Between Locales, locatives and existentials
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Hebrew, as many SVO languages, permits V-S-XP word order under certain conditions. This inversion is commonly attributed to presentative unaccusative verbs, such as arrive and appear, as in (1):

(1) higi’a
doa’r.

arrived mail

Borer (2010) discusses the VS construction in Hebrew, and proposes a new approach, presenting the notion of Locales. One of the prominent achievements of her work is the unified analysis for VS sentences in Hebrew, independently of Aktionsart or transitivity. She suggests that post-verbal weak subjects are only grammatical in the presence of a clitic locative phrase, namely fam/ kan/ ecli, which she defined as Locale. Thus, post-verbal subjects in unergatives, as in (2) (ibid; 315, no. 15), and in transitive expletive sentences, as in (3) (ibid; 332, no. 53), are grammatical in Hebrew with a locale:

(2) ‘avad *(fam/kan/ecli) ganan (ha.yom).
worked here/there/chez.me gardener today

(3) hifcic *(fam) (’eyze) matos ‘et ha.’ir (ha.boqer).
bombed there some plane OM the.town this morning

With presentative unaccusative verbs as in (1), the locale is claimed to be optionally covert, but obligatorily overt in all other cases.

Borer supports her theory through a set of judgements, showing that weak, post-verbal subjects are licit with all verb classes when bound by a locale. My work will look at more fine grained facts, regarding the empirical extension of the locative paradigm, which will lead to a modified analysis. In particular, the phrase claimed to licit the inversion is not necessarily clitic (4a-b), neither compelled to precede the subject (4b) nor obligatorily locative (4c-d).

(4) a. ‘avad *(ba.gina ha.zot) (’eyze) ganan.
worked in.the.garden this.f some gardener

b. caxaku *(kama) yeladot *(baxeder ha.ze).
laughed some girls in.the.room this.m

c. hifcic *(ha.boqer) (’eyze) matos ‘et ha.’ir.
bombed this.morning some plane OM the.town

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This new complexity presented calls for an explanation. Two major questions arise: (i) Does the subject manifest special semantic properties when it appears in the post-verbal position, or is it derived through a purely syntactic mechanism? In either case (ii) What is the precise syntactic mechanism that licenses the post-verbal subject?
Addressing question (i), I discuss Diesing’s (1992) Mapping Hypothesis. The crucial insight of Diesing is the connection between the semantic properties of weak NPs and their syntactic position. Specifically, Diesing suggests that through a process which she calls *tree-splitting*, two different syntactic positions are mapped into two separate logical representation, as paraphrased in (3) (*ibid.*, 9-10):

(5) **Mapping Hypothesis:**
   i. Material from VP is mapped into the nuclear scope.
   ii. Material from IP is mapped into a restrictive clause.

Following Diesing, I propose that in the VS_{WEAK} order in Hebrew, the subject NP is bound existentially in a low position. Hence, my answer to (i) is that the derivation of the construction is not purely syntactic, but depends on semantic factors. In light of Boneh & Sichel (2010), I suggest an answer to question (ii) in terms of the EPP (Chomsky, 1981). I propose that the weak NP, mapped through tree-splitting to a post-verbal position, can stay low, assumingly in specVP, when the EPP is satisfied. The next step I take is to understand what the categories that can satisfy this principle are. Crucially, I claim that this element is not necessarily clitic, neither locative.

The new set of data I present in my work suggests a reexamination of the Locales approach. The main source of interest discussing the VS order in Hebrew is the attempt to reveal the relationship between a syntactic position and semantic scope. Moreover, this work could relate to the typological view of the semantic properties of post-verbal position and the parametric status of the EPP. To put more explicitly, the current discussion suggests to understand whether Hebrew behaves more like Germanic languages, which have more permissive conditions for the subject position (Bobaljik & Jonas, 1996), or rather more strict, like Russian (Freeze, 1992). For further research, it worth considering other possible constrains and factors intervening in the VS construction in Hebrew, as shown by Belletti (2004) for Italian.

**References**


