a context of a football match played between Barca and Read Madrid, for example, a curious Barcelona fan who has just heard his team scoring a goal against Real Madrid may raise the question (24a) to his friend, who was watching the match, and the latter may answer (24b) or (24c). The rhetorical-question answer indirectly implies the explicit answer (24c). The exceptive constituent *illa meesi* 'but Messi" may attach to either a *wh*-word such as *meen* 'who', which is construed as a negative phrase, or a negative quantifier such as *ma ḥada* 'no one'.

Before we conclude this talk, we would like to consider the last piece of evidence for our analysis of PA exceptive sentences featuring *illa*. Such evidence comes from the fact that PA sentential negation may not license more than one over realization of the acceptive marker *illa* in its scope, as illustrated in (25).

(25) **Sentential negation may not license more than one overt realization of the exceptive *illa* in its scope**

a. ****maa*** *baas-at* ***illa*** *zeenab* ***illa*** *rašiid*
Neg kiss-Pst-3FS Exc Zenab Exc Rashid

b. ***illa*** *zeenab* ***maa*** *baas-at* ***illa*** *rašiid*
Exc Zenab Neg kiss-Pst-3FS Exc Zenab
"Only Zenab didn't kiss Rashid."

The ungrammaticality displayed in (25a) demonstrates that it is impossible for a sentential negation *maa* to simultaneously license two instantiations of the exceptive *illa* in different syntactic argument-positions, i.e., the external argument in Spec*v*P position and the internal argument projected as the complement of the root head √BOS in its scope. Such a fact excludes any NPI-analysis of *illa*, since PA allows the licensing of the NPI *ayya* 'any' in both the external and internal argument-positions, as shown in (25c).

(25) c. ***maa*** *baas-at* ***ayya*** *mara* ***ayya*** *zalami*
Neg kiss-Pst-3FS any woman any man
No woman kissed any man."

The mere movement of the closest external argument *illa zeenab* from the c-commanding scope of the Neg *maa* position to the pre-negative-tensed position (in narrow syntax) renders the string grammatical, as illustrated in (25b). We argue that that *illa zeenab*-fronting to the sentence initial-position (through the [Spec, NegP] position) enables *maa* in Tns-head position to license *illa* in internal-argument position. The presence of *illa zeenab* in the Spec*v*P position *in-situ*, however, turns it into an *intervener* between the negative licenser *maa* and the licensee *illa* in the internal-argument position, thus blocking such licensing and renders the string ungrammatical. We take this fact as a further argument for the covert movement of *illa* DP in PA exceptive sentences.

5. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, we believe we have introduced some novel observations concerning the PA exceptive construction featuring the contrastive exceptive/exclusive marker *illa* and managed to shed some light on some of its salient intricate characteristics. More specifically, we have shown that the right configuration at syntax-semantic interface may turn *illa* 'but' into *bass* 'only' with respect to its logical meaning. Furthermore, the prominent thesis defended in this talk is that the focus operator *illa* and its focused associate constituent undergo a covert movement into the designated [Spec, NegP] position, which is c-commanded by the sentential Neg head left-adjoined to the selecting Tns head, to enable Neg with the help of the exceptive operator to quantify over propositional alternatives. We admit, however, that we haven't examined the full landscape of exceptive/exclusive markers in PA. Nevertheless, we believe that its cognitive value lies in that it demonstrates the relevance of syntactic structure in determining exceptive/exclusive sentence-meaning, thus falsifying any attempt to take a pure lexical semantics-approach to account for exceptive/exclusive markers in natural language, at least in PA. Moreover, it expands the logical space of linguistic facts that have been inaccessible to syntacticians studying Germanic and Romance exceptive constructions, on the one hand, and presents challenging linguistic facts waiting to unveil some principles of UG that regulate the distribution and interpretation of exceptive/exclusive markers in natural language, on the other.

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