Construct State: Modern Hebrew

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2013. In G. Khan (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, Leiden: Brill.

Modern Hebrew (MH) nominal morphology preserves the nominal inflectional categories of earlier periods, and accordingly all nouns are inflected for the category of *state* (as well as other nominal categories such as *gender* and *number*). The unmarked state is called the *absolute state*, and it is distinguished from the *construct state* (CS) form:

(1a)   absolute state: גלימה *glima* 'gown'

(1b)   construct state (CS): גלימת *glimat* 'gown-CS'

The construct state noun heads a construction called סמיכות חבורה *smixut xavura* 'construct', where it is immediately followed by a noun-phrase called סומך *somex* 'annex'. The construct encodes a relation, such as the possessive relation in (2) where the construct head is the possessee and the construct annex the possessor:

(2)   גלימת המלך

        glimat   *ha-melex*

        gown-CS   the-king

        'the king's gown'

Nouns in the absolute state must lack an annex, as they do in (3a). In contrast, nouns in the construct state must be followed by an annex, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (3b) which lacks an annex.

(3)   המלך התעטף בגלימה*בגלימת

    ha-melex hitʿaṭef   *(a) bi-glima /(b) *bi-glimat*

    the-king wrapped himself   (a) in-gown / (b) *in gown-CS

    'The king wrapped himself in a gown'.

 The construct in MH preserves some of the properties of the construct in earlier periods of Hebrew, but also exhibits some new tendencies, concerning both form and function. The study of the construct in MH has been carried out within different theoretical frameworks, and has raised a variety of issues related to the properties and characteristics of the construct. These issues include definiteness of the construct, the distinction between phrasal and compound structures, and the interpretation of constructs headed by non-nominal heads. In addition, it has been pointed out that the construct is but one of three constructions which express genitive relations in MH, and the relationship between these constructions has been the subject of many studies.

1. The Form of the Construct

Prosody and Phonology. As in earlier periods of Hebrew, the construct state head in MH together with the first word of its annex constitute a prosodic word. This word has one primary stress, which falls on the annex. As a result, the head may undergo a variety of phonological operations sensitive to lack of stress, such as vowel deletion (גָדוֹל *gadol* 'big' > גְדוֹל *gdol* 'big-CS'), monosyllabization (בַּיִת *bayit* 'house' > בית *bet* 'house-CS', מָוֶת *mavet* 'death' > מוֹת *mot* 'death-CS), and internal stem modification (שְׂמָלוֹת *śmalot* 'dresses' > שִׂמְלוֹת *śimlot* 'dresses-CS'). The latter operation, however, is less widely spread in MH, and speakers often use either forms in both construct and absolute nouns (Rosén 1957:140). Thus both חֶבְרוֹת *xevrot* 'companies-CS' and חֲבָרוֹת *xavarot* 'companies' (absolute form) can be found as the head of a construct, as in חֲבָרוֹת\חֶבְרוֹת תעופה *xevrot/xavarot teʿufa* 'airline companies', and both forms are also attested in non-construct phrases, such as חֲבָרוֹת\חֶבְרוֹת עסקיות *xevrot/xavarot ʿisqiyot* 'financial companies'. The phonological form of the head also differs according to the nature of the annex; pronominal annexes and full NP annexes may in some cases trigger different phonological operations on the head, e.g., מְלָאכָה *melaxa* 'craft' : מְלֶאכֶת *melexet*-(CS) vs. מְלַאכְתּוֹ *melaxt-o* 'his craft'. In some cases only the suffixed construct changes form: סרט *seret* 'film' : סרט *seret*-CS vs. סרטו *sirt-o* 'his film' (Glinert 1989).

In addition, the feminine singular suffix *-á* and the masculine plural suffix *-im* exhibit a particular form in the construct state: *-at* and *-e* respectively (Rosén 1957; Berman 1978; Coffin and Bolozky 2005; Faust 2011; among many others).

The Head. The head of the construct can be a noun, as in שמלת כלה *śimlat kala* 'bridal dress', חלון הבית *xalon ha-bayit* 'the window of the house', including abstract nominalization of a verb (יציאת המוזמנים *yeṣiʾat ha-muzmanim* 'the exit of the invitees', הפסקת הדיון *hafsaqat ha-diyun* 'the termination of the discussion'); an adjective (טוב לב *tov lev* 'good hearted', שחור תלתלים *śxor taltalim* 'black-curled'); a numeral or quantifier (כל הילדים *kol ha-yeladim* 'all the children', שבעת הכוכבים *šivʿat ha-koxavim* 'the seven stars'); a participle, either active (עורך עיתון *ʿorex ʿiton* 'newspaper editor', מנהל החברה *menahel ha-xevra* 'CEO') or passive (מוצף מים *muṣaf mayim* 'flooded with water', נטול קפאין *neṭul kafeyn* 'caffeine free'); and a preposition (לפני הצהריים *lifne ha-ṣohorayim* 'before noon', אחרי הצומת *ʾaxare ha-ṣomet* 'after the intersection').

From a normative point of view, the head cannot be coordinate. Yet constructs with coordinate heads are attested, not only in colloquial use but also in more formal registers: מורי ותלמידי המכללה *more ve-talmide ha-mixlala* 'the teachers and students of the college', מדינת ועם ישראל *medinat ve-ʿam yiśraʾel* 'the state and the people of Israel', תחילת וסוף השיעור *txilat ve-sof ha-šiʿur* 'the beginning and the end of the class' (Glinert 1989).

In very rare cases, the head of the construct can itself be a construct: בית משפט השלום *bet mišpaṭ ha-šalom* 'magistrates court', בית ספר שדה *bet sefer śade* 'field school'.

The Annex. The annex of the construct in MH must be a noun phrase, including noun phrases which consist of a pronominal affix (זכותו *zxut-o* 'his right'). However, proper names are generally avoided as annexes when referring to a possessor. Speakers judge constructs such as משקפי מוטי *mišqefe moṭi* 'Moti's glasses' as ungrammatical, and find it difficult to assign possession interpretation to them (Ravid and Bar-On 2012). The annex cannot be an adjective; a compound such as הנדסה אזרחית *handasa ʾezraxit* 'civil engineering' is not a construct, as is evident from the form of the head (הנדסה *handasa*), which is in the absolute state rather than the construct state (הנדסת *handasat*). The annex can also itself be a construct, thus creating construct chains which are in principle unbounded: עקרון חופש הביטוי *ʿeqron xofeš ha-biṭuy* 'the principle of freedom of speech', תצהיר מזכירת דובר ראש הממשלה *taṣhir mazkirat dover roš ha-memšala* 'the declaration of the secretary of the prime minister'.

Inflection. Plural and gender inflection is marked on the head: ראשי ממשלות *raše memšalot* 'prime ministers', עורכת העיתון *ʿorexet ha-ʿiton* 'the newspaper editor (f)'. Pluralization of the annex differs for compound and phrasal constructs, and is discussed below. Definiteness marking in the construct has been the topic of investigation of many studies, and is discussed below.

2. Related Constructions

The construct involves the surface adjacency of two nominal elements: the construct-state head and the noun-phrase annex. The construction denotes a genitive relation, such as possession, where the construct-state head is the possessee, and the annex noun-phrase is the possessor, though many other semantic relations are also expressed (see, e.g., Azar 1977; Glinert 1989; Schlesinger and Ravid 1998 and references therein; and Coffin and Bolozky 2005). In the construct, the annex is bare, i.e., not case-marked. Genitive relations can also be expressed with a different construction, the *periphrastic possessive* construction, where the possessee is a full noun phrase. In this case the possessor cannot be bare, but must be case-marked as genitive by the genitive preposition של *šel*: ספר של המורה *sefer šel ha-more* 'a book of the teacher's', המטריה החדשה של רותי *ha-miṭriya ha-xadaša šel ruti* 'Ruti's new umbrella'. There is also an intermediate construction for the expression of genitive relations, where the head is in the construct state, and its annex is a possessive suffix which agrees with the possessor. This construction is called the *clitic doubled construct,* or simply the *double construct.* It has in common with the periphrastic possessive the case-marking of the possessor by means of the genitive preposition של *šel* 'of': אשתו של הצייר *ʾišt-o šel ha-ṣayar* 'the painter's wife', ספרו החדש של המורה *sifr-o he-xadaš šel ha-more* 'the teacher's new book' (Rosén 1957; Azar 1977; Berman 1978; Borer 1984; Engelhardt 1998; 2000).

The construct and double-construct show structural and functional similarities and differences relative to the periphrastic construction, where the head neither agrees nor is in the construct relation with the possessor. Though some researchers maintain that the three constructions are essentially synonymous (Berman 1978; Landau 1980; Rosenhouse 1989; Glinert 1989; Coffin and Bolotzky 2005 among others), others have pointed out interesting differences in the meaning of the construct (including the double-construct) vs. the periphrastic construction. For example, the construct is only interpreted as relational, unlike the looser contextual association allowed in the periphrastic possessive construction (Rosén 1957):

(4a)

בנות המורה	בנותיה של המורה	הבנות של המורה
bnot ha-mora	*bnot-eha šel ha-mora*	*ha-banot šel ha-mora*
girls-CS the-teacher	girls-CS-her of the-teacher	the-girls of the-teacher
both: 'the daughters of the teacher'		'the teacher's girls' (not necessarily her daughters, maybe her students, or associated in any contextually salient way)

(4b)

אשת הצייר	אשתו של הצייר	האשה של הצייר
ešet ha-ṣayar	*išt-o šel ha-ṣayar*	*ha-iša šel ha-ṣayar*
woman-CS the-artist	woman-CS-his of the-artist	the-woman of the-artist
both: 'the wife of the artist'		'the artist's woman' (not necessarily his wife, could be the woman he painted)

(4c)

צבע הסתיו	צבעו של הסתיו	הצבע של הסתיו
ṣeva ha-stav	*ṣivᶜ-o šel ha-stav*	*ha-ṣeva šel ha-stav*
color-CS the-autumn	color-CS-its of the-autumn	ES-color of the-autumn
both: 'the color of autumn' (the prevalent color of nature in that time of year)		'autumn's color' (the color associated with autumn, e.g., the one in vogue in autumn fashion this year)

Nouns which are interpreted only as relational tend to appear in the construct. This conforms with the cross-linguistic tendency for more structural 'cohesion' in relational constructions

than in possessive constructions. The construct state is the idiomatic form of relational nouns which allows them to appear in close association with their argument. The periphrastic construction, on the other hand, where the possessor is not an argument, but is contextually associated with the head, is less suitable for the expression of such relations, as examples (5a)–(5d) show:

(5a)

דרום הארץ	דרומה של הארץ	?הדרום של הארץ
drom ha-ʾareṣ	*drom-a šel ha-ʾareṣ*	*? ha-darom šel ha-ʾareṣ*
south-CS the-country	south-CS-its of the-country	the-south of the-country
'the south of the country'		

(5b)

ראש המגדל	ראשו של המגדל	?הראש של המגדל
roš ha-migdal	*roš-o šel ha-migdal*	*?ha-roš šel ha-migdal*
head-CS the-tower	head-CS-its of the-tower	the-head of the-tower
'the top of the tower'		

(5c)

תחילת השיעור	תחילתו של השיעור	*התחילה של השיעור
tχilat ha-šiʕur	*tχilat-o šel ha-šiʕur*	**ha-tχila šel ha-šiʕur*
start-CS the-class	start-CS-its of the-class	the-start of the-class
'the beginning of the class'		

(5d)

טובת המדע	טובתו של המדע	*הטובה של המדע
ṭovat ha-madaʕ	*ṭovat-o šel ha-madaʕ*	**ha-ṭova šel ha-madaʕ*
sake-CS the-science	sake-CS-its of-the-science	the-sake of the-science
'the sake of science'		

The double construct differs from the construct in that it reduces thematic ambiguity in the role of the annex as argument of the relational head. While אהבת אם *ʾahavat ʾem* can be interpreted as 'mother's love' (mother as the subject) as well as 'love for mother' (mother as the object), the corresponding double construct אהבתה של אם *ʾahavata šel ʾem* can have only the first interpretation. That is, the annex can be interpreted only as the subject argument of the head, not the object. Where a subject interpretation is not possible, the construction is ungrammatical: תחזיתו של מזג האויר* *taχazito šel mezeg ha-ʾavir* 'the forecast of the weather' (vs. תחזיתו של החזאי *taχazito šel ha-χazay* 'the forecast of the meteorologist', which is grammatical) (Englehardt 1998; 2000). Some nominalizations allow for passivization, as in הריגתו של הנמר *harigato šel ha-namer* 'the killing of the leopard', where *ha-namer* is the subject of the passivized nominalization (Hazout 1991; 1995; Borer 1999).

The relationship between the three genitive constructions has been studied within a functional-pragmatic framework as well. Schlesinger and Ravid (1998) point out that the view that the three varieties are semantically equivalent does not take into consideration the fact that not all expressions are equally possible in the three constructions. Furthermore, when several varieties are available, one is regarded as more basic and less marked than the others. Their studies (1995; 1998) examined the occurrences and functions of the three constructions in a wide corpus (35,000 word tokens) of written and spoken texts. They found that each construction has distinct basic functions.

The main function of the bound construct is that of categorization, that is, creating a hyponym of the head. In 96 percent of the bound construct in spoken corpora the relationship between the head and the annex is that of categorization, as in בובת עץ *bubat ꜥeṣ* 'wooden doll', שולחן קפה *šulxan qafe* 'coffee table', מחלת רוח *maxalat ruax* 'mental illness'. Two other semantic relations, possession and part-whole relation, are also attested, but the bound construct is the marked construction for expressing them. Rather, the periphrastic construction is the basic structure for expressing these relations in MH. The double construct is the most limited construction, and occurs almost exclusively in written texts. It expresses specific propositional relations: the annex is the subject argument of the head, or its possessor. Proper names and nouns denoting human entities are very common; they appeared in eighty percent of the occurrences in the corpora studied as the annex of double constructs: אשתו של דני *ʾišto šel dani* 'Danny's wife', ביתו של המזכיר *beto šel ha-mazkir* 'the secretary's house', חריצותם של תושבי האי *xariṣutam šel tošve ha-ʾi* 'the diligence of the island's inhabitants'.

3. Phrasal vs. Compound Constructs

Constructs with non-phrasal annexes are one of the productive word formation devices in MH, similarly to compounds in other languages (Berman 1987; 1988; Borer 1988; Ravid and Schlesinger 1995; Ornan 2001). As such, they form part of the lexicon. They are distinguished from constructs with phrasal annexes, which are productive and are generated in the syntax of the language.

Compounds and phrasal constructs exhibit surface similarities yet distinct syntactic and semantic properties, making it challenging to draw the line between them and to account for both the similarities and differences.

Borer (1988; 2009) points out that both types of constructs show the same kind of phonological reduction of the head described above. Syntactically, the definite article is attached only once, to the annex, both in compounds (בית החולים *bet ha-xolim* 'the hospital') and in phrasal constructs (בית המורה *bet ha-more* 'the teacher's house'). The head cannot be

directly modified; rather, all modifiers of the head have to follow the annex in constructs, be they compounds (בית חולים חדש *bet xolim xadaš* 'a new hospital') or phrasal (בית מורה חדש *bet more xadaš* 'a new house of a teacher').

One difference between compounds and phrasal constructs is the availability of the double construct for phrasal constructs but never for compounds: סופו של פסוק *sof-o šel pasuq* can only be the doubling of the phrasal construct 'the end of a sentence', but not of the compound סוף פסוק *sof pasuq* 'full stop'. Another difference between compounds and phrasal constructs is overtly expressed in colloquial Modern Hebrew (Berman 1978; Agmon-Fruchtman 1982; Coffin and Bolozky 2005; Meir and Doron, forthcoming). Colloquial Modern Hebrew allows the definite article to attach to the construct-state head, yet it does so strictly only in the case of compounds, and not in the case of phrasal constructs: התמונת מצב *ha-tmunat maṣav* 'the situation report', התמונת מורה* *ha-tmunat more* 'the teacher's picture'.

Borer (1988; 2009) lists a variety of syntactic and semantic operations and properties within Modern Hebrew (not necessarily colloquial) which distinguish between the two structures. Semantically, Borer regards compounds as opaque, in that their meaning is neither compositional nor predictable from their components, as in עורך דין *'orex din* 'editor-law' = 'lawyer', בית ספר *bet sefer* 'house-book' = 'school'). Phrasal constructs are regarded by Borer as semantically transparent, as their meaning is entirely predictable from their components: עורך המאמר *'orex ha-ma'amar* 'editor-the-article' = 'the editor of the article', בית השר *bet ha-śar* 'house-the-minister' = 'the house of the minister').

The syntactic differences mentioned by Borer between the two types of constructs have to do mainly with the phrasal nature and with the referentiality of the annex: in compounds the annex is non-referential, as it is not even a phrase, while in phrasal constructs it is phrasal and referential. Hence in compounds, but not in phrasal constructs, the annex cannot be modified (6), cannot be a coordinate phrase (7), may not be referred to pronominally (8), and is not interpreted as definite even when marked by the definite article *ha-* (9):

(6a) בית התלמידים החדשים

    bet   ha-talmidim ha-xadašim (phrasal construct)

    house the-students the-new

    'the house of the new students'

(6b) *בית החולים החדשים

    bet ha-xolim ha-xadašim (compound)

    house the-sick (pl) the-new(pl)

    'the new patients' house; *the new hospital'

(7a)   בית תלמידים ותלמידות

bet talmidim ve-talmidot (phrasal construct)

house students (m) and-students (f)

'a house of male students and female students'

(7b)   *בית חולים וחולות

bet xolim ve-xolot (compound)

house patients (m)   and-patients (f)

'the male and female patients' house; *hospital'

(7c)   *גן ילדים וחיות

gan yeladim ve-xayot

garden children and-animals

*'a kindergarten and a zoo'

(8)   *בית חולים ומיטותיהם

bet xolim u-miṭoteyhem

house patients$_i$ and-beds-theirs$_i$

*'the hospital and their beds'

(9)   בן המלך

ben ha-melex

son the-king

'the prince'

In (9) under the compound reading 'prince', though the entire construction is definite, the annex 'the king' is not interpreted as a particular king.

Other differences between the two constructions are as follows:

In phrasal constructs, the annex may be pluralized, with the related change in meaning: בית השר *bet ha-śar* 'the house of the minister', בית השרים *bet ha-śarim* 'the house of the ministers'. In compounds, the annex is either in the singular or in the plural, but it cannot vary in number inflection: מיץ גזר *miṣ gezer* 'carrot juice' (*carrot* in singular, the plural is ungrammatical), מיץ תפוחים *miṣ tapuxim* 'apple juice' (*apple* in plural, the singular is ungrammatical).

The stress pattern of the two constructions may also differ. Compounds may exhibit redistribution of stress so as to create a sequence of alternating stressed and non-stressed syllables (Bolozky 1982), as in כדורגל *kàdurégel* 'football', מצב-רוח *màṣav-rúax* 'mood', כאב

ראש *kèʾev-róš* 'headache', מורה דרך *mòre-dérex* 'guide'. Phrasal constructs do not exhibit such redistribution of stress.

Borer points to a class of constructs which are difficult to classify, since they have a mix of semantic characteristics of the two classes. Like compounds, they have a non-referential annex, but like phrasal constructs, their interpretation is compositional: the annex is interpreted as a modifier of the head, as in בית אבן *bet ʾeven* 'stone house', מגבת מטבח *magevet miṭbax* 'kitchen towel', גלגל הצלה *galgal haṣala* 'life saver, flotation ring'. This class of modificational constructs leads Borer to a tri-partite classification of constructs, whereas Meir and Doron (forthcoming) maintain a bi-partite classification, treating modificational constructs as compounds. Like compounds, the double construct is never available for modificational constructs, though it is found with phrasal constructs: ביתם של החולים* *bet-am šel ha-xolim* 'the hospital' (which can only be interpreted as phrasal, i.e., 'the house of the patients'), ביתה של האבן* *bet-a šel ha-ʾeven* 'the stone house', vs. ביתם של השרים *bet-am šel ha-śarim* 'the ministers' house'. Like compounds, modificational constructs in colloquial MH allow the definite article to be attached to the construct-state head: המגבת מטבח *ha-magevet miṭbax* 'the kitchen towel', השמלת משי *ha-śimlat meši* 'the silk dress', הבית אבן *ha-bet ʾeven* 'the stone house'.

4. *Adjectival Constructs*

An adjective in the construct state exhibits the phonological changes typical of construct nouns and behaves as a construct with respect to the position of the definite article.

There are two types of constructs headed by an adjective. One is the so-called *superlative genitive*, where the construct expresses the superlative relation, as in טובי האמנים *ṭove ha-ʾomanim* 'the best artists' (Glinert 1989). This use of the construct is restricted to formal usage, and the adjective must be simplex (derived adjectives as well as participial forms, such as מוצלח *muṣlax* 'successful', do not occur in this construction).

The second type of adjectival construct, which has received a great deal of attention in the literature, consists of a construct state adjective which forms a complex semantic relation with its annex, on the one hand, and with the noun it modifies, on the other hand, as in ילדה ארוכת צוואר *yalda ʾarukat ṣavar* 'girl with a long neck, long-necked girl', מרפסת עגולת פינות *mirpeset ʿagulat pinot* 'balcony with rounded corners', חדרים גבוהי תקרה *xadarim gvohe tiqra* 'rooms with a high ceiling, high-ceilinged rooms'. The adjectival head is restricted to non-suffixed adjectives, i.e., derived adjectives, such as גאוותן *gaʾavtan* 'arrogant', אביבי *ʾavivi* 'of-spring, spring (adj), springtime (adj)', cannot occur in this position (Glinert 1989).

The annexes in adjectival constructs are typically relational nouns (Glinert 1989; Hazout 2000; Siloni 2002), such as body parts, abstract attributes, spatial parts (as is 'ceiling' to 'room' in the above examples), but not kinship terms (Siloni 2002). The adjectival head in this construction is not directly interpreted as an attribute of the noun it modifies, but only indirectly, through being an attribute of its annex, which itself is a relation taking the modified noun as argument. For example, *long* is not an attribute of the modified noun *girl* in the construct 'long-necked girl', but of the noun *neck* in annex position. The relation between *long* and *girl* is mediated by the relational annex *neck*, which takes *long* as its attribute on the one hand, and *girl* as its argument on the other hand (Kim 2002). Though the construct state adjective functions as the head of the construct, its annex, too, has head-like properties, since it takes the modified noun as argument. Accordingly, the annex is non-recursive in this construction, and disallows further modification and complementation (Hazout 2000):

(10) ‏*ילדה אדומת שמלה קצרה‎

yalda adumat śimla qṣara

girl   red-CS   dress   short

'a girl whose short dress is red'

(11) ‏*הילדה אדומת שרוולי חולצתה‎

ha-yalda adumat šarvule xulṣat-a

the-girl   red-CS   sleeves-CS shirt-CS-her

'the girl whose shirt's sleeves are red'

Some accounts (e.g., Kremers 2005) nevertheless analyze construct state adjectives as attributed to the noun they modify. In the above examples, this can be paraphrased as: 'a girl who is long (of neck)', 'a balcony which is round (of corners)' or 'rooms which are high (of ceiling)'. Such a paraphrase would be problematic (#'a boy who is torn of shirt') for an example like (12):

(12) ‏ילד קרוע חולצה‎

yeled qruaʿ   xulṣa

boy   torn-CS   shirt

'A boy whose shirt is torn'

Among adjectival constructs, as in the case of other nominal constructs, it is possible to discern between phrasal constructs, which are fully productive and have transparent meaning, such as the examples above (Siloni 2002; Hazout 2000), and adjectival compounds, such as ‏קל רגליים‎ *qal raglayim* 'light-legged' meaning 'fast', ‏כבד משקל‎ *kvad mišqal* 'heavy-weighted' meaning 'serious, important', and ‏גבה לב‎ *gvah lev* 'high hearted' meaning 'arrogant'.

5. *Definiteness of the Construct*

The assignment of definiteness to the construct shows some peculiarities that raise many theoretical challenges. As already mentioned, the canonical way of turning a construct definite is by attaching the definite article to the annex. This raises several theoretical questions:

(a) Why is it impossible to mark a construct state head directly with the definite article and to what extent has this changed in colloquial Modern Hebrew?

(b) Does the annex itself get a definiteness value from the definite article which marks it?

(c) How does the construct get its definiteness value from the definite article marking the annex?

The prevalent view in the literature is that the definiteness marking of the annex determines the definiteness of the construct. In (13) the picture is interpreted as definite because of the definiteness marking of the annex *monk*:

(13)   תמונת הנזיר

    tmunat   ha-nazir

    picture-CS the-monk

    'the picture of the monk'

There is disagreement about whether the annex itself is definite in addition to the construct, or whether an additional translation of (13) could be 'the picture of a monk', as suggested by Danon (2008). An indefinite interpretation of the definite annex is found in compounds, e.g., גלימת הנזיר שלו *glimat ha-nazir šelo* 'his priestly robe', but Danon suggests this for phrasal constructs as well.

In the view of Heller (2002), the construct is definite independently of the definiteness of its annex, which is determined by the relational (or, rather, functional) interpretation of its head. Heller argues that (14) is definite as well as (13), though the annex in (14) is indefinite:

(14)   תמונת נזיר אחד

    tmunat   nazir exad

    picture-CS monk one

    'the picture of some monk'

Conversely, Danon (2001) argues that constructs may be indefinite even in cases where the annex is definite. In the following examples, the construct is not necessarily interpreted as unique, despite the definiteness marking of the annex:

(15a)   רגל השולחן

    regel   ha-šulxan

    leg-CS   the-table

      'the leg of the table'

(15b) חלון המכונית

      xalon   *ha-mexonit*

      window-CS   the-car

      'the window of the car'

(15c) עובדת השגרירות

      ʿovedet   *ha-šagrirut*

      employee-CS   the-embassy

      'the employee of the embassy'

(15d) תושב האיזור

      tošav   *ha-ʾezor*

      inhabitant-CS   the-area

      'the/an inhabitant of the area'

(15e) תלמיד החוג

      talmid   *ha-xug*

      student-CS   ES-department

      'the/a student of the department'

(15f) דוד הכלה

      dod   *ha-kala*

      uncle-CS   the-bride

      'the uncle of the bride'

These various issues concerning definiteness have been tackled in a sequence of studies: Borer (1984; 1996; 1999), Ritter (1988), Englehardt (1998; 2000), Danon (2001; 2008; 2010), Heller (2002), Siloni (2001; 2003), Shlonsky (2004), Rothstein (2009), Doron and Meir (forthcoming), Meir and Doron (forthcoming), and others.

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