Subject to Change

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Roadmap

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  - Examples
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  - Counter-examples
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Subject to Change

- In Hebrew the default word-order is SV(O), yet it allows a VS order in several cases.
- One of these cases is VS order with verbs whose subject is an internal argument, i.e., passives and unaccusatives (Reinhart & Siloni, 2005; Shlonsky, 1997).
- In **colloquial** Hebrew, such VS examples may fail to exhibit ϕ-agreement between the verb and its internal argument: the verb shows default agreement (i.e., 3M.SG) although its subject is feminine or plural (or both).
- Further, unaccusative verbs exhibit two case patterns.

nafal li ha-maftexot (VS)

fell-3M.SG DAT-me the-keys-M.PL

‘My keys fell’

nigmar ha-mayim ha-xamim

finished-3M.SG the-water-M.PL the-hot-M.PL

‘There is no more hot water’

Examples from Brazilian Portuguese

- nasceu os gêmeos Eva e Mateo
  was-born-3SG the-M.PL twin-M.PL Eva and Mateo
  'The twins Eva and Mateo were born'
  (https://www.purepeople.com.br/noticia/cristiano-ronaldo-e-pai-pela-segunda-vez-apos-barriga-de-aluguel-dar-a-luz-gemeos_a180554/1)

- Recentemente apareceu os livros para colorir para adultos
  recently appeared-3SG the-M.PL book-M.PL for color-INF for adult-PL
  'Recently coloring books for adults appeared'

Examples from Tuscan Italian (Nocentini, 1999)

- Con quest'umido nasce i funghi
  with this-humid be-born-3SG the-M.PL mushroom-M.PL
  'Mushrooms grow with this humidity'

- Stasera viene le tue amiche a trovarti?
  tonight comes-3SG the-F.PL your-F.PL friend-F.PL to find-you
  'Are your girlfriends coming to see you tonight?'

*ha-maftexot nafal li (SV)

the-keys-M.PL fell-3M.SG DAT-me

‘My keys fell’

*ha-mayim ha-xamim nigmar

the-water-M.PL the-hot-M.PL finished-3M.SG

‘There is no more hot water’

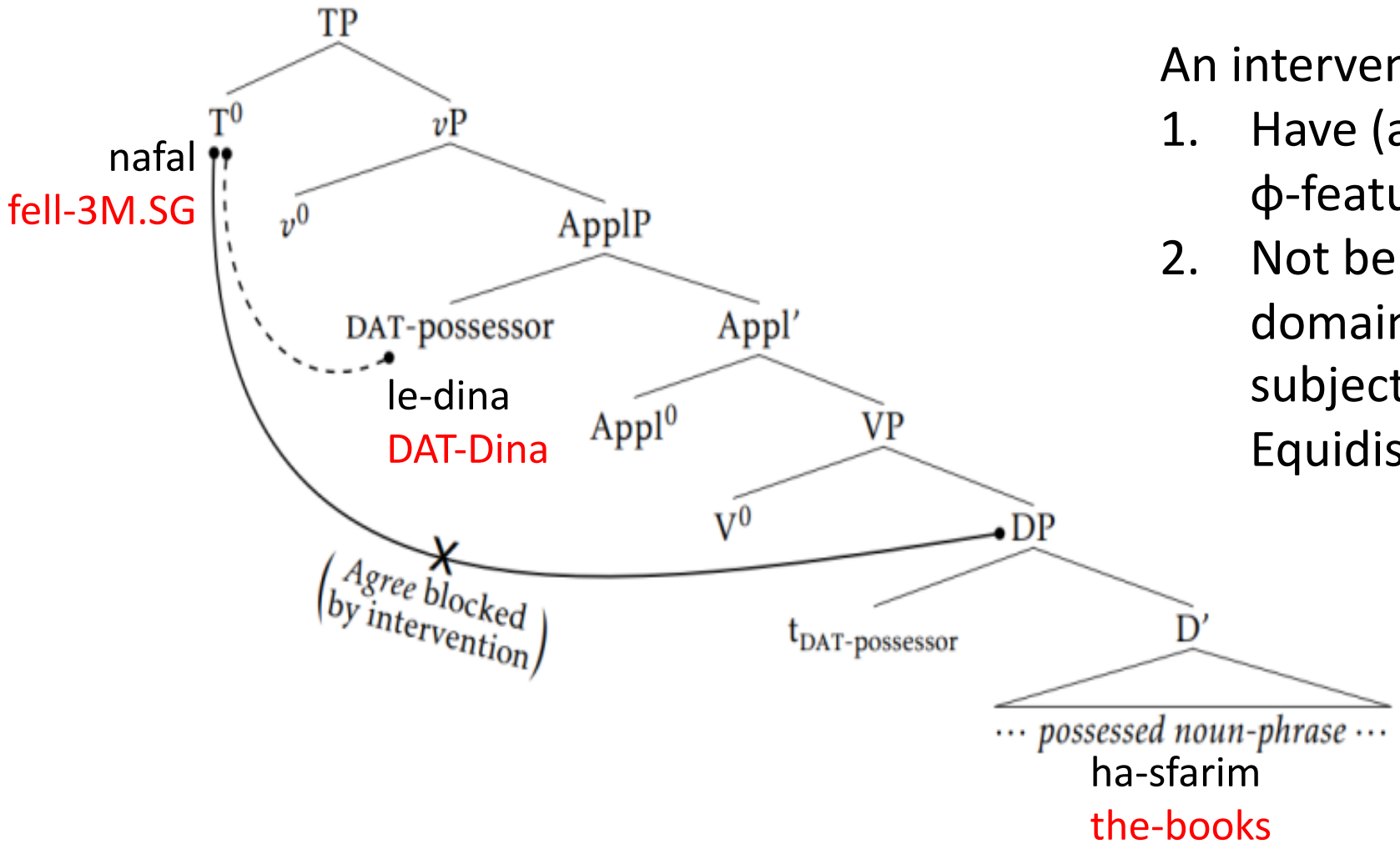
Preminger (2009): Failure to agree

Lack of agreement with unaccusatives results from the structural intervention of a possessive dative.

nafal le-dina ha-sfarim
fell-3M.SG DAT-Dina the-book-M.PL
'Dina's books fell'

"Failure to agree": agreement is not optional, but if the verb and its internal argument subject fail to agree due to structural intervention – lack of agreement is tolerated.

Preminger (2009): Failure to agree



An intervener must:

1. Have (accessible) ϕ-features
2. Not be in the minimal domain of the internal subject DP (The Equidistance Condition)

Wait a minute…

1) nišpax **harbe** mayim (quantifier)
   spilt-3M.SG **a-lot-of** water-M.PL
   ‘A lot of water was spilt’

2) ve-az nocar **be’ecem** nefila (adverb)
   and-then PASS-created-3M.SG **in.fact** fall-F.SG
   ‘And then there is a fall’
   (The TV show “The 12th floor” on Channel 12)

3) ala **ba-post** tluna al-ha-mexir-im (locative)
   arose-3M.SG **in-the-post** complaint-F.SG on-the-price-M.PL
   ‘A complaint about the prices arose in the post
   (https://m.facebook.com/groups/lehaifnikim/permalink/10160297014116263/?mibextid=Nif5oz)

4) nigmar ha-tut-im (no intervention)
   ended-3M.SG the-strawberry-M.PL
   ‘There are no more strawberries’

The emergence of the accusative marker

nišar li **et** ha-siftonim ha-regilim

remained-3M.SG DAT-me **ACC** the-lipstick-M.PL the-regular-M.PL

‘The regular lipsticks remained’

hofi’a li **et** ha-mila ha-zot ba-milon

appeared-3M.SG DAT-me **ACC** the-word-F.SG the-this-F.SG in-the-dictionary

‘This word appeared in the dictionary’

Research questions

Intervention: Does intervention improve lack of ϕ-agreement?

YES: What is the nature of this intervention? Why is it so?

NO: What allows lack of agreement to occur?

Object marker: How should we analyze sentences where the post-verbal argument is introduced by the direct object marker? What licenses this object marker?

hofi'a	li	**et**	ha-mila	ha-zot	ba-milon
appeared-3M.SG	DAT-me	**ACC**	the-word-F.SG	the-this-F.SG	in-the-dictionary

Proposal

- Intervention is **not** necessary - no support for Preminger's 'agreement failure'.
- Lack of agreement is licensed by the lack of nominative in internal argument position.
- Agreement optionality - two competing analyses:
  1. The subject DP bears nominative case -> agreement is established.
  2. The subject DP is caseless -> agreement is not established.
- Hebrew unaccusatives are undergoing the same process that presentational constructions had undergone in the 20th century.

Experiment 1

Intervention: Does intervention improve lack of ϕ-agreement?

Experiment 1 examined the acceptability of sentences with lack of agreement, where the verb is singular and the subject plural (henceforth: Singular-Plural), with and without a possessive dative.

These sentences were compared to sentences with agreement (grammatical baseline) and sentences where the verb was plural and the subject singular (ungrammatical baseline, henceforth: Plural-Singular).

Experiment 1 - Materials

1) ʔnafal ha-maftexot ba-sedek (Singular-Plural)
fell-3M.SG the-key-M.PL in-the-crack
'The keys fell in the crack'

2) ʔnafal le-dan ha-maftexot ba-sedek (Singular-Plural with PD)
fell-3M.SG DAT-Dan the-key-M.PL in-the-crack
'Dan's keys fell in the crack'

3) naflu ha-maftexot ba-sedek (Agreement)
fell-3PL the-key-M.PL in-the-crack

4) naflu le-dan ha-maftexot ba-sedek (Agreement with PD)
fell-3PL DAT-Dan the-key-M.PL in-the-crack

5) *naflu ha-mafteax ba-sedek (Plural-Singular)
fell-3PL the-key-M.SG in-the-crack

6) *naflu le-dan ha-mafteax ba-sedek (Plural-Singular with PD)
fell-3PL DAT-Dan the-key-M.SG in-the-crack

Experiment 1 - disclaimer

Lack of agreement sentences belong to a colloquial register of Hebrew and go bluntly against the normative/prescriptive rules of Hebrew. We expect a relatively low rating and working within that range.

Experiment 1 - Method

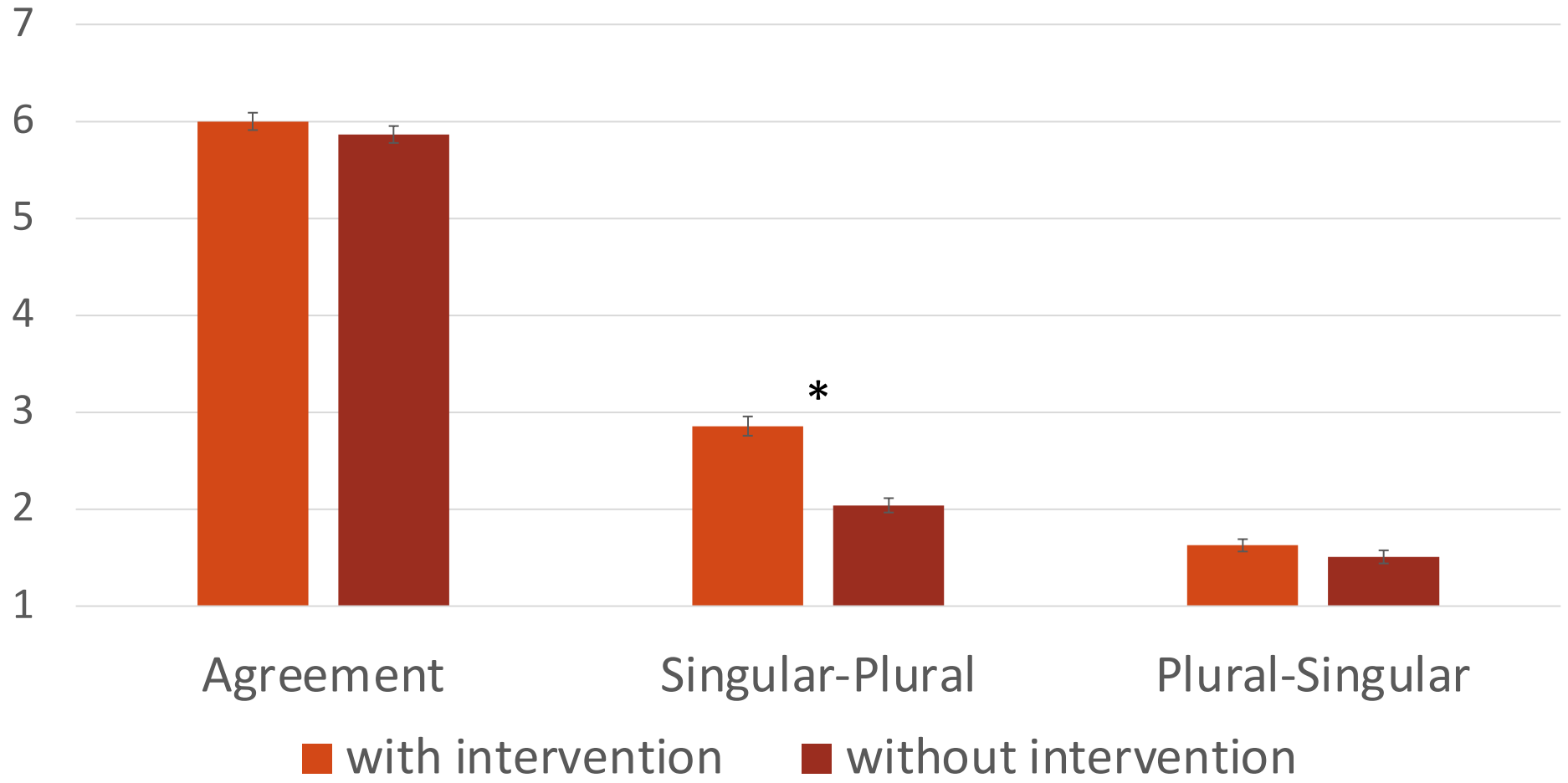
Acceptability judgement task (scale of 1 to 7)

Participants:

42 adults aged 22-53 (mean age = 30.9) monolingual native speakers of Hebrew with no linguistic education.

- 6 conditions
- 18 sets of experimental items
- 36 filler items
- Each participant was exposed to 3 sentences of each condition

Experiment 1 - Results



naflu (le-dan) ha-maftexot
fell-PL (DAT-dan) the-key-M.PL

nafal (le-dan) ha-maftexot
fell-3M.SG (DAT-dan) the-key-M.PL

naflu (le-dan) ha-mafteax
fell-PL (DAT-dan) the-key-M.SG

Experiment 1 - Discussion

- Singular-Plural sentences belong to a **colloquial** register of Hebrew.
- Singular-Plural are significantly more acceptable than Plural-Singular sentences (ungrammatical baseline), even without intervention.
- The intervention of a possessive dative significantly improves the acceptability of Singular-Plural sentences.

Research questions

Intervention: Does intervention improve lack of ϕ-agreement?

YES: What is the nature of this intervention? Why is it so?

NO: What allows lack of agreement to occur?

Hypothesis A: Preminger: only possessive datives can serve as interveners, because they have accessible ϕ-features and are not in the minimal domain of the internal subject DP.

Hypothesis B: not only possessive datives but also adverbs can improve lack of agreement, due to an analogy to presentational constructions.

Experiment 2

Experiment 2 examined the acceptability of 4 types of intervention: possessive datives, adverbs and quantifiers vs. no intervention within Agreement and Singular-Plural sentences.

Experiment 2 – Materials

1) ne’elam/ne’elmu **le-yosi** dvar-im me-ha-mizvada (possessive dative)
disappeared-3M.SG/3PL **DAT-Yosi** thing-M.PL from-the-suitcase
‘Yosi’s stuff disappeared from the suitcase’

2) ne’elam/ne’elmu **etmol** dvar-im me-ha-mizvada (adverb)
disappeared-3M.SG/3PL **yesterday** thing-M.PL from-the-suitcase
‘Yesterday stuff disappeared from the suitcase’

3) ne’elam/ne’elmu **harbe** dvar-im me-ha-mizvada (quantifier)
disappeared-3M.SG/3PL **a-lot-of** thing-M.PL from-the-suitcase
‘A lot of stuff disappeared from the suitcase’

4) ne’elam/ne’elmu dvar-im me-ha-mizvada (no intervention)
disappeared-3M.SG/3PL thing-M.PL from-the-suitcase
‘Stuff disappeared from the suitcase’

Experiment 2 – Predictions

ne’elam **le-yosi** dvar-im me-ha-mizvada (possessive dative)
disappeared-3M.SG **DAT-Yosi** thing-M.PL from-the-suitcase
‘Yosi’s stuff disappeared from the suitcase’

=

ne’elam **etmol** dvar-im me-ha-mizvada (adverb)
disappeared-3M.SG **yesterday** thing-M.PL from-the-suitcase
‘Yesterday stuff disappeared from the suitcase’

?

ne’elam **harbe** dvar-im me-ha-mizvada (quantifier)
disappeared-3M.SG **a-lot-of** thing-M.PL from-the-suitcase
‘A lot of stuff disappeared from the suitcase’

*

ne’elam dvar-im me-ha-mizvada (no intervention)
disappeared-3M.SG thing-M.PL from-the-suitcase
‘Stuff disappeared from the suitcase’

Experiment 2 - Method

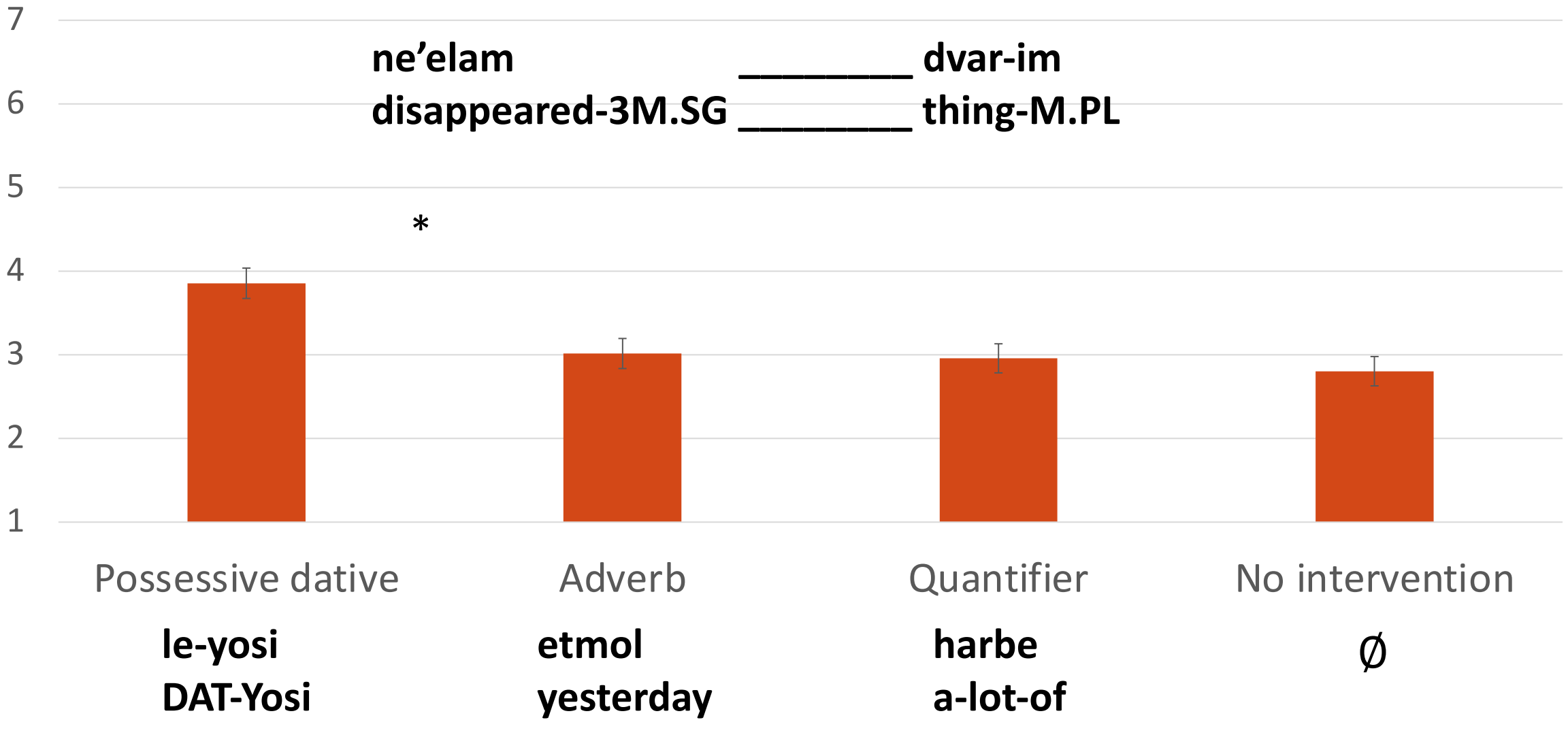
Participants:

Singular-Plural sentences: 104 adults aged 20-39 (mean age = 27.8) monolingual native speakers of Hebrew with no linguistic education.

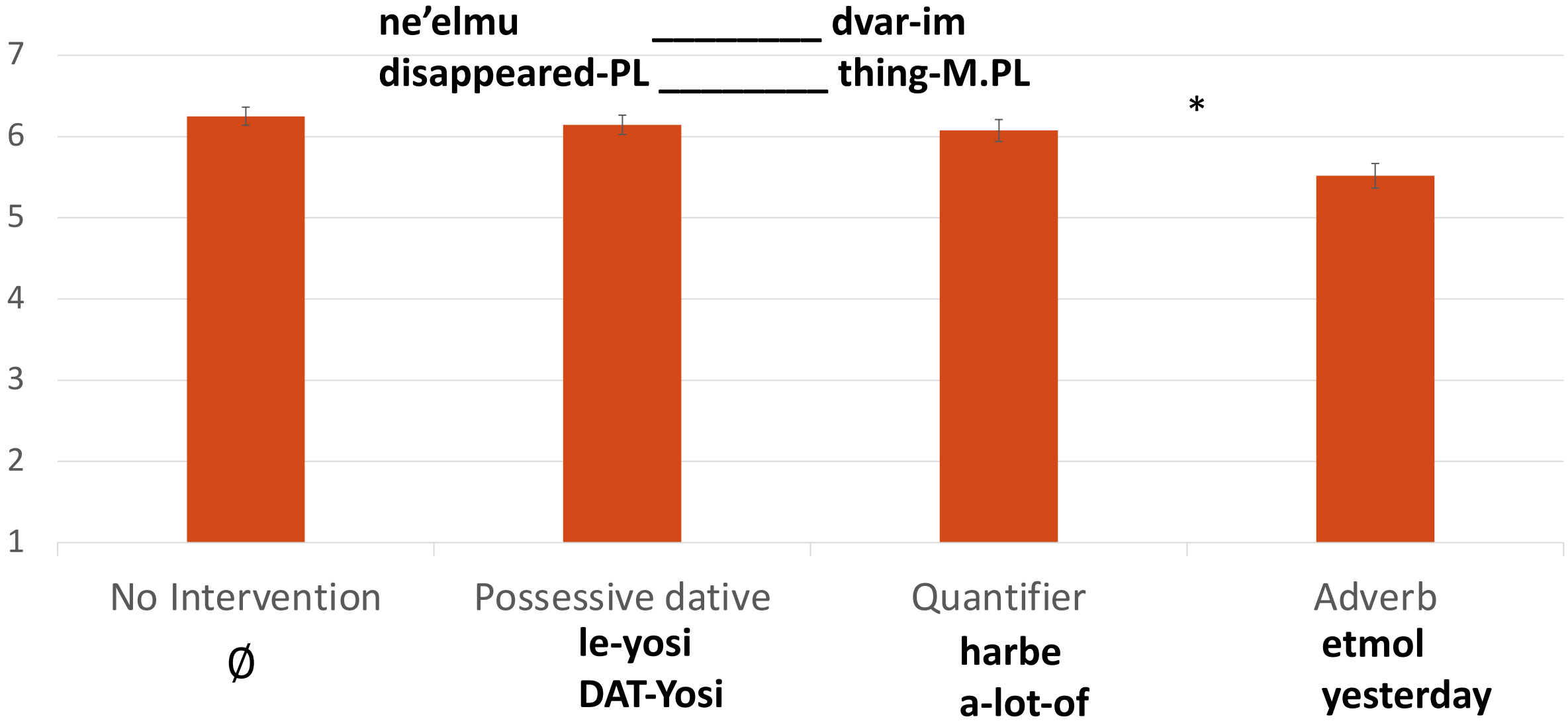
Agreement sentences: 104 adults aged 18-38 (mean age = 26.3) monolingual native speakers of Hebrew with no linguistic education.

- 4 conditions
- 12 sets of experimental items
- 24 filler items
- Each participant was exposed to 3 sentences of each condition

Experiment 2 – Singular-Plural Results



Experiment 2 – Agreement Results



Experiment 2

The interaction between the two groups of the experiment was examined using a linear mixed model fit by REML and t-tests that use Satterthwaite's method.

This interaction found no significant difference between the adverb condition and the possessive dative condition in group I and group II of the experiment ($t(2357.83) = 1.336$, $p = 0.182$).

ne'elam **le-yosi** dvar-im disappeared-3M.SG **DAT-Yosi** thing-M.PL 'Yosi's stuff disappeared'	=	ne'elmu **le-yosi** dvar-im disappeared-3PL **DAT-Yosi** thing-M.PL 'Yosi's Stuff disappeared'
ne'elam **etmol** dvar-im disappeared-3M.SG **yesterday** thing-M.PL 'Yesterday stuff disappeared'		ne'elmu **etmol** dvar-im disappeared-3PL **yesterday** thing-M.PL 'Yesterday stuff disappeared'

Experiment 2 - Discussion

- The lower rating that the adverb received compared to the possessive dative does not stem from lack of agreement! - ”Adverb penalty”
- The “adverb penalty” follows from the word-order. The order **verb-adverb-subject** is less acceptable than **verb-dative-subject**.
- Adverbs can improve lack of agreement.
- Quantifiers cannot improve lack of agreement.
- Preminger’s “failure to agree” cannot be maintained – adverbs do not have accessible ϕ-features but they improve lack of agreement.

Research questions

Intervention: Does intervention improve lack of ϕ-agreement?

YES: What is the nature of this intervention? Why is it so?

~~**Hypothesis A:** Preminger: only possessive datives can serve as interveners, because they have accessible ϕ-features and are not in the minimal domain of the internal subject DP.~~

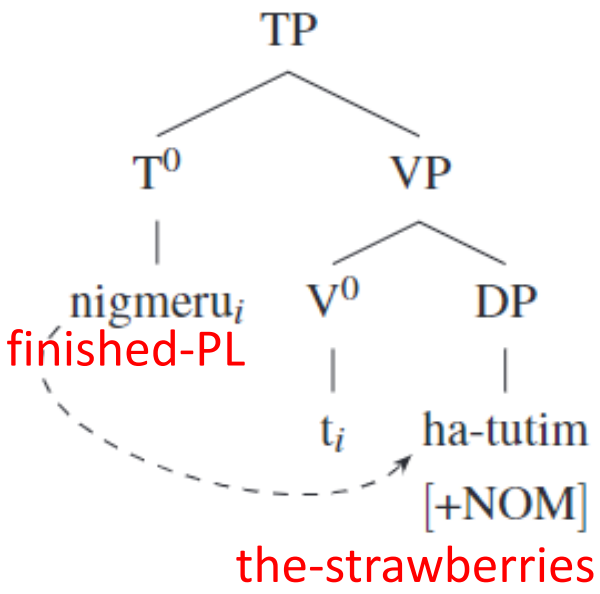
Hypothesis B: not only possessive datives but also adverbs can improve lack of agreement, due to an analogy to presentational constructions.

Object marker: How should we analyze sentences where the post-verbal argument is introduced by the direct object marker? What licenses this object marker?

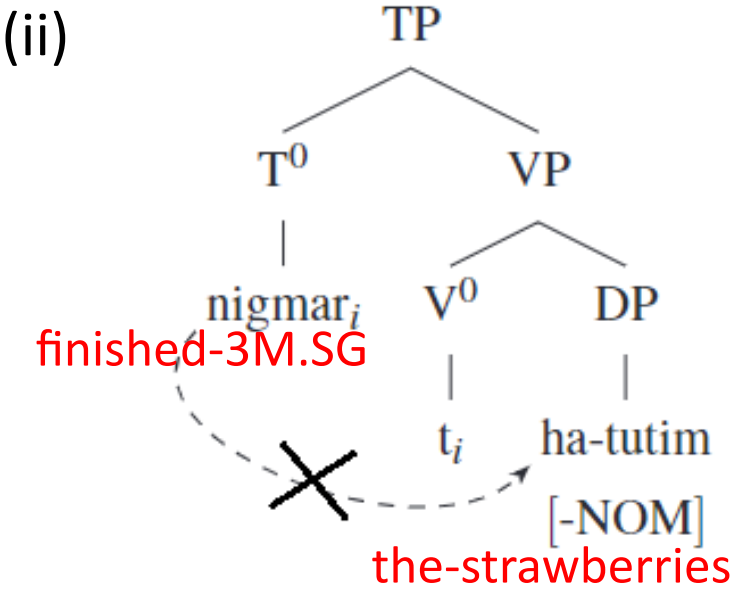
Proposal

- What allows lack of ϕ-agreement between the unaccusative verb and its subject DP is the DP's loss of nominative case in internal argument position.
- What surfaces as agreement optionality is 2 competing analyses available to speakers in unaccusative VS configuration:

(i)



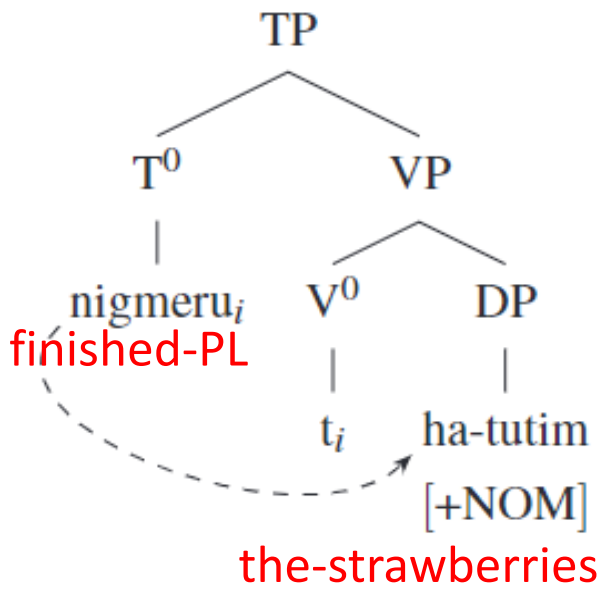
(ii)



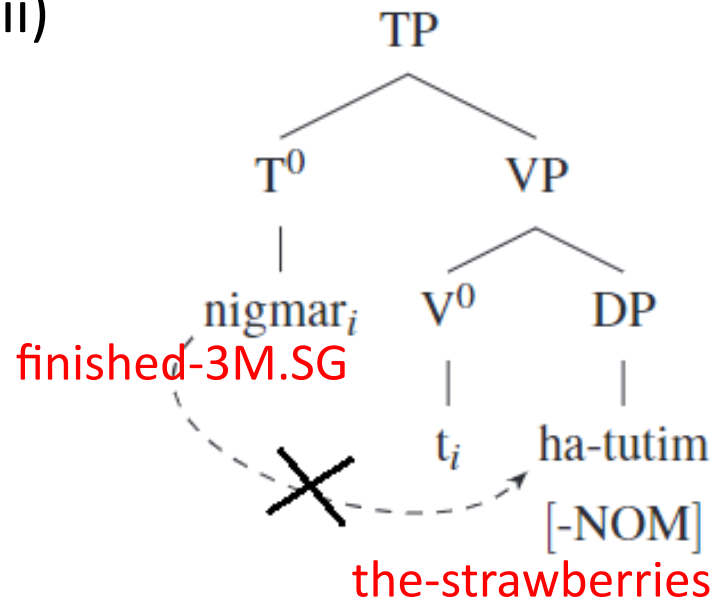
Proposal

On analysis (i) AGREE between T[uϕ] and the postverbal nominative argument results in ϕ-agreement. On analysis (ii), the postverbal argument, lacking nominative case, is no longer visible for T[uϕ]'s probing. Unable to find a relevant goal in its search domain, T[uϕ] exhibits default agreement (3M.SG).

(i)



(ii)



Evidence for loss of NOM in internal position

The loss of nominative in the internal argument position is triggered by lack of morphological marking and enhanced by the **loss of nominative postverbal subject pronouns**, which were replaced by accusative pronouns.

*haya (li) hu ba-sifriya
was-3M.SG (DAT-me) he in-the-library
'It was/(I had it) in the library'

haya (li) oto ba-sifriya
was-3M.SG (DAT-me) him in-the-library

Evidence for loss of NOM in internal position

Cf. unaccusatives:

*nišar le-xa hu
remained-3M.SG DAT-you-M.SG he
'You have this remained'

nišar le-xa oto
remained-3M.SG DAT-you-M.SG him

*nišar le-xa ze
remained-3M.SG DAT-you-M.SG this

nišar le-xa **et** ze
remained-3M.SG DAT-you-M.SG **ACC** this

Evidence for loss of NOM in internal position

The appearance of accusative pronouns and **the direct object marker *et*** attested in these constructions morphologically mark the loss of nominative case. As already observed by Siloni (1997), *et* introduces caseless definite NPs in impersonal constructions (1) and adjectival passives (2):

(1) xaser li **et** ha-madrega ben le-ven
missing-M.SG DAT-me **ACC** the-step-F.SG in-between
'I am missing the step in between'

(2) lo haya katuv **et** ha-ša'a
NEG was-3M.SG written-M.SG **ACC** the-hour-F.SG
'The hour was not written'

Evidence for loss of NOM in internal position

Unaccusatives in VS order are undergoing the same process that **Hebrew existential and possessive constructions** had undergone in the 20th century.

haya le-moše ha-ša'on ha-ze mi-švayc (Ziv, 1976)
was-3M.SG DAT-Moshe the-watch-M.SG the-this-M.SG from-Switzerland
'Moshe had that watch from Switzerland'

hayta l-anu ha-mexonit ha-zot
was-3F.SG DAT-us the-car-F.SG the-this-F.SG
'We had this car'

haya le-moše **et** ha-ša'on ha-ze mi-švayc
was-3M.SG DAT-Moshe **ACC** the-watch-M.SG the-this-M.SG from-Switzerland
'Moshe had that watch from Switzerland'

haya l-anu **et** ha-mexonit ha-zot
was-3M.SG DAT-us **ACC** the-car-F.SG the-this-F.SG
'We had this car'

Evidence for loss of NOM in internal position

Unaccusatives in VS order are undergoing the same process that **Hebrew existential and possessive constructions** had undergone in the 20th century.

haya (li) sefer al ha-madaf
was-3M.SG (DAT-me) book-M.SG on the-shelf
'There was a book on the shelf'/ Dative: 'I had a book on the shelf'

haya (li) sfarim/otam/*hem al ha-madaf
was-3M.SG (DAT-me) book-M.PL/them/*they on the-shelf
'There were books on the shelf'/ Dative: 'I had books on the shelf'

haya (li) #**(et)** ha-sefer ha-ze al ha-madaf
was-3M.SG (DAT-me) **ACC** the-book-M.SG the-this-M.SG on the-shelf
'This book was on the shelf'/ Dative: 'I had this book on the shelf'

Evidence for loss of NOM in internal position

Presentational constructions in contact languages (Taube, 2015):

Yiddish:

(1) Haynt ober ništo im dem malekh
today but. NEG.EXIST him.**ACC** DEF.ACC.SG angel
'but today he is not there, the angel'

Polish:

(2) Nie ma Go tu
NEG.EXIST him.**GEN**.SG here
'He is not here'

Ukranian:

(3) Nema yoho tut
NEG.EXIST him.**GEN**.SG here

Proposal

The analogy to existential (locative) and possessive constructions could explain why lack of agreement sentences are better with possessive datives and adverbs.

(1) lo haya le-ron et ha-xoveret (possessive)
NEG was-3M.SG DAT-Ron ACC the-notebook-F.SG
'Ron did not have the notebook'

(2) */??lo haya et ha-xoveret le-ron
NEG was-3M.SG ACC the-notebook-F.SG DAT-Ron

(3) haya ba-sifriya et ha-sefer ha-ze
was-3M.SG in-the-library ACC the-book-M.SG the-this-M.SG (locative)
'This book could be found in the library'

(4) haya et ha-sefer ha-ze ba-sifriya
was-3M.SG ACC the-book-M.SG the-this-M.SG in-the-library

Verbs that allow accusative marking

- **Verbs of existence/change of location:**
  - remain
  - arise
  - appear
  - **marginally:**
    - arrive
    - come back
    - fall
    - disappear
    - run out

Summary

- Possessive datives **improve** but are not necessary for lack of agreement in VS unaccusatives.
- Both **possessive datives** and **adverbs** improve lack of agreement.
- **Proposal:** the lack of nominative in internal argument position is what licenses lack of agreement in VS:
  - Disappearance of nominative postverbal subject pronouns
  - Direct object marking
  - Existential and possessive constructions in Hebrew
  - Contact languages

Thank you!

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Diagnostics of Unaccusatives

1) The verb occurs in the untriggered VS word-order (Siloni, 2012).
2) The verb allows a possessive dative (Borer & Grodzinsky, 1986; Brandel & Siloni, to appear; Meltzer-Asscher & Siloni, 2012).
3) The verb has a transitive counterpart whose external argument has a Cause role (i.e. an argument unspecified regarding mental state) (Reinhart, 2002).

Stimuli – Experiment 1

1	nafal le-dan ha-maftex-ot ba-sedek fell-3M.SG DAT-Dan the-key-M.PL in-the-crack 'Dan's keys fell in the crack'
2	hitkalef la-soxrim ha-kir-ot ba-šipuc peeled-3M.SG DAT-the-renters the-wall-M.PL in-the-renovation 'The renters' walls peeled off during the renovation'
3	hit'arex la-sar ha-pgiš-ot etmol became-longer-3M.SG DAT-the-minister the-meeting-F.PL yesterday 'The minister's meetings yesterday were extended'
4	nixba la-tošavim ha-or-ot baxuc turned-off-3M.SG DAT-the-residents the-light-M.PL outside 'The residents' lights outside went out' (the residents were affected by the event)
5	gadal la-dayarim ha-hoca-ot ba-xoref increased-3M.SG DAT-the-inhabitants the-expense-F.PL in-the-winter 'The residents' expenses increased in the winter'
6	nisraf le-ronen ha-nur-ot ba-erev burnt-3M.SG DAT-Ronen the-light-bulb-F.PL in-the evening 'Ronen's light bulbs burned out in the evening'
7	nišpax la-melcar ha-maška-ot ba-xatuna spilt-3M.SG DAT-the-waiter the-drink-M.PL in-the-wedding 'The waiter spilled the drinks in the wedding'
8	ne'elam le-yosi ha-štar-ot me-ha-megira disappeared-3M.SG DAT-Yosi the-banknote-M.PL from-the-drawer 'Yosi's money disappeared from the drawer'
9	nivla le-dana ha-matbe-ot ba-mexona swallowed-3M.SG DAT-Dana the-coin-M.PL in-the-vending-machine 'Dana's coins got stuck in the vending machine'
10	neheras le-beni ha-kis'-ot ba-mesiba ruined-3M.SG DAT-Benny the-chair-M.PL in-the-party 'Benny's chairs got ruined in the party'
11	nigmar le-dina ha-ugi-ot ba-erev ended-3M.SG DAT-Dina the-cookie-F.PL in-the-evening 'Dina ran out of cookies in the evening'
12	hitbatel le-roni ha-šiur-im ba-boker got-canceled-3M.SG DAT-Roni the-lesson-M.PL in-the-morning 'Roni's lessons got canceled in the morning'
13	hitkalkel le-daniela ha-maxšev-im ba-misrad broke-3M.SG DAT-Daniela the-computer-M.PL in-the-office 'The computers in Daniela's office broke'
14	nignav le-keren ha-taxšit-im me-ha-xeder PASS-stolen-3M.SG DAT-Keren the-jewel-M.PL from-the-room 'Keren's jewels got stolen from the room'
15	nifga le-itamar ha-cmax-im ba-sufa got-damaged-3M.SG DAT-Itamar the-plant-M.PL in-the-storm 'Itamar's plants got damaged in the storm'
16	nišbar la-šxenim ha-xalon-ot ba-seara broke-3M.SG DAT-the-neighbors the-window-M.PL in-the-storm 'The neighbors' windows broke in the storm'
17	nisgar la-metavxim ha-misrad-im PASS-closed-3M.SG DAT-the-real-estate-agents the-office-M.PL ha-boker the-morning 'The real-estate agents' offices were closed (by someone) this morning'
18	hitparek la-metajlim ha-ohal-im ba-ruax fell-apart-3M.SG DAT-the-travelers the-tent-M.PL in-the-wind 'The travelers' tents fell apart in the wind'

Stimuli – Experiment 2

1	nišpax (le-maya/milion/be-ta'ut) xaruz-im al-ha-ricpa spilt-3M.SG (DAT-Maya/million/accidentally) bead-M.PL on-the-floor '(Maya's/A million/Accidentally) beads were spilt on the floor'
2	nidbak (le-maya/hamon/shuv) al-im le-ha-šimša stuck-3M.SG (DAT-Maya/lots-of/Again) leaf-M.PL to-the-windowpane '(Maya had/Lots of/Again) leaves stuck to the windowpane'
3	ne'elam (le-yosi/harbe/etmol) dvar-im disappeared-3M.SG (DAT-Yosi/many/yesterday) thing-M.PL me-ha-mizvada from-the-suitcase '(Yosi's/Many/Yesterday) things disappeared from the suitcase'
4	hitbatel (le-asaf/male/bidiyuk) harca-ot be-ha-kenes cancelled-3M.SG (DAT-Asaf/lots-of/exactly) lecture-F.PL in-the-conference '(Asaf's/Lots of/Just now) lectures in the conference got cancelled'
5	nixnas (le-gili/elef/pit'om) zvuv-im le-ha-oxel entered-3M.SG (DAT-Gili/thousand/suddenly) fly-M.PL to-the-food '(Gili's/A thousand/Suddenly) flies got in the food'
6	nivla (le-dan/kama/hayom) matbe-ot be-ha-mexona swallowed-3M.SG (DAT-Dan/a-few/today) coin-M.PL in-the-machine '(Dan's/A few/Today) coins got stuck in the vending machine'

7	nidlak (le-roni/elef/pit'om) nur-ot turned-on-3M.SG (DAT-Roni/thousand/suddenly) light-bulb-F.PL be-ha-mexonit in-the-car '(Roni had/A thousand/Suddenly) warning lights appeared in the car'
8	nišbar (le-roni/hamon/hayom) sfal-im be-ha-kior broke-3M.SG (DAT-Roni/lots-of/today) mug-M.PL in-the-sink '(Roni's/Lots of/Today) mugs broke in the sink'
9	ne'ebad (le-yosi/harbe/shuv) xafac-im be-ha-dira got-lost-3M.SG (DAT-Yosi/many/again) item-M.PL in-the-apartment '(Yosi's/A lot of/Again) stuff got lost in the apartment'
10	nisraf (le-asaf/male/etmol) man-ot be-ha-misada got-burnt-3M.SG (DAT-Asaf/lots-of/yesterday) dish-F.PL in-the-restaurant '(Asaf's/Lots of/Yesterday) plates got burnt in the restaurant'
11	hitpazer (le-gili/milion/be-ta'ut) zxuxi-ot be-ha-mitbax scattered-3M.SG (DAT-Gili/million/accidentally) glass-F.PL in-the-kitchen '(Gili had/A million/Accidentally) glasses scattered in the kitchen'
12	nafal (le-dan/kama/bidiyuk) argaz-im me-ha-tender fell-3M.SG (DAT-Dan/a-few/exactly) box-M.PL from-the-truck '(Dan's/A few/Just now) boxes fell from the truck'