



## Sentence structure - discourse structure dualism? Evidence from Hebrew insubordinate clauses

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My talk examines the on-line emergence (Auer 2009) of insubordinate (Evans & Watanabe 2016) clauses in Hebrew conversation as constrained by local interactional contingencies, questioning traditional notions of grammatical 'subordination' and contributing to conceptions of grammar as a locally sensitive, temporally unfolding resource for social interaction (Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2001). The clauses examined are syntactically unintegrated (unembedded in any matrix clause), or loosely-integrated (cannot be viewed unambiguously as constituting a relative, complement, or adverbial clause), yet they all begin with *she-* ('that/which/who') -- the general 'subordinating conjunction' in traditional Modern Hebrew grammar. All 104 insubordinate *she-* clauses found throughout a 5.5 hour audio-recorded corpus were classified according to their discourse function -- modal, elaborative, or evaluative. Leaving aside the modal type, the remaining insubordinate *she-* clauses (N=69, 66%) are shown to emerge on-line while speakers are busy performing a variety of tasks and responding to local interactional contingencies. In all of these cases *she-* functions as a **generic 'wildcard' tying back to immediately prior discourse and projecting usually an elaboration but sometimes an evaluation of it**, in either same- or other-speaker talk.

However, an **integrated** post-positioned *she*-clause in a bi-clausal construction (i.e., in a 'complex sentence') -- be it a canonical relative, complement, or adverbial clause -- is of course also an elaboration of immediately preceding discourse. This is because any attribute specifies the head it modifies, and any argument or adverbial complement explicates the action described by the verb -- by spelling out the referents involved in the action and the circumstances in which it takes place. In this sense the syntactically integrated clauses are but a subtype of the syntactically unintegrated cases. In other words, rather than viewing the syntactically un/loosely-integrated cases as imperfect realizations of the canonical type, the canonical type could be viewed as a grammaticization (Hopper 1987) in which elaborative, and to a lesser extent also evaluative actions have sedimented to form the bi-clausal relative, complementational, and adverbial clause-combining constructions familiar to us from traditional sentence-level grammar (cf. Hopper & Thompson 2008).

The findings concerning Hebrew insubordination thus suggest that rather than dependency being **extended** "from sentence-level syntax into larger discourse and pragmatic domains" (Mithun 2008: 69), at least for languages in which the same morpheme is shared by the relativizer, the complementizer, and adverbial conjunctions, the opposite may actually be the case: the discourse action of tying back to an immediately prior stretch of interaction and projecting an elaboration/evaluation of it has sedimented into the bi-clausal patterns familiar to us from sentence-level grammar. This usage-based perspective on canonical subordinate clauses thus blurs the sentence structure-discourse structure dualism.

### References

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