In the Beginning There Was Conversation:
Fictive Direct Speech in the Hebrew Bible

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Abstract

This paper explores the use of non-quotational direct speech—a perspective-indexing construction displaying perspective persistence—in the Hebrew Bible, an ancient text of great cultural significance. We discuss such frequent viewpointed structures as the use of non-quotational direct speech to introduce intentions, hopes, motives, or states of affairs. Special emphasis is laid on the complementizer *lemor*, grammaticalized from a speaking verb. This complementizer introduces the import of an action through direct speech. We claim that such fictive speech is grounded in face-to-face conversation as a conceptual model. Beyond the Hebrew Bible itself, we discuss possible extended implications our findings have for the link between perspective-indexing constructions and orality, as well as possible links between conversation as a conceptual frame and the notion of meaning. Ultimately, we hope to advance the view that grammar and discourse are inherently conversational and thus viewpointed in nature.

Keywords: direct speech, fictive interaction, conversation frame, viewpoint, Biblical Hebrew

1. Introduction

In this paper we study the use of one common type of perspective-indexing construction with perspective persistence, namely non-quotational direct speech, in one culturally significant ancient text, the Hebrew Bible. This small study aims to contribute to a broader view of the foundational role intersubjectivity (and its canonical form, oral face-to-face conversation) plays in human cognition, language, and culture.

As outlined in the introductory paper (Gentens et al. this issue), and argued throughout the current issue, perspective-indexing constructions are pervasive across unrelated languages and across discourse genres (and see Graumann and Kallmeyer 2002). It is uncontroversial that both the expression and the change of perspective are quintessential in intersubjective conversation, which invariably contains viewpoint information and is characterized by turn-taking, and thus constant viewpoint shift between speaker and hearer. We treat linguistic perspective-indexing structures—including those involving only one perspective and one overt 'turn'—as emerging from and reflecting this viewpointed nature of talk-in-interaction. Face-to-face communicative interaction is the primary, canonical, and earliest form of language use (Clark 1996)—ontogenetically, diachronically, and phylogenetically (see overview in Pascual 2014, 1–2). It is thus reasonable to expect that the pattern of conversation itself would have offered one of the earliest and most widespread cognitive models for structuring spoken monologues and written texts. In Cognitive-Linguistic terms, conversation may provide a conceptual frame, or a metaphorical source domain, with such roles as ADDRESSER, ADDRESSEE, and BYSTANDER (cf. Goffman 1963, 1981), for structuring discourse through perspectivization. This may be manifested in perspective-indexing constructions.

We focus on a common phenomenon that invariably involves embedded perspective and has received little attention, namely non-quotational direct speech (Pascual 2006, 2014; Pascual and Sandler 2016). By this we mean the enactment or 'demonstration' (Clark and Gerrig 1990) of a non-actual enunciation. An example is the *(be) like* construction, as in this fragment from a televised interview with a former Lance Armstrong fan (Pascual 2014, 119):

(1)   I beat cancer, so did <u>you</u>. I was an athlete and I came back and I played at a really high level... But I didn't cheat. For me it's <u>kind of like</u>: *why did I look up to <u>you</u>? Why aren't <u>you</u> looking up to me?*[2]

Note that if the italicized words were introduced by "I was (kind of) like" they could be interpreted as a simple quotative: the enunciator simply quotes literally his own previous utterance. This could also be viewed as a pseudo-quotation: he didn't say these exact words, but they give the gist of what was uttered (cf. Tannen 1988, [1989] 2007; Clark and Gerrig 1990). But in (1), the *(be) like* construction is used to express the speaker's thinking, rather

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2. Italics in examples indicate direct speech; underlining (in Latin script) or boldfacing (in Hebrew script) is used to mark quotative markers and other parts in the example we wish to direct readers' attention to.

than to reproduce a past utterance by him or somebody else. The utterance is not reported, as in ordinary quotation, including the report of fictitious or imaginary speech (e.g. "In the movie *Frozen* the Snowman says: '*I like warm hugs!*'"). It is not a *constructed* utterance either (Tannen 1988, [1989] 2007), as in "I wish the President said: '*I hereby resign*'" (cf. Vandelanotte this issue). Instead, the utterance following the phrase marker 'kind of like' in (1) is a *fictive* one in the sense of Talmy ([1996] 2000). Its ontological nature is between reality and fiction, since it is non-actual in that it has never been factually uttered, but it does serve to express something actual about the world (or, better, the speaker).

Note too that the entire fragment is presented as directly *addressed* at Lance Armstrong, who is not within earshot, and can thus not be a conversational participant in the literal sense. An absent discourse character (i.e. Armstrong), who had previously been referred to with the third-person pronoun 'he'/'him', is now referred to with the second-person 'you'. This indexical shift indicates that the conversational topic is temporarily presented as a fictive addressee, the actual addressee in the here-and-now of the ongoing interview (i.e. the journalist) temporarily becoming a fictive bystander (Goffman 1963, 88–99). The speaker role is maintained, and there is thus perspective persistence (Gentens et al. this issue), but the conversational structure in which his enunciation is understood has changed, for discourse purposes. The direct speech needs to be construed as a non-genuine conversational turn, even if the *(be) like* construction is not explicitly part of a larger fictive conversation in its surrounding discourse (Armstrong is not presented as offering a counterargument).[3] The speaker sets up a verbal argument with Armstrong that never took place as a means of expressing his disappointment with Armstrong to the journalist and the television audience. Hence, the structure of face-to-face conversation, with its perspective information and speaker-hearer roles, is used as a frame, as a modelling structure, for conceptualizing and expressing what was originally a feeling or opinion that need not have been verbalized.

Examples such as this one are typical cases of *fictive interaction*—the use of the frame of conversation as a means of structuring thought, discourse, and grammar—and among the very first cases studied (Pascual 2006, 251–253, 261; 2014, 115–140). But whereas the *(be) like* construction originated in the colloquial speech of the youth (Blyth, Recktenwald, and Wang 1990; Streeck 2002), the phenomenon of fictive direct speech as such, which it instantiates, is more widespread and has a long and venerable history (Pascual 2006, 2014,

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3. There is, however, an implied silent response (Bakhtin [1979] 1986, 71) from Armstrong-the-discourse-character: he is meant to feel ashamed and to be left speechless.

Pascual and Sandler 2016). The same is true for related discourse phenomena also involving perspective shift, such as the use of non-information-seeking questions to express information structure like topic and focus (cf. Pascual 2014, Ch. 2, Ch. 7; Xiang and Pascual 2016). That long and venerable history, as we shall now see, also includes the Hebrew Bible.

2. The Conversation Frame in the Hebrew Bible

The object of our study is the Hebrew Bible—a foundational text of Western culture and beyond, dating back to the 1st millennium BCE. For an ancient language, Biblical Hebrew provides an exceptionally extensive and relatively diverse corpus of data, fully available for electronic search.[4] The version of the Hebrew Bible we will use is the Masoretic text, which is considered canonical in Judaism. This fact allowed for its preservation, but one should also take into account that it underwent millennia of copying and centuries of editing. Also, while the semantics of Biblical Hebrew has been mostly preserved (through translations into ancient languages and a tradition of exegesis in later texts), the meanings of many words and expressions remain unclear or contested. This notwithstanding, our focus in this paper is on phenomena that are sufficiently robust to allow meaningful generalizations.

Examples analyzed below are from the Classical Biblical Hebrew linguistic layer of the text (Genesis through 2 Kings). All biblical verses in this paper are given in the Hebrew original with an English translation based on the New Revised Standard Version, modified to render quotative constructions as literally as possible.[5]

The Hebrew Bible contains several genres, most commonly narrative (with omniscient narration), chronicles, and laws. Given this mix, one would expect limited use of reported speech constructions, with a preference for indirect over direct speech. In fact, though, the text is to a large extent dominated by conversation. While indirect speech does exist, it is clearly dispreferred (Miller 2003, 93–94). One study estimated that 42.5% of the words in the entire text are contained within direct speech quotes (Rendsburg 1990, 160). The action in biblical passages often proceeds primarily through direct speech (Miller 2003, 2). Tellingly, the verb root *'mr* ('say') appears 5,308 times in the Hebrew Bible, making it easily the most frequent verb in the text (Wigram 1995).

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4. We used the corpus of Jewish religious writings (*ma'agar sifrut ha-kodesh*), at: http://kodesh.snunit.k12.il.

5. In particular, the verb *'mr* is always translated as 'say' and the complementizer *lemor* is always translated as 'to say'. Quotatives added by the translators were removed, and those omitted were restored.

The Hebrew bible also employs other perspective-shifting structures, such as questions, some three quarters of which are non-information-seeking (Moshavi 2010, 2013). This perspective-indexing nature of the biblical text is observed also on a deeper conceptual level when conversation is used as a frame structuring numerous aspects of the narrative. For instance, the creation story of Genesis 1 is narrated in communicative terms through the explicit use of reported speech:

(2)   **וַיֹּאמֶר** אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר **וַיְהִי**-אוֹר

'Then God <u>said</u>, *"Let there be light"*; <u>and there was</u> light.' (Genesis 1:3)

The creation of the world is not present as the result of some event or action, but as a series of speech acts ascribed to the creator. The world is then said to obey God's order in a narrative pattern of commands followed by a report of their fulfillment. The creation story is thus structured as a dialogue—albeit a non-prototypical one—between God and the created world, where the world responds non-verbally to God's verbal commands (see in-depth analysis and further supporting references in Miller 2003, 286–289).

In this paper we focus in particular on one class of perspective-indexing phenomena—the use of fictive direct speech, as in (1) above. These are quotations that share formal and functional characteristics with ordinary reported speech (see Si and Spronck this issue) and both free indirect speech and 'distancing indirect speech or thought' (see Vandelanotte this issue), but which have a non-quotative function to express a stance, reason, or state of affairs rather than genuinely shift to a given discourse source (see overview in Pascual 2014, 1–25; Pascual and Sandler 2016, 3–22). Within this diverse category, we primarily discuss embedded fictive direct speech displaying perspective persistence (see Gentens et al. this issue), specifically: (i) fictive direct speech used to express thoughts and intentions; (ii) choral speech; (iii) fictive direct speech for reasons, using the *ki amar* ('for N/Pron. said') construction; (iv) fictive direct speech to account for characters' names; and (v) the distinctive and ubiquitous *lemor* ('to say') construction.

2.1.   *Fictive Direct Speech to Express Mental States*

Fictive direct speech is frequently used to express the speaker's mental states, as documented in many unrelated languages, in some of which it is grammatically obligatory (Pascual 2014; Voort 2016; Vries 2003, 2010). In historical texts, too, there is extensive use of direct speech for the expression of inner thoughts, evaluations, and feelings across a wide variety of

discourse genres and registers, for instance in Classical Arabic prose (Beaumont 1996) as well as in Old French and English literature (Marnette 1998; Louviot 2016). The Hebrew Bible is no exception to this rule, with thoughts, and especially intentions, routinely expressed through fictive direct speech (cf. Vries 2010).

(3)   וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָהָם עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּצְחָק **וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ** הַלְּבֶן מֵאָה־שָׁנָה יִוָּלֵד וְאִם־שָׂרָה הֲבַת־תִּשְׁעִים שָׁנָה תֵּלֵד.

'Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and <u>said in his heart</u>, *"Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"'* (Genesis 17:17)

Here, Abraham expresses disbelief through an embedded rhetorical question, a polar interrogative functioning as a sort of exclamation addressed to his inner self.

(4)   **וַיֹּאמֶר** מֹשֶׁה אָסֻרָה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הַמַּרְאֶה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מַדּוּעַ לֹא־יִבְעַר הַסְּנֶה.

'Then Moses$_i$ <u>said</u>, *"I$_i$ must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up."'* (Exodus 3:3)

In (4), direct speech is used to inform us of Moses' intention to wander off his path. Moses is at this point alone in the wilderness, so the embedded utterance clearly does not have an external addressee.

It is still possible to interpret such expressions of mental states as representing a genuine quotation of a character's inner monologue. Indeed, (3) is explicitly marked as such ("said *in his heart*"). Nevertheless, the point of such quotes is to present a mental state or intention, and thus advance the action narrated. Tellingly, in (4), Moses' words are sufficient to inform us not only of his intention, but also of him acting as intended (cf. Pascual 2014, 136–137). Immediately after (4), the narrative continues: "And the Lord saw that he had turned aside" (Exod. 3:4). Moreover, in some cases, interpreting the expression of intentions in direct speech as inner monologue would not work. Thus, in (5) direct speech is used to ascribe intentions—and action upon them—to a group of people (see also section 2.2):

(5) **וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעֵהוּ** הָבָה נִלְבְּנָה לְבֵנִים וְנִשְׂרְפָה לִשְׂרֵפָה וַתְּהִי לָהֶם הַלְּבֵנָה לְאָבֶן וְהַחֵמָר הָיָה לָהֶם לַחֹמֶר. **וַיֹּאמְרוּ** הָבָה נִבְנֶה-לָּנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֹאשׁוֹ בַשָּׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה-לָּנוּ שֵׁם פֶּן-נָפוּץ עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ. וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה לִרְאֹת אֶת-הָעִיר וְאֶת-הַמִּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם.

'And <u>they_i</u> <u>said to one another</u>, "Come, let us_i make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they_i had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then <u>they_i</u> <u>said</u>, "Come, let us_i build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us_i make a name for ourselves_i; otherwise we_i shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built.' (Genesis 11:3–5)

The issue to note about these examples is how unexceptional they are. Intentions and other mental states are routinely described by imputing direct speech to the character(s) in question, especially where the description requires some nuance (cf. Sandler 2012, 589).

2.2. *Choral Speech*

The device of choral speech forms another, fairly large, set of uses of fictive direct speech in the biblical narrative.[6] There are two different types of choral speech in the text. In one case, the conversation among a group of people is summed up by one utterance attributed to the group as a whole, as in (5) above and in:

(6) **וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו** אֲבָל אֲשֵׁמִים אֲנַחְנוּ עַל-אָחִינוּ אֲשֶׁר רָאִינוּ צָרַת נַפְשׁוֹ בְּהִתְחַנְנוֹ אֵלֵינוּ וְלֹא שָׁמָעְנוּ עַל-כֵּן בָּאָה אֵלֵינוּ הַצָּרָה הַזֹּאת: וַיַּעַן רְאוּבֵן אֹתָם **לֵאמֹר** הֲלוֹא אָמַרְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר אַל-תֶּחֶטְאוּ בַיֶּלֶד וְלֹא שְׁמַעְתֶּם וְגַם-דָּמוֹ הִנֵּה נִדְרָשׁ.

'They_i <u>said to one another</u>, "Alas, we_i are paying the penalty for what we_i did to our_i brother; we_i saw his anguish when he pleaded with us_i, but we_i would not listen. That is why this anguish has come upon us_i." Then Reuben_j answered them_i <u>to say</u>, "Did I_j not tell you_i not to wrong the boy? But you_i would not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood."' (Genesis 42:21–22)

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6. This device is by no means unique to the Hebrew Bible. It is also commonly used, for example, in Old English poems (Louviot 2016, 10, 36) as well as in present-day discourse in various languages (Tannen 1986, [1989] 2007, 113–16; Pascual 2014, 4, 132, 161).

Here, the first utterance ("*Alas, we are…*") is explicitly ascribed to the entire group (ten of Jacob's sons) conversing among themselves. By contrast, the second utterance ("*Did I not…*") is attributed specifically to one of them, Reuben. The first utterance could have been introduced as uttered by one of the brothers on behalf of all, but in (6) it is not presented as citing anybody's precise words. This stretch of direct speech gives the upshot of the brothers' conversation, it is a *fictive* message that summarizes and stands for the whole conversation, rather than actually quoting some factual part of it.[7]

The other type of choral speech in the Hebrew Bible features collective utterances by groups addressed to an outside audience. A typical example is:

(7) וַיִּתֹּם הַכֶּסֶף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּמֵאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ **כָל-מִצְרַיִם** אֶל-יוֹסֵף **לֵאמֹר** הָבָה-לָּנוּ לֶחֶם וְלָמָּה נָמוּת נֶגְדֶּךָ כִּי אָפֵס כָּסֶף

'When the money from the land of Egypt and from the land of Canaan was spent, all the Egyptians_i came to Joseph, to say *"Give us_i food! Why should we_i die before your eyes? For our_i money is gone."*' (Genesis 47:15)

In this case, words are attributed to an entire nation, presented as addressing one individual in one act of communication. It would be absurd to interpret this as an actual quotation. We suggest, again, that these are fictive utterances standing for multiple conversations between different characters. These are compressed to human scale (Fauconnier and Turner 2001, 2002) by representing them as a single fictive utterance attributed to the entire group, as if it were an individual speaker.

2.3. *Fictive Direct Speech for Reason: The* **ki amar** *Construction*
A use of fictive conversation that is quite common cross-linguistically, and which is fully grammaticalized, even obligatory, in some languages (Pascual 2014, 102–104), and which is also abundant in the Hebrew Bible, is to indicate reason. Biblical Hebrew has a special construction for this purpose, where direct speech is introduced by the sequence *ki amar* (lit.

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7. This is reminiscent of the sentence "Three times a student asked a stupid question", one of the classical examples of fictivity (Langacker 1999, 98). Here, "a student" is a fictive entity, actually standing for three different students, "a stupid question" similarly standing for three different questions. The difference here is that while Langacker's example uses the singular, examples of choral speech in Biblical Hebrew are always grammatically marked as plural.

'for N/Pron. said').[8] This construction offers an explanation grounded in people's words or thoughts, for some action or state of affairs. It is quite clear that all such 'quotations' aim to provide a retrospective account of people's reasoning, rather than reproduce their actual words. We found about 30 occurrences of the *ki amar* construction in the text. Consider:

(8) וְלֹא-דִבֶּר שָׁאוּל מְאוּמָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא **כִּי אָמַר** מִקְרֶה הוּא בִּלְתִּי טָהוֹר הוּא כִּי-לֹא טָהוֹר.

'Saul₁ did not say anything that day; <u>for he₁ said</u> [*ki amar*], *"Something has befallen him_j; he_j is not clean, surely he_j is not clean."'* (1 Samuel 20:26)

In (8), the enunciation attributed to Saul explains the fact that Saul did *not* speak. Interpreting it as an actual quotation would imply Saul simultaneously spoke and was silent, which is naturally impossible. Similarly:

(9) וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֵיהֶם נָסוּ לְקֹלָם **כִּי אָמְרוּ** פֶּן-תִּבְלָעֵנוּ הָאָרֶץ.

'All Israel₁ around them fled at their_j outcry, <u>for they₁ said</u> [*ki amru*], *"Lest the earth will swallow us₁ too!"'* (Numbers 16:34)

In (9), the 'quoted' words explain what motivated the 'speakers' to flee in panic. It would be strange to assume they first stopped to deliberate and jointly produce the quoted utterance before running away.

(10) וַיִּרְאוּ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים **כִּי אָמְרוּ** בָּא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-הַמַּחֲנֶה

'The Philistines were afraid; <u>for they said</u> [*ki amru*], *"Gods have come into the camp."'* (1 Samuel 4:7)

This verse is one of several cases where the *ki amar* construction serves to account for the fictive speakers' mental states. Here, members of the Philistine army are struck by fear, which is explained not by the divine presence itself, but by their utterance regarding it. The biblical narrative here—we believe—is not concerned with nuanced observations about the effects of verbalization on the psyche. Rather, the direct speech *ki amar* construction is meant

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8. Since Biblical Hebrew is a VSO language, the two words *ki* ('for' or 'because') and *amar* ('said', inflected for gender, number, and person) follow in sequence, where in the English translation the fictive speaker has to be identified in between the two words.

to provide the Philistines' subjective perspective, the reason why they were afraid. Finally, consider:

(11) וְחָרָשׁ לֹא יִמָּצֵא בְּכֹל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל **כִּי-אמר פְּלִשְׁתִּים** פֶּן יַעֲשׂוּ הָעִבְרִים חֶרֶב אוֹ חֲנִית.

'Now there was no smith to be found throughout all the land of Israel; for [*ki*] the Philistines said [*amru*], *"Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears for themselves."'* (1 Samuel 13:19)

In (11), direct speech is used to express, very succinctly, the rationale for a state of affairs affecting an entire population. In a striking reversal of modern political realities, the Israelites are at that point living under occupation by the Philistines. This verse reports that there are no blacksmiths in the entire country because the occupying army took measures to prevent the occupied population from revolting. This situation is presented as explained by what the Philistines (as a group) *said*, which is not the order some commander gave, but the reasoning behind it: "Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears for themselves".

2.4. 'Etymological' naming of characters

One very distinctive use of fictive direct speech in the Hebrew Bible is as part of a formulaic sequence that appears when characters are named at birth, as in:

(12) וַיֵּדַע אָדָם עוֹד אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ **וַתֵּלֶד** בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שֵׁת כִּי שָׁת-**לִי** אֱלֹהִים זֶרַע אַחֵר תַּחַת הֶבֶל כִּי הֲרָגוֹ קָיִן.

'Adam knew his wife$_i$ again, and she$_i$ bore a son and named$_i$ him Seth [*šet*], "for God has appointed [*šat*] for me$_i$ another child instead of Abel, because Cain killed him."' (Genesis 4:25)

The point here gets somewhat lost in translation: the quote contains a word (or sometimes two), which appears to share a root with the name being given to the child (or parts of it), thus providing a folk etymology that 'explains' the name. Such etymological accounts for names are a distinctive feature of the biblical narrative, specifically in the book of Genesis.[9] In the great majority of cases, the account is given in direct speech by the person naming the

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9. We found only one example (out of 28) of an etymological naming for a child outside of Genesis and the early chapters of Exodus (1 Sam 1:20). Similar 'etymological' sequences are also used for naming places (e.g. Genesis 32:3) and, more rarely, for renaming distinguished persons or deities (e.g. Genesis 16:13).

child (typically the mother). A smaller subgroup of cases gives the etymological account without employing direct speech in the same manner. Sometimes the child's birth is foretold in advance, with the account and the name both contained in the divine utterance announcing the upcoming birth (e.g. Genesis 16:11). On one occasion (Genesis 3:20), the etymological account appears directly in the main narrative. With these few exceptions, direct speech seems to be the norm. Indeed, the use of direct speech in this context was sufficiently formulaic that in several instances the text dispenses entirely of quotative markers for introducing the direct speech, which is very unusual in other contexts. Thus, in (12), Eve is referred to in the third person ("and she bore a son…"), immediately followed by direct speech, in which she refers to herself in the first person ("God has appointed for me another child"), without anything in the text to mark the perspective shift (cf. Si and Spronck this issue).[10] The same abrupt shift also appears in Exodus 18:4, 1 Samuel 1:20, and, twice in a row, in Genesis 41:51–52.

At other times, the direct speech is introduced with a speaking verb, typically *wattomer* ("and she said") as in:

(13) וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן **וַתֹּאמֶר** כִּי-שָׁמַע יְהוָה כִּי-שְׂנוּאָה אָנֹכִי וַיִּתֶּן-לִי גַּם-אֶת-זֶה וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ שִׁמְעוֹן.

'She$_i$ conceived again and bore a son, and said $_i$, *"Because the Lord has heard [šama`] that I$_i$ am hated, he has given me$_i$ this son also"*; and she named him Simeon [šim`on].' (Genesis 29:33)

Whether or not the biblical narrative is committed to the claim that the naming person actually uttered the words presented as her direct speech is an open question. The grammatical forms used are usually compatible with the assumption that these are bona fide quotations. Also, explicit markers (*ki*, 'for'/'because', and `al ken`, 'therefore') occur on several occasions to mark the name given as a *consequence* of the utterance act. On the other hand, the use of direct speech is, again, entirely formulaic, and only rarely is there any

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10. The particle *ki* (translated here as 'for') should, in our analysis, be regarded as part of Eve's words. Etymological naming sequences often have the same particle at the beginning of the quoted utterance, regardless of whether a quotative marker is present. *ki* is also used in Biblical Hebrew as a complementizer introducing *indirect* speech, but this interpretation is unlikely here, both because of the preceding context and because it is followed by *direct*, not indirect, speech. A third option is to view *ki* as part of the quoting context, not the quote itself, in which case we would have to assume the verb *amra* ('she said') was omitted after it.

information on the time or place of enunciation.[11] It seems *beside the point* whether or not the words were uttered. Functionally speaking, the role of direct speech in these examples is to provide an account for the name being given, the reason behind it, rather than to report what the mother said. The direct speech should thus be regarded as fictive, as it has a so-called non-token interpretation (Pascual and Sandler 2016, 10–11): it is not meant primarily as a report on a particular act of enunciation.

3. The *lemor* Construction

Our final set of examples comes in the form of a characteristic grammatical structure in Biblical Hebrew, the *lemor* construction. With over 900 occurrences, this construction appears literally on every page of the Hebrew Bible (Wigram 1995).

The word *lemor* (לאמר) itself is the infinitive of the verb *'mr* ('say'). But, as Miller (2003, 181–185), the authority on this subject, convincingly argues, this word does not figure as a true infinitive (with only a handful of exceptions). Rather, it has grammaticalized into a complementizer (Miller 2003, 199–212), introducing direct speech (as opposed to complementizers in languages spoken most often in the West today, which only introduce *in*direct speech).[12] This is quite accurate in terms of the syntactic role of *lemor*. There has been a bit of debate about the semantics of the word *lemor* itself, essentially around whether it is entirely bleached, and so carries no meaning of its own (see overview in Miller 2003, 418–422). We believe that Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, 2003, 2006; Croft 2001) provides a more fruitful approach and examine the semantics of the whole construction in which *lemor* figures, not just the word itself.

Syntactically speaking, the *lemor* construction has the following general form:

(14) <matrix clause> *lemor* <direct speech>

For example in (15), the matrix clause is "And the supervisors […] were beaten", then comes the word *lemor* ('to say') itself, and "Why did you not finish […]?" is the direct speech component. Note the second person plural form, clearly indicating this is indeed direct speech:

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11. The only two exceptions (Genesis 35:17–18 and 38:29), involve utterances by a midwife made at the time of birth.

12. For similar cases of complementizers emerging from verbs of communication in unrelated languages without or with no widespread writing, see Güldemann and von Roncador (2002), and see more references on this phenomenon across languages from different families in Pascual (2014, 85, 103, 108).

(15) וַיֻּכּוּ, שֹׁטְרֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר-שָׂמוּ עֲלֵהֶם, נֹגְשֵׂי פַרְעֹה **לֵאמֹר**: מַדּוּעַ לֹא כִלִּיתֶם חָקְכֶם לִלְבֹּן, כִּתְמוֹל שִׁלְשֹׁם--גַּם-תְּמוֹל, גַּם-הַיּוֹם

'And the supervisors[i] of the Israelites, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten <u>to say</u> [*lemor*], *"Why did you[i] not finish the required quantity of bricks yesterday and today, as you[i] did before?"'* (Exodus 5:14)

Semantically, (15) suggests that the beating conveys the same message that would transpire from the accusation ("*Why did you not finish…?*"), that this is what the beating was about. There is, however, no implication that the accusation was necessarily uttered by anyone in particular. Hence, we can propose the following 'formula' to express the *lemor* construction's meaning:

(16) The action/event/state described in <matrix clause> conveys the message (or otherwise has the import) that would be expressed by a speaker uttering <direct speech>.

Thus stated, the semantics of the *lemor* construction has two features: (i) the direct speech component should be interpreted by default as *fictive*, which implies that the use of fictive direct speech in this construction is *prototypical* (in the sense of Rosch 1973, see also, e.g., Langacker 1987); and (ii) the *lemor* construction is a means of expressing the *meaning* of actions and events.

3.1. The lemor *Construction and Fictive Direct Speech*

Genuine quotations reproduce the particular words of a particular person, made at a particular time and place, for the purpose of informing one's audience of what that person said. Fictive quotations have a different purpose and often do not reproduce anything that anybody ever uttered. This is unmistakably the case in:

(17) כִּי הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם לֹא-נִפְלֵאת הִוא מִמְּךָ וְלֹא רְחֹקָה הִוא: לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִוא **לֵאמֹר** מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָּנוּ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְיִקָּחֶהָ לָּנוּ וְיַשְׁמִעֵנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: וְלֹא-מֵעֵבֶר לַיָּם הִוא **לֵאמֹר** מִי יַעֲבָר-לָנוּ אֶל-עֵבֶר הַיָּם וְיִקָּחֶהָ לָּנוּ וְיַשְׁמִעֵנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה.

'Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you[i] today is not too hard for you[i], nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, <u>to say</u> [*lemor*], *"Who will go up to heaven for us[i], and get it for us[i] so that we[i] may hear it and observe*

it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, <u>to say</u> [*lemor*], *"Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us_i, and get it for us_i so that we_i may hear it and observe it?"'* (Deuteronomy 30:11–13)

The questions after *lemor* ('to say') appear in a counterfactual scenario: that's what a character might have said if the commandment were in heaven or beyond the sea, which is—we are told—not the case. So, by design, this is *not* a quote of what somebody purportedly uttered. Nevertheless, the biblical text uses the *lemor* construction, unequivocally featuring direct speech (note the shift to first person plural), to characterize the counterfactual scenario.[13]

But such clear-cut cases are relatively rare. More often, the *lemor* construction, much like the English quotative *(be) like* construction exemplified in (1), occupies a continuum between fictive and genuine quotation. We argue that the fictive end of this continuum is *prototypical* for this construction. In other words, the core conceptual meaning of the *lemor* construction involves fictive direct speech. Even when this construction is used non-prototypically, including for what appears to be genuine quotation, there are still features of its use that can be accounted for as extensions of that prototype—as we will now try to demonstrate.

A very common use of the *lemor* construction is to introduce loose quotation, what Hatav (2000) calls 'free direct discourse'.[14] This is a likely interpretation for such examples as:

(18) וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה **וַיֻּגַּד** לְאַבְרָהָם **לֵאמֹר** הִנֵּה יָלְדָה מִלְכָּה גַם-הִוא בָּנִים לְנָחוֹר אָחִיךָ.

'Now after these things <u>it was told</u> Abraham_i <u>to say</u> [*lemor*], *"Milcah also has borne children, to your_i brother Nahor […]"'* (Genesis 22:20)

Here, the matrix clause refers to a communicative act (Abraham being *told* of something), and the direct speech component reproduces the gist of the message. In accordance with our formula in (16), the direct speech component, if uttered by a discourse character, conveys the same message as the communicative act(s) referred to in the matrix clause did in fact convey. This, however, does not imply somebody came to Abraham and used these precise words. The direct speech merely reproduces the information Abraham received, on one or more

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13. For a discussion of direct speech dialogue representing what wasn't said, see Tannen ([1989] 2007, 111; 1995, 202) and Vandelanotte (this issue).

14. Hatav's thesis is that *lemor* is *always* used for free direct discourse. However, Miller (2003, 412–418) provides multiple counterexamples, including our example (19).

occasions, collecting this into one utterance. The same holds for the multiple uses of the *lemor* construction to introduce "quotations that are semi-direct, retold, iterative, hypothetical, or fabricated" (Miller 2003, 394).

Farthest removed from the semantic prototype of the *lemor* construction in (16) are cases in which it is used as a *bona-fide* quotative, as in:

(19) וַיְבָרֲכֵם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא **לֵאמוֹר** בְּךָ יְבָרֵךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל **לֵאמֹר** יְשִׂמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת־אֶפְרַיִם לִפְנֵי מְנַשֶּׁה.

'So he blessed them$_{i+j}$ that day, <u>to say</u> [*lemor*], *"By you$_{i+j}$ Israel$_y$ will invoke blessings, <u>to say</u> [lemor], 'God make you$_y$ like Ephraim$_i$ and like Manasseh$_j$."*
So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.' (Genesis 48:20)

Here, despite the use of the *lemor* construction, the precise wording of the direct speech component is attributed to the speaking character. Indeed, the narrator draws our attention to a particular fact about that character's wording—the order in which the names are mentioned.[15]

Nevertheless, the prototype expressed in (16) also throws some light on such uses of the construction. We should bear in mind that the *lemor* construction is one of several different quotative constructions in Biblical Hebrew, and it is not the most common one. Most typically, actual quotations in the biblical text are given using a regular VSO clause with a speaking verb (overwhelmingly *'mr*, with the singular masculine form *wayyomer* being the most frequent).[16] Where the *lemor* construction may be used to provide faithful quotations (as far as we can tell), it is reserved for reproducing salient utterances, and is, more generally, a marked form of quoting (Miller 2003, 299–398).[17]

In the prototypical case, the direct speech component expresses, in the voice of a discourse character, the import of the action referred to in the matrix clause, the meaning it has, the effect it takes. When, however, it is understood that the direct speech component

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15. The verse in (19) is also a relatively rare case of one *lemor* construction embedded within another.

16. Such a quotative clause can also serve as the matrix clause within the *lemor* construction, thus combining the two constructions in question.

17. Syntactic differences between the quotative constructions in Biblical Hebrew add another layer of constraints to how they can be used—a matter which we do not have enough space to delve into (the subject is covered extensively in Goldenberg 1991 and Miller 2003). Syntactic considerations do not, however, alter the main conclusions of our analysis.

reproduces the very speech act announced in the matrix clause, the result is focusing the reader on the import of that speech act, on the very fact it takes effect.[18]

In (19), the quoted utterance is a *blessing* given by Jacob to his two grandchildren (understood as foreshadowing events in the distant future). In our reading, it is the fact that this is a blessing that makes the use of the *lemor* construction pertinent. Jacob's words are marked as particularly effectual. Another telling case in point is the use of the *lemor* construction in what is in effect an equivalent of legalese:

(20) וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל-עֶפְרוֹן בְּאָזְנֵי עַם-הָאָרֶץ **לֵאמֹר** אַךְ אִם-אַתָּה לוּ שְׁמָעֵנִי נָתַתִּי כֶּסֶף הַשָּׂדֶה קַח מִמֶּנִּי וְאֶקְבְּרָה אֶת-מֵתִי שָׁמָּה: וַיַּעַן עֶפְרוֹן אֶת-אַבְרָהָם **לֵאמֹר** לוֹ: אֲדֹנִי שְׁמָעֵנִי אֶרֶץ אַרְבַּע מֵאֹת שֶׁקֶל-כֶּסֶף בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ מַה-הִוא וְאֶת-מֵתְךָ קְבֹר.

'He[i] spoke to Ephron[j] in the hearing of the people of the land <u>to say</u> [*lemor*], *"If you[j] only will listen to me[i]! I will give the price of the field; accept it from me[i], so that I[i] may bury my[i] dead there."* Ephron[j] answered Abraham[i] <u>to say</u> [*lemor*] to him[i], *"My lord, listen to me[j]; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you[i] and me[j]? Bury your[i] dead."'* (Genesis 23:13–15)

These verses are part of a sales deed. Abraham purchases a burial cave from Ephron. The quoted utterances in (20), and in the entire sales deed, are part of a *binding* agreement, which is indeed recorded using the *lemor* construction throughout. Similarly, the *lemor* construction is also used to introduce most batches of religious laws in the text (setting them up as extended conversational turns by God; see Miller 2003, 285–286).

Thus, in our analysis, the *lemor* construction is prototypically a fictive interaction construction. As the formula in (16) shows, it attributes a fictive utterance (the direct speech component) to a discourse character, thereby characterizing the action in the matrix clause. Even when it is used as an actual quotative, its semantics retains traces of its fictive-interaction core. The discourse character utters the direct speech component for the reported

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18. There is room for further bleaching. The *lemor* construction can serve to mark a quoted utterance as merely pragmatically important or unusual, for instance to introduce a dispreferred response within an adjacency pair (Miller 2003, 328), or as an alternative means for introducing quotations, to be selected over other variants for syntactic (Miller 2003, 313–314) or perhaps even stylistic reasons. All such uses fit our 'formula' in (16), but they are of less interest to us, as it is precisely the fictive-interaction aspect of the construction that gets progressively (though not completely) effaced in them.

speaker, or concertedly with that speaker, as it were, resulting in a loose paraphrase in some cases, or added stress and weight in others.

3.2.   The lemor *Construction and Meaning*

In our view, the function of the fictive direct speech in the *lemor* construction is to express or reinforce the *meaning* (or at least the meaningfulness) of what the matrix clause tells about. This is evident when the construction is used for loose quotation, as in (18) above. The direct speech component here restates the gist of the message delivered in the communicative act(s) referred to in the matrix clause. Of particular interest are cases in which the main verb is not itself communicative, as in (15) above or in:

(21)   וַתִּקַּח הַמְיַלֶּדֶת וַתִּקְשֹׁר עַל-יָדוֹ שָׁנִי **לֵאמֹר** זֶה יָצָא רִאשֹׁנָה

'[A]nd the midwife took and bound on his hand a crimson thread, to say [*lemor*], *"This one came out first."'* (Genesis 38:28)

Here, twins are born and the midwife marks the firstborn by tying a thread around his hand. Using *lemor* instead of *wattomer* ('and she said') suggests that the direct speech need *not* be attributed to the midwife, who is merely said to perform an action: binding a thread. In our interpretation, it is the import of this action that is expressed in the text by a fictive enunciation. The direct speech component is ascribed to an implied, fictive discourse character, with the aim of characterizing or explaining the action referred to in the matrix clause.

In (22), we again have a non-verbal action (blowing a horn) to which direct speech is being attributed:

(22)   וְשָׁאוּל תָּקַע בַּשּׁוֹפָר בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ **לֵאמֹר**, יִשְׁמְעוּ הָעִבְרִים: וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁמְעוּ **לֵאמֹר** הִכָּה שָׁאוּל אֶת-נְצִיב פְּלִשְׁתִּים וְגַם-נִבְאַשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּפְּלִשְׁתִּים.

'And Saul blew the horn throughout all the land, to say [*lemor*], *"Let the Hebrews hear!"* And all Israel heard to say [*lemor*], *"Saul had defeated the*

garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious to the Philistines'" (1 Samuel 13:3–4)[19]

Notably, (22) features two distinct direct speech utterances ascribed to the same (communicative) act, one reflecting the intentions of the addresser and the other reflecting the (different) understanding of this act by its audience. King Saul has just defeated a garrison of the Philistine army and he is now blowing the horn to announce it. Saul probably simply wanted the Israelites to know of the victory. This is what blowing the horn meant *from his perspective*, but what the Israelites actually understood is that following this military success the Philistines are now angry with them and they should expect retaliation. This is what blowing the horn meant *to them*.[20]

We shall return to the notion of meaning reflected in this usage, and some more general implications it might have, below.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, we discussed several widespread and typical uses of perspectivization in the Hebrew Bible. We showed that non-quotational direct speech involving perspective persistence is a frequent occurrence in the biblical text, and takes a variety of different grammatical forms. These observations are valuable in their own right, especially given the unique status of the Hebrew Bible in the history of Western culture and beyond, but they are also significant as supporting evidence for broader theoretical claims. In this concluding section, we would like to sketch some such broader (and more speculative) implications, with a focus on two particular themes: orality and the notion of meaning. Per our hypothesis, perspective-indexing structures, such as direct speech, should be especially pervasive in texts and languages that stand close to the oral (and therefore conversational) roots of human culture (Pascual 2014, 29–57, 83–112; Vries 2003). Thus, one common feature of a large number of primary oral languages is the existence of unmarked or obligatory grammatical

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19. The verb *šmʿ*, the matrix clause verb of the second verse, is polysemous. The basic meaning is 'hear'. More relevant in this case is the related sense of 'understand' (an utterance, a situation, or a language). In addition, the verb is also used in the sense of 'obey'.

20. Alter (1999, 70–71) suggests blowing the horn was rather a call to arms, and was perceived as such by the Israelites. In this case, the two meanings of blowing the horn are congruent, but are nevertheless reported as distinct by the biblical narrator. Note also that we may interpret (22) as saying not that Saul blew the horn himself but that he ordered it to be blown. The rationale for the action could have been given verbally as part of such an order.

forms that transparently developed from direct speech to express what is often not a report of previously produced discourse (Pascual 2014, 83–112; and see Güldemann and von Roncador 2002; Vries 2003; Spronck 2016; Voort 2016). Grammaticalized forms of fictive direct speech are also abundant in signed languages (Jarque and Pascual 2016) and in historical literary genres grounded in oral tradition (Beaumont 1996; Louviot 2016). Marnette (1998, 172) goes as far as to say that direct speech is the only way to represent thoughts in some medieval literary genres.

The Hebrew Bible is an ancient text. While it was clearly the product of a highly literate culture for its day, it stands much closer to the oral and conversational origins of language and communication of all human culture (Ong [1982] 2002), certainly more so than texts produced in modern literate societies. It has many parts that originate in oral folklore (Dundes 1999), and is still today regularly recited orally in religious settings. And indeed, we found that fictive direct speech is abundantly present and takes multiple forms in the biblical text, as is also the case for non-information-seeking questions—another fictive interaction construction (see Moshavi 2010, 2013). Several common grammatical constructions are prototypically used to introduce fictive direct speech. This is further evidence to support the claim that face-to-face conversation, characterized by the expression of perspective and sequential viewpoint shift, was one of the earliest and most productive templates for linguistically conceptualizing and expressing human experience (e.g. Linell 1998), especially of mental and cultural phenomena.

One particular construction we examined, the *lemor* construction, suggests even broader theoretical implications. As we saw, this construction is prototypically used to gloss the *meaning* of an action or state of affairs. There is some anachronism in our use of the word 'meaning' in this context. The notion(s) of meaning as applied by linguists, philosophers, and lay people today would be alien to people living in Palestine over 2,500 years ago. Tellingly, Biblical Hebrew had no known word for the noun 'meaning' or the verb 'to mean'. But by the same token, the perspective on the import of people's words and actions, which we see embodied in the *lemor* construction in Biblical Hebrew, can be used to expand or revise our modern notions of meaning. For speakers of Biblical Hebrew, stating what some action, utterance, or state of affairs means did not involve reducing it to logical propositions or any other abstract entities. Instead, such statements used (fictive) direct speech, indeed, often quite 'pragmatics-heavy' direct speech, as in (15) or (17), where it contains non-information-seeking questions and choral speech. Moreover, while modern philosophical models seek to analyze the meaning of words and utterances into some sort of (abstract) non-linguistic entity,

Biblical Hebrew went in the opposite direction: non-linguistic actions and situations were explicated using (fictive) linguistic utterances in direct speech.

Biblical Hebrew thus seems to exemplify a cultural model of meaning that has been neglected in most philosophical and linguistic semantic theories, a model that connects meaning with making an utterance, a model that does not seek to reduce linguistic meaning to allegedly 'simpler' notions (see overview in Sandler 2016), but instead considers a communicative linguistic act as the basic paradigm for meaningfulness in general (Voloshinov [1929] 1986; Bakhtin [1975] 1981, [1979] 1986; Gasparov 2010).

Our paper fits within the growing tendency to combine cognitive and interactional approaches to language and language use (e.g. Linell 1998; Graumann and Kallmeyer 2002; Verhagen 2005; Zlatev et al. 2008; Zima and Brône 2015), challenging long-standing assumptions among linguists, by viewing both meaning and grammar as arising from talk-in-interaction, and ultimately, perspective shifting (see overview in Sandler 2016 and Gentens et al. this issue). More broadly, while focused on a single text, this paper nevertheless instantiates the central role of intersubjectivity in language and discourse in general (see also van Duijn and Verhagen this issue). This was the case not only on the immediate level, at which language use and discourse partake in intersubjective communication, but also on a structural and conceptual level, at which conversation provides us with a cognitive model to access and make sense of complex situations and ideas. In sum, we hope to have shown that the centrality and pervasiveness of perspective-indexing constructions reflect the fact that grammar and discourse are inherently *viewpointed* in nature, emerging from our lifelong experience with sequential turn-taking and the expression of perspective.

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