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History of the Ancient and Modern Hebrew Language

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Excursus 5

Growth in the Number and Range of Israeli Hebrew Verbs

There are two main methods:

1. By extracting 3 or 4 consonant roots out of Hebrew or foreign nouns and forming verbs in the piel/pual/hitpael forms. E.g. from telephone the verb *tilfen* and from torpedo *tirped*
2. For most roots, only 2 or 3 of the 7 main stems were in use in pre-modern Hebrew. Israeli Hebrew has been able to massively activate unused forms in order to create variants on the root idea. E.g. classically קרַך was used in the kal stem meaning to cast. Now it is still used in kal for that idea but is also used, on the analogy of European languages, in hiphil/huphal to mean to give (hiphil) or receive (huphal) an injection. (See [Tene](#) in Select Bibliography below)

Excursus 6

New Word Formation

Israeli Hebrew has taken many inherited resources and regularized their uses to enable it to closely parallel modern European languages. A few items of note:

- wide use of suffixes such as ם to form abstract nouns and ם, to freely form adjectives
- use of what are essentially prefixes to freely form adverbs e.g. באופן
- the use of inherited particles in ways that closely parallel the usages of European languages e.g. בְּלִתִּי, אֵי

For details see [Glinert 1989](#) .

Excursus 7

Changes in Syntax

In Mishnaic and Israeli Hebrew Biblical Hebrew's richly varied uses of the infinitives largely disappears (see Gesenius pp 339-355; Williams, Segal p. 54 and Glinert in Select Bibliography). The infinitive construct prefixed by ל is now used mainly in ways analogous to the English infinitive. Also, in Mishnaic and Israeli Hebrew the "consecutive tenses" have disappeared thus changing the look and feel of the language drastically.

Kutscher (see Select Bibliography below) wrote

"H Rosén has noted a ... **phenomenon which has changed the whole makeup of Israeli Hebrew – its syntax.**

“The development of the “period” with its many subordinate clauses has made Israeli Hebrew flexible enough to be employed like any other modern (i.e. European) language. ... Biblical Hebrew is to a large extent paratactic, i.e. it prefers to coordinate sentences, (a start in the development of the modern structure was made by) Mishnaic Hebrew (which) is much more syntactic, making use of the subordinating ψ (she) in all kinds of subordination.”

For more detailed discussion of some issues see *Studies in Modern Hebrew Syntax and Semantics* ed., North-Holland Linguistic Series 32
1976 Peter Cole

Excursus 8

Is Israeli Hebrew Unique in Being a Western Language (semantics, use of tenses etc.) Under a Semitic Skin (grammar, vocabulary, semantics, syntax)?

Interestingly, a well respected scholar of both Hebrew and Arabic has shown the Modern Standard Arabic has developed in ways very closely paralleling developments in Israeli Hebrew. See Joshua Blau's book "*The Renaissance of Modern Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic*" (Berkeley: UC Press, 1981).