

# Hebrew Structures, p. 1

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This page examines the structures of VP and NP in Hebrew. (We will assume there are no N' or V' nodes.)

## VP

The VP contains the verbs complements and adjuncts. There is a certain freedom of constituent order; we will assume that if two constituents can be switched, this is evidence that they are sister nodes.

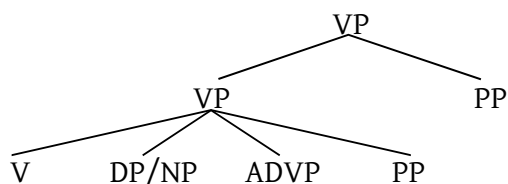
Within the VP, adverbs can be freely interspersed among the PPs.

- (1) a. Baraxti maher me- habalšan.  
 escape.1SG.PST quickly from- the.linguist  
 'I escaped from the linguist quickly.'
- b. Baraxti me- habalšan maher meod.  
 escape.1SG.PST from- the.linguist quickly very  
 'I escaped from the linguist very quickly.'

This shows that they must be a sister to the arguments instead of being adjoined to VP, despite being adjuncts. On the other hand, the following shows that PPs can be adjoined, even argument PPs. The conclusion is that there are two PP positions in the VP, unrelated to the grammatical function of the PP.

- (2) Hayiti [[[kone sfarim] ve [mekabel xavilot]] me- amazon].  
 AUX.1SG.PST buy books and receive packages from Amazon  
 'I used to buy books from Amazon and receive packages from them.'

So the structure of the VP is (ignoring order):



In English there is a clearer distinction of positions based on grammatical functions: arguments are sisters to V, and adjuncts are adjoined to VP, so the two PP positions exist in English, but there isn't free variation between them the way there is in Hebrew. The ADVP, as an adjunct, is adjoined to VP in English. Sometimes the same structures are used for Hebrew, but they are not consistent with the Hebrew facts.

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## NP

Within the NP, the noun can be immediately followed by a NP in the *smixut* (construct state) construction. Adjective phrases are also sisters to the head rather than being adjoined, as shown by the inability to coordinate a syntactic *smixut* construction. (Naturally, lexical *smixut* constructions, i.e. compounds, behave differently.)

- (3) \*[[[ginat ha- more] ve [dirat ha- talmid]] ha- xadašot ]  
 garden DEF- teacher and apartment DEF- student DEF- new.FPL  
 'the new garden of the teacher and apartment of the student'

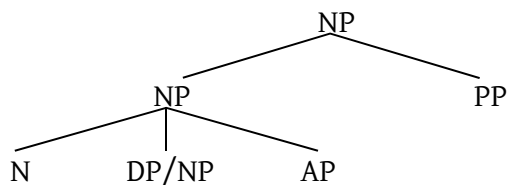
As in the VP, PPs are adjoined.

- (4) [[[ha- sefer ha- muclax] ve [ha- seret ha- zoher]] al šibut dinozaurim]  
 DEF- book DEF- successful and DEF- film DEF- glowing on cloning dinosaurs  
 'the successful book and the glowing movie, both about cloning dinosaurs'

Unlike in VPs, a PP cannot precede the AP:

- (5) \*ha- sefer al dinozaurim ha- meod muclax  
 DEF- book on dinosaurs DEF- very successful  
 'the very successful book on dinosaurs'

The internal structure of NP is:



Here again, this is different from the accepted structure for English, in which the possessor is in the specifier of DP and the AP is adjoined to NP. Sometimes similar structures are proposed for Hebrew, with movement of the N and other elements. Such structures do not reflect the closeness of elements in the *smixut* construction.

In terms of  $\bar{X}$  theory, the Hebrew structures do not match the usual idea of specifier and complements, with adjoined adjuncts. From this we can learn that the relation between structure and grammatical function is less close. On the other hand, there is almost complete parallelism between VP and NP, as we would expect.

# **Hebrew Structures, p. 3**

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