DATIVE MARKING OF THE AFFECTEE ROLE: DATA FROM MODERN HEBREW

by

RUTH A. BERMAN

Tel Aviv University

ABSTRACT: The study concerns the ways in which dative marking by means of the preposition le- has been extended in colloquial Hebrew to a wide variety of syntactic contexts in which it did not occur at earlier stages of the language. These constructions include extraneous arguments in "ethical datives" such as ha tinok šuv xala lanu 'the baby again got-sick to (= on) us'; avoidance of surface subjects with experiential predicates such as acuv le rina 'is-sad to Rina'; and "extended datives" in three-place predicates such as hu hoci la et ha nešama 'he took-out to (= from) her the heart'. These various occurrences of le- marking are shown to provide a unique means of encoding the semantic role of affectee in modern Hebrew, yielding a continuum of participant involvement which ranges from the highest degree of "reflexive datives" (e.g. dan hitrocec lo ba rexov 'Dan ran to/for himself in-the street') as extended from biblical usage, through to the most extraneous instance of ethical datives. In typological terms, the widespread use of le- in these superficially different functions is shown to correlate with the increasingly "dative orientation" of modern Hebrew compared both with earlier stages of the language and with a "non-dative oriented" language like modern English.

This study considers how dative marking by means of the preposition le- 'to' or 'for' has been extended in modern Hebrew to a wide range of syntactic contexts in which it did not occur at earlier stages of the language. We aim to show how, in many instances, use of le- marking provides speakers with a means of referring to some individual as affected by a given situation or event, and to thereby quite uniquely encode the case

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role of affectee. Discussion here devolves mainly on the colloquial spoken variety of contemporary Hebrew, in which dative marking of the affectee role is particularly widespread. Such usage is quite generally attributed to Slavic-Yiddish influence (Even-Zohar, forthcoming), and is still considered non-normative by some (Sivan 1976).

The prefixal morpheme in question is also used to mark the infinitive form of verbs—e.g. le-daber 'to talk', la-lêxet 'to walk'—as well as to denote movement towards—e.g. rac le-xadro 'ran to his-room' or halax la-xanut 'went to-the-store'. More germane to the present discussion is the fact that le- is used with the verb meaning 'be' as the basic way of expressing possession in Hebrew, as in many non-habere languages. Thus possessors are dative marked, as is the noun dan in yeš le-dan kôva 'be to-Dan (a) hat'='Dan has a hat' or the pronoun 'they' in haya la-hem mazal 'was to-them luck'='they had luck'.

Our analysis focuses on the kinds of constructions illustrated in the following two sets of examples:

(1) dan ne'elam li pî'tom me ha ōfek
Dan disappeared to-me suddenly from the horizon
'Dan's gone and disappeared on me all of a sudden'

(2) a. danî ne'elam loj pî'tom me ha ōfek
Dan disappeared to-him suddenly from the horizon

= b. danî ne'elam mi-menûj pî'tom
Dan disappeared from-him suddenly

≠ c. danî ne'elam loj pî'tom me ha ōfek
Dan disappeared to-him suddenly from the horizon
'Dan's gone and taken it upon himself to disappear all of a sudden'

The first example above, as shown by the translation given for (1), indicates that the dative-marked first person is involved in, and feels affected by, a situation in which this person, the speaker, did not participate directly at all—Dan's disappearing. As such, sentence (1) closely corresponds to (2a), where someone other than Dan is affected by Dan's having disappeared. Furthermore, the ablative paraphrase of (2b) in the sense of

1. Broad phonetic transcription is adopted as a rough representation of Israeli Hebrew. Word stress is final unless indicated by an acute accent on the penultimate; and for ease of exposition, we represent as separate words morphemes that are orthographically part of the following word, such as ha- 'the', le- 'to', ve- 'and', or ye- 'that'.
DATIVE MARKING OF THE AFFECTEE ROLE

"from him" could be used to reword sentence (1) as well, to yield the synonymous *ne’elam mi-meni* ‘disappeared from me’ in place of *ne’elam li* ‘disappeared to(=on) me’. This paraphrase is not possible, however, in (2c), where the dative pronoun is coreferential with the subject noun *dān*, and a kind of reflexive sense is yielded, as suggested by the gloss for (2c).

Below we try to show that contemporary extensions of the dative nominal as in (1) and (2a) above can be given a uniform characterization under the common semantic concept of *affectee* of the event. We consider, firstly, uses of dative marking in sentences like (1) above, of the type termed “the ethical dative,” in which the dative nominal represents an outsider or mere onlooker, a nonparticipant who is nonetheless perceived as affected by the event described (Section 1). We then try to show that dative marking provides an option to the use of canonic SV(O) constructions in one-place and two-place predicates, thereby serving to drain the subject of some of its syntactic and semantic functions in contemporary Hebrew (Section 2). We then consider how dative marking can be used in place of other types of oblique case markings in three-place predicates of the kind illustrated in (2a) above, where *le-* is used in place of an ablative marker, hence extending the notion of “indirect object” beyond recipients and benefactees (Section 3). The last kind of dative marking is of the kind illustrated in (2c) above, where the dative pronoun is coreferential with the subject NP. This “reflexive” type of dative is the only use attested to in classical, biblical Hebrew, and it is widely used in the modern literary language also. We shall try to show, however, that it has been considerably extended in colloquial usage today (Section 4). Finally, we suggest that these various uses of dative marking, as characterized in Sections 1 through 4, can be ranked along a cline of differing degrees of “affectee involvement,” proceeding from the nonparticipant, onlooker type of affectee of the “ethical dative” through to the opposite extreme of the coreferential or reflexive dative nominal that may represent the only participant in a given event. We also consider more general implications of the data presented from modern Hebrew in terms of varying degrees of “dative orientation” across different languages and language types (Section 5).

2. In today's usage, preference for dative marking is so strong in some instances, that the periphrastic option tends to seem more marked, or to have a somewhat different, more restricted interpretation. Thus, the expression *ne’elam mi-* ‘disappear from’ is not common in colloquial usage in the literal sense of ‘disappear from the sight of someone’, as suggested in (2b) of the text. Rather, this is confined to the more literary expression meaning ‘be hidden from X’ in the sense of ‘X is not aware of’.
1. “Ethical Datives”

The examples in (3) and (4) below illustrate a very special function of dative marking in current Hebrew—that of nonparticipating affectee.

(3) a. rak še hi lo taxle li šuv axšav
   just that she not will-sicken to-me again now
   ‘Just so she doesn’t go and get sick on me again now!’

   b. ha yęled tamid kam lanu mukdam davka be šabat
   the child always gets-up to-us early just on Saturday
   ‘The kid always wakes up early on us on the weekend (of all times)’

(4) a. ha kir ha ze alul li pol la-xem kol réga
   the wall the that might to fall to-you(pl) any moment
   ‘That wall’s liable to fall on you (non-locative) any minute’

   b. cémax ka ze yigdal lax / lexa bli be’ayot
   plant like that will-grow to-you (fem/masc) without problems
   ‘That kind of plant will-grow without any difficulty for you/for one’

Such sentences are closely paralleled by constructions which are traditionally termed the “ethical” dative, as in the following examples in French (taken from Leclère, 1975):

(5) a. je te bois dix pastis en trois minutes
   ‘I can drink you ten Pernods in three minutes’

   b. Paul m’a encore enflé depuis deux jours
   ‘Paul went and swelled up on me again two days ago’

It is worth noting about such sentences, in Hebrew and French alike, that the dative-marked pronoun is syntactically, and logically, unnecessary: it is not in any way required by the verb. Pragmatically, too, the affectee of the event, the one marked by le-, is totally outside of the actual perpetration of the event, representing what Leclère (1975) characterizes as a kind of “onlooker” (témoin) to the event. Thus, in the examples in (3) above, the activity of getting sick or of waking up early is carried out quite independently of anyone other than the subject/agent. However, the speaker perceives himself as being the victim of this activity or circumstance, and he thus describes it as one by which he is affected. Similarly, in the examples in (4), the speaker addresses the hearer(s) as being directly affected by an event over which they themselves may have no control—such as the wall’s falling down, or the way the plant grows.
On the other hand, the ethical dative is possible only if there is some intimate personal connection between the person(s) marked by the dative and the perpetrator or patient of the event. For instance, the comment in (3a) about someone getting sick "on the speaker" would hardly be appropriate if said by a doctor with reference to a patient whom he treats on a casual, occasional, or impersonal basis. This is true even when the le-marked pronoun does not refer to the speaker, as in the examples in (4) above; thus, the wall which might fall or the plant which will grow well must be such that the addressees of the utterance are closely involved with them, and hence are likely to be affected by anything which happens to it.  

Accordingly, the "ethical" kind of dative, which introduces a grammatically and pragmatically extraneous argument, a nonparticipant in the event's occurrence, is rather more restricted than the other types of dative marking considered below. Although it is not lexically restricted in the sense of being governed by a given class of verbs, it is limited to highly affective situations and types of discourse, where the speaker feels free to express his own or someone else's intimate connection with the perpetrator or patient of the event, and hence his own personal involvement in or attitude to that situation. Nonetheless, we chose the ethical dative as the starting-point for our analysis, for it seems to represent the prototypical instance of how classical dative marking has been extended in contemporary Hebrew, in that it so clearly highlights the point of view of the affectee of the situation, when subjectively perceived as such by the speaker.

2. Datives with One- or Two-Place Predicates: Experiencer vs. Agent

Modern Hebrew has a rather rich class of expressions like those in (6) below, where a predicate-initial construction takes a dative nominal—often in cases where a subject-requiring language like English would have an SV construction.

3. A generic reading is often yielded where the dative-marked nominal is second person, as in the Hebrew examples in (4) and the French in (5a) of the text, as well as below:

(i) hu mesugal li štot lexä et kol ha viski eclam ba msiba
   he capable to drink to-you OM all the whiskey by-them at the party
   'He's capable of drinking all the Scotch at their party on one'

In such cases, the ethical dative is used in the sense of the whole universe of people involved in some way with the agent of the action.
This use of dative marking in what Bolinger (1973) calls "circumstantial predicates" is relatively limited in Hebrew compared with, for example, the Dravidian languages (Sridhar 1976), as well as many other languages which are rich in dative-marked experiential predicates of this kind. For instance, Hebrew uses a Subject-Predicate construction to express the equivalent of ‘I’m hungry’, or ‘he was tired’; but dative marking of the experiencer is well-attested with numerous stative predicates in Hebrew, not only those in (6) above. The use of dative marking is also typical in predicate-initial constructions with sentential complements, like those in (7) below.

(7) a. kaše li le ehov oto
    hard to-me to like him
    ‘It’s hard for me to like him/I have a hard time liking him’

b. xaval lānu še hu nixšal
    pity to-us that he failed
    ‘It’s a pity for us/We’re sorry that he failed’

c. haya xašuv le dan le hagi’a bazman
    was important to Dan to arrive on-time
    ‘It was important for Dan/it mattered to Dan to get there on time’

In such constructions, the dative-marked nominal is optional, and where it does not occur, an impersonal, generic type of reading is yielded. However, if the experiencer of the predicate is overtly indicated, it invariably takes dative marking in these and in many other affective predicates which take sentential complements.

The predicate-initial constructions with dative-marked nominals like those in (6) and (7) above—e.g. ‘is cold to me’ = ‘I’m cold’, ‘was a pity to
Dan that we lost' = 'Dan was sorry that we lost'—demonstrate, firstly, that Hebrew has a wide range of predicate-initial constructions and, secondly, that such predicates typically take a dative-marking argument to represent their experiencer. More germane to our central concern here are doublets like the following, where in each case the Predicate ~ Dative construction in (a) has a Subject ~ Predicate counterpart in (b).

(8) (i) a. avad le dan ha tik = b. dan ibed et ha tik
    lost to Dan the file Dan lost OM the file
    'The file got lost on Dan'
(ii) a. lo yadú'a la-hem hexan hu = b. hem eyam yod'im
    not known to-them where he (is) they don't know
    hexan hu
    where he (is)

(9) (i) a. lo mistader lanu im ha šita ha xadaša
    not work-out to-us with the method the new
    'It isn't working out/arranging itself for us with the new method'
    = b. anaxnu lo mistadr-im im ha šita ha xadaša
    we('re) not managing+pl with the method the new
(ii) a. hitbalbel li nora ba bxina
    got-mixed-up to-me awful in-the exam
    'Things got terribly mixed up for me in the exam'
    = b. ani hitbalbal-ti nora ba bxina
    I got-mixed-up awfully in-the exam

The examples in (8) above are in rather formal style, while those in (9) are in a very colloquial register. But they are structurally and semantically alike: the (a) sentences above have a predicate-initial construction with a dative-nominal, and in this they are like the "experiential datives" noted earlier in this section. However, here the (a) sentences quite generally have a regular SVO paraphrase, as shown in (b) above, where the preposition et marks the Direct Object nominal. The widespread use of the (a) Predicate ~ Dative versions in preference to the (b) Subject ~ Predicate options can be explained as a means of effectively downgrading the agent, hence taking attention away from any participant as perpetrator of a given action or event. In a different context (Berman 1979b), I noted that modern Hebrew has several syntactic devices for achieving different kinds of degrees of downgrading of the role of agent in a situation: by use of subjectless impersonals with 3rd person plural verbs; by use of middle-voice intransitives; through agentless passive constructions; and by straightforward topicalization by fronting of some element other than the subject NP. In the present context, I would like to suggest that use of the
dative marker *le-* also makes it possible to present an event as agentless, hence making it more impersonal. That is, the fact that speakers often choose to use a dative-marked nominal in place of a canonic two-place SVO construction has a special function: it serves to give the nominal that could function as surface subject the status of the experiencer of the event, the one affected thereby, rather than that of its perpetrator or agent; and thus it has the effect of absolving this experiencer of responsibility for the event, which he is presented as undergoing, rather than as performing.5

The glosses for these Predicate plus Dative constructions sound awkward in English, but they are very natural expressions in Hebrew, particularly in more everyday spoken usage, where an “affectee” point of view is perhaps more easily tolerated than in more “objective” discourse styles. As noted (notes 4 and 5), they are widespread in the speech of young children, and they also occur in numerous formulaic expressions, such as the following.

(10) a. *nišbar to* (me ha ʿjob šelo)
    broke to-him (from his job)
    ‘He’s fed up (with his job)’

b. *nimʿas lanu* (lixyot kax)
    sickened to-us (to live so)
    ‘We’ve had it/We’re sick of living like this’

c. *mitxasek lahemi* (la vo itanu)
    feels-like to-them (to come with us)
    ‘They feel like it/coming with us’

One effect of the use of such constructions is to lower the transitivity of the speaker’s descriptions of the events in question (in the sense of Hopper & Thompson, 1980). Thus, the verb morphology in all the examples in (8) through (10), as well as those in n. 5 is typically INTRANSITIVE, often explicitly passive, so that the predicate markings correspond to a large extent to the *se* particle of French and its counterparts in other Romance languages, or the -*sja* suffix in Russian, as well as to the prefixes of Middle English verbs like *methink* or *become* in the sense of ‘suit’. Furthermore, in close correspondence to the analysis suggested by Sridhar

5. Thus, children will report on events to those taking care of them by using constructions like the ones in (a), rather than take responsibility for the event, as in the (b) forms.

(i) a. *nišbar li* ha séfel
    broke to-me the cup
    \( l \) broke OM the cup

b. *ani šavárti et ha séfel*
    \( l \) broke OM the cup

(ii) a. *nebdu* (sic) lanu ha maftexot
    got-lost to-us the keys
    \( l \) lost OM the keys

b. *anâxnu ibád-nu et ha maftexot*
    \( l \) lost OM the keys
(1976) for similar constructions in the Dravidian language of Kannada, the dative nominal can never be taken to represent a volitional agent of the state or process in question. This is shown, for instance, by the ill-formedness of (11a) below:

(11) a. *be tipsut-o, avad le dan ha tik
    in his-stupidity, got-lost to Dan the file
b. be tipsut-o, dan ibed et ha tik
    in his-stupidity, Dan lost OM the file

'Stupidly, Dan lost the file'

In typological terms, we wish to claim that constructions of the kind analyzed in this section are not unexpected in Hebrew; they correlate with the general disposition of the language—even in its contemporary, basically SVO state—for predicate-initial constructions, on the one hand, and for sentences which lack a surface grammatical subject and which are semantically impersonal, on the other (Berman 1980). From an internal syntactic point of view, there is evidence that the Predicate ~ Dative ~ Nominal constructions at issue here might also be potential candidates for inclusion in the class of subjectless impersonals in Hebrew, although the status of the grammatical relations borne by these two NPs is not easy to specify. In terms of surface coding properties (in the sense of Keenan, 1976)—case-marking, government of agreement in the verb, and position in linear ordering—the dative nominal has none of the properties associated with surface subjects in Hebrew, nor is it ever semantically the agent; and it does not for the most part manifest the behavioral, or transformational, properties characteristic of subject NPs. The other, nondative nominal by contrast, does have many such surface properties: it does not take any case-marking prepositional, generally true only of subject NPs in Hebrew;

The dative experiencer does have certain subject-like behavioral properties, in controlling reflexivization and equi-NP deletion, as below:

(i) nim'as li me acmi
    sickened to-me from myself = 'I've gotten fed up with myself'
(ii) kaše lo le histader im acmo
    hard to-him to settle with himself = 'He has a hard time getting on with himself'

This accords with the claim made by Cole et al. (1980) that, across languages, where a given NP changes diachronically by becoming more subject-like, it will acquire behavioral properties of a subject BEFORE surface coding properties. However, other of the behavioral criteria applied in their study do not work with the dative NPs of Hebrew, which suggests that at this stage in its development at all events, the Hebrew dative is still basically nonsubject-like in character.
and it triggers agreement in number and gender on the verb. Moreover, it can also occur in sentence-initial position, as shown below:

(12) ha kad nisbar lo
    the vase broke to-him  = 'The vase went and got broken on him'
ha sefel nafal la yad
    the cup fell to-the girl  = 'The cup fell from the little girl's hands'

However, there are indications on all three counts that this “nominative” NP is losing many of its surface subject-like properties in contemporary usage: the unmarked position for such nominals is postverbal rather than sentence-initial, as in the sentences in (12); verb agreement of sentence-initial predicates with following nouns is often violated, the unmarked masculine singular form of the verb being used instead; and there is a strong tendency—certainly among younger, or less careful, speakers—to insert the object marker et before the normatively zero-marked NP, as in, for instance nispax lo et kol ha xalav ‘spilt to-him OM all the milk’ = ‘All the milk got spilt on him’ (nonlocative on).

This draining-off of the surface subject properties of the non-dative NP in such Predicate ← Dative ← NP constructions is most noticeable in possessives (Ziv 1976). Thus, the examples in (13) show that the object marker et—normatively reserved for direct objects only—tends to be inserted before the normatively nominative possessee NP; while in (14), the unmarked masculine singular form of the verb is used with a plural noun in (14a), with a feminine noun in (14b).

(13) a. ye' li et ha sefer
    be to-me OM the book  = 'I have the book'
b. haya le dan et ha ome
    was to Dan OM the courage  = 'Dan had the courage'

(14) a. hayu li harbe be'ayot ito
    were to-me many problems with-him  = 'I had lots of problems with him'
b. yihye lexa od hizdamnut
    will-be (masc) to-you another chance (fem)  = 'You'll have another chance'

7. Our analysis of the insertion of the accusative et before an unmarked or “nominative” postverbal NP thus differs from that of Gil (ms.). He suggests that this trend in contemporary usage, though reminiscent of a few prenominative occurrences of et in biblical Hebrew, too, is due to a reanalysis of et which is draining it of its object-marking character, so that it is becoming a superficial, prosodically motivated marker on any non-initial, noncase-marked NP. In my view, use of et postverbally in contexts other than normatively before direct objects indicates, rather, that speakers are treating the NP in question as less subject-like. That is, it is not et which is losing its object-marking properties, but rather postverbal NPs which are treated as less subject-like in character.
This suggests that possessive sentences can be viewed as one subset of the cases where use of a dative NP serves to weaken the concept of agency while encoding experientiality or, in this case, possession. It might be the case that languages like Hebrew or Russian, and certainly the Dravidian languages (Sridhar 1976), all of which indicate possession by dative marking on the possessor rather than by a Subject *habere* verb construction, might be more likely to use dative marking for the experiencer/affectee role in general. This seems to be true to some extent for French, where *avoir* in SV constructions coexists with *de/à* (dative) alternation in expressing possession. In the next type of construction we consider, we will see that dative marking interacts in other ways with the syntax/semantics of possession.

3. **“Extended” Datives in Three-Place Predicates**

The term “extended” datives is adapted from Leclère (1975), being used here to refer to the use of *le-* marked nominals in three-place predicate constructions which correspond structurally to the ordinary or canonic datives with verbs like those meaning *give, bring, send, tell, transfer, contribute,* etc. In the examples of canonic datives in (15) below, the ordering of the direct and indirect object respectively depends on considerations of heaviness as well as of relative knowness and focus of the two nonsubject NPs (for instance, pronouns typically come directly after the verb), and the *le-* marker must be retained, irrespective of the linear ordering of the constituents (see Berman 1982).

(15)  

*a. dan natan et ha matana le rina*  
Dan gave OM the gift to Rina  

*b. hevéy-ti la-hem yerakot me ha šuk*  
I brought to-them vegetables from the market

The examples in (16) below show that the same marker *le-* is used both for the recipient sense of ‘to’ and for the benefactee sense of English ‘for’, thus:

(16)  

*a. dan asa le rina bet bubot mi ec*  
Dan made to (=for) Rina doll-house from wood  

*b. rina timca li et ha séfer še ani carix*  
Rina will-find to (=for) me OM the book that I need  

c. hu šaxax li knot lanu kartisim  
he forgot to buy to (=for) us tickets

However (and this is highly pertinent to our analysis of other uses of *le-* nominals in the same syntactic environment), benefactive *le-* differs
from the canonic ‘to’ or recipient datives of (15) in that it can be replaced by other prepositions with roughly the meaning of English ‘for’—e.g. le-ma’an ‘for the sake of’, avur and bišvil ‘for’. This is shown in the examples in (17), where the glosses show that both le- and bišvil can yield either a benefactive or a “proxy” reading. Here, too, the linear ordering of postverb nominals is determined largely by factors of heaviness—so that le- marked pronouns tend to precede the direct object, whereas bišvil plus pronoun generally follows it.

(17) a. dan kana la-hem kartisim bišvil-i
   Dan bought (to)them tickets for-me
   = (i) the tickets were intended for me
   OR (ii) Dan did the buying instead of me

b. dan kana li kartisim bišvil-am
   Dan bought (to)me tickets for-them
   = (i) the tickets were intended for them
   OR (ii) Dan did the buying instead of them

c. dan hexna la-hem et ha oto
   Dan parked to-them OM the car
   = dan hexna et ha oto bišvil-am
   Dan parked OM the car for-them
   = ‘Dan parked the(ir) car for them’

These, then, are the canonic datives with le- marking the recipient, as in (15), or the benefactee, as in (16) and (17); and in the latter case, le-alternates quite freely with bišvil, the choice being determined by such factors as register, relative focus, and so on. This same construction in the form of S ~ V ~ DO ~ IO also occurs in what can be termed the “extended” dative, where le- is used to mark a wide range of semantic roles other than recipient or benefactee. The examples in (18) below illustrate such different uses of le- marking in three-place predicates. They are typical of current spoken Hebrew, although not attested to in earlier stages of the language, which is probably why they are viewed as nonnormative by some (Sivan 1976). It is feasible to relate them to the pervasive influence of Slavic-Yiddish on the Hebrew of some decades back (Even-Zohar, forthcoming).

The most typical such extension of le- marking is in reference to the POSSESSOR nominal, as shown below:

8. Loan translations from these substrata abound in colloquial Hebrew expressions with a dative-marked nominal, e.g. lo bo’er li (3um davar) ‘not burns to-me (nothing)’ in the sense of ‘I’m in no hurry’.
DATIVE MARKING OF THE AFFECTEE ROLE

(18) (i) a. ima raxaca le dan et ha panim
Mom washed to Dan OM the face =washed Dan’s face (for him)
= b. ima raxaca et ha panim ŝel dan
Mom washed OM the face of Dan =Dan’s face
(ii) a. ani exbos lexa et ha yad
I’ll bandage to-you OM the hand =I’ll bandage your hand (for you)
= b. ani exbos et ha yad ŝel-xa
I’ll bandage OM the hand of-you =your hand

It might be argued that the dative forms in the (a) sentences of (18) are used because Hebrew, like French and other unrelated languages, does not require possessive marking on body parts and other inalienably possessed objects which are understood to belong to a given participant in the discourse context. But this is, in fact, not necessarily the case, as shown by the following version of (18-ii), which is conceivable in a situation where one orderly makes an offer to another:

(19) ani exbos lex a et ha yad ŝel ha pacua
I’ll bandage to-you OM the hand of the wounded
‘I’ll bandage the injured man’s hand for you’

In addition, dative marking can be used for inalienable possession, as in:

(20) (i) a. ima kiftera le dan et ha sveder
Mom buttoned to Dan OM the sweater
= b. ima kiftera et ha sveder ŝel dan
Mom buttoned OM the sweater of Dan =Dan’s sweater
(ii) a. lama atem melaxlexim li et ha ŕati’ax?
why (are) you dirtying to-me OM the carpet?
= b. lama atem melaxlexim et ha ŕati’ax ŝel-t?
why (are) you dirtying OM the carpet of-me =my carpet?

Again, the possessor reading is not necessary, although it is the one generally preferred.9 Thus, the direct object of (20-ii) could be ha ŕati’ax ŝel ha ŕxena ‘the carpet of the neighbor =the neighbor’s carpet’, analogous to the ‘wounded man’s hand’ in (19). And the example in (20-i) about the

9. It seems clear that the possessor interpretation is the most basic extension of dative le- in such constructions. Thus, whenever native Hebrew speakers were asked for examples, they would come up with expressions such as nišbera lo ha yad ‘broke to-him the hand’ in the sense of ‘he broke his hand/arm’. Moreover, in written tests requiring informants to paraphrase a wide variety of three-place predicate sentences with le- marked NPs, Ben David (1975) found that the possessor response was by far the most frequent.
mother's buttoning the child's sweater is possible with dative marking on 'the child' just in case he is actually wearing the sweater at the time, whereas no such implication holds where the more neutral possessive marker is used to yield 'Dan's sweater' in (20-ib); the latter could be used had the mother been buttoning the child's sweater before putting it into the drawer, say. That is, the use of le- dative marking in the above examples conveys a distinct sense of the person thus referred to—the child Dan having his sweater buttoned, or the speaker having the carpet dirtied—as being intimately involved in and directly affected by the event described.

In general, in current Hebrew, le- marking can be extended to all kinds of oblique object arguments, just in case they may be perceived as affected—either favorably or adversely—by the event in question. These various possibilities are illustrated in (21) below, set out according to the nature of the affectedness, as demonstrated by the periphrastic case marking preposition in the (b) sentences.

(21) (i) POSSESSOR: a. ha tinok lixlex li et ha xulca
    the baby dirtied to-me OM the shirt
    b. ha tinok lixlex et ha xulca šel-i
    the baby dirtied OM the shirt of-me =my shirt

(ii) BENEFACTEE: a. dan hizmin la-nu mekomot
    Dan ordered for-us seats
    = b. dan hizmin mekomot bišvil-énu
    Dan ordered seats for us

(iii) DEPRIVEE: a. hu ganav/lakax le rina harbe ra'ayonot
    he stole/took to Rina many ideas
    = b. hu ganav/lakax harbe ra'ayonot mi rina
    he stole/took many ideas from Rina

(iv) LOCATEE: a. ha axot sama lo talk
    the nurse put to-him powder
    b. ha axot sama al-av talk
    the nurse put on-him powder

Semantically, what all the above have in common is the fact that the dative-marked nominal is presented as the individual(s) affected by the situation. Thus, in (21-i), the wearer/owner of the shirt is affected by its being dirtied; in (21-ii), the benefactee/recipient of the tickets were favorably affected by what the agent did; in (21-iii), the deprivee of such activities as stealing or taking could also be specified by the more normative, ablative marker mi- 'from'. Moreover, this case marker is obligatory in cases where the nominal in question cannot be viewed as affected or as personally "deprived" of something, thus:
This accords well with the general requirement that canonic datives be human, or at least animate. (Compare English "she brought flowers to her friend," which allows dative shifting, with "she brought flowers to her party," which does not.) Note, further, that the dual nature of the effect, whether benefactive or malefactive (so that the affectee is either beneficiary or victim), does not necessarily depend on the semantics of the verb alone, although, clearly, stealing generally affects the deprivee adversely, and putting tends to relate to location. There are, however, cases in which a given activity is semantically neutral, but it may be perceived as either positive or negative in effect for extralinguistic, pragmatic reasons, as in the following:

(23) hu patax li et ha déllet/ ha tik
he opened to-me OM the door/ the file

This could mean either that he was kind enough to open the door for me, or let me see the file, or that he did me a disservice by opening the door (or, say, a police record) against me, as it were. This potential ambiguity would not, of course, occur in languages (such as the Quechua-Mayan language of Aymara, Dan Slobin, personal communication) which have a special case-marking particle to indicate the malefactee.

Some such constructions are semantically ambiguous, too, quite apart from how the person in question views himself as subjectively affected. For instance, the sentence in (24) was given three variant paraphrases by subjects asked to interpret it in isolation (Ben David, 1975). The responses are translated below into English, listed in decreasing order of frequency.

(24) lakáx-ti lo et ha séfer ba-sifriya
I-took to-him OM the book in-the library
=a. I took the book FROM him (when in the library)
b. I took the book FOR him (from the library)
c. I took the book OF him= his book (in/from the library)

The sentences in (18) through (24) of this section—which we have termed "extended" datives—all share a semantic property which links them to the "ethical" datives discussed in Section 1 above: they represent several different relationships—as evidenced by the distinct paraphrases to which they lend themselves—that have in common the sense of association or involvement of someone with an event for which he is not re-
sponsible, and of which he is not the direct patient, an event by which he is nonetheless affected, either favorably or adversely. In these “extended” datives, then, le-marking serves to set up a tripartite relationship between the agent of the event, the thing to which something is done, and the individual(s) affected by the fact that something has happened.

In syntactic terms, the third, nondirect object argument in such three-place predicate constructions represents a single grammatical relation, which we choose to term INDIRECT OBJECT. Following the general lines of the NP accessibility hierarchy as established originally by Keenan & Comrie (1977), we wish to claim the following: Hebrew has an object relation for nominals which function in two-place predicate constructions, and which semantically has the role of patient in most instances. This object relation is of two syntactic kinds: direct or accusative objects taking the special marker et when definite; and “governed” objects following verbs which lexically govern a particular preposition, corresponding to, for example, English handle vs. deal with, discuss vs. talk about, affect vs. impinge on, cause vs. lead to. These two object types are semantically alike, but they have very different syntactic consequences (Berman 1978, pp. 127–138). Secondly, Hebrew has a class of indirect objects which occur in three-place predicates and which take dative-marking with le-. In the case of true or canonic datives, those having a semantic recipient interpretation, and in their case alone, the le-dative marker is, firstly, governed by the verb and, secondly, it thus cannot be replaced by some other preposition in paraphrase relation to it. In all other cases, the le-marked NP is not governed by the verb, and it can be replaced by another case-marking preposition—indicating source, deprivee, location, etc. Syntactically, there is no motivation for distinguishing these from one another, or from other OBLIQUE OBJECTS, such as instrumentals or comitatives. They all occur as the quite generally OPTIONAL third argument, fleshing out a basic SVO construction (in which, as noted, the O may be either accusative or “governed”); they behave identically with respect to syntactic processes such as interrogative, passive, relativization, and left-dislocation; and they are

10. Both traditional and more contemporary Hebrew grammars display confusion in their use of the term musa akif ‘indirect (or oblique) object’ by contrast with musa yašir ‘direct object’. The latter term is reserved for all and only objects which take the accusative marker et when definite, while the term ‘indirect’ or ‘oblique’ is used as a dumping-ground for all the rest. Various characterizations of these terms in more recent Hebrew studies are reviewed in Berman (1982), as background to the analysis of various kinds of oblique and adverbial nominals in Hebrew. In Berman (1978) I try to specify which features of “direct objects” set them apart from other, semantically similar types of object constructions in the language.
DATIVE MARKING OF THE AFFECTEE ROLE 51

subject to similar constraints on linear ordering with respect to the main verb in terms of degree of "individuation" (Hopper & Thompson 1980), on the one hand, and prosodic features of heaviness, on the other. Moreover, they are high on the continuum of "bitransitivitiy" ranging from IOs and other obliques at the one end via Locationals to other Adverbials at the other (Berman 1982).

In other words, the expressions considered here under the label of "extended" datives are semantically members of a single class of Affectee, while syntactically they form a coherent class of Indirect Objects in modern Hebrew. Moreover, while highly productive and very typical of everyday usage, from early childhood on (Berman, in press), they are a relatively recent phenomenon in the language; and in this they contrast with the last set of constructions to be considered, the reflexive datives which, as noted earlier, are attested to in biblical Hebrew.

4. Reflexive or Coreferential Datives

This heading refers to constructions which differ from those considered in Sections 1 to 3 above, in that the le-marked nominal must be coreferential with the subject of the sentence, and hence it must be pronominal. This type of construction was illustrated at the outset of our paper by reference to example (2c), which is repeated here.

(25) danj ne’elam loj pit’om me ha ófek
Dan disappeared to-him(self) suddenly from the horizon
‘Dan’s gone and suddenly disappeared from the scene’

Such coreferential datives cannot be given an exclusively “affectee” interpretation, since they may refer to the volitional agent of an action, as in:

(26) ha yeladim histalku la-hem
the children ran-away to-them(selves)
‘The kids (upped and) ran away’

They also differ stylistically from the le-marked constructions discussed in preceding sections, since they have their origins in biblical Hebrew, and they occur quite freely in literary prose today.

11. Faltz (1978) objects to the claim of universality for IO as a syntactic category, as suggested by the Keenan & Comrie (1977) hierarchy. Semantically, "obliques" such as instrumentals or locatives can be shown to differ from IOs, whether dative marked or not, for the latter are typically both definite and animate, manifesting the “high individuation” properties associated with datives in general (Hopper & Thompson, 1980; and see details for Hebrew in Berman, 1982). Compelling arguments along these lines are provided, for instance, by Ziv & Sheintuch (1979).
As background, note that preferred Hebrew style generally does not require an explicitly reflexive form of pronouns coreferential with subject NPs in the same clause, as is shown by the ambiguity of the following sentences (as well as (2a) vs. (2c) above).

(27) (i) dan kana lo ofanáyim
Dan bought to-him a bike

=a. dan kana li vno ofanáyim
Dan bought for his son a bike

OR b. dan kana le acmo ofanáyim
Dan bought for himself a bike

(ii) ha dayarim mac’u la-hem dira basof
the tenants found for-them a house eventually

=a. ha dayarim mac’u la orxim dira basof
the tenants found (for) the guests a house eventually

OR b. ha dayarim mac’u le acmam dira basof
the tenants found for themselves a house eventually

This use of the ordinary personal pronoun in the dative, rather than an explicitly and unambiguously coreferential reflexive pronoun reflects biblical usage, a reflexive paradigm based on the stem ‘ecem ‘essence, bone, thing’ having come into use in later, mishnaic Hebrew. (For contrastive examples from the two stages of the language, see Bendavid 1971, p. 880.)

There is no straightforward semantic distinction between the personal/reflexive pronoun forms of the sentences in (27), although nonreflexives are perhaps preferred in literary style, as being more “classical.” Where both options exist in everyday usage, choice of one over the other reflects the way in which the participants are perceived in relation to the event in question: the simple pronoun is used when the patient is viewed as an intimate part of the event, one and the same person being both the perpetrator and the experiencer of the event in question, and the patient is intrinsic to the event, rather than merely the object thereof. The overt reflexive pronoun, by contrast, treats the patient as lying outside the event, as an object external to the activity, which happens to be perpetrated both by and for the same person—and the fact that the agent and the experiencer are the same individual(s) is incidental rather than intrinsic to the event. That is, we are claiming that the Hebrew version of, say, ‘Dan bought himself + Refl a bike’ is closer in perspective to, say, ‘Dan bought his wife a bike’ than it is to the coreferential reading of ‘Dan bought him + a bike’. This reflects the fact that the dative nominal of the latter sentence—*dan kana lo’ ofanáyim*—has the same argument structure as does the straightforward SVO *dan kana ofanáyim* ‘Dan bought (a) bike’. That is, the dative
coreferential _lo_ ‘him’ functions as an aspectual marker rather than encoding an additional NP participant in the event—where such a participant may be, but need not be, coreferential with the agent NP.  

Interestingly enough, a coreferential reading on nonreflexive pronouns within a single clause is possible today—by contrast with biblical Hebrew—just in case the pronoun carries _le_- , but no other case marking. Thus, the following can only be interpreted as noncoreferential with simple pronouns, and as coreferential with reflexive pronouns respectively.

(28)  

a. _dan makir oto mecuyan ≠ dan makir et acmo_  
Dan knows him well Dan knows OM himself  
mecuyan well

b. _rina tamid batxa ba ≠ rina tamid batxa_  
Rina always trusted in-her Rina always trusted  
be acma in herself

c. _ha pkidim somxim al-eyhem ≠ ha pkidim somxim_  
the clerks rely on them the clerks rely  
al acmam on themselves

The origin of the reflexive use of _le_- as illustrated in (25) and (26) above, where the activity of disappearing or of running away can in no way be construed as syntactically transitive, is evident in the biblical construction termed _dativus commodi_ (Gesenius 1910), as illustrated below:

(29)  

a. _go to-you =’get thee away’_ :  

b. _pass over to-you =’pass ye over’_ :  

c. _rise to-you+Fem =’get thee up’_ :

12. This reflects a distinction we make in another context (Berman 1979a) between reflexives that are lexicalized within the verb or expressed analytically, thus:

(i) _dan hitkasa dan hitgale’ax_  
Dan covered (himself) up Dan shaved (himself)

are interpreted as incorporating both agent and object within the verb—in a way analogous to our analysis of the nonreflexive coreferential dative pronoun. By contrast, their analytic paraphrases with an overt reflexive pronoun treat the object as lying outside of the actual occurrence of the event, thus:

(ii) _dan kisa et acmo/ bno_  
Dan covered OM himself/ his son  
dan gilé’ax et acmo/ et raglav  
Dan shaved OM himself/ OM his legs
Gesenius notes that this dative is used "especially in colloquial language and later style in the form of a pronoun with le- as an apparently pleonastic *dativus ethicus* with many verbs in order to give emphasis to the significance of the occurrence in question for a particular subject" (emphasis mine), hence explicitly relating it to our presently relevant notion of benefactee or affectee. Gesenius then goes on to say that "in this construction, the person of this pronoun must always agree with that of the verbal form (i.e. with the subject of a person-marked verb—R.B.). By far the most frequent use of this *le-* is with the pronoun of the second person after an imperative" (1910, p. 381).

As a footnote to his observation that the dative-marked pronoun and the verb-incorporated subject must agree—that is, be coreferential—Gesenius notes that "such expressions as the analogous English *he plucked me ope his doublet, but me no buts* and the like are, accordingly inadmissible in Hebrew." Yet precisely these cases from English, which are stilted and archaic-sounding today (the first edition of Gesenius' grammar was in 1813!), correspond to the "extended" and "ethical" datives considered thus far by us; and their equivalents in Hebrew, with dative-marked indirect objects, sound perfectly natural today.

One further historical comment is that in biblical Hebrew, use of reflexive *le-* was very common, but almost totally restricted to second person imperatives like those in (29) above. However, modern Hebrew has extended this use to a wide variety of nonimperative contexts, as illustrated below:

(30)  

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>rina</td>
<td>yašva (la) ba pina ve baxta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rina</td>
<td>sat (to her) in-the corner and wept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Rina was sitting herself/was sitting in the corner and crying'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>lama</td>
<td>ata rac (le-xa) kaxa ba rexov?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>why (are) you running to-you so in-the street?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>ani</td>
<td>stam sixák-ti (li) šam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I just played (to-me) there</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'I was just playing away there/just having myself a game'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>dan</td>
<td>minapē'ax (lo) mi yom le yom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>swells-up (to him) from day to day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Dan's getting (himself) fatter/more swollen-headed by the day'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>he</td>
<td>inyanim yistadru (la-hem) be mēšex ha zman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the matters will-settle (to-them) in course the time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Things will settle (themselves) down in due course'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In such sentences, the dative pronoun does not introduce any other argument or specify any additional role, so that it is very different from
the "ethical" datives of Section 1, which serve precisely to encode some extraneous nonparticipant as involved in the event. The dative pronouns in (30) are repetitive of the subject, hence semantically redundant ("pleonastic" in Gesenius' terms) in not adding any new role to the description, and—as the parentheses indicate—they are syntactically unnecessary for producing well-formed utterances. The verbs are typically, though not necessarily, intransitive in such constructions, and the subject of the sentence need not be animate, as shown by (30-e).

It is not easy to provide a uniform account of this use of dative marking, for it varies according to the verbs with which it is associated, as well as the flavor which the speaker chooses to attach to his utterance by this extra marking on the action or perpetrator of the action, and this is shown by the rather awkward free translations supplied for each sentence in (30).

The main effect of use of the reflexive dative seems to be precisely one of assigning reflexivity to the event, in that the event is viewed as reflecting forward from the subject to the dative pronoun and backward from the dative pronoun to the subject. Thus, the use of le-highlights the autonomy of the event, as perpetrated to, by, and for the subject noun (even where the subject is nonanimate, as in (30-e), the affairs in question

13. Transitive verbs can be used in this construction—as in formulaic da lexan 'know to-you' in the imperative sense of 'get it into your head'. But then an "extended" dative interpretation will more generally be yielded, e.g.

(i) šavár-ti li et ha kad
    I broke to-me OM the vase = 'I went and broke my vase'

or in other cases the dative will be used as a stylistic alternant of a reflexive pronoun, e.g.

(ii) ata xayav le sader le-xa / le-acmexa et ha inyanim
    you have to arrange to-you / to-yourself OM the things
    'You must arrange things for yourself/see to your own affairs'

14. One appealing possibility would be if dative marking were restricted to nonpunctive verbs, so that it could be used only in a durative sense—corresponding to the contrastive use of se in Spanish in describing durative but not punctive action (Hopper & Thompson 1980). However, although dative reflexives in Hebrew do typically imply some kind of durative process—as in all the examples in (30) of the text—they can also be used with punctive actions, as in (ii) below.

(i) dan yašan lo kol ha láyla bli be'ayot
    Dan slept to-him all the night without problems
    'Dan had no trouble in sleeping all night long'

(ii) dan nirdam lo čik čak
    Dan fell asleep to him(self) in a jiffy
    'Dan dropped off to sleep in a jiffy'
are characterized as getting into shape of their own accord, without anyone's intervention as an outside agent. That is, these reflexives refer to processes which are carried out by the subject NP with a high degree of independence, the subject's own involvement in the process being sharply marked through the dative-reflexive pronoun. Hence, not only is there no outside agent in such situations, but the event is intrinsically tied to the subject noun as its patient/doer and as its experiencer/affectee, as the person or thing most intimately and exclusively affected by the process. Hence this coreferential use of le-serves to combine the role and nature of reflexivized objects (Faltz 1977) on the one hand, and of marking the affectee role through use of the dative on the other.

5. Discussion

We have tried to show that the dative preposition le- in modern Hebrew can be used to refer to noun phrases which semantically cover the entire spread from the most extraneous "onlooker" type of the dativus ethicus of Section 1 through the most internal, subject-identical type of the dativus commodi of Section 4. Thus, the various syntactic constructions in which le-occurs can be charted along a cline of "degree of affectee participation," where at one extreme the reflexive dative pronoun refers to the only direct participant in an event (Section 4), and at the other extreme, the dative nominal refers to an outsider, a nonparticipant who is nevertheless affected by the event.

In its most central sense, the le-marks the affectee of the event, and as such: (a) it allows reference to someone outside the event, as in the ethical datives of Section 1; (b) it allows the language to encode the experiencer/affectee rather than the agent, hence further draining the already relatively weak status of the subject relation in Hebrew, as discussed in Section 2 (and see Berman 1980); (c) it makes it possible to extend the canonic dative roles of recipient/benefactee to possessors, deprivees, and locates by means of the "extended" datives of Section 3, providing a uniform marking of different case roles all sharing the semantic function of AFFECTEE and allowing for a coherent characterization of the relation of Indirect Object in modern Hebrew; and (d) it makes it possible for speakers to mark the aspectral nature of certain activities by extending the classical reflexive dative to a wide range of predication, as shown in Section 4.

Finally, one can consider certain more general implications of our analysis of dative marking as based on modern Hebrew. It might be worthwhile
investigating how these uses of *le-* relate to the fact that the same morpheme also marks not only possessive relations in conjunction with the verb 'be', but also direction towards as in *dan nasa le tel aviv* 'Dan traveled to Tel Aviv' as well as the infinitive form of verbs, as in *dan raca le-daber* 'Dan wanted to talk'. For this is a combination of one form to many functions which Hebrew shares with such unrelated languages as English on the one hand, and Bantu languages like Kinyarwanda and Swahili on the other.

It also seems worth considering typological properties of languages in terms of their "dative orientation," to ascertain how their propensity for or against dative constructions correlates with other of their properties. For instance, languages like Hebrew, Russian, and Kannada, which use dative marking for possession, might be more strongly inclined to extensive use of datives than a language like French, which has both a *habere* verb and a dative or genitive marking of possessors. On the other hand, French might be more receptive to dative marking than, for example, is English, which today manifests loss of earlier, dative-marked predicates such as the verbs meaning *like* or *please, repent, think, seem, ail, matter, belong,* etc. which existed as such through to middle English (Lightfoot 1979, pp. 229–239). In this, English can be associated with the class of languages which manifest a dative-to-nominative shift diachronically, as discussed in Cole *et al.* (1980), quite the reverse of what we have observed for Hebrew. Besides, English has a partially productive mechanism for promoting indirect objects in such a way that they lose their dative properties by means of so-called "dative shifting."

Cross-linguistically, languages differ in the extent to which they allow, or require, dative marking on experiential predicates of the type discussed in Section 2. Thus, for instance, Dravidian languages, as discussed by Sridhar (1976), use dative marking across a wide range of two-argument "dative subject constructions;" and they often have no alternative way of marking experiencers or recipients. Hebrew has alternatives in many cases: ordinary SVO nominatives in place of experiential datives; other case markers in the extended three-place datives; and ordinary reflexive pronouns with transitive verbs. Yet the very existence of a dative option in Hebrew today tends to drain these periphrastic alternatives of much of their force in actual usage. It appears that French has more numerous, and more highly grammaticized, types of alternative formulations than does Hebrew, so that French might be still lower on the scale of dative orientation than current Hebrew, though higher than is English.

The question also arises which datives are more basic or primary than others, where this is meant in a typological rather than a derivational
sense. This would make it possible to stipulate, given that a language has one kind of dative, whether the existence of other kinds might also be predicted for it, synchronically as well as in the course of time. Historically, the reflexive datives perpetuate but also greatly extend a form found in biblical usage (said by Gesenius, as noted, to occur "especially in later language and colloquial style"). But impersonal experientials similar to modern yadu’a lo ‘is-known to-him’ = ‘he knows’ and na’im lanu ‘is-pleasant to-us’ = ‘we like’ such as have been lost in English, are also attested to in classical Hebrew. We suggested that the most semantically extreme case of the "ethical" dative might perhaps be the prototypical instance, hence more basic than all the others. Yet evidence from numerous unrelated languages suggests that perhaps the impersonal experientials (as discussed in our Section 2) are the primary type of datives and that only if a language has them will it also have, e.g., ethical and extended, possibly reflexive, datives as well. Moreover, the evidence from English suggests that, in a highly nondative-oriented language, canonic datives marking the recipient in three-place predicates may be retained almost in isolation. Ideally, both an intralanguage and cross-language hierarchy might be established to provide a diachronic and synchronic base for explaining and predicting how and why languages use the dative across historical stages and within language types.

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DATIVE MARKING OF THE AFFECTEE ROLE


Gil, D. Ms. “Case-marking, phonological size, and linear order: Hebrew et.”


