A matter of time: tense, mood and aspect in spontaneous Spoken Israeli Hebrew
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6. TMA studies in Hebrew and Semitic languages

The results in Section 5 suggest that the SIH verb system is aspectual. In this section, I will compare the findings with findings from other Semitic languages, as well as with previous TMA studies in Hebrew.

6.1. TMA in SIH compared with other Semitic languages

Section 5 above demonstrates that the verb system of SIH is practically tenseless. The distribution percentages of the forms suggest that it is more aspectual than anything else, since the majority of the forms represent aspectual properties. In addition to the aspectual structures it contains several mood types, but modal properties in the SIH verb system are much fewer than the aspectual ones. The distribution of tense in the SIH verb system is marginal.

Hebrew language purists still refer to Israeli Hebrew or Modern Hebrew as a tense language. This view can be explained in the frame of Bhat's theory (1999), who claims that grammatical traditions of many aspect-prominent languages usually emphasize the category of tense at the expense of aspect and mood. These traditions state that aspectual or modal markers actually denote tense. These approaches make use of terms like ‘past’, ‘present’ and ‘future’, and these notions actually represent ‘perfective’ and ‘imperfective’ aspects (p. 121). This description reflects the reality in Israeli Hebrew, where traditional grammarians use the term ‘tense’ to actually represent aspect and mood. Bhat (1999) claims that in some languages aspect markers are attached to verbs only when the aspectual meaning is not derivable from the context, and that when these verbs stand out of context, they can be interpreted as tense (p. 125). This seems to be the situation in Hebrew too. As is shown above, Israeli Hebrew speakers, while speaking, use aspects, and not tense; but when being out of context, the verbal forms they use may be interpreted as expressing tense.
Composed of roots and patterns, as well as verbal inflections, the Israeli Hebrew verb system is characterized by Semitic features. Viewing the SIH verb system in the light of other Semitic languages reveals a systematic correlation between them in terms of aspectual properties. Israeli Hebrew shares aspectual properties with at least the following four Semitic languages: Amharic, Classical Arabic, Egyptian Arabic¹ and Neo-Aramaic (see below). Yet, in these four Semitic languages, the imperfective aspect is assigned to the prefixed forms, whereas in Israeli Hebrew the imperfective aspect is assigned to the participle. There is however a parallelism between Israeli Hebrew and the other Semitic languages in the basic aspectual notion of the verb system, as well as in the representation of the perfective aspect by the suffixed form.

Amharic: Yimam (2006) presents aspects in Amharic, identifying the affixes in the verb system as aspect indicators. He claims (p. 195) that verb affixes distinguish between perfective and imperfective forms in Amharic, where verb suffixes reflect perfective aspect, and verb prefixes reflect imperfective aspect. Yimam omits affixes from the Amharic verb forms so as to isolate the verb stems which represent the basic perfective and imperfective forms. He presents two stems, one representing the basic perfective aspect, the other the basic imperfective aspect. These stems, as well as the affixes are similar to the stems and affixes which are used in the Israeli Hebrew verb system, except that the prefixed form denotes the imperfective aspect in Amharic, but not in IH. The situation in Amharic corresponds to other Semitic languages. Sisay and Haller (2003) agree with Yimam on the perfective and imperfective forms, but claim that these forms frequently reflect past and future tense, respectively (p. 5). This approach is similar to the traditional approach as regards Hebrew verb tenses, according to which suffixed forms express past tense, and prefixed forms express future tense, and can be explained in the frame of Bhat’s (1999) theory described above.

¹ Please note that Classical Arabic and Egyptian Arabic are considered two different languages; in order that a native speaker of Arabic would understand Classical Arabic (s)he must be literate.
Classical Arabic: Horesh (2002) discusses tense and aspect in Classical Arabic. He brings examples of forms with different meanings, such as suffixed forms which denote different notions. Horesh claims that the identical forms with different meanings are implicatures. Apart from pointing at the aspectual properties of the verb system in Classical Arabic, Horesh does not elaborate on this issue further, but simply recommends further investigation. Also he does not draw any conclusions regarding the dominant meaning of each of the forms.

Egyptian Arabic: Cuvalay-Haak (1996) brings an overview of TMA categories in Egyptian Arabic (Cairo dialect), and emphasizes the differences between the behavior of verbs in Classical and Modern Arabic dialects (p. 206). Similarly to Israeli Hebrew, participles in Modern Arabic dialects can function as either nouns / adjectives or verbs (p. 145-169), and can denote a variety of TMA functions, depending on their function, dialect and context (p. 209). Also, she claims that suffixed forms in Modern Arabic are referred to as expressing the perfective aspect with past time reference (p.115). But as opposed to IH, suffixed forms can also denote factual mood (p. 119), when referring to future events, which are perceived as certain. The use of prefixed forms in Egyptian Arabic is different from their use both in Amharic and in IH. When they have a null additional marking, they are mainly used to express either non-past tense or habitual aspect. Prefixed forms with additional marking can denote some functions, for example, the sa-/sawfa- prefix would point at a future tense (p. 125). Yet, the basic notion of the prefixed forms expressing the imperfective aspect is consistent with that of Amharic, but not with IH.

Neo-Aramaic: Similarly to the other Semitic languages, the Neo-Aramaic verb system is also aspectual. According to Krotkoff (1982:23-40), Hoberman (1989:123-148) and Coghill (1999), the Neo-Aramaic verb system includes a perfective-imperfective distinction, as well as some additional sub-aspects, that are interpreted as tense and mood. For example, prefixed verbs (prefix i-) in Neo-Aramaic are used to denote general imperfective aspect, while future tense is expressed by another prefix (bed-, bet-, bd- or bt-). This reminds one of the Arabic verb system,
where the imperfective is represented by prefixed forms, and a more
distanced future tense is formed by the addition of the prefix *sa-* / *sawfa*.
This, however, is different from IH in that IH has no future tense at all, with
or without prefixation. Furthermore, IH imperfective forms are not prefixed
forms. The suffix *-wa* in Neo-Aramaic is attached to the verb to express
the habitual past, whereas the suffix *-lav* (*V* represents a vowel) denotes
perfective aspect, a pure and simple action. Suffixed forms denoting
perfective aspect are common to all Semitic languages mentioned here.
Yet, the use of a suffix to express the habitual past is unique to Neo-
Aramaic, whereas the habitual past is obtained by a periphrastic use of
the verb ‘be’ in the other Semitic languages discussed. All three Neo-
Aramaic researchers agree that the verb system of Neo-Aramaic is
aspectual.

IH shares the property of an aspectual verb system with the other four
Semitic languages. There is yet a difference in the use of aspects
between IH and the other Semitic languages. Whereas the use of suffixed
forms to express perfective aspect is common to IH and the other Semitic
languages, imperfective aspect is expressed in IH by participles, and not
by prefixed forms, like in the other Semitic languages. Prefixed forms in IH
are used for modal purposes, whereas in the other Semitic languages
they usually express the imperfective aspect.

In addition to aspects, IH exhibits a minor and limited tense category:
the auxiliary verb *hjj* ‘be’ is used for the expression of tense. The same
auxiliary ‘be’ is used to express tense in three of the four other Semitic
languages (Amharic, Classical Arabic and Egyptian Arabic).

Amharic: Tense in Amharic is formed by adding auxiliary verbs, such
as *nä* ‘be’, where the auxiliary verb has different forms when attached to
the perfective or imperfective forms (Yimam 2006:198). The auxiliary
verbs are not added to the verbs instead of the aspects, but are an
addition to the aspects, and can appear in two forms: past and non-past.
In IH, the auxiliary verb *hjj* ‘be’ is also added to the expression in addition
to the aspects, which is identical to Amharic. But in IH the auxiliary verb
*hjj* ‘be’ can also be used independently with a nominal complement, even
if there is no other aspectual form in the expression. The latter situation is not discussed by Yimam, and therefore I cannot make the comparison between IH and Amharic in this regard.

Classical Arabic: Horesh (2002) refers to tense in Classical Arabic only briefly, bringing examples of the addition of the auxiliary verb *ka:n* ‘be’ to express continuous aspect in the past (p. 6). It is not mentioned to which forms this auxiliary can be added, perfective forms, imperfective forms, or both. The addition of the auxiliary verb *ka:n* ‘be’ to express a double TMA category corresponds to the Israeli Hebrew form *hjj* ‘be’ + participle, which is used to express the habitual past.

Egyptian Arabic: Copula / auxiliary verbs can appear with either a following verb or a nonverbal predicate (Cuvalay-Haak 1996:172). In the latter case of nonverbal predicates, the copula verbs are not needed to denote present tense. This is parallel to IH, where the copula / auxiliary verb *hjj* ‘be’ can be used as a time specifier (past or future) in a nominal expression, and in its absence, the whole expression denotes an ongoing state. Complex verbs, which are the former case, are formed by a combination of a copula / auxiliary followed by a verb (p. 172), which can also stand independently without the copula (p. 175). Cuvalay-Haak cites Moutaouakil (1988:189), stating that a verb that denotes perfective meaning when standing alone would be used in its suffixed form to express absolute past tense, and would appear in its suffixed form with a copula verb to express relative past tense. This is not parallel to IH, where suffixed forms can have past tense reference in their immediate environment, but in combination with a copula they do not express relative tense, which is the function of the participle. Cuvalay-Haak points that double TMA meanings of one predicate cannot co-occur in Arabic dialects, and that only one TMA meaning can be assigned to a verb by inflection. There are no double TMA inflections in IH either, and each verb can be inflected for only one TMA category. Therefore, two TMA categories should be inflected on two separate verbal forms: the main verb and the auxiliary *hjj* ‘be’.
Similarly to IH, and differently from the other three Semitic languages discussed above, modal categories are briefly mentioned only for prefixed verbal forms of Neo-Aramaic (Coghill 1999:42). This might correspond to IH prefixed forms, but it is not sufficiently detailed in order to come to definite conclusions. Despite this declaration, the author still insists that the verb system of Neo-Aramaic is more aspectual in nature, which seems to be similar to IH.

6.2. TMA in SIH compared with previous studies in Hebrew

TMA studies in Hebrew are mainly directed towards Biblical Hebrew rather than towards Modern Hebrew. Studies in Modern Hebrew usually deal with literary and written materials, rather than spoken materials, since these materials are more readily available than spoken texts, and easier to access. Since SIH is different from these areas of the language, the comparison between them is difficult and may be irrelevant, as most of the studies on Modern Hebrew point at a tense system, whereas IH according to this research presents an aspectual system.

Generally speaking, the research of SIH was 'neglected'. Various studies on Modern Hebrew (Berman 1978, Glinert 1989, Coffin-Amir and Bolozky 2005) have brought a bulk of examples from Hebrew, some of which included spoken phrases, others were taken from different Hebrew layers, but were not based on any substantial data. This study is based upon a corpus of spontaneous conversations, and thus takes into account speech variations, which are not included in any of the other studies on Modern Hebrew. The results prove that relying on written text does not cover all the spoken varieties.

There are studies, claimed to have been performed on Modern Hebrew, that are not based on spoken corpora, and thus do not represent the spontaneous spoken language. The sources of the examples provided in these studies are mostly unknown, as they are usually not cited, and in many cases they do not correspond to spontaneously spoken texts, which are characterized by a much faster speech, overlaps between speakers, truncations and additional discourse features.
The verb system of SIH according to this research is aspectual, and not tense-based. Although it contains several mood types and structures as well as minor tense forms, the distribution percentages of the verbal forms suggest that it is rather aspectual than anything else. The majority of the forms are concentrated within the aspect category.

The current suggested verb system of Spoken Israeli Hebrew is characterized by aspectual properties. It contains five verbal patterns, and not seven, as noted in the literature. It does not have the two passive patterns that are referred to in the literature, the latter being unproductive in the frame of the verb system. It does not have unique imperative patterns, which are referred to in the literature. Imperative forms in IH are derived phonologically from prefixed forms, and they do not follow a constant morphological pattern, like in the traditional Hebrew grammar. They are possible in the Qal pattern, and also, on rare occasions, in the Piel and Nifal patterns, but never in the Hifil or Hitpael patterns. Prefixed forms are used for the imperative functions instead. It is also shown that IH contains mood, in a lower distribution than aspect, as well as tense, which is the least widespread category.

Most of the available analyses of the Hebrew verb system refer to the traditional division of the verb forms into seven patterns (Blau 1986:126-148, Coffin-Amir and Bolozky 2005, Junger 1987:13), and this is also how the system appears in Hebrew textbooks and is taught in Israeli schools (Blau 1967, 1975). Researchers tend to refer to the two passive patterns as part of the verb system, although they are not productive in the spoken language according to this study. Examples presented in books on IH / MH are mixed up. Some look as if they were taken from the spoken language, whereas other instances of 'spontaneous speech' are dubious (Junger 1987:79), and would probably never be produced during spontaneous speech.

This research shows that tense is the least prominent category in SIH. Yet, studies of Hebrew refer to tense categories more than to any other TMA category. Glinert (1989, 1994:90-91) reviews in depth the Hebrew verb system and discusses the tense category, but only mentions and
brings examples of ‘tenses’ in Hebrew (past, present and future), which express in fact a wide range of aspects and moods in addition to tense. He states that his use of the terms “past”, “present” and “future” is meant for simplicity and convenience only, and he doubts their categorization (p. 121). Unlike others, he refers to complex structures in the Hebrew verb system, such as the root \textit{hjj} ‘be’ + participle or the root \textit{hlk} ‘go’ + infinitive, which express aspect (the former) or mood (the former and the latter) (pp. 124-125, 331-332). Indeed, the former construction expresses both mood and aspect according to the current study as well, but while aspectual, it also expresses tense, which is not mentioned by Glinert for this construction. The latter construction is found in negligible number in this research and it always expresses aspect, but never mood. Glinert’s doubt of the ‘tense’ system in Hebrew is closer to reality than other views, although his examples are taken from both channels, spoken and written, and there is no distinction between them. Henkin (1991) investigated unique uses of past tense in children’s language. She mentions the use of suffixed verb patterns, to express “imaginary past”, defined as another, imaginary world, in which the playing child is not included. Participles were used among children to return back to reality (pp. 342-343), but are not classified to any semantic category whatsoever. Of all studies, Henkin’s study is the only one performed on a real spoken corpus of Hebrew language. Yet, it deals with children’s language, and the relevance of children’s language to adult’s spoken language is unclear. Like most of the other researchers, Bar (2001:53) also refers to the verb system as composed of three tenses: past, present and future, which are expressed by three structures: suffixed forms, participles and prefixed forms, respectively. She does not doubt this classification, and takes for granted that tenses in Hebrew exist. Her analyses are adjusted to the tense notions accordingly. Schwarzwald (2001:38) also refers to the Hebrew verb system as expressing three tenses (past, present and future) and one modal pattern (imperative), similar to the other traditional approaches. She refers to the structure of \textit{hjj} ‘be’ + participle as expressing an aspect, and which can also express modality in certain cases (2001:62). Her latter conclusion corresponds to SIH counterfactual mood and habitual past,
only that the past property in the habitual past was ignored. In this regard, she follows Glinert’s view. Schwarzwald also refers to a construction of a verb form followed by an infinitive as expressing aspect and modality (2001:63). She claims that the added infinitive is the item that expresses aspect or tense in the verb phrase. The findings in this study show the opposite: Since TMA categories must be inflected, infinitives cannot bear TMA properties, because they are never inflected. Schwarzwald does not refer to tense, aspect and mood as independent categories, and as in other studies, she refers to traditional Hebrew, and not to the spoken variety. Azar (1995) reviews the ‘tense’ system of Mishnaic Hebrew, which does not correspond to IH. His review corresponds to the common theories, referring to a sequence of suffixed forms (for example ‘CaCaC’, ‘C’ stands for a consonant; p. 4) as the ‘skeleton’ or ‘foreground’ of the story, and to $hj\bar{j}$ ‘be’ + participle forms as background events. He classifies the verb forms as expressing various tenses, and divides them, according to the types of sentences where they appear, to forms which express absolute and relative tense (p. 4-27). This division does not correspond to IH, but Azar states clearly that it adequately describes Mishnaic Hebrew.

In spite of defining their book as a grammar of Modern Hebrew, Coffin-Amir and Bolozky (2005) also show a traditional approach when referring to what they call Modern Hebrew. Regarding the verb system, they mention several pronunciations in speech, but their approach is not different from the traditional ones when presenting the verb system as having three tenses and one modal form, which is the imperative, where participles are presented as expressing present tense (p. 35-36). Imperatives are also referred to by Schwarzwald (2001, see above), but have been proved to be absent from the IH verb system in their traditional form in this research. Coffin-Amir and Bolozky refer to habitual forms as present tense (p. 36) and to continuous forms as past tense (p. 38). Imperatives are presented as mood (p. 44), whereas in IH they do not exist in their traditional form, and all prefixed forms are referred to as future tense (p. 38); in IH, on the other hand, they represent mood, including the imperative mood. Verb affixes, which stand for person,
gender and number, are referred to as representing tense (p. 37-38). Coffin-Amir and Bolozky contradict themselves when presenting in two different places in their book an identical structure that expresses two different functions, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tsRiXim lehakSiv</td>
<td>tsaRiX + inf</td>
<td>Mood expressed by the infinitive (p. 44-45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘need’ (M-PL) ‘listen’ (INF), literally: ‘need to listen’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsRiXim lavo</td>
<td>tsaRiX + inf</td>
<td>Modal structure (p. 301)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘need’ (M-PL) ‘come’ (INF), literally: ‘need to come’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference between these two forms is the personal pronoun, which precedes the structure (see below), and not the existence or non-existence of the infinitive in the phrase. The modal property is intrinsic in the first component of these constructions tsRiXim ‘need’, which carries a modal meaning as part of its lexical semantics. Also, like Schwarzwald (2001, see above), they refer to infinitives as expressing mood. Mood cannot be expressed by the infinitive, as the infinitive is not an inflected form. Their distinction between modality to mood within the same structure is somewhat strange:

- atem tsRiXim lehakSiv lanu (p.45)
  you (PL) need (M-PL) listen (INF) to us
  ‘you must listen to us’

- kulam tsRiXim lavo bazman (p. 301)
  everyone need (M-PL) come (INF) on time
  ‘everyone must come on time’

Coffin-Amir and Bolozky classify modal expressions as having present tense, with some exceptions in the past and future tenses (p. 306). Although the IH verb system is mostly aspectual, aspects are mentioned only in the context of Biblical Hebrew, and are presented as verb tenses in Modern Hebrew. None of the TMA categories is presented as part of a semantic system. Tsarfaty (2004) investigates the use of aspects in Modern Hebrew. She does not use spontaneous conversations, but rather
narratives, which are based upon a picture book of 45 pictures forming a story (p. 19). She claims that Modern Hebrew verb system is regarded as having three verb tenses, a system that was taken from Mishnaic Hebrew, as opposed to the rest of Modern Hebrew structure, which is based on Biblical Hebrew (p. 32). She also claims that according to traditional theories the tenses in Hebrew have default aspectual meanings, where past tense bears also a completive meaning, and the participle bears also a progressive meaning (p. 34-35). These declarations correspond to what is found in the current research, where suffixed forms express the perfective aspect, and participles express the imperfective aspect. Unlike other researchers, Tsarfaty thinks that verbs do have aspectual meanings, which are incorporated by the combination of the root to its pattern (p. 93). This claim also corresponds to the findings of this research, but she further withdraws from determining the verb system as aspectual, and adds that the aspectual meanings are not pure meanings, but rather implicatures (p. 35). Tsarfaty, like the others, speaks about seven verb patterns in Hebrew (p. 36), referring to the passive patterns as productive, which apparently is not the case.

Some researchers refer to other categories than tense. Rosen (1977) points at a mood category (pp. 194-197), and also refers to some aspectual ones (p. 179). He claims that the mood category is syntactic in nature, and the aspectual category is morphological in nature. But his relation to Hebrew is still traditional, and does not correspond to the spoken variety. Berman (1978) hints at an aspectual category in Modern Hebrew. She makes a clear distinction between Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew to Modern Hebrew when referring to the verb tenses. She claims that suffixed forms in Biblical Hebrew represent perfective aspect, whereas prefixed forms represent imperfective aspect. Participles started representing present tense in Mishnaic Hebrew (Berman 1978:139-140). She refers to Modern Hebrew as having three verb tenses: past, future and neutral. The latter is expressed by participles, and since it is neutral (neither past nor future), she calls it “present” (p. 142). Past and future are parallel to the perfective and imperfective Biblical forms, respectively. Berman distinguishes the participles from the other forms, saying that
these forms are names, which can serve as verbs in the present tense (pp. 140, 142). She emphasizes the difference between Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew to Modern Hebrew. Her approach to the Modern Hebrew verb system as parallel to that of Biblical Hebrew in terms of its aspects is different from the other approaches, and probably much closer to reality (see Section 5 of this thesis). Still, these distinctions are general and are not made for the spoken variety. In her paper on subjectless constructions in Modern Hebrew (1980) Berman further mentions some modal structures (p. 768), which are similar to structures obtained in this study. Yet, their representation of TMA categories is lexical and not grammatical, as their pattern never changes. Berman’s examples are taken both from written Hebrew and from spoken Hebrew. From all studies, Berman’s approach is the closest to the spoken variety of Israeli Hebrew, stating that its verb forms are parallel to perfective and imperfective Biblical forms. Yet, the findings in this research show a different picture of the forms used for each of the functions. Tsivoni (1991) reviewed the means of expressing tense and aspect in Written Hebrew. She claims that Hebrew verb forms do not only express tense, but also additional categories, including aspect and mood (p. 55). This conclusion corresponds to the current findings. She brings examples for expressing the categories of aspect, tense and mood using verb patterns, verb structures and phrases of verbs with adverbs. All these examples contain lexical items expressing TMA, which are not neutralized during the analysis in order to determine the exact meaning of the verb pattern itself. This entails classifications that are guided by lexical items rather than by real TMA grammaticalization of forms and structures. A minority of the examples do exhibit real TMA-form correlation, but these examples are literary, and are never used in IH speech. Furthermore, they would probably be classified as ‘strange’ by IH native speakers. Such examples are: *mitjaSev haja* ‘used to get himself seated’ and *boXa hajta* ‘used to cry’ on page 60. Similarly to all the other studies, Tsivoni’s research is based on Written texts, and although it covers a respectful list of Israeli books, it cannot represent the spoken variety.
According to the current research, SIH participles express the imperfective aspect. Gordon (1982) describes the development of participle forms in Modern Hebrew and their meaning as expressing tense. He compares them to parallel forms in Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew. His approach is also traditional, as he uses tense as the main property of the Hebrew verb system. Azar (1995) refers to participles in Mishnaic Hebrew in particular. He claims that participles are used both as verbs and as nominals, as opposed to other researchers, who refer to Hebrew participles as nominals only. When using participles as verbs, he claims that they express the future, which starts immediately after the speech point, and thus is ‘clean’ of modality (p. 15). This analysis is similar to English forms representing an immediate future such as *I am leaving this evening*. His claim about the participles being used as future tense does not correspond to the current study, where participles represent the imperfective aspect. Yet, the fact that he negates their modality goes hand in hand with the findings here. Meltzer (2007) also claims that participles can be used both as verbs and as nominals, adjectives in particular. She classifies these forms according to their character. She thinks that stative participles can be used both as verbs and as adjectives, whereas non-stative participles, which require a theme or an agent, can only be used as verbs. She does not directly address the TMA issue in Hebrew participles, but only makes the distinction between their function as a nominal and their function as a verb. For further details on her approach see 2.3.3.3.1 above.

Mood as a grammatical category in SIH is found in the prefixed forms of the IH verb system. Most studies which claim to have investigated mood in Hebrew, check in fact modality, and not mood. Most researchers ignore modal lexical elements in the expressions they analyzed, and conclude that Hebrew has mood. Kopelovich (1984) claims that mood in Hebrew should be referred to as a notion in the language, rather than a syntactic or a morphological item (p. 7). She calls it mood, although she does not assign a grammatical structure to it. Kopelovich’s theory was constructed on the basis of written questionnaires, which were given to native speakers of Hebrew. Written tests cannot be referred to as
representing the spoken language. Ambar (1989) checked what the ways
to express modality in Modern Hebrew are. She mainly referred to lexical
elements, which contain modality as part of their semantics. Lexical
modality is observed in this study too, but in its scope, it is lexical, and not
grammatical. Ambar did not refer to mood as a grammatical semantic
category. Similarly to most of the other researches, she did not mention
in Hebrew conditionals, and compared them to non-conditionals (2001).
She claims that participles, when used as verbs, can express all three
tenses: past, present and future (1999:218-219). This is in contrast to the
system that is presented in this research for SIH. It is not likely to have the
same form to express everything, since it points to an irregularity in the
system. It is more likely that the analysis of the system is inaccurate. Bar
claims to have also found modal use of verb patterns, where modality was
syntactic, such as cases where verbs preceded the subjects (1999:221),
the use of the root \textit{hjj} ‘be’ + participle pattern (2001:50) and the addition
of a \textit{Se-} ‘that’ morpheme to prefixed verb forms (1999:252, 2001:50). The
last two findings do correspond to the results of this study, according to
which \textit{hjj} ‘be’ + participle can express counterfactual mood, and the
addition of a \textit{Se-} ‘that’ morpheme to prefixed verb forms can express
optative mood. Also, according to Bar forms with the root \textit{hjj} ‘be’ are used
as tense markers in verb forms which look identical in the present and
past (1999:244). This claim seems to be correct, as some of the \textit{hjj} ‘be’ +
participle constructions contain a participle form, which is identical to the
prefixed form of the same verb. Yet, these cases are part of the standard
habitual past constructions, and they carry the same meaning. Bar’s
corpus included various written sources, such as the Bible, the Israeli
writer Amos Oz and modern journals. These sources do not reflect on the
spoken varieties of IH. She also brings examples for sentences containing
suffixed forms, which express modality, but like the others, does not refer
to other elements in these sentences, mainly lexical elements. The lexical
elements and not the verb patterns in these examples bear the modal
The combination of two TMA categories in SIH is possible only in the case of the habitual past (see Section 5). Muchnik (1989) checks the ways of expressing tense, mood and aspect in Chanoch Bartov’s book “Everyone Had Six Wings” (in Hebrew). She claims to have found linguistic patterns which express all three categories, and concludes that each meaningful expression or clause bears at least one of these semantic categories, but not all of them together. Although tense in IH is the least prominent category, Muchnik claims that two semantic categories can co-exist within the same clause or expression, on condition that one of them is tense (p. 52), but she does not bring examples to show that. She classifies the verb patterns and their prefixed / suffixed forms according to TMA categories, but there are many overlaps between different semantic representations of the same forms. This cannot be defined as a system, as it does not correspond to basic linguistic TMA definitions or to the findings in this research. In complete contradiction to the results of this study, aspect is classified as the least dominant TMA category in the language of the book she investigates. Muchnik’s research is based upon one literary text, and therefore cannot represent the situation in Hebrew, all the more so Spoken Israeli Hebrew.

Tense, mood and aspect have not been investigated in Modern Hebrew as one system. Studies on TMA in Hebrew are only available for Biblical Hebrew, and are very few in number. Rattray (1997) checked the system of aspect-tense-mood in Biblical Hebrew, Samuel A and B. She claims that suffixed and prefixed forms in the Bible do not represent tenses or aspects, but she does not provide any analysis to what they do represent. Unlike other researchers, Rattray claims that tense, aspect and mood are three components of one system, and their existence as one entity in languages is much more widespread than their existence in languages as separate entities (p. 28). This research proves that this point is correct. Rattray classifies Biblical forms as having constant functions, i.e. a one to one relationship between form and meaning. Participles, she claims, represent imperfective-durative and realis forms, suffixed forms are a combination of perfective with realis, and prefixed forms are a combination of a non-durative aspect with either realis or irrealis (p. 149-
150). Although Rattray’s research deals with Biblical Hebrew, these conclusions correspond to many of the findings of the current research. Yet, the comparison between the two studies can be misleading, as two different languages are involved.