Deixis (ii) Modern Hebrew

Deixis in linguistics encompasses the concepts of 'person deixis' (איה hu 'he', היא hi 'she' and יה hem 'they.M', ויה hen 'they.F'), 'spatial deixis' (demonstrative pronouns and adjectives, and locative demonstrative adverbs such as פה/קאנ po/kan/hine 'here' and שם/ dentist šam 'there'), 'temporal deixis' (e.g.ตอน/אן 'now' ואז 'then'), 'social deixis' (i.e. indicators of social rank and relationship between participants, e.g. אדון/אדוונ/קנוד adon/’adoni/kvodo 'Mister/My Lord/Your Honor', גברת/גברתי gveret/gvirti 'Miss/My Lady' and אחי/אחיי ’aši/’ašši ’my brother/brother of mine'), and 'discourse deixis' (i.e. whose referent or reference is inferable to the addressee from the 'universe of discourse' in which the utterance is situated).

This entry is concerned with demonstratives, taking into account both lexical and non-lexical demonstratives, with particular attention being give to non-lexical demonstratives, which are now used extensively in the 'universe of discourse' of contemporary Hebrew. 'Lexical' demonstratives are deictic pronouns that index participants in, or particular entities presented in, an ongoing act of communication, whereas 'non-lexical' demonstratives are, in themselves, non-referential expressions that do not stand for any particular entity and are not coreferential with an antecedent in the linguistic context. It should be noted, however, that the distinction between 'lexical' and 'non-lexical' demonstratives is not sharp; rather, there are intermediate cases.

Demonstratives are commonly divided into pronominal demonstratives, which substitute for a noun phrase or a clause, and adnominal demonstratives, which accompany a noun. Demonstratives of the latter type resemble adjectives in that they incorporate the determinatum (i.e. the unspecified noun and its referent), and are therefore independent elements that stand in apposition to the noun with which they occur.

Proximal and distal demonstratives constitute two distinct sets of forms in Hebrew that are morphologically unrelated. The proximal demonstratives –
indicating 'near to the speaker' – are זו ze this.M.S, זות/זוזז/זוזז/זוזזז/זוזזזז/זוזזזזז/זוזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז/זוזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזזז zewnętrzn/_EXTERN 'every one of these' (the plural forms are neutralized for gender). When used pronominally, these forms never carry a definite article. (In this they differ from adjectives, which, when appearing without an overt head-noun, are always accompanied by the definite article). An exception is the Mishnaic plural demonstrative תַּלְלָל halalu 'these', used in high-register Hebrew, which became grammaticalized with an in-built definite article -ה ha- 'the'.

When used adnominally, the proximal demonstratives follow the noun and its adjectival modifiers (if any), and like adjectives agree with the noun in gender and number, and most crucially, also in definiteness. In literary Hebrew, the definite articles before the noun and demonstrative are optional: noun phrases with demonstratives can occur either with or without the definite article, e.g. המקוֹם הוה/מקוֹם הז ha-maqom ha-ze/maqom ze lit. the-place the-this/place this 'this place'.

The distal demonstratives – indicating 'far from speaker', and used less frequently in Hebrew than their proximal counterparts – are constructed from the 3rd person pronouns הוא hu 'he', היא hi 'she', הם hem 'they.M', and она hen 'they.F', obligatorily prefixed with the definite article -ה ha- 'the', e.g. המקוֹם המסההה היא ha-maqom ha-hu lit. the-place the-he ('that place'), המסעדה המסההה היא ha-mis'ada ha-hi lit. the-restaurant the-she ('that restaurant'), הפרטיים הפרטיים היא ha- praṭim ha-hem lit. the-details the-them.M ('those details'), העובדות העובדות היא ha- avodot ha-hen lit. the-works the-them.F ('those works'). Literary Hebrew also has הַלְלָל hala 'that.M' as a pronominal deictic (generally restricted to human reference). Proximal and distal demonstratives are frequently used in vivid narrative or speech situation to express a contrast between two entities from the speaker's stance. The first entity which is emotionally closer to the speaker's real-world is indexed by the proximal demonstrative זה ze while the second one which is viewed subjectively as remote or adversative is
indexed by the distal demonstrative העם *hu*, e.g. "they are enemies now: this one (lit. this.M) who is looking for parking and that one (lit. that.M) who took it from him."

In the spoken language, demonstrative pronouns are also used in evaluative functions, e.g. pejoratively, most frequently in expressions involving a 'redundant' definite demonstrative co-occurring with a definite proper noun, e.g. נמאס עלי כבר היוסי הוו (lit. this.F) they always forgive him; ישנה כל היום, זה (lit. this.F) sleeps all day, that one.

Modern Hebrew also uses the neutralized pronominal demonstratives זה *ze* and זו *zot* (unmarked for semantic gender and number) as endophoric expressions (referring to antecedent content in the text), e.g. in complement position המחבר ציין זאת/את זה כמה פעמים han-mexaber šiyen zot/ʾet ze kama peʾamim "The author indicated this several times." These endophoric pronouns also appear in clause linkers, e.g. im zot/ʾim ze 'nevertheless'. On the other hand, the non-lexical demonstrative זה *ze* 'this/it', to be discussed below, is mostly used to convey exophoric reference (i.e. extra-textual reference).

Inflected demonstratives can also function as person deictics picking out particular discourse participants, usually particular referents within a previously mentioned pair, e.g. in a distributive meaning זה הלך זה השאר זה נישקו זה את זה *Dani ve-Ruti nišqu ze ṣet ze*.
Dani and Ruti kissed each other. Demonstratives may also function as heads of relative clauses, e.g. in Cleft Sentences, *ha-šoțrim hayu 'ele še-'azru lahem* 'The policemen were those who helped them'; *hi zo še-ḥisgira 'otam la-mɪstara* 'She is the one (lit. this.F) who turned them over to the police'. In a sentence having a subject and an object identical in gender and number, where only one of them is co-indexed in an adjacent co-ordinative phrase, a demonstrative is being chosen for this purpose rather than a 3rd person pronoun. Such a demonstrative is interpreted in the universe of discourse as anaphoric to the noun which is of "intermediate accessibility" (Ariel 1990), i.e. it co-indexes the object rather than the subject. This strategy is a device taken by the speakers to avoid ambiguity, e.g. *ha-ʿed pan a 'el ha-neʾėşam ve-ze(ʔve-hu) hišpil 'et mabaṭo* The witness turned to the defendant and this one (lit. this.M) lowered his eyes (lit. look). The motivation for this strategy is primarily language use and not grammar.

Non-lexical ze is exemplified in expressions like *še mi-ze* 'Snap out of it', *ṣxaẓ mi-ze* 'Forget it', where ze does not refer to any particular entity, but to a very general situation inferable to the hearer from previous discourse and/or the situational context. In other words, it is an 'ambient' pronoun encompassing the entire 'universe of discourse' (Bolinger 1973). When appearing initially in place of a full noun, which evidently carries higher information value, ze may be regarded as a loose invitation to re-identify the referent, when the speaker has hastily indexed an entity and then felt to be insufficiently salient; or as a device to elaborate the referent, e.g. *ze 'axšav lo? ha-dira šelaxem Natan? ze po lo? šama mimul? 'It's now? Your apartment Natan? It's here, isn't it? Ahead over there?'* (Shimoni 1999:128; *ken, ze lo maṣṣiq. bixlal-bixlal lo maṣṣiq ha-maṣav šelo* 'Yes, it's not funny. Not funny at all his situation' (Shimoni 1999:259).
Non-lexical ze also appears in constructions of Extraposition (i.e. syntactic topicalization) and focalizing (typically Cleft Sentences), as well as in existentials, modals and other kinds of impersonals. In the literature, this pronominal ze is often analyzed as an "expletive" or "dummy" element, i.e., as an element devoid of any semantic content. However, another view holds that it does have meaning as a maximally general or ambient pronoun, whose basic function is to instruct the hearer to search for a particular entity or piece of information in the salient situation or discourse, and focus the interlocutors’ attention on this element.

In topicalization, non-lexical ze serves as a grammatical device for focusing the interlocutors’ attention on the extraposed (topicalized) constituent, whereas in focalization, it highlights a specific constituent in the clause (the focus) as bearing the new information and as contrasting with some previous information. In Cleft Sentences, when the focused element is a noun phrase representing the grammatical subject there is a complementary distribution between 3rd person pronominals and non-lexical demonstratives. The first option is generally a characterization of the "higher" register. While the non-lexical demonstrative appears in initial place the 3rd person pronoun co-occurs obligatorily after the noun phrase, e.g. "זה המורה שאיתנה את השעון" zo ha-mora še-gilta 'et ha-ṭaʿut 'It (lit. this.F) is the teacher.F who found out the mistake' versus "המורה היא שאיתנה את השעון" ha-mora hi še-gilta 'et ha-ṭaʿut 'the teacher.F is (lit. she) the one who found out the mistake'.

Ze can be used to focus not only nouns but also adverbials, e.g. "זה רק בגלל השעה诠וחה שאיתנה שיח שעה מדברת כל ה" ze raq biglal ha-saʿa ha-zot še-hi medaberet kaxa 'It's only because of the hour that she's talking this way' (Shimoni 1999:208); furthermore, it can also mark the bare nexusal (i.e. predicative) relation as an extraposed focus, e.g. "זה לא שאię לא שמעתי שלד" ze lo še-ʿani lo somexet 'alexa 'It's not that I don’t trust you' (Shimoni 1999:18). On the utterance level (i.e. beyond the sentence level), this marking of the bare nexus may express the
speaker's commitment to the factuality of the proposition, e.g. "היה זה בחצות (ba-xašot ha-lel (ba-xolot), ṣe-zug yaša lo leťayel ha-xolot (popular Israeli song from the '70s) lit. was this/it at midnight (in the dunes) that a couple went-out to-him to walk in the dunes. 'It was at midnight that a couple went out for a walk in the dunes.' Sentence-initial ṣe can point forward not only to a noun but also to a following infinitive e.g. המ=-=-=-=-=- זה לא布朗שלבךשים (شع). "It was at midnight that a couple went out for a walk in the dunes."

sentence-initial ze can highlight not only a postposed topic but also a preposed one, e.g. מהי זה שיציל אותנו ממהם. הصراع [which is] only of (=belongs to) the army, the movie? It (is) also their daughter's; ha-misxøq šelahem, ze ma-yešayil 'otanu lit. their game, it (is) what will save us. Ze can also highlight an infinitival subject, רק זה חסר לי, בדיעךuff! אומת raq ze xaser li, bediyuq lifgoš 'oto lit. only this I lack to-me, exactly (~just) to meet him. 'The last thing I need is to meet him'. Non-lexical ze can also occur in interrogatives as an expressive device for pointing to the adjacent predicative content, e.g. 'מי זה ש...? Likewise, מי זה המxFFFF dictated to you if the Shlafter is אצי זה Shlafter?...

Additionally, ze functions as a lexicalized modifier (i.e. amplifier) of time adverbials, e.g. ze šnatayim še-hem lo hitra'u lit. it (is) two years that they didn't see each other 'It's been two years since they saw each other'; or as part of a lexicalized temporal expression, e.g. המ Eternal זה ha-davar yadua' ze mikvøq lit. the matter (lit. this matter) is known it of-already 'This has long been known'.

This non-lexical demonstrative may function as a complementizer, e.g.
In spoken Hebrew, there is an increasing tendency to employ ze as an "expletive" subject in existentials or situationals, creating constructions very similar to those that have become grammaticalized in most modern Indo-European languages. Interestingly, this subject is used almost exclusively with circumstantial modifiers, such as temporal or locative adverbs, e.g. קח מעיל, זה ממש קר בחוץ! "Take a coat, it's really cold outside!"; למה אתה עם פרצוף כזה? זה לא תשעה באב היום! "Why are you with such a face?! It's not the Ninth of Ab (a Jewish day of mourning) today". Similarly, in modals and other kinds of impersonals followed by an infinitival or tensed 'that' clause as complement, e.g. זה طبيعي שאתה כועס 'It's natural that you are angry'. Ze occurs even with neutralized present-tense modals (denoting an evaluative or expressive stance), typically, though not exclusively, in the hifil template, e.g. זה מרייז מוזר собой ולא הגיעה תשובה 'It's worrying that an answer has not yet arrived'. The use of present-tense verbs as impersonal modals in such constructions is most likely the result of increasing English influence, e.g. זה שאין פה אף אדם 'It feels strange that there is nobody here'.

In spoken Hebrew, ze is also frequently employed as a stylistic variant of the 3rd person pronominal copulas (הוא hu, היא hi, הם hem, וhen), which are considered (unlike their Biblical Hebrew parallels, which denote topicalization) as the normative copula markers. Unlike these copulas, ze is neutralized for gender and number, i.e. does not agree with the subject of the clause, e.g. ילדיהם זה שמיה yeladim ze simха lit. children it (are) joy.
Nonetheless, *ze* in such sentences is not always replaceable with the 3rd person copular pronouns, e.g. *yeladim ze lo bi-šliṭati* lit. kids it (is) not in my control, (~'Having children is beyond my control’) versus *yeladim ‘enam (hem lo) bi-šliṭati* lit. kids they (are) not in my control (~ ’I can't control kids’). Furthermore, when co-occurring with sentential subjects, e.g. infinitival forms, this pro-copular *ze* cannot be replaced by its 3rd person counterparts at all, e.g. *

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lit. kids (is) not in my control, (~'I can't control kids').

This copula-like *ze* thus functions more like a ‘comment-predicate’ than an ordinary copula (Rosen 1977: 245-247). Hence, it is not far removed from the Rabbinical *ze*, as in e.g. *u-ve-moštim – ze ha-dam* ‘and with signs – it is the (plague of) blood’ (from the Haggada of Pesach).

*Ze* can function as a modal operator. For example, in the colloquial construction called 'echo pattern' (Taube 1997; or 'sandwich focalization' in Azar 1992), where it signals emphatic deixis (expressing the speaker's attitude towards the proposition). This construction features a duplicated *ze* creating a frame for a focused nominal phrase or predicative constituent: *זה ניש ניאר זה? זה ברורה!*

lit. this (is) youth this? this (is) garbage! (from a popular Israeli song of the 60s); *זא יארז לו פא מאלךלאז זא מאמימראד זא* lit. this (one) has a dirty mouth this (one), this (one is) bitter this (one). *Ze* is also used emotively in the one-unit intonational and pragmaticized expression *m-an zi* or *m-an zi ma-zi*, e.g. *m-an zi ma-zi ḥa-šōgalad ha-zi* lit. this what-this / what-this (is) good this chocolate (~ I tell you, this chocolate is excellent).

Non-lexical *ze* is an element in the composite forms *זא* ‘it/?this-is.M’ and *זא-זא*, which serve various communicative functions. Typically, they serve to express the speaker's commitment (or non-commitment) to the
factuality of the proposition and to qualify the 'I-say-so' component of the utterance. In this respect, they qualify the illocutionary act in much the same way as a performative or declarative verb. For example, zehu-ze can be an assertive statement signaling the (hypothetical or actual) endpoint of an ongoing situation, e.g. zehu-ze niganum ha-terumim lit. this is this, finished the excuses 'That's it, no more excuses'. Or, in a dialogue, these expressions can be an affirmative response to a counter-interlocutor’s remark, e.g. zehu-ze, (naxon) ze xayav lihyot ha-šir ha-ze 'that's it (right), it has to be this song'. Additionally, zehu 'it/this-is' has the illocutionary force of a counter-statement that the speaker wishes to present, e.g. zehu, še-ze lo kol kax qore lit. it/this-is (~the thing is), it does not happen so much (Shimoni 1999: 50).
References


**Secondary sources**


Rivka Halevy (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)