The Hebrew Resultative Constructions Conundrum

I will argue that new future resultative constructions based on past tense forms are now emerging in Hebrew and discuss two research questions:

- How do these constructions differ from Hebrew's future tense and imperative mood?
- What are the motivations for the seemingly counter-intuitive choice of past tense forms?

The Future Resultative Construction employs past tense forms to denote a *future state* ensuing from a previous action. *xasaxta* (lit. 'you saved') in (1) conveys the future state of having saved 300 shekels (due to a future purchase). By contrast, Hebrew's future tense (2) bears no such resultative reading:

(1) *ha-mexir   ecle-nu: 900.* **xasaxta***:*   *300* (Mobile Website)
    DEF-price   at-1.PL   900   **save.PST.2.SG.M**   300
    'Our price: 900. Your saving will be: 300'

(2) *nipagesh   maxar*
    meet.FUT.1.PL   tomorrow
    'We'll meet tomorrow'

The Military Imperative Construction consists of second person past tense forms and a temporal upper-bound. It requires that the addressee shall be in a future state of having executed the command (3). By contrast, Hebrew's imperative mood (4) merely asserts the command:

(3) *daka   **hikaftem**   ta-ma'ahal!*
    minute   **encircle.PST.2.PL.M**   ACC.DEF-camp
    'Be in a state of having run around (lit. you ran around) the camp in a minute!'

(4) **takifu**   *ta-ma'ahal!*
    encircle.IMPERATIVE.2.PL   ACC.DEF-camp
    'Run around the camp!'

I argue that the use of past tense forms is motivated: the future state is the *point of reference* R from which the event E is viewed (Reichenbach 1947). E is a *relative past* of R in a Perfect's formulation E-R. De Swart schematizes resultatives as an eventuality *e* immediately followed by a state *s*. (2007: 2278). Thus, the past tense forms in the above constructions reflect the anteriority of *e* to *s* iconically.

References

Bybee, Joan L., Revere Perkins, & William Pagliuca. 1994. *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in the Languages in the World*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Declerck, Renaat. 2006. In Bernd Kortmann and Elizabeth C. Traugott, eds., *The grammar of the English verb phrase volume 1: The grammar of the English tense system*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

De Swart, Henriëtte. 2007. A cross-linguistic discourse analysis of the Perfect. *Journal of Pragmatics* 39:2273-2307.

Reichenbach, Hans. 1947. *Elements of symbolic logic*. New York: Free Press.