Chapter 1
Preliminary discussion

1.1 Parts of speech

One of the major issues in the presentation of grammar is the definition of language categories. Language categories can be described as parts of speech, i.e. language units in isolation, or in terms of their function in context. For instance, a noun can be described as belonging to the parts-of-speech category ‘noun’, and also as functioning either as a subject or an object within the clause or sentence structure, as the modifier of another noun, etc. While we recognize that all language items belong to a whole network of interrelationships, we shall limit the present discussion to context-free (i.e., parts-of-speech), and context-dependent (i.e., functional) relationships.

The following are the main traditional categories of parts of speech:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>נoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td>נoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>נoun, נָון</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>נoun, נָון</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td>נoun, נָון</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>מִילּוֹת חֵכים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctions</td>
<td>מִילּוֹת חֵכים</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In many cases, the distinction between the part-of-speech characterization of some item and its function in context is obvious. Thus, for instance, in the noun phrase מִלַּח סֵפֶרֶים ‘bookstore’, we have two nouns (part of speech), and although the second one is a modifier...
of the first, and thus functions as if it were an adjective, it is still a noun from the part-of-speech point of view. On the other hand, there are words that even in isolation cannot be assigned unambiguously to a single category. Every word functions as at least one part of speech, but there are words that can serve as two or more parts of speech, depending on the context. For instance, some present participle forms can function as verbs in the present tense, as nouns or as adjectives:

Noun
The new worker did not arrive at work today.

Verb
The computer does not work properly.

Adjective
The executive (working) committee decided to raise membership fees.

The same word can also function as both an adjective and an adverb:

Adjective
The director is a difficult man.

Adverb
He makes everyone work hard.

Below are some illustrations of parts of speech and grammatical functions. A more detailed discussion will follow in the main chapters of the book.

Verbs

Verbs in tense
Dan hurried home.
They will oppose the plan for ideological reasons.

Non-finite verbs
Dan wants to run in the Boston Marathon.

Nouns and pronouns

Nouns
I have coffee and cake for you.

Verbal nouns
Dan is a cooking expert.
She proved a profound understanding of the subject.
Chapter 1: Preliminary discussion

Personal pronouns
He likes to cook and she likes to eat.

Demonstrative pronouns
This food is Moroccan food.

Adjectives
Adjectives in noun phrases
He is an excellent cook.

Adjectives as predicates
This student is talented.

Adverbs
He cooks a lot but eats little.

Particles
Dan goes with friends to shows.

Conjunctions
Do you want to walk or to go by car?

Subordinators
They went to the restaurant that I recommended.

Interrogatives
Who is this?

Interjections
Ouch! It hurts!

1.2 Grammatical functions
Another way to classify the components of an utterance is by their grammatical function. Here are some of the terms that are used to describe the roles the parts of speech play in sentences:

- Subject
- Predicate
- Attribute
- Object
- Adjunct

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Chapter 1: Preliminary discussion

Subject
Noun phrases
The new cook is from France.
Subordinate clauses
That he studied cooking in France is of no interest to me.

Predicate
Verb predicates
Dan started studying in the summer.
Nominal predicates
He is a student in law school.

Attribute
Expansion of phrases with additional information
Dan met friends from work at a pub on the beach.

Object complement
Direct object
Dan met his friends.
Indirect object
Dan got together with his friends.

Adjunct
Temporal
Dan was not at home this morning.
Spatial
Dan traveled in England for three months.

1.3 Words and patterns
All verbs, many nouns, and a good number of adjectives and adverbs are based on a combination of roots and patterns. The root *shoresh* is a consonantal skeleton. It is a hypothetical sequence of consonants shared by related words. Roots do not constitute actual words. Each one is applied to a pattern, from which actual words are formed. In the verb system the pattern is called *binyan*, and elsewhere it is called *mishkal*.
Chapter 1: Preliminary discussion

Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>שורש</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>כותב</td>
<td>כ-ח-ב</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dictated</td>
<td>הקוב</td>
<td>חפיעל</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nouns and adjectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>שורש</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>magician (noun)</td>
<td>קוסמ</td>
<td>ק-ס-מ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charming (adjective)</td>
<td>קסיפור</td>
<td>קסיפור</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are seven verb pattern groups (binyanim) in Hebrew. The third person singular in the past tense is traditionally used to represent each of these groups. To label each of these groups generically, a prototypical root is used. The generic verb ¦¬® is used in combination with the pattern of each binyan, giving it its name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Binyan’s name</th>
<th>Citation Form</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pa’al</td>
<td>(פֵיעֶל)</td>
<td>י-ר-ק</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nif’al</td>
<td>(מְעָלֶה)</td>
<td>ש-ב-ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pi’el</td>
<td>(פֵיעֶל או פִּיעֶל)</td>
<td>ס-פ-ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pa’al</td>
<td>(פֵיעֶל או פִּיעֶל)</td>
<td>ס-ל-ק</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hitpa’el</td>
<td>(חתוך או חתך)</td>
<td>ר-ג-ש</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hif’il</td>
<td>(חקטיל)</td>
<td>ק-ל-ג-ח</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huf’al</td>
<td>(もっとועלו או מועלו)</td>
<td>נ-ב-ה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The root consonant is labeled ר (marked in English as C1). The second root consonant is labeled ש (C2) and the third root consonant is כ or ק (C3).
A comparative note

The verb pattern groups in Hebrew are somewhat similar to special groups of verbs in English, where the base undergoes predictable internal changes, and the modifications within the stem are regular. Some examples of such groups:
(a) drive-drove-driven, write-wrote-written, ride-rode-ridden
(b) speak-spoke-spoken, freeze-froze-frozen, steal-stole-stolen

Although the root does not exist on its own, many words sharing a common root tend to have a common meaning or related meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Citation form</th>
<th>binyan</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ק-ש-ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be tied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ק-ש-ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get in touch; get connected</td>
<td></td>
<td>ת-ש-ל</td>
<td>התשע-ל</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nouns and adjectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tied, connected (adj.)</td>
<td>ק-ש-ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tie, connection (noun)</td>
<td>ק-ש-ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context (noun)</td>
<td>ק-ש-ר</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3.2 Deriving new words

New words in Hebrew, as in other Semitic languages, are formed in two ways:
1. Linearly, without affecting the base for derivation. For instance, the adjective יְָפֶּה יְָפֶה יְָפֶה ‘public, in the public domain’ is derived from the noun יְָפֶה ‘the public’.

There are also cases of chains of derivations.

Noun | Abstract noun derived from | Adjective derived from | Abstract noun derived from
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>child</td>
<td>childhood</td>
<td>childish</td>
<td>childishness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. New verbs can also be derived from an existing root, by combining it with an existing derivation pattern. For instance, the following recent verbs were formed with existing roots and their new combination with patterns:
Chapter 1: Preliminary discussion

1.4 Gender and number

Nouns, adjectives and verbs have gender and number features. The gender is either masculine יי or feminine רעפ. A distinction is made between two major noun categories: [1] nouns that represent living entities: human beings and other living beings with biological gender features, and [2] nouns that represent other entities, mostly inanimate and abstract nouns (for example, objects, concepts, plants and others). The biological gender of living beings and their inherent masculine or feminine features are reflected in their grammatical gender features. Other nouns have an assigned grammatical gender, which is prescribed and cannot be predicted.

There are regular number features, which indicate whether a noun is a singular noun י or whether it is a plural noun ש. The feminine singular noun endings ר or a final ר- are frequently marked by a final ר-ו or a final ר-ו. The plural noun endings are represented by the suffixes ש-ım and ש-ו. In nouns the plural ending ש-ım most frequently but not necessarily reflects the masculine gender of the nouns, while the plural ending ש-ו most frequently but not necessarily reflects the feminine gender of the nouns.

Verb forms in Hebrew also have gender and number features. In most past and future tenses they also have subject person features, i.e. personal pronoun features (I, you, he), which are often affixed to the verb forms.

1.5 Open and closed word classes

The parts of speech can be classified as belonging to two large categories: to ‘open’ classes or to ‘closed’ classes. The open classes consist of these parts of speech: verb, noun, adjective, and adverb. The various particles (prepositions and conjunctions and others) are closed.
classes. The closed classes are fixed sets of a limited number of function words, whereas the open classes have a large membership.

1.5.1 Open classes
These are productive classes to which new words are continuously added, responding to the need for new vocabulary to serve the changing times. The new words are added either according to existing rules of morphology for the formation of new words, or by borrowing words from other languages and either leaving them as they are, or adapting them to Hebrew structures and patterns. The closed classes resist the addition of new members.

### Formation of verbs

#### Adaptation from existing words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Derived Verb</th>
<th>Derived Root</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to market</td>
<td>בְּקָרָם</td>
<td>ק-ר-מ</td>
<td>market</td>
<td>שֹק</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to report</td>
<td>בְּלָקָה</td>
<td>ה-ו-מ</td>
<td>report</td>
<td>דְרָה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **ה-** prefix added to existing roots:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Derived Verb</th>
<th>Derived Root</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to communicate</td>
<td>בְּלָקֵשׁ</td>
<td>ק-ר-מ</td>
<td>tie</td>
<td>ק-ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to brief</td>
<td>בְּלָקָד</td>
<td>ק-ר-מ</td>
<td>guide</td>
<td>ד-ר</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **ש-** prefix added to existing roots:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Derived Verb</th>
<th>Derived Root</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to subjugate</td>
<td>לָשַׁב</td>
<td>ס-ר-ב</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>ע-ב</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to rewrite</td>
<td>לָשַׁב</td>
<td>ס-ר-ב</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>כ-ח</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Formation of nouns

#### Derived from verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Derived Noun</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>frame</td>
<td>סָמַר</td>
<td>ס-ר</td>
<td>שֵׁר</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guard, watch</td>
<td>מָשַׁר</td>
<td>מ-ש-ר</td>
<td>שֵׁר</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Derived from other nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Derived Noun</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brotherhood</td>
<td>אַחַת</td>
<td>א-ה</td>
<td>פִט</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>privacy</td>
<td>개인</td>
<td>ה-י-י</td>
<td>פִט</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Preliminary discussion

Derived from adjectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Derived Noun</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>permissiveness</td>
<td>permissive</td>
<td>itivën</td>
<td>permissive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health</td>
<td>healthy</td>
<td>cira</td>
<td>health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Borrowing words from other languages

Direct borrowing of nouns:
- high tech
- prime time
- boss

Deriving new verbs from borrowed words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Derived Verb</th>
<th>Extracted Root</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>subsidize</td>
<td>subsidy</td>
<td>sibсид</td>
<td>subsidióna</td>
<td>subsidy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sympathize</td>
<td>sympathy</td>
<td>sibтся</td>
<td>subsidióna</td>
<td>subsidy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Borrowed words with Hebrew suffixes

- Plural Suffixes: intellectuals
- Feminine ending: Practice
- Adjective endings: digital

Note that the noun system is the most open, and nouns from other languages can be adopted into the language without alterations or with little alteration, such as 'atom', 'telephone', 'television', 'technology', and many others. However, new borrowed verbs and adjectives require adaptation into the existing system. For instance, the verb יִסְבָּד sibsid 'to subsidize' above requires vowel modification from the borrowed noun subsidía 'subsidy' in order to fit into a Hebrew verb pattern.

1.5.2 Closed classes

The closed classes of words consist of the grammatical function words, such as:

1. Pronouns
2. Prepositions
3. Conjunctions
4. Determiners
5. Quantifiers
6. Subordinators
Chapter 1: Preliminary discussion

All of the above do not have gender or number features, and as a general rule, do not fill the slot of the head of a phrase. They are called closed because they contain a limited number of items, and their membership is not likely to be expanded. Function words are hardly ever borrowed from other languages.

**Prepositions**

Prepositions are usually followed by a noun phrase or by a pronoun suffix. Prepositions function as heads of prepositional phrases. Some verbs must be followed by obligatory prepositions. Some prepositions are followed by a subordinating particle ַ that introduces a subordinate clause.

**Prepositional phrase**

After the holiday meal

Subordinating item: preposition + clause

After they ate the holiday meal.

**Determiners, articles and quantifiers**

Articles, determiners, and quantifiers precede and modify nouns:

Not everyone agrees with you.

He is a billionaire! He has lots of money.

Each person brought something.

**Coordinators**

Common coordinators are ַ -'and' and ַ 'because' and ַ 'or'. They can be found in several levels of the hierarchy: words, phrases, or clauses.

**Phrases**

Who is the boss here, you, or your brother?

Are you and your brother going to the office?