

# Penser les langues

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LANGUES & LANGAGE



## Basic Sentence Structure : A View from Spoken Israeli Hebrew

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In spite of growing recognition of the primacy of spoken varieties of language over written ones, the study of spoken language has suffered from neglect practically during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following a tradition of over two millennia of linguistic studies. Exceptions were few. Only recently, notably with the advent of large computerized corpora, we have been granted with large-scale grammars that include data from spoken varieties of language, of which Biber *et al.* 1999 can be signaled as a notable pioneering effort. As much as one can admire the results, one cannot ignore the heavy load of traditional linguistics on the authors of this work, as noted by Sinclair (2002 : 358) : "I have mentioned one or two places where the commentary gets into difficulties because the language obstinately refuses to divide itself into the categories prepared in advance for it."

In what follows<sup>1</sup>, I will try to overcome tradition by utilizing data from spontaneous speech recorded for the Corpus of Spoken Israeli Corpus (CoSIH<sup>2</sup>), always having in mind the way J. Sinclair would regard corpus data : "To me a corpus of any size signals a flashing neon sign 'Think again', and I find it extremely difficult to fit corpus evidence into received receptacles" (Sinclair 2002 : 357).

<sup>1</sup> The subject matter of this study has been presented before diverse audiences in Jerusalem, Florence, Tsukuba, Paris and Berlin, as well as in graduate seminars at Tel-Aviv University during the past few years. I have benefitted from insights, questions and criticism by colleagues and students. I have further benefited from conversations and correspondence with Claire Blanche-Benveniste, Zygmunt Frajzyngier, Gideon Goldenberg, Yaar Hever, Michal Marmorstein (Schwartzbart), and Il-Il Malibert-Yatziv, among others, who have further enhanced my understanding of the issues involved. Yaar Hever's input has been especially constructive in forming the definition of predicate as offered in this paper. Il-Il and Yaar have read a previous draft of this paper and offered useful comments. I thank you all for your precious input. Needless to say, I bear sole responsibility for the ideas presented in this article.

<sup>2</sup> For the state of research, availability and dissemination of the corpus, see <http://humanities.tau.ac.il/~cosih/>.

## 1. Preliminaries

My “neon sign” includes in addition the following premises :

- Language is a tool of expression and communication. Its most frequent manifestation is inter-human communication.
- Spoken varieties, notably the language of everyday conversation, are the most frequent of all linguistic systems. It is this capacity of spoken language that lends it the power to have its impact on all other linguistic systems and their development.
- Therefore, proper linguistic attention must be drawn to spoken language.
- Spoken language must be analyzed according to its own properties. We must detach ourselves from any pre-conceptions about the structure of language based on its written forms.
- Corpus data reflect the perceived language rather than the produced one. Therefore, linguistic analyses based on corpus data can lean solely on data as heard rather than as generated by the speaker.
- Linguistic analysis must regard language as a system on its own, notwithstanding its mutual-relationship with elements that are either external to the linguistic system or external to the immediate discourse.
- Prosody is a formal feature of spoken language no less than segmental features.
- Prosody is the main tool we use for spoken language segmentation. The “prosodic group” (aka “intonation unit”, “tone group”, or the like) encapsulates a segmental unit of language (“speech unit”) and defines its boundaries: major (terminal) or minor (continuing). A terminal boundary is also the boundary of an utterance (cf. Izre'el & Mettouchi 2011).
- Syntax, information structure and prosody integrate in spoken language structure, forming a coherent linguistic unity (cf. Izre'el, forthcoming b).

Using these premises as guidelines for my work, I will try to lay down some basic features of sentence structure in spoken Israeli Hebrew.

## 2. Some common ideas on sentence structure

Let me list some preconceived, common notions about sentence structure, which I will try to challenge in this paper. While some of these assumptions or tenets are widespread, others tend to be confined to some theoretical orientations, among them ones that have a strong foothold in the Hebrew grammatical tradition. The main points relevant to our discussion here are the following:

- A defining feature of “sentence” is predication. As such, a sentence is viewed as consisting of both subject and predicate (e.g., Carter & McCarthy 2006 : 486; Soanes and Stevenson 2008 s.v. clause<sup>3</sup>).
- The subject is the component upon which the sentence is constructed; i.e., the subject is the basis of the sentence, upon which predication is held (cf. Matthews 2007 : 15). While this is by no means a general theoretical tenet

<sup>3</sup> See below, note 6, for the use of the term “sentence” rather than “clause” in this study.

(e.g., Tesnière 1966 : chs. 48-49; van Valin & LaPolla 1997 : § 2.2; cf. Matthews 2007 : 15-16), one should note that it is so in the Hebrew grammatical tradition.

- Exceptions are treated as elliptical sentences or are excluded from the general analysis of sentence structure altogether (cf., e.g., Biber *et al.* 1999 : ch. 14, especially § 14.3).

In the Hebrew grammatical tradition, which has its roots in studies of medieval Hebrew grammarians, the terms for “subject” and “predicate” are especially instructive, as they carry the notion of grammatical dependency of the predicate upon the subject :

The term for “subject” is *nosé*, bearing the literal meaning “(the one that) carries”.

The term for “predicate” is *nasú*, bearing the literal meaning “(the one being) carried”.

Jonah Ibn Janāh (ca. 990-1050) in his *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ* (“The Book of Variegated Flower-beds”; translated into Hebrew by Yehuda Ibn Tibbon [1171 C.E.]), describes the relationship between the two as follows :

It has already been clarified ... that there is nothing ... but Substance and Event. And it has been known that Substance is self-contained, carrying [*nosé*] the events, and Event is carried [*nasú*] by Substance, and cannot stand in itself. ... Since Substance is previous to Event by nature, because it carries it or renews it, ...

Terminology carries with it notions and conceptual framework. Therefore, it is no surprise that this old tradition, backed by similar conceptual frameworks in Western linguistic schools, is still deeply rooted and commonly held in the study of Hebrew up until today. Note the definitions of the relevant terms in a contemporary Hebrew linguistic dictionary :

Sentence : A complete notional unit that includes a subject and a predicate. Indicated by S in generative-transformational grammar.

Clause : (1) A syntactical structure that includes a subject and a predicate; a complete notional unit which ends with a pause. (2) A syntactical structure that includes a subject and a predicate, [...] (Rodrig-Schwarzwald and Sokoloff 1992 : 203 and 35 respectively; my translation).

More recently, Coffin and Bolozky (2005 : 314) define the notion of sentence in similar terms :

The sentence is the maximal unit of syntax [...] The major constituents of sentences are the subject and predicate phrases that join to construct a sentence.

One example may suffice to show that these definitions cannot hold even in a brief encounter with spoken Israeli Hebrew<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Transcription is broad phonetic with some phonological input, and generally segmented into prosodic groups. Transcription notations : each prosodic group is transcribed in a separate line; final tones : terminal ||; continuing |; appeal /; truncated word -; truncated prosodic group -; non-verbal sounds <creak>; overlapping [ ] (cf. Izre'el 2002, following in essence Du Bois *et al.* 1992). Predicates are indicated by boldface characters, subject by underlining; predicative constructions are indicated by curly brackets { }. Glossing follow, in general, the Leipzig Glossing Rules.

- (1) [1] a: **moruf**||<sup>5</sup>  
Morush Morush,  
[2] b: **ma motek** ||  
what sweetie What, sweetie?  
[3] a: **asbaa jamim** |  
four days Four days –  
[4] **jva meot jekel le=zug** ||  
seven hundreds shekel to=couple seven hundred shekels for two.  
[5] b: **bli kesef** ||  
without money (This is) very cheap.  
[6] a: **naxon** /  
right Isn't that so?  
[7] b: **ejfo** /  
where Where?  
[8] a: **be=holidej in ha=yadaf** ||  
in=Holiday Inn the=new At the new Holiday Inn.  
[9] b: **daj** ||  
enough Wow!  
(OCD2\_sp2\_057-061; OCD2\_sp1\_026-030)

In this conversational chunk, none of the units conforms to the definitions of “sentence” cited above. Carter & McCarthy (2006 : 490) claim that “[t]he sentence is a unit of grammar, and must be grammatically complete (i.e. it must have at least one main clause). The utterance is a unit of communication. It [...] does not need to be grammatically complete”. Biber *et al.* (1999 : ch. 14), term units that do not conform to the traditional definition of sentence “non-clausal”, yet nevertheless feel the need to coin an “umbrella term ‘C-units’ for both clausal and non-clausal units; i.e., for syntactically independent pieces of speech” (p. 1070). This was done precisely because many of the units used in everyday speech do not fit the “received receptacles”, as J. Sinclair put it. In what follows, I will try to find a path through which we can reach a unified theory that will encompass all the evidence provided by spontaneous speech data.

### 3. Types of predicates

Let us first look briefly at the type of sentences one usually thinks of when studying Hebrew, viz., “verbal” sentences (ex. 2) and “nominal” or “verbless/non-verbal” sentences (ex. 3) :

- (2) hi te-kabel –  
she 3SGF-will\_get She will get (OM\_sp2\_058)  
(3) hakol jvil-im ||  
everything path-PLM All are dust-roads. (OCh\_sp1\_180)

Looking at this classification, as well as looking at the two typical examples given above as if equivalent, there are two problems involved : a terminological problem and a conceptual problem.

As for the terminological problem, one must note that the terms “verbless” or “non-verbal” mean that a verb is missing in the discussed structure. However, there is no need for a verb in this type of sentence, neither a copula is required nor a copula deleted. “Nominal” means that the predicate is a noun. However, not only nouns can occupy the predicate slot in any of the sentence types that are termed “nominal”. In fact, one will find in this position any part of speech: nominal (substantives, adjectives), participial (active or passive), pronominal (personal pronouns, demonstratives, interrogatives and other pronouns), adverbs and prepositional phrases. Sentences and other types of syntactic complexes will be found as predicates as well. The two following examples will suffice to illustrate this :

- (4) ani **be=kugs**  
1SG in=course I am taking a course.  
(Prepositional phrase; OCD3\_sp1\_59)  
(5) jeela **ma ze naxon** |  
question what this right The question is what is the truth.  
(Sentence; OCh\_sp2\_045)

As for the conceptual problem, one should note that a verbal predicate differs in its internal structure from any other predicate. This deserves some dilation.

### 4. The Hebrew verb

A verb, it must be noted, occupies a special position in Hebrew, as it does in other Semitic languages. The Hebrew verb is a morphological complex consisting of a subject and a predicate, and holds the nexus between the two components (Goldenberg 1998). As such, it makes a complete sentence in itself. Let us first observe the morphological components of the Hebrew verb, and then their syntactic capacities. We shall compare these structures to those of the nominal and participial forms, and see that participles, although they are usually seen as enabling paradigmatic substitution by verbs in a sentence, in fact they differ in structure and capacities. For our analysis, we shall use derivatives of the root *gdl*, which carries the basic meaning of “bigness”.

	2SGM	3SGF	3PL
Prefix conjugation	t-igdal 2SGM-will_grow “you will grow”	t-igdel-i 2SGF-will_grow- 2SGF “you will grow”	y-igdel-u 3PLM-will_grow- 3PLM “they will grow”
	gadal-ta grew-2SGM “you grew”	gadl-a grew-3SGF “she grew”	gadl-u grew-3PL “they grew”

Table 1. Verbal morphology

<sup>5</sup> Personal names (in this case, a nick name) have been changed or eliminated in CoSIH for privacy.

	SGM	SGF	PLM
Participle	gadel-ø grow-SGM "grow(s)", "growing"	gdol-a grow-SGF "grow(s)", "growing"	gdol-im grow-PLM "grow", "growing"
	gdol-ø big-SGM "big"	gdol-a big-SGF "big"	gdol-im big-PLM "big"

Table 2. Nominal morphology as represented in participles and adjectives

Adjectives and participles, like all nominal forms, inflect only for gender and number, whereas verbal inflection includes also indication of person. Therefore, in order to form predication, nominal forms need a subject marker added. This is also the case with any other predicate, excluding, of course, verbs.

A verb, then, is a morphological manifestation of a predicative complex, i.e., a sentence. It includes, minimally, a predicate with its subject, with nexus, i.e., predication. Therefore, the verb is not a predicate per se.

## 5. Hebrew sentence structure<sup>6</sup>

### 5.1. Hypotheses

- The kernel of the sentence is a predicate. The predicate introduces a "new" element to the discourse; it is the informative component of the sentences and carries its modality.
- Theme and rheme or topic and comment (cf. Sornicola 2006) are thus the default functions of "subject" and "predicate" respectively (cf. Lyons 1971 : 335).
- A sentence will be defined as a unit consisting minimally of a predicate, being the rhematic element and the one which carries the modality of the sentence.
- Two main classes of sentences can be discerned: (1) Unipartite, consisting of a predicate only. (2) Bipartite, where a sentence consists – in its minimal manifestation – of a subject and a predicate. This basic structure will be regarded as first-level predication.
- Sentences with higher level predication incorporate predicates that are sentences in themselves.
- Subjects, like predicates, can consist of sentences.

### 5.2. Unipartite sentences

Unipartite sentences consist of a predicate in itself (or a predicate with complements and peripherals), and do not include a subject. A predicate is the "new" element in the discourse (Chafe 1994 : 108) and thus carries the informational load of the sentence. As such, it is identified with the rheme. The predicate carries the modality of the sentence (cf. Lefeuve 1999 : ch. 1; Martin 2009 : ch. II/1). Ex. 1 above exhibits some

<sup>6</sup> "Sentence" is taken here to be the reference unit of syntax, thus replacing "clause" in any way this term may be used by other schools, including those dealing with spoken language (e.g., Miller & Weinert 1998).

typical unipartite sentences, indicated by boldface characters (lines 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). In ex. 6 below, lines 7-8, 9, 10, 11, 12 are examples of unipartite clauses<sup>7</sup>.

- (6) [1] a : ma | What?  
 [2] jaani **hem baim** – You mean, they come  
 [3] baim beeize falof babokes e | come like 3 a.m. uh  
 [4] axke miklayat / after shower?  
 [5] b : moru | Moru,  
 [6] axke | after...  
 [7] lo **gak be** | not only at  
 [8] lajla | night.  
 [9] **gam bejam- bejom** || During the d- the day too.  
 [10] **beʔot jom** || During daily hours.  
 [11] **beavodat jom** || During day-working time.  
 [12] a : **eze hazama** || What an exaggeration!  
 (OCD:2480"-2490")

For further discussion see Izre'el, forthcoming a.

### 5.3. Bipartite sentences

Bipartite sentences include both a subject and a predicate and the nexus (predication) between the two components. Hitherto I have been able to distinguish between three levels of predication: primary, or first-level predication, second-level predication, and third-level predication. Sentences with higher level predication incorporate predicates that are sentences in themselves.

#### 5.3.1. Primary (first-level) predication

In our earlier discussion on predicative constructions we have already seen some examples of sentences with primary predication, viz., sentences where only one predication is present (exx. 3, 4, 6 [line 2]). Going back to our root *gdol*, the following basic constructions are the simplest among bipartite sentences :

- (7) david **gdol** David (is) big.  
hu **gdol** He/it (is) big.

In these simple sentences, a noun (in this case, a personal name) or a pronoun will be the subject (indicated by underlining) and the adjective *gdol* "big" will be the predicate (indicated by boldface characters). As we have seen, the basic element will be a predicate, as it can occur by itself to form a complete sentence. Therefore, a subject will be added to the predicate where it becomes communicatively necessary to specify a subject.

We have also seen above that any Hebrew verb is, in fact, a sentence on its own. All verbs include a subject and a predicate and manifest by their very essence the nexus

<sup>7</sup> The prosodic group in line 2, which includes a bipartite sentence, is truncated. The sentence then resumes in the following prosodic group by repeating the predicate **baim** "come". Therefore, one should not regard line 3 as consisting of a unipartite sentence.

Lines 1 and 5, although they form independent syntactic units, may not fit the definition of "sentence" as suggested in this study. These are regulatory units, in Chafe's terminology, i.e., units that regulate the discourse flow rather than introduce new information. This type of units still requires further investigation.

between the two components. As such, every Hebrew verb is a bipartite sentence with first-level predication. Keeping track with our forms derived from the root *gdL*, one will recall the comparison made above between adjectival and participial forms on one hand and verbs on the other hand, where – in contrast with nominal forms, including participles – verbs include the subject marker in them :

- (8) *y-igdal* He will grow.  
*t-igdal* You will grow.  
*gdal-ta* You grew.  
 cf. *hu gadol* He/it (is) big.

Verbs tend not to require an explicit, external to the verb indication of the subject referent. Such indication will mostly be added when communicatively required. A prominent example is the introduction of a new topic to the discourse (or a reintroduction of a topic), which will usually be specified as a noun (ex. 9). An externally added pronominal subject may be required to express contrast (ex. 10) or for any other pragmatic need (ex. 11, line 8). These will be labeled later as second-level predication. Otherwise, there is no need for any other reference than the one which is part of the verb, as in the 1PL forms in ex. 11 (narrative), in ex. 12 (directive), or in ex. 13 (last line), where the reference is made only by the 3SGF subject marker within the verb, because the active person is known to the participants in the conversation. These last cases are examples for primary (or first-level) predication.

- (9) *eldad {heylit-g}* *fe={hu}* | Eldad decided-3SGM that=3SGM Eldad decided that he  
*lo mvater* | | NEG give\_up wouldn't give up. (OCh\_sp1\_782-783)
- (10) *eldad {lakay-g}* *akev- otobus le=po* Eldad took-3SGM trai- bus to=here Eldad took a trai- a bus over here  
*le=hongkong* | to=Hong\_Kong to Hong Kong,  
*ve=ani {xazav-ti}* *le=beijin kvas* | ve=1SG returned-1SG to=Beijing already but I returned directly to Beijing.  
 and=1SG returned-1SG to=Beijing already (OCh\_sp1\_715-716)
- (11) [1] *a : lakay-nu mi=po sus-im* | took-1PL from=here horse-PLM We took horses from here,  
 [2] *asi-nu tsek* | did-1PL trek we did a trek  
 [3] *ad* | until towards  
 [4] *eze flostseve* | some three\_quarters three-quarters (of the way)  
 [5] *ha=tsafon-a* | DEF=north-ward northward,  
 [6] *[ve=xazav-nu]* | and=returned-1PL and we returned.  
 [7] *b : ma* | what What! ?  
 [8] *ata {xayav-ta}* *al=sus* / 2SGM rode-2SGM on=horse You rode on a horse?

- [9] *a : flofa jamim* | three day- PLM (For) three days!  
 [10] *b : [lo sipax-ta le=i]* | NEG told-2SGM to=1SG You didn't tell me!  
 (OCh\_sp1\_209-215; sp2\_074-076)
- (12) *{t-avi-i}* | *{t-avi-i}* | 2SGF-bring-2SGF 2SGF-bring-2SGF Bring (it over), bring (it over)!  
 (C714\_sp1\_087)
- (13) *{hem baajati-im}* | *ha=nesot ha=ele* | 3PLM problematic-PLM DEF=candles DEF=these They are problematic, these candles<sup>8</sup>.  
*beezejefehu flav i effaz lehadlik otam* | At some point it's impossible to light them!  
 ...  
*{hitslix-a}* / succeeded-3SGF Did she succeed?  
 (C714\_sp1\_093-095)

Further, predicates without referent (usually called “impersonal”), which in Hebrew are usually expressed by 3PLM verbs (or PLM participles), will not be adjoined by an “external” subject (ex. 14) :

- (14) *fin-u po et ha=kvij* | changed-3PL here ACC DEF=road The road has been changed.  
 (OCD2\_sp3\_117)

### 5.3.2 Second-level predication

Second level predication is the case where an overt subject is added to a basic construction with primary, first-level predication. This basic construction, viz., a sentence in itself, thus becomes the predicate of the additional subject. Such structures are very frequent, and occur with all types of predicative constructions with a pronominal subject, be it independent or affixed :

- (15) *david {hu gadol}* David 3SGM big David is big.  
*david {y-igdal}* david 3SGM-will\_grow David will grow.  
*hu {y-igdal}* 3SGM 3SGM-will\_grow He will grow.  
*ata {t-igdal}* 2SGM 2SGM-will\_grow You will grow.  
*david {gdal-g}* david grew-3SGM David grew.  
*hu {gdal-g}* 3SGM grew-3SGM He grew.  
*ata {gdal-ta}* 2SGM grew-2SGM You grew.

<sup>8</sup> Sentence-final topicalization needs further research. We shall see below some other cases of fronting and backing, which will not be treated in this paper.

The added subject can be of any type, pronominal or other, with some constraints. We have already seen some examples for second-level predication, as in exx. 9 and 10, as well as ex. 11, line 8. Ex. 16 shows a discourse flow where a noun is used to introduce a new topic in the first sentence. The following sentence consists only of a repetition of the sentence that comprises the predicate of the first sentence, viz., an anaphoric pronoun and an adjective in predicative relations :

- (16) nagid {ha=tiga} {hi mekuba-at} /  
 say DEF=castle 3SGF square-SGF Say the castle is square?  
 {hi mekuba-at} /  
 3SGF square-SGF It is square?

### 5.3.3. Third-level predication

Similar to the case of second-level predication, an overt subject can be added to a complete construction, one that includes a second-level predication. This sentence with second-level predication becomes the predicate of the additional subject. This type of structure seems to be rare in spoken Hebrew, and probably occurs under some constraints that cannot be assessed at this stage of research. Note the following example :

- (17) jaon amax | Sharon said  
 je fe- <creak> {arafat {hu | that that Arafat  
 Arafat 3SGM  
 {haja-g ben haxifonim fel hatexor | was among the first terrorists,  
 was-3SGM  
fexataf metosim | who hijacked planes  
vehaxag e | and killed uh  
sportaim israelim}} || Israeli sportsmen.

In example 17, the covert zero morpheme of the verb *haja* “he was” is the subject of the first level predication manifested in this verb.<sup>9</sup> The lexical part of the predicate follows the verb. The 3SGM pronoun following “Arafat” is the subject of the predicate in this first level predication sentence, thus forming a higher-level construction, viz., a sentence with a second-level predication. Finally, the proper noun “Arafat” is adjoining to this second-level predication to form yet a higher-level sentence, viz., one with third-level predication.

### 5.4. Subject sentences

Sentences construed of {NP + Pron + NP} have hitherto been analyzed as comprising second-level predications of which the predicate consists of a bipartite sentence in itself. Example 18 seems *prima facie* to be a sentence of this type :

- (18) japanim hem tajalim ||  
 Japanese 3PLM travelers Japanese are travelers.

However, the discourse structure does not allow this analysis : it is types of travelers that are discussed, and the new element in this sentence is clearly “Japanese”. According to the definition of the predicate suggested above, *japanim* should be regarded as a predicate. Prosody also supports this analysis. In all other cases, the prosodic accent, which points at the focal kernel of the sentence, has always been on the grammatical predicate, which by default comes following the subject. In contrast, here the accent falls not on the final word but on the first one. Therefore, in the framework suggested here, the preferred analysis will take *japanim* as the predicate :

- (18a) japanim {hem tajalim} ||

Having asserted *japanim*, the subject now includes a sentence in which an anaphoric pronoun (*hem*) makes the subject of the predicate *tajalim* “travelers”, which carries the modality (affirmative) of this subject sentence. Other subject sentences occur rather frequently in questions ; e.g.,

- (19) az eix {dibas-tem} /  
 so how spoke-2PLM So how did you speak? (OCh\_sp2\_126)  
 (20) [1] fiat le=ma ||  
 Fiat for=what What do we need a Fiat for?  
 [2] le=savta ||  
 to=grandma (To go) to grandma.  
 [3] {anaynu nos-im} mataj ||  
 we go-3PL when When are we going?  
 [4] be=jom flifi ||  
 in=day third On Tuesday. (C712 :237”-241”)

In ex. 19, the verb – a sentence in itself – is the given element, and the interrogative adverb *is*, of course, the new one, hence the predicate. In ex. 20, the topics asked about in the interrogative sentences (lines 1, 3) are already known from the context. In line 3, the sentence *anaynu nosim* “we are going” is therefore to be taken as a subject sentence, the interrogative adverb *mataj* “when” being the predicate. In the following example, both the context and the accent on the phrase *flifa jamim* “three days” require that it be analyzed as a predicate and the sentence which follows as the subject :

- (21) flifa jamim {ze haja kaya}  
 three days it was thus Three days it was like that. (OCh\_sp1\_359)

I would not regard these sentences as carrying second-level predication, since it is not the predicate of the larger sentence that includes a first-level predication but rather the subject.

### Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to lay some foundations for a unified theory of sentence structure in spoken Israeli Hebrew, starting with unipartite sentences that consist of only a predicate, going on to the hierarchical structure of bipartite sentences, with three levels of predication, where the second and third levels include predicates which are in themselves complete sentences.

<sup>9</sup> This verb serves as a copula to enable tense marking for clauses that do not include a verb and therefore cannot indicate tense (cf. Dekel 2010 : § 5.3.5).

I should end this homage to Claire by citing what she wrote about the study of spoken French, only replacing "French by "Hebrew" :

... il ne s'agit pas d'utiliser l'hébreu parlé pour illustrer une théorie, mais de trouver une théorie qui permette d'aborder les données de l'hébreu parlé

(cf. Blanche-Benveniste and Jeanjean 1987 : 90).

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À la fois outils  
et matériau de  
communication  
et de création,  
image et filtre  
du monde,  
les langues  
réalisent par  
leur pluralité  
la singularité  
du langage.

Ce volume réunit les communications données en hommage à Claire Blanche-Benveniste (1935-2010) lors de trois journées organisées à Paris en décembre 2010. Les articles sont signés par des chercheurs de tout premier plan, originaires de France, d'Europe et d'ailleurs, qui ont voulu honorer la mémoire de cette grande linguiste en rappelant ce qu'elle avait apporté dans le domaine des études sur le langage et les langues, et en montrant l'influence qu'elle a pu exercer sur leurs propres recherches. Les travaux présentés dans cet ouvrage abordent un grand nombre de thèmes qui étaient chers à Claire Blanche-Benveniste et dans lesquels elle a apporté des contributions majeures : la syntaxe et la morphologie flexionnelle du français oral et écrit, l'orthographe et la ponctuation, la constitution de corpus, les relations entre syntaxe et discours, le langage enfantin et l'acquisition de la langue, la linguistique comparée des langues romanes, l'enseignement du français à l'étranger, l'enseignement simultané des langues romanes, l'histoire des idées linguistiques.

*Sandrine Caddéo, Marie-Noëlle Roubaud, Magali Rouquier et Frédéric Sabio ont été les élèves de Claire Blanche-Benveniste à l'université d'Aix-Marseille et à l'École pratique des hautes études à Paris. Ils sont actuellement enseignants-chercheurs en linguistique française à Aix-en-Provence et à Toulouse.*

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# Penser les langues avec Claire Blanche-Benveniste

sous la direction de  
S. Caddéo  
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M. Rouquier  
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