In the beginning there was conversation

Fictive direct speech in the Hebrew Bible

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This paper explores the use of non-quotational direct speech – a construction displaying deictic perspective persistence – in the Hebrew Bible, an ancient text of great cultural significance. We focus on 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, which introduces the import of an action through direct speech. We claim that such fictive speech is grounded in face-to-face conversation as conceptual model or frame. Beyond the Hebrew Bible itself, we discuss possible extended implications that our findings have for the link between grammatical structures conventionally associated with perspective shift and orality, as well as possible links between the conceptual frame of situated interaction and the notion of linguistic 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

This study examines the use of one common type of perspective-indexing construction with deictic perspective persistence, namely non-quotational direct speech, in one culturally significant ancient text, the Hebrew Bible. We aim to contribute to a broader view of the foundational role of intersubjectivity in human cognition, language, and culture.

As outlined in Gentens et al. (this issue), and argued throughout this issue, perspective-indexing constructions are pervasive across unrelated languages and discourse genres (cf. Graumann and Kallmeyer 2002). Indeed, both the expression and the change of perspective are quintessential in intersubjective communication, which invariably contains viewpoint information and is characterized by

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turn-taking, i.e. constant viewpoint shift between addresser and addressee. We treat linguistic perspective-indexing structures – including those involving only one overt 'turn' and perspective – 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 metaphorical source domain, structured by turn-taking, with such roles (to use Goffman's 1963 terms) as ADDRESSER, ADDRESSEE, and BYSTANDER.

We focus on a common – albeit understudied – phenomenon that invariably involves the grammar of embedded perspective: non-quotational direct speech (Pascual 2006, 2014; Pascual and Sandler 2016). This is 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 you. 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 kind of like: *why did I look up to you? Why aren't you looking up to me?*[1]

Note that if the italicized words were introduced by "I was (kind of) like" they could be interpreted as an ordinary quotative or a pseudo-quotation: he didn't say these exact words, but they give the gist of what was uttered (cf. Tannen 1986, 2007; Clark and Gerrig 1990). But in (1), the *(be) like* construction is used to express the speaker's thinking, rather than reproduce an actual past utterance. The enunciation is not reported, as in ordinary quotation, including the report of fictitious or imaginary speech (e.g. "Cinderella said: '*Where's my shoe?*'"). It is not a *constructed* utterance either (Tannen 1986, 2007), as in "I wish Don said: *'I quit'*" (cf. Vandelanotte, this issue). Instead, the enunciation following 'kind of like' is *fictive* in the sense of Talmy (2000). Its ontological nature is between reality and fiction, it is non-actual, but it does serve to express something actual about the world (or, better, the speaker).

Moreover, 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),

1. Italics in examples indicate direct speech; underlining (in Latin script) or boldfacing (in Hebrew) marks quotative markers and other noteworthy parts in the example.

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 to Armstrong 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 – and the deictic coordinates associated with this role – is maintained, but the conversational structure in which his enunciation is understood has changed, for discourse purposes. The direct speech needs to be (re)interpreted 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).[2] 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 (1) are typical cases of *fictive interaction* – the use of the conceptual 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; Pascual and Sandler 2016). That long and venerable history of fictive interaction also includes the Hebrew Bible.

2. The conversation frame in the Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew Bible – a foundational text of Western culture and beyond – dates 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.[3] We use the Masoretic text, considered canonical in Judaism, finalized around the 10th century CE (some vowel markings are even

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

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

later). Its long history of editing implies it cannot, alas, be viewed as simply the product of a single historical native speaker community. Moreover, 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.

The examples analyzed below are from the Classical Biblical Hebrew linguistic layer of the text (Genesis through 2 Kings). All verses appear in the Hebrew original with an English translation based on the New Revised Standard Version, modified to render quotative constructions as literally as possible.[4] For interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses, we follow the practice proposed by Shead (2011, xxii–xxiii, 6–9).[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. However, the text is largely dominated by direct speech, and broader narrative structures modeled on face-to-face communication. While indirect speech does occur, 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 *ʾmr* ('say') appears 5,308 times in the Bible, making it easily the text's most frequent verb (Wigram 1995).

This use of turn-taking or direct speech constructions to express more monological or narrative meanings is observed also on a deeper conceptual level when conversation is used as a frame structuring numerous aspects of the narrative. Consider, for instance:

(2) וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֱלֹהִ֔ים יְהִ֥י א֖וֹר **וַיְהִי**-א֥וֹר

way-y-ōmer ʾĕlōhîm yə-hî ʾôr wa-y-hî ʾôr

CO.NARR-3MSG-say God 3MSG-be\JUSS light CO.NARR-3MSG-be light

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

4. The verb *ʾmr* is always translated as 'say' and the complementizer *lemor* as 'to say'. Quotatives added by the translators were removed, and those omitted restored.

5. Our glossing choice for verbs does not imply any preference regarding any of the several theories on interpreting Biblical Hebrew verb grammar, nor is our analysis affected by them. We depart from Shead's practice in glossing the construct state as a genitive, for better readability.

The creation of the world is not presented 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 on one class of perspective-indexing phenomena – the use of fictive direct speech, as in (1) above. These are formal quotations that share structural and functional characteristics with ordinary reported speech (see Vandenalotte, this issue; Si and Spronck, this issue), but which have a non-quotative function to express a stance, reason, or state of affairs rather than genuinely shift to an utterance produced by a given discourse source (see overview in Pascual 2014, 1–25; Pascual and Sandler 2016, 3–22). In line with Vandelanotte (this issue), and van Duijn and Verhagen (this issue), this allows us to consider the range of functional extensions that specific grammatical constructions of direct speech may have. While the phenomena evoked below typically involve some state of mind related to a character evoked in the main clause, and in that sense involve a cognitive perspective shift towards that character, they do not involve the metalinguistic status of an utterance (see Si and Spronck, this issue). Put differently, while the use of direct speech grammatically signals a cognitive and deictic shift, the deictic shift is not realized in interpretation, which makes these cases instantiate deictic perspective persistence (Gentens et al., this issue; see Vandelanotte, this issue, for a discussion of internet memes involving both deictic and cognitive perspective persistence). Within this diverse category, we primarily discuss: (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, primarily those lacking an indirect speech alternative, it is grammatically obligatory (de Vries 2003, 2010; Pascual 2014; van der Voort 2016). 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) and in Old French and English literature (Marnette 1998; Louviot 2016). The Hebrew Bible is no exception, with thoughts,

and especially intentions, routinely expressed through fictive direct speech (cf. de Vries 2010). Consider:

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

way-y-ippōl ʾaḇrāhām ʿal=pān-āw way-yi-ṣḥāq
CO.NARR-3MSG-fall Abraham on=face.GEN-3MSG CO.NARR-3MSG-laugh
way-y-ōmer bə-lib-bô hal-lə-ḇen mêʾāh=šānāh
CO.NARR-3MSG-say in-heart.GEN-3MSG the-to-son\GEN hundred=year
yiw-wālêḏ wə-ʾim=śā·rāh hă-ḇaṯ=tiśʿîm šānāh
3MSG.PASS-bear\NPFV and-if=Sarah the-daughter=ninety year
tê-lêḏ
3FSG-bear\NPFV
'Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, *"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. The direct speech is thus not used to report prior discourse but rather to present internalized dialogicality (Du Bois 2011). Similarly:

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

way-y-ōmer mōšeh ʾā-sur-āh=nā wə-ʾe-rʾeh
CO.NARR-3MSG-say Moses 1SG-turn_aside-HORT=FRM and-1SG.NPFV -see
ʾeṯ=ham-marʾeh hag-gāḏōl haz-zeh maddūaʿ lō=yi-ḇʿar
ACC=the-sight the-big the-this.MSG why NEG=1SG-burn\NPFV
has-səneh
the-bush
'Then Moses$_i$ said, *"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 present 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 of both his intention and 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, interpreting the expression of intentions in direct speech as inner monologue does not always work, as when direct speech is used to ascribe intentions – and action upon them – to a group (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 בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה-לָּנוּ שֵׁם פֶּן-נָפוּץ עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ. וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה לִרְאֹת אֶת-הָעִיר וְאֶת-הַמִּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם.

way-y-ōmər-ū *ʾîš* *ʾel=rêʿê-hū* *hāḇ-āh*
CO.NARR-3M-say-PL man to=fellow.GEN-3SG bring.IMP[MSG]-FRM
ni-lbən-āh *ləḇên-îm wə-ni-śrəp-āh* *li-śrêp̄āh*
1PL-make_bricks-HORT brick-PL and-1PL-burn-HORT to-fire
wat-tə-hî *lā-hem* *hal-ləḇênāh lə-ʾāḇen* *wə-ha-ḥêmār hāyāh*
CO.NARR-3FSG-be to-3MPL the-brick to-stone and-the-clay be[3MSG]\PFV
lā-hem *la-ḥōmer.*
to-3MPL to-mortar
way-y-ōmər-ū *hāḇāh* *ni-ḇneh=lā-nū* *ʿîr*
CO.NARR-3M-say-PL bring.IMP[MSG]-FRM 1PL-build\NPFV=to.1PL city
ū-miḡdāl *wə-rōš-ô* *ḇaš-šām-ayim wə-na-ʿăśeh=lā-nū* *šêm*
and-tower and-head.GEN-3MSG in-sky.DU and-1PL-do\NFPV=to.1PL name
pen=nā-p̄ūṣ *ʿal=pən-ê* *ḵol hā-ʾāreṣ.* *wa-y-yêreḏ*
lest=1PL.disperse\NPFV on=face.GEN all the-land CO.NARR-3MSG.go_down
yahweh li-rʾōṯ *ʾeṯ=hā-ʿîr* *wə-ʾeṯ=ham-miḡdāl* *ʾăšer bān-ū*
Yahweh to-see.INF ACC=the.city and-ACC=the-tower REL build.PFV-3MPL
bən-ê *hā-ʾāḏām.*
son-PL\GEN the-man
'And they$_i$ said to one another, "*Come, let us$_i$ make bricks, and burn them thoroughly*." And they$_i$ had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they$_i$ said, "*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 notable issue 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 nuance is required (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 both modern and historical languages (Louviot 2016; Tannen 1986, 2007; Pascual 2014). Choral speech is also used in the biblical narrative, in which two different types of choral speech can be found. In one case, the conversation among a group of people is summarized 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 בְּהִתְחַנְּנוֹ אֵלֵינוּ וְלֹא שָׁמָעְנוּ עַל-כֵּן בָּאָה אֵלֵינוּ הַצָּרָה הַזֹּאת: וַיַּעַן רְאוּבֵן אֹתָם **לֵאמֹר** הֲלוֹא אָמַרְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר אַל-תֶּחֱטְאוּ בַיֶּלֶד וְלֹא שְׁמַעְתֶּם וְגַם-דָּמוֹ הִנֵּה נִדְרָשׁ.

way-y-ōmər-ū *ʾîš* *ʾel=ʾāḥ-îw* *ʾăbāl* *ʾăšêm-îm* *ʾănaḥnū*
CO.NARR-3M-say-PL man to=brother.GEN-3MSG but guilty-MPL we
ʿal=ʾāḥî-nū *ʾăšer rāʾî-nū* *ṣāra-ṯ* *napš-ô*
on=brother.GEN-1PL REL see.PFV-1PL anguish.GEN soul.GEN-3MSG
bə-hiṯḥann-ô *ʾêlê-nū wə-lō* *šāmāʿə-nū* *ʿal=kên*
in-plead.REFL.INF-3MSG to-1PL and-NEG hear.PFV-1PL on=thus
bā-ʾāh *ʾêlê-nū haṣ-ṣārāh* *haz-zōṯ.*
come.PFV-3FSG to-1PL the-anguish the-this.FSG
way-yaʿan *rəʾūḇên* *ʾōṯ-ām* *lêmōr hă-lô* *ʾāmar-tî* *ʾălê-ḵem*
CO.NARR-3MSG-answer Reuben ACC-3MPL COMP the-NEG say.PFV-1SG to-2MPL
lêmōr ʾal=te-ḥeṭʾ-ū *ḇay-yeleḏ wə-lō* *šəmaʿ-tem*
COMP NEG=2M.NPFV-sin-PL in-boy and-neg hear.PFV-2MPL
wə-ḡam=dām-ô *hinnêh ni-ḏrāš.*
and-also=blood.GEN-3MSG behold PASS.PART-demand[MSG]
'They$_i$ said to one another, "*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$_i$ to say, "*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)

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 words. This stretch of direct speech gives the upshot of the brothers' conversation, it is

a *fictive* message summarizing and standing for the whole conversation, rather than quoting some factual part of it.[6]

The other type of choral speech in the 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-לָנוּ לֶחֶם וְלָמָּה נָמוּת נֶגְדֶּךָ כִּי אָפֵס כָּסֶף

way-yit-tōm hak-kesep mê-'ereṣ miṣrayim ū-mê-'ereṣ
CO.NARR-3MST.end the-money from-land.GEN Egypt and-from-land.GEN
kənaʿan way-yā-ḇō-'ū ḳol miṣrayim 'el=yôsēp lêmōr
Canaan CO.NARR-3M-come-PL all Egypt to=Joseph comp
hā·ḇāh=lā-nū leḥem wə-lām-māh nā-mūṯ neḡde-ḵā
bring.IMP[MSG]-FRM=to-1PL bread and-to-what 1PL-die\NPFV opposite-2MSG
kî 'āp̄ês kā·sep̄
because cease.PFV[3MSG] money
'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 communicative act. It would be absurd to interpret this as an actual quotation. These are, again, fictive utterances standing for multiple conversations between different characters (i.e. the Egyptians). They are compressed to human scale (Fauconnier and Turner 2001), 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 enunciation that is quite common cross-linguistically is to indicate reason. Indeed, in some languages the use of fictive direct speech for reason is fully grammaticalized, and sometimes even obligatory (Pascual 2014,102–104). It is also abundant in Biblical Hebrew, which has a special construction for this purpose, where direct speech is introduced by the sequence *ki amar* (lit. 'for [N/Pron.] said'). This construction offers an explanation grounded in people's words

6. This is reminiscent of the sentence 'Three times a student asked a stupid question', a classical example of fictivity (Langacker 1999, 98). Here, 'a student' is a fictive entity, standing for three different students, 'a stupid question' similarly standing for three different questions. The difference is that choral speech in Biblical Hebrew is always grammatically marked as plural.

7. 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.

or thoughts, for some action or state of affairs. It is quite clear that all such 'quotations' aim to provide an account of people's reasoning to advance the narrative, 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 **כִי אָמַר** מִקְרֶה הוּא בִּלְתִּי טָהוֹר הוּא כִּי-לֹא טָהוֹר.
wə-lō=ḏibber šā'ūl mə'ūmāh bay-yôm ha-hū kî
and-NEG=speak[3MSG]\INTS Saul anything in-day the-that.MSG because
'āmar miqreh hū biltî ṭāhôr hū kî=lō ṭāhôr
say[3MSG]\PFV happenstance be.3MSG.PART NEG clean he because=NEG clean
'Saul$_i$ did not say anything that day; for he$_i$ said [*ki amar*], *"Something has befallen him$_j$; he$_j$ is not clean, surely he$_j$ is not clean."*' (1 Samuel 20:26)

Here, 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 **כִי אָמְרוּ** פֶּן-תִּבְלָעֵנוּ הָאָרֶץ.
wə-ḵol yiśrā'ēl 'ăšer səḇîḇ-ōṯê-hem nās-ū
and-all Israel REL around.GEN-FPL.GEN-3MPL flee-3PL\PFV
lə-qōl-ām kî 'ā·mə·rū pen=ti-ḇlā'ê-nū
to-voice.GEN-3MPL because say.3PL\PFV lest=3FSG.NPFV-swallow-1PL.ACC
hā-'āreṣ
the-land
'All Israel$_i$ around them$_j$ fled at their$_j$ outcry, for they$_i$ said [*ki amru*], *"Lest the earth will swallow us$_i$ 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 **כִי אָמְרוּ** בָּא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-הַמַּחֲנֶה
way-yir'-ū hap-pəlišt-îm kî 'āmər-ū bā
CO.NARR-1PL-fear-1PL the-Philistine-PL because say.3PL\PFV come[3MSG]\PFV
'ĕ·lō·hîm 'el=ham-maḥăneh
God(PL) to=the-camp
'The Philistines were afraid; for they said [*ki amru*], *"Gods*[8] *have come into the camp."*' (1 Samuel 4:7)

8. While this verse suggests the reading "God" in the singular (reflecting the theological perspective of the Hebrew Bible's editors), the next verse refers to the same presence as "Gods" in the plural (reflecting the polytheistic Philistines' perspective). The Hebrew word for 'God' here

This verse illustrates 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 means of an utterance regarding it. The narrative does not seem concerned with nuanced observations about the effects of verbalization on the psyche. Rather, the direct speech *ki amar* construction is meant to provide the Philistines' subjective perspective, the reason for their fear. Finally, consider:

(11) וְחָרָשׁ לֹא יִמָּצֵא בְּכֹל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל **כִּי-אמר פְּלִשְׁתִּים** פֶּן יַעֲשׂוּ הָעִבְרִים חֶרֶב אוֹ חֲנִית.
wə-ḥārāš lō yim-māṣê bə-ḵōl ʾereṣ yiśrāʾēl
and-smith NEG 3MSG-find\PASS in-all.GEN land.GEN Israel
kî=ʾā·mər[-u][9] *pəlišt-îm pen ya-ʿăś-ū hā-ʿiḇr-îm*
because=say.3PL\PFV Philistine-PL lest 3M-make-PL\NPFV the-Hebrew-PL
ḥereḇ ʾô ḥănîṯ
sword or spear
'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 succinctly used to express the rationale for a state of affairs affecting an entire population. 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 by making their own weapons. 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.[10]

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 used when newborns are named, as in:

(*elohim*) is morphologically plural. The text is thus ambiguous between the two readings. We followed the word choice of the English translators.

9. The obligatory plural suffix *-u* is absent from the written text (*ktiv*), likely due to an ancient copying error, and is traditionally restored when the text is read aloud (*qri*).

10. See Verstraete (2008) on the status of (negative) purpose, reason, and intended endpoint or result as involving a mental state relation on the part of the main clause participant(s) (typically the agent), which is formally often reflected in the use of quotatives/complementizers of speech reports. See also Gentens et al. (this issue) and Example (17) below.

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

way-yêḏaʿ ʾāḏām ʿôḏ ʾeṯ=ʾišt-ô wat-têʾ-leḏ
CO.NARR-3MSG-know Adam more ACC=woman.GEN-3MSG CO.NARR-3FSG-bear
bên wat-ti-qrā ʾeṯ=šəm-ô šêṯ kî
son CO.NARR-3FSG-call ACC=name.GEN-3MSG Seth because
šāṯ=l-î ʾĕlōhîm zeraʿ ʾaḥêr taḥaṯ heḇel kî
set[3MSG]\PFV=to.1SG God seed other instead Abel because
hărāḡ-ô qāyin
kill[3MSG]\PFV-3MSG.ACC Cain
'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. This is a distinctive feature of the biblical narrative (reflecting the significance of names and their meanings in the culture that produced this text), specifically in the book of Genesis.[11] In the great majority of cases, the account is given in direct speech by the person naming the child (typically the mother). A smaller subgroup of cases gives the etymological account without employing direct speech in the same manner. Sometimes the account and the name are both contained in a divine utterance announcing an upcoming birth (e.g. Genesis 16:11). On one occasion (Genesis 3:20), the etymological account appears directly in the main narrative. Otherwise, direct speech seems to be the norm. The use of direct speech in this context was sufficiently formulaic that in several instances the text dispenses entirely with quotative markers for introducing it, 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 a verb of saying or any other marker indicating where perspective shift occurs (cf. Si and Spronck, this issue).[12]

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11. 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).

12. We analyze the particle *ki* ('for') 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

The same abrupt, partially undermarked deictic shift also appears in 1 Samuel 1:20, and, twice in a row, in Genesis 41:51–52 and Exodus 18:4–5.

Direct speech may also be introduced with a speaking verb, typically *wat-tomer* ("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.

wat-ta-har *ʿôḏ* *wat-têʾ-leḏ* *bên wat-t-ōmer*
CO.NARR-3FSG-conceive more CO.NARR-3FSG-bear son CO.NARR-3FSG-say
kî=šāmaʿ *yahweh kî=śənūʾ-āh* *ʾānōḵî*
because=hear[3MSG]\PFV Yahweh because=hate.PASS.PART-FSG I
way-yit-ten=l-î *gam=ʾeṯ=zeh* *wat-ti-qrā*
CO.NARR-3MSG-give=to.1SG also=ACC=this CO.NARR-3FSG-call
šəm-ô *šimʿôn*
name.GEN-3MSG Simeon
'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 genuine quotations. Also, explicit markers (*ki*, 'for'/'because', and *`al ken*, 'therefore') frequently occur to mark the name given as a *consequence* of the utterance act. However, the use of direct speech is, again, entirely formulaic, and only rarely is there any information on the time or place of enunciation.[13] It seems *irrelevant* whether or not the words were uttered. Functionally speaking, direct speech is used in these examples so the narrative can provide readers with an account for the name being given, rather than to report what the mother said. The direct speech should thus be regarded as fictive, and as a case of deictic perspective persistence, where the grammatically direct representation does not correspond to a deictic shift to an original utterance setting in interpretation (Gentens et al., this issue).

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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.

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

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 Bible (Wigram 1995).

The word *lemor* (לֵאמֹר) itself is an infinitive construct form of the verb *ʼmr* ('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 modern Indo-European languages, which only introduce *in*direct speech).[14] This is quite accurate regarding the syntactic role of *lemor*. There has been some 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* occurs, not just the word itself.

Syntactically speaking, this 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:

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

way-yukk-ū *šōṭərê* *bənê* *yiśrāʾēl*
CO.NARR-3M-strike-PL\PASS.CAUS officer.MPL.GEN son.MPL.GEN Israel
ʾăšer=śām-ū *ʿălê-hem* *nōgəśê* *parʿōh* *lêmōr maddūaʿ lō*
REL=put-3MPL\PFV on-3MPL taskmaster.MPL.GEN Pharaoh COMP why NEG
ḵillî-ṯem *ḥāqə-ḵem* *li-lbōn* *ki-ṯmôl*
finish-2MPL\PFV.INTS quota.GEN-2MPL to-make_bricks.INF as-yesterday
šilšōm *gam=təmôl* *gam=hay-yôm*
day_before_yesterday also=yesterday also=the-day

14. For similar cases of complementizers emerging from speaking verbs 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).

> 'And the supervisors$_i$ of the Israelites, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten to say [*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*, implying 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 individual, made at a particular time and place, for the purpose of informing one's audience of what that individual 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.

kî ham-miṣwāh haz-z-ōṯ ʾăšer ʾānōḵî
because the-commandment the-this-FSG REL I
mə-ṣawwə-ḵā hay-yôm
MSG.PART-command\INTS-2MSG.ACC the-day
lō=ni-p̄lê-ṯ hî mim-məḵā wə-lō rəḥōq-āh hî. lō
NEG=PART-do_wonders-FSG\PASS she from-2MSG and-NEG far-FSG she. NEG
ḇ-aš-šām-ayim hî lêmōr mî ya-ʿăleh=lā-nū haš-šām-aym-āh
in-the-sky-DU she COMP who 3MSG.NPFV-ascend=to-1PL the-sky-DU-DIR
wə-yiq-qāḥe-hā lā-nū wə-ya-šmiʿê-nū
and-3MSG.NPFV-take-FSG.ACC to-1PL and-3MSG-hear\NPFV.CAUS-1PL.DAT

ʾōṯ-āh wə-na-ʿăśen-nāh. wə-lō=mê-ʿêḇer l-ay-yām hî
ACC-3FSG and-1PL.NPFV-do-3FSG.ACC. and-NEG=from-across to-the-sea she
lêmōr mî ya-ʿăḇor=lā-nū ʾel=ʿêḇer hay-yām
COMP who 3msg.npfv-pass=to-1pl to=across the-sea
wə-yiq-qāḥe-hā lā-nū wə-ya-šmiʿê-nū
and-3MSG.NPFV-take-FSG.ACC to-1PL and-3MSG-hear\NPFV.CAUS-1PL.DAT
ʾōṯ-āh wə-na-ʿăśen-nāh.
ACC-3FSG and-1PL.NPFV-do-3FSG.ACC.
'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, to say [*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, to say [*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.[15] Nevertheless, the biblical text uses the *lemor* construction, unequivocally featuring direct speech (note the shift to first person plural), to characterize the counterfactual scenario.[16]

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, that is, 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'.[17] An example is:

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15. More precisely, (17) is part of a longer monologue attributed to Moses, so it is as such a quote from Moses, but not of his addressees, who are the nominal 'speakers' in the embedded direct speech.

16. For a discussion of direct speech dialogue representing what wasn't said, see Tannen (2007, 111) and Vandelanotte (this issue).

17. 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).

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

wa-y-hî ʾaḥărê had-dəḇār-îm hā-ʾêlleh
CO.NARR-3MSG-be after the-thing-MPL the-this.MPL
way-yug-gaḏ lə-ʾaḇrāhām lêmōr hinnêh yāləḏ-āh
CO.NARR-3MSG-tell\PASS.CAUS to-Abraham COMP behold bear.PFV-3FSG
milkāh ḡam=hî bān-îm lə·nāḥôr ʾāḥî-ḵā
Milcah also=she son-PL to-Nahor brother.GEN-2MSG
'Now after these things it was told Abraham$_i$ to say [*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 what the communicative act(s) referred to in the matrix clause did in fact convey. This, however, does not imply somebody addressed Abraham with these precise words. The direct speech merely reproduces the information Abraham received, on one or more occasions, compressed 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) וְיִבָרֲכֵם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא **לֵאמוֹר** בְּךָ יְבָרֵךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל **לֵאמֹר** יְשִׂמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת-אֶפְרַיִם לִפְנֵי מְנַשֶּׁה.

wa-y-ḇārəḵ-êm b-ay-yôm ha-hū lêmôr bə-ḵā
CO.NARR-3MSG-bless\INTS-2MPL.ACC in-the-day the-that.MSG COMP in-2MSG
yə-ḇārêḵ yiśrāʾêl lêmōr yə-śim-ḵā ʾĕlōhîm
3MSG-bless\NPFV.INTS Israel COMP 3MSG.NPFV-put-2MSG.ACC God
kə-ʾēprayim wə-ḵi-mnaššeh way-yā-śem ʾeṯ=ʾēprayim lip̄nê
as-Ephraim and-as-Manasseh CO.NARR-3MSG-put ACC=Ephraim before
mənaššeh
Manasseh
'So he blessed them$_{i+j}$ that day, to say [*lemor*], *"By you$_{i+j}$ Israel$_y$ will invoke blessings, to say [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 words of the direct speech component are 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.[18]

Nevertheless, the prototype expressed in (16) also throws some light on such uses of the construction. The *lemor* construction is one of several different quotative constructions in Biblical Hebrew, and 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).[19] 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).[20]

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 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.[21]

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:

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

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

20. Syntactic differences between the quotative constructions in Biblical Hebrew add another layer of constraints to how they can be used – something we cannot delve into here (this is covered extensively in Goldenberg 1991 and Miller 2003). Syntactic considerations do not, however, alter the main conclusions of our analysis.

21. The *lemor* construction can also 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 reasons (Miller 2003, 313–314). 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.

(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.

wa-y-ḏabbêr *ʾel=ʿeprôn* *bə-ʾozənê*
CO.NARR-3MSG-speak\INTS to-Ephron in-ear.MPL.GEN
ʿam=hā-ʾāreṣ *lêmōr aḵ* *ʾim=ʾattāh lū* *šəmāʿê-nî*
people.[SG].GEN=the-land COMP but if=2MSG COND.IRR hear.MS.IMP-1SG.ACC
nāṯat-tî *kesep* *haś-śāḏeh qaḥ* *mimmen-nî*
give-1SG\PFV money.GEN the-field take.MS.IMP from-1SG
wə-ʾe-qbər-āh *ʾeṯ=mêṯ-î* *šāmmāh.*
and-1SG.burry-HORT\NPFV ACC=dead.GEN-1SG there
way-yaʿan *ʿeprôn* *ʾeṯ=ʾaḇrāhām* *lêmōr l-o.* *ʾăḏōn-î*
CO.NARR-3MSG-answer Ephron ACC=Abraham COMP to-3MSG master.GEN-1SG
šəmāʿê-nî *ʾereṣ ʾarbaʿ mê'-ōṯ* *šeqel=kesep* *bên-î*
hear.MS.IMP-1SG.ACC land four hundred-FPL shekel.GEN=silver between-1SG
ū-ḇênə-ḵā *mah=hî* *wə-ʾeṯ=mêṯə-ḵā* *qaḇōr.*
and-between-2MSG what=that.FSG and-ACC-dead.GEN-2MSG burry.MS.IMP
'He$_i$ spoke to Ephron$_j$ in the hearing of the people of the land to say [*lemor*], *"If you$_j$ only will listen to me! I$_i$ will give the price of the field; accept it from me$_j$, so that I$_i$ may bury my$_i$ dead there."* Ephron$_j$ answered Abraham$_i$ to say [*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 reproduced 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) indicates, it attributes a fictive utterance (the direct speech component) to a discourse character, thereby characterizing the action in the matrix clause. Even when introducing a genuine quotation, its semantics retains traces of its fictive-interaction core, which accounts for the fact that the quotation is always *marked* (had the genuine quotative use been prototypical, we would expect *lemor* to be regularly used for *unmarked* quotation). The discourse character utters the direct speech component for the reported speaker, or concertedly with that speaker, as it were, resulting in a loose paraphrase in some cases, or added stress and weight in others. In the context of the biblical text, these added glosses and emphases reflect the pragmatic and cultural priorities of the biblical narrator – they help advance the narrative, point to important moments

in the unfolding plot, or mark issues of special cultural and symbolic significance. This means that on a higher level, the direct speech sections further have an overlaid narrative function of advancing and emphasizing certain parts of the narrative, even where the *lemor* construction is used in a bona-fide quotation. This overlay of narrative meanings on top of the range of fictive interaction meanings is similar to the combination of narrator-related and character-related meanings that may be involved in irregular perspective shifts (see Gentens et al., this issue).

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 presents. 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

wat-tiq-qaḥ ha-m-yalleḏ-eṯ wat-ti-qšōr

CO.NARR-3FSG-take the-PART-bear-FSG\INTS CO.NARR-3FSG-tie

ʿal=yāḏ-ô šānî lêmōr zeh yāṣā rišōn-āh

on=hand.GEN-3MSG scarlet COMP this.MSG exit.PFV[3MSG] first-FRM

'[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.

wə-šāʾūl tāqaʿ b-aš-šôp̄ār bə-ḵol hā-ʾāreṣ lêmōr

and-Saul blow.PFV[3MSG] in-the-horn in-all.GEN the-land COMP

yi-šməʿ-ū hā-ʿiḇr-îm. wə-ḵol yiśrāʾêl šāmə-ʿū lêmōr

3M-hear-PL\NPFV the-Hebrew-MPL and-all Israel hear.PFV-3MPL COMP

hik-kāh *šā'ūl 'eṯ=nəṣîḇ* *pəlišt-îm*
CAUS.PFV-strike[3MSG] Saul ACC=garrison.GEN Philistine-MPL
wə-ḡam=ni-ḇ'aš *yiśrā'ēl b-ap-pəlišt-îm*
and-also=PASS.PFV-stink[3MSG] Israel in-the-Philistine-MPL
'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)[22]

Notably, (22) features two distinct direct speech utterances that involve two distinct perspectives on 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 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*.[23]

We 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. The constructional patterns we exemplified all have a grammatically 'direct' representation, while this deictic shift is usually not realized in interpretation. These cases of deictic perspective persistence were shown to fulfill a range of non-quotational functions, such as a character's assessment of the reason for, or import of an action, while also involving added narrative functions. We showed that non-quotational direct speech is frequently attested throughout the biblical text, and takes a variety of different grammatical forms.

22. The verb *šm`*, 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). The verb is also used to mean 'obey'.

23. 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. We may also interpret (22) as saying that Saul ordered the horn to be blown. The rationale for the action could have been given verbally as part of such an order.

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.

Widespread writing seems to affect culture, grammar, and discourse in profound ways (Ong 2002). Prior studies suggest that structures that fully shift to the deixis of (fictive) conversational participants, such as direct speech, are especially pervasive in texts and languages that stand close to the oral roots of human culture (see overview and references in Pascual 2014, 29–57, 83–112). Thus, one common feature of a large number of primary oral languages from different families is the lack, or infrequent use, of indirect speech and the existence of unmarked or obligatory grammatical forms that transparently developed from direct speech to express what is not a report of previously produced discourse (Güldemann and von Roncador 2002; de Vries 2003; Spronck 2016; van der Voort 2016). Grammaticalized forms of fictive direct speech are also abundant and unmarked in signed languages (e.g. Jarque and Pascual 2016), which generally lack a writing system. Direct speech – including fictive direct speech – is usually also preferred to indirect speech in spoken conversation, even in languages with a writing system (Tannen 1986, and see more references in Pascual 2014, 85). It should thus not be surprising that fictive direct speech was also widespread 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 origins of language and communication and of all human culture (Ong 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 text. Several common grammatical constructions are prototypically used to introduce fictive direct speech. This is also the case for another fictive interaction construction, namely non-information-seeking questions (Pascual 2014, 29–57, 169–188), such as leading and rhetorical questions, which are overwhelmingly common in the Hebrew Bible (some three quarters of the corpus examined in Moshavi 2013, and see Moshavi 2010). This further evidences that the deictic frame of face-to-face conversation, characterized by the expression of perspective as directly linked to the conversational ground, and by sequential viewpoint shift between interactants (but see Vandelanotte, and van Duijn and

Verhagen, this issue, for non-sequential, mixed-perspective constructions), 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, and for organizing discourse.

One particular construction we examined, involving *lemor* plus direct speech, suggests even broader theoretical implications. As we saw, this construction is prototypically used to gloss the *meaning* of an action or state of affairs. On the other hand, Biblical Hebrew had no known word for the noun 'meaning' or the verb 'to mean'. Biblical Hebrew thus seems to exemplify a cultural model of meaning that has been neglected in most philosophical and linguistic semantic theories. This model connects linguistic meaning with making an utterance, not seeking to reduce linguistic meaning to allegedly 'simpler' notions, such as logical propositions or concepts in the mind (see overview in Sandler 2016), but instead considering a communicative linguistic act as the basic paradigm for meaningfulness in general (Voloshinov 1986; Bakhtin 1981, 1986; Gasparov 2010). Something meaningful, on this approach, is something that *speaks* to us, literally, and not just metaphorically: As the Biblical Hebrew *lemor* construction exemplifies, stating what some action, utterance, or state of affairs means involves ascribing (fictive) direct speech to it (indeed, often 'pragmatics-heavy' direct speech, including, e.g. non-information-seeking questions and choral speech).

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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