

## Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis, the study of stretches of text in context, has been implemented within a wide variety of theoretical and empirical frameworks, concerning a broad range of linguistic and socio-linguistic phenomena. In Modern Hebrew the investigation covers, among other sub-fields, areas as diverse as genre analysis and stylistics, conversation analysis, coherence and cohesion, discourse markers, issues in translation, acquisition of discourse skills, speech acts, the interfaces between text and sentential structure and, less prototypically, but very interestingly, computational parameters.

The original view, whereby the relevant unit of analysis extends beyond the sentence (e.g., Abadi 1988) had to be reassessed in view of units smaller than the sentence, the realization of which is conditioned by the larger linguistic and extra-linguistic context (e.g., Borochofsky Bar-Aba 2007; 2010). A related issue concerns the particular nature of the data under examination, and it has become evident with time that specific varieties of discourse lend themselves to different analytical and empirical tests and raise distinct research questions. Thus, the spoken mode has been studied extensively within the methodology of conversation analysis, which, naturally, concentrates on dialogues (e.g., Maschler 2009a; 2009b). Significantly, even the apparently clear-cut distinction between spoken and written varieties of discourse has been characterized as overly simplistic, and so the proposal has been made (Izre'el 2002) to draw a finer distinction in the spoken mode between spontaneous *דבור* *davur* and non-spontaneous *מדובר* *medubar* speech. With very few exceptions (e.g., Maschler 2004), in the initial phases of research the data was mostly sporadic. However, the construction of the *Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew* (in progress; see Izre'el et al. 2001; Izre'el and Rahav 2004) promises to rectify this situation. This corpus is intended to provide linguistic and socio-linguistic data on the basis of which statistically significant generalizations can be made and typicality of structures can be ascertained.

Among the sub-fields studied within Discourse Analysis are genres, registers, and sty-

listics. Thus, along with characterizations of narrative prose, the language of novels, drama and skits (e.g., Abadi 2010; Ben-Shahar 1990; 2003; Weizman 2000), there are close examinations of poetic language (e.g., Livnat 2005; Sovran 2002; 2006), and stylistic generalizations concerning spontaneous spoken monologues (e.g., Livnat and Yatziv 2010), the language of the media, interviews, politics, law and science (e.g., Burstein 2005; Livnat 2003; 2010; Weizman 2008), and issues related to translation with their obvious socio-linguistic ramifications (e.g., Ben-Shahar 1994; Kuzar 2002).

Since the pioneering research by Halliday and Hassan (1976), in which a basic distinction is drawn between text coherence, the thematic holding together of the text, and cohesion in text, the property shared by the linguistic devices that make the text units adhere, the study of discourse in Hebrew has been characterized, in part, by attempts to identify factors contributing to coherence and examine various cohesive devices. Among the contributions in this domain are Abadi (1995), in which the coherence/incoherence in stories by S. Y. Agnon is examined, and markers whose function is to maintain coherence are investigated. Such markers are discussed, for example, in Ariel's (1998) analysis of *הרי* *hare* 'behold, here is, indeed', Livnat and Yatziv's (2003) study of *כי* *ki* 'for, because', Yatziv and Livnat's (2006) survey of the uses of *אז* *'az* 'then, at that time' and Ziv's (2008) study of *מה* *ma* 'what'. Prototypical contributions to the research on cohesive devices are, e.g., Shloush's (1998) discussion of *בקיצור* *be-qisur* 'in short' and some of Maschler's (2009b) observations concerning *טוב* *tov* 'good, well' and *בקיצור* *be-qisur* 'in short', especially with respect to the organization of the text, including segmentation, shifting, and change of topic.

Discourse markers have become a significant topic in discourse analysis over the past two decades. Their characterization clearly depends on the theoretical perspective adopted. Thus, Maschler (2009a; 2009b) studies them within conversation analysis and claims that they must

fulfill a metalingual function and should prototypically occur at intonation-unit initial position. She argues that their metalingual function can be (a) meta-textual, as in the case of the organizational marker **בְּקִצּוֹר** *be-qišur* ‘in short’ (b) interpersonal, as in the case of the impatience marker **נָּ** *nu* ‘come on’ or (c) cognitive, as in the case of the rephrasing or hedging by means of **כְּאִילוּ** *ke-’ilu* ‘like, as if’. Several other studies of discourse markers have been conducted within the theoretical framework of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986; 1995), where Grice’s Cooperative Principle of interpretation (Grice 1975) is replaced by cognitive considerations controlled by relevance parameters. These investigations (e.g., Ariel 1998; Shloush 1998; Ziv 1998; 2008) consider the extra-sentential status of discourse markers as a defining property and adopt the relevance-theoretic distinction between conceptual and procedural meaning (e.g., Blakemore 1987), where truth conditional meaning differs from procedural instructions on how to interpret, concentrating on their procedural features. Among the procedural characteristics are: organizational, e.g., **בְּקִצּוֹר** *be-qišur* ‘in short’ (Shloush 1998), attitudinal, e.g., **כַּזֶּה** *ka-ze* ‘like this, thus’ (Ziv 1998) and **פְּשׁוּט** *pašut* ‘simply’ (Ziv 2001), and presuppositional, e.g., **הֲרֵי** *hare* ‘behold, here is, indeed’ (Ariel 1998). Naturally, the different diagnostics make different predictions with respect to what counts as a discourse marker. Thus, Maschler (2009b) characterizes **אֵה** *’eh* as a cognitive discourse marker, while studies based on Relevance Theory do not refer to it as a discourse marker at all. Likewise, **כַּזֶּה** *ka-ze* ‘like this, thus’, which is analyzed as a discourse marker within the Relevance Theoretic framework (e.g. Ziv 1998), is not considered a discourse marker in the framework of conversation analysis adopted by Maschler (2009b). The claim that discourse markers only occur in the colloquial and in some cases sub-standard varieties of the language can be easily counter-exemplified by the following quote from Gen. 30.30, where **וַעֲתָה** *wə-’attā* fulfills an organizational role in the discourse. Having worked for him for years Jacob asks Laban to let him go:

כִּי מַעֲטָ אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה לְךָ לְפָנַי וַיִּפְרֹץ לְרֵב וַיִּבְרֹךְ יְהוָה אֶתְךָ לְרִגְלֵי וַעֲתָה מִתִּי אֶעֱשֶׂה גַם־אֲנֹכִי לְבֵיתִי

*kī mə’at ’ăšer-hāyā ləkā ləpānāy way-yiḫrōš lā-rōb wa-ybārek YHWH ’ōtkā lə-raglī wə-’attā mātay ’e’ēše gam-’ānōkī lə-bēti*

for it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also? (KJV)

It is clear that in this example **וַעֲתָה** *wə-’attā* does not contribute its semantic meaning of temporality, ‘at present’, since the very same utterance seeks to find out the answer to the question ‘when?’.

Many discourse markers originate from semantically full lexical items (e.g. **בְּקִצּוֹר** *be-qišur* ‘in short’, **אָז** *’az* ‘then, at that time’) and cease to function at the sentential level with their basic semantics, but rather function at the discourse level: **בְּקִצּוֹר** *be-qišur* ‘in short’ and **אָז** *’az* ‘then, at that time’ at the organizational level and **פְּשׁוּט** *pašut* ‘simply’ and **הֲרֵי** *hare* ‘behold, here is, indeed’, like **מָה** *ma* ‘what’, contributing to the coherence parameter (see Livnat 2009 for a diachronic approach). An intriguing finding by Borochofsky Bar-Aba (2003) points to an interesting source of a discourse marker converging on the coherence-cohesion dividing line. Thus, **נְקוּדָה** *nequda* ‘period’, which originally designates the name of the punctuation mark occurring at the end of the sentence, has come to possess a discourse marker function of ‘no further argument, end of argument’ as in:

מִי שֶׁשׂוֹתֵה אֶלְכוֹהוֹל לֹא נוֹהֵג. נְקוּדָה.

*Mi še-šote alkohol lo noheg. Nequda.*

Whoever drinks alcohol does not (i.e., must not) drive. Period. (from Livnat 2000:73)

Speech acts constitute another important research area within the domain of Discourse Analysis. Prototypical research projects concentrate on two main aspects: original Hebrew formulaic and productive patterns of carrying out acts via language (e.g., apologizing and requesting) and comparative studies with the related translatability problems and cross cultural issues (e.g., Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Kampf and Blum-Kulka 2007; Kampf 2008; Olshtain 1989; Weizman 1993).

Yet another field of interest studied within Discourse Analysis is information structure. In particular, these involve close investigations

of the possible correlations between the content and organization of major discourse units and their sub-parts on the one hand, and the structure of sentences on the other. Thus, for example, the discourse factors conditioning the occurrence of topicalized sentences, where a non-canonical word order occurs initially, are examined. Recentness of mention of a referent or a piece of information and textual as well as extra-linguistic givenness turn out to be relevant parameters in the occurrence of sentence-initial topics (e.g., Giora 1985; Ziv 1996; Birner and Ward 1998). This is evident in:

עצרנו בצידי הדרך. לימיננו ניצב פסל ענק. על הפסל  
היתה כתובת.

*‘aşarnu be-šide ha-derex. l-iminenu nišav pesel  
‘anaq. ‘al ha-pesel hayta ktovet.*

We stopped at the side of the road. To our right  
stood a giant statue. On the statue (there) was an  
inscription.

However, focal elements which occur sentence initially display ill-formedness in exactly the same discourse environments, precisely because they present new, non-predictable discourse entities (e.g., Lambrecht 1994).

עצרנו בצידי הדרך. \*פרחים ראינו.

*‘aşarnu be-šide ha-derex. \*praxim rainu.*

We stopped at the side of the road. Flowers we  
saw.

Recent investigations within Discourse Analysis have indicated that in addition to the familiar language skills, discourse skills too must be acquired (see Blum Kulka 2002.) It has been demonstrated that the distinction between the various genres, registers, and modes, along with the morphological and syntactic devices that are at their service, are mastered at a relatively advanced age in adolescence. The acquisition of expository prose skills, for example, entails the use of sophisticated lexical information and command of complex morphological, syntactic, and discourse strategies (see, e.g., Ravid and Tolchinsky 2002; Berman and Nir-Sagiv 2004; Ravid and Berman 2006). A recent study (Nir-Sagiv and Berman 2010) examines complex syntax from a discourse perspective and proposes a hierarchy of complexity of clause-combining relations, investigating the different rhetorical strategies for which the various structures are

used. An additional study, which concerns the spontaneous spoken mode (Ravid 2002), demonstrates the way spontaneity factors impose constraints which have to be manipulated in order to optimize the expressive parameters for expository purposes at advanced stages of the acquisition of discourse skills.

Interestingly, topics involving processing and translation, interpreting and answering questions, and transfer from the written to the spoken mode and vice versa have also been among the issues investigated within Computational Linguistics (e.g., Wintner 2002). Additional issues concerning the computational parameters involved in the assessment of discourse referents, the relation between discourse and sentence structure, and those affecting coherence have also been studied (e.g., Grosz and Sidner 1986; Grosz 1995; Grosz and Ziv 1998). In the absence of an overall theory of Discourse Analysis, the diversity of studies within the vast range of theoretical and empirical frameworks will, hopefully, shed light on the human capacity to produce and interpret stretches of text in a variety of contexts (→ Grounding; Fronting; Topic; Focus).

#### REFERENCES

- Abadi, Adina. 1988. *The grammar of discourse of Modern Hebrew* (in Hebrew). Jerusalem: Magnes.
- . 1995. "Coherence/Incoherence in stories by S. Y. Agnon: Organization in discourse". *Anglicana Turkuensia* 14:131-137.
- . 2010. "Are Orly Castel-Blum's works post-modern by the standards of discourse analysis?" (in Hebrew). Rinah Ben-Shahar and Gideon Touri 2010, 337-357.
- Ariel, Mira. 1998. "Discourse markers and form-function correlations". Jucker and Ziv 1998, 223-259.
- . 1990. "Certain stylistic characteristics of the skits of *Ha-gašaš Ha-xiver*" (in Hebrew). *Language and Hebrew* 1:31-35.
- . 1994. "Translating literary dialogue: The problem, and its implications for translation into Hebrew". *Target* 6:195-221.
- . 2003. "On the poetics of Orly Castel-Blum" (in Hebrew). *Lamed le-Ilaš: On the 30th Anniversary of the Israeli Association of Applied Linguistics*, ed. By Yitzhak Schlesinger and Malka Muchnik, 78-93. Jerusalem: Tzivonim.
- Ben Shahar, Rinah and Gideon Touri (eds.). 2006. *Hebrew: A living language, vol. 4*. Tel-Aviv: Ha-kibbutz Ha-meuchad.
- . 2010. *Hebrew: A living language, vol. 5*. Tel-Aviv: Ha-kibbutz Ha-meuchad.
- Berman, Ruth A. and Bracha Nir-Sagiv. 2004. "Linguistic indicators of inter-genre differentiation in later language development". *Journal of Child Language* 31:339-380.

- Birner, Betty J. and Gregory L. Ward. 1998. *Information status and non-canonical word order*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Blakemore, Diane. 1987. *Semantic constraints on relevance*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. 2002. "Introduction: Genres of spoken discourse-developmental and cross-cultural perspectives" (in Hebrew). *Sqript: 'oryanut, mexkar, te'orya ve-ma'as* 3-4:9-25.
- Borochofsky Bar-Aba, Esther. 2003. "Punctuation marks: Procedural and conceptual uses". *Journal of Pragmatics* 35:1031-1048.
- . 2007. "'efšar qafe?" 'May I some coffee?' Non-sentential utterances in colloquial Hebrew". *Hebrew Studies* 48:291-316.
- . 2010. *Issues in colloquial Hebrew* (in Hebrew). Jerusalem: Bialik.
- Burstein, Ruth. 2005. "Context dependent interrogative sentences in interviews and discussions in the written media currently" (in Hebrew). *Helqat Lašon* 36:31-55.
- Giora, Rachel. 1985. "A text based analysis of non-narrative texts". *Theoretical Linguistics* 12:115-135.
- Grice, Paul. 1975. "Logic and conversation". *Speech acts*, ed. by Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan, 41-58. New York: Academic.
- Grosz, Barbara J. 1995. "Centering: A framework for modeling the local coherence of discourse". *Computational Linguistics* 21:203-225.
- and Candance L. Sidner. 1986. "Attention, intention and the structure of discourse". *Computational Linguistics* 12:175-204.
- and Yael Ziv. 1998. "Centering, global focus and right dislocation". *Centering theory in discourse*, ed. by Marilyn A. Walker, Aravind K. Joshi and Ellen F. Prince, 293-307. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Halliday, Michael A. K., and Ruqayia Hasan. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Izre'el, Shlomo, Benjamin Hary, and Giora Rahav. 2001. "Designing CSIH: The Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew". *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 6:171-197.
- Izre'el, Shlomo, and Margalit Mendelson (eds.). 2002. *Speaking Hebrew: Studies in the spoken language and in linguistic variation in Israel*. Ramat Aviv: University of Tel-Aviv.
- Izre'el, Shlomo and Giora Rahav. 2004. "The Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew (CoSIH); Phase I: The Pilot Study". *Fourth International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation*, ed. by Nelleke Oostdijk, Gjert Kristoffersen, and Geoffrey Sampson, 1-7. Paris: European Language Resources Association.
- Jucker, Andreas H. and Yael Ziv (eds.). 1998. *Discourse markers: Description and theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kampf, Zohar. 2008. "The pragmatics of forgiveness: Judgments of apologies in the Israeli political arena". *Discourse & Society* 19:577-598.
- Kampf, Zohar and Shoshana Blum-Kulka. 2007. "Do children apologize to each other? Apology events in young Israeli peer discourse". *Journal of Politeness Research* 3:11-37.
- Kuzar, Ron. 2001. *Hebrew and Zionism: A discourse analytic cultural study*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- . 2002. "Translating the *Internationale*: Unity and dissent in the encoding of proletarian solidarity". *Journal of Pragmatics* 34:87-109.
- Lambrecht, Knud. 1994. *Information structure and sentence form: Topic, focus and the mental representation of discourse referents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Livnat, Zohar. 2000. "Punctuation as a rhetorical device" (in Hebrew). *Hebrew Linguistics* 46:69-79.
- . 2003. "Investigating interpretive legal discourse: 'Sentence meaning', 'utterance meaning' and 'speaker meaning'" (in Hebrew). *Hebrew: A living language*, vol. 3, ed. by Rinah Ben-Shahar and Gideon Touri, 191-206. Tel-Aviv: Ha-kibbutz Ha-meuchad.
- . 2005. "The poetic codes of *Rexovot Hanahar* [streets of the river]" (in Hebrew). *Shofar* 23:19-33.
- . 2009. "Discourse markers in Modern Hebrew: A synchronic and diachronic study" (in Hebrew). *Two hundred and fifty years of Modern Hebrew*, ed. by Chaim E. Cohen, 211-227. Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language.
- . 2010. *The rhetorics of the scientific article: The language and the discourse community*. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press.
- Livnat, Zohar and Il il Yatziv. 2003. "Causality and justification: The causal marker *Ki* in spoken Hebrew". *Revue de Sémantique et Pragmatique* 13:99-119.
- . 2010. "Repetitions and contrasts in spoken narrative" (in Hebrew). Ben Shahar and Touri 2010, 277-291.
- Maschler, Yael. 2004. *The Haifa corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew*. <http://hebra.haifa.ac.il/com/maschler/>
- . 2009a. "The system of discourse markers permeating casual Hebrew conversation" (in Hebrew). *Hebrew Linguistics* 62-63:99-129.
- . 2009b. *Metalanguage in interaction: Hebrew discourse markers*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Nir-Sagiv, Bracha and Ruth Berman. 2010. "Complex syntax as a window on contrastive rhetoric". *Journal of Pragmatics* 42:744-765.
- Olshtain, Elite. 1989. "Apologies across languages". *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: Requests and apologies*, ed. by Shoshana Blum-Kulka, et al., 155-73. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex.
- Ravid, Dorit. 2002. "The emergence of modality adaptation skills in expository text production". (in Hebrew). *Hebrew Linguistics* 50-51:95-120.
- Ravid, Dorit and Ruth Berman. 2006. "Information density in the development of spoken and written narratives in English and Hebrew". *Discourse Processes* 41:117-149.
- Ravid, Dorit and Liliana Tolchinsky. 2002. "Developing linguistic literacy: A comprehensive model". *Journal of Child Language* 29:419-448.
- Shloush, Shelly. 1998. "A unified account of Hebrew *bekicur* 'in short': Relevance theory and discourse structure considerations". Jucker and Ziv 1998, 61-82.

- Sovran, Tamar. 2002. "Spoken and poetic language in Israeli modern poetry" (in Hebrew). *Izre'el* 2002, 395-420.
- . 2006. "The poetic language of Agi Mishol" (in Hebrew). Ben Shahar and Touri 2006, 281-306.
- Sperber, Dan and Deirdre Wilson. 1986 (1995). *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Weizman, Elda. 1993. "Interlanguage requestive hints". *Interlanguage pragmatics*, ed. by Gabriele Kasper and Shoshana Blum-Kulka, 123-137. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2000. "A pragmatic study of the given-new discourse structure in Aharon Megeed's novel *Ha-xay 'al Ha-met*" (in Hebrew). *Helqat Lašon* 29-32:19-39.
- . 2008. *Positioning in media dialogue: Negotiating roles in the news interview*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Wintner, Shuly. 2002. "Hebrew computational linguistics: Past and future" (in Hebrew). *Izre'el* 2002, 35-64.
- Yatziv, Il-il and Zohar Livnat. 2006. "Coherence in spoken discourse: 'az as a discourse marker" (in Hebrew). Ben Shahar and Touri 2006, 175-189.
- Ziv, Yael. 1998. "Hebrew *kaze* as a discourse marker and lexical hedge: Conceptual and procedural properties". Jucker and Ziv 1998, 203-221.
- . 2001. "It is not at all *pašut* [simple]: Discourse markers in Spoken Hebrew" (in Hebrew). *Hebrew Linguistics* 48:17-29.
- . 2008. "Codifying apparent inconsistencies in discourse: The case of Hebrew *ma*". *Current issues in generative Hebrew linguistics*, ed. by Sharon Armon-Lotem, Gabi Danon, and Susan Deborah Rothstein, 353-388. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Yael Ziv (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)