SAT-2G.405-1-L-04

# Against Left Dislocation in Nominal Sentences in Modern Hebrew

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***Abstract:*** *This paper argues against the hypothesis of Left Dislocation (LD) in Nominal Sentences occurring in Modern Hebrew. Nominal Sentences that naturally lack the verb 'to be' in the present tense can employ either a personal pronoun (PronH) or impersonal pronoun (PronZ) as linking copulas. The presence of the linking copulas and their strong resemblance to pronouns may suggest that they are in fact subject pronouns of the Nominal Sentences and thus derived through Left Dislocation and not a linking copula between the subject and the predicate noun.*

***Key words:*** *PronH, PronZ, Nominal Sentences, Modern Hebrew, Left Dislocation.*

## INTRODUCTION

Nominal sentences in Modern Hebrew naturally lack the verb 'to be', because there is no conjugation for the verb 'to be' in present tense. This type of sentence always occurs in the present tense and has a number of 'suppletors'[18] that fill in the gap left open. In this paper I will deal with 'suppletors' consisting of two kinds of copulas: one that is homonymous with 3rd person personal pronouns and the other one which is homonymous with demonstrative pronouns. Examples (1a) and (1b) are two prototypical examples:

(1) a. david hu rofe
David he doctor
'David is a doctor'.


b. david ze rofe
David this doctor
'David is a doctor'.

## AGAINST LEFT DISLOCATION
### *Copula as Pron*

As Doron (2016) proposes in her PhD thesis *Verbless predicates in Hebrew*, we shall analyse the two copulas employed by the present tense nominal sentences as **Pron**. To distinguish between the two types of copula, we shall name PronH the pronoun that is homonymous with 3rd person personal pronoun and PronZ the pronoun that is homonymous with demonstrative pronoun. The forms will be the following:

Table 1. Forms of PronH and PronZ

| Personal Pronoun 3rd person /PronH | | Singular | Plural |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Masculine | *hu* | *hem* |
| | Feminine | *hi* | *hen* |
| | | | |
| Demonstrative Pronoun /PronZ | | Singular | Plural |
| | Masculine | *ze* | *ele* |
| | Feminine | *zot* | *ele* |

### *PronZ[19] and LD derivation*

Hazout (1994) is one of those who support the theory which considers PronZ the subject of the sentences. To account for her theory, she provides the following example:

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[18] The inverted commas are used, because the copulas are not a real suppletive form.
[19] The author does not consider PronH as her paper focuses on PronZ.

(2) li-dxof et ha-šulxan ze kaše
  to push Acc the table it hard
  'It is hard to push the table.'                                   [Hazout, 1994: 271]

Analyzing the sentence according to Hazout`s theory, we obtain the following scheme:

  [IP [CP li-dxof et ha- šulxan] IP[NP ze] I`[AP kaše]]

One of the problems with Hazout`s analysis is the fact that it is limited to AP, as the author doesn`t provide examples for NPs or DPs. Moreover, this type of sentence is limited to present tense, as it is not possible to transform sentence (2) into a sentence in the past tense that follows the exact same word order:

(3) li-dxof et ha-šulxan (*ze) haya kaše
  to push Acc the table was hard
  `It was hard to push the table`.

In the following sub-chapters, I will provide further arguments against the theory that considers PronH and PronZ a result of LD.

### Intonation arguments
The main difference between a nominal sentence and a sentence containing Left Dislocation is the 'intonation pattern' [Heller, 1999: 3], more specifically 'the pitch contour associated with topicalized elements (high initial, followed by a drop and rising at the end)'. [Berman and Grosu, 1976: 277]. Consider the differences in intonation between sentences (4a) and (4b) and between sentences (5a) and (5b). But the difference in intonation is not a random element, as it points to deeper differences between sentences with PronH and PronZ and LD sentences, as we shall see in the next sections.

(4) a. Yair Yarden hu baxur cair
  Yair Yarden he young boy
  'Yair Yarden is a young boy'.                                   [Oz, 1977:123]

  b. Yair Yarden, hu baxur cair
  Yair Yarden, he young boy
  ' (As for) Yair Yarden, he is a young boy'.

(5) a. Yair Yarden ze baxur cair
  Yair Yarden this young boy
  'Yair Yarden is a young boy'.

  b. Yair Yarden, ze baxur cair
  Yair Yarden, this young boy
   '(As for) Yair Yarden, this is a young boy'.

### Syntactic Arguments
PronH 'only occurs with the so-called nominal predicates and never with verbs' [Heller 1999:12]. This pattern applies not only to PronH, but also to PronZ. One could never find a PronH/PronZ and an inflected verb as part of the same grammatically correct sentence. Considering sentence (6a), a LD is necessary to construct the grammatical sentence. In this

case, (6b), the inflected verb is forcing PronZ to become the subject of the sentence and, in consequence, a regular demonstrative pronoun.

PronH and PronZ can occur in the same sentence with a personal pronoun, whereas a left dislocated element cannot. Consider sentences (7a) and (7b) and (8a) and (8b) for exemplification and contrast.

(6) a. rimon ze *[VP ose li carevet]
pomegranate this makes to me heartburn
'Pomegranate gives me heartburn'.

   b. rimon, ze [VP ose li carevet]
   '(As for) pomegranate, this gives me heartburn'.      [Heller, 1999:4-5]

(7) a. muvan šani hu šamarti
Understandable that I he that said[1st][pers][sg]
`(It is) understandable that I am the one who said  `.     [Oz, 1977:120]

   b. muvan šani, hu šamarti
   Understandable that I, he that said [1st][pers][sg]
   `(It is) understandable that I, he is the one who I said`.

(8) a. ha-lo ze ani
def. art. not this I
Am I not?     [Oz, 1977:55]

   b. ha-lo ze, ani
   def. art. not this I
   not this, me?

Berman and Grosu (1976) argue that against PronH and PronZ being derived by LD and conclude that 'the subject of a copula construction may be a nonspecific indefinite NP, while a left-dislocated NP may not' [Berman and Grosu 1976: 277]. They provide an example only for PronH (9a) and (9b) Following the same pattern, Heller provides examples for PronZ (10a) and (10b) and concludes the same: when having a quantifier or a non-general subject, LD is ungrammatical. Furthermore, one can question the predicate of a nominal sentence, but cannot question the predicate of and LD sentence.

(9) a. kol exad še lo gonev hu tipeš.
   all one that not steals he fool
   'Anyone who doesn't steal is a fool .'

   b.* kol exad še lo gonev, hu tipeš
   *'(Concerning) anyone who doesn't steal, he's a fool.'   [Berman and Grosu, 1976: 277]

(10)    a. *kol diyun be-balšanut, ze makor le-xilukey de'ot
   every discussion in-linguistics this source to-disagreement
   "*Every discussion in linguistics, it is a source of disagreement."

   b. kol diyun be-balšanut ze makor le-xilukey de'ot
   every discussion in-linguistics this source to-disagreement
   'Every discussion in linguistics is a source of disagreement.'     [Heller 1999:5]
   ***Questioning***

A final argument and at the same time a test to prove that PronH and PronZ act as copulas and not as subjects in a LD sentence is provided by questioning, because 'the predicate of a sentence can be questioned, provided that the subject and predicate are permuted' [Berman and Grosu 1976:277]. So, (11a) is the question to which sentence (4a) is the right answer. If we were to question (6a), we would get question (11b) which is ungrammatical.

(11)   a. ma hu Yair Yarden?
        what he Yair Yarden?
      'What is Yair Yarden?'

       b. *le-mi rimon, ze ose carevet
       to-whom pomegranate, this makes heartburn
       'To whom does pomegranate give heartburn?'                    [Heller, 1999:7]

**CONCLUSION**

Throughout the paper we saw solid arguments against the claim that Nominal Sentences containing a pronominal copula should be analyzed as a case of Left Dislocation. Future research should deal with different theories describing *what PronH and PronZ* are, but this research focused on proving that syntactically, the two copulas are not the subjects of the sentences in which they appear, because, as we saw, when trying to dislocate the subject, PronH and PronZ are ungrammatical in the newly formed sentences.

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