3   Complement clause types in Israeli

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Complement clauses in Israeli (a.k.a. 'Modern Hebrew') demonstrate *inter alia* that the fascinating, new, 'semi-engineered' language is caught in a war between prescriptivism and descriptivism. For example, the prescribed complementizer *ki* 'that' is possible and comprehensible but – as opposed to the usual complementizer *she-* 'that' – unproductive (see §4.2). By and large, authors of Israeli grammars attempt – deliberately or subconsciously – to force a '*M*osaic' grammar, which is Semitic, on a '*m*osaic' language, which is made up of both Semitic and Indo-European components.

1.   Basic information

The Israeli language emerged in *Eretz Yisrael* (lit. 'Land of Israel', which at the time was known as Palestine) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is one of the official languages – with Arabic and English – of the State of Israel (established in 1948). Israeli is spoken to varying degrees of fluency by the 6.8 million citizens of Israel – as a mother tongue by most Israeli Jews (whose total number is 5,235,000), and as a second language by Israeli Muslims (Arabic-speakers), Christians (e.g. Russian- and Arabic-speakers), Druze (Arabic-speakers) and others. It is also spoken by some non-Israeli Palestinians, as well as by a few Diaspora Jews.

The genetic classification of Israeli has preoccupied linguists since the beginning of the twentieth century. The still prevalent, traditional school suggests that Israeli is Semitic: (Biblical/Mishnaic) Hebrew *revived*. I call this the 'phoenix model', as the

phoenix rises from the ashes. The revisionist position, by contrast, defines Israeli as Indo-European: Yiddish *relexified*, i.e. Yiddish is the 'substratum', whilst Hebrew is only a 'superstratum' providing the lexis and lexicalized morphology (cf. Horvath and Wexler 1997). I call this the 'cuckoo model', as the cuckoo lays eggs in the nest of another bird. My own ***mosaic*** view is that Israeli is simultaneously Semitic and Indo-European. Both Hebrew (in use as the Jewish liturgical language but lethargic as a vernacular for more than 1700 years) and Yiddish (the revivalists' mother tongue, the contribution of which was not intentional, hence the term 'semi-engineered') act as its *primary contributors* (rather than 'substrata'). Israeli, therefore, falls into a mixed category of its own, as a 'phoenicuckoo hybrid' (which often also resembles a magpie as it collects features from various languages other than Yiddish and Hebrew).

Although Israeli phonetics and phonology are primarily Yiddish and its morphology is mainly Hebrew, the European contribution to Israeli is not restricted to particular linguistic domains and is evident even in its morphology. Thus, the term 'Israeli' is more appropriate than 'Israeli Hebrew', let alone the common signifiers 'Modern Hebrew' or 'Hebrew' *tout court* (cf. Zuckermann 1999, 2003, 2005, forthcoming).

2. Grammatical profile

Israeli is a fusional synthetic language, with non-concatenative discontinuous morphemes realised by vowel infixation. Consider, for example, *yohåv* 'love:3msgFUT', i.e. '(he) will love'; *mitahévet* 'fall.in.love:fsgPRES', i.e. '(she) is falling in love' – both formed from the root *'.h.b.*, but fitted into two distinct verb-templates. Compare also the following two verbs based on the root *n.d.b.*: *yenadvú* 'volunteer:3pl', i.e. '(they) will

volunteer (others)'; and *hitnudávti* 'volunteer:1sgPAST: COERCIVE/INDUCIVE.*hit–a–é– + –u–á–*', i.e. 'I (was) volunteered (by force)'.

However, Israeli is much more analytic than (Biblical/Mishnaic) Hebrew. Whereas the Hebrew phrase for 'my grandfather' was *sav-í* 'grandfather-1sgPOSS', in Israeli it is *sába shel-ì* 'grandfather GEN-1sg'.[2] Still, Israeli sometimes uses the Semitic feature known as 'construct-state' (Israeli *smikhút*, glossed here as CONSTR), in which two nouns are combined, the first being modified or possessed by the second. For example, *repúblika-t banánot*, lit. 'Republic-CONSTR bananas', refers to 'banana Republic'; and *mevakér ha-mdiná*, lit. 'comptroller DEF-state', is 'State Comptroller'. However, unlike in Hebrew, the construct-state is not highly productive in Israeli (see Zuckermann forthcoming). Compare the Hebrew construct-state *'em ha-yéled* 'mother:CONSTR DEF-child' with the more analytic Israeli phrase *ha-íma shel ha-yéled* 'DEF-mother GEN DEF-child', both meaning 'the mother of the child', i.e. 'the child's mother'.

Israeli is a head-marking language. It is nominative-accusative at the syntactic level and partially also at the morphological level. As opposed to Biblical Hebrew – whose constituent order is VAO(E) / VS(E) – but like Standard Average European (cf. Zuckermann forthcoming) and English, the usual constituent order of Israeli is AVO(E) / SV(E). Thus, if there is no case marking, one can resort to the constituent order. Israeli is characterized by an asymmetry between definite Os and indefinite Os. There is an accusative marker, *et*, only before a definite O (mostly a definite noun or personal name). *Et-ha* is currently undergoing fusion and reduction to become *ta*. Consider *taví l-i et ha-séfer* 'give:2msgsIMP (puristically FUT[3]) DAT-1sg ACC DEF-book' (i.e. 'Give me the book!'), where *et*, albeit syntactically a case-marker, is a preposition (cf. Danon

2002), and *ha* is a definite article. This sentence is realised phonetically as *taví li ta-séfer*.[4]

2.1 Nouns

Israeli nouns show number, normally only singular and plural. Each noun is either m(asculine) or f(eminine), the latter often being created by adding a suffix to the unmarked masculine. For instance, whereas *manhíg* is 'male leader', *manhig-á* is 'female leader' (note the addition of the feminine suffix *-a*). Similarly, *khayál* is 'male soldier' and *khayél-et* is 'female soldier'; *profésor* is 'male professor' and *professor-it* is 'female professor'.

Pronouns have 'case forms' consisting of a preposition plus a suffix: nominative (e.g. *aní* 'I'), accusative (*ot-í* 'me'), dative (*l-i* 'to me') and genitive (*shel-í* 'my'). However, NPs which are not pronouns do not bear case marking. The only exceptions are the above-mentioned accusative marker *et* (or *ta*), and the lexicalized allative ('to/towards') case (which, serendipitously, is based on the historical accusative case, see Weingreen 1959), e.g. *ha-báit* 'the house' > *ha-báyt-a* 'to the house'; *yerushaláim* 'Jerusalem' > *yerushaláym-a* 'to Jerusalem'; *tsafón* 'north' > *tsafón-a* 'to the north'. New allative phrases, e.g. *tel avív-a* 'to Tel Aviv', are not normally used unless one is trying to sound high-flown or jocular.

Adjectives agree in number, gender and definiteness with the nouns they modify, e.g. *ha-yéled ha-gadól*, lit. 'DEF-boy DEF-big', i.e. 'the big boy'; *yelad-ím gdol-ím*, lit. 'boy-mpl big-mpl', i.e. 'big boys'.

2.2 Verbs

As opposed to Biblical Hebrew, which had only a perfect/imperfect distinction, Israeli

has three tenses: past, present and future. In the past and future, verbal forms differ

according to gender, number and 1st, 2nd and 3rd person. However, in the present tense,

verbs are only conjugated according to gender and number and there is no person

distinction. The historical reason is that the forms of the Israeli present can be traced

back to the Hebrew participle, which is less complex than the historical perfect and

imperfect forms.

Verbs are transitive, intransitive or ambitransitive (labile). Ambitransitivity is

usually of the S=A type, e.g. *dan shatá etmòl* 'Dan$_\text{s}$ drank yesterday' (cf. *dan shatá*

etmòl bíra 'Dan$_\text{s}$ drank yesterday beer$_\text{o}$'). However, owing to Americanization, there are

more and more ambitransitive verbs of the S=O type, e.g. *ha-séfer mokhér tov* 'The-

book$_\text{s}$ sells well' (cf. *grísham mókher et ha-séfer tov* 'Grisham$_\text{s}$ sells ACC the-book$_\text{o}$

well'); *yésh po máshehu she-meríakh ra* 'There.is here something$_\text{s}$ that-smells bad' (cf.

aní meríakh po máshehu ra 'I$_\text{s}$ smell here something$_\text{o}$ bad').

In addition to the rich plethora of inflected verbal forms, there is a tenseless form,

which is usually referred to in Hebrew linguistics as the 'infinitive' (see §4.4, §4.5), cf.

Israeli *makór natúy*, lit. 'inflected origin'. It consists of the allegedly historical basic

verb form (Israeli *makór*, lit. 'origin, source'; often similar to the 2nd person masculine

singular imperative form, which derives from the historical imperfective), preceded by

the dative preposition *le-* (or *li-* or *-la*), which can refer to 'in order to'. For example, **le-**

nashék 'INFIN-kiss', i.e. 'to kiss' (cf. *nashék* 'kiss:2msgIMP'); **li-shmór** 'INFIN-guard' (cf.

shmor 'guard:2msgIMP'); **la-lékhet** 'INFIN-go' (cf. *lekh* 'go:2msgIMP').

2.3 Clauses

The main clause in Israeli consists of (a) clause-initial peripheral markers, e.g. discourse

markers; (b) NP(s) or complement clause(s); (c) a predicate – either verbal, copular or

verbless; (d) clause-final peripheral elements, e.g. discourse markers. The only

obligatory element is the predicate, e.g. *higáti* 'arrive:1sgPAST'. Sentences (1), (2) and

(3) are examples of a verbal, copular and verbless clause, respectively.

(1) [ester]$_A$ {[akhlá]$_V$ [tapúakh]$_O$}

    Esther   eat:3fsgPAST   apple

    'Esther ate an apple.'

(2) [ester]$_{CS}$ {[hi]$_{COP}$ [akhót   shel-i]$_{CC}$}

    Esther   COP:fsg   sister   GEN-1sg

    'Esther is my sister.'

(3) [ester]$_{VCS}$ {[khakham-á]$_{VCC}$}

    Esther   clever-f

    'Esther is clever.'

There are many types of subordinate clause, e.g. adverbial (denoting time, place,

condition, concession, reason, result, goal, state, comparison), adjectival/relative,

nominal/complement. I shall first describe the difference between a *she-* complement

clause and a relative clause (§3). Just like English *that*, the relativizer *she-* also acts as a

complementizer. Only after having established a clear distinction between relatives and

she- complements, shall I go on to describe the six main structural types of complement clauses, and their syntactic functions (§4).

3. The difference between *she-* complement clauses and relative clauses

Unlike a relative clause, which is only part of an argument (O/S/A/E), a complement clause is itself an argument (O/S/A/E). Consequently, there are several criteria to distinguish between relative and complement clauses in Israeli: passivization, topicalization, coordination and interrogation. Whereas only complement clauses can undergo passivization and topicalization, only relative clauses can be coordinated with adjectives. In interrogation, a complement clause answers a different type of question from that answered by a relative clause.

3.1 Passivization

A complement clause – but not a relative clause – can be the target of passivization. Consider the following complement clauses:

(4) [anì]   {yodéa   <she-hì   yaf-á>$_O$}

    I   know:msgPRES   COMP-she   beautiful-fsg

    'I know that she is beautiful.'

(5) {yadúa   l-i}   <she-hì   yaf-á>$_S$

     know:msgPRES:PASS   DAT-1sg   COMP-she   beautiful-fsg

    'It is known to me that she is beautiful.'

In (5) the complement clause from (4) is the target of passivization, just like an NP

object. On the other hand, in (6), *she-niytá yafá* 'who became beautiful' behaves like an

adjective and cannot be the target of passivization, i.e. it is a relative clause.

(6) raíti   et   [ha-ishá   [she-niytá   yaf-á]REL]O

    see:1sgPAST   ACC   DEF-woman   REL-become:3fsgPAST   beautiful-fsg

    'I saw the woman who became beautiful.'

3.2 Topicalization

A complement clause – but not a relative clause – can be topicalized, as, for example, in

(7), which is based on (5):

(7) [[ze]   <she-hí   yaf-á>]S   {yadúa   l-i}

    PROXmsg   COMP-she   beautiful-fsg   know:msgPRES:PASS   DAT-1sg

    'That she is beautiful is known to me.'

Sentence (8) is topicalization by fronting of the complement clause in (9):

(8) [[ze]   <she-yóram   ohév   et   íris>]O kul-ánu yodím

    PROXmsg   COMP-Yoram love:msgPRES ACC Iris   all-1pl   know:mplPRES

    'That Yoram loves Iris we all know.'

(9) kul-ánu yodím   <she-yóram   ohév   et   íris>O

    all-1pl   know:mplPRES   COMP-Yoram   love:msgPRES ACC Iris

    'We all know that Yoram loves Iris.'

Israeli prefers not to begin a sentence with a *she-* clause. The solution the language has

found is to insert a *ze* 'that, this' demonstrative as an external head. The result is that the

she- complement clause is in apposition to *ze*. In other words, once the complement

clause is put in a sentence-initial position, it has to transform into a complex O (or S in

the case of passivization – see (7)) consisting of an NP and a complement clause in

apposition (see §4.1). The result is 'complementary distribution' of a complement

clause and a complementation strategy of sorts – as in the case of Tariana (Chapter 8).

That said, it is indeed possible to topicalize the complement clause without *ze*.

However, such a structure is highly marked, rare and requires intonation of

topicalization, with a rising-falling contour at the end of the topicalized constituent:

(10) <she-yóram   ohév   et   íris>O   kul-ánu   yodím

  COMP-Yoram   love:msgPRES   ACC   Iris   all-1pl   know:mplPRES

  'That Yoram loves Iris we all know.'

3.3 Coordination

While a complement clause cannot be coordinated with an adjective, a relative clause

can. After all, the relative clause within an O is itself a modifier of the NP heading the

O. Consider the relative clauses in (11) and (12):

(11) raíti   [yaldá [she-hí   khakham-á]REL]O

  see:1sgPAST   girl   REL-COP   clever-fsg

  'I saw a girl who is clever.'

(12) raíti   [yaldá   yaf-á   [she-hí   khakham-á]REL]O

      see:1sgPAST   girl   beautiful-fsg   REL-COP   clever-fsg

      'I saw a beautiful girl who is clever.'

In (12), an adjective is added to (11). Such a move is impossible in the case of (13), which contains a complement clause:

(13) koév   l-i   <**she**-ló   notním   la-kélev   ókhel>S

      hurt:msgPRES   DAT-1sg   **COMP**-NEG give:mplPRES to:DEF-dog   food

      'It hurts me that no food is given to the dog.'

3.4 Interrogation

Whereas a complement clause could serve as an answer to a question beginning with *what* (Israeli *ma*, cf. *What* did you hear? I heard that Danny was coming), a relative clause could serve as an answer to a question beginning with *which* (Israeli *éyze*, cf. *Which* fruit do you like here? I like the fruit which is red). That said, in the case of a complex O/E (see §4.1), the complement clause can also serve as an answer to a question beginning with *which* (e.g. *Which* news did you hear? I heard the news that Danny was promoted).

4. Structural types of complement clauses

Israeli has six main types of complement clause, classified here according to structure (e.g. the complementizer type):

(a) *she-* 'that' (§4.1)

(b) *ki* 'that' (§4.2)

(c) *im* 'if' / interrogative (§4.3)

(d) 'infinitive' (§4.4)

(e) *im*/interrogative + 'infinitive' (§4.5)

(f) reduced complement clause (§4.6)

All these types are used in the O slot. All except (f) can be used in the A/S slot – see (5) and (16) for (a) and (33) and (48) for (c). Complements (a), (b) and (c) can take all the TAM properties available to main clauses. However, (d) and (e) can only take an infinitive and the verb in (f) must be in the present tense. Negation is possible within all Israeli complement clauses. In (d) and (e), the negator has to appear right before the 'infinitive'. Raising is possible only in (f) – see (43).

4.1 *She-* 'that' complement clause

This is the unmarked, most common complement clause, often used as a fact complement clause but also for activity and potential meanings:

(14) hu amár   l-i   <**she**-én   l-o   késef>$_O$

     he say:3msgPAST   DAT-1sg   **COMP**-EXIST.COP:NEG   DAT-3msg   money

     'He told me that he had no money.'

(15) shamáti   <**she**-ha-profésor-it   tekudám>$_O$

     hear:1sgPAST   **COMP**-DEF-professor-fsg   promote:3fsgFUT:PASS

     'I heard that the female professor will be promoted.'

Although *she-* complement clause usually appears in the O slot, it can easily be in the S

slot (see (5) above) and even in the A slot – just like in Yiddish and other European

languages – as follows:

(16) {[margíz]$_V$ [ot-à]$_O$}   <**she**-okhlím   khatul-ím>$_A$

        annoy:msgPRES   ACC-3fsg   **COMP**-eat:mplPRES   cat-pl

      'It bothers her that cats are eaten.'

By and large, *she-* complement clauses can follow almost all PRIMARY-B verbs, as well as

all verbs denoting SECONDARY CONCEPTS other than beginning SECONDARY-A verbs (see

Tables 1 and 2).

    The Israeli complementizer *she-* [ʃe] 'that' can be traced back to the Hebrew

complementizer *she-* 'that', which derives from the Hebrew relativizer *she-* 'that'. There

is no consensus about the origin of the latter. It might be a shortened form of the

Hebrew relativizer *'asher* 'that', which is related to Akkadian *'ashru* 'place' (cf.

Semitic ***'athar*), similar to the case of Goemai (Chapter 9). Alternatively, Hebrew

'asher derived from *she-*, or it was a convergence of Proto-Semitic *dhu* (cf. Aramaic *dī*

below) and *'asher*. The Hebrew relativizer *'ashér* is the origin of the Israeli relativizer

ashér 'that', which is much less common than the Israeli relativizer *she-* 'that'. Whereas

Israeli *she-* functions both as complementizer and relativizer, *ashér* can only function as

a relativizer.

Complex O/E with an NP and a *she-* complement clause in apposition

Like *that* complement clauses in English, *she-* complement clauses can sometimes

appear in a complex O/E argument involving an NP followed by a complement clause

in apposition (cf. (8) in Chapter 1, as well as Dixon 1991: 141-2). The NP can be a noun like *ha-uvdá* 'the fact' or *ha-khadashót* 'the news' or *ha-teórya* 'the theory' or *ha-hanakhá* 'the assumption', as in (17):

(17) hem satrú et [[ha-hanakhá]_{NP} <she-yésh khaím

     they contradict:3plPAST ACC DEF-assumption:f COMP-EXIST.COP life

     akhréy ha-mávet>]_O

     after DEF-death

     'They contradicted the assumption that there is life after death.'

Obviously, the noun is modifiable by an adjective before the apposed complement clause:

(18) hem satrú et [[ha-hanakhá ha-rovákh-at]_{NP}

     they:m contradict:3plPAST ACC DEF-assumption:f DEF-common-f

     <she-yésh khaím akhréy ha-mavét>]_O

     COMP-EXIST.COP life after DEF-death

     'They contradicted the common assumption that there is life after death.'

However, non-modifiable words can also be used in complementation. Consider the adverb *kakh* 'so, thus, that' and the masculine singular proximal demonstrative *ze* 'this, that', which, like a generic noun, can act as the head of an apposed complement clause. *Kakh* and *ze* are often used in the case of a complement-taking verb which requires a

preposition. They can be added between the verb and the complementizer *she-*.

However, this is not a necessity and Israeli allows *she-* after a preposition, as follows:

(19) hen   makhú   al   [(kakh/ze)   <she-ló   natnú

they:f protest:3plPAST   on   (so/PROXmsg)   COMP-NEG give:3plPAST

l-o   avodá>]ₑ

DAT-3msg   work

'They protested that he was not given work.'

The difference between *kakh* and *ze* is that *kakh* sounds high-register, whereas *ze* sounds

colloquial. That said, only *ze* can occur after a complement-taking verb with no

preposition. Furthermore, when the complementation occurs at the beginning of a

sentence, it is only possible to use *ze* (see §3.2).

4.2 *Ki* 'that' complement clause

Instead of using the *she-* complementizer, an Israeli formal writer could use the rare

complementizer *ki* 'that', which derives from the Hebrew complementizer *kī* 'that',

from *kī* 'because'. (Hebrew *kī* was replaced by *'asher/she* owing to the calquing of

Aramaic *dī/zī*, which functions both as complementizer and relativizer – cf. Deutscher

2000: 64). Consider the following minimal pair:

(20) ha-neeshám   taán   <**ki**   hu   khaf   mi-pésha>ₒ

DEF-accused:msg   claim:3msgPAST   **COMP**   he   clean   from-crime

'The accused claimed that he was innocent.'

(21) ha-neeshám   zuká   [**ki**   hu   khaf   mi-pésha]$_{CAUS}$

DEF-accused:m   acquit:3msgPAST:PASS   **CAUS**   he   clean   from-crime

'The accused was acquitted because he was innocent.'

Whereas in (20) *ki* introduces a complement clause, in (21) it introduces a causal clause. But such versatility can easily result in ambiguity, for example after the verb *hevín* 'understand':

(22) hevánti   [**ki**   kvar   hisbíru   et   ze]$_{CAUS/COMP}$

understand:1msgPAST   **REL/CAUS**   already   explain:3plPAST   ACC   PROXmsg

'I understood that it has already been explained.'

OR 'I understood because it has already been explained.'

Consequently, *ki* is often avoided even by Israelis attempting to write in a high register.

As opposed to *she-*, I believe that *ki* should be categorized as a prescriptive complementizer *tout court*. That said, some French-speaking immigrants to Israel use the complemetizer *ki* less rarely than other Israelis because of the phonetic similarity to the French complementizer *que* 'that'.[5] Bendavid (1967: 147) calls this multiple causation phenomenon *hidamút sheló midáat* 'subconcious assimilation' – cf. 'use intensification due to phonetic matching' (Zuckermann 2000: 316).

With regard to the distribution of *ki*, although it can replace *she-* in most cases, it cannot do so, for example, following LIKING verbs such as *aháv* 'love, like', *saná* 'hate', *heedíf* 'prefer' (see Table 1). As opposed to *she-* complements, *ki* complements cannot follow verbs denoting SECONDARY CONCEPTS.

Furthermore, whereas *she-* complement clauses can be topicalized in colloquial speech (see (10)), *ki* clauses cannot be. The reason for this syntactic restriction might be that whereas topicalization is colloquial in Israeli, *ki* is highly prescriptive, resulting in a clash. Unlike *she-*, *ki* complement clauses are not normally the target of passivization.

4.3   *Im* 'if'/Interrogative complement clause

Both *im* 'if' and interrogative complement clauses can follow almost all ATTENTION verbs, as well as conception, memory, knowledge, credence and prediction (THINKING) verbs, and saying, proposition, report, asking and demonstration (SPEAKING) verbs.

4.3.1   *Im* 'if' complement clause

Im 'if' complement clauses – in contradistinction to interrogative complement clauses – can also follow LIKING verbs, as well as modal and emotive verbs denoting SECONDARY CONCEPTS. *Im* clauses often, but not always, have a potential – rather than fact/activity – meaning. Consider (23):

(23) aní   tohé   <**im** atá   rotsé   la-vó>$_O$

    I   wonder:msgPRES   **if** you:2msg   want:msgPRES   INFIN-come

    'I wonder if you would like to come.'

Im complement clauses can be the target of passivization. They can follow all Primary-B verbs except those of supposition, remorse, promise and command – see Table 1. This distribution is similar to the case of interrogative complement clauses, although the latter can follow command verbs.

4.3.2 Interrogative complement clause (*vis-à-vis* direct speech)

In addition to the verbs already mentioned in §4.3.1, interrogative complement clauses – as opposed to *im* 'if' complement clauses – can follow command SPEAKING verbs. Interrogative clauses often, but not always, have a potential – rather than fact/activity – meaning. Consider (24):

(24)	hi	giltá	l-i	**<matáy**	[ha-hor-ím	shel-à]	yagíu>O
	she	reveal:3fsgPAST	DAT-1sg	**when**	DEF-parent-pl	GEN-3fsg	arrive:3plFUT

'She revealed to me when her parents would arrive.'

Historically, one might regard the interrogative complement clause as a semi-direct speech clause: *emór li: "matáy atà ba?" > emór li matáy atà ba > amárta li [matáy atà ba]* – Tell me: 'when [do] you (2msg) come?' > Tell me when you (2msg) come > You (2msg) told me [when you (2msg) come]. Direct speech is commonly used in Israeli, for example in informal speech or story-telling. Unlike English, the present tense in Israeli direct speech does not become past in indirect speech, and there is no change of constituent order. Thus, besides the distinct intonation, the only difference between an interrogative complement clause and direct speech is the pronoun used. Juxtapose (25) and (26):

(25)	hu	shaál	ot-ì	<ma	**anì**	rotsé>O
	he	ask:3msgPAST	ACC-1sg	what	**I**	want:msgPRES

'He asked me what I wanted.'

(26)	hu	shaál	ot-ì:	[ma	**atà**	rotsé	?]Direct Speech

he ask:3msgPAST ACC-1sg: what **you:2msg** want:msgPRES ?

'He asked me "What do you want?"'

Although I have no doubt that European languages such as Yiddish (a primary

contributor to Israeli) are an important source for Israeli interrogative complement

clauses, such clauses seem to have pre-existed in Hebrew (the other primary contributor

to Israeli). Consider, for instance, the Biblical Hebrew sentence *lo noda'* [*mi hikkáhu*]

'it be not known [who hath slain him]' (Deuteronomy 21:1). Such multiple causation, or

multi-sourcedness, corresponds with the Congruence Principle, according to which if a

feature exists in more than one contributor – whether primary or secondary – it is more

likely to persist in the target language (see Zuckermann 2003; cf. 'convergence' in

Thomason and Kaufman 1988).

Interrogative + *she-* **relative clause**

Interrogative complement clauses should not be confused with relative clauses which

modify an interrogative functioning as an NP, as follows:

(27) dáni   makír   et   [[mi]NP [she-higía   etmòl]REL]O

     Danny know:msgPRES ACC who   REL-arrive:3sgPAST   yesterday

     'Danny knows the one who arrived yesterday.'

(28) yósi   ve-rúti   mitkhartím   al [[ma]NP [she-hèm asú]REL]E

     Yossi and-Ruthie regret:mplPRES on what   REL-they do:3plPAST

     'Yossi and Ruthie regret what they did.'

(29) hu   hitkavén   le-[[má]$_{NP}$ [she-hù   amár]$_{REL}$]$_E$

he   mean:3msgPAST   to-what   REL-he   say:3msgPAST

'He meant what he said.'

(30) ahávti   <[[ekh]$_{NP}$ [she-hì   hirtsetá]$_{REL}$]$_O$

like:1sgPAST   how   REL-she   lecture:3fsgPAST

'I liked the way she lectured.'

4.4 'Infinitive' complement clause

Complement clauses beginning with a tenseless verb, commonly referred to as

'infinitive' (see §2.2) are often potential (31), but they can also describe activity (32).

(31) [hem] {bikshú   mi-dáni   <**li**-knót   mataná le-natalí>$_O$}

they   ask:3plPAST from-Danny   INFIN-buy   present to-Natalie

'They asked Danny to buy a present for Natalie.'

(32) od   lo   siámnu   <**le**-haavír   et   ha-khafats-ím>$_O$

still   NEG finish:1plPAST   INFIN-move   ACC   DEF-item-pl

'We have not yet finished moving the items.'

'Infinitive' complement clauses can appear in the S slot, as follows (see also (48)):

(33) <le-hitahév>$_S$ {ze   khashúv}

INFIN-fall.in.love   COP   important

'To fall in love is important.'

The following verb types do not use the 'infinitive' complement clause: (a) ATTENTION;

(b) THINKING: supposition, credence, prediction; (c) LIKING: remorse; (d) SPEAKING:

proposition. All the others do – see Tables 1 and 2.

4.5 *Im*/Interrogative + 'Infinitive' complement clause

Im/interrogative + 'infinitive' complement clauses can follow almost all ATTENTION and

SPEAKING verbs, as well as conception, memory, knowledge and prediction (THINKING)

verbs, but not LIKING verbs. Consider (34) and (35):

(34) [hi]   {tagíd   l-i   <**im** li-fgósh   ot-à   be-[yóm   khamishí]>$_O$}

        she   say:3fsgFUT   DAT-1sg **if** INFIN-meet   ACC-3fsg   in-day   fifth

        'She will tell me whether to meet her on Thursday.'

The ambiguity here – either 'she will tell me on Thursday' or 'we shall meet on

Thursday' – exists in Israeli too.

(35) [ha-moré   le-nehigá] {masbír   <**ekh**   le-hatslíakh   ba-tést>$_O$}

        DEF-teacher   to-driving explain:msgPRES   **how**   INFIN-succeed   in:DEF-test

        'The driving teacher explains how to succeed in the test.'

4.6 Reduced complement clause

In Israeli it is difficult to distinguish between a reduced complement clause and an NP

object followed by a participle acting as a modifier (either a relative clause or a deverbal

adjective).[6] Consider (36):

(36) raíti   [kélev   noshékh]$_O$

      see:1sgPAST   dog   bite:msgPRES

      'I saw a biting dog.'

      OR 'I saw a dog biting.'

(37) raíti   et   <**ha**-kélev   noshékh>$_O$

      see:1sgPAST ACC   DEF-dog   bite:msgPRES

      'I saw the dog biting.'

In (37), there is a complement clause, although the object of 'biting', a transitive verb, is not mentioned. Reduced complement clauses are in the present and it impossible to change their tense. In (36) there are two possible readings: either a mere NP object ('a biting dog') or a complement clause ('a dog biting'). One of the criteria which can be used to distinguish between the two readings is to check whether an object can be added to the verb (or participle), in this case *noshékh* 'biting'. This works in the case of transitive verbs. If it is possible, then it is a complement clause.

(38) raíti   <kélev   noshékh   ot-à>$_O$

      see:1sgPAST   dog   bite:msgPRES   ACC-3fsg

      'I saw a dog biting her.'

Sentence (38) is based on (36) but whereas (36) is ambiguous, (38) is not. Similarly, (39) is based on (37):

(39) raíti   et   <**ha**-kélev   noshékh   ot-à>ₒ

     see:1sgPAST ACC   DEF-dog   bite:msgPRES ACC-3fsg

     'I saw the dog biting her.'

The picture gets complex when considering (40):

(40) raíti   et   [**ha**-kélev   **ha**-noshékh]ₒ

     see:1sgPAST   ACC   DEF-dog   DEF-bite:msgPRES

     'I saw the biting dog.'

The modifier *ha-noshékh* 'DEF-bite:msgPRES' can be analysed either as a deverbal
adjective (with the *ha* appearing due to the required definiteness agreement between
nouns and adjectives) or as a reduced relative clause (with *ha-* as a 'relativizer', as
opposed to the unmarked *she-*). Supporting the relative clause analysis is the fact that it
is possible to add an object to the clause in (40). In that case, however, *hanoshékh otá*
'that is biting her' will *have* to be a relative clause modifying the dog – see (41).
However, here some native-speakers perceive a change of meaning.

(41) raíti   et   [**ha**-kélev   [**ha**-noshékh   ot-à]]ₒ

     see:1sgPAST ACC   DEF-dog   REL-bite:msgPRES ACC-3fsg

     'I saw the dog that is biting her.'

Although the *noshékh* 'biting' complement clauses involve a transitive verb, from (37)
one should conclude that whenever the noun is definite but the following participle/verb

is not, there is a complement clause. Consider (42), where *noshévet* 'blowing' is an

intransitive verb:

(42) shamáti   et   <ha-rúakh   noshév-et>O

hear:1sgPAST ACC   DEF-wind:f   blowing-f

'I heard the wind blowing.'

It is possible to raise the subject of the complement clause to the O slot within the main

clause, as follows:

(43) shamáti   ot-[à]i   <[Ø]i   noshév-et>O

hear:1sgPAST ACC-3fsg   Ø   blowing-f

'I heard it [the wind] blowing.'

Finally, compare (43) with (44), where the construct-state is an NP object, not a

complement clause. The head of the NP *neshivá* 'blowing' is a deverbal noun

('gerund'). (One might consider such nominalization a complementation strategy.)

(44) shamáti   et   [[neshivá-t   ha-rúakh]CONSTR]O

hear:1sgPAST ACC   blowing-CONSTR DEF-wind

'I heard the blowing of the wind.'

5. Complement-taking verbs

Table 1 features the distribution of complement clauses among verb types outlined in

Chapter 1. The symbol '√' means 'possible' whereas '~' means 'possible but unlikely'.

A blank means 'does not occur'.

<div align="center">**<place Table 1 about here>**</div>

There are verbs which always require a preposition following them, e.g. *makhá* 'protest' – see (19). Many others, however, may require a preposition to follow them only in specific circumstances. Tables 1 and 2 mark whether a specific complement clause can follow the verb regardless of whether or not the verb requires a preposition between the verb and the complement clause. Note that no 'infinitive' complement clause follows a preposition.

Some verbs, especially negative promise ones such as *hizhír* 'warn', require *irrealis* semantics and can take the prescriptive complementizers *pen*, *bal*, *levál* and *shéma* 'lest', resulting in a rare type of Israeli complementation, which cannot be the target of passivization:

(45) hizhárti   ot-ò   <bal/levál/pen/shéma yedabér>_E

     warn:1sgPAST   ACC-3msg   lest   speak:3msgFUT

     'I warned him not to speak.'

Negation and modality are often interlinked in Israeli. Consider *ma she-**ló** taasé*, lit. 'what REL-**NEG** do:2msgFUT', i.e. 'whatever you do', as well as the following minimal pair:

(46) hodíu   le-dalít   <she-[[má]   [she-hì   taasé]_{REL}]_S   yaazór>_O

notify:3pmPAST to-Dalit   COMP-what REL-she do:3fsgFUT help:3msgFUT

'Dalit has been notified that what she will do will help.'

(47) hodíu   le-dalít   <she- má   she-hì   **lo**   taasé

notify:3pmPAST to-Dalit   COMP- what   REL-she   **NEG**   do:3fsgFUT

yakhshílu   ot-à>_O

fail:3plFUT   ACC-3fsg

'Dalit has been notified that no matter what she does, she will fail.'

6. Secondary concepts

Table 2 features the distribution of complement clauses among verb types denoting

secondary concepts outlined in Chapter 1. It is clear from the table that, by and large,

secondary verbs in Israeli do not take the *ki* 'that', *im* 'if', interrogative, or

interrogative+'infinitive' complement clause.

<place Table 2 about here>

As one can see in the 'emotive' section in Table 2, some Israeli adjectives can take a

complement clause as an argument – cf. the cases of Matses (Sentences (20) and (21) in

Chapter 10) and Goemai (Chapter 9; note, however, that Goemai 'adjectives' are

actually verbs coding property concepts). Consider (48), said to be the last words of

Yosef Trumpeldor, soldier and early pioneer-settler in *Eretz Yisrael*, spoken on 1 March

1920, when he was mortally wounded while defending Tel Hai, a settlement in the

Galilee:

(48) tov   <la-mút   beád   arts-énu>_S

      good   INFIN-die   for   land-1plPOSS

      'It is good to die for our country.' (cf. *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*.)

7. Concluding remarks

Israeli has six main types of complement clause and does not require complementation

strategies. It can use direct speech (see §4.3.2) and nominalization (see end of §4.6).

Israeli complementizers (other than the archaic *pen*, *bal*, *levál* and *shéma*) all have some

other grammatical function. Thus, Israeli provides yet another illustration of the

statement that 'the great majority of complementizers are homonymous with some other

grammatical form in that language' (Dixon 1995: 184). One of the main difficulties is

how to distinguish between a reduced complement clause and an NP object with a

modifier. By and large, Israeli complementation types and their frequency correspond

with Yiddish and Standard Average European, although the forms used are Hebrew.

Type	Verb	Translation	Semantic Class	complement clause type						
				she-	*ki*	*im*	inter	infin	inter+infin	reduced
A T T E N T I O N	raá	see	perception	√	~	√	√		√	√
	shamá	hear	perception	√	~	√	√		√	√
	sam lev	notice	perception	√		√	√		√	
	heríakh	smell	perception	√						
	gilá	discover	discovery	√	~	√	√		√	√
	matsá	find	discovery	√	~	√	√		√	√
	khasáf	uncover	discovery	√	~	√	√		√	√
	badák	check		√	~	√	√			
T H I N K I N G	khasháv	think	conception	√	~	√	√	√	√	
	shakál	consider	conception	~		√	√	√	√	
	dimyén	imagine	conception	√	~	√	√	~	√	√
	khalám	dream	conception	√	~	~	√	√	√	
	heníakh	suppose	supposition	√	~					
	shiér	assume	supposition	√	~					
	savár	presume (high register)	supposition	√	~					
	tahá	wonder	supposition				√		√	
	zakhár	remember	memory	√	~	√	√	√	√	√
	shakhákh	forget	memory	√	~	√	√	√	√	√
	hevín	understand	knowledge	√	~	√	√		√	
	yadá	know	knowledge	√	~	√	√	√	√	
	hikír	be familiar with	knowledge						√	
	heemín	believe	credence	√	~	√	√			
	khashád	suspect	credence	√	~					
	nikhésh	guess	prediction	√	~	√	√		√	
	nibá	predict	prediction	√	~	√	√		√	
	khazá	foresee	prediction	√	~	√	√		√	
L I K I N G	aháv	love, like	preference	√		√		√	√	√
	saná	hate	preference	√		√		√	√	√
	heedíf	prefer	preference	√		√		√	√	√
	matsá khen beenáv	like	preference	√		√		√		
	hitkharét	regret	remorse	√						
	pakhád	fear	fear	√		√		√		
	khashásh	be afraid	fear	√		√		√		
	nehená	enjoy	joy	√		√		√		

Type	Verb	Translation	Semantic Class	complement clause type						
				she-	*ki*	*im*	inter	infin	inter+infin	reduced
S P E A K I N G	amár	say	saying	√	~	√	√	√	√	
	hodía	notify	saying	√	~	√	√	√	√	
	sipér	tell	saying	√	~	√	√		√	
	yidéa	inform	saying	√	~	√	√	√	√	
	teér	describe	proposition	√	~	√	√		√	
	taán	claim	proposition	√	~	√	√		√	
	hisbír	explain	proposition	√	~	√	√		√	
	tsién	mention	proposition	√	~	√	√		√	
	heelíl	allege	proposition	√	~	√	√		√	
	diveákh	report	report	√	~	√	√		√	
	perét	detail	report	√	~	√	√		√	
	hivtíakh	promise	promise	√	~			√		
	iyém	threaten	promise	√	~			√		
	hizhír	warn	promise	√	~				√	
	makhá al	protest about	complaint	√	~					
	hitlonén	complain	complaint	√	~					
	kavál al	complain about (high register)	complaint	√	~					
	tsivá	order	command	√	~		√	√	√	
	horá	order	command	√			√	√	√	
	pakád	command	command	√			√	√	√	
	hiftsír (be)	urge (in) (high register)	requesting	√	~			√		√
	bikésh (mi)	request (from)	requesting	√	~			√		√
	darásh (mi)	demand (from)	requesting	√	~			√		√
	shaál	ask	asking				√	√		
	hokhíakh	prove	demonstration	√	~	√	√		√	
	liméd	teach	demonstration	√	~	√	√	√	√	√
	lamád	learn	demonstration	√	~	√	√	√	√	
	herá (le)	show (to)	demonstration	√	~	√	√		√	
	shikhnéa	convince	demonstration	√			√	√	√	√

Table 1: Classification of Primary-B Verbs

Type	Element	Translation	Semantic Class	complement clause type						
				she-	*ki*	*im*	*inter*	infin	inter+infin	reduced
S E C O N D A R Y A	tsaríkh	should	modal	√				√		
	khová	must	modal	√				√		
	yitakhén	might, perhaps	modal	√						
	(lo) batúakh	(un)sure	modal	√						
	khavál	not worth-while	modal	√		√		√		
	kedáy	worth-while	modal	√		√		√		
	kef	fun	emotive	√		√		√		
	tov	good	emotive	√		√		√		
	atsúv	sad	emotive	√		√		√		
	yafé	beautiful	emotive	√		√		√		
	hitkhíl	begin	beginning					√		
	himshíkh	continue	beginning					√		
	hifsík	stop	beginning					√		
	siém	finish	beginning					√		
	gamár	finish	beginning					√		
	nisá	try	trying	√				√		
	hishtadél	try hard	trying	√				√		
S E C O N D A R Y B	ratsá	want	wanting	√				√		√
	kivá	hope	wanting	√				√		
	ikhél	wish	wanting	√				√		
	hitkavén	intend	wanting	√				√		
	tikhnén	plan	wanting	√			√	√	√	
	hityamér	pretend	wanting					√		
	heemíd paním	pretend	wanting	√						
S E C O N D A R Y C	asá	make	making	√						√
	garám (le-)	cause (DAT)	making	√				√		√
	hekhríakh	force	making	√				√		√
	hirshá (le-)	allow (DAT)	making	√				√		√
	natán (le-)	allow (DAT)	making	√				√		√
	azár (le-)	help (DAT)	making	√				√		√
	hitnadév	volunteer	making					√		

Table 2: Classification of Verbs Denoting Secondary Concepts

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Footnotes

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[1]   Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon read a draft of this chapter and provided invaluable suggestions for improvement.

A note on the transcription: whereas *á* is primary stress, *à* is secondary stress. If a stress is not mentioned in a bisyllabic word, it means that there are two possible stresses.

[2]   Etymologically, *shel* 'of' (GEN) consists of the relativizer *she-* 'that' and the (dative) preposition *le* 'to'.

[3]   Note that unlike Hebrew, in Israeli many semantically imperative constructions consist of morphologically future verbs.

[4]   Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, did not like the *et* particle and would have liked to have replaced *taví li **et ha**-séfer* with *taví li **ha**-séfer*. (It has been suggested that he was not keen on diplomatic relations with **etyópya** 'Ethiopia' for the same reason.) However, such a puristic attitude is hardly ever seen these days and *taví li **ha**-séfer* is non-native.

[5]   French *que* is traceable back to Proto-Indo-European **kwe*, which is also the origin of Modern Persian *ke* (cf. Haig 2001: 200), and which has been alleged to be ultimately related to Hebrew *kī*. If this is the case, the phonetic similarity between French *que* and Israeli *ki* cannot be put down to pure serendipity – cf. 'incestuous phono-semantic matching' in Zuckermann (2003).

[6]   Cf. formal generative linguists' 'complement *small* clause' and infinitival ECM (Exceptional Case Marker), e.g. Rothstein (1995).