

The Template as a Morphology-Syntax Interface in Modern Hebrew

The non-concatenative morphology of the Modern Hebrew (MH) verbal system, presented in (1), combines a consonantal root ($\sqrt{\text{rgš}}$ in (1)) and a vocalic pattern, defined through word internal vowel quality (=melody), affixes and prosody.

This talk addresses four questions that arise from (1): i) Why are the melodies different from one verb type to another?, ii) Why do stem melodies change between tenses?, iii) Why are the prefix vowels not the same in the different verb types?, and iv) why is there no *m-* prefix in the first present participle *rogeš*?

Within generative grammar, morphological accounts of the MH verbal system^{1,2} have treated only the first question of the four. In order to account for changes in the melody, the concept of Melodic Overwriting (MO) was evoked. MO replaces a basic melody with another. The three other questions have been left to lexicality.

But, in fact, so was the first one: while MO does give the phenomenon a name, it hardly goes any further: it says nothing about vowel quality, and amounts to saying that any melody may replace any other. This talk suggests that this is far too drastic a conclusion.

First, I put forward two phonological tools: i) the theory of Elements³, which allows a decomposition of complex vowels (I+A=E; U+A=O), and ii) the apophonic chain $\emptyset > i > a > u$ ⁴, which allows for only one specific vowel change. Next up, I show that by looking at the syntactic makeup of the different verbs a principled account can be reached. I adopt the syntactic subtrees proposed by Doron (2003), presented in (2), which introduce different action heads for *riḡeš* and *irḡiš*.

I then suggest the morphological tool: a single template for all Hebrew verbs. This template, designed along the lines of the CV option of government Phonology⁵, is composed of an inner and an outer domain: CV-CVCVCV. The root satisfies this template as in (3).

Doron's action heads, along with the view of the template as the interface between syntax and phonology (in other words, "morphology"), allows for an account of the problems raised above in the following ways:

- i. All three verbal heads v , γ , ι , introduce the CV-CVCVCV template.
- ii. Activation (originally, in the uninflected Past tense form) of the outer domain corresponds only to the introduction of an action head γ (the prefix *i-*) or ι (underlying gemination).
- iii. Little v corresponds to the application of an element A in the inner templatic domain. Thus, the structure in (2a) corresponds to the template in (3a). Activation of the outer domain by an action head entails the vocalisation of the available slots of the template: by a default *i* in (3b), or by spreading of the prefix vowel in (3c). As in Doron (2003), ι licenses Little v , which spells out as mentioned, yielding *riḡes*. But there is no Little v involved in γ forms, and thus no A is applied, and the form surfaces as *irḡiš*.
- iv. Future/participle prefix vowels correspond to template satisfaction: a default *i* (like in the case of (3b)) when the outer CV-domain is not occupied (*yirḡoš-* (4a)), an epenthetic [e] when it is and the prefix is external to the template (*yerageš-* (4b)), and no vowel when the stem is V-initial (*yargiš-* (4c)).
- v. No *m-* form in the present participle *rogeš* corresponds to lack of an action head, which in turn means no activation of the prefixal CV- (**m-CV-rogeš*).
- vi. The *same* position (CV-) is apophonized ($i > a$) in *y/me-rageš* and *y/m-argiš*. (4b,c)

The talk gives the syntactic structure corresponding to each verbal form, and explores the way the different heads are spelled out. Morpho-phonologically, the account is made possible by positing underlying geminates for *riḡeš*-type forms (3b), thus giving more support to this claim.

To summarize, exploring form-structure correspondence allows us to account (if only in MH) for phenomena hitherto considered lexical, or not considered at all. Time permitting, the active-passive patterns in (5) are shown to follow from the principles presented.

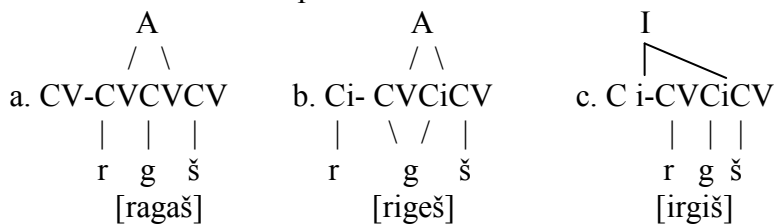
(1) Various verbal instances of one root (3sg.m. forms)

past	future	present participle
ragaš 'be very active'	yirgoš	rogeš
rigeš 'move emotionally'	yerageš	merageš
i-rgiš 'feel'	yargiš	margiš

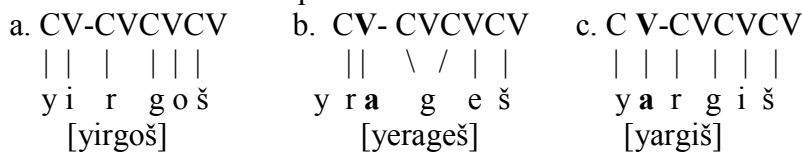
(2) Doron (2003): (simplified)

- [ext.arg.[arg.[√rgš]]_{v,p}]_v => ragaš
- [ext.actor[actor verb[arg.[√rgš]]_{v,p}t]_v => rigeš
- [ext. cause[cause verb[arg.[√rgš]]_{v,p}]_v => i-rgiš

(3) Satisfaction of the template in the different verb forms



(4) Satisfaction of the template in the different verb forms



(5) Active passive pairs

<i>Active</i>	<i>passive</i>
ragaš	-
rigeš	rugaš
irgiš	urgaš

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