

The complex suffix *-ut* of Modern Hebrew: a morpho-syntactic analysis

Often in the analysis of the form of a morpheme, one finds this morpheme dissected into more than one piece, even though the pieces are not independent of each other. But if the dissection is treated seriously, the difference pieces must be understood as indicating structural levels, whose mutual dependency must be explained. This talk treats one such case, that of the suffix *-ut* of Modern Hebrew (Bolzky & Schwarzwald 1992) and its decomposition into $u+t$.

The talk begins by assembling the facts that attest to the plausibility of this dissection. First, the suffix is always feminine; this follows from the presence of *t*, which is present in all the feminine suffixes of the language (1). In addition, when a plural suffix is added (2), the feminine *t* appears only on that suffix, and only the *u* of *-ut* survives.

It remains then to be proven that *u* has an existence of its own, i.e. that it is not a simple phonological residue. Beyond the phenomenon in (2), two sets of data are presented to that effect. First, the meaning of *-ut* is productively and almost without exception non-concrete (3); this meaning does not come from the feminine *t*. In addition, several nominal patterns with a thematic vowel [u] exist that have the same non-concrete collective meaning (4). In these cases, the [u] contributes this meaning independently of the presence of a feminine suffix. The analogy is especially striking regarding action nouns, which are created with [u] as a theme vowel for verbs of the form QiTeL (4b), but with the suffix *-ut* for middle voice verbs (3i,j). We conclude that the vowel of the suffix *-ut* is the same as the thematic [u] of the items in (4), and the analysis $u+t$ is well-motivated.

This analysis raises the question of how one is to represent the morpheme /u/ so that its distribution is accounted for. This representation has to account for the fact that /u/ is not a suffix in its own right.

The distribution of *-ut* is then examined more closely and it is noted that with few exceptions (3a), the complement of *-ut* is always an independent noun. The ensuing analysis is formalized within the framework of Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993), wherein words are built in syntax. Two theoretical propositions are adopted from Lowenstamm (to appear). First, the feminine suffix is represented as a root \sqrt{at} . This root is structurally separate from the category head. Second, the affixal status of the root is (and its distribution) is accounted for by assuming a selectional restriction [u $\sqrt{\quad}$], which states that the structural complement of \sqrt{at} must be of the type $\sqrt{\quad}$ (Root). By this token, the structure in (5a) is not well-formed. It is then proposed that when the target is a non-concrete word, the selectional restriction of \sqrt{at} is satisfied by the insertion of \sqrt{u} (5b) as its complement.

If so, the [u] of *-ut* functions as the thematic vowel of this feminine suffix. As a thematic vowel, \sqrt{u} itself has no selectional restriction: this is shown to account for its dependency on other items, and the lack of an independent suffix *-u*. Structures for the rest of the occurrences of \sqrt{u} are then presented in keeping with this generalization.

The talk concludes with cases such as (3a,b), deemed problematic because the complement of *-ut* does not seem to be independently attested. It is shown that in reality, these cases do not involve the suffix *-ut*; rather, they are just cases of y-final roots in the nominal pattern QTuLa(t), and the non-appearance of the third radical /y/ allows for the landing of the feminine /t/ (6). Such nouns are probably the historical origin of the *-ut* suffix: this explains the appearance of /y/ in the plural.

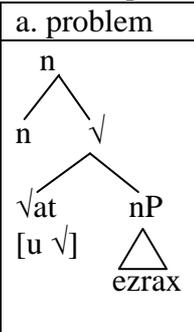
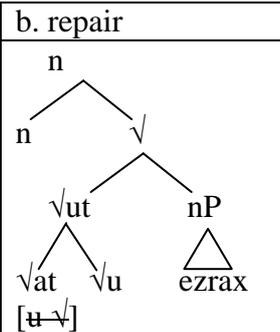
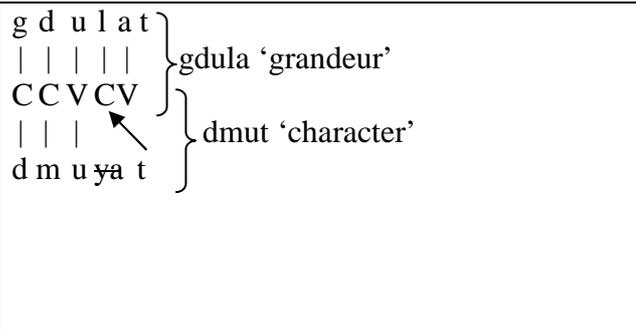
This analysis of \sqrt{u} is the first study (known to us) that systematically associates meaning to a non-root vocalic element **across nominal patterns** in a Semitic language. The talk concludes with the discussion of the implications of the analysis for the study of root and pattern analyses in general. Time permitting, the consequences for the analysis of yet another suffix, the suffix *-it*, are presented.

- (1) Feminine suffixes of MH
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|----|-------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| a. | yeled | 'child' | yald- ut | 'childhood' |
| | | | yald-a(t) | 'little girl' |
| | | | yelad-ot | 'little girls' |
| b. | sapar | 'barber (ms.)' | sapar-it | 'barber (fm.)' |
| c. | calam | 'photographer (ms.)' | calém-et | 'photographer (fm.)' |

- (2) sg. pl.
efšar-**ut** efšar-**uy**-ot 'possibility'

- (3) Bases (Bolozky & Schwarzwald 1992)
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|----|-------------|----------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| | base | | base+ut | |
| a. | | | dm-ut | 'a character' |
| b. | | | št-ut | 'triviality' |
| c. | enoš | 'a human being' | enoš-ut | 'humanity' |
| d. | ezrax | 'citizen' | ezrax-ut | 'citizenship' |
| e. | sapar | 'barber' | sapar-ut | 'barber-hood' |
| f. | savir | 'probable' | svir-ut | 'probability' |
| g. | manhig | 'leader' | manhigut | 'leadership' |
| h. | mecuyan | 'excellent' | mecuyanut | 'excellence' |
| i. | le-hitnaged | 'to oppose' | hitnagd-ut | 'opposition' |
| j. | le-hisaref | 'burning (intrans.)' | hisarf-ut | 'the fact of burning' |

- (4) Other non-concrete nominal patterns with /u/
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|--------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| | a. <u>QTuLa</u> | | b. <u>QiTuL</u> | | c. <u>QóTeL</u> (*Qútel) |
| gdula | 'grandeur' | gidul | 'raising, tumor' | gódel | 'size' |
| kvuda | 'equipment' | kibud | 'respect, offerings' | kóved | 'weight' |
| kvuca | 'group' | kiyum | 'existence' | córex | 'need' |
| refu'a | 'medicine' | cibur | 'public' | 'ódef | 'excess' |

- (5) \sqrt{u} as a repair
- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| a. problem | b. repair | (6) <i>dmut</i> is not <i>dm+ut</i> | |
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References

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