**Why *-it* is and why is *-et*: The distribution of two (?) Modern Hebrew feminine suffixes**

Two nominal suffixes in Modern Hebrew (MH), *-it* and *-et*, spell out a single feature [(+)gender]. In this talk, I ask what determines the spelled-out form and the distribution of these suffixes, which have both been hitherto considered lexical. I show that the underlying form of both suffixes is identical, and that what determines the surface form is their relation to their base, formalized in terms of cycles/phases. The phenomenon is thus an instance of form-structure correspondence.

I start by examining the two most productive *masculine* suffixes, agentive *-an* and diminutive *-on*, which contrast minimally with respect to their feminine suffix (*X-an-it* vs. *X-ón-et*). As (1) shows, a single stem behaves differently according to whether its suffix is *-an* or *-on*.[1]

Diminutive *-on* is shown to be compositional and non-templatic (it does not impose a vocalization on the stem), whereas agentive *-an* is templatic and possibly non-compositional. This difference is formulated as follows (following Lowenstamm 2007): {item-an} vs. {{item}-on}.

The different ways to distinguish between the contrasting [+gender] sequences (*safr-an-it* 'fem. librarian' ; *yalda-yald-ón-et* 'girl-(dim.)') are considered. The fact that the diminutive of an inanimate feminine nouns must agree in gender with its base (e.g. *map-it* => *map-iy-on-et* 'serviette-(dim.)', *\*mapiy-on*[2]) is claimed to be evidence for the distinction in (2).

I move on to examine the hypothesis that this distinction holds not only for the feminine forms of *-an* and *-on*, but for all occurrences of *-it and -et*: *-et* is always in the same cycle as its base; *-it* never is. The table in (3) summarizes the distribution of *-it* and *-et* suffixes within the nominal system. Examples are provided in (4).

The data in (3) and (4) are taken to support an extension of the distinction in (2) to all occurrences. How so? First, *-et* can be non-compositional exactly where *-it* cannot (namely with CaCaC bases): *-et* is not dependent on the meaning of its base. Secondly, the fact that the distribution of *-et* is limited in terms of its base suggests that the suffix is sensitive to its base *form*; *-it* clearly isn't. The latter claim is given further support by the fact that it is *-it* that is used with loan bases, which presumably are cases of a closed {X}. The examples in (4c), where a \*CaCaC base is only deducible from an item CaCeC-et, suggest that *-et* imposes a vocalization on its base; no such pattern is found with *-it*. A final remark concerns (4i): *pétek* 'note', is of the same nominal type as *séfer* 'book' (1a). An analogy with {{**s**ifr}on} (suggested for (1c)) lends further support to a {{**p**itk}it} analysis.

I move on to discuss two problematic cases: 1. the non-compositionality of inanimate bases with a suffix *-it* (like (4e-i); and 2. the existence of *-it* forms with no apparent base (*xavit* 'barrel'). I show that these are in fact not problematic for the analysis.

The segmental resemblance, the mere functional [+fem] role and the structural differences described above all make it extremely plausible that *-it* and *-et* are underlyingly one and the same. The second part of the talk shows how the structural differences lead to the difference in form.

I make use of two theoretical tools: the apophonic chain (Ø>i>a>u - Guerssel & Lowenstamm 1996) and Government phonology (GP- Kaye et al. 1990). According to the latter, there are no consonant final representations; all "syllables" are of a CV (or Onset-Nucleus) form. For the present purpose, this means that all domains end with a V-slot (or a Nucleus). In addition, a parameter of GP determines whether a language may have final empty nuclei. MH is clearly a language that may do so.

Following proposals made for French (Rucart 2008) and Somali (Godon 1998), I submit that the feminine morpheme is a mere elaboration of the size of the item: it is but an additional CV unit. The relevant representations are shown (for the shared stem form CaCaC) in (5). The phonology of (5a) is presented in (6a): an epenthetic consonant [t] is inserted in order to identify the feminine CV unit; *tayas-t* surfaces as *tayéset*. In contrast, the phonology of (5b) proceeds in two phases, as in (6b) (See Kaye 1995): first, the internal domain is spelled out. As in Bobaljik (2000), the inner domain is sensitive to the existence of additional material in the outer domain: the former's last V slot is not final and has to be filled. This is achieved through apophony: Ø>i. In the outer domain, an epenthetic *t* is inserted anyway. The last V-slot, as mentioned, stays empty.

The analysis thus explains *how* the different structures lead to different realizations of the same morpheme. However, it does not explain *why*; that is, why it is that the diminutive suffix is in the same

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[1] The talk treats only <u>diminutive</u> *-on*. Stress is marked only when not final.
[2] See Bat El (to appear (a)) for an account of the t=>y change.

cycle as its feminine form, whereas the agentive suffix is separated from its feminine suffix. Time permitting, this and other implications (e.g. the third feminine suffix *-a*) of the analysis are explored.

(1)     Basic an~on distinction (stress is not marked when final; regular alternation e~i)
        a) s**é**fer 'book'     b) s**i**fr-i 'my book'     c) s**i**fr-on 'book (dim)'     d) s**a**fr-an 'librarian'

(2)     The distinction between *an-it* and *on-et*
        {{x-an}-it} ; {{x}-on-et}

(3)     Summary of *-t* and *-it* in nominal system

| fem. Suffix | suffixed to loanwords | productive native MH bases | compositionality of CaCaC+X |
|---|---|---|---|
| *-et* | never | mainly CaCaC bases (4a-c) | possibly non compositional (4a,b), base may not exist (4c) |
| *-it* | yes (4e,f) | all nouns, including CaCaC. (4d-i) | always compositional (4d), CaCaC must exist |

(4)     Examples (phonological rule: *a=>e/_C-et* (Bat-El, to appear (a)))
                        *ms.*                          *fm.*
        /CaCaC-*et*/    a. tayas 'pilot'       tayéset 'pilot'        **or**   'air squadron'
                        b. šayat 'oarsman'     šayétet 'oarswoman'    **or**   'sea squadron'
                        c. *dabaš, *kavar      dabéšet 'hump', kavéret 'hive'
        /CaCaC-*it*/    d. sapar 'barber'      saparit 'barber'       **but nothing else!**
        /loan-it/       e. star 'celebrity'    stár-it 'celebrity', *stár-et
                        f. flannel 'flannel'    flanelit 'flannel ribbon'
        /X-it/          g. itur 'location'      iturit 'locating device'
                        h. pax 'tin'           paxit 'can'
                        i. pétek 'note'        pitkit 'small note'

(5)     The feminine suffix as an additional CV
        a. [tayas**V**-CV] => tayéset   'pilot (fem)'         b. [[sapar**V**]-CV] => saparit   'barber (fem)'

(6)     Spell-out of different forms
        a. [tayasV-tV]   => [tayas-**t**] (C-epenthesis) => [tayas**e**t] (V-epenthesis) =>tayéset
        b. [[saparV]-CV] => [[sapar**i**]-tV] (apophony, C-epenthesis) => saparit

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