

### On the Syntax and Semantics of Hebrew *ze*-clefts

Cleft sentences have been extensively discussed in the literature primarily with respect to English and can be roughly divided into two main approaches – the expletive (Jespersen (1937), Chomsky (1977), Williams (1980), Rizzi (1997), Kiss (1999), Beletti (2008), etc.) and the extraposition (Jespersen (1927), Akmajian (1970), Emonds (1976), Gundel (1977), etc.) analyses, without any consensus in the literature. New evidence from Hebrew *ze*-clefts leads to the need for a new and combined account, for which we will argue in this paper, after reviewing the existing analyses. Hebrew *ze*-clefts contain the initial pronoun *ze*, followed by a focused XP and a CP (1). The status of the pronoun and the CP are the controversial parts in the analysis of clefts in general and are discussed in this paper with respect to Hebrew.

*I. The status of ze.* The extraposition analysis captures the observation that the structure of extrapositions (2a) and it-clefts (2b) appears to be very similar; both involve the pronoun *ze* and a CP. A standard assumption in the literature is that *ze* is expletive in both. However, these assumptions regarding the nature of the initial pronoun have been challenged by Emonds (1970), Bennis (1986), Hazout (1994), Zaring (1994). We will follow them by using islandhood as a diagnostic for complement/adjunct status of CP (Chomsky (1986), Rizzi (1990)), showing that in terms of extraction out of the CP, clefts (4) behave similarly to extrapositions (3), assuming that extraction out of complements is possible, while extraction out of adjuncts is not, them being islands for wh-movement. From this follows that the CP is an adjunct and thus the *ze*-pronoun cannot be expletive. More evidence for the referential status of *ze* comes from control (5). One of the readings of (5a) is (5b), an instance of semantic event control (Williams (1994)). We follow Landau (2009) in that only arguments can control into adjuncts, thus the controller of the PRO in the purpose clause is, by elimination, *ze* and not the CP. Moreover, *ze* can serve as the antecedent of a reflexive. In addition, Chomsky (1995) argues that pure expletives have no phi-features and thus are not directly involved in any case or agreement checking. However, Hebrew cleft pronoun exhibits number and gender phi-features (6). All this points to the referential status of *ze*, which, as we will argue, refers to the proposition denoted by the CP. However, the fact that *ze* inflects can still mean that it is a copula PronZ (Sichel 1997), which we argue against, claiming that *ze* is the subject and not the copula in clefts, based on the ability of *ze* to raise (7), interaction with past/fut. tense PronH copula (8) and not exhibiting the typical pattern of Hebrew copula-inversion with participles (Borer (1995) (9)).

*II. The status of the clause: II. The status of the clause:* evidence from extraction (3,4) also shows that the CP of clefts is an adjunct and not a complement, contra Chomsky (1977), Rizzi (1997), etc., which hold the CP together with its head to be the complement of BE. However, maintaining the view that the CP is an adjunct, the question of whether it is a restrictive relative clause (cf. extraposition approach), an appositive or a free relative (Den Dikken 2001, etc.) still remains. New evidence from Hebrew is particularly surprising, since it reveals a hybrid nature of the RC in clefts; it has both properties of restrictive relatives and of non-restrictive appositives. To mention just a few, RRC properties exhibited by CP of clefts are: no intonational break that sets it apart from the matrix clause; the possibility of wh-pronoun/complementizer or  $\emptyset$  for English (Reeve 2010) and comp. *še/Ø* for Hebrew; the CP may contain foci and be affected by sentence negation (Jackendoff 1977), and more. On the other hand, the non-RRC properties of the cleft CP are: the focused element of the cleft, which functions as the head of the RC, may consist of a proper name (1); the focused head of RC can be a non-referential PP or an adverbial, and, in fact, may constitute any XP categorically; CPs of clefts can be conjoined and cannot be stacked; they may contain main-clause sentence adverbs, similarly to non-RRC (Demirdache 1991), etc. (10).

- (1) a. *ze* DANI *še* ohev lil'os mastikim  
it Dani that likes to-chew bubble gums  
'It's Dani who likes chewing gum''.

b. *ze* (BE<sub>PAST/FUT</sub>) XP<sub>FOCI</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> *še* ....t<sub>i</sub>.....]

- (2) a. ze margiz [še xomski lo hurša lehikanes]  
it annoying that Chomsky neg. allowed to-enter  
“It’s annoying that Chomsky wasn’t allowed to enter”.
- b. ze xomski [še lo hurša lehikanes]  
it Chomsky that neg. allowed to-enter  
“It’s Chomsky who wasn’t allowed to enter”.
- (3)a. ma<sub>i</sub> **pro** xašuv [še nilmad t<sub>i</sub>]?                      a’. eyx<sub>i</sub> **pro** xašuv [še nilmad carfatit t<sub>i</sub>]?  
what important that we will study?                      how important that we study French?  
“What is it that is important that we will study?”                      “How is it important that we study French?”
- b. ?ma<sub>i</sub> **ze** xašuv [še nilmad t<sub>i</sub> ]?                      b’. \*eyx<sub>i</sub> **ze** xašuv [še nilmad carfatit t<sub>i</sub>]?  
what it important that we study                      how it important that we study French  
“What is it that is important that we will study?”                      “How is it important that we study French?”
- (4) a. ?eyze gvul<sub>i</sub> **ze** haya dani [še avar t<sub>i</sub> be-mafti’a]  
which border it was Dani that crossed.he surprisingly
- b. \*eyx<sub>i</sub> **ze** haya dani [še avar et ha-gvul ha-beynleumi t<sub>i</sub>]?  
how it was Dani that crossed.he acc. the-border the-international
- (5) a. ze dani [še halax iti la-mesiba] (kedey lehoci le-kol ha-banot et ha-eynayim)  
it Dani that went with-me to-the-party in order to take-out to-all the-girls acc. the-eyes  
“It was Dani who went with me to the party to make all the girls jealous”.
- b. **ze<sub>i</sub>** Dani [še halax iti la-mesiba] (kedey **PRO<sub>i</sub>** lehoci le-kol ha-banot et ha-eynayim)
- (6) a. ze                      dani še hegi’a                      la-mesiba  
it/this.masc.sgl. Dani that arrived.masc. at-the-party
- b. ze/zo                      rina še hegi’a                      la-mesiba  
it/this.masc./fem.sgl. Rina that arrived.fem. at-the-party
- c. ze/ele                      dani ve-dina še hegi’u                      la-mesiba  
it/this.masc.sgl./pl. Dani and Dina that arrived.pl. at-the-party
- (7)a. ze carix lihyot dani še halax la-makolet                      b. \*dani carix lihyot še halax la-makolet  
it should be Dani that went to-the-grocery-store                      Dani should be that went to-the-grocery-store
- c. \*carix lihyot dani še halax la-makolet  
should be Dani that went to-the-grocery-store
- (8)a. ze dani še ba                      b. \*hu dani še ba                      c. dani hu                      še ba  
it Dani that came                      he/pron.BE Dani that came                      Dani pron.BE that came  
“it was Dani who came”                                           “Dani is (the one) who came”
- (9)a. haya ze/ze haya barur še itamar yeaxer                      b. ze barur/\*barur ze še itamar yeaxer  
was it/ it was clear that Itamar will.be.late                      it clear/\*clear it that Itamar will.be.late  
“It was clear that Itamar will be late”.                      “It is clear that Itamar will be late”.

- (10) ze YOSI še, t'a-emet, lo raciti še yavo la-mesiba  
it Yossi that frankly neg. want.I that will.come.he to-the-party  
“It’s Yossi, that, frankly, I didn’t want him to come to the party”.