Patterns of Dislocation: Judeo-Arabic Syntactic Influence on Modern Hebrew

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Abstract

This article deals with a phenomenon of Modern Hebrew that exhibits the influence of Judeo-Arabic: the phenomenon of dislocation as found in the Hebrew sociolect of the Israeli periphery, among descendants of Middle Eastern and North African Jews. I call this sociolect Israeli Periphery Hebrew (IPH). The article examines the wide-spread use of dislocation constructions in IPH—specifically pronominal disloca-tion, as well as echo and anchoring constructions—and their unique features. Even though dislocation is typical of spoken language in general, it is argued here that its frequency and unique constructions in IPH reflect the influence of the Judeo-Arabic substrate. The article attempts to illuminate the sources and roots of these dislocated constructions.

Keywords

Introduction

Although some of its features have, over time, trickled into General Israeli Hebrew (GIH),[1] the influence of the Judeo-Arabic substrate on Modern

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1   This term was coined by Haim Blanc (1957, 1964) to describe the spoken Israeli Hebrew that is grounded mainly in the language of speakers of European origin.

Hebrew is most visible in the Hebrew of the Israeli periphery (IPH),[2] namely, in the speech of the descendants of speakers of Judeo-Arabic (Henshke 2013). Examined here is one feature of Modern Hebrew that can be attributed to the influence of Judeo-Arabic: the phenomenon of dislocation as exemplified in the Hebrew sociolect of the periphery. The data presented here are based on a broad field survey that I conducted among second and third-generation descendants of North African immigrants to Israel and on dialogues culled from written literature.

Considering that dislocation constructions are very frequent in the Judeo-Arabic of North African Jews (Moshe Bar-Asher [personal communication]; Akun 2015:9–10; Caubet 1993:1:227–228, 2:5, among others), it is only natural that such constructions entered the Hebrew of Israelis whose parents or grandparents spoke Judeo-Arabic. Indeed, my examination of their Hebrew showed widespread use of means of dislocation in IPH, compared to GIH, and, moreover, unique dislocation constructions that are otherwise rare in Modern Hebrew. Several prominent constructions are examined here: widely occurring constructions involving the dislocation of personal and demonstrative pronouns, as well as echo and anchoring constructions. I claim that even though dislocation typifies spoken language in general, its multiplicity and unique constructions in the Hebrew of the periphery display the influence of the Judeo-Arabic substrate.

Personal Pronoun Dislocation

As noted, in the periphery some dislocated clauses are distinguished from GIH only by the *frequency* of their use (see Bar 1997 for a detailed discussion of the phenomenon). If tensed clauses with a pronominal subject are not widespread in GIH (Bar 1997:313–15), in the Hebrew of the periphery they constitute an active, dominant category with several syntactic variations, as outlined below. I analyze the pronominal subject as being a dislocated element resumed by various types of resumptive elements: a) verbal person-number-gender inflection; b) inflected prepositions.

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2   The term "periphery" refers here to geographical and social periphery alike. The term IPH
    denotes the language of Israel-born native Hebrew speakers who are descendants of immi-
    grants from the Middle East and North Africa, many of whom live in development towns,
    small towns, and moshavim (communal agricultural settlements) in the north and south of
    Israel, or in distinctive urban neighborhoods.

Verbal Clitic as Resumptive Element

(1)   אני עכשיו הגעתי לבית שלך.
  ani   ʕaxšav   hegaʕti   la-bait   šel-ax[3]
  I   now   arrive.PST.1SG to.the-house   of-you
  'Me, now I have reached your house.'
  (R., Jerusalem)[4]

All strata of Hebrew, including GIH, refrain from the use of a redundant pro-
nominal first or second person subject without special cause (Cohen 1990:53;
Bolozky 1984:126). Various aspects of the sporadic presence of this construc-
tion in verbal clauses in GIH have been noted and analyzed in the literature.
Some note its distribution in terms of person and tense (Bolozky 1984); oth-
ers regard it as a means of enhancing discourse accessibility, noting pragmatic
motivations for its use. Among the latter, the most frequently noted motiva-
tion is topic shift. A tangential motivation for its use is to focus on the person
performing the action (Ariel 1990:120; Polak-Yitzhaki 2004:33–34, 69);[5] others
observe the expressive nature (complaint, warning, insult) of the use of the
extra pronominal subject (Bar 1997:314). Nonetheless, all agree that this struc-
ture is infrequent in spoken GIH and even rarer in written Hebrew.[6]

     In IPH, however, I found widespread, explicit use of the personal pronoun
preceding verbs in the past (and future) tense, whose source I attribute to
Judeo-Arabic, as in the following Judeo-Arabic constructions, for example:

(2)   *nti   šəfti-h   waqt   li- ža?*
      you   see.PST.2.F.SG-him   time   that-come.PST.3.SG
      'You, did you see him when he came?'

(3)   *ana   ma   mšit-ši   l-l-ʕarš*
      I   NEG   go.PST.1SG-NEG   to-the-wedding
      'Me, I did not go to the wedding.'

In IPH, this construction occurs in both first-person and second-person pronouns, but more frequently with the former.[7] Regarding the rationale for this redundancy in IPH, only in a minority of cases can we discern the pragmatic or emotional motivation that is mentioned in the literature. Most of the occurrences serve to direct attention to the subject of the predicate, but this effect is not necessarily very strong; indeed, it is often almost imperceptible, as in the following examples:

(4) אני תמיד הייתי עובדת.
ani	*tamid*	*haiti*	*ʕovedet*
I	always	was.PST.1.SG	work.PTCP.F.SG

'Me, I have always worked.'
(Motzafi-Haller 2012:39)

(5) אני כשהייתי בהצגה עם ציפי לא ידעתי שהיא מרוקאית.
ani	*kše-hayiti*	*ba-hacaga*	*ʕim*	*cipi*
I	when-was.1SG	in.the-play	with	Tsipi
lo	*yadaʕti*	*še-hi*	*marokait*	
NEG	know.PST.1SG	that-she	Moroccan.F	

'Me, when I was at the play with Tsipi, I didn't know that she was Moroccan.'
(H., Yeruham)

These utterances are typical of the IPH sociolect. In GIH the equivalent utterances would be devoid of the initial pronoun.

Inflected Prepositions as Resumptive Elements

Dislocation of personal pronouns is also evident in verbal clauses in which the resumptive element is not the verbal inflection, but is an object or possessive pronoun; namely, the left dislocation is of a nominative form which is resumed by a pronoun in the direct/indirect object or possessor position. For example:

(6) הוא עוד מדברים עליו שנשאר מלך.
hu	*ʕod*	*medabrim*	*ʕal-av*	*še-nišar*	*melex*
he	still	say.PTCP.M.PL	of-him	that-remain.PTCP.M.SG	king

'Him, they still say of him that he remained a king.'
(Shilo 2005:16)

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7 A similar tendency with future verbs is also found in GIH. See Bolozky 1984:128–129. I did not provide examples of the third-person construction, because they are widespread in Hebrew (Bolozky 1984).

(7) אני, תעזוב אותי פה רגע עם איציק.

    ani   *taʕazov*   *ot-i*   *po*   *regaʕ*   *ʕim*   *icik*

    I   leave.FUT.2.M.SG   ACC-me   here   minute   with   Itzik

    'Me, you leave me here for a minute with Itzik.'

    (Shilo 2005:55)

(8) אני הבנים שלי למדו בחינוך העצמאי.[8]

    ʔani   *ha-banim*   *šəl-i*   *lamdu*   *ba-ħinnux*

    I   the-son.PL   of-me   study.PST.3.PL   in.the-education

    ha-ʕacmaʔi

    the-independent

    'Me, my sons studied in the independent education system.'

(9) אני המשפחה שלי עלתה ממרוקו ומתורכיה.[9]

    ani   *ha-mišpaħa*   *šel-i*   *ʕalta*

    I   the.family   of- me   immigrate.PST.3.F.SG

    mi-maroko   *ve-mi-turkiya*

    and-from-Turkey   from-Morocco

    'Me, my family immigrated [to Israel] from Morocco and Turkey.'

(10) אני הסבתא שלי לא ידעה קרוא וכתוב.

    ani   *ha-safta*   *šel-i*   *lo*   *yadʕa*

    I   the-grandmother   of-me   NEG   know.PST.3.F.SG

    kro   *u-xtov*

    read.INF   and-write.INF

    'Me, my grandmother did not know how to read and write.'

(11) אני כואב לי כשאומרים . . .

    ani   *koev*   *l-i*   *kše-omrim*

    I   hurt.PTCP.M.SG   to-me   when-say.M.PL

    'Me, it hurts me when they say . . .'

The examples above are verbal clauses; however, dislocation of nominative pronouns is also found in nominal possessive constructions (*yesh li* 'I have'/

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8 Rabbi Ovadia Yosef in an interview, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShUTNgTylVI (accessed October 6, 2014).

9 Examples (9)–(11) are cited from Schwarzwald (1986:332). Interestingly, Schwarzwald's main informant for examples of this sort is a speaker whose family came from an Arabic-speaking land.

ʔen li 'I don't have'). This dislocated construction is not found in GIH and is marked as typical of IPH. For example:

(12) אני יש לי חור בשכל

   ani   yeš   l-i   xoʁ   ba-sexel
   I   is   to-me   hole   in.the-brain
   'Me, I have a hole in my brain.'
   (R., Jerusalem)

(13) היא אין לה את הבעיה עם השם שלי.

   hi   en   l-a   et   ha-beʕaya   ʕim   ha-šem   šel-i
   she   NEG   to-her ACC   the-problem with   the-name of-me
   'Her, she doesn't have a problem with my name.'
   (Shilo 2005:178)

(14) ¹⁰...אני הייתה לי

   ani   hayta   li
   I   was.PST.3.F.SG   me
   'Me, I had...'
   (Busi 2000)

(15) אני לא היה לי שעון.¹¹

   ani   lo   haya   l-i   šaʕon
   I   NEG   was   to-me watch
   'Me, I didn't have a watch.'

The latter type of examples (12)–(15) has direct parallels in Judeo-Arabic:

(16) *ʔana   ʕnd-i   tlat   bnat*
   I   by-me   three   daughter.PL
   'Me, I have three daughters.'

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10   Citation from Muchnik 2004:10–11. She terms these "substandard expressions from spo-
      ken language...and expressions...typical of the uneducated."

11   Rabbi Ovadia Yosef in an interview, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShUTNgTylVI
      (accessed October 6, 2014).

Demonstrative Pronoun Dislocation

The use of dislocated demonstrative pronouns is very frequent in IPH. Unlike the semantically empty expletive pronouns found in GIH sentences such as *ze raq ba-ʿerev she-hi kazot*, 'it is only in the evening that she is like that' (Halevy 2006; Bar 1997:310–11),[12] dislocated demonstratives in IPH point to persons and generally have a specific referent known to the speaker and hearer. In Bar's study of dislocation in Israeli Hebrew (Bar 1997:310–11), this pattern is not mentioned. Here, too, the influence of Arabic is readily apparent (Caubet 1:168–69). The following examples are taken from spoken Judeo-Arabic, the first of right dislocation and the second of left dislocation:

(17) *li*   *tquli-lu*   *yaʕməl-ək*   *ada*
      that   say.FUT.2.M.SG-him   do. FUT.3.M.SG -(for) you   DEM.M.SG
      'Whatever you tell him he will do for you, that one.'

(18) *hadi*   *li*   *ʕnd-a*   *taʕṭ-ek*
      DEM.F.SG   that   by-her   give.FUT.3.M.SG -(to) you
      'That one, whatever she had she will give to you.'

In IPH as well, these dislocated elements are found in both left and right dislocation.

Right Dislocation

(19) ?איך הוא אמר זה
      ex   *hu*   *amar*   *ze*
      how   he   say.PST.3.M.SG   DEM.M.SG
      'How did he say, that one?'
      (P., Yeruham)

(20) היא עדינה זאתי.
      hi   *ʕadina*   *zoti*
      she   delicate   DEM.F.SG
      'She's delicate, that one.'
      (Shilo 2005:69)

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12   In Bar-Aba's (2010:186–209) examples, most instances of זה *ze* 'it,' are not interchangeable with proper nouns. The few examples of this sort that she does present (Bar-Aba 2010:195–196) are not associated with speakers of a particular social background.

(21) היא יכולה לבכות זאתי.

hi   *yxola*   *livkot*   *zoti*
she   can.PTCP.F.SG   cry.INF   DEM.F.SG
'She can cry, that one.'
(Shilo 2005:73)

(22) היא מחורפנת לגמרי זאתי.

hi   *mexurfenet*   *legamre*   *zoti*
she   crazy.PTCP.F.SG   completely   DEM.F.SG
'She's completely screwed up, that one.'
(Adaf 2008:206)

Left Dislocation

(23) זה, מתי שהוא מגיע למטבח, אשתו לובשת סינר.

ze   *matay*   *še-hu*   *magiyaʕ*   *la-mitbax*
DEM.M.SG   when   that-he   get.PTCP.M.SG   to.the-kitchen
išt-o   *lovešet*   *sinar*
wife-his   wear.PTCP.F.SG   apron
'That one, when he gets to the kitchen his wife wears an apron.'
(P., Yeruham)

(24) זה, כל מה שהוא אומר לך, זה לא נכון.

ze   *kol*   *ma*   *še-hu*   *omer*   *l-ax*
DEM.M.SG   everything   what   that-he   tell.PTCP.M.S   to-you
ze   *lo*   *naxon*
this(it)[13]   NEG   correct
'That one, everything he tells you, it's not correct.'
(G., Yeruham)

(25) זאתי, הכל אצלה הצגה.

zoti   *ha-kol*   *ecl-a*   *hacaga*
DEM.F.SG   the-everything   by-her   act
'That one, everything is a show for her.'
(Shilo 2005:171)

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13   This *ze* is a semantically empty expletive parallel to the expletive common in GIH, and
      not the demonstrative pronoun discussed in this section.

(26) וזאתי ימח שמה- ציפרניים של זאב יש לה.

    ve-zoti   *yimmaħ*   *šem-a*   *cipornayim*   *šel*

    and-DEM.F.SG   eradicate.FUT.3.M.SG   name-her   claw.PL   of

    ze'ev   *yeš*   *l-a*

    wolf   have   to-her

    'And that one, may her name be cursed: claws of a wolf she has.'

    (Adaf 2008:167)

The Echo Construction

A particularly striking construction is the echo construction (Taube 1997),[14] also called the "sandwich construction" (Azar 1992:96), as in (27):

(27) ?אתה רעב אתה

    ata   *raʕev*   *ata?*

    you   hungry   you

    'You, are you hungry?'

    (Oz 1983:40)

On the face of it, example (27) might seem to be a case of right dislocation that just happens to duplicate the resumptive pronoun. However, though historically these sentences may indeed be analyzed as simple cases of dislocation, I maintain that in IPH they constitute a distinct construction: a fixed structure involving an echo, i.e., an exact duplication of the pronoun (whether personal or demonstrative). The essential feature of this structure is the full echo, which produces an intensifying effect.

    The echo construction, which occurs with personal and demonstrative pronouns, is typical of and very frequent in IPH, and appears in both declarative and interrogative sentences.[15] Some of these clauses still retain their expressive function;[16] in others, however, the expressive function has been eroded, leaving only the repetitive construction.

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14   Taube (1997), who discusses the echo construction in Yiddish, notes that in Hebrew these repetitive constructions do not derive from Yiddish but rather from Arabic dialects (Taube 1997:418). The speakers who use it share a Judeo-Arabic substrate.

15   Contra Azar (1992:96), who argues that most occurrences of this construction are interrogative.

16   Bar-Aba (2010:171–72) maintains that this utterance expresses denigration or exhortation. This is not the case in IPH.

Even though this construction exists in the Bible,[17] its prevalence in IPH is clearly due to the influence of Judeo-Arabic. This construction is common in North African Arabic, e.g.:

(28) *hada*   *mliḥ*   *hada*
     DEM.M.SG   good   DEM.M.SG
     'That's good, that!'

(29) *hadi*   *ṣla*   *hadi*
     DEM.F.SG   synagogue   DEM.F.SG
     'That's a synagogue, that.'

(30) *ana*   *məžnuna*   *ana?*
     I   crazy   I
     'I'm crazy, am I?'

In the Hebrew of the periphery this construction can take two forms, simple and complex:

Simple Echo Construction

This construction is composed of a clause with the addition of a personal pronoun duplicated at the beginning or the end, as in (27) above, and in the following examples:

(31) ?למה את באה אתי את
     lama   *at*   *ba'a*   *it-i*   *at*
     why   you.F.SG   come.PTCP.F.SG   with-me   you.F.SG
     'Why are you coming with me, you?'
     (A., Jerusalem)

(32) את צריכה להיזהר את.
     at   *crixa*   *le-hizaher*   *at*
     you. F.SG   need   to-careful.INF   you.F.SG
     'You have to be careful, you.'
     (Adaf 2008:163)

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17   Psalm 76:8: אתה נורא אתה *?atta nora ?atta* 'Oh You! You are awesome!'

(33) הוא, גרוש הוא לא היה שם בצד.

hu   gruš   hu   lo   haya   sam   ba-cad
he penny he NEG was put in.the-side
'Him, a penny he didn't set aside.'
(Shilo 2005:21)

Complex Echo Construction

This construction is composed of a base clause with the addition of two identical echo pronouns at both ends. Again, these sentences may have developed through a process of dislocation. For example, the simple clause *ma ani yaʕase,* 'what I do.FUT.1.M.SG' in (34) became *ani ma ani yaʕase*, 'me what I do,' through left dislocation (or, alternatively, *ma ani yaʕase ani* through right dislocation), and then an additional process of dislocation yielded a second pronoun at the other end, forming an echo structure (*ani ma ani yaʕase ani*). However, I believe that today these sentences are instances of the independent echo construction as well.

(34) אני מה אני יעשה אני?

ani   ma   ani   yaʕase   ani?
I   what   I   do.FUT.1.M.SG   I
'Me, what will I do -, me?'
(G., Jerusalem)

(35) אני לא חסר לי שכל אני

ani   lo   ḥaser   l-i   sexel   ani
I   NEG   lack   to-me   intelligence   I
'Me, I'm not lacking in intelligence, me.'
(Motzafi-Haller 2012:158)

Echo constructions (both simple and complex) can also feature demonstrative pronouns:

Simple

(36) זה מוסיקה טובה זה.

ze   muzika   tova   ze
DEM.M.SG   music   good   DEM.M.SG
'That's good music that.'
(M., Jerusalem)

(37) זה סיפור מהחיים זה.

    ze   *sipur*   *me-ha-ḥaim*   *ze*
    DEM.M.SG   story   from-the-life   DEM.M.SG
    'That's a story from life that.'
    (Motzafi-Haller 2012:35)

Complex

(38) זה הכלכלה שלו יקר זה.

    ze   *ha-kalkala*   *še-lo*   *yakar*   *ze*
    DEM.M.SG[18] the- economy   of-him   expensive   DEM.M.SG
    'That one, supporting him is expensive, that one.'
    (A., Yeruham)

The Anchoring Construction

Another dislocation construction that singles out one part of the sentence is the anchoring construction, involving a chain of social relationships. For example:

(39) שכן שלי, החברה שלו, שכנים שלה לומדים אצלנו.

    šaxen   *šel-i*   *ha-xavera*   *šel-o*   *šxenim*   *šel-a*
    neighbor   of-me   the-friend   of-him   neighbor.M.PL   of-her
    lomdim   *ecl-enu*
    learn.PTCP.M.PL   by-us
    'The neighbors of the friend of my neighbor study with us.'
    Literally: 'My neighbor, his friend, her neighbors study with us.'
    (Ziv 2010:43)

This construction has received partial coverage in the literature (Ziv 2010), but no attention has been paid to the overall syntactic picture. Treating it here as part of the phenomenon of dislocation that typifies IPH, I examine its significations, uses and sources.

    Anchoring is a discourse construction that seeks to create an anchor for connectivity and for enhanced accessibility of discourse entities (Ziv 2010:

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18   In its two appearances in the sentence *ze* refers to a person.

43–45). It is frequent in Judeo-Arabic and in the Hebrew of Israelis with origins in Arabic-speaking lands, and has even found its way into spoken GIH. Its advantages in terms of processing are readily apparent. Nonetheless, note that this is not an innovation, but rather a borrowing of a widespread Judeo-Arabic construction. Moreover, in Hebrew this construction serves the same purpose as in Judeo-Arabic, especially in the description of relationships in real or imagined space. It always opens with a coordinate known to the interlocutors and progresses two or three stages in order to map relationships.

An additional example appears below:

(40)   אילן דדון, אחותו, גיסתה, פתחה מספרה.
  ilan dadon axot-o gisat-a   patxa
  Ilan Dadon sister-his sister-in-law-her open.PST.3.F.SG
  maspeʁa
  hairdressing.salon
  'The sister-in-law of Ilan Dadon's sister opened a hairdressing salon.'
  Literally: 'Ilan Dadon—his sister—her sister-in-law; she opened a hair-
  dressing salon.' (H., Netivot)

Thus, as we saw above, in discourse speakers use these dislocated utterances, which progress from one entity to the next, in order to guide the addressee to the destination by clarifying the link between each two entities in the chain.

A Presentative Construction

An additional type of anchoring construction involves locative phrases. Speakers of IPH who have to map out a route for their interlocutor note the main coordinates in nominal form, sometimes preceded by a presentative word. They sometimes use a combination of Hebrew and Arabic, as in (41), or only Hebrew, as in (42):

(41)   א-תחנה א-דאר.
  ha-t-taḥana   ha-d-dar
  here-the-station here-the-house
  'Here's the station—here's the house.'
  (H., Yeruham)

(42) .הנה התחנה הנה הבית

    hine   ha-taḥana   hine   ha-bayit

    here   the-station here   the-house

    'Here's the station—here's the house.'

    (S. Regev)[19]

Conclusion

In sum, this article has examined a syntactic phenomenon in Modern Hebrew: the frequency of dislocated elements in IPH and the unique forms found only in this sociolect. Attributing this phenomenon to Judeo-Arabic sources has shed new light on the roots of the use of dislocation in IPH. The article has also reconsidered some elements sporadically addressed in the literature, such as echo and anchoring constructions, viewing them as part of a general trend of dislocation that draws on the Judeo-Arabic substrate.

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19   See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAPmMVjT-78 (accessed October 3, 2010).

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