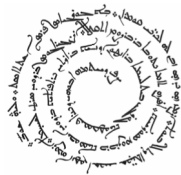


The Syntax of Neo-Aramaic: The Jewish Dialect of Zakho



Gorgias Neo-Aramaic Studies

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The Syntax of Neo-Aramaic: The Jewish Dialect of Zakho

Eran Cohen



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PREFACE

This monograph is a complex, systematically organized collection of innumerable details and facts, whose infinitude is well known to anyone who has had the experience of trying to achieve such description; the bulk of material is partially manifest in the physical and digital materials accumulated during the years of the project. The complexity of production has been in the hands of the author, but actually many people have helped, both directly and indirectly:

H.J. Polotsky, who collected the texts and investigated them. By leaving us his Jewish Zakho notes, as well as by teaching the language to many students over many years, he left us a significant heritage;

Gideon Goldenberg, who taught me this language (inter alia), trusted me with these texts, which made this project possible, and answered an infinite number of questions, thus helping to resolve many qualms;

Yona Sabar, the most prominent figure in the study of this dialect, who willingly sat with me throughout the Polotsky Zakho text collection and helped clarify many incomprehensible expressions;

Olga Kapeliuk, for some helpful pieces of advise;

My advanced students Michal (Schwartzbart) Marmorstein and Ya'ar Hever, who participated in the project and offered their invaluable professional opinion many times throughout the writing process;

Noa Tal, who participated in the first stages of the project, and was the one in charge of the digitization process of the Polotsky material as well as its initial translation;

The Israel Science Foundation (grant 1074/05), who supported this research and actually made it possible;

My colleagues from the department of linguistics: Ariel Shisha Halevy, Moshe Taube and Lea Sawicki, for their willingness to discuss many issues over the years;

Eitan Grossman, with whom I conducted an countless linguistic conversations, who also read through the manuscript, pointed out many difficulties and suggested many valuable solutions and corrections (pertaining both to the language used and various linguistic issues);

My two editors, Geoffrey Khan and Hezy Mutzafi, who accepted the book to the series and, drawing from their experience, offered their corrections, suggestions and thoughts, for which I am thankful. In addition, Geoffrey Khan has been, over the years, a constant and unique source of assistance, especially with regard to various syntactic issues.

My many Zakho students (five two-year cycles) have asked a plethora of questions, which no doubt have made me stand on my toes and indirectly have made this description a better one.

And, last but not least, my family, who are my constant source of energy, inspiration and *raison d'être*.

0 INTRODUCTION

The Jewish Neo-Aramaic dialect of Zakho is considered a well-known dialect, possibly for its long service—it is one of the longest-taught Neo-Aramaic dialects (along with the literary dialect of Urmi), or perhaps because of the breadth of the extant material (see below, corpus definition). The impression of the actual profound linguistic knowledge about this dialect is not commensurate with the actual amount of linguistic publications devoted to it: the amount of knowledge is remarkable, but very little of it is actually published; it has largely remained an oral tradition in Jerusalem. This was the impetus for the project and the present monograph (as well as several papers which have come to accompany it) constitutes an attempt to remedy this situation.

0.1 HISTORY OF RESEARCH

H.J. Polotsky was the pioneer in working with data from the Jewish dialect of Zakho (henceforth JZ), which he collected firsthand. The existence of these data constitutes the incentive for this description. Polotsky's attention was centered, judging from his few but thorough publications, on the Christian dialect of Urmi, whereas the grammar of Zakho was given but occasional, brief comments in his publications. Thus, the linguistic information pertaining to this language has remained by and large within the confines of oral tradition; the language has no published grammar. However, Polotsky had compiled a dossier of grammatical facts backed by examples, pertaining to phonology, morphology and possibly syntax. This dossier has remained unpublished, but it had been, for a long time, accessible to anyone interested, as it was on the shelf in the library of the Hebrew University's linguistics department until it disappeared. There are two more dossiers—one is mostly type-written, organized as a grammar, perhaps meant to be a replacement for the hand-written dossier in the library; and the other is a folio-sized notebook, dated January 1945. Both files contain various lists of a

morphological and syntactic nature. The syntax part, which is more relevant to us, is in both cases a collection of examples with hardly any comments.

Reconstructing Polotsky's thoughts from such bare examples, without having personally studied with him, is quite impossible. Whenever there are some clues to Polotsky's train of thought, I either accept them or argue with them, always mentioning him. In addition, some terminology is adopted off his notes (for instance, the term "presentative"). Note, however, that the concept of the syntactic structure of JZ presented in this monograph is my own, and is similar in more than one point to my syntactic description of Literary Old Babylonian (Izre'el and Cohen 2004:62–114), although it is much more detailed and nuanced, being based on a far larger corpus of a modern language.

Polotsky's impact on JZ research was immense, but indirect; his only publication specifically related to JZ was Polotsky 1967:73–77 (JZ text) and 104–111 (JZ Glossary). His impact was achieved mainly through teaching, whereby his students (most notably Y. Sabar and G. Goldenberg) published JZ material and related research. No doubt, the material collected by him was, and still is, the hidden goldmine in the research of JZ. Following Polotsky's work,¹ JZ has been given due consideration in further published texts (see §0.3 below, corpus definition), some materials have to do with the **lexicon** (see below), a little has to do with **phonology**, which has been given particular consideration in Nakano 1969, Hoberman 1989:149–156, 1997:314–333 and Sabar 2002b:22–37. **Zakho morphology** is given a short sketch in Avinery 1988:12–15, and a special consideration in Sabar 2002b:38–54. The quadriliteral verb is treated in Sabar 1982.

The field of lexicography in Zakho Neo-Aramaic has received much attention, and has been dealt with by many, most notably by Y. Sabar (1974, 1975), whose name has come to be intimately associated with the language of Zakho, as a key figure in the research of Neo-Aramaic in general and of Zakho in particular. Sabar's dictionary (2002b) is now the standard authority on JZ and the Nerwa Homilies, it is based on Polotsky's JZ vocabulary card collection.

As for syntax, it is truly a vast territory; many works dealing with syntactic issues in Neo-Aramaic in general have bearing on Zakho as well, but articles or monographs entirely devoted to Zakho syntax are rare at best.

¹ An enormous impact on Neo-Aramaic studies in general was achieved through his first publications related to Urmi Neo-Aramaic—Polotsky 1961 and 1962.

Nominal syntax is addressed in Tsereteli 1965, 1968a; Goldenberg 1993:296–298, 2000:78–81; Khan 2001 and 2008; verbal syntax in Tsereteli 1968b, 1972; Polotsky 1984–6, 1994, 1996; Hoberman 1989; Hopkins 1989, 2002; Goldenberg 1991, 1992:119–131, 2000; Kapeliuk 1998, 2006, 2008; Pennacchietti 1996; and finally, Khan 2006, 2007, 2008c and more. Valuable syntactic information is also found in extensive footnotes in various text editions, e.g., Meehan and Alon 1979. Noteworthy in this context is Goldenberg 1988, which describes several features of the homiletic language of the early Neo-Aramaic of Nerwa (Sabar 1984), which can be considered the closest we have to an earlier diachronic stage of Zakho. Another research domain (relevant to all levels of linguistic analysis) is the one dealing with influence exerted by neighboring languages, e.g., Kapeliuk 1996, 2002:315–318 and Pennacchietti 1988.

The syntactic discourse in the field of Neo-Aramaic has been greatly enhanced along the last decade; this is manifest primarily in G. Khan's publications: 2001 (indefiniteness), 2008a (definiteness), 2008b (monumental treatment of the Barwar dialect and indeed one of the richest syntactic descriptions in Semitic linguistics), 2009a (discourse structure), 2009b (genitive), 2010 (deontic modality). These publications often show a wide comparative perspective.

My own published work pertains to 1. information structure: 2008b (focus), 2008c (syntactic focus marking) and 2008d (copular clauses), and 2. the nominal group: 2010 (nucleus and attribute) and one which is forthcoming (the determination system). Work in progress investigates circumstantial clause combining. Three papers were written by students of mine: Gutman 2008 (bare preterites), Hever 2006 (discussing the difference between the two preterite formations) and Schwartzbart 2008 (the exposition unit of folktales).

0.2 METHOD

The linguistic method followed throughout this monograph is structural, which is merely a way to look at things rather than imposing an analysis on the data (see below for more detail). This description is more or less consistent with the ideas behind **non-aprioristic syntactic theory** (Frajzyngier 2010), or **framework-free grammatical theory** (Haspelmath 2010).

The method followed in this study is empirical, based on a defined corpus. The results of the analysis are system-oriented rather than feature-oriented. The description refers to **exponents**, that is, **formal features**, whether morphological, syntactic or macrosyntactic, which have a con-

sistent relationship to certain **values** or **functions**. The term ‘empirical’ means, in addition, that every statement formulated in this monograph is not impressionistic, but rather rests on synthesis of many details of data, that is, it is retraceable and hence it is refutable.

The system of interrelationships between linguistic signs is not directly accessible, and hence analysis starts with the **parole**, the concrete manifestation of language, the primary material at our disposal, represented by the text. The linguist’s task is to consider anything found in the text as long as it is linguistically **pertinent**, viz., deemed as having a function in the **langue** (the abstract language-system shared by a linguistic community). Such linguistic pertinence exists with regard to an entity as long as it is found in opposition with at least one other entity. Since the **parole** is not a system but only a local actualization thereof, an analysis should be performed using the **syntagmatic** and **paradigmatic** dimensions, in order to expose the system behind the parole. The **syntagmatic** dimension is the one present in the text – the linear, or sequential, relationships between the entities, phrased in terms of (in)compatibility, order, etc. The **paradigmatic** dimension is the relationship between all the entities that may figure in the same syntactic location *in absentia*, without changing the syntactic structure of the segment. This kind of relationship is categorial—all linguistic entities, of whatever order or size, which may be found in a given syntactic slot, belong in and constitute part of the same functional category, or the same **paradigm**.² Thus it is possible to determine and define at each stage of the analysis the exact interrelationships existing between different paradigms, as well as the relationships between the entities within a paradigm. Moreover, the **commutation** (interchangeability) test teaches us important details about the syntagmatic dimension of entities—for example, their boundaries, i.e., where entities begin or end. The **value** of entities is defined as the meaning, or function of the entity. This function is definable only in **opposition** to the other members of the paradigm and in comparison between paradigms. Note that each paradigm is by definition environment-sensitive; for instance, two externally identical forms may actually belong to different paradigms and have distinct functions.

These tools do not foretell the findings; they merely supply the linguist with a relatively objective way of approaching the material, observing it,

² To be sharply distinguished from the traditional sense of ‘paradigm,’ in morphological word-lists. See glossary, §0.7.

and uncovering the extant entities and the interrelationships found among them.

The description does not follow any design, other than that which is presented, or dictated, by the language itself. It strives to formulate JZ syntax, so as to provide its *mode d'emploi*. Much attention is paid to syntactic patterns, often termed constructions: a syntactic pattern is recognized whenever a syntactic structure consistently signals a function.

0.3 THE CORPUS

Unlike many modern treatments, based upon modern collection of materials from old native speakers, the language of the Zakho corpus at our disposal is in general the fruit of old-style fieldwork, often without recordings. For this reason it sometimes must be treated as a written language (for instance, because there is no more information about the informants who contributed the material, or when a long time has passed and there is no one to approach for further inquiries). This entire enterprise has sometimes earned the scorn of field linguists, as if the way the data was collected makes JZ less real or worthy of study. However, the depth of treatment, viz., analysis and description, does not entirely depend on the methodological purity of the way the material had been obtained, and depth may be attained even when data is not perfect. Incidentally, the material, coming from speakers who were much closer temporally to their natural speech conditions in the original habitat, is considerably less influenced by linguistic interference than the material which is collectible nowadays.

The corpus consists of the material published up to this point and of the Polotsky Zakho texts. When available, text sizes (assessed by the number of words) is given in parentheses:

Polotsky 1967:73–77 (text, no edition) and 104–111 (Glossary) and Zaken 1997 are parts of the entire Polotsky text material. They are not given any special reference.

Meehan and Alon 1979 is an excellent edition of a story with a detailed linguistic commentary (abbreviated MA) (2700 words)

Avinery 1988 is a monograph containing, *inter alia*³ 1. a few stories and story-like texts in modern Zakho Neo-Aramaic (abbreviated A+number. line); 2. most of the book is devoted to a translation of a selection from the two thousand sentences in Frei 1966. These translations have no context, yet they expose an often unfamiliar, colloquial side of this language (abbreviated AS+number). (3860+13000 words)

Sabar 1976b, *Lēl Hūza*, a text traditionally recounted on the Ninth of Ab, reflects somewhat older language (abbreviated LH). (1430 words)

Sabar 2002b is a reconsideration and a detailed edition of a text recorded in 1870 (Socin 1882:159–166), both texts have a detailed sociolinguistic as well as linguistic commentary (abbreviated SS). (1300 words)

Fassberg 2003 and 2004 are different, having been elicited not too long ago (2000 and 2003 respectively) from a woman who is not, strictly speaking, a native speaker of Zakho Neo-Aramaic, since she was born in Israel and learned the language from her grandparents with whom she had lived as a child. These texts belong to the genre termed “personal experience narrative”, which is considerably different from the more usual, folktale genre.

Two more extensive texts belong to this genre (acronym PEN), Sabar 2005 and Sabar 2007 (abbreviated SYG and SAG respectively). These texts have not been given separate consideration, although as a different genre they probably deserve their own description. (7000+5700 words)

The main corpus upon which this description is based consists of texts recorded in writing by H. J. Polotsky between the end of 1944 and mid-1947. Polotsky had prepared for this material collection; he systematically learned a great deal from his informants *before* he started writing down stories: the basic vocabulary, the basic grammatical forms, etc. By the time he started recording the stories, he was quite well versed in the language. There is an impressive indirect evidence for this: throughout the material, nine notebooks, there is an astonishingly small number of corrections or

³ It also contains translations of Biblical texts (Book of Jonah and the haftarah for the Ninth of Ab, Jeremiah 8:13–9:23); the hymn *‘eṭ ša‘āre rāšōn* and a glossary at the end of the book. These materials are not part of the corpus: the Bible translations are explained below, and hymns are analogous to other poetry types.

erasures. The material was collected from three informants about whom we know next to nothing, and it comprises 55,000 words, about 150 pages.

xlviiii

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ʔuwa xa gōra s̄iwāja uʔ ʔuwāle b̄axta
 uʔarbá jalúnkē dagigē. ʔáj mišpāhā
 r̄aba faq̄ir ūela. ʔau gōra s̄iwāja k̄udjōm
 ḡezilwā il q̄t̄aʔst s̄iwē ūḡeʔiʔuwāt̄u x̄a
 k̄arta ḡd̄ar̄eʔuwāt̄u l̄x̄aʔē ūḡezilwā gim-
 z̄ab̄inwāt̄u ḡō s̄ūgā ū(k)k̄ar̄ib̄wā ʔ̄bb̄u
 x̄ákma q̄ʔr̄ūs̄ē ūbid̄d̄an q̄ʔr̄ūs̄ē k̄es̄ē
 wā b̄as̄ l̄ax̄ma. ʔau l̄ax̄ma ḡn̄ābilwāt̄ē
 il b̄esā ūḡimp̄al̄éʔuwāt̄ē ta b̄ax̄t̄ē ūta
 jalúnkē d̄id̄ē ʔan̄ kp̄in̄ē. z̄illa s̄āta
 z̄illū tr̄é s̄inn̄ē ūʔūla d̄id̄ē l̄am̄x̄ōl̄ip̄-
 -l̄ē. z̄illē x̄aʔjōmā mūx̄ k̄üllū j̄ōm̄asā

an exemplary page from notebook 7

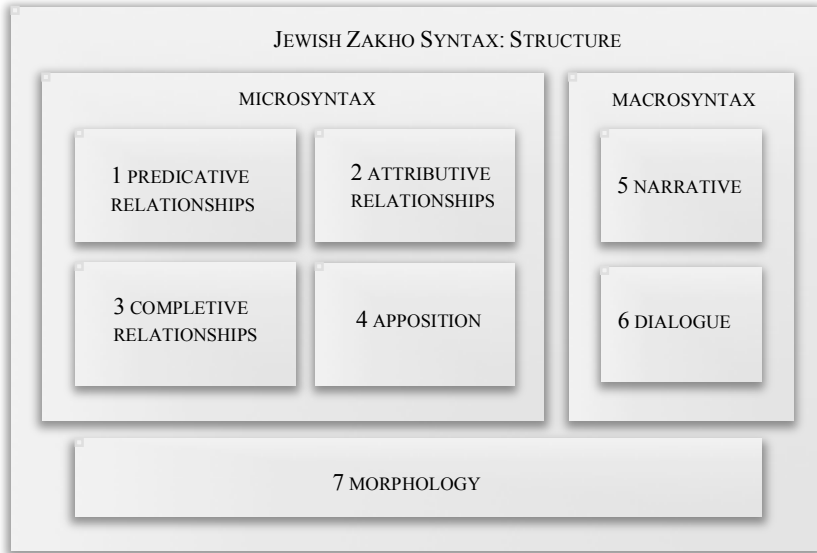
It has more than double the extant amount of text from other sources (to the exclusion of Avinery's sentences). Originally the text was put down in Polotsky's large handwriting and extends over almost 968 of these pages (abbreviated PT, but being the main source for this description, just the original page number is enough). The material consists exclusively of stories (folktales, novellas and a farce) and the informants seem to be very good storytellers. This material was examined and the result, combined with that of the other texts, is this monograph. These texts are planned to be published shortly after this syntactic description.

The Polotsky Zakho texts were related by three informants—Zion Levy, Simha Levy and Avraham Levy, I am not sure whether they were related, as there is very little available information about them. The last two were young people, around twenty years old. There are minor idiolectal differences between them, which are mentioned occasionally.

Other genres, such as epic poetry (e.g., Rivlin 1959) or Bible translations (Sabar 1983, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1994; Goldenberg and Zaken 1990) are not considered in this description. The poetry is evidently different syntactically from the rest of the material, whereas the translations are very literal (as is explained in Sabar 2000) and their syntax is heavily influenced by accommodation to the Hebrew source; therefore, these texts have little value for syntactic analysis.

0.4 STRUCTURE

The monograph consists of two parts—the first describes *microsyntax*, namely, the basic syntactic relationships at sentence-level: the predicative relationship, the attributive relationship and the completive relationship. A small chapter on apposition, not considered a relationship in itself, concludes this part. The second part is devoted to *macrosyntax*—relationships and syntactic entities beyond sentence-level. The chapters describe the narrative and the dialogue. The last chapter, which is really an appendix, succinctly outlines the morphology for anyone without a prior knowledge of Neo-Aramaic.



0.5 GENERAL PRACTICES

The transcription used is a compromise: it is not quite the original text itself, which is written in an extremely narrow transcription, nor is it a purely phonemic transcription. As a phonemic analysis has not been carried out, I use the prevalent transcription system for JZ, as used, e.g., by Yona Sabar. This means that many differences, kept in the original super-narrow transcription, are neutralized in this transcription. There is a certain inconsistency, since no unification took place; consequently, the way a unit is written could be different across the text, basically keeping the original (e.g., *ʾaw* vs. *aw*) to avoid an arbitrary decision. Additionally, in this transcription, the accent was kept whenever 1. it was originally placed in a different place than the usual penultima; 2. when it is not clear why it is there (e.g., on the determiners: is there a difference perhaps between *aw* vs. *áw*?).

The verbal forms in this description are generally not named after their putative most common function, for the simple reason that such habit may produce an occasional clash: for instance, the form *p-šāqil-wa* is usually found in counter-factual apodoses ‘he would have taken, il aurait pris’ (§6.2.2.3.4) in the dialogue. On the other hand, in narrative, it has two functions (§5.6.3): one is an intensitive circumstantial (‘intending to X’), where a finite verbal form interchanges with the gerund or the perfect participle. The second is where *p-šāqil-wa* occurs instead of *k-šāqil-wa* as an imperfective ‘he

was taking, il prenait'. The practice then is to use the form itself, *šqil-wā-le*, *k-šāqul*, *wēle bi-šqāla*, etc. This practice is adopted from Damourette and Pichon 1911–52, who use throughout their monumental book the various forms of *savoir* 'know' in its various 2CPL forms—for instance, *le sachiez* (= present subjunctive), *le sauriez* (= conditionnel), *le sîtes* (= passé simple), etc.

0.6 ABBREVIATIONS

TEXTS

A	=	Avinery 1988:48–75 (texts)
AS	=	Avinery 1988, 76–209 (sentences)
LH	=	Sabar 1976b
MA	=	Meehan and Alon 1979
PT	=	H. J. Polotsky, unpublished Zakho Texts, Jerusalem 1944–1947
PUG	=	H. J. Polotsky, unpublished notes on Zakho grammar
SAG	=	Sabar 2007
SYG	=	Sabar 2005
SS	=	Sabar 2002a

TERMS

COP	=	copula
DET	=	determiner
PRON	=	pronoun
QUANT	=	quantifier
R	=	rheme
SUBST	=	substantive
ADJ	=	adjective
ADV	=	adverb
IDO	=	indirect object
DO	=	direct object

INFORMANTS

A	=	Avraham Levy
S	=	Simha Levy
Z	=	Zion Levy

MS	=	masculine singular
FS	=	feminine singular
CS	=	common singular
CP	=	common plural
NUC	=	nucleus
ATTR	=	attribute
1	=	1 st person
2	=	2 nd person
3	=	3 rd person

0.7 A SHORT GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following table provides a short definition of the most important terms used throughout the book:

term	explanation	example																								
ALLOTAGM	A syntactic conditioned variant: a different actualization of a syntactic entity in changing environments.	the syntagm <i>x-īle</i> (predicate + COP) is realized as <i>īle-x</i> (COP + predicate) only in subordination.																								
ATTRIBUTE	An expansion of a nucleus (which may be nominal or adverbial), which may consist of a (pro)noun, an adverbial or even a clause.	<i>xabra</i> ‘word’: <i>xabr-ox</i> ‘your word’; <i>xabir xōr-e</i> ‘word(s) of his friend’; <i>xabir mxēla</i> ‘word(s) she said’.																								
COPULA	An exponent specialized to signal the <i>nexus</i> (or predicative link) between non-verbal entities. The ancient non-verbal clause is obsolete.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>theme</th> <th>rheme</th> <th>copula</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>’āhet</i> you</td> <td><i>brōni</i> my-son</td> <td><i>wētēn</i> are_{2MS}</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> (‘It is I’ =) <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th><i>’āna</i> I</th> <th><i>wn</i> am</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>’ēma</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘which man’</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>čū</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘no man’</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>flāna</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘a certain man’</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>’aw</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘the man’</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	theme	rheme	copula	<i>’āhet</i> you	<i>brōni</i> my-son	<i>wētēn</i> are _{2MS}	(‘It is I’ =) <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th><i>’āna</i> I</th> <th><i>wn</i> am</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>’ēma</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘which man’</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>čū</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘no man’</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>flāna</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘a certain man’</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>’aw</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘the man’</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			<i>’āna</i> I	<i>wn</i> am	<i>’ēma</i>	<i>nāša</i>	‘which man’	<i>čū</i>	<i>nāša</i>	‘no man’	<i>flāna</i>	<i>nāša</i>	‘a certain man’	<i>’aw</i>	<i>nāša</i>	‘the man’	
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DETERMINER	A grammatical exponent marking the obligatory actualization framework of the noun; may express degrees of definiteness, specificity, etc.	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>’ēma</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘which man’</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>čū</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘no man’</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>flāna</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘a certain man’</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>’aw</i></td> <td><i>nāša</i></td> <td>‘the man’</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>’ēma</i>	<i>nāša</i>	‘which man’	<i>čū</i>	<i>nāša</i>	‘no man’	<i>flāna</i>	<i>nāša</i>	‘a certain man’	<i>’aw</i>	<i>nāša</i>	‘the man’												
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<i>’aw</i>	<i>nāša</i>	‘the man’																								
EXPONENT	A concrete, consistent signal for some grammatical function.	daw <i>nāša</i> (the exponent to mark the nominal attribute)																								
FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE (FSP)	The domain accounting for the informational status of linguistic units, for instance, whether they are new, presupposed, contrasted, etc.	<i>āna bīdamxen ū’āhut nōr</i> ‘I will sleep whereas you guard’ (contrastive topic); <i>ppēšan ’āna baxtox</i> ‘Let me be your wife’ (focus).																								
FOCUS	An entity marked for a special informational prominence. It is marked this way for reasons of contrast, exclusivity, restriction, etc.	<i>mqābil minne šī</i> ‘just before him; <i>xa minnu šī la gēwɪzwa</i> ‘even one of them he would not do’; <i>qmla ’āpāya bxēla ’immu</i> ‘so she too wept with them’.																								

NEXUS	The <i>relationship</i> between the main components of the clause, theme and rheme (which is also termed predicative link). The term <i>nexus</i> stands, in addition, for the entire combination of theme and rheme.	rheme	nexus	theme
		<i>p-šaqł</i> FUT-take	—	<i>in</i> 1MS
		{I _ will take}		
			theme nex.	rheme
		<i>kxāzē le</i> they-see him	—	<i>bizāla</i> going
		They see {him _ going}		
NUCLEUS	The ‘grammatical center’ of a construction, which determines the syntactic status of the entire construction.	<i>baxtut mutla</i> ‘(the) wife (who) died’; <i>baxtut tre</i> ‘(the) second wife’; <i>ay_{FS} d tre</i> ‘the second (lit. the-that-of-two)’.		
PARADIGM	A group of forms which may interchange with one another at a given slot. The members of such group generally have a function in common.	<i>šqł-le</i> he took	<i>xa</i> (indef.) <i>aw</i> (def.) a/the	<i>nāša</i> man (the object DET paradigm)
PATTERN	A complex form, often realized by an abstraction often consisting of several variants, which has a consistent function.	# <i>šāqł-wa—p-šāqł-wa</i> # (SUBJ + <i>-wa</i> —FUT + <i>-wa</i>) = counter-factual conditional (#had he ...ed, he would have ...ed#).		
PLUSQUAM-PERFECTUM	Past perfect, perfect in the past.	<i>šqıla wēle</i> ‘he had taken’.		
PLUSQUAM-PRÆTERITUM	Past of past, without the notions of perfect.	<i>šqł-wā-le, qam šāqł-wā-le</i> ‘he took (a long time ago)’.		
RHEME	The entity holding the new information in a clausal setting; the rheme is often found inside the verbal form. Otherwise it is marked by the copula or by other exponents. For instance, the (minimal) answer is always the rheme.	1. <i>bēša dīdī-le</i> ‘the house is mine’. 2. <i>mani mīrrēlox ‘azmitti? murre ’ō gōra: baxti mīrrāli ‘azminnox</i> ‘Who told you to invite me? My wife told me to invite you’.		
SUBJUNCTIVE	A form with two main functions: mark subordination and modality.	<i>xá yā’e</i> ‘someone (who) knows’; (<i>šud</i>) <i>yā’e</i> ‘let him know’.		
SYNTAGM	Any combination of two or more entities, an ordered sequence of entities.	<i>aw nāša</i> ‘the man’; <i>xīzyāle baxta</i> ‘he saw the woman’.		

THEME	The presupposed entity, about which new information is predicated within clause level.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="751 189 843 234"></th> <th data-bbox="843 189 947 234">theme</th> <th data-bbox="947 189 1063 234">rheme</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="751 234 843 269"><i>ṭalb-ın</i></td> <td data-bbox="843 234 947 269">(that) I</td> <td data-bbox="947 234 1063 269">ask</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="751 269 843 295"><i>ṭıb-li</i></td> <td data-bbox="843 269 947 295">I</td> <td data-bbox="947 269 1063 295">asked</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		theme	rheme	<i>ṭalb-ın</i>	(that) I	ask	<i>ṭıb-li</i>	I	asked
	theme	rheme									
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TOPIC	Above clause-level, the topic is the thematic entity, the entity about which one predicates new information (termed ‘comment’). It often serves as a discourse anchor, containing presupposed or backgrounded information, whose function is to maintain cohesion between parts of the text.	<i>ıswa xa gōra ... aw gōra...</i> ‘There was a man... the man... ’; <i>ū’āhet mayla qaḥra didox?</i> ‘ As for you , what is your grief?’									

PART I: MICROSNTAX:

INTRACLASUAL SYNTACTIC RELATIONSHIPS

The number of basic syntactic relationships is a debated issue. Nevertheless, it seems that three basic syntactic relationships are tenable for JZ, which correspond, by and large, to the same relationships in the ancient Semitic languages, where they are symbolized by the three-case system. This scheme is presented in Becker (1841 §60) and discussed, with reference to the Semitic languages, by Goldenberg (1987 = 1998:138–47), where the general linguistic literature treating these relationships is presented. It seems that, despite the lack of case marking, the syntactic behavior of JZ is similar, in several respects, to the ancient Semitic case languages, such as Arabic and Akkadian.

These basic relationships are 1. the **predicative** relationship (= nexus), which obtains between any theme and rheme (for which see §1 below); 2. the **attributive** relationship, which is realized syntactically by any genitive construction; and 3. the **completive** relationship, found between the nexus and the object or adverb. The following table summarizes the basic information regarding these relationships:

syntactic relationship	morphological realization	syntactic realization
predicative	verbal forms	copulas and their rheme
attributive	adjectives	construct state and its attribute
completive	pronominal object suffixes	independent object or an adverb

Each line in the table represents a relationship. The idea of these basic relationships is the classificatory principle used throughout the description of the JZ microsyntactic system. Consequently, each relationship has a chapter in the first part of this syntactic description. It must be stressed that **apposition** is not in itself a relationship, but rather a repetition of a syntagm, and

occasionally, of the relationship itself, in the same syntactic conditions (Becker 1841 §60). Apposition has an entire chapter as well.

These relationships, taken together, constitute microsyntax, and this entire domain will be described with reference to them.

1 THE PREDICATIVE RELATIONSHIP

Theme and **rheme** are the basic functions of a clause: the theme is the given, or known entity in the clause, whereas the rheme is the new piece of information that is predicated on the theme. Note that these terms, which concern information structure, have little to do with morphological marking and can be encoded in various morphological, syntactic, and other ways. The relationship obtaining between the theme and the rheme is the **predicative link**, or the **nexus**. In JZ an independent nexus, or a clause, is a syntagm that has to have an exponent of the nexus. The most common exponents of nexus are the verbal forms and the copulas. Besides them, one encounters various types of dependent nexus (such as object nexus and adjunct nexus)

1.1 VERBAL FORMS

The morphological constitution of verbal forms is displayed in chapter 7. Their internal syntactic constitution is discussed in this section, whereas the individual values of these forms is discussed under macrosyntax (chapters 5 and 6).

Verbal forms are described in Goldenberg 1985 as a basically “built-in clause”. It is shown *ibid.* to be made up of 1. a subject index; 2. a verbal lexeme; and 3. the nexus between them. The subject index is generally the theme, the verbal lexeme is the rheme. The individual values of each verbal form are determined by form in the wide sense, that is, by the combination of morphological class and syntactic environment. The following table shows this analysis on all extant verbal bases:

form	rheme	theme	example	gloss	persons
1. imperative	šqōl-	∅ (2CS)	ṭlōb	ask	2 nd (SG. & PL.)
		-un (2CP)	ṭlōbun	ask _{PL}	
2. subjunctive	šaqł-	-in (1MS)	ṭalbin	(that) I ask	all
		-it (2MS)	ṭalbit	(that) you ask	
		-a (3FS)	ṭalba	(that) she ask	
3. active preterite	šqil-	-li (1MS)	ṭibli	I asked	all
		-lox (2MS)	ṭiblox	you _{MSG} asked	
		-la (3FS)	ṭibla	she asked	
4. passive preterite	šqil-	∅/-in (3MS)	qṭiln	he was killed	3 rd
		-a (3FS)	qṭila	she was killed	
		-i (3CS)	qṭili	they were killed	
5. pres. perfect (as well as passive state)	šqil-	(copula) nexus - theme			all
		w—in (1MS)	wn qṭila	I have killed	
		w—at (2FS)	wat qṭilta	you have killed	
		w—ax (1CP)	wax qṭile	we have killed	

The analysis into the base, representing the verbal lexeme (which is the rheme), and the subject index affix (which represents the theme) is rather simple. Note that with the perfect tense, the copula, which represents the nexus, is an explicit exponent of the nexus. It is important to note, however, that the subject indices for each base **are different** (for instance, 1SG may be *-in* or *-li*). The presentation of the system, mainly because of the special diachronic origins of the NA preterite, was discussed by Polotsky, as well as by others after him—Goldenberg (1992), Hopkins (1989) and Khan (passim).

Polotsky examines the following representative pair from the Urmi literary dialect:

<i>nšiq</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>nə</i>	‘she kissed me’
<i>nəšiq</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>nə</i>	‘that I kiss her’

He arrives at the conclusion that

“since the two sets of pronominal morphemes are the same and occur in the same order, their inherent meaning and their syntactic relation to the participial base **must be the same in both tenses** ... the contrast between the two participial bases must concern their respective ‘voice’: *pti(j)x-* **must be passive**. In *nšiq-in-nə* we have a passive base,

a nominative undergoer (-*in*), and a dative actor (-*lə*)..." (Polotsky 1996:16, the emphasis is mine).

Polotsky does not say that the form *nšijq-in-nə* is passive; he merely refers to the base *nšijq-*. The same could be said about the perfect or passive participle in Romance languages—*je les ai sorties* implies that the participle is passive, since it agrees with the object, but the verbal expression does not signal any passivity but rather **past tense**.

A different view may lead to a different presentation. We may compare similar forms to those that Polotsky compares, since in JZ the inventory is not identical to Urmi's. We could compare the following forms:

subjunctive *našq-ī-lax* 'let them kiss you_{FS}'

preterite *nšiq-ī-lax* 'you_{FS} kissed them'

From a synchronic point of view, these forms seem to be analogous to the ones compared by Polotsky. However, when taking all of the information into consideration, the results obtained are somewhat different.

The following table shows the syntagmatic (that is, linear) conditions and paradigmatic constitution (i.e., the forms which figure *in posse* in each slot).

base	verbal prefix	base forms	1 st set prons.			2 nd set prons.	
			3 pers.	2 pers.	1 pers.	sg.	pl.
subj.	<i>qam-</i> , - \emptyset	<i>šāqil(-)(C)</i>	- \emptyset	- <i>it</i>	- <i>in</i>	- <i>li</i>	- <i>lan</i>
	<i>k-~g-</i> <i>p-~b-</i>	<i>šaql- (V)</i>	- <i>a~-ā-</i>	- <i>at</i> - <i>étun</i>	- <i>an</i> - <i>ax(ni)</i>	- <i>lox</i> - <i>lax</i>	- <i>loxun</i> - <i>lóxun</i>
pret.	none	<i>šqil- (C)</i>	- <i>i~-ī-</i>	none	none	- <i>le</i>	- <i>lu</i>
		<i>šqil- (V)</i>				- <i>la</i>	

1. The syntagmatic conditions are not the same for both bases—that is, the verbal prefix slot occurs only with the subjunctive base; hence, according to the linguistic principles used here, the paradigms are different (even though they may look the same).

2. The paradigms of the first set pronouns are also explicitly different: the preterite base occurs only with 3rd pers. forms, while the subjunctive base occurs with all persons of this set. Such difference in paradigmatic constitution is enough to account for a difference in function.

3. The occurrence of both pronominal sets is different for each base: with the subjunctive base the first set is *always* present; with the preterite base it

is often absent (e.g., when the object is indefinite). On the other hand, the second set (*l-* pronouns) is facultative with the subjunctive base,¹ whereas it is obligatory with the preterite base.

What is obligatory is here viewed as subject index, representing the external theme. Another form is the relatively rare passive preterite (see e.g., Polotsky 1996:17–18):

base	verbal prefix	base forms	1 st set prons.			2 nd set prons.	
			3 rd	2 nd	1 st	sg.	pl.
pret. (passive)	none	<i>šqīl-</i>	- \emptyset ~ - <i>in</i> - <i>a</i> - <i>i</i>	none	none	none	none

In this case, the 1st set (only 3rd pers.) is obligatory, functioning as subject index. This form has different syntagmatics, and there is no need to view it as a preterite without the 2nd set, but rather as a distinct form. This form incidentally strengthens the case made by Polotsky—it occurs without an expression of the agent and we tend to view it as either passive or as impersonal, which corroborates Polotsky's concept of the passive base.

1.2 THEMATIC NOMINAL GROUPS

Nominal groups occur in many syntactic functions, the theme being merely one of them. Nevertheless, the nominal group will be described here in full, and below, in the context of other functions, only the relevant facts peculiar to that syntactic function are described.

1.2.1 Nouns and determination

The nominal group includes any entities co-occurring with the substantive, that is, determiners, quantifiers (henceforth DET and QUANT respectively) or entities which occur instead of it, representing it pronominally, that is, pronouns (PRON) as well as other entities which exhibit pronominal behavior (as quantifiers often do), and finally, substantival clauses. In addition, the adjective (for which see §4.1) is also a part of this group. The basic structure of

¹ Except in the formation *qam-šāqīl-le*, where it is obligatory as object.

the nominal group is DET + (QUANT +)SUBST, each representing an entire paradigm, a substitution group.

The DET group² occurs obligatorily with members of the nominal groups — SUBST, pronominals and ADJ (but not with real pronouns):

DETERMINERS			determiner type
M	F	PL	
∅			± def., generic
<i>flāna</i> ‘a certain’			non-specific
’ <i>ēma</i> ‘which’			dir. and indir. interrogative
č <u>u</u> ‘no’			negative
<i>aw</i>	<i>ay</i>	<i>an</i>	definite
<i>ō(ha)</i>	<i>ē(ha)</i>	<i>anya</i>	
’ <i>wā(ha)</i>	’ <i>yā(ha)</i>	—	distal
<i>xa</i> ‘a’			indef.
<i>xakma</i> ‘some’			indef.
<i>xapča</i> ‘some’			partitive

What makes this group a paradigm is that one of them always heads a noun group. It is a syntactic function rather than a semantic one; semantically these determiners have a variety of functions—they may be non-specific (*flāna* ‘a certain’), negative (*ču* ‘no’), demonstrative (’*wāha*), etc. What they have in common is that they all identify the noun phrase as such even if this is not transparent:

- (1) ’*an ksēmi munnan* ‘th(os)e (who) hate us’ SAG 3.17

In ex. (1), the construction consist of a definite determiner (no definite pronoun ever occurs in this function with a verbal form) and an asyndetic adjective clause consisting of a finite verbal form (*ksēmi munnan* ‘they hate us’). What tells us that this verbal form functions as noun is the nominal envelope provided by the determiners, in this case *an* (plural definite DET). The functional importance of the determiner is further illustrated by a comparison with the following example:

- (2) *anya žgillu* ‘These were busy’ 808

² For a wider linguistic context see Cohen forthcoming.

anya ‘these’ is often thought to be of the same group. It does occasionally occur with nouns; however, when it precedes a verbal form, it is clearly an independent pronoun, ‘these’, which functions as the theme. In fact, all the entities in the table function as determiners; but the ones shaded grey can only be determiners, they do not occur alone, e.g., cannot represent the theme. They do, however, mark the category of the entire phrase, which makes them the nucleus of the noun phrase.

The **thematic** noun phrase, the *given information*, is generally both familiar *and* specific. Not at first, however, when an entity is being presented for the first time:

(3) *iswa xa gōra ... aw gōra...* ‘There was a man... **the** man...’ 663

(4) *sēle xa gōra kislōhun ... u’ōha gōra pišle kislū* ‘A man came to them ... and **the/this** man stayed with them...’ 224

In both examples *xa gōra* is the first, introductory occurrence; the second time it is marked with a DET (*aw* and *’ōha*), where *gōra* is henceforth both referential and retrievable. Thereafter, there is a fluctuation in tracking function between the definite and \emptyset determiner:

(5) *sēle aw gōra il bēsa* ‘**The** man came home’ 240

(6) *sēle \emptyset gōra ’il bēsa* ‘**The** man came home’ 210

\emptyset determiner, then, shows here **definiteness**. Note that in some slots it may signal indefiniteness (e.g., with plural nouns). It is important to note that the indefinite noun in ex. (4) is not the theme of the clause; in fact, the entire clause consists of new information. Such expressions are termed **thetic expressions** (see §1.5 below). That is why exx. (3) and (4) are comparable, since both introduce new referents.

The negative determiner plays a similar function, but does not introduce a new referent:

(7) *ču nāša mun mujlis lá fhumle mā qışta wēla* ‘**No** man from the council understood what the story was (about)’ 476

(8) *la sēle axxa ču gōra* ‘**No** man came here’ 263

The subtler functional difference between the various definite determiners needs further examination. Several issues are known: First, \emptyset determiner is a pure determiner: its function is only anaphoric, without any demonstrative force, whereas the other definite determiners occasionally do have this force:

(9) \emptyset *baxta libba* ⁺*rāba pišle rižya mun* ^ʼ*isāya dīda ldé dūka* ‘The woman was very satisfied that she came to that place’ 862

(10) *sēle* \emptyset ^ʼ*arya uqrūle* ‘The lion came and approached’ 665

The cases in exx. (6) and (10), where \emptyset occurs with a definite substantive, are rather common. \emptyset occurs with indefinite substantives but rarely:

(11) \emptyset *baxta mōnixla bbaxta* ‘A woman looked at (another) woman’ 823

This is a peculiar case. We know who the women are, and this expression is analogous to a reciprocal expression. The following example is arguable, as the lion could be definite:

(12) *xá bēná šmeʼle mu rahūqa xa hirímhurímta did* ^ʼ*arya ūbasır xakma daqıqe muxwēle* \emptyset ^ʼ*arya mun rahūqa* ‘Suddenly he heard from a distance a lion’s roar, and after a few minutes **a/the lion** appeared from afar’ 664

In addition, **generic nouns** are marked by this \emptyset determiner:

(13) \emptyset ^ʼ*arya lág dāmıx lá-hōya riš xızēna* ‘**A lion** (any lion) does not lie down, unless it is on top of a treasure’ 918

(14) \emptyset *baxtı*³ *mpıqla mum bés gōra ūpišla gō kōlāne ... lág daʼra lbēsa bčú-mújib* ‘**A woman** (= any woman, all women) (who) left her husband’s house and remained in the streets ... will not return home under any circumstances’ 848

(15) \emptyset *baxta kmád hāye gōra sqıla ū xazyı xa xét ápāwa gıbāle* ‘**A woman**, however beautiful her husband may be, if she sees another one, she wants him too’ 807

(16) *bale yāʼıt lā kxāšex* \emptyset *nāša manēlu pāre dıde* ‘but you should know it is not proper for **a man** to count his money’ 7

A further characteristic of the definite DETs is that they occur quite readily with substantives in the construct state:

³ In fact, in the remainder of this maxim, the woman occurs with a definite DET: ...*uʼáy baxta haqqa qılla-le* ‘and that woman (= meaning, the generic one we introduced before, *such* woman), deserves death’.

- (17) *bīd dāw kōlānūt lē'al wēle qašrūt wazīrūt ḥakōma. bax wazīra skīnta wēla go 'ōliya 'ilēsa. é bax wazīra baxta +rāba spahin wēla* 'On that street was the castle of the king's vizier. The vizier's wife lived in the upper floor. **The vizier's wife** was a very beautiful woman' 481

The definite DET may co-occur with a substantive followed by the genitive suffix:

- (18) *éha brāti wa'da dida-ile ta gwāra* 'This daughter of mine, it is time for her to marry' 172
- (19) *mjōwible 'aw brōne rūwa ūmurre* 'This older son of his answered saying' 646

The indefinite DETS occur but rarely with construct state:

- (20) *xá mbīnnōke sēle xá tērt maḥkōye ūmurre* 'One morning there came **some speaking bird** and said' 278

However, a substantive with genitive suffixes is considered definite. This creates no problems with the the definite DET, but the indefinite DET with it would need an explanation:

- (21) *xá yōmá basir yalunke dide rwēlu qmle xá brōne ūmurre ta bābe* 'One day, after his children grew up, **one of his sons** stood up and said to his father' 632

This *xá* is not an indefinite DET, but something else. Another problem associated with this case is that occasionally it is difficult for us to decide which *xa* it is, the indefinite DET or the number. Examining related cases seems to explain the problem:

(22)	∅	—	<i>malaxīne</i>	'angels'	305
(23)	∅	<i>tré</i>	<i>malaxīne</i>	'two angels'	362
(24)	<i>an</i>	<i>tré</i>	<i>malaxīne</i>	'the two angels'	366
(25)	<i>an</i>	—	<i>malaxīne</i>	'the angels'	364

These examples put together prove that there are in fact *two* slots preceding the substantive itself, as is explicit in ex. (24). The same happens below, especially ex. (29):⁴

(26)	∅	—	<i>askar</i>	‘(± def) soldier(s)’	759
(27)	∅	<i>tre</i>	<i>askar</i>	‘(± def) two soldiers’	113
(28)	∅	<i>işra</i>	<i>askar</i>	‘(± def) ten soldiers’	134
(29)	<i>xa</i>	<i>işra</i>	<i>askar</i>	‘some ten soldiers’	133 (obj!)
(30)	<i>ʾan</i>	<i>ʾişra</i>	<i>nāše</i>	‘the ten people’	134
(31)	<i>anya</i>	<i>ʾişra</i>	<i>gūre</i>	‘the ten men’	131

In these examples we have no trouble determining which is the determiner and which is the quantifier. Exx. (24) and (29)–(31) exhibit both DET and QUANT groups. In fact, so do exx. (23), (27) and (28) except here the DET is ∅. That is what we have in ex. (21)—The DET is ∅ and the QUANT is *xa*.

Except cardinal numbers, other members of the QUANT group are the collective numerals *kutr-* + gen. pron. (‘both of them’) as well as *kúṭlāhūn* (‘all three of them’), *kud ʾarbu* (‘all four of them’ 864), *kud šōʾu* (‘all seven’ 521). *kull-* ‘all of’, although semantically very close, works differently and is placed **outside** the substantive group—the syntagm *kullu ʾan gūre* ‘all these men’ (952) proves that *kullu*, being compatible with a determiner, cannot be one. *kma* ‘few’ (row 8a below) mostly does not occur independently of *xa* and as an indefinite, and hence *xakma* is shared between both DET and QUANT groups.

The next table represents various combinations of the entire substantival group:

Syntagmatic behavior of the three paradigms					
	DET	QUANT	SUBST	source	Eng. parallel
1	<i>xa</i>	<i>xa</i>	<i>yarxa</i>	203	‘about one month’
2	<i>xa</i>	—	<i>baxta</i>	779	‘a woman’
3	∅	<i>xa</i>	<i>baxta</i>	829	‘one woman’
4	∅	—	<i>baxta</i>	862	‘a/the woman’
5	<i>ču</i>	—	<i>baxta</i>	695	‘no woman’
6	∅	<i>tre</i>	<i>baxtāsa</i>	772	‘two women’

⁴ Note that this syntagm is not thematic but rather objective; however, the principle works everywhere.

7	<i>xa</i>	<i>isri</i>	<i>ʾōde</i>	194	‘about twenty rooms’
8		<i>xakma</i>	<i>nāše</i>	345	‘several/some men’
8a	∅	<i>kma</i>	<i>sa‘e</i>	87	‘few hours’ (rare)
9	<i>an</i>	<i>tre</i>	<i>baxtāsa</i>	772	‘the(se) two women’
10	<i>an</i>	<i>kutru</i>	<i>baxtāsa</i>	832	‘both (of the) women’
11	∅	<i>kutru</i>	<i>baxtāsa</i>	836	‘both women’
12	<i>ay</i>	—	<i>baxta</i>	549	‘the/this woman’
13	<i>an</i>	—	<i>baxtāsa</i>	A 6-7	‘the(se) women’
14	∅	—	<i>baxtāsa</i>	540	‘(the/some) women’

The table illustrates many possible combinations, thereby explaining how *xa* could signify, with a substantive, both indefinite DET or the QUANT ‘one’.

Of the quantifiers, the cardinal numbers may occur in partial pronominal function, representing the substantive itself (brought for comparison in line 1), while still occurring with a DET (rows 2 and 3):

Pronominal behavior of the quantifiers					
	DET	PRONOMINAL		Eng. Parallel	source
		QUANT			
1	<i>anya</i>	<i>ṭlāha</i>	<i>šo‘āle</i>	‘the(se) three things’	697
2	<i>anya</i>		<i>ṭlāha</i>	‘the(se) three’	879
3	∅		<i>ṭlāha</i>	‘(some) three’	926
4	<i>ay xa</i>			‘this(f) one/thing’	774
5	<i>xa kma</i>			‘some’	214
6	<i>ču xa</i>			‘no one’	passim
7	∅ <i>mundi</i>			(some)thing, anything	469
8	<i>xa mundi</i>			something	746, 750
9	<i>ču mundi</i>			nothing	360, 493
10	<i>ō, aw mundi</i>			the thing	307, 380

The pronominal complexes *ayxa* (or *ēxa*; masc. *awxa*),⁵ *xakma* and *čuxa* (lines 4, 5 and 6 respectively) are in fact independent pronouns, but analyzing their structure reveals that structurally they are some kind of amalgams

⁵ In other dialects this pronoun is used for anaphora in memory; see Khan 2008b:485–487.

of DET and PRON (or QUANT). The pronominal *mundi* occurs with any singular DET.

1.2.2 Pronouns

True pronouns are considered only those entities which can represent the entire substantive group; the fact that some of these pronouns look like some DETS or QUANTS is of course not accidental, they are related diachronically. Synchronically, however, the DET *xa*, the QUANT *xa* and the pronoun *xa* are distinct entities syntactically, at times this is clear semantically as well. The following table lists the most common pronouns:

Pronouns				
	PRONOUNS	Value	Eng. parallel	Source
1	<i>xa</i>	indefinite	‘(some/any)one’	285
2	<i>kutxa</i>	distributive	‘each one’	passim
3	<i>kutru</i>	collective	‘both of them’	passim
4	<i>kútlāhun</i>	collective	‘(the) three of them’	474
5	<i>kull-</i> + gen. pron.	collective	‘all of + PRON’	passim
6	<i>ō(ha), ē(ha) anya</i>	demonstrative	‘this/that, these/those’	687, 808
7	<i>ʷā(ha), ʷā(ha)</i>	distal	‘that yonder’	799, SYG 2.79
8	<i>āwa, āya, āni</i> ⁶	personal	‘he, she, they’ ⁷	passim
9	<i>ayxa</i>	?	‘this (F) one/thing’	774
10	<i>xakma</i>	plural indefinite	‘some’	214
11	<i>čū(x)xa</i>	negative	‘no one’	passim

A short survey of the pronoun *xa* can illustrate the differences from *xa* in the other groups:

(32) *xáʷ brāʷiš ʷillan* ‘Someone will detect us’ 656

⁶ The two sets of pronouns (rows 6 and 8) are in variation when functioning as theme. The differences between them are more prominent in other functions, e.g., when standing for the object, when rhematic, when focal and when topical. See below.

⁷ The 1st and 2nd personal pronouns are perfectly capable of functioning as theme, however, they are different in that they do not represent a substantive, but rather a ‘discourse role’, namely, the speaker and the addressee respectively.

- (33) *xá lak táfiq 'ibbe* 'No **one** will meet him' (lit. 'one won't meet him') 929

xa takes the place of the entire substantive group, when occurring with a negative clause, it is analogous to the pronoun *čuxa* 'no one'. *xa* occurs as theme in reciprocal constructions in which the verb occurs in the singular:⁸

- (34) *xā mirre ta daw xēt* 'One said to the other' 52

Another example is of *gyān-*, a usually reflexive pronoun, when used thematically:

- (35) *mattaw lē'al gyāni didox-ila ūmtuslamta wāna řālox* 'From now on **my very self** is yours, and I am given to you' 815

1.2.3 Clauses and infinitives

Other entities that may occur in the thematic group are substantive clauses and infinitives. Both are by no means common in this function. The position of substantive clauses is restricted, occurring only after the rhematic entity, and only with special expressions:

- (36) *bāš ila ksibli ō qadda pāre* 'It is good (that) **I earned so much money**' 335
- (37) *éha lēwa brisa ūlá gbarya unnu āna řakōma wēna ūhatxa bāre go gusa didi ay kuma řunne* 'It is absolutely impossible **that I am a king and such a thing would happen in my garden for several years**' 185
- (38) *ūkulla minnox brēla did qam qařlunnu an raqit māya 'an papūkin* 'and everything happened because of you, **that I killed the poor frogs**' 248–249
- (39) *éha lá kısıya (i)lqbāla did jwanqa mun řēr bāřer ā se ūpā yeř řakōma dēni* 'This will not be accepted, **that a youngster from another city would come and become our king**' 153

The substantive clauses occur asyndetically (ex. (36)), or with *unnu* (ex. (37)) and *did* (ex. (38)–(39)). Infinitives in thematic function are very rare:

⁸ It is not certain whether *xa* in cases with verbs in the plural should be regarded as thematic: *u'āwa u'axōne ymēwālu xā ta daw xet* 'And he and his brother had sworn one to the other' (276).

- (40) *biš xlēla ʿilli ʿwāza xōrūsax min ʿwāz xōrūs bnās mire ūpāšāye*
 ‘**Befriending** you pleases me more than befriending emirs’ and
 pashas’ daughters’ 896

Note that the thematic infinitive takes an object (*xōrūsax*).

- (41) *uʿō ʿi sāyox lá kīʿe ʿ ibbe čuxxa* ‘And your being here (lit.
coming), nobody knows about it...’ 798
- (42) *ūmaḥkōye dōhun la fhmli minne čū xabra* ‘and (as for) **their**
speech, I did not understand a word of it’ 422

The last example shows us that substantive clauses are not exactly like infinitives; the former does not take a DET, whereas the latter can. This is not self-evident, since adjective clauses generally occur with DETs.

1.2.4 Adjectives and adjective clauses

Adjectives (simple or complex) are different from substantives in that they are complex entities that contain, in addition to the quality they signal, some kind of pronominal representation of the substantive they describe (for an in-detail description, see below, §4.1).

Both morphological and syntactic adjectives mostly occur in JZ following a substantive. Their less common function, as an independent theme *without* a preceding substantive, is the main point here. Note that the adjective, whether morphological or syntactic, generally occurs with a DET. Unlike a substantive, however, it never occurs with DET \emptyset :

- (43) *ha ʿatta wal ʿurre xá nuxrāya* ‘Just now **a stranger** has passed
 by’ 811

This really is athetic expression, where the free adjective is not really the theme, being indefinite. The next example has the full package:

- (44) *iswa trē axawāsa xā ʿāqil uxá šizāna. aw ʿāqil gwīra wēle uʿaw*
šizāna lá wēle gwīra ‘There were two brothers, one wise and one
 an idiot. The wise one was married and the idiot was not
 married’ 241

Note that the brothers are introduced together with their most prominent characteristic. This done, the text can now refer to them by these qualities, ‘the wise one’ and ‘the idiot (one)’. These free adjectives both represent each of the brothers and function as themes in their respective clauses. The following case is the usual way in JZ to express the notion of ‘the third one’:

- (45) *áw d̥t̥lāha pišle biṭrāya basru* ‘The **third one** was riding behind them’ 887

It is clear that all adjectival syntagms in the examples represent a substantival entity. The same occurs when the adjective is a clause, syndetic or asyndetic:

- (46) *balki tafqi ṛbba ṛán d(ɪ)k̥t̥āʿe ṛilla* ‘Perhaps **those who look for** her may find her’ 885

(47)	<i>ūmuttīla trē kāšīye xazir ḥakumta.</i>	‘and she put <u>two cups</u> near the queen.
a	<i>áy d̥āla yamme m̥šūra wēle ṛilla warda ūṭarpe d̥ide,</i>	On the one on the right were painted a rose and its leaves
b	<i>uʿáy ttréʿ laswa ṛilla čú šurta</i>	and on the second one there was no picture
c	<i>ʿáy qamēsa d̥ʿiswa ṛilla šurtit warda qam yāwāla ḥakumta ta jwanqa</i>	the first one, on which there was the painting of the rose, the queen gave to the youngster
d	<i>uʿay-xét d̥wiqāla biza ūštēlu mizgas</i>	the other one she held in her hand, and they drank together’ 813–814

Exx. (45)–(47) all contain adjectival syntagms, each preceded by a determiner, which shows the referent’s gender and number.

The free adjective is a nominal, and hence capable of functioning as theme. As far as its external syntax is concerned, it is not different from the substantive in this case and in object function as well. Its internal syntax is treated under §2.3.2 (for the syntactic adjective) and §4.1.1 (simple adjective).

1.3 COPULAR EXPRESSIONS

JZ independent clauses generally occur with an exponent for a nexus (namely, the predicative link), be it a verbal form or a copular expression. The line separating the two is often very thin, meaning that the various copulas and the various forms of $\sqrt{\text{hwy}}$ are often interchangeable with one another. The so-called ‘presentative copula’ is described here (§1.3.3), as well as below (§1.5.2), because it functions both as a copula (without any presentative function whatsoever) and as presentative.

Verbal copulas (like $\sqrt{\text{hwy}}$ or *pišle*) behave like intransitive verbal forms whose most prominent feature is the fact that they do not occur with the *qam* preterite formation, since this formation necessitates a direct object. It

is true that verbs that have only an indirect complement do not occur in the *qam* preterite as well, but then the prepositional phrase that serves as object is consistent (e.g., *mōnixle b-/ibb-*). In the case of all these copular expressions, as a complement we get a diverse group. This group, the **rheme paradigm**, occurs with other, non-verbal copular expressions (the copula and the presentative) as well, and is different than any object paradigm (for which see §3.1.1). This paradigm consists of anything which can function as rheme, i.e., with the copula—(pro)nominals, adverb(ial syntagm)s, gerunds and perfect participles. It is this paradigm that unifies all these expressions, verbal or not.

Dividing the various copula types between different sections is done for the sake of order and comprehension. Nevertheless, all these forms are part of one sub-system, which is characterized by a series of complementary distributions. In addition, when a copula is paired with a verbal rheme (that is, a perfect participle or a gerund), the resulting copular verbal forms also form oppositions inside the verbal system, they are part of this system as well.

1.3.1 The present copula

The present copula (for forms see §7.3.1; named after its most common function, opposed to the presentative copula, for which see below, §1.1.3) occurs mainly in dialogue, but also in subordinate clauses in narrative. The following survey refers to the common features of the copula in all textemes and genres.

The copula is not quite considered a verbal form, although it has some features in common with other verbal forms, and peculiarly, at least in the 1st and 2nd person affirmative, and in the negative, its origin is most probably verbal.⁹ The common features with verbal forms are as follows: First, the copula is in continuous opposition with verbal copulas (e.g., *ile* [indicative] vs. *hāwe* [subjunctive]). Second, when occurring with a verbal rheme, the copula has oppositions inside the tense-aspect system (for instance, *wın ıya*

⁹ In Goldenberg 1992:123 it is suggested that the origin of the copula is similar to that of other III-y verbs which occur, in the Nerwa homilies, in a special formation otherwise deemed as denoting the perfect (*mşın*, *mşıt*, i.e., preterite base and the 1st set of pronominal endings, reserved in JZ for passive preterites). It is suggested that the copular form *ıwın* originates in **hwın*, etc.

‘I have come’ vs. *sēli* ‘I came’). All this is described below under macrosyntax, chapters 5 and 6.

The copula consists of a thematic index and a representation of the nexus, and always has to be supplied with a rheme. As such, it is essential in JZ to mark the predicative link between the theme and the rheme, since the Semitic concept of the non-verbal clause no longer exists in JZ as an independent clause (except for rare exclamatory expressions, e.g., *axnan nāše mare-nāmus* ‘we are respectable people’ 848. See Khan 2008b:854).

The internal partition inside the present copula group is **a.** between 3rd person and 1st/2nd persons; **b.** between affirmative and negative; and **c.** between independent and subordinate. Further parameters are the type of rheme joining the copula—on one hand, verbal rhemes, i.e., the gerund and the perfect participle, on the other hand, (pro)nominal and adverbial rhemes.

1.3.1.1 The affirmative copula (3rd pers.)

The **affirmative 3rd pers. copula** is the most common, occurring basically with non-verbal rhemes (namely, substantives, adjectives, adverbials, etc.) and only seldom with verbal rhemes. In complementary distribution with this copula we have the presentative copula (see §1.1.3 below), which occurs more readily with verbal rhemes. The basic feature of the order (always *x-īle*) makes it always clear beyond any doubt what is the rheme, since the copula consistently follows it immediately. The copula has an allotagm, *dīle-x*, occurring only immediately following construct states (whether pronominal, nominal or adverbial), in other terms, it is the *genitive*, or *attributive* form of the copula (to be further discussed §2.2.4, exx. (116)–(133)).

There is a tight juncture between the copula and the rheme, that is, the new information: it is expressed phonetically in the following examples:

- | | |
|------|---|
| (48) | <i>ba ta ʿīman-(n)īla hatxa bāre ul ḥakō ma</i> ‘but till when is it (that) thus will happen to the king?’ 646 |
| (49) | <i>yassaq-(q)īlu ʿanya šoʿāle ta yihāwa</i> ‘These things are forbidden to give’ 697 |
| (50) | <i>ūcū ḥ akim lá zeʿle mā ʿēš-(š)īle ʿille</i> ‘No doctor knew what illness he had (lit. is on him)’ 703 |
| (51) | <i>hawēlu ʿanya ḥaqqit dō jawāhar-(r)īlu</i> ‘Here they are, they are the price of the gem ’ 670 |

What these cases have in common is an *ad hoc* doubling of the last consonant in the rheme, where it touches the copula. Another indication for this intimate relationship is found in a relic:

- (52) *atta badle did dila ʿilli bāmer dīde-h-īla* ‘now the suit which is on me, he’ll probably say **it is his**’ 220
- (53) *ūlá rʿišle mā qıştu-h-īla* ‘and did not understand nor sense **what their story is**’ 877

The *h* is a relic of the old (and otherwise obsolete) *h* in 3rd person suffix genitive pronouns. It is preserved only here, enclosed within this tight link.

The last, as well as most common expression of this close juncture is the fact that an allomorph of the copula (*-le/a/u*) is the one that follows a vowel, see exx (54)–(58).

Substantival rhemes:

One normally finds common nouns functioning as rhemes:

- (54) *ūxa baxta did hōyāwa smuxta kīʿēwa ʿnkan brōna-le uʿnkan brāta-la* ‘And (in case of) a woman who would be pregnant he would know whether **it is a boy** or whether **it is a girl**’ 226–227
- (55) *de atta si kis flāna qaşāba xōri-le* ‘So now, go to a certain butcher, **he is my friend**’ 358

Proper nouns, especially in naming constructions, occur as rhemes as well:

- (56) *lalxin sēle kislī xa ʿarxa ʿazīza u⁺rāba muḥsin ūşimme Mamo-le* ‘Yesterday a dear and beautiful guest came to me, his name is **Mamo**’ 322

Pronouns:

Several types of pronouns occur as rhemes.

Personal pronouns are thematic/topical in nature and must be marked as rheme or as focus:

- (57) *mmandın ʿızwa ūmād nāpıq ta kutxa minnōxūn, āwa-le haqqe* ‘I will cast a lot and what(ever) comes out for each of you, **that** (lit. he) **is his portion**’ 427

Demonstrative pronouns:

- (58) *mēnxun óhā-le qaramán did gibe kābısla bāžer dıdı* ‘Look, it is **him**, Qaraman who wants to conquer my city’ 127

Interrogative pronouns always occur preceding the copular expression:

- (59) *mayle šūlax gō dē bariya* ‘What is your business in this wilderness?’ (lit. ‘**what is it** (namely) your business...’) 858

mayle is different—the copula following it has its full form, *ile*. Note the difficulty in translation: the nuclear clause is ‘what is it’. The rest (‘your business in this wilderness’) is an expansion of the theme (‘it’), which is represented by the theme index in the form of the copula (that is, in this case, the 3FS signal). Such an expansion is often a noun of some kind, or a pronoun. In the following example it is an adjectival clause:

- (60) *āna gbēna yā’ēna mani-le bikābısla bāžer dıdı* ‘I want to know, **who is it** (who) will conquer my city’ 123

This is probably a direct interrogative clause (an interpretation as an indirect question is called for, but the structure explicitly indicates that *mani* ‘who’ is the rheme), where the thematic index in the copula (3MS) is expanded by a clause. The pattern is a **cleft sentence** (see §6.1.3.1.2), whose purpose is to mark something other than the verbal form (in this case it is the interrogative) as rheme or as focus. Another example for a cleft pattern in a question is found in ex. (48) above. There is some difficulty in differentiating between direct and indirect questions:

- (61) *ma bēsa-le ōha?* ‘**What** (kind of a) **house is** this?’ 54
 (62) *bxāzin ēma bēsa-le* ‘I will see which house it is’ 162
 (63) *drēle tīna il kullu dargā(y)e did lá ya’āx bēse ēma-le* ‘He put dirt on all doors so that we cannot know which is his house (lit. his house, which is it)’ 165

Ex. (61) is a direct question. Since the question is ‘what (kind of) house’ the copula marks both as the rheme. Ex. (62) looks like an indirect question; note that the sequence interrogative–substantive, analyzed in (61) as one syntagm in rhematic function, should now be analyzed differently: *ēma* here introduces an indirect clause. The third example makes it even more complicated. The clausal object of not-knowing is often put in the form of an indirect question, that is, one would normally expect *ēma bēsa-le*, as in ex. (62). However, what we get in ex. (63) is *bēse ēma-le* ‘his house, which is it’,

perhaps to be analyzed as an asyndetic indirect question, in which *bēse* is the theme and what looks like the interrogative is marked as rheme¹⁰. The difficulty is that *ēma* is explicitly marked as rheme by the copula which immediately follows it, even though it is not an interrogative.

Pronominal Nuclei are a group whose members represent a noun and are always in the construct state (and consequently function as nuclei of their constructions), like the pronoun *dīd(-)* ‘that of’. Besides signalling possession (with the pronominal suffixes), such a pronominal nucleus can adjectivize a following syntagm (whether substantival, pronominal or verbal):¹¹

- (64) *qumle ōha mare bēsa ūšrxle ūmurre: bēsa dīdī-le ūsūse dīdī-la* ‘The landlord got up and cried out, saying: The house is **mine** and the mare is **mine**’ 220

In ex. (64), *dīdī* is a rhematic possessive pronominal adjective. In the following example it has a somewhat more complex function:

- (65) *mbōqrru: dīd mani-le ōqadda māl? gumri: dīd flāna nāša-le* ‘They asked: So much property, **whose** (lit. of whom) is it? They say: It is **of some man**’ 20

dīd, as a pronominal nucleus here adjectivizes, first the pronoun ‘who’, marking it as an adjectival ‘of whom’ or ‘whose’, and second, adjectivizing a substantival syntagm.¹²

The concord of the copula is in most cases with the theme (e.g., in ex. (65), with the substantive *māl* [MS]). In a few cases there is no theme, and then the concord is with the rheme (e.g., ex. (54)). Ex. (67) below has a substantive clause for a theme, and the concord is with the impersonal (whose default marking in JZ is feminine singular).

¹⁰ Compare *la kīʿax kutxa ʿēma šāqil* ‘we do not know which (thing) each one should take’ (lit. ‘each which should take’ 427), where *kutxa* is the theme.

¹¹ For this function of *dīd*, see §2.1.1.

¹² The view of marking one entity as functioning differently is shown in Tesnière 1959 (termed “translation”). However, endorsing Tesnière’s views to their full extent entails the presupposition that there are transformations in synchrony. This is not how synchrony is viewed in this framework, and hence, one can merely discuss the function of this construct state pronoun inside its syntagm.

Adjectives:

The following example has an adjective as rheme, whose expansion (*min didi* ‘than mine’) further identifies it as comparative:

- (66) *māxulla qaḥra didox zōdanta-la mun didi?* ‘Your grief, is it indeed **greater than mine?**’ 239

In the following example the adjective occurs with a content clause (‘that I earned so much money’), which is the *theme* of the clause:

- (67) *bāš ıla ksibli ō qadda pāre* ‘It is **good** (that) I earned so much money’ 335

The issue of rhematic expansion is somewhat difficult. The rheme slot, immediately preceding the copula, can house only relatively short syntagms; when the rhematic information exceeds a certain level of complexity or length, it is continued by other syntagms, see ex. (66) above, for a prepositional expansion (*min didi* ‘than mine’). Ex. (68) has a relative clause for an expansion:

- (68) *ay dammut xūwe gẓēle ḥinnu aw gōra-le did mīrwāle tāle: ...*
‘When the snake saw that it is **the (same) man who had told him...**’ 35

This might look like a cleft sentence (cf. ex. (60) above and §6.1.3.1.2), but it is not; the *did* clause is an expansion of the **rheme** and hence part of it, whereas in a cleft it is an expansion of the *theme*. The same idea recurs in ex. (69):

- (69) *marri ḥēma ḥurxa-la d’āzun ḥibba elqaṣr ḥakōma* ‘Tell me **which way** is it that I should walk to the king’s palace’ 757

That is, the rheme here is ‘which way that I should walk to the king’s palace’. It is broken in the middle by the copula for technical reasons, and continued immediately thereafter.

Adverbial syntagms:

These are not particularly common as rhemes. The following example shows the correspondence in information structure between a question and an answer:

- (70) *ūnohāla kmá-ḥīle? ḥīl tihōm ile* ‘And the valley, how (deep) is it (lit. **how much** is it)? It is (all the way) **to the abyss**’ 235

Note that the interrogative, obligatorily marked as rheme in the question, corresponds to the answer, marked as the rheme as well. The following example too has prepositional syntagms. In this example, two prepositional phrases in a row are marked as rheme:

- (71) *ūla xašwīt ʾinni anya pāre ʔāli-lu. ġēr ta yatūme ūta gawāye-lu*
 ‘Do not think that this money is **for me**. It is only **for the orphans and the beggars**’ 4–5

Ex. (72) has an adverbial syntagm consisting of the negative particle (in this case the semantic equivalent of ‘without’) and a kind of a compound noun:

- (72) *xšūla balki ʾanya jwanqe lá yumma ūbāba -lu* ‘She thought perhaps these youngsters are orphans (lit. **without mother and father**)’ 858

The last example has a temporal adverb for rheme:

- (73) *atta qarwāwīt palġdyom ūla* ‘Now it is **almost noon**’ 75

Verbal rhemes:

Although verbal rhemes are very rare with the affirmative present copula (less so with other copular expressions), this domain is essential in rendering transparent the verbal components. The latter are discussed above (§1.1) based upon Goldenberg 1985 and said to consist of 1. a subject index; 2. a verbal lexeme; and 3. the nexus between them. Here this analysis becomes transparent. Take a look at the following, unique example of the copula with a gerund as rheme:

- (74) *baġ-wazīra mʾōjbla ʔamá mʾōwiqle ó ġōra xūna hēš mxallōle-le*
 ʾize ‘The vizier’s daughter wondered why the man delayed;
 (could it be that) **he is still washing** his hands?’ 494–495

This example comes from a stretch of free indirect discourse (for a description of which see §5.2.1.2). The copular/verbal complex *mxallōle-le ʾize* ‘he is washing his hands’ is perfectly analogous to the English structure, except that in JZ the theme is to be found inside the copula. The verbal components can be observed directly: 1. the subject index is the 3MS index inside the copula; 2. the verbal lexeme is represented by the gerund; and 3. the nexus between them is found in the copula, whose most important function is being an explicit exponent of this predicative link.

Similar in principle, but ambiguous with regard to diathesis, is the perfect participle functioning as rheme: