

Thursday Interdisciplinary Colloquium
Fall 2017-Winter 2018
Thursdays, 16:00-17:30, Webb 103

18.01.18

Yakir Dalal

Tel Aviv University

The Controlled Passive in Hebrew

The Hebrew construction in (1), which I refer to as The Controlled Passive, has not yet received any attention.

(1) *ha-dira huxleta le-himaxer*
the-apartment was.decided to-be.sold

'It was decided that the apartment would be sold.'
(lit. 'The apartment was decided to be sold.')

In spoken colloquial Hebrew this construction is quite marginal, grammatical for some speakers, but ungrammatical for others. However, it is widely-attested in colloquial internet language (in talk-backs and social networks, for instance). Although to a lesser extent, the construction is also found in more formal registers (such as journalistic language, legal language, etc.).

The construction features control verbs (Subject Control or Object Control) as the matrix verbs, and both the matrix and the embedded verbs must be passive (e.g., **ha-dira huxleta limkor*, **ha-dira hexlita lehimaxer*).

The Hebrew controlled passive raises several intriguing questions such as:
(i) Is the subject generated in its surface position? Or is it an argument of the embedded verb raised to Spec.TP of the matrix clause?

(ii) If the latter, how is this movement allowed given the common assumption that control verbs take a CP-complement, out of which A-movement is disallowed?

(iii) Why must the embedded verb be in the passive voice?

I will first establish that the subject of the construction is an argument of the embedded verb rather than of the main one. I will then present experimental evidence showing that the complement of the main verb in this construction is not a CP, but a TP. In light of this, I will argue that the Hebrew controlled passive is derived via A-movement from the embedded clause to the subject position of the main TP. Finally, I will show that the embedded verb has to be in the passive voice owing to the control properties of the matrix verb.

The talk will be delivered in Hebrew.

Moshe Ziat

Tel Aviv University

Null Complement Anaphora and Null Object in Hebrew

Null Complement Anaphora (NCA) constructions involve a covert clausal complement whose interpretation derives from an in-context element. This kind of complement was classified by Hankmar & Sag (1976) as deep anaphora, which means that it has no internal structure and is not created as a consequence of deletion. This element, they claim, is null at all stages of the derivation.

My goal is three-fold. First, I will examine the behavior of NCA in Hebrew and compare it to that of its English counterpart. Second, I will argue that NCA does not have any syntactic realization, along the lines proposed by Grimshaw (1979). Last, I will show that what Doron (2012) claims to be a nominal NCA in Hebrew is not an NCA, but rather a Topic Drop, as was suggested by Ertechik-Shir, Ibnbari, & Taube (2013).

A Hebrew NCA construction is given in (1). The complement of the verb *serev* 'refused' is null, and is understood via the context, in this case the first clause of the sentence.

- (1) *ima bikša le-nakot et ha-kelim še- ba- kiyor,*
 Mother ask.3SG.F.PST to-clean ACC the-dishes that-in.the-sink,
aval maks serev
 but Max refuse.3SG.M.PST

'Mother asked to clean the dishes in the sink, but Max refused.'

Dapiente (2000) claims that the NCA has a syntactic representation, which involves no internal structure. She claims that it shows a behavior similar to that of pro-forms, and is in fact a sentential null pro-form. In contrast, Grimshaw (1979) argues in favor of a semantic approach, where the complement is constructed only in the discourse phase. I will provide evidence that the NCA is not syntactically represented, in concert with Grimshaw's view.

Finally, the alleged existence of a nominal NCA in Hebrew (Doron 2012) is intriguing as it has been argued for other languages that the construction cannot be nominal. I will show that Hebrew is not different in this respect. The nominal construction does not show the syntactic behavior of an NCA. The null element is an object that was deleted under identity with a topic of the sentence. The findings of an experiment I conducted show that the object does not raise to topic position prior to deletion (as originally suggested by Huang 1984 for Chinese), but was deleted *in situ* (as proposed by Ertechik-Shir et al.).

The talk will be delivered in Hebrew.

References

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04.01.18

Eli Dresner

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Proof Complexity and Textual Cohesion

The objective of this talk is to develop a connection between two areas of research that are seldom associated with each other: proof complexity and textual cohesion. In the first section of the talk I define a series of measures of proof complexity which are motivated by extra formal considerations related to cohesion. In the second section these measures are generalized to the broader category of formal texts. In the third section of the talk I outline several applications of the proposed formal theory to the discussion of textual cohesion and related concepts.

The talk will be delivered in Hebrew.

28.12.17

Jonathan Avidan

Tel Aviv University

The Rhyming Grammar of Modern English: A Study in Musical Theater

In this talk I will present my research on the topic of **rhyming** as a source of speakers' knowledge of phonological similarity. Specifically, **imperfect rhyming**, i.e., any rhyme that contains some form of phonological mismatch (e.g., 'home' h[**oʊm**] ~ 'alone' ə'l[**oʊn**] differing in the [place] of the final nasal), is proposed as a source of information on speakers' unlearned, untaught, and non-inferable grammatical knowledge regarding similarity scales between phonemes in prosodic context (Steriade 2001).

Given previous studies' observation of a crucial tendency for **minimality of violation** of featural identity between correspondents in rhyming (Zwicky 1975, Steriade 2003, Kawahara 2007, Gretchen 2015, Katz 2015), I propose a representation-neutral – and hence language-neutral – grammatical framework set in Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky 1993/2004), namely the **Rhyming Grammar**, entailing that differences in rhyming traditions stem from differences in constraint ranking. I proceed to test this framework using a newly assembled corpus comprising every sung rhyme in 11 contemporary American musicals and 1 short musical film from a highly homogeneous group of writers/performers. Corpus analysis shows that ~48% (~850/~1750) of rhyming sets are *imperfect*, confirming their higher prevalence in English than is commonly perceived. Preliminary results demonstrate a relationship between **acoustic salience** and **faithfulness**, confirming that imperfect rhymes reflect confusability and thus phonological similarity.

References

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21.12.17

Isabelle Charnavel

Harvard University

Independence from Perspective: French (Exempt) Anaphora

My talk will explore the relation between logophoricity and exemption from Condition A of the Binding Theory. Anaphors like English *himself* are canonically considered to obey the locality constraints imposed by Condition A. But in many unrelated languages, some instances of anaphors have been shown to escape such requirements. Furthermore, these exempt anaphors exhibit a logophoric interpretation: The domain containing them must express the perspective of their antecedents. How can we explain this puzzling correlation between logophoricity and exemption? The goal of the talk will be to provide a solution primarily on the basis of the behavior of French anaphors.

14.12.17

Itamar Shatz

Tel Aviv University

Phonological Selectivity in the Acquisition of English Clusters

Phonological selectivity is a phenomenon where children avoid certain target words, which they deem as too 'difficult' due to their phonological characteristics. The present study examines selectivity in the acquisition of complex onsets and codas in English, and specifically the acquisition of patterns of biconsonantal (CC) clusters in each position, compared to triconsonantal (CCC) clusters. The data comes from the productions of three English-speaking children, who were recorded in a naturalistic setting over the course of approximately two years, starting from the age of one year. The results indicate that children only *attempt* to produce target tokens with a CCC onset after they have *attempted to produce* target tokens with a CC onset, and that the same occurs in the case of codas. Furthermore, the results also show that children only *attempt* to produce target tokens with a CCC onset after they have *successfully managed to produce* tokens containing a CC onset, and once again that the same applies to codas. Several potential confounds were also examined, namely frequency, morphological complexity, and /s/ clusters, and each was ruled out as a possible explanation for these acquisition patterns. Overall, the findings provide important insights regarding children's phonological selectivity during native language acquisition, and provide empirical support to the avoidance patterns predicted by the theory of Error Selective Learning.

07.12.17

Ravit Melamed

Tel Aviv University

Processing Costs of Non-Canonical Word Order Sentences in Hebrew

Canonical word order is the unmarked order of the basic constituents in a sentence of a certain language, namely, subject, object, and verb. The assumption that non-canonical word order sentences are more difficult to process than canonical ones has been examined by various studies in different languages. This assumption has been supported, among others, by findings of two fMRI experiments conducted in healthy Hebrew native speakers. These findings demonstrate differential activation in several areas in the brain while processing non-canonical word order sentences. However, to date, no behavioral results from Hebrew on-line experiments supported these findings.

The current study proposes a self-paced reading experiment designed to examine whether the difficulty in processing Hebrew non-canonical word order sentences is reflected in longer reading times. In the talk I will present the experiment design, as well as my predictions, via discussing in detail the estimation of the processing costs of each of its conditions, based on the Dependency Locality Theory (DLT; Gibson 2000).

The talk will be delivered in Hebrew.

30.11.17

Julie Fadlon

The Hebrew University

It Depends: Structural Choices in the Production of Filler-Gap Dependencies

A major component of the information conveyed in utterances is predicate-argument relationships. For example, "The girl pushed the boy" conveys a predicate-argument relationship between the verb 'push' and the nouns 'the girl' and 'the boy' appearing right before and after it. However, many of our utterances convey predicate-argument relationships between distant elements, pronounced in two different clauses. For example, in "The teacher watched the boy [who the girl pushed __ yesterday]", 'the boy' is interpreted as the object of the pushing incident even though it is uttered at an earlier stage of production.

The processing of these constructions, termed *filler-gap dependencies*, has been mainly investigated from the perspective of the listener. In this talk I will discuss the mechanisms utilized by the speaker during the production of these constructions and report evidence from English and Hebrew, demonstrating how speakers moderate processing demands during the production of challenging filler-gap dependencies.

23.11.17

Gabi Danon

Bar-Ilan University

***The Hebrew Genitive Alternation:
Empirical Data and Theoretical Questions***

Modern Hebrew has three types of genitive constructions: *šel* genitives (1), construct state (2), and double genitives (3):

- (1) *ha-tmuna šel ha-yeled*
the-picture of the-boy
'the picture of the boy'
- (2) *tmunat ha-yeled*
picture.CS the-boy
'the picture of the boy'
- (3) *tmunat-o šel ha-yeled*
picture.CS-POSS.3MS of the-boy
'the picture of the boy'

Generative works over the last few decades have focused mostly on deriving the word order and hierarchical relations of these three genitives, as well as on deriving their possible interpretations. However, very often, these analyses seem to overgenerate, such that speaker judgment on genitive acceptability is frequently lower than what would be predicted on the basis of those analyses. In this talk I argue that the alternation between these three genitive types is subject to multiple independent constraints that cannot be reduced to a single, unified factor. I discuss evidence for weak (soft, violable) constraints from semantics, morphology, and processing, as well as lexical idiosyncrasies that must all be taken into consideration in order to properly characterize the full range of grammaticality observed in this domain. I then discuss some implications of these facts for a theory of Hebrew genitives.

16.11.17

Annamária Kresztyankó

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

***Language Socialization and Hierarchy:
Identity, Ethnicity, and Language Practice of Gypsy Children in Hungary***

The Gypsies are the largest minority in Hungary. It is estimated that today nearly one fifth of primary school children are of Gypsy origin. My presentation focuses on language socialization processes of the Gypsy communities in Hungary.

My research aims to explore the mechanisms used for language socialization in early childhood education, in pre-school, and in primary school. This grants us the opportunity to examine native language

competence as well as communicative competence, which can determine the Roma children's school performance. The current picture shows that the Hungarian education system has been unable to adapt and relate to the inherent disadvantages of Roma children, while the 2015 Pisa Reports indicate that one fourth of fifteen-year-olds in Hungary are functionally illiterate. The results of my study may impact on improving this trend so that the rate of analphabetism in Hungary would not rise further. I study adult-children and children-children communication from the preverbal era till the end of primary school education. I avoid the traditional sociological research methodology, my approach is of a constructivist anthropological one which focuses on the socialization processes of the Gipsy linguistic communities.

I analyze the data according to the following (sociolinguistic) aspects:

- (1) Speech modes in the school vs. community language practice,
- (2) The role of language attitude(s) in individual and social identity,
- (3) The relationship between identity, inter-language comprehension, and superdiversity.

The talk will address the language socialization of two different Hungarian Gypsy communities, both monolingual and multilingual, with the aim of demonstrating similarities and differences between the heterogeneous Gypsy communities. The results of this research will contribute to the understanding of the factors forming ethnicity and identity in the Gypsy communities in light of language socialization.

09.11.17

Galia Hatav

University of Florida

Secondary Predication and Converbs in Hebrew

Following the approach of studies such as Rothstein (2004), I define a secondary predicate (SP) as a predicative expression that conveys information about the subject or the object, **in addition** to the information given by the main predicate. Accordingly, contrary to what is suggested by studies such as Rapoport (1993), I do not consider small clauses, causatives, and adverbials to be SPs.

Crosslinguistic Studies discuss mainly three kinds of SPs: subject oriented depictives, as in the English sentence (1) below, object-oriented depictives, as in (2), and resultatives (3):

- (1) John drove the car **drunk**. (subject-oriented depictive)
- (2) Mary ate the fish **raw**. (object-oriented depictive)
- (3) Sharon painted the house **red**. (resultative)

The APs 'drunk', 'raw', and 'red' in these sentences are considered to be

SPs of their respective sentences, as they convey some information about the subject or the object but are not the main predicates, which are 'drove', 'ate', and 'painted' in (1), (2), and (3), respectively.

As noted by Rothstein (2004), SPs are characteristically APs. However, it is well acknowledged that while Hebrew has AP depictives, it does not have AP resultatives, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (4) below:

(4) **Sharon cav'a et ha-bayit adom.*

Hebrew must resort to other kinds of phrases for resultative SPs. E.g., the SP 'red' in the English sentence (3) can be depicted by a PP in Hebrew: *be-adom* 'in red'.

In this paper, I will show that both Biblical and Modern Hebrew make use of converbs, i.e., verbs deprived of temporal features, for secondary predication. In particular, I will show that apart from APs, which can be used only for depictives, Biblical Hebrew (BH) makes use of the infinitive-absolute and Modern Hebrew (MH) of the Benoni for all three kinds of secondary predication, including resultatives.

Harbour (1999) considers the infinitive absolute (IA) in BH to be a converb form deprived of temporal and agreement features. As such, it is found in a number of constructions. In this paper, I will show that what is usually referred to as 'the double infinitive absolute construction' is used for secondary predication. Example (5) below illustrates:

(5) 1Kgs 20:37^b
wayyakkēhû hā'îš hakkēh ûpāšōa'
Literally: strike (*wayyiqtol*)-him the-man strike (IA) and-wound (IA)
'The man struck him [the prophet], **wounding** [him].'

In addition to its first occurrence in the finite form *wayyiqtol*, the verb 'strike' in this verse appears again in IA, conjoined with the verb 'wound', also in IA.

A number of analyses have been suggested for this construction. My contention is that it is used for SP. E.g., the SP in our verse, I believe, is a resultative: The man struck the prophet and as a result the prophet was wounded.

Modern Hebrew (MH) lost the IA as a productive form. For verbal SPs, MH makes use of the Benoni, which may be considered a converb, as it patterns more like nouns and adjectives rather than verbs in the past or future tense. The example in (6) illustrates:

(6) *Satiti et kol habakbuk *rek/ merokent oto.*
'I drank the bottle *empty/ emptying it.'

The use of the adjective *rek* 'empty' is ungrammatical in this sentence as it functions as a resultative SP, but the Benoni merokent 'emptying' is fine.

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02.11.17

Luka Crnić

The Hebrew University

Some Questions in the Theory of Antonymy

There exist several competing approaches to antonymy (e.g., Bierwisch 1989, Heim 2007, Sassoon 2010). The main goal of this talk is to make further headway towards adjudicating between them. After presenting evidence against approaches that assume that so-called 'negative' antonyms like "slow" introduce a negative operator (cf., Heim 2007, Büring 2007), we turn to approaches that do not make this assumption (e.g., Rullmann 1995, Kennedy 2001, Sassoon 2010). We compare them partly by investigating a variety of phenomena that have been put forward as supporting the negative operator approach.