

A B S T R A C T

REVISITING WORD CLASSES: THE CASE OF HEBREW ADVERBS

The paper is offered as a tribute to Fillmore's pioneering insights into lexical structure (e.g., 1975, 1978), the nature of grammatical constructions (Fillmore et al, 1988), and his view of the lexicon as inseparable from grammar. As such, Fillmore's ideas from early on contrast markedly with the accepted division of lexical entries into content versus function words, open-class versus closed-class items, or grammatical versus lexical elements (Biber et al, 1999; Lyons, 1968; Talmy, 1985), as applied in typological as well as psycholinguistic research (Croft, 2001; Talmy, 2000; or Haveman, 1996; Landau & Gleitman, 1985, respectively). Following different suggestions to the effect that the open-class / closed-class (OC/CC) distinction is too sharply dichotomous (Gentner & Boroditsky, 2001; Hopper & Traugott, 1993; Slobin, 1997, 2001), our study proposes that linguistic elements be ranged along a cline rather than clearly divided between a "lexical" versus a "grammatical" area. More specifically, corpus-based research in different languages has demonstrated the need to re-examine how word-like units be characterized as "framed" by the context of extended discourse (Berman, 2002; Nir-Sagiv, Bar-Ilan, & Berman, 2008; Ravid & Berman, 2009).

Particularly problematic for attempts to cut up the lexical space are items grouped together under the mixed-bag heading of "adverbs". Some treat these as OCs (Biber et al, 1999; Fromkin & Rodman, 1993; Radford et al, 1999), while others confine the OC category to nouns, verbs, and adjectives (Baker, 2003; Ouhalla, 1999; Stemmer & Whitaker, 1998). One problem is that in a language like Hebrew, both classical and contemporary, there is no class of morphologically identifiable adverbs, even in the case of manner adverbs like those marked by the suffixes *-ly* in English or *-ment, -mente* in French and Spanish. In Hebrew, these are typically expressed by Prepositional Phrase constructions with *be-* 'in, with' + De-adjectival Nominal (e.g., *be-simxa* 'with-gladness = gladly', *be-racon* 'with-desire = willingly', *be-zehirut* 'with care(fulness) = carefully').

Our study aims to shed light on the broad issue of word classes by considering these and other items lying in the gray area between clearly OC (e.g., concrete nouns) and clearly CC (e.g., morphologically bound markers of grammatical categories). We analyze these as "intermediate" constructions themselves ranging along a continuum, between expressions that have concrete conceptual content and those that activate an abstract grammatical schema (Schilperoord & Verhagen, 2006). Focus here is on Hebrew adverbs as part of a disparate group of "between-class" (BC) elements that are neither semantically autonomous open-class nor grammatically structure-dependent closed-class. Different types of adverbs in Hebrew are analyzed in structural terms as ranging from multi-lexemic to mono-morphemic expressions and functionally as manifesting variability of use in the context of extended discourse. We conclude by proposing that word-class distinctions in general, and "between-class" elements in particular, depend essentially on discourse-embedded considerations for their interpretation.

(470 Words)

REFERENCES

- Baker, M. C. (2003). *Lexical Categories: Verbs, nouns, and adjectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Berman, R. A. (2002). Crosslinguistic comparisons in later language development. In S. Strömquist (ed.), *The diversity of languages and language learning*. Lund: Center for Languages and Literature, 25-44.
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education.
- Croft, W. (2001). *Radical construction grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fillmore, C. J. (1975). An alternative to checklist theories of meaning. *Berkeley Linguistic Society, 1*, 123-131.
- Fillmore, C. J. (1978). On the organization of semantic information in the lexicon. *Papers from the Parasession on the Lexicon*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistics Society, 148-173.
- Fillmore, C.J., Kay, P. & O'Connor, M. (1988). Regularity and idiomatity in grammatical constructions. *Language, 64*, 501-538.
- Fromkin, V. A. & Rodman, R. (1993). *An introduction to Language, 5th ed.* Fort Worth, Tx: Harcourt Brace.
- Gentner, D. & Boroditsky, L. (2001). Individuation, relativity, and early word learning. In M. Bowerman & S. C. Levinson (eds.), *Language acquisition and conceptual development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 215-256.
- Haveman, A. (1996). *The open-/closed class distinction in spoken word recognition*. Nijmegen: Max-Planck Institute series in psycholinguistics.
- Hopper, P. J. & Traugott, E. C. (1993). *Grammaticalization*. Cambridge University Press.
- Landau, B. & Gleitman, L. (1985). *Language and experience: Evidence from the blind child*. Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press.
- Lyons, J. (1968). *Introduction to theoretical linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nir-Sagiv, B., Bar-Ilan, L., & Berman, R. A. (2008). Vocabulary development across adolescence: Text-based analyses. In A. Stavans & I. Kupferberg (eds.), *Studies in language and language education*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 47-74.
- Ouhalla, J. (1999). *Functional categories and parametric variation*. New York: Routledge.
- Radford, A., Atkinson, M., Britain, D., Clahsen, H., & Spencer, A. (1999). *Linguistics: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ravid, D. & Berman, R. A. (2009). Developing linguistic register across text types: The case of Modern Hebrew. *Pragmatics and Cognition, 17*, 108-145.
- Schilperoord, J. & Verhagen, A. (2006) Grammar and language production: Where do function words come from? In J. Luchjenbroers (ed.), *Cognitive Linguistics Investigations. Across languages, fields and philosophical boundaries*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 139-168.
- Slobin, D. I. (1997). The origins of grammaticizable notions: Beyond the individual mind. In *Crosslinguistic Study of Language Acquisition, Volume 5*. Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 265-324.
- Slobin, D. I. (2001). Form-function relations: How do children find out what they are. In M. Bowerman & S. C. Levinson, eds. *Language acquisition and conceptual development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 406-449.
- Stemmer, B. & Whitaker, H.A. (1998). *Handbook of neurolinguistics*. New York: Academic.
- Talmy, L. (1985). Lexicalization patterns: semantic structure in lexical form. In T. Shopen (ed.), *Language typology and semantic description, Volume 3: Grammatical categories and the lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 36-149.
- Talmy, L. (2000). *Towards a cognitive semantics*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.