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Constructing a genre: Hebrew (*'ani*) *lo yode'a / lo yoda'at* '(I) don't know' on Israeli political radio phone-ins

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Abstract: We explore employment of the Hebrew construction (*'ani*) *lo yode'a / lo yoda'at* (lit '[I] not M/F-SG.know'), roughly equivalent to English 'I don't know', by callers and hosts in 80 interactions on Israeli political radio phone-in programs, as compared with its functions in casual conversation. Five uses were attested in the corpus of radio phone-ins and correlated with the syntactic form of complementation (if available) for each token of the construction: (i) expressing literal lack of knowledge; (ii) expressing epistemic stance of uncertainty / hedging; (iii) gaining cognitive processing time in the midst of self-repair; (iv) expressing affective stance of contempt or criticism; and (v) avoidance strategies. While most of these uses are common to both genres, some are unattested in casual conversation. By exploring the functions of the (*'ani*) *lo yode'a / lo yoda'at* construction and their distribution according to institutional role, the study (i) sheds further light on the use of the construction and its evolvment through use; and (ii) shows how hosts and callers exploit this specific construction in ways that establish the Israeli political radio phone-in institutional genre.

Keywords: Mental verb constructions, affective and epistemic stance, hedging, self-repair, avoidance strategies, Hebrew interactional linguistics

1 Introduction

A genre is constituted by the discourse practices of its participants. In this study, we discuss the role one such practice plays in the construction of a particular genre. We explore the practice of employment of the (SUBJ)-NEG-PRED construction (*'ani*) *lo yode'a/lo yoda'at*, roughly equivalent to English 'I don't know', by

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callers and hosts in interactions on Israeli political radio phone-in programs, as compared with its functions in casual conversation (Maschler 2017). The construction consists of the negation word *lo* ('not') followed by the verb *yada* 'know' in first-person masculine (*yode'a*) or feminine (*yoda'at*) singular present tense, occasionally preceded by the first-person pronoun '*ani*':

(*'ani*) *lo yode'a*
 I NEG know.M.SG
 'I don't know (M)'

(*'ani*) *lo yoda'at*
 I NEG know.F.SG
 'I don't know (F)'

Both gender forms are often morphophonologically reduced, resulting in forms such as '*an'loydea*, *loydea*, '*an'lodea*, *lodea* for the masculine, and '*an'loydat*, *loydat*, '*an'lodat*, *lodat* for the feminine. The different variants will be referred to here as "the *loydea* construction."

Our data come from 80 different interactions, altogether 390 minutes of talk, between hosts and callers, which took place on three different radio programs on the two leading public stations in Israel (see Dori-Hacohen 2012a for more details). Altogether 67 tokens of the construction were employed throughout the corpus. Excluding tokens whose quality of recording did not allow analysis and those that were employed by non-native speakers of Hebrew, this study is based on analysis of the remaining 57 instances of the construction in the database.

Five uses of the *loydea* construction were attested in this corpus and correlated with the syntactic form of complementation (if available) for each token of the construction: (i) expressing literal lack of knowledge; (ii) expressing epistemic stance of uncertainty/hedging; (iii) gaining cognitive processing time in the midst of self-repair; (iv) expressing affective stance of contempt or criticism; and (v) avoidance strategies. While most of these uses are common to both genres, some are unattested in casual conversation. By exploring the functions of the (*'ani*) *lo yode'a* / *lo yoda'at* construction in the radio phone-ins and their distribution according to institutional role, the study (i) sheds further light on the use of the construction and its evolution through use; and (ii) shows how hosts and callers exploit this specific construction in ways that establish the Israeli political radio phone-in institutional genre.

The paper is structured aiming to suggest a possible functional itinerary of the construction: Following some background and initial findings (Section 2), we illustrate the literal function of the *loydea* construction in the corpus of radio

phone-ins (Section 3); Section 4 explores its epistemic and closely related hedging uses; Section 5 considers the self-repair function; Section 6 then moves to affective functions of the *loydea* construction; and Section 7 discusses uses associated with avoidance, before concluding the study and discussing its implications (Section 8).

2 Background

The Hebrew verb *yada* ('know') is considered a transitive verb involving two arguments – one for the “knower,” the other for the entity “known.” According to traditional Hebrew grammar (e.g. Blau 1966), the entity “known” is referred to either by a noun phrase or by a subordinate object clause. However, there has been much work, pioneered by Thompson and Mulac (1991), on object complementation in conversation in a variety of languages, showing that this traditional view of object complements does not always hold (for a review of the literature, as well as studies of “equivalents” of the *loydea* construction in other languages, see Lindström et al. 2016). These studies show that there is a strong tendency for the “main” verb of these constructions to be a mental verb, as in *I don't know, I don't understand, I mean*, in which the complement-taking-predicate (CTP) phrase has an epistemic/evidential/evaluative meaning (Thompson 2002). These CTP phrases are often more adequately described as clause-external epistemic/evidential/evaluative formulaic fragments expressing speaker stance towards upcoming discourse. Rather than having matrix clause status, they function as projecting (Auer 2005) constructions – “prefabs” that foreshadow certain types of actions to come, which are implemented by a syntactically independent stretch of discourse often much longer than a clause. Quite often these CTP phrases are morphophonologically reduced, and the resulting fragments often grammaticize (Hopper 1987) into prototypical discourse markers (Maschler 2009, 2012, 2017; Maschler and Schiffrin 2015; Polak-Yitzhaki and Maschler 2016).

Of particular relevance to our study are previous studies of the *loydea* construction in a 7.5 hour corpus of 166 casual conversations among 448 speakers (Maschler 2012, 2017), showing that while many tokens are employed literally to disclaim the speaker's knowledge on some matter, the construction is also used for a variety of other discourse purposes (Table 1).

Tokens of the *loydea* construction complemented by a question-word initial object clause *always* function *literally* in casual conversation; those complemented by an *'im* 'if'-initial object clause *always* function to convey *epistemic stance*.

Table 1: Uses of the *loydea* construction in casual conversation as a function of type of object complement.

Type of object complement	Uses
'ani lo yode'a / yoda'at+ question-word initial object clause	Literal
'ani lo yode'a / yoda'at+ 'im ('if')-initial object clause	Epistemic stance of uncertainty
('ani) lo yode'a / yoda'at+ question-word	Literal Epistemic stance of uncertainty Gaining cognitive-processing time in self-repair
('ani) lo yode'a / yoda'at+ ∅ object complement	Literal Epistemic stance of uncertainty Gaining cognitive-processing time in self-repair Changing the course of talk Allowing one's response to "die out" Avoiding dispreferred response

However, tokens complemented by a question word (not followed by a clause) and those lacking any complement (112 out of 171, 65% of all tokens) can be employed literally, epistemically, and also in four other functions, not shared by the previous structures. While there is no one-to-one correspondence of form and function, nonliteral functions usually manifest morphophonological reduction and very often lack an object complement. Furthermore, a particular construction may implement more than one use simultaneously, and Maschler (2017) argues that this in fact is what motivates the semantic change undergone by the construction (cf. Traugott and Dasher 2002).

Before presenting the analysis of the radio phone-in data, we present preliminary quantitative findings comparing casual conversation with the radio data. The two discourse genres differ with respect to the frequency of employment of the *loydea* construction. The casual conversation corpus exhibits an average of one token every 2.63 minutes (450 min/171), while for the corpus of radio phone-ins this figure is one token every 5.82 minutes (390 min/67), showing that the construction is about half as frequent in the radiophonic data.

In the remainder of the paper, we show that the *loydea* construction in the radio phone-in corpus also exhibits a somewhat different array of functions when compared to those of everyday conversation. While the literal, epistemic, self-repair, and avoiding dispreferred response functions are shared between the

genres, the phone-in data also exhibit some affective functions,¹ which were not attested in the casual conversation corpus. Furthermore, in the radio phone-ins the construction may be employed not only for avoiding a dispreferred response but also to avoid taking a stance altogether. On the other hand, not all uses employed in casual conversation are attested in the radiophonic data: in particular, no tokens changing the course of talk or allowing one's response to die out were found.

We move now to an illustration of each of the functions found in the radio phone-ins for the *loydea* construction. Their order of presentation is meant to suggest a possible functional itinerary for the construction.

3 Literal uses of the *loydea* construction

Eighteen of all *loydea* construction tokens (31%) are employed in this corpus literally.

In (1), in the midst of an argument concerning reform in the educational system, the host is in need of information concerning the caller's workplace (see the appendix for transcription conventions):

(1) (“Workplace,” 10 January 2005)

- 222 Host: ..*takshiv*.
'listen.'
- 223 ..*gam*
'also'
- 224 ..@'*an'loydea* 'eyfo 'ata 'oved,
'I dunno where you work,'
- 225 '*aval gam*
'but also'
- 226 ...'*a-- 'e 'an'loydea* kama 'anashim 'ovdim,
'u--h e I dunno how many people work,'
- 227 *bamakom* 'avoda she--,
at the place work that
'at the workplace that,'
- 228 'ata 'oved bo,
'you work at,'

¹ Following Couper-Kuhlen, the term “affect” will be used as “a general label for all kinds of displayed heightened involvement in conversation” (Couper-Kuhlen 2009: 94).

- 229 ...*kama* '*anashim* '*ovdim* *sham*?
 'how many people work there?'
230 Caller: ...'*ovdim xamishim* '*ish*.
 work fifty people.
 'fifty people.'

Since the host's '*an'loydea* tokens are followed by the question which he had just claimed he didn't know the answer to, *kama* '*anashim* '*ovdim* *sham*? 'how many people work there?', (ex. [1], line 229) and the caller's answers (ex. [1], line 230), these '*an'loydea* tokens are employed literally referring to the host's lack of knowledge in this domain. Indeed, they each manifest an object complement opening with a question word (*kama* 'how many' [ex. (1), line 226] and '*eyfo* 'where' [ex. (1), line 224]). This is the case for 17 out of 18 literal tokens in the corpus of radio phone-ins. However, although this is the literal use of the construction, both tokens manifest significant phonological reduction from '*ani lo yode'a* to '*an'loydea*, with erosion of the final /i/ phoneme of the pronoun '*ani*, of the /o/ phoneme of the verb *yode'a*, as well as of its glottal stop. As in the casual conversation corpus, although there is a strong tendency for nonliteral tokens to be morphophonologically reduced, literal tokens may also show reduction, resulting in there being no one-to-one correspondence between the morphophonological (and syntactic) properties of the construction and its uses.

4 Epistemic stance of uncertainty/hedging uses of the *loydea* construction

Another function of the *loydea* construction found in both the everyday and the phone-in data involves epistemicity. We adopt here Kärkkäinen's definition of epistemicity as "different ways of showing commitment towards what one is saying" (Kärkkäinen 2003: 19).

In (2) the caller presents his topic – the Dovrat Report concerning a reform in the educational system:

- (2) ("Dovrat Report," 17 January 2005)
118 Caller: ... '*aní lo yode'a* '*ad kama--*,
 I not know to how much
 'I don't know to what extent,'

- 119 'ata 'ishit,
 'you personally,'
- 120 'eytan,
 {-pp-}
 'Eytan,' {personal name}
- 121 naxon?
 {-pp-}
 'right?'
- 122 Host: ken.
 'yes.'
- 123 Caller: ..yode'a,
 'know,'
- 124 ... ma dox dovrat 'omer,
 what report dovrat says
 'what the Dovrat Report says,'
- 125 ... 'ani batuax sherov hakahal,
 I sure that-majority the-audience
 'I'm sure that the majority of the audience,'
- 126 verov hatsibu--r,
 and-majority the-public
 'and the majority of the public,'
- 127 ... lo yode'a,
 not know
 'don't know,'

The caller relates to the host's familiarity with the report through the unreduced form of the *loydea* construction followed by a complement clause opening with the question word '*ad kama*' ('to what extent'): '*aní lo yode'a 'ad kama--*, *'ata 'ishit*, [...] *yode'a, ma dox dovrat 'omer*, 'I don't know to what extent, you personally, [...] know, what the Dovrat Report says', (ex. [2], lines 118, 119, 123, 124). While there is certainly some aspect of literal knowing here (the caller literally does not know how familiar the host is with the report), the speaker's epistemic stance of uncertainty is more prominent. This can be seen from the dialogic syntactic relations (Du Bois 2007; Nir et al. 2014) between the caller's utterance and his immediately following parallel construction '*ani batuax she-* 'I'm sure that' (ex. [2], line 125) expressing his *epistemic stance of certainty* concerning the *audience's non-familiarity* with the report: '*ani batuax sherov hakahal, verov hatsibu--r, lo yode'a*, 'I'm sure that, the majority of the audience, and the majority of the public, don't know' (ex. [2], lines 125–127).

Thus, what the caller is *unsure* of is contrasted with what he is sure of, and we conclude that the *loydea* construction (ex. [2], line 118) is first and foremost epistemic.

This token is unreduced morphophonologically and the *loydea* construction is complemented by an object clause opening with the question word 'ad kama 'to what extent'. The strong projective force (Auer 2005) of the *loydea* construction is evidenced by the insertion of the question–answer sequence (ex. [2], lines 120–122) in the midst of the complement clause, an aside sequence to confirm the host's name.

Directly related to the epistemic use of *loydea* is the hedging one, because what one is unsure of is very often hedged. In (3), from a conversation which took place before the Israeli evacuation of the Gaza strip, the caller opposes conducting a referendum concerning the evacuation, because a referendum would bring the evacuation to a halt for a considerable length of time:

- (3) ("Gaza Strip Evacuation," 9 February 2005)
 307 Caller: *ze 'omer litkoa 'et kol ha'eseq,*
 this says to-make stuck ACC all the-affair
 'this means getting the whole affair stuck,'
 308 ... *le-- **loydea** le le le'eyze tkufa.*
 fo--r dunno for for for-what period
 'fo--r I dunno for for for how long.'

The *loydea* construction is found between two prepositions (i.e. not where one would expect a CTP phrase), in the midst of self-repair involving a word search concerning the length of time by which a referendum would delay the process in the caller's opinion. This word search is initiated by the lengthening of the preposition *le--* 'for' (ex. [3], line 308). However, instead of giving an estimate of the length of time (e.g. *lexamesh shanim* 'for five years'), following *loydea* and three recyclings of the preposition *le--* 'for', the caller finally opts for hedging the length of time, resulting in a token of *loydea* complemented by a clause opening with the question word *le'eyze* 'for what / which' followed by a noun: *le-- loydea le le le'eyze tkufa* 'fo--r dunno for for for how long' (ex. [3], line 308). However, because of the position of this *loydea* between two tokens of the preposition *le--* 'for' (projected by the verb *litkoa* 'to cause something to be stuck [for some time]'), and because Hebrew 'eyze means both 'what/which' and 'some', another possible syntactic analysis here is that 'eyze *tkufa* 'some time' is a noun phrase in the prepositional phrase *le'eyze tkufa* 'for some time' projected by the verb *litkoa*, in

which *'eyze* 'some' hedges *tkufa* 'period of time',² and *loydea* is a fixed chunk modifying this prepositional phrase by hedging it further.

Such an analysis is supported by the formal features of the construction. Compared to the previous two *loydea* construction tokens, morphophonological reduction is greater here, because the construction is employed with no trace of a personal pronoun (even though Hebrew is considered a so-called semi "Pro-drop" language, i.e. the "dropping" of the personal pronoun is ungrammatical in first-person present tense).³ There is still some literal meaning here, because the caller is indeed referring to his lack of knowledge concerning the length of time involved in the hypothetical event of conducting a referendum, but it is minimal. With this *loydea*, the speaker is mainly hedging the length of 'the period of being stuck' while at the same time implying that it will be a long one.

The position of this *loydea* in the midst of three recyclings of a preposition suggests that it, too,⁴ is functioning here to gain cognitive-processing time in the midst of a word search, in addition to the lengthening of the first preposition *le-* 'for'. One can thus see how an epistemic hedge might evolve into a device for gaining cognitive-processing time (leading to the self-repair use, Section 4), both functions of which are also found in the casual conversation corpus.

In the corpus of radio phone-ins, 12 (21%) of all *loydea* tokens function in epistemic stance of uncertainty or hedging uses.

5 The *loydea* construction in self-repair

Another token in the midst of self-repair, this time less ambiguous as to its occurring with no object complement, is presented next ([4]). This excerpt, from another calltaking place before the Israeli evacuation from Gaza, comes from a unique interaction in our corpus – with a Palestinian caller from the Occupied Territories (see Dori-Hacohen 2011a), whom the host treats as "enemy," therefore speaking to him as Israeli to Palestinian, and not only as host to caller:

² See Miller (2010) for the hedging functions of *'eyze*.

³ For a comprehensive study of the discourse constraints on Hebrew "Pro-dropping," see Polak-Yitzhaki (2004).

⁴ See Fox et al. (2010) for the centrality of recycling prepositions at word searches in the Hebrew strategy of self-repair (Schegloff et al. 1977).

- (4) “Crazed Hammasniks” 11 February 2005
 321 .. 'anaxnu--,
 ‘we--,’
 322 .. *modi'im*,
 ‘are announcing,’
 323 ... *la'olam kulo*,
 to-world all
 ‘to the entire world,’
 324 ..*velax*
 ‘and-to-y’ {probably beginning of *laxem* (you.PL)}
 325 ..*velapalestina'im*,
 ‘and-to-the-Palestinians,’
 326 *she'anaxnu 'ozvim 'et 'aza*.
 ‘that-we are leaving ACC Gaza.’
 (omitted lines)
 347 ..*ve'axsha--v*,
 ‘and-no--w,’
 348 .. /k/*shebimkom la'azor lanu--*,
 /when/-instead to-help us
 ‘instead of helping u--s,’
 349 .. 'az *haxamasnikim ha ha..'anlodea*,
 {-----ff-----}
 so the-Hammasniks the the..I dunno,
 ‘so yo yo..I dunno,’
 350 *hametorafim shelaxem*,
 {-----ff-----}
 the-crazed your
 ‘your crazed Hammasniks,’
 351 ...*yorim 'aleynu*,
 ‘are shooting at-us,’

The *loydea* construction (this time *with* the personal pronoun but also with further phonological reduction of the /y/ phoneme – ‘*an'lodea* – and lacking any object complement) occurs (ex. [3], line 349) in between the second and third attempts at self-repair⁵ involving recycling the definite article *ha-* ‘the’

⁵ While the *loydea* construction in self-repair in this corpus is employed in the midst of a word search involving recycling, the mundane corpus manifests use of *loydea* in the midst of self-repair involving the strategy of replacement (see Maschler 2017).

preceding the adjective *metorafim* 'crazed' which modifies *haxamasnikim* 'the Hammasniks' – members of the Islamic Palestinian faction.⁶ We see clear evidence of difficulties searching for this highly affective negative adjective, and *'an'lodea* allows the speaker additional cognitive processing time for this task. There is a slight trace of the literal sense in this self-repair token – the speaker literally “does not know which adjective to pick” in order to best capture his stance towards *the Hammasniks*. However, its position between two definite articles and the lack of an object complement weaken the literal interpretation of this *loydea* construction token and strengthen its interpretation as a device employed to gain cognitive-processing time for the word search of the adjective *metorafim* 'crazed' modifying *the Hammasniks*.

There is also a trace of a contemptuous stance in this token “spilling over” from the speaker's negative stance towards *the Hammasniks*, which is expressed in the adjective *metorafim* 'crazed' and the derogatory *shelaxem* 'your' modifying the noun phrase *haxamasnikim* 'the Hammasniks' (see Section 6 below), as well as in the louder volume and marked prosody marking the speaker's high degree of affect and involvement here.

Only one (2%) of all *loydea* tokens is employed as a device for gaining cognitive-processing time in the midst of self-repair in the corpus of radio phone-ins.⁷ This function is not very common in the casual conversation corpus either.

6 Affective stance uses of the *loydea* construction: scorn, contempt and criticism

6.1 Scorn and contempt

The corpus of radio phone-ins also manifests some more clearly affective stance uses of the *loydea* construction – functions not attested in the corpus of casual conversation.

The following excerpt comes from an interaction in which the host, at a very angry moment, scolds an extreme right-wing caller claiming to be a Holocaust survivor for having compared the Israeli government to the Kapos

⁶ The order of elements in a Hebrew noun phrase is as follows: (i) definite article, (ii) noun, (iii) definite article (iv) adjective (v) possessive; i.e. *haxamasnikim hametorafim shelaxem* lit., 'the hammasniks the crazed your'.

⁷ If one accepts the second analysis offered here for the *loydea* of (ex. [3], line 308), then there are two tokens in this category in the corpus.

during the Holocaust.⁸ The caller objects to this, asking why the politician Tomi Lapid, another Holocaust survivor, whom the caller despises, and who had made a similar comparison, is allowed such comparisons, while he – the caller – is not:

(5) “Comparing to the Holocaust” 20 January 2005

- 438 Caller: ... *lama letomi lapid*,
 why for-Tomi Lapid
 ‘why is Tomi Lapid,’
- 439 *mutar lehashvot le 'im hasho'a*,
 permissible to-compare to with the-Holocaust,
 ‘allowed to compare [issues] to with the Holocaust,’
- 440 Host: 'e [*beseder*.
 ‘eh okay.’
- 441 Caller: [*veli 'asur?*
 and-to-me not permissible
 ‘and I’m not allowed?’
- 442 Host: .. *'aval lehagid*
 ‘but to-say’
- 443 Caller: *hine dugma*,
 here example
 ‘here’s an example,’
- 444 .. *shuv dugma klasit*.
 again example classic
 ‘again a classic example.’
- 445 .. *leto [mi lapid mutar*,
 for-Tomi Lapid permissible
 ‘Tomi Lapid is allowed,’
- 446 Host: [*le..le..lehagid*.
 ‘to..to..to-say.’
- 447 .. *bese [der*.
 ‘okay.’
- 448 Caller: [*hasavta shelo*,
 the-grandma his
 ‘his grandma,’

⁸ A Kapo was a Jewish death camp prisoner during WWII appointed by the Schutzstaffel, commonly referred to as the “SS,” as the head of a labor squad. Kapos were known to have retained their privileged position by terrorizing subordinate prisoners.

- 449 .. '*ani lo yodea mi*,
I not know who
'I don't know who,'
- 450 *ze mutar*,
it permissible
'is allowed,'
- 451 Host: '*ani [lo 'omer sheletomi lapid lapid*
I not say that-for-Tomi Lapid Lapid
'I'm not saying Tomi Lapid Lapid'
- 452 Caller: [*aval 'ani hayiti shama*,
but I was there
'but I was actually there,'

The caller begins in “list intonation” (Selting 2004), a list of people he has low regard for, who *are* allowed to make comparisons to the Holocaust. After Tomi Lapid (ex. [5], lines 438, 439, 445), the second member of this list is *hasavta shelo* ‘his (i.e. Tomi Lapid’s) grandma’ (ex. [5], line 448). This is somewhat an “equivalent” of the English “Joe Schmo” expression, an example of some insignificant person in the caller’s mind, whom he holds in contempt, who *is* allowed this comparison. This “Joe Schmo” is then referred to a second time by the construction '*ani lo yodea mi* ‘I don’t know who’ (ex. [5], line 449), scorning the person further by indicating that *s/he* is so insignificant that his/her identity does not even matter. The point is that *s/he* *is* allowed this comparison to the Holocaust, while he – the caller and survivor – is not. The contemptuous key is apparent not only in the *loydea* construction followed by the question word *mi* ‘who’ alone (i.e. not followed by any other component of an “embedded clause”), but also by the preceding phrase referring to this person, *hasavta shelo* ‘his grandma’, which has become an expression employed to refer to a person for whom one has low regard.

It is not difficult to see how a hedging utterance referring to some person might come to convey scorn and contempt: the speaker scorns the person referred to by showing that the identity of that person is insignificant, to the extent that it does not even warrant the speaker’s effort in recalling who exactly *s/he* is.

6.2 Critical stance

A more common affective stance conveyed by the *loydea* construction in our data is of another, related variety – conveying critical stance, which we define as a stance in which a speaker asserts or implies disapproval of some person or idea.

In (6) the caller, an owner of a motorcycle driving school, expresses his outrage concerning the fact that regular insurance companies no longer insure motorcyclists, resulting in all having to get insured through one particular company which charges exorbitantly. Recently this insurance company has added an additional charge of 10%, a fact about which the caller phones in to complain:

(6) a. “Motorcycle Driving School” 20 January 2005

164 Caller: ... *biglal sheze.. bet sefer nehiga*,
because that-it house book driving

‘because it’s.. a driving school,’

165 ... *hem hafxu 'et ze lexevra*,
they turned ACC it to-company

‘they now consider it a company,’

166 .. *ve'ani lo yodea lama*,
and-I not know why

‘and I don’t know why,’

167 ...*hem govim*,
‘they charge,’

168 ... *'od 'asara 'axuz*.
more ten percent
‘another ten percent.’

169 Host: ...*mhm*.

170 Caller: ... *hahishtolelu--t*,
the-mischief

‘the degree of mischie--f’ (i.e. unreasonable behavior),

171 ...*hi--*,
‘i--s’

172 .. *gvoha me'od*,
high very
‘very high,’

173 ...*ze pashut 'e--h*,
‘it simply u--h,’

(2 intervening intonation units by host)

175 ...*nikra kartel*,
‘is called [a] cartel,’

176 *'e--h belshon 'amamit*,
u--h in-language common
‘i--n common parlance,’

- 177 .. *'eh kshekol xevrot habituax,*
uh when-all companies the-insurance
'uh when all insurance companies,'
- 178 ... *mevatxot rak derex xevra 'axat,*
insure only through company one
'insure only through a single company,'

The caller explains that the driving school is now considered a company by the insurer, and therefore – following his insertion of the parenthetical *'ani lo yodea lama* 'I don't know why' – they charge an extra 10% (ex. [6], lines 164–168). His disapproval of this extra charge is apparent also in the following clause: *hahishtolelut, hi, gvoha me'od* 'the degree of mischief [i.e. the insurer's unreasonable behavior], is, very high' (ex. [6], lines 170–172). This token of the *loydea* construction cannot be understood literally, since the caller displays his knowledge of the reason for the extra fees: the insurance is 'a cartel' (ex. [6], line 175) and therefore can spike up its fees as it sees fit (ex. [6], lines 175ff).

Following 83 intonation units, the caller returns to the extra 10%:

(6) b. "Motorcycle Driving School" 20 January 2005 (continued)

- 261 Caller: ... *ve--bashana ha'axarona--,*
and-in-year the-last
'and this last year,'
- 262 ... *hem hosifu tosefet,*
they added addition
'they added an extra charge,'
- 263 *'im 'ata bet sefer nehiga,*
if you house book driving
'if you're a driving school,'
- 264 .. *ze kmo xevra--,*
it like company
'it's like a company,'
- 265 ... *'ani gam lo yodea lama lexevra,*
I also not know why for-company
'I also don't know why for a company,'
- 266 ... *'od 'asara 'axuz.*
more ten percent
'[they charge] another ten percent.'

- 267 Host: ... [ken.
 'yes.')
- 268 Caller: [*bishvil ma*,
 for what
 'what for,')
- 269 ... *'al ma*,
 on what
 'what on,')
- 270 ... *'ani loydea*.
 'I don't know.'

The caller now employs the *loydea* construction followed by a complement clause, beginning with the question word *lama* 'why' to repeat his earlier criticism: *'ani gam lo yodea lama lexevra*, 'od *'asara 'axuz* 'I also don't know why for a company, another ten percent' (ex. [6], lines 265 and 266). Following the host's support (ex. [6], line 267), the caller upgrades his criticism by adding two question words: *bishvil ma*, *'al ma* 'what for, what on' (ex. [6], lines 268 and 269) followed by *'ani loydea* ('I don't know'), further strengthening the critical stance expressed in these questions by explicitly referring to himself. The only tokens of the *loydea* construction which follow the question word complement in our data – i.e. *are not projecting constructions* – convey criticism.

Seven (12%) of all *loydea* tokens in our corpus are employed to convey affective stance – either contemptuous or critical. This function is not attested in the corpus of casual conversation (171 *loydea* tokens).

Indeed, these figures are correlated with what Dori-Hacohen (2012a) has shown to be one of the main reasons for which Israeli callers participate in political phone-in programs; namely, to criticize the social situation as part of the public sphere. Elsewhere we have suggested that if an utterance recurs over and over again in contexts overlaid with a particular stance, by way of *pragmatic strengthening* of a connotation (Dahl 1985; Traugott 1999), the utterance may begin to acquire a new linguistic function (Maschler and Dori-Hacohen 2012; Auer and Maschler 2016). In the case of *loydea* in the political phone-ins, then, this may be an affect expressing critical or contemptuous stance.

7 The *loydea* construction for avoidance

Maschler (2017) has shown that the *loydea* construction lacking a syntactic complement can be employed in casual conversation in responsive position in order to avoid a dispreferred response, usually disagreement – a function also

found in the corpus of radio phone-ins. In (7) a host employs the *loydea* construction to avoid a dispreferred response to a particularly hostile move by an uncooperative caller, a “regular” caller (Dori-Hacohen 2012b), who is vehemently against returning the Occupied Territories to the Palestinians:

- (7) “The Minister of Defense” 9 March 2005
 147 Host: *'ani yaxol rak lish'ol she'ela?*
 I can just ask question
 ‘may I just ask you a question?’
 148 *kedey sheyihye li reka--*,
 so that-will be to-me background
 ‘so that I have a wi--der backgrou--nd,’
 149 .. *raxav yoter*,
 wide more
 (wider),
 150 *legabey ma she'at 'omeret?*
 concerning what that-you say
 ‘concerning what you’re saying?’
 151 ... *yesh lax 'ulay de'a--*,
 there is to-you maybe opinion
 ‘do you perhaps have an opinion,’
 152 ...*kama leylo--t*,
 ‘how many ni--ghts,’
 153 ...*kama.. pe'ulo--t*,
 ‘how many..[army] opera--tions’,
 154 ... *bekama yexidot muvxaro--t*,
 in-how many units special
 ‘in how many special u--nits,’
 155 .. *sheret sar habitaxon?*
 served minister of-defense
 ‘the minister of defense has served?’
 156 *'o she--stam 'at 'eh*
 or that-merely you uh
 ‘or are you just uh’
 157 *s'tomeret [ma--*
 ‘I mean wha--t’
 158 Caller: [so wha--t?
 {in English}
 159 *nu 'az ma--?*
 ‘nu so wha--t?’

- 160 Host: *lode*[a,
 ‘I dunno,’
- 161 Caller: [‘az ze [marshe lo,
 so it allows him
 ‘so does this allow him,’
- 162 Host: [tsk
- 163 Caller: ta’teruf haze ‘axshav?
 ACC-insanity this now
 ‘this insanity now?’
- 164 Host: lo,
 ‘no,’
- 165 ki
 ‘because’
- 166 ki ma ‘ani ‘omer?,
 because what I say
 ‘because what am I saying?,’

(Host attempts to continue his argument but with no success, as the caller repeatedly interrupts.)

In this interaction, the caller heavily criticizes the minister of defense for wishing to evacuate the Occupied Territories. Countering her, the host, after marking her as an uncooperative caller via the elaborated pre-question (ex. [7], lines 147–150, see Dori-Hacohen 2011b: 534–536), asks the caller whether she has any idea concerning the minister of defense’s military background. In this he argues that the minister is sufficiently experienced and should therefore not be criticized when it comes to the country’s defense policies (ex. [7], lines 151–156). The caller flatly rejects this argument as irrelevant with a highly affective code-switched utterance composed of the English ‘so what?’ question followed by the Hebrew one, articulated in highly emotional prosody: *so wha--t? nu⁹ ‘az ma--?* ‘so what [English]? *nu* so what [Hebrew]?’ (ex. [7], lines 158, 159). She then counters with her own question: *‘az ze marshe lo, ta’teruf haze ‘axshav?* ‘so does this allow him, this insanity now?’ (ex. [7], lines 161, 163). The host avoids a dispreferred response to the hostile ‘so what?’ questions with a maximally reduced *lodea* (ex. [7], line 160) followed by the dental click *tsk* (ex. [7], line 162), a Hebrew discourse marker which may be employed to express discontent (Maschler 2000: 545). He refrains also from answering her question (ex. [7], lines 161,

⁹ This token of the discourse marker *nu* provides a contemptuous key to the caller’s utterance. See Maschler and Dori-Hacohen (2012: 444–445).

163), which may have been rhetorical, but begins another attempt at presenting his point (ex. [7], lines 165ff). The host thus employs the *loydea* construction here to avoid a dispreferred response to a particularly hostile move while at the same time attempting to continue his general argument.

In the radiophonic context, however, we often find strategic avoidance of taking a stance altogether by using the *loydea* construction. While callers mainly call in to these programs for the sake of criticizing current affairs, hosts are supposed to engage with the callers yet avoid presenting their own opinions (see Hutchby 1996). It is therefore not surprising that hosts often avoid expressing an opinion altogether, i.e. either agreeing or disagreeing with callers, specifically after callers attempt to solicit an agreeing response from them. Thus, callers construct questions to solicit agreement as a preferred response from hosts, yet hosts avoid taking a stance altogether by responding neither in the preferred agreeing way nor in the dispreferred disagreeing way, and they may employ the *loydea* construction for achieving this avoidance, since it can claim a lack of epistemic resources to either agree or disagree with the caller's position.

In (8), which also took place before the Israeli Gaza Strip evacuation, the host avoids taking a stance altogether via the *loydea* construction, followed by the account that his is the role of “the one who asks the questions”:

- (8) “Referendum” 16 March 2005
 296 Caller: ... *'im 'ani kerosh memshala--*,
 if I as-head government
 ‘if I as prime ministe--r,’
 (omitted lines)
 300 *...xoshev*,
 ‘think,’
 301 *shema shexashavti*,
 that-what that-I thought
 ‘that what I thought,’
 302 *lifney shnatayim shalosh*,
 before two years three
 ‘two three years ago,’
 303 ... *lo mat'im [hayom*,
 not suitable today
 ‘is not suitable today,’
 304 Host: *['az tagid li [et ze.*
 so say to-me ACC it
 ‘so say it to me.’

- 305 Caller: [/'eh ????/
 306 .. [/????/
 307 Host: [tavo vetagid li 'et ze.
 come and-say me ACC it
 'come and say it to me.'
 308 ma habe'aya shelxa,
 what the-problem your
 'what's your problem,'
 309 lavo [velehagid li?
 'to come and tell me?'
- 310 Caller: ['az biglal ze--,
 so because this
 'so because of that,'
 311 .. tsarix lalexet lemish'al 'am?
 must to-go to-questionnaire people
 it's necessary to have a referendum?'
- 312 Host: .. 'ani lo yodea,
 I not know
 '**I don't know**,'
 313 .. 'ani rak sho'el.
 'I only ask.'
- 314 Caller: ..az
 'so'
 315 ..tov.
 good.
 'ok.'
- 316 .. beseder.
 ok.
 'fine.'
- 317 z--e
 it
 'it'
- 318 ze she'ela
 it question
 'it's a question'
- 319 ze she'ela bimkoma.
 it question in-its-place.
 'it's a legitimate question.'

(Caller continues his argument.)

The caller begins an argument rejecting the need for a referendum, saying that the prime minister (PM) is allowed to change his mind without holding a referendum (ex. [8], lines 296–303, 310–311). The host then demands that in this case, the PM should openly admit that he has changed his mind (ex. [7], lines 304, 307), and he asks: *ma habe'aya shelxa, lavo velehagid li?* 'what's your problem, to come and tell me?' (ex. [7], lines 308, 309). Instead of answering, the caller counters with his own question – a yes/no question concerning whether the PM's having changed his mind is sufficient reason for conducting a referendum: *'az biglal ze--, tsarix lalexet lemish'al 'am?* 'so because of that, it's necessary to have a referendum?' (ex. [7], lines 310, 311). This question creates two possible answers: "yes, such a change requires a referendum" and the preferred answer "no, such change of mind does not require a referendum". However, the host responds with the full *loydea* construction – *'ani lo yodea*, in continuing intonation contour but with no object complement (ex. [8], line 312). The lack of epistemic resources claimed in this response releases the host from taking any stance towards the need for a referendum following the caller's question. Although this might at first seem a literal use, in the immediately following intonation unit, via the utterance *'ani rak sho'el* 'I only ask' (ex. [8], line 313), the host explains why he is responding in this way rather than why he lacks knowledge regarding the caller's question. The host thus avoids taking a stance altogether via the *loydea* construction, providing his institutional role as part of the account. The caller accepts this avoidance strategy (ex. [8], lines 315, 316) and concedes that the host's demand is a legitimate one (ex. [8], line 317–319), before continuing his argument.

Our final example shows that avoiding taking a stance via the *loydea* construction can indeed be **interpreted** by the participant as avoiding disagreement. Like everything else in interaction, this avoidance can also be challenged and negotiated. The host uses *loydea* here to avoid taking a stance, either disagreeing or agreeing with the caller, yet the caller does not accept this avoidance technique.

The caller criticizes the teachers' trade union leader, who recently rejected the same report we mentioned above (ex. [2]):

(9) "It's Clear" 10 January 2005

157 Caller: *hu ba lexasot 'et 'atsmo ke'ilu,*
 he comes to-cover himself like
 'his purpose is to cover himself sort of,'
 158 *...letovat hamorim,*
 'for-the-benefit-of the-teachers,'

- 159 .. *bishvil lehazik layeladim.*
 in-order to-damage the-kids
 ‘in order to cause damage to the kids.’
- 160 (1.5) *kaxa ze nir’e li.*
 ‘so it seems to-me.’
- 161 Host: (1.5) **loydea.**
 not know
 ‘dunno.’
- 162 Caller: ... *ma ze l loydea.*
 what this n not know.
 ‘what [do you mean] dunno.’
- 163 .. *ze barur.*
 it clear
 ‘it’s clear.’

(Caller continues his argument.)

The caller accuses the teachers’ trade union leader of being more concerned with the teachers’ interests than with the students’, thereby causing damage to the students. Following a rather long pause, in pursuit of response (Pomerantz 1984), the caller states: *kaxa ze nir’e li* ‘so it seems to me’ (ex. [9], line 160). Following another long silence (ex. [9], line 161), the host responds with a stand-alone *loydea* ‘dunno’, again, with no object complement. In this way the host avoids taking a stance on whether the caller is right or wrong. Instead, by claiming a lack of knowledge, the host demonstrates that he does not necessarily share the caller’s opinion. This “no knowledge” response allows him both to avoid the implications of overt disagreement (see Keevallik 2011) as well as to refrain from agreeing with the caller. It also functions to avoid providing a counter-argument (as in [7]) while enabling the host to take a turn-at-talk in the argumentative interaction.

However, the host’s disclaim of knowledge is perceived as disagreement by the caller: in the following turn, the caller dialogically resonates (Du Bois 2007) the host’s utterance, preceding it with *ma ze* lit. ‘what this’, which expresses the caller’s incredulous, disaligned stance towards the host’s previous utterance: *ma ze l loydea* ‘what [do you mean] d dunno’ (ex. [9], line 162).¹⁰ The caller challenges the host’s expressing a lack of knowledge and continues his argument, asserting that the state of affairs in the world is clear and cannot be denied: *ze barur* ‘it’s clear’ (ex. [9], line 163), implying that the host should agree with him and cannot ‘not know’.

¹⁰ See Maschler and Nir (2014: 548–549), for the incredulity function of Hebrew *ma* ‘what’ in a somewhat similar argumentative context: A: *lo naxon.* ‘not true’. B: *ma, lo naxon!* lit. ‘what, not true!’.

This excerpt shows that a speaker's claiming a lack of knowledge is not necessarily incontestable by other participants, as Heritage (1984: 272) has claimed. Furthermore, from this caller's perspective, hosts and callers manifest no asymmetries in the right to know or to claim knowledge (Raymond and Heritage 2006) via the *loydea* construction.

Of all *loydea* tokens employed throughout the corpus of radio phone-ins, 19 (33%) are employed for avoidance. Eighteen of the 19 avoidance *loydea* tokens (95%) lack a syntactic complement and occur in responsive position. This is the most frequent use of the *loydea* construction in the radio phone-in data, more frequent than the literal use (31%). Furthermore, the hosts' use of *loydea* for avoidance is by far the largest functional category of the construction in our corpus (see Tables 3, 4, Section 8) – nearly half the tokens employed by hosts are used for this purpose.

8 Summary and conclusion

We have explored five different functions of the *loydea* construction in this article. Their distribution according to type of complement is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of *loydea* constructions in the corpus of radio phone-ins according to complement type and function.

	Question-word initial object clause	' <i>im</i> 'if'- initial object clause	Question word	∅	Total
Literal	17			1	18
Epistemic/hedging	3	7	1	1	12
In self-repair				1	1
Stance	4		3		7
Avoidance			1	18	19
Total					57

We see that there is no one-to one correspondence between function and complement type, but there are some very strong tendencies: whereas literal *loydea* construction tokens are almost always complemented by a question-word initial object clause, avoidance tokens almost always appear with no complement at all. Stance tokens are complemented as frequently by a question word as by a question-word initial object clause. The majority of epistemic/hedging tokens are complemented by an '*im* ('if')-initial object clause, but all forms of complementation are possible here. Furthermore, while avoidance tokens are restricted to responsive position, tokens functioning in epistemic, self-repair and

stance uses do not occur in this sequential position and are found at initial, final or mid-position of a turn.

By closely examining the contexts in which the construction was employed, we have suggested a synchronic perspective on the functional route possibly followed by the *loydea* construction. Through the literal usage of speakers commenting on their lack of knowledge (ex. [1]), the construction has gained epistemicity of uncertainty and hedging uses; what one lacks knowledge about, one is generally epistemically less committed to (ex. [2]) and more likely to hedge (ex. [3]). Hedging is often accompanied by word searches in which the speaker is looking for the “right” word. Such searches often involve self-repair; hence, the *loydea* construction is used as a device for gaining cognitive-processing time in the midst of self-repair (ex. [4]). Particular frequently expressed affective stances conveyed in these Israeli political phone-in programs may result in pragmatic strengthening of the *loydea* construction for the expression of scorn and contempt (ex. [4], [5]) or critical stance (ex. [6]). With regard to the former, there is also a tie to the hedging function: one may display contempt towards a non-present person by hedging the reference to their identity, thus implying that the person is insignificant, to the extent that they do not even warrant the speaker’s effort in recalling who exactly they are (ex. [5]). Finally, “no knowledge” constructions often evolve into tokens of avoiding dispreferred response (ex. [7]). In this radio-phonetic context, such uses are nuanced in particular ways that include avoidance of taking a stance altogether (ex. [8]). Furthermore, interlocutors may treat a host’s avoidance of stance-taking as disagreement (ex. [9]).

Table 3 summarizes the distribution of the *loydea* construction based on the institutional role of speaker.

Table 3: Frequency of function by institutional role for the *loydea* construction.

	Callers	Hosts	Total
Literal	7 (12%)	11 (19%)	18 (31%)
Epistemic/hedging	9 (16%)	3 (5%)	12 (21%)
In self-repair	–	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Stance: Contempt/criticism	7 (12%)	–	7 (12%)
Avoidance	5 (9%)	14 (25%)	19 (33%)
Total	28 (49%)	29 (51%)	57 (100%)

The *loydea* construction tokens are similarly distributed between the hosts and the callers in this corpus, with callers employing 49% of them, while hosts, 51%. This comparison should be approached cautiously, however, since callers talk more than hosts do. It is thus more telling to compare the *relative*

employment of the various functions of the *loydea* construction by hosts versus by callers (Table 4).¹¹

Table 4: Relative employment of *loydea* functions by hosts versus by callers.

	Callers	Hosts
Literal	7 (25%)	11 (38%)
Epistemic/hedging	9 (32%)	3 (10%)
In self-repair	–	1 (3%)
Stance: Contempt/criticism	7 (25%)	–
Avoidance	5 (18%)	14 (48%)
Total	28 (100%)	29 (100%)

As can be seen from Table 4, the largest functional category of the *loydea* construction is that of avoidance by hosts (48% of hosts' tokens). Callers employ the construction for this purpose at only 18% of their tokens. The largest functional category for callers is the epistemic/hedging one (32%). Hosts employ the construction for this purpose at only 10%. The second largest functional category for hosts is the literal one (38%). Callers employ the literal category at 25%, which is also the rate at which callers employ the *loydea* construction for affective stance-related purposes. In this corpus, hosts do not generally construct affective stance via the *loydea* construction. The construction is unambiguously employed as a device gaining cognitive-processing time in the midst of self-repair only once throughout the corpus – by a host.

The differential use of the *loydea* construction by hosts and callers, which our study reveals, contributes to the construction of the political radio phone-in setting. The role of the host is to create an argument while at the same time limiting the expression of his opinion (Dori-Hacohen 2011b). Hosts therefore often employ *loydea*, thereby avoiding responses which might reveal their opinions (ex. [7]–[9]). Callers, on the other hand, employ the *loydea* construction most often to epistemically modify or hedge their arguments (to avoid extreme positions) and in order to take affective stances on issues. The high frequency of both the epistemic/hedging and the affective stance-related functions of callers' *loydea* construction tokens relative to hosts' deployment of these strategies, then, is directly related to the callers' role. Hosts do not convey affective stance via the *loydea* construction. The only possible exception to this is a trace of contempt which can

¹¹ A Fisher's exact test indicates that callers and hosts differ significantly in their proportion of use of the different functions of the *loydea* construction ($p=0.001$). We are grateful to Maya Inbar for help with the statistical analysis.

be detected in the *loydea* construction token (ex. [4]), from an interaction with a Palestinian caller, in which the host did not follow strictly his institutional role and related to the caller also as Israeli to Palestinian (see Dori-Hacohen 2011a).

To conclude, the study of the *loydea* construction in political radio phone-ins demonstrates the manner in which hosts and callers exploit the construction in ways that establish the Israeli political radio phone-in institutional genre. The study also furthers our understanding of this construction and its evolvment by revealing an affective stance-related function, as well as a function of avoiding taking a stance altogether, both unattested in the corpus of casual conversation.

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Appendix: transcription conventions

Each line denotes an intonation unit (Chafe 1994) followed by a (broad) gloss. Only when the gloss is not close enough to an English utterance, it is followed by a (functional) translation. Tokens of *loydea/loydat* are given in **boldface** and their object complements (if available) are underlined. Transcription basically follows Chafe (1994), as sometimes adapted by Du Bois (forthcoming) and adjusted for Hebrew:

...	half-second pause (each extra dot = another half a second)
..	perceptible pause of less than half a second
(3.56)	measured pause of 3.56 seconds
intonation unit,	continuing intonation (“more to come”)
intonation unit.	sentence-final falling intonation
intonation unit?	sentence-final “appeal intonation”
intonation unit?,	“continuing appeal” intonation (Du Bois forthcoming)

intonation unit!	sentence final exclamatory intonation
∅	lack of punctuation at end of line – a fragmentary intonation unit
--	elongation of preceding vowel
@	one burst of laughter
ˈ	primary stress of intonation unit
[Square bracket to the left of two consecutive lines indicates 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.
<i>pp</i>	<i>pianissimo</i> (spoken very softly)
<i>ff</i>	<i>fortissimo</i> (spoken very loudly)
/?????/?	transcription impossible
/within slashes/	uncertain transcription
{ <i>in curly brackets</i> }	transcriber's comments
'	Uninverted quotation mark in the middle of a transliterated word indicates the glottal stop phoneme.
,	Inverted quotation mark in the middle of a transliterated word indicates an elided form (e.g. <u>ts'xa</u> instead of <u>tsrixa</u> ['needs', F, SG]).
M	masculine
F	feminine
SG	singular
PL	plural
ACC	accusative marker
SUBJ	subject
NEG	negation
PRED	predicate

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Bionotes

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