

Michael Becker

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Education

- September 2008 (expected) Ph.D. Department of Linguistics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
Dissertation title: “Phonological Trends in the Lexicon: The Role of Constraints.” Defended June 2008.
Committee: John J. McCarthy (chair), Joe Pater, Elisabeth Selkirk, Lyn Frazier, Shmuel Bolozky, Adam Albright.
- 2002 M.A. Magna cum laude in linguistics, Tel Aviv University. Thesis on Hebrew intonation and stress.
Committee co-chairs: Outi Bat-El and Charles Kisseberth.
- 1997–2001 Interdisciplinary Program for Outstanding Students, Tel Aviv University.

Publications

- Submitted The surfeit of the stimulus: Grammatical biases filter lexical statistics in Turkish voicing deneutralization. With Andrew Nevins (Harvard) and Nihan Ketrez (Yale).
- In preparation Phonologization of tone/height interactions: A Slovenian perspective. With Peter Jurgec (Tromsø).
- 2007 Tone licensing and categorical alignment in Serbo-Croatian. In Leah Bateman et al. (eds.) University of Massachusetts Occasional Papers in Linguistics 32: Papers in Optimality Theory III. Amherst: GLSA, pp. 1–19.
- 2007 OT-Help user guide. In Michael Becker (ed.), University of Massachusetts Occasional Papers in Linguistics 36: Papers in Theoretical and Computational Phonology. Amherst: GLSA. With Joe Pater (UMass), pp. 1–12.
- 2003 Lexical stratification of Hebrew: The disyllabic maximum. In Yehuda Falk (ed.) Proceedings of the Israel Association for Theoretical Linguistics 19.
- 2003 Hebrew Stress: Can’t you hear those trochees? In Kaiser and Arunachalam (eds.) Proceedings of PLC 26, 9.1: 45–58.

Teaching

Phonology

- Linguistics 3024 Analysis of Prosodic Phenomena. High-level undergraduate course for linguistics majors. Full responsibility for the course, including design, lectures, assignments and exams. Ben Gurion University, spring 2007.
- Linguistics 1022 Introduction to Phonological Theory. For linguistics majors. 70 registered students. Full responsibility for the course, including design, lectures, assignments, exams, and guidance for the TA. Tel Aviv University, spring 2002.
- Linguistics 2166 Advanced Phonological Theory. Advanced course for linguistics majors. Teaching assistant for Prof. Outi Bat-El. Duties included creating class materials and assignments, teaching a section, and grading. Tel Aviv University, fall 2002.
- Linguistics 1022 Introduction to Phonological Theory. Teaching assistant for Prof. Outi Bat-El. Duties included teaching discussion groups and grading. Tel Aviv University, spring 1999, 2000 and 2001 (three semesters).
- Linguistics 402 Speech Sounds and Structure. Teaching assistant for Prof. Joe Pater. Duties included grading homework, holding office hours, and some teaching. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, fall 2007.

General linguistics

- Linguistics 201 Introduction to Linguistic Theory. Undergraduate introduction to linguistic theory, analysis and problem solving. Full responsibility for the course, including design, lectures and grading. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, fall 2006, spring 2008 (two semesters).
- Linguistics 101 People and their language. General introduction to language and broad topics in linguistics. Teaching assistant for John J. McCarthy. Duties included teaching discussion groups and grading. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, spring 2004, 2005 (two semesters).

Hebrew

- Hebrew 361 & 362 Modern Hebrew Literature I and II. A year-long sequence for third-year students. Full responsibility for the course, including design, classes, grading, and individually tailored activities for exceptionally advanced students. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, fall 2005 and spring 2006 (two semesters).

Linguistic software

- 2007 LexLearn: A learner of irregular phonology using constraint cloning and OT-CC.
- 2007 OT-Help: Typology explorer for Optimality Theory and Harmonic Grammar. With Joe Pater and Christopher Potts (UMass). At <http://web.linguist.umass.edu/~OTHelp/>.
- 2005 CCamelOT: An implementation of OT-CC's GEN and EVAL in Perl. Available at <http://wwwx.oit.umass.edu/~linguist/CCamelOT/>.

Invited talks

- 2008 Why and how to use Universal Grammar in learning irregular morphology. Linguistics department, Reed College.
- 2008 What do Hebrew speakers know about irregular patterns? The role of Universal Grammar. The department of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin.
- 2007 The role of statistical generalizations in the grammar. Phonology reading group, University of Tromsø.
- 2007 The role of statistical generalizations in the grammar. Linguistics department colloquium, Ben Gurion University.
- 2006 Computational Optimality Theory with finite candidate sets. MIT Phonology Circle.
- 2006 Computational Optimality Theory with finite candidate sets. Thursday Interdisciplinary Colloquium, Tel Aviv University.

Refereed conference papers and posters

- 2008 The role of markedness constraints in learning lexical trends. 82nd meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, Chicago, IL.
- 2007 Tone/ATR interactions in Slovenian. 7th European Conference on Formal Description of Slavic Languages (FDSL-7) in Leipzig. With Peter Jurgec (Tromsø).
- 2007 From the lexicon to a stochastic grammar. 38th Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society, University of Ottawa.
- 2007 From the lexicon to a stochastic grammar. Workshop on Variation, Gradience and Frequency in Phonology, Stanford University.

- 2007 The role of markedness in Hebrew exceptional plurals. Israel Association for Theoretical Linguistics 23, Tel Aviv University.
- 2007 Tone/ATR interactions in Slovenian. Workshop on Segments and Tone, Meertens Institute/Amsterdam University. With Peter Jurgec (Tromsø).
- 2007 When and why to ignore lexical patterns in Turkish obstruent alternations. 81st meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, Anaheim, CA. With Andrew Nevins (Harvard) and Nihan Ketrez (Yale).
- 2006 CCamelOT: An implementation of OT-CC's GEN and EVAL in Perl. 80th meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, Albuquerque, NM.
- 2003 Lexical stratification of Hebrew: The disyllabic maximum. Israel Association for Theoretical Linguistics 19, Ben Gurion University.
- 2003 Hebrew Stress: Can't you hear those trochees? Penn Linguistics Colloquium 26, University of Pennsylvania.

Workshop talks

- 2008 Learning hidden structure in morphological bases. MUMM 2, a UMass-MIT phonology meeting.
- 2007 Prudent error-driven learning in OT-CC. Northeast Computational Phonology Circle (NECPhon), UMass Amherst.
- 2006 When and why to ignore lexical patterns in Turkish obstruent alternations. Yale Turkish Linguistics Workshop. With Andrew Nevins (Harvard) and Nihan Ketrez (Yale).
- 2006 Tone licensing and categorical alignment in Serbo-Croatian. HUMDRUM, Johns Hopkins University.
- 2006 Verum Focus and T-to- Σ movement in English. ECO5 syntax workshop, MIT.
- 2004 The interpretation of boundary tones: Turkish and beyond. Intonation Matters, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- 2004 Lexical exceptions: Putting the grammar to work. HUMDRUM, Rutgers University.

Research assistantships

- Fall 2007 Research assistant for Joe Pater. Duties included research on comparison of constraint-based theories and learning, independently and in collaboration with Joe Pater.

Summer 2004	Research assistant for John J. McCarthy. Duties included pursuing my work on lexical exceptions.
Fall 2003	Research assistant for Elisabeth Selkirk, NSF grant “reflexes of focus in phonology”. Duties included pursuing my fieldwork on Turkish intonation and collaborative experimental work on English intonation.

Edited volumes

2007	University of Massachusetts Occasional Papers in Linguistics 36: Papers in Theoretical and Computational Phonology.
2007	University of Massachusetts Occasional Papers in Linguistics 33: Proceedings of the 3rd Conference on the Semantics of Underrepresented Languages in the Americas. With Andrew McKenzie.

Service

2008	Abstract reviewer for IATL 24.
2007	Abstract reviewer for ConSOLE 16.
2004-2006	Student representative to the department curriculum committee.

Languages

Native	Hebrew.
Near native	English, French.
Extensive	Classical Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, Turkish.
Elementary	Other Romance languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Italian), other dialects of Arabic (Palestinian, Lebanese, Moroccan), Russian, Farsi.

Computation

Programming	Java, Perl, Praat scripting, XML/XSLT, Visual Basic for Microsoft office, SQL, Prolog.
Web design	HTML, JavaScript, CSS/DHTML, AJAX.
Other	R, LaTeX, *nix.