

**TE'UDA**

XXVII

STUDIES IN SPOKEN HEBREW



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XXVII

**STUDIES IN SPOKEN HEBREW**

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# TE'UDA

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## ABSTRACTS

### Part I

#### **An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics: On Corpora Research around the World and in Israel**

Einat Gonen

This chapter is an introduction to corpus linguistics for Hebrew readers. It presents an overview of the development of corpus linguistics internationally starting in the 1960s.

Key issues are surveyed, including the nature of spoken language corpora, the question of representation in corpus linguistics versus theoretical linguistics, the development of sub-fields such as corpus-based linguistics and corpus-driven linguistics, computational linguistics and others. A special section is devoted to Israeli Hebrew corpus linguistics.

#### **The Database for the “Studying Spoken Hebrew” Project**

Shlomo Izre'el

The database for this project is based on a set of recordings that forms part of *The Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew (CoSIH)* ([cosih.com](http://cosih.com)). The design of *CoSIH* is culturally dependent to correspond to the structure of the Israeli Hebrew speech community, and thus includes informants from a variety of demographic backgrounds. Crucially, it includes natural speech from everyday life in a variety of contexts, mostly conversations. Each set of recordings composing the disseminated corpus consists of longitudinal recordings over periods of 8, 12 or 16 hours.

Awareness of being recorded can influence individuals' speech usage. However, this awareness normally subsides after a short period of time. The conversations dealing with the recording itself appear not to use forms of speech that differs from the regular, spontaneous speech of the same speakers.

An example is given as an appendix to this chapter. Sociolinguistic data on the informants, their interlocutors and the recordings are also provided (cf. [cosih.com/audio-and-data.html](http://cosih.com/audio-and-data.html)).

## Part II

### **A Few Words on “Word”**

Shlomo Izre’el

The term *word* resists a single definition, and therefore has been characterized from different points of view. A *written word* is a stretch of letters followed by a space or a punctuation mark. A *lexical word* (or *lexeme*) is a semantic concept that can be represented in a dictionary but usually combines a variety of related forms. A *grammatical* (or *morpho-syntactic*) *word* is a form defined according to structural criteria. A *phonological word* is defined according to phonological criteria. For Hebrew, a solid phonological criterion that can be used is stress, and a *prosodic word* is defined as a segmental stretch carrying a single main stress.

### **Visual Representations of Spoken Hebrew**

Shlomo Izre’el

This chapter presents a general review of phonetic, phonological and orthographic methods of transcribing spoken Israeli Hebrew, and claims that phonetic and phonological transcripts are necessary for phonological and morphological analyses, whereas orthographic transcripts are best used for discourse analysis, lexicographical studies and possibly also for syntactic analysis. A short survey of prosodic notations for Hebrew is also presented. It is emphasized that no study of spoken language can rely solely on transcripts and must always refer to actual recordings.

### **Speech Prosody: An Introduction**

Vered Silber-Varod and Hila Green

As human listeners, we contribute many sources of information to the interpretation of a message, including syntax, semantics, our knowledge

of the world, the conversational context, and *prosody* – the information gleaned from the timing and melody of speech. However, the timing and melody of speech convey both linguistic as well as para-linguistic (e.g., intentions) and even non-linguistic (e.g., emotional state) information. The goal of this chapter is to introduce the diverse information conveyed by rhythm and intonation in speech. Investigating speech prosody is essential to an understanding of a wide range of intriguing issues including speech perception, language learning and teaching, speech recognition, rhetoric, assistive technologies and even security devices and forensics.

## **The Syntax of Colloquial Hebrew**

Esther Borochofsky Bar-Aba

The grammar of the Hebrew language that developed in the Middle Ages dealt with analyzing and describing the rules of classical written Hebrew texts. Since then, Hebrew grammar, along with its perceptions and concepts have been associated with the legacy of the written language. Spoken syntax researchers who are familiar with the syntax of written Hebrew can find many differences between the two modes, but this analysis tends to be limited to the concepts and perspectives of the written language grammar, and does not reveal the overall picture and or show that the construction of spoken utterances, the macro-syntax, differs substantially from that used in written texts. This chapter explores a number of examples of syntactic features typical of spoken languages in general and spoken Hebrew in particular including (1) Repetitions resulting from speakers' inability to convey a message properly on the first attempt, and repeated attempts to improve it until they are satisfied or until they feel that the message has been understood; (2) Syntax between speakers: sometimes there is a syntactic dependency between the utterances of different speakers, for instance when one speaker completes the other person's utterance or uses it to "hook" an utterance and thus build a joint construction; (3) Changes in forms of expression: by changing tenses, pronouns, direct and indirect speech and so on, speakers diversify their utterances to make the addressee closer or farther from the content conveyed; (4) Non-sentential utterances; (5) an abundance of pronouns; (6) Changes in word order and others.

## **Producing a Dictionary of Spoken Hebrew**

Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald

Producing a dictionary of a spoken language is difficult for a variety of reasons including the limited size of the corpus, the level of coherence of actual utterances, the partial representation of different subject matters and misrepresentations by individuals from various social and educational backgrounds. In addition to issues such as spelling, unclear meanings and the choice of appropriate lexical items, phonetic, etymological and grammatical information needs to be considered. Most of the vocabulary of spoken Hebrew is the same as the written one; nevertheless, the spoken corpus exhibits the following exceptional lexical items which are exemplified in detail here: one-time innovations, meaning changes, abbreviations, loan words and slang words.

## **Remarks on the Vocabulary of the Corpus**

Doron Rubinstein

This chapter presents a characterization of the vocabulary of spoken Israeli Hebrew, as found in the workshop corpus. The transcribed corpus consists of 26,538 word tokens by about 40 speakers. For purposes of analysis, a concordance of the corpus was prepared. The words were classified into 5,552 word types, which were tagged in turn into 2,236 entries (both lexical and encyclopedic). The findings showed that one third of the word tokens of the corpus could be classified into 36 word types (only 0.6% of the total: **אֵל** [no, not, did not, is not], **הֵן** [this, it is], **אֲנִי** [I] etc., in that order), and half of the word tokens could be classified into 52 entries (only 2.3% of the total: **הֵן**, **אֵל**, **אֲנִי** etc., in that order).

## Part III

### The Basic Units of Spoken Language: Prosody, Discourse and Syntax

Shlomo Izre'el

Spoken language organizes itself into units of speech that can be accounted for by their suprasegmental structure. There is a broad consensus that each such unit, here termed *prosodic group*, encapsulates a coherent structural, functional segmental unit and defines its boundaries. A larger unit of prosody is a *paratone*, defined as a prosodic unit ending in a major (terminal) boundary tone. A paratone can include either a single prosodic group or more, where the optional, preceding prosodic groups will end in a minor (continuing) boundary. The paratone encapsulates a segmental unit which is termed *utterance*.

In terms of the interface between prosody and syntax, there seems to be a large (albeit not universal) consensus as regards the syntactic unit encapsulated by a prosodic group, and different schools of thought view the *clause* as the basic syntactic unit, which implies that the prosodic group is the natural domain of the clause. However, for many languages, including Israeli Hebrew, the ratio between clauses and prosodic groups challenges this assumption. It is therefore suggested that the *utterance*, rather than the prosodic group, should be the default domain of the clause, whether it consists of a single prosodic group or more. An utterance can include either a single clause or a clause cluster.

The interface between prosodic and segmental units is suggested to be the following:

Prosodic units	Discourse units	Syntactic units
Paratone	Utterance	Clause /Clause cluster
Prosodic Group	Speech Group	
Minor		Phrase / Clause (/Clause cluster)
Major		Clause (/Clause cluster)

## **The Quest for Gutturals in colloquial Hebrew: Strategies for Identifying missing Slots**

Shmuel Bolozky

As is well known, in General Israeli Hebrew, *ʔ*, *ʕ* and in most cases *h* are usually not realized on the surface (except for relatively marginal phonetic realizations). They are only heard when the syllables containing them are heavily stressed for emphasis or contrast. The main argument presented here is that it is still possible to recognize consonantal positions (or slots) where historical gutturals existed, not only because of their residual effect on neighboring vowels, but also, and primarily, because these consonantal slots help attribute lexical items with now-lost gutturals to morphological patterns, and thus facilitate their morphosemantic processing. This chapter examines a number of possible accounts as to how speakers identify theoretical consonantal slots by surface clues such as a syllable with an initial vowel, a long or somewhat-lengthened vowel, etc., and at other times by relying on the uniqueness of forms or on the context. The arguments are based entirely on data drawn from a spoken corpus.

## **Acoustic Reduction of Hebrew Vowels in Spontaneous Speech**

Osnat Tzenker and Noam Amir

From a functional point of view, speakers strive to achieve optimal transfer of messages with a minimal amount of articulatory effort. Acoustic vowel reduction (AVR) can be considered a realization of pronunciation economy, in which the position of the vocal organs required for the production of an ideal vowel is abandoned in favor of a more neutral position of the vocal tract.

This study investigated the phenomenon of AVR in the spontaneous speech of native speakers of Hebrew. Formant frequencies of the five Hebrew vowels in spontaneous speech and the effect of word stress on these values were examined. In addition, the effect of the phonetic context; namely, the place of articulation of the preceding consonant on the formants of the vowel /a/ was evaluated. The values of the first two formants and the fundamental frequency were extracted from 5,583 vowels taken from the production of 10 speakers (5 men and 5 women). The reduction measurements were

calculated for the vowel space as a whole and to quantify the reduction of individual vowels.

The data analysis showed that AVR exists in the spontaneous speech of Hebrew speakers: the polygons of unstressed vowels were reduced in size and more central in the formant space than the polygons of their stressed counterparts. The unstressed occurrences of the vowels were higher in the formant space than the stressed ones in the F1 dimension and more central in the F2 dimension. The stress effect was the strongest on productions of the low vowel /a/. The stress effect was also found in the fundamental frequency values: stressed vowels had slightly higher frequency values than their unstressed equivalents.

In addition, the data showed that the F2 frequency values of the vowel /a/ were affected by the phonetic context of the preceding consonant. Vowel /a/ production in the unstressed position varied more significantly because of the different phonetic contexts than their realizations under word stress. This tendency supports the hypothesis of contextual assimilation – the change in vowel quality due to a phonetic context effect – that takes place in unstressed vowels.

### **“Lo Ohev T’a... Signon Haze (I Do Not Like This... Style)”: Prosody-Syntax Interface in the Vicinity of Hesitation Disfluencies**

Vered Silber-Varod

This chapter investigates a specific structural aspect of speech prosody: the segmentation of speech into intonation units. The *prosodic hierarchy* is thought to encompass three types of supra-prosodic units beyond the *prosodic word* level: the *phonological phrase*, the *intonational phrase* and the *utterance*. The *prosodic hierarchy* demonstrates that prosodic units are relevant solely when they are linked to other layers of speech; i.e., to phonemes, syllables, words, phrases and utterances. The issue of which type of linguistic structure is represented by intonation units is crucial to the study of prosody-syntax, and one of the premises here is that the prosodic strata does not necessarily overlap the syntactic strata. In other words, a prosodic unit boundary is not necessarily a syntactic unit boundary, and vice versa: the end of a syntactic unit does not have to be realized by a

prosodic boundary tone. The first step in this exploration was to identify patterns capturing the perceptual and acoustic characteristics of continuous (C) prosodic boundaries. Five C-boundary tones were defined at this stage: C-Rise, C-Fall, C-Rise-Fall, C-Neutral, Elongated-C (i.e., hesitation). The next stage involved a linear analysis of the prosodic boundary tone and the part-of-speech (POS) dependencies between the words on either side of the boundary. The prosodic-syntactic interface was defined by the type of C-boundary as related to the syntactic dependency between the POS on either side of the boundary tone. The results show that while all four C-boundary tones split the weak dependencies (C-Rise, C-Fall, C-Rise-Fall, C-Neutral), the Elongated-C boundary tone was unique in that it is the most likely to occur between words with stronger levels of syntactic dependency.

### **Selected Morphological Phenomena in the Corpus of Spoken Hebrew**

Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald

The morphology of spoken Hebrew is quite similar to written Hebrew; nevertheless, there are several phenomena that are characteristic of the spoken language: 1. The prefixed particles, *ke-* 'as' is hardly used. The prepositions *le-* 'to', *be-* 'in' and the connectives *še-* 'that' and *ve-* 'and' do not show morphophonemic alternation; 2. Personal pronouns do not include *ʔanoxi* 'I' and *ʔanu* 'we', but rather *ʔani* and *ʔanahnu*, respectively; 3. Pronominal suffixes are limited to certain nominal lexical items, but never to verbal ones; 4. Although the construct state is very productive, the definite article fluctuates between the first and second constituent of the construction; 5. The gender agreement between numbers and nouns also fluctuates; 6. Other unique morphological trends are listed briefly because the corpus did not provide sufficient data to make decisive generalizations.

### **Indexed roots: on the representation of roots in Israeli Hebrew verbal Morphophonology**

Ezer Rasin

In standard approaches to root-and-pattern morphology, the consonants of the root are inserted one after the other into the consonantal slots provided



by the pattern. The verbal system of Israeli Hebrew presents a challenge to these approaches: the borrowing of loan words with complex consonant clusters and the disappearance of guttural consonants from the language have led to mismatches between the number of consonants in the root and the number of slots in the corresponding pattern. To address this challenge, a new representation of roots is proposed in which each consonant has an index that determines the position in the pattern in which it should be inserted.

### **Nuances in meanings of the prefix and suffix verbal conjugation in spoken Israeli Hebrew**

Ilil Malibert-Yatziv

This chapter presents the main nuances of *tense-aspect-mood* (TAM) meanings of the prefix and suffix verbal conjugation as attested in the *Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew* (CoSIH).

A synchronic corpus-driven examination characterizing the *tense-aspect-mood* nuances of the simple and complex verbal forms occurring in the texts was the basis for this study. This preliminary research attempts to avoid referring to the pre-established meanings of Modern Hebrew verbal forms which have been described as principally tense-oriented. The theoretical background draws on the typological literature on *tense-aspect-mood* in other languages.

All the verbal forms (simple and complex) were analyzed within a broad context including syntactic devices (the presence or absence of personal pronouns in the clauses, the nature of clauses, and lexical constructions (adverbials)).

It is shown that prefix verbal conjugation in CoSIH is mainly modal-oriented and can be defined as non-factual. Suffix verbal conjugation in CoSIH is mainly aspectual-oriented and is associated with tense, but it can also replace the general present or the present continuous. In most of the examples, temporal adverbials highlight the modal or the aspectual meanings of the verbs.

## Nominative Independent Person Markers in Spontaneous Spoken Israeli Hebrew Verbal Units: Initial Findings

Smadar Cohen

The grammatical category of “person” is usually associated with the independent personal pronoun (*kinuy parud*). The basic morpho-phonological distinction of person markers in world languages is between an “independent marker” and a “dependent marker.”

A rough division of languages into two types is customary in typological linguistics: those enabling the omission of the pronoun, and those which do not (there are some linguists who postulate a third type of languages, those enabling partial omission of the pronoun).

Goldenberg’s Hebrew verb theory is based on the assumption that Hebrew is a language that enables the addition of a person (the pro-add phenomenon) to the verb but, in fact, does not require its presence.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, though the person marker is not required, every such addition contributes an added meaning to the unit, a meaning that is absent without it. This added meaning requires explanation.

This chapter follows Goldenberg by showing that Hebrew is indeed a language enabling the addition of an external person marker to the verb – in other words, that Hebrew is a *pro-add language* rather than one enabling the person marker’s omission (a *pro-drop language*), the terms customarily used in typological linguistics.<sup>2</sup> Further, this chapter theorizes that the independent person markers have a clear role, a consistent arrangement, and distinct conditions of performance; they do not appear randomly or non-systematically in spoken Hebrew.

The conclusions of this study rely on an extensive research corpus, whose database includes 60,000 words, in which 24 informants were recorded between the years 1999 and 2002. It analyzes verbal structures in speech units, and presents the system of person markers within verbal units of spoken Hebrew in Israel at the onset of the twenty-first century.

- 1 G. Goldenberg, “On the theory of the Hebrew verb and the verb,” in *Studies in Language*, ed. M. Bar-Asher (Jerusalem, 1985), 1:295–349 [Hebrew].
- 2 The classification of a language according to the status of its pronouns is a theoretic-philosophical issue, one of the important parameters that localize the language in the global language map.

## Construct States in the Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew (CoSIH)

Nimrod Shatil

This study explored all the construct states (Noun<sub>1</sub> + Noun<sub>2</sub>) found in the corpus that are determined by the article *ha*—both quantitatively and qualitatively. The position of this article can be a) initial (before a Noun<sub>1</sub>); b) internal (before Noun<sub>2</sub>); c) doubled (before both nouns). The internal position is the most prevalent in classical Hebrew, and hence is considered the normative form.

Quantitatively, the internal determination (the normative form) constituted 57% of the corpus, the internal determination accounted for 37%, and the double determination was only found in 6%. The main claim made here is that this difference in frequency of the forms reflects different grammatical functions. The initial determination marks lexical phrases. The internal determination marks certain kinds of grammaticalizations (new prepositions, adverbs and quantifiers). It also marks construct states that serve as proper nouns, for example, *ʔarcot ha-brit* (the U.S.) and idioms like *ʔaxrit ha-yamim* (End of Days). Finally it marks possession; e.g., *kaf ha-yad seli* ('my palm of the hand' = the palm of my hand).

The double determination is the least amenable to classification. Often it is a variant of the lexical constructs. The internal determination may be introduced as an after-thought, probably as an acknowledgment normativity.

## The Numerals in a Spontaneous Corpus of Colloquial Hebrew

Einat Gonen & Doron Rubinstein

Classical Hebrew as well as Modern Hebrew distinguish between the genders of numerals. However in colloquial Modern Hebrew there has been a process of neutralization. This chapter addresses the issue of numerals in colloquial Hebrew and specifically examines gender agreement between Modern Hebrew numerals and the nouns they modify in a corpus of casual spoken Hebrew discourse.

The use of numerals in spoken Modern Hebrew is varied, and many speakers do not regularly distinguish numerals according to the grammatical gender of the modified noun, but rather use the unmarked 'neutral' form

of the numeral, which in Hebrew is typically the feminine form. Previous studies have argued within a variety of methodologies and frameworks for a gradual ongoing neutralization of the gender distinction of numerals in this environment. This chapter looks at the conditions and the scope of this neutralization.

It is based on a collection of recordings from CoSIH “Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew”, and analyzes the various usages of numerals in this corpus. It presents the scope and nature of the neutralization process in colloquial Hebrew and shows that although there is a bias towards neutralization, this bias is not absolute and depends on specific circumstances.

## **Word Order**

Esther Borochoovsky Bar-Aba

Word order in spontaneous spoken language is, in many cases, driven by the processes going on in the speaker's mind while producing the utterance. Sometimes speakers introduce at the beginning of the utterance an important part of the message they want to convey, mostly the theme of the content. At other times speakers add a sort of a “tail” at the end of the utterance for various purposes, such as completing the utterance, being more precise, ascribing more or less validity to what has just been said, and so on. The outcome is that many utterances in the spoken language are constructed such that the content conveyed is “packaged” in different components serving various discourse roles located before or after the main content.

## **Unipartite Clauses in Spoken Israeli Hebrew**

Shlomo Izre'el

This chapter is grounded in an integrative approach to the structure of spoken language that includes prosody, information structure and syntax that leads to a new model of the *clause*, viz., a *unipartite clause*, where the only necessary and sufficient component is the *predicate*; i.e., no subject component is required. The clause is thus defined as a unit consisting minimally of a predicate.

A predicate can be either nuclear or extended; in other words, it can consist of either a single element (phrase, word or part of a word) or be

seen as a domain. The predicate (or the predicate domain) is viewed as the component that carries the informational load of the clause within the discourse context, which by default is a newly introduced element. More importantly, the predicate (or the predicate domain) is the component that carries the modality of the clause, where *modality* is viewed in a broader perspective. By default, the predicate also carries the focus of the clause. A broad classification of unipartite clauses in spoken Israeli Hebrew is presented, based on anchoring points within a discourse context (intra- or extra-linguistic) and types of anchors.

### **Given Information: The Interface Between Pragmatic and Prosodic Features In Spoken Hebrew**

Ilil Malibert-Yatziv & Elda Weizman

In this chapter we examine the interface between the pragmatic and prosodic features of given information in spoken discourse. Specifically, we aim to answer two questions: (1) Does textual markedness of given information – manifest in its morphology, syntax, semantics and cohesion – correspond with its prosodic markedness? (2) when such correspondence occurs – what is its nature?

In what follows we propose a research method which may best serve our aim, and discuss some preliminary findings which emerge from the analysis of a monologic excerpt of a conversation, featuring in the data base of The Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew (CoSIH). We make a clear-cut distinction between the textual and the prosodic approaches. Accordingly, we first identify in the prosodic contour deviations in terms of pitch (FO), and then analyse separately the pragmatic features of the textual environment in which the deviation occurs. Only then do we match the prosodic features with their textual counterparts. This method of analysis presupposes a symmetrical perception of the interface between prosody and textual pragmatics.

## **The Thread of the Conversation – A Semantic Pragmatic Texture of Conversations**

Tamar Sovran

Recorded conversations can be analyzed from various angles. This chapter focuses on the semantic-pragmatic elements that bind different types of conversations together. It first follows the twists and turns of a recorded telephone conversation between two good female friends. It reveals the dynamics between the participants, and highlights the abilities and skills that help them understand the situation, feel gaps, and grasp the meanings of certain speech acts and subtle hints. The second conversation is a multiple participant discussion over a family dinner table. This conversation deviates and is almost quelled, but eventually survives thanks to the efforts and contributions of the speakers despite their different personalities and attitudes. The chapter tracks the varying themes and semantic frames that characterize this activity. It is claimed that although engaging in conversations is natural and highly automatic, the participants need to exercise sophisticated skills that help them overcome breakdowns and crisis situations over the course of the session. The main point is that conversations are not mere collections of speech acts, but rather display a mutual ‘choreography’ of turns, conflicts, as well as support, where the participants make an unspoken pact to preserve the thread.

## **Levels of Comprehension and Ways of Representing the Subject in Spoken Hebrew**

Sol Azuelos-Atias

This chapter discusses the ways the subject is represented in spoken Hebrew sentences. A tentative characterization of a class of circumstances is suggested in which speakers express informative discourse units (in contrast to regulatory discourse units) by using “unipartite” sentences consisting of predicates alone. In these circumstances the information is expressed by sentences that do not specify their subject explicitly.

The theoretical basis for this work is based on the results of research by Shlomo Izre'el and Esther Borochofsky Bar-Aba and those of Mira Ariel. The description of the ways the subject is represented in spoken Hebrew

is based on an analysis of utterances recorded during a real conversation from the collection of dialogues presented in the *Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew* (CoSIH). This chapter characterizes the circumstances in which speakers use unipartite sentences by considering the schematic nature of human languages. It is suggested that speakers tend to use unipartite sentences unless they suspect, given the discourse circumstances, that their addressees might misunderstand them; in these cases speakers add redundancy (among other things, by specifying their subjects explicitly). This characterization suggests another facet of the way coherent utterances are generated that can be studied by discourse analysis.

### **Discourse / Prosody Interface: Axshav ('now') as a Test Case**

Zohar Livnat, Noam Amir & Einat Gonen

This study describes the discursive characteristics of the discourse marker *axshav* ('now') in spoken Hebrew and explores its prosodic features using instrumental methods. This is the first attempt to use acoustical analysis to examine the prosodic aspects of discourse markers in Hebrew. The corpus is made up of more than 5 hours of everyday Israeli Hebrew conversations, in which 106 occurrences of the word *axshav* were found. More than one-third of these occurrences were identified as DMs, while the others were temporal adverbials. The main discursive functions of these DMs were segmentation, accentuation of the importance of certain pieces of information, sometimes by means of comparisons and contrasts, and holding the floor.

The acoustical analysis of the performances of *axshav* in both functions showed that most DMs have characteristic intonation contour, including a sharp decrease in the frequency inside the second syllable. There was a statistically significant difference between the average duration of the performance of *axshav* as a DM compared to its performance as a temporal adverbial. Specifically, the duration of the performance of *axshav* as a DM was shorter, both for the performance of the first syllable as well as for the overall duration of the word. These findings strengthen the claim that prosodic data play a role in deciphering the function of *axshav* as a DM.

## **Selected Comment Expressions from CoSIH – Distribution, Functions and Analytical Challenges**

Yael Ziv

This chapter examines the distributional and functional properties of a number of comment expressions in spoken Israeli Hebrew: “*ani xoSev/et*”, “*nir'e li*”, “*leda'ati*” and “*betax*” as reflected in selected sections of CoSIH. Analysis reveals that various syntactic features associated with a given expression correlate with its syntactic-semantic scope along with the relative epistemic load associated with a specific instance. In addition to predictable syntactic, semantic and pragmatic differences between these comment expressions, a significant grammaticalized distinction emerges in SIH between “*ani xoSev/et*” and the others; namely, when embedded in a phrasal unit it functions as an approximator rather than a regular epistemic expression.

## **On the Language of a Bilingual Speaker of Mizrahi Origin: Between Idiolect and Sociolect**

Yehudit Henshke

This chapter deals with the Hebrew spoken by a roughly 60 year old Israeli woman whose native tongue is Judeo-Arabic and who learned Hebrew after she came to Israel from Morocco in her twenties. It examines the initial stage of contact between Hebrew and Moroccan Judeo-Arabic, with an eye to describing the ongoing impact of this contact on the language of Israelis whose native language is Hebrew but whose (distant) origin is likewise in Morocco. The influence of Judeo-Arabic is explored in the domains of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and phraseology. It is shown that in most of these linguistic domains, there is a considerable similarity between the Hebrew of the first-generation immigrant and the Hebrew of second- and third-generation descendants of Moroccan immigrants.

Good examples are the unique usages of prepositions and complex tenses. The woman's Hebrew can therefore be said to faithfully represent the initial state of a sociolect spoken by a certain sector in Israel's periphery, and to reflect the extensive role of Judeo-Arabic in forming this sociolect.