

# THE SEMANTICS OF VERBAL PRAGMATICS: CLARIFYING THE ROLES OF *WAYYIQTOL* AND *WEQATAL* IN BIBLICAL HEBREW PROSE<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The parameters of temporal succession (labelled consecution or sequentiality) and foregrounding have long been associated with *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal* in Biblical Hebrew. Many recent models of the Biblical Hebrew verbal system distinguish these two *waw*-prefixed forms from *qatal* and *yiqtol*, respectively, based on the parameter of temporal succession, foregrounding, or both. Unfortunately, these parameters are generally presented as self-evident concepts and are therefore rarely defined with sufficient precision nor in many cases even distinguished from one another. This article distinguishes between temporal succession as a semantic property of clauses and the foreground-background distinction as a psycholinguistic feature of the processing and organizing of discourse. Correlation, or lack thereof, between each of these parameters and the *waw*-prefixed verb forms in Biblical Hebrew is then examined. This article concludes that a semantic analysis is crucial to explaining correlations between verb forms and discourse functions.

## 1. Introduction

Theories of the Biblical Hebrew verbal system must all wrestle with the complex issue of the semantic and discourse-pragmatic relationships among the four primary verb forms. Among these four, it has become commonplace in the literature to distinguish *wayyiqtol* from *qatal* and likewise *weqatal* from *yiqtol* with the parameter of temporal succession (also termed *sequentiality*) (Gropp 1991; Endo 1996; Hatav 1997; Gentry 1998; Goldfajn 1998), or foregrounding (Talstra 1992, Niccacci 1990), or both (Longacre 1992, Buth 1992).

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The association of temporal succession with the *waw*-prefixed verb forms (traditionally called the *waw*-consecutive forms) can be traced back to the nineteenth-century concept of *consecution*, popularized by Ewald and Driver.<sup>2</sup> The foreground-background distinction, although a relatively recent concept in linguistics, has been associated with the *waw*-prefixed forms from its inception.<sup>3</sup>

The use of temporal succession and foreground to distinguish among the Biblical Hebrew verbal forms labours under two difficulties. First, these concepts have been treated as self-evident and very often as self-evidently correlative. With the notable exception of Hatav's discussion of temporal succession (1997), they have received no theoretical treatment nor sufficiently rigorous definitions in studies of the Biblical Hebrew verb. In some cases, this has actually resulted in scholars applying the terms to different phenomena.<sup>4</sup> In addition, many studies assume a correlation between temporal succession and foreground: foreground consists of temporally successive clauses (e.g., Reinhart 1984; Longacre 1992: 178).

Second, discourse studies have too often made the gratuitous leap from correlation to causation in their analyses. For example, Longacre writes, 'In Biblical Hebrew, VSO clauses (with a particular narrative tense) mark the storyline, while SVO clauses (not with the special narrative tense) are for the most part reserved for supportive material' (1996: 23). Although there is an obvious correlation between VSO clauses and foreground in Biblical Hebrew, on what basis can Longacre claim that word order *marks* the storyline, and in what sense do they *mark* it? Downing observes that distinguishing between causation and correlation is a difficulty generally in discourse

<sup>2</sup> According to Driver ([1874] 1998: 72) the term *waw-consecutive* was first suggested by Böttcher in 1827.

<sup>3</sup> Although foreground has been used in literary studies for some time, Tomlin (1984: 116, 118, 138 n.3) credits Longacre (1976) with initially proposing this as a discourse distinction, which he termed 'backbone-background', in a paper on the Genesis flood narrative. Hopper (1979) coined the now common label 'foreground-background' and helped disseminate the concept more widely among linguists.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Bache (1985: 22) notes that Weinrich's use of foreground-background does not accord with the general understanding of the distinction (Weinrich's discourse model of European languages was adapted for Biblical Hebrew by Schneider [1982], whose theory inspired the more comprehensive treatments by Talstra [1992] and Niccacci [1990]). Li (1999: 3) introduces confusion over whether he is discussing syntactic sequentiality or semantic temporal succession (on this distinction see 1.1 below) by intentionally not distinguishing the two in his terminology; hence, his statement 'A sequential/consecutive clause is an iconic clause that is marked for sequence' is ambiguous (1999: 4).

linguistics: ‘when particular language structures are used in particular discourse contexts, say, ... in a passage devoted to storyline development, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the relationship between the linguistic form and the discourse factor is causal or merely correlational’ (1995: 6).

The difficulty in distinguishing causation from correlation lies in the general neglect of semantics by discourse theories.<sup>5</sup> Without a semantic foundation, these theories are unable to explain the correlations they observe in discourse (i.e., they are unable to determine whether they are causal) without being circular. For example, Hatav observes that ‘the main difficulty with [Longacre’s dynamic verb rankings], is that it is not defined by objective metalinguistic means, which results in a circular claim (*wayyiqtol* is a dynamic form because the situation it denotes is dynamic, and the situation is dynamic because it is denoted by a dynamic form)’ (1997: 21; similarly, Heimerdinger 1999: 98).

Unfortunately, this neglect of semantics serves only to confuse the distinction between (semantic) meaning and (discourse) function, since these theories thereby present their discourse explanations (whether implicitly or explicitly) as suitable *alternatives* to semantic ones. Before proceeding on the premise that the difference between the *waw*-prefixed forms and the non-*waw*-prefixed forms is solely one of discourse function (e.g., signalling foreground), one should first demonstrate that there is no semantic distinction between the forms.<sup>6</sup>

The solution to these problems does not lie in jettisoning discourse analysis as a tool for understanding the Biblical Hebrew verbal

<sup>5</sup> Specifically, the major discourse treatments of Biblical Hebrew imply a dismissive attitude towards semantics. Longacre states that verbal forms are ‘most surely and concretely described’ in terms of their saliency levels in different types of discourse (1989: 59). Niccacci claims that a discourse approach (rather than semantics) ‘is a necessary, even indispensable, starting point’ in the study of Hebrew discourse (1994: 118). Finally, Talstra contends that while one should ‘remain open to the possibility of relating text-level [discourse] and clause-level [semantics] categories’, discourse concerns must be given priority (1997: 85–6).

<sup>6</sup> Binnick’s comments aptly describe the difficulties posed by the four main verb forms, but also imply that it is unlikely that there is no semantic distinction between the *waw*-prefixed and non-*waw*-prefixed forms: ‘If the *waw* adds no temporal (tense or aspect) meaning, then the difference between verbs with *waw* and verbs without *waw* cannot be a semantic one. But apparently it is, for the forms with the *waw* are generally seen as “reversing” the values the “tenses” normally have. To reconcile the two, we must assume that the forms without the *waw* and those with it do *not* in fact differ in semantics, but the only way this is possible is if the “tense” forms do not differ from one another in meaning to begin with’ (1991: 441).

system, but in constructing a discourse analysis on a sound semantic foundation. This approach is justified by Comrie's observation that there are very few items in grammar that can be reduced to purely discourse functions; most forms mean something apart from their discourse context (1986: 21). A semantic foundation provides the necessary means to explain correlations observed in discourse since, as Comrie elsewhere advocates, 'discourse function should ultimately be accounted for in terms of the interaction of meaning and context' (1985: 29). More precisely, I adopt Fleischman's view that, 'The pragmatic *functions* of tense-aspect categories in narrative are not arbitrary; rather, I see them as motivated extensions of the *meanings* of those categories, extensions that, according to the view of grammar as "emergent" (Hopper 1987) may ultimately contribute to a reshaping of the basic meanings' (1990: 23). In other words, there is a reciprocal relationship between meaning and function, necessitating that they ultimately be examined together. Below I begin with a theoretical discussion of temporal succession and the foreground-background distinction, followed by a semantic and discourse evaluation of *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal* with respect to these parameters.

## 2. Temporal Succession and Foreground-Background

### 2.1 Temporal Succession

My choice in terminology is intentional in order to distinguish the phenomenon under discussion here from *sequentiality*, which is predominantly employed in the linguistic literature to refer to the syntactic chaining of underspecified verb forms.<sup>7</sup> Although I am not aware of any current theories that treat the Biblical Hebrew *waw*-prefixed forms as sequential in this sense (there is no evidence that either of the *waw*-prefixed verb forms is in any way *underspecified*), the nineteenth-century *waw*-inductive theories of the forms are a sequential analysis of sorts.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> On the distinction between (temporal) succession and (sequential) chaining, see Longacre (1985: 243–4, 263–7). The confusion between these two concepts is partly due to the fact that sequential chains are frequently employed to express temporal succession (see Longacre 1985: 263–84); however, as discussed in the previous section, such correlations do not warrant an immediate claim of causation, as Longacre warns (1985: 265).

<sup>8</sup> On the *waw*-inductive theory of the Hebrew verb, see McFall 1982: 24–6. The stringing together of infinitive absolutes headed by a fully inflected verb form in Biblical Hebrew may perhaps be explained as a sequential structure (e.g., Zech 7:5).

By contrast, temporal succession refers to the linear portrayal of events according to the order of their occurrence in the depicted world (Fleischman 1990: 131; Hopper and Traugott 1993: 26).<sup>9</sup> This concept involves the recognition that the order in which clauses are presented in discourse is semantically significant, as illustrated by the contrastive pair of statements in (see Labov and Waletzky 1967: 21; Labov 1972: 360).<sup>10</sup>

- (1) a. Sheri got married and got pregnant.  
b. Sheri got pregnant and got married.

Temporal succession corresponds to a recognized *ordo naturalis* characteristic of narrative discourse (Brown and Yule 1983: 125). That is, in the absence of any linguistic cues to the contrary, events are understood as occurring in the order in which they are reported in narrative discourse.

Early explanations of temporal succession by linguists focused on situation aspect (only accomplishments and achievements may be temporally successive) (e.g., Dry 1981; Heinrichs 1986) or viewpoint aspect (only perfective verbs may be temporally successive) (e.g., Kamp and Rohrer 1983).<sup>11</sup> More recently, linguists have recognized that temporal succession is determined by the semantic property of *boundedness* (see Hatav 1989; 1997), defined as whether an event has reached a temporal boundary or not (see Depraetere 1995: 2–3). Only bounded events are temporally successive; that is, subsequently reported events can only be understood as occurring *after* a temporally bounded event, as illustrated by the contrastive pair of sentences in.

- (2) a. Rob cooked dinner and Rachel came home (bounded).  
b. Rob was cooking dinner and Rachel came home (unbounded).

<sup>9</sup> Fleischman describes temporal succession as diagrammatically iconic: ‘an iconic *diagram* is a systematic arrangement of signs, none of which necessarily resembles its referent in respect to any prominent characteristic, as in the case with an iconic *image*; rather, it is the relationship of the signs to one another that mirrors the relationships of their referents’ (1990: 131).

<sup>10</sup> More formally, temporally successive clauses are defined by the *irreversibility property*: given clauses A and B,  $AB \neq BA$ . Such clauses may therefore usually be conjoined with what Lakoff terms the ‘asymmetric “and”’, equivalent to ‘and then’ (1971: 126–31).

<sup>11</sup> Linguistic discussions have generally utilized the Reichenbachian term R or reference point/time: temporally successive events advance the reference time, whereas temporally overlaid events do not (see Binnick 1991: 405–15; Hatav 1997: 36–55).

The difference in boundedness between (2a) and (2b) is apparently motivated by the difference in viewpoint aspect — perfective versus imperfective.<sup>12</sup> However, viewpoint aspect is not the only factor that contributes to boundedness. For instance, if we replace the *activity* [cook] in (2a) (repeated in [3a]), with the *state* [be sick], as in (3b), the expression is no longer bounded: it is presumed that Rob was still sick when Rachel came home.

- (3) a. Rob cooked dinner and Rachel came home (perfective viewpoint + activity [cook] = bounded).  
 b. Rob was sick and Rachel came home (perfective viewpoint + state [be sick] = unbounded).

Further, context is also determinative, as illustrated by the examples in (4), in which the interpretations of boundedness for the statements in (3) are reversed by the new contexts.

- (4) a. Rob cooked dinner. He had barely started and Rachel came home (unbounded).  
 b. Rob was sick. But he quickly recovered and Rachel came home (bounded).

Thus, boundedness is actually determined by a combination of semantic factors that include viewpoint aspect and situation type as well as context. Accomplishments and achievements with a perfective viewpoint (and neutral context) are bounded and therefore temporally successive: subsequently reported events are understood as occurring *after* the achievement and accomplishment in the examples in.

- (5) a. Jared won the race *and then...* (perfective + achievement [win] = bounded)  
 b. Colin built a fort *and then...* (perfective + accomplishment [build a fort] = bounded)

By contrast, the examples demonstrate that any situation type with an imperfective viewpoint (in a neutral context) is unbounded;<sup>13</sup> a subsequent event in the discourse is understood as *interrupting* the imperfective event.

<sup>12</sup> The use of English examples to illustrate the contrast between perfective and imperfective is justified by Binnick's observation that, 'sometimes the English progressive tenses contrast with the simple, nonprogressive tenses in the same way [as imperfective and perfective]' (1991: 372).

<sup>13</sup> States (non-dynamic) do not generally occur with the progressive in formal English, though in colloquial English the combination is frequently found (e.g., He *was loving* his job more every day).

- (6) a. Evan was playing *and then...* (imperfective + activity [play] = unbounded)
- b. Tage was building a tower *and then...* (imperfective + accomplishment [build a fort] = unbounded)
- c. Jared was winning the race *and then...* (imperfective + achievement [win] = unbounded)

Finally, the determination of boundedness by situation and viewpoint aspects may always be overridden by a temporal adverbial phrase explicitly establishing a temporal boundary, as in example (7a), or by a subordinate structure explicitly expressing temporal overlay, as in example (7b).

- (7) a. Jared was reading the book *for two hours and (then)...* (imperfective + activity [read] + *for two hours* = bounded)
- b. While Jared read the book *for two hours...* (perfective + activity [read] + subordination = unbounded)

In summary, the chart below shows the interaction of various parameters with respect to boundedness (the numbers in bold refer to the examples just examined).

(8) Determination of boundedness

Bounded situation, temporally successive	Unbounded situation, not temporally successive
perfective + accomplishment or achievement (5)	imperfective + any situation type (6)
perfective + activity (“implicit bound”) <sup>14</sup> (3a), (4a)	state (default interpretation) (3b), (4b)
any combination of aspects with an adverbially asserted temporal boundary (7a)	any combination of aspects with temporal overlay asserted through subordination (7b)

Two conclusions arise from this discussion of temporal succession. First, in view of the fact that temporal succession corresponds with the *ordo naturalis* of narrative discourse, it is intrinsically unlikely that this value will be obligatorily marked in language. Instead we should expect to find, and indeed do find, that most languages only

<sup>14</sup> Using Smith’s terminology: activities with perfective aspect have an ‘implicit temporal bound’, meaning that they are most naturally interpreted as bounded with perfective aspect, but are also quite often interpreted as unbounded as dictated by the context (1999: 488). She explains that activities are ‘flexible’, in that they present events as temporal units (being dynamic), but not necessarily as terminated (i.e., bounded). This is evident from the fact that activities do not work well with conjuncts asserting simple continuation (e.g., #Jared studied and he may still be studying), but conjuncts asserting a new unit of activity are acceptable (e.g., Jared studied and continued studying after that without a break).

obligatorily mark *departures* from *ordo naturalis* in discourse (i.e., they mark temporal overlay).<sup>15</sup> Second, based on an understanding of the constellation of semantic factors that contribute to temporal succession, it is theoretically problematic to claim that temporal succession is determined solely by a particular verbal conjugation.

## 2.2 *Foreground-Background*

The concept of foreground-background is a relatively new concept in linguistics, having been adopted from literary studies.<sup>16</sup> As a result, elements of literary approaches to the concept are frequently found in the linguistic studies.<sup>17</sup> Here I am asking strictly linguistic questions of the issue of foreground-background: what are the language processes that create the distinction between foreground and background and how are those distinctions marked in language?

In answer to the first question, several studies have demonstrated that the classification of events as either foreground or background is a universal *psycholinguistic* feature of our perception and production of discourse (Gomulicki 1956; Tomlin 1984; Erbaugh 1987; DeLancey 1987).<sup>18</sup> In other words, division of events into foreground and

<sup>15</sup> Temporal succession is rarely marked regularly in discourse in the languages of the world (so Wald 1987: 488, 507; cf. Cook 2001: 130, n.18). Wald concludes from his examination of several African languages that grammatically mark temporal succession that only the Bantu language of Bemba 'obligatorily encodes ... temporal sequence'; the marking is optional in the other languages (1987: 507). The instances of marking of temporal succession that Longacre observes are within serial/sequential verb constructions (1985: 264–9; 1972: 1–25). For examples of non-obligatory morphemes used to mark temporal succession (or consecution), see Heine and Kuteva (2002).

<sup>16</sup> See note 3 above.

<sup>17</sup> See Dry (1992) for an incisive discussion of the variety of ways in which foregrounding has been explained.

<sup>18</sup> Gomulicki's study involved asking fifty subjects to repeat back orally a prose selection delivered to them orally. The longer the selection, the more material the subjects omitted when repeating the selection back. However, the subjects consistently preserved 'the key parts of a passage, giving its general theme', while dropping those portions that 'contribute[d] least to the general meaning of the passage' and 'sections introducing secondary themes' (1956: 88). Similarly, in Tomlin's study fifteen native English speakers and thirty-five advanced ESL learners were asked to produce a play-by-play narration of a silent cartoon they viewed. As in Gomulicki's study, there was a universal pattern with respect to which information was retained under stress of communication (1984). Erbaugh (1987) examined the data from Tomlin's study and discovered that the speakers also uniformly had more pauses, errors, and self-corrections when narrating foreground events as compared with background events, demonstrating that more careful attention was given by the speakers to narrating foreground events.

background appears to be a natural part of the way in which we process discourse. The foreground-background pair distinguish events in terms of their *relative saliency* within a discourse. The distinction between foreground and background events is based on a cluster of features that determine the relative saliency of events, illustrated by the list of verbal semantic properties in (9).<sup>19</sup>

- (9) Features of the saliency continuum involving verbal semantics (see Hopper 1979: 129; Hopper and Thompson, 1980: 252)

<i>more salient</i>	<i>less salient</i>
temporally successive	temporally overlaid
perfective	imperfective
dynamic	non-dynamic (descriptive)
telic	durative
volitional	non-volitional
affirmative	negative
realis	irrealis

Unfortunately, simply listing these features fails to explain *why* particular ones are more or less salient. For example, why do the properties of temporal succession and perfectivity make events more salient and the opposing properties of temporal overlay and imperfectivity render them less salient?

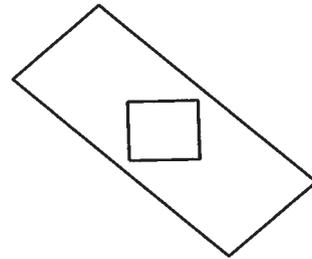
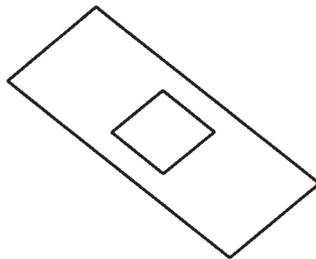
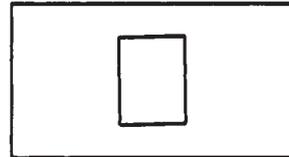
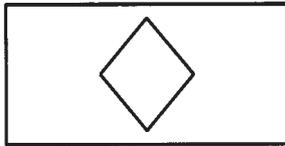
In an attempt to elucidate the nature of the foreground-background distinction, linguists have adapted principles of visual perception from Gestalt theory (Reinhart 1984; Wallace 1982).<sup>20</sup> The use of Gestalt-like principles is based on the analogy of foreground and background in discourse with figure and ground in the visual field. In Gestalt theory, the *figure* is the pattern that is most visually perceptible, whereas the *ground* is the area surrounding and delimiting the figure. The relationship between figure and ground is de-

<sup>19</sup> Behind this description is my attempt to manoeuvre through two controversies over the foreground-background distinction that Dry notes: whether the distinction should be conceived of as binary or continuum-like; and whether the determination is relative or absolute (1992: 442). From the point of view of language production and processing, foreground-background may perhaps be understood as continuum-like; however, the linguistic marking of the distinction in language may often be binary. At the same time, the marking of events as foreground or background is relative with respect to the particular discourse context: an event determined as foreground in one context, may be considered background in another, based on its *relative* saliency.

<sup>20</sup> Dry raises the question whether the use of Gestalt theory may have 'more than metaphoric import' (1992: 442). Here I am treating it simply as a metaphor to illuminate the way in which we process and organize discourse.

scribed as one of dependency: the figure depends upon the ground to give it its perceived shape.<sup>21</sup> This dependency relationship is illustrated by the figures in below (10), in which the perception of the figure as either a square or a diamond is dependent upon the orientation of its rectangular ground.

- (10) Diamond figure (adapted from Koffka 1935: 185; see Reinhart 1984: 789)      Square figure (adapted from Koffka 1935: 185; see Reinhart 1984: 789)



The analogy with foreground and background in discourse is apparent: the dependency relationship explains why it is inaccurate to speak of the foreground as the ‘gist’ of a discourse, since our perception of the relatively salient foreground is dependent upon our perception of the other parts of the discourse as less salient background material.<sup>22</sup>

With respect specifically to the saliency features of verbal semantics, there are two Gestalt principles that have been adapted to explain the foreground-background phenomenon. The first is the *law of good continuation*, which asserts that shapes with continuous lines are more easily perceived, or will appear as the figure, than shapes with broken lines (Koffka 1935: 151–3). Thus, in figure (11a) we

<sup>21</sup> This dependency relationship is discussed in terms of the principles of ‘one-sided contour’ and ‘functional dependency’ by Koffka (1935: 181, 184).

<sup>22</sup> The idea of the foreground as the ‘gist’ of a discourse has more affinities with literary approaches to foreground than the present linguistic approach (see Dry 1992: 438–41).

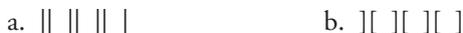
perceive a square wave and a sine wave rather than the series of closed shapes marked in black in (11b). This principle explains why, in the linguistic realm, temporally successive events in continuous sequence are perceived as more salient.<sup>23</sup>

(11) Law of good continuation (adapted from Reinhart 1984: 803)



The second principle is *closure*. It states that enclosed areas in the visual field are more easily perceived than those that are not enclosed. To illustrate, we most readily perceive the figure in (12a) as three pairs of lines with an extra line to the right. However, the perception of figure and ground is reversed when the straight lines are replaced with enclosing brackets, as in (12b). Analogously, in discourse bounded events are more salient than unbounded ones.

(12) Principle of closure (adapted from Koffka 1935: 164, 168; Reinhart 1984: 804, 805)



The relatively high saliency of bounded, temporally successive events accounts for the strong correlation between temporal succession and foreground in narrative discourse; however, despite the frequent correlation between these two parameters, they are nevertheless distinct concepts, as demonstrated by the preceding discussion. Temporal succession is a semantic property of clauses, whereas foreground is a psycholinguistic feature of our production and perception of discourse.

### 3. *Waw*-Prefixed Forms

#### 3.1 *Wayyiqtol* and Temporal Succession

Based on the preceding discussion of temporal succession, it is inherently unlikely and theoretically problematic to claim that the verbal conjugation *wayyiqtol* itself marks temporal succession. However, it is still an open question as to why there is such a strong correlation between *wayyiqtol* and temporally successive narrative discourse and

<sup>23</sup> Reinhart (1984: 801) actually makes a stronger claim based on this principle, that *only* temporally successive events are candidates for foreground — a claim that I take issue with in 3.1 below.

whether it is a complete correlation. Addressing these issues will strengthen the theoretical argument already presented against the claim that *wayyiqtol* marks temporal succession.

The answer to these discourse questions, as with the explanation of temporal succession generally, lies in semantics. The theory is now widely accepted that *wayyiqtol* developed from a Canaanite *\*yaqtul* conjugation. The label ‘prefixed preterite’ for this Canaanite form, which has persisted from early twentieth-century comparative studies (e.g., Bauer 1910; Driver 1936; Greenstein 1988), betrays a popular understanding that *wayyiqtol* developed from a past tense verb. Based on cross-linguistic patterns with respect to the interaction of past tense and perfective verbs with stative predicates, it is clear that Biblical Hebrew *wayyiqtol* preserves the past tense value of its antecedent form *\*yaqtul* (Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1992: 95; Cook 2001: 128–31). As a past tense verb, *wayyiqtol* defaults for perfective aspect in narrative discourse, just as the English Simple Past does (see Fleischman 1990: 101). Thus the form may semantically contribute to temporally successive expressions, in part explaining their frequent correlation.

However, to further avoid the temptation of claiming that this correlation is causal, notice that there are numerous counter-examples where the correlation between *wayyiqtol* and temporal succession does not hold. From one direction, there are examples like the one in which *qatal* appears in temporally successive statements.

- (13) *Qatal* expressing temporally successive events (see also Gen. 18:7; 30:8; 2 Kgs 18:4)

*wayyiwālēd laḥānōk ’et-’irād w’ ’irād yālad ’et-m’ ḥūyā’ēl ūm’ ḥūyā’ēl yālad ’et-m’ tūšā’ēl ūm’ tūšā’ēl yālad ’et-lāmek*

‘And Irad was born to Enoch, and Irad **begot** Mehujael, and Mahujael **begot** Methusael, and Methusael **begot** Lamech.’ (Gen. 4:18)

Such examples render temporal succession meaningless both as a semantic and as a discourse parameter for distinguishing between *wayyiqtol* and *qatal*.

From the other direction, there are numerous examples of *wayyiqtol* in temporally overlaid expressions. The examples, which are of two types, consist first of those that feature *wayyiqtol* with a simple past meaning in a variety of temporally overlaid expressions, as illustrated by the examples in (14).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> For another classification of overlap in Biblical Hebrew narrative see Talmon 1978. For other similar examples, see Heimerdinger 1999: 85–93.

(14) Types of temporal overlay featuring *wayyiqtol*

- a. Temporally included subevents (see also Josh. 2:23)  
*wayyēš'û 'anšē hā'îr wayyillāhāmû 'et-yô'āb wayyipōl min-hā'ām mē'abdē dāwid wayyāmot gam 'urîyyā haḥittî*  
 'And the men of the city came out **and fought** with Joab **and** some of the people of the servants of David **fell and** also Uriah the Hittite **died.**' (2 Sam. 11:17)
- b. Coincidental temporal overlay (see also Josh. 2:15–16; 8:3–4; cf. Exod. 24.13–14)  
*wayyišlah 'otām mōšeh lātûr 'et-'ereš k'nā'an wayyō'mer 'ālhem 'ālû zeh bannegeb wa'ālitem 'et-hāhār*  
 'And Moses **sent** them to spy out the land of Canaan **and he instructed** them, "Go up this (way) into the Negev and go up into the hill country." (Num. 13:17)
- c. Simultaneous temporal overlay  
*way'āqōb nātan l'ēšāw leḥem ûn'zîd 'ādāšîm wayyō'kal wayyēšṭ wayyāqom wayyēlak*  
 'And Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew **and he ate and he drank** and he rose and he left.' (Gen. 25:34)
- d. Verbal hendiadys in direct speech frame  
*waydabbēr 'ēlōhîm 'el-mōšeh wayyō'mer 'ēlāyw 'ānî yhwḥ*  
 'And God **spoke** to Moses **and said** to him, "I am Yhwh." (Exod. 6:2)

The passage in (14a) features *temporally included subevents*, all expressed with *wayyiqtol*s: Uriah's *death* is a subevent of the *fall* of some of the servants of David, which is itself a subevent of the activity [fight], which is only implicitly bound by the default perfective aspect of *wayyiqtol*.<sup>25</sup> In (14b) Moses' commissioning entails two coincidental activities — sending the spies and instructing them; a strict temporally successive interpretation of the *wayyiqtol*s does not make sense — he did not *first* send them and then *instruct* them. Only slightly different is (14c), in which the activities of Esau's eating and drinking are simultaneous: presumably he would have alternated his eating and drinking as opposed to eating all his bread *then* drinking all his soup.<sup>26</sup> Notice the contrast with the temporally successive se-

<sup>25</sup> Dowty has pointed out that this sort of overlap is also common with accomplishments, which always allow the inference of 'temporally included subevents' (1986: 43; see ter Meulen 1995), as illustrated in the following example in which [select], [draw], and [buy] are subevents of [build]: *Bill built a house. He selected the site, drew up the plans, and bought the supplies.*

<sup>26</sup> One of the attendees where I first gave this paper brought to my attention

quence *and he rose and he left* immediately following in the passage. Finally, (14d) illustrates verbal hendiadys, in which both activity verbs refer to the same event.

In the second type of temporal overlay, *wayyiqtol* appears to have a past perfect meaning, as illustrated by the passages in (15).

(15) Contexts that assign a past perfect sense to *wayyiqtol*

a. Synchronized temporal overlay

**Storyline 1:** ‘And when many days (passed) then the word of Yhwh came (*qatal*) to Elijah, in the third year (of the drought), saying, “Go present yourself to Ahab and I will send rain on face of the land.” <sup>2</sup>And Elijah went (*wayyiqtol*) to present himself to Ahab.’

**Storyline 2:** ‘Now the famine was severe (*qatal*) in Samaria. <sup>3</sup>And Ahab (had) summoned (*wayyiqtol*) Obadiah, who was in charge of the palace...<sup>5</sup>And Ahab (had) said (*wayyiqtol*) to Obadiah, “Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the wadis; perhaps we will find grass and keep the horses and mules alive, and we will not have to destroy some of the animals.” ...’

**Convergence:** ‘And while Obadiah was on (his) way Elijah met him’. (1 Kgs 18:1–3, 5, 7a)

b. Flashback storyline

‘So Joash lay down (*wayyiqtol*) with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat (*qatal*) upon his throne; and Joash was buried (*wayyiqtol*) in Samaria with the kings of Israel. <sup>14</sup>Now Elisha had become sick (*qatal*) with the illness of which he would die, and King Joash of Israel had gone/went down (*wayyiqtol*) to him, and (had) wept (*wayyiqtol*) before him,...’ (2 Kgs 13:13–20)

c. Interrupted storyline

‘And the battle increased (*wayyiqtol*) that day and the king was (*qatal*) propped up (*participle*) in the chariot opposite Aram, and he died (*wayyiqtol*) and the blood of the wound poured (*wayyiqtol*) into the bottom of the chariot. <sup>36</sup>And the cry passed through (*wayyiqtol*) the camp when the sun went (down) saying, “Each man to his city and each man to his country!” <sup>37</sup>And the king (had) died (*wayyiqtol*) and he came (*wayyiqtol*) to Samaria and they buried (*wayyiqtol*) the king in Samaria.’ (1 Kgs 22:35–7)

that certain cultures have the custom of eating and drinking in strict sequence. However, I am not aware of any evidence that this was the custom in ancient Canaan (the narrative setting) or at any time in the later history of the land (the author’s setting).

In (15a), the narrator reports Elijah's and Obadiah's commissionings alternately in order to portray them as happening simultaneously. These two narrative threads then converge when the two meet along the road, as narrated in verse 7. The excerpt in (15b) is from a lengthy flashback storyline that extends for eight verses. The flashback is narrated with a string of *wayyiqtol*s, headed by the past perfect *qatal ḥalâ*, 'had become sick', in verse 14, a fairly frequent pattern in Biblical Hebrew narrative (see Baker 1973: 23–53; Joüon 1993: 391; Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 556). Finally, in the passage in (15c), the death of king Ahab in battle is initially reported in verse 35. However, it is *re-reported* in verse 37 after the account of the outcome of the battle is given in verse 36. Through this technique, the narrator picks up the interrupted story line by reasserting the last reported event in it (see Buth 1994). In all of these examples and others like them, the past perfect meaning for *wayyiqtol* is *contextual* rather than semantic, evident in the fact that a past perfect translation of *wayyiqtol* in these instances is optional (as noted in the translations of the examples above).

Thus, from a theoretical standpoint, temporal succession is not a semantic feature of *wayyiqtol*. And based on an analysis of the Biblical Hebrew data, even a discourse correlation between *wayyiqtol* and temporal succession is not fully accurate; there are numerous exceptions to the rule.

### 3.2 *Wayyiqtol* and Foreground

The correlation between *wayyiqtol* and foreground fares much better than the case for temporal succession discussed above. Many languages in the world feature a *narrative verb* or tense, which is employed in narrative discourse to express the basic story line or foreground (see Longacre 1990: 109). Within Biblical Hebrew narrative discourse there is overwhelming data to support the assertion that *wayyiqtol* is a narrative verb in this sense. In other words, *wayyiqtol* is the default verb in narrative discourse, and as such presents (i.e., marks) foregrounded events.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Heimerdinger is the only scholar I have found who takes issue with this view that *wayyiqtol* foregrounds events in Biblical Hebrew narrative. His dissension, however, is based on a different understanding of foregrounding from the one proposed here. Heimerdinger defines foreground based on Grice's maxims of conversation (i.e., quantity, quality, relation, and manner; see Levinson 1983: 97–166): the speaker or writer throws certain events into relief when their inclusion in the discourse violates one of the maxims of conversation (1990: 223–5). In Heimerdinger's words, 'Foregrounding in Old Hebrew narratives could be described as spe-

Recognition of *wayyiqtol* as discourse-pragmatically marked for foreground is exegetically significant when it occurs in contexts where we would more naturally expect a background construction to be employed, as in the account of Jacob's marriage to Laban's daughters. The relevant verses are given in (16).

- (16) a. *wayhî bā'ereb wayyiqqah 'et-lē'ā bittô wayyābē' 'ōtāh 'ēlāyw wayyābō' 'eleyhā* <sup>24</sup>*wayyittēn lābān lāh 'et-zilpā šiphātô l'lē'ā bittô šiphā* <sup>25</sup>*wayhî babbōqer w'hinnēh-hî' lē'ā*  
 'And when it was evening he took Leah, his daughter and brought her to him and he went in to her. <sup>24</sup>And Laban gave Zilpah, his maidservant, to her to be a maid for Leah his daughter. <sup>25</sup>And when it was morning, behold, it was Leah.' (Gen. 29:23–25a)
- b. *wayyā'as ya'āqōb kēn waymallē' š'bu<sup>a</sup> zō't wayyitten-lô 'et-rahēl bittô lô l'isšā* <sup>29</sup>*wayyittēn lābān l'rahēl bittô 'et-bilhā šiphātô lāh l'šiphā* <sup>30</sup>*wayyābō' gam 'el-rahēl wayyē'ēhab gam-'et-rahēl millē'ā*  
 'And Jacob did so and he fulfilled this seven years and he gave to him Rachel, his daughter, for a wife. <sup>29</sup>And Laban gave to Rachel, his daughter, Bilhah his maid to be a maid for her. <sup>30</sup>And he came in to Rachel also and he loved Rachel more than Leah.' (Gen. 29:28–30a)

In each of these excerpts the use of *wayyittēn* to report Laban's gift of a maidservant seems out of place; we may justifiably expect a background construction using *qatal*, such as *w'lābān nātan*. Thus, this departure is exegetically significant: by using *wayyiqtol* forms, and intentionally interrupting the reports of the two sisters' marriages to Jacob, the narrator highlights and foreshadows the role of the maidservants as surrogate mothers in the sororial feud between Leah and Rachel.

Another example of the narrator capitalizing on the unexpected use of foreground *wayyiqtol* is found in (17).

- (17) <sup>14b</sup>And he stayed with him a month. <sup>15</sup>And Laban said to Jacob, 'Because you are my kin should you therefore serve me without

cial salience. In the development of a story, there are special events which are more arresting than others, because they happen "out-of-the-blue" (1999: 240). By contrast, I am understanding foreground as the default (or unmarked) mode of recounting events in narrative, often marked (as in Biblical Hebrew) by means of a dominant *narrative verb*; background is marked by departures from the default mode of narration. Within the dominant foreground, events may nevertheless be determined to be more or less important to the development of the theme, as Heimerdinger observes in his criticism of Longacre (1999: 76–80); but this is a different (literary) matter.

compensation? Tell me what your wage should be?’<sup>16</sup> Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah and the name of the younger was Rachel.<sup>17</sup> And the eyes of Leah were soft/weak, but Rachel was lovely and beautiful.<sup>18</sup> [Now Jacob loved Rachel, and he said, ‘I will serve you seven years for Rachel your youngest daughter.’] (Gen. 29:14b–18)

*wayyē’ehab ya’aqōb ’et- rāḥēl wayyō’mer ’e’ēbadkā šēba’ sānim b’rāḥēl bitkā haqq’annā*

‘Now Jacob loved Rachel, and he said, “I will serve you seven years for Rachel your youngest daughter.”’ (Gen. 29:18)

An interpretation of *wayyē’ehab* as temporally successive—*then Jacob fell in love with Rachel*—is clearly strained; it is unlikely that Jacob suddenly began to have feelings for Rachel during his conversation with Laban (cf. Hatav 1989: 496). Instead, one may justifiably expect a backgrounded construction such as *ya’aqōb ’āhab ’et-rāḥēl* in this context (cf. Gen. 37:3). This has prompted several translations to render *wayyē’ehab* with an English past perfect (e.g., REB, NAB). However, a past perfect rendering obscures the narrator’s exploitation of the narrative verb in this unexpected context to highlight the motivating factor of Jacob’s love for Rachel in his service to Laban.

Although the narrative verb *wayyiqtol* consistently marks foregrounded events, it does not automatically follow that every other verb form is limited to backgrounded events (cf. Longacre 1989: 65). Notably, *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* often appear together expressing simultaneous foregrounded events, as illustrated in (18) (e.g., Gen. 45:14; Exod. 17:10; Judg. 1:25).<sup>28</sup>

- (18) *wayḥî miqqēš yāmîm wayyābē’ qayin mipp’rî hā’ādāmā minḥā layhwh w’hebel hēbî’ gam-hû’ mibb’kōrôt šō’nō ûmēḥelbēhen*

‘And it happened that after some days Cain brought some of the produce of the ground as a gift to Yhwh, and Abel also brought some of the firstborns of his flock and some of their fat.’ (Gen. 4:3–4)

It seems clearly counterintuitive to interpret Cain’s offering as foregrounded and Abel’s as backgrounded (cf. Reinhart 1984: 794–5). Rather, both *wayyābē’* and *hēbî’* express foregrounded events that are equally highly salient to the narrative. The motivation for this construction may have to do with avoiding an implicitly bound interpre-

<sup>28</sup> For other examples of *qatal* expressing foreground events, see Heimerdinger 1999: 93–8.

tation (temporally successive) of the activity verb [bring] expressed by narrative *wayyiqtol*.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.3 Conclusion (*Wayyiqtol*)

To conclude this discussion of *wayyiqtol*, there is neither a semantic marking nor a complete discourse correlation between the form and temporal succession. The nevertheless high degree of coincidence between *wayyiqtol* and temporal succession is explained first of all by the semantics of *wayyiqtol*; namely, its default perfective aspect regularly contributes to the expression temporal succession. Secondly, because *wayyiqtol* is a narrative verb, its employment implies the *ordo naturalis* characteristic of narration, thus implicating a temporally successive interpretation.

By contrast, foregrounding is a discourse-pragmatic feature of *wayyiqtol*; the form is the narrative verb in Biblical Hebrew, used regularly to express foregrounded events in narrative discourse. Nevertheless, Biblical Hebrew does not employ *wayyiqtol* exclusively to express foreground, and neither are departures from the *wayyiqtol* in narrative always to be construed as marking background information. Rather, such deviations from *wayyiqtol* (mostly with perfective *qatal*) may be motivated by any number of factors (or a combination of them), including word order (e.g., fronting in Gen. 18:7; 25:6), avoidance of a temporally successive interpretation (e.g., Gen. 37:3, 11), marking of a new discourse section (e.g., Gen. 4:1; 39:1), and signalling of backgrounded information (usually with a perfect or pluperfect *qatal*) (e.g., Gen. 14:3–4).

### 3.4 *Weqatal*

*Weqatal* is viewed by Longacre as the analogical counterpart to *wayyiqtol* within non-narrative discourse (1992: 181).<sup>30</sup> As in the case of *wayyiqtol*, a claim that *weqatal* marks temporal succession is ruled out on theoretical grounds. However, as with *wayyiqtol*, the se-

<sup>29</sup> Although perfective *qatal* could likewise yield a bounded interpretation, within Biblical Hebrew narrative, in which the *ordo naturalis* of temporal succession is generally associated with the default narrative verb, the employment of *qatal* instead of *wayyiqtol* usually implies a departure from strict temporal sequence — either a simultaneous event or a backgrounded event (mostly with a perfect or past perfect sense). Distinguishing whether a given instance of *qatal* is temporally successive or not within its context depends to some degree on which interpretation is the more plausible (see Comrie 1986: 17).

<sup>30</sup> This strong analogical view is not shared by all discourse theories (cf. Talstra 1992: 272; Niccacci 1990: 168).

mantics of *weqatal* are compatible with temporally successive expressions (see below). Further, the Biblical Hebrew data demonstrate that although *weqatal* regularly signals foreground in certain non-narrative discourses, any claim of marking must be very limited, since the form also regularly operates in background constructions.

Beyond this negative assessment, the variegated discourse role of *weqatal* may be elucidated by examining its semantic development. Unlike *wayyiqtol*, no convincing evidence has been produced that *weqatal* derives from an independent conjugation; its origin is found in perfective *qatal*. The long-held view that the form is distinguished from *qatal* by word stress is made problematic by the findings in two articles from the mid-1980s by E.J. Revell (1984, 1985). Rather, the distinction between the two forms is syntactic: *weqatal* always appears with verb-subject word order. Several scholars have noted a parallel between the word order of *weqatal* and modal clauses in Biblical Hebrew, which are also verb-subject order (Rosén 1969; Revell 1989; DeCaen 1995; Shulman 1996). The evidence compiled by these scholars supports the view that word order is grammatically relevant in Biblical Hebrew: it distinguishes between modal and indicative verbs. On this basis, *weqatal* can be identified as a modal verb form (Cook 2001: 134–5).<sup>31</sup>

Comparative evidence offers the beginnings of an explanation as to how the modal *weqatal* developed from perfective *qatal*: in other Semitic languages cognates of *qatal* function in conditional clauses with a similar non-past sense as Biblical Hebrew *weqatal*. This non-past sense is actually a modal meaning that is derived from the modal context of the conditional construction (Peled 1992: 12). Thus, we may hypothesize that *weqatal* originated in conditional clauses, from which the acquired modal sense was transferred to other protasis-apodosis constructions such as temporal and purpose clauses. From its frequent use in conditional law codes, *weqatal* also developed a deontic sense, which eventually became independent of its conditional context. Because of the close relationship between future tense and modality in English, the usual treatment of the form in terms of tense is tolerable. However, an accurate understanding of the form demands that we recognize the modal nuance in each occurrence of the form (see further Cook 2002: 223–32).

<sup>31</sup> Joosten (1992) and DeCaen (1995) also identify *weqatal* as modal; however, they do not posit the broader hypothesis developed by Holmstedt (2001; 2002: chaps 3–4) and Cook (2001: 134; 2002: 272–4), namely, that the indicative–non-indicative modal distinction throughout Biblical Hebrew is consistently marked by word order: subject-verb versus verb-subject.

Returning then to the issue of *weqatal*'s discourse role, we find that the form functions distinctively in each of the four non-narrative discourse types identified by Longacre. In *hortatory* discourse, in which imperatives and jussives dominate the foreground, *weqatal* mostly appears in backgrounded purpose or result clauses, as illustrated in (19) (Longacre 1989: 121).

- (19) *'imrî-nā' 'ahotî 'ätt k'má'an yîtab-lî ba'ábûrêk w'ḥāytâ napši biglālêk*  
 'Please say that you (are) my sister in order that it might go well for me on your account and my life **might be spared** because of you.' (Gen. 12:13)

In *predictive* discourse, which Longacre illustrates with the passage in (1994: 51), *weqatal* primarily functions as part of a lengthy temporal protasis-apodosis construction (see also 2 Sam. 7:11–17).

- (20) *Weqatal* in predictive discourse

When you go (infinitive) today from me, **(then) you will meet** (*weqatal*) two men near the tomb of Rachel in the territory of Benjamin in Zelzah, **and they will say** (*weqatal*) to you, 'The donkeys that you went (*qatal*) to look for (infinitive) have been found (*qatal*), and behold, your father has abandoned (*qatal*) the matter of the donkeys and is anxious (*qatal*) for you saying, "What should I do (*yiqtol*) about my son?"' <sup>3</sup>**And when you pass on** (*weqatal*)<sup>32</sup> further from there, **(then) you will come** (*weqatal*) to the oak of Tabor **and three men will meet you** (*weqatal*) there, going up to God at Bethel, one carrying (participle) three kids, and one carrying (participle) three loaves of bread, and one carrying (participle) a skin of wine. <sup>4</sup>**And they will greet** (*weqatal*) you **and give** (*weqatal*) you two (loaves) of bread and **you should take** (*weqatal*) (them) from their hand. <sup>5</sup>After that you will come (*yiqtol*) to Gibat-elohim, where the Philistine garrison is. And when you come (infinitive) there to the city **(then) you will meet** (*weqatal*) a band of prophets coming down (participle) from the high place, with harp, tambourine, and flute, and lyre before them, and prophesying (participle). <sup>6</sup>**And the spirit of Yhwh will rush** (*weqatal*) upon you **so that you will prophesy** (*weqatal*) with them **so that you are changed** (*weqatal*) into a different person. (1 Sam. 10:2–6)

Although *weqatal* in the apodosis expresses foregrounded, temporally successive events, the form is not restricted with respect to either of

<sup>32</sup> It seems preferable to interpret this *weqatal* as beginning a new protasis after the interruption of the apodosis with direct speech; however, interpreting it as beginning a new protasis or continuing the apodosis does not affect the argument made here.

these values, as its deontic use in verse 4 and its appearance in the two backgrounded result clauses in verse 6 shows. It is problematic, therefore, to claim that *weqatal* marks temporal succession or foreground in predictive discourse, although there is some degree correlation between *weqatal* and foreground.

By comparison, a greater correlation between *weqatal* and foreground as well as temporal succession is found in both *procedural* and *instructional* discourse. Longacre identifies Leviticus 1–5 as procedural discourse (1994: 52) and Exodus 25–30 as instructional discourse (1994: 54; see 1995). In both discourse types, deontic *weqatal* expresses the foregrounded procedural or instructional steps in order (i.e., in temporal succession). What distinguishes the two types, according to Longacre, is that procedural discourse is introduced with a protasis-apodosis construction (using either *weqatal* or *yiqtol*; cf. Lev. 1:10), as illustrated in (21).<sup>33</sup>

(21) *Weqatal* in procedural discourse

<sup>3</sup>If (*'im*) the anointed priest sins (*yiqtol*), to the guilt of the people, **then he should offer** (*weqatal*) for his sin that he has committed (*qatal*) a bull, son of the herd, without blemish to Yhwh for a sin offering. <sup>4</sup>**And he should bring** (*weqatal*) the bull to the entrance of the tent of meeting before Yhwh, **and he should lay** (*weqatal*) his hand on the head of the bull, **and he should slaughter** (*weqatal*) the bull before Yhwh. <sup>5</sup>**And the anointed priest should take** (*weqatal*) some of the blood of the bull **and bring** (*weqatal*) it into the tent of meeting. <sup>6</sup>**And the priest should dip** (*weqatal*) his finger in the blood **and sprinkle** (*weqatal*) some of the blood seven times before Yhwh in front of the curtain of the sanctuary. <sup>7</sup>**And the priest should place** (*weqatal*) some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense, which is in the tent of meeting before Yhwh, but all (the rest) of the blood of the bull he should pour (*yiqtol*) at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. (Lev. 4:3–7)

By contrast, instructional discourse is introduced by an imperative construction, as in (22).

(22) *Weqatal* in instructional discourse

Then the Lord spoke to Moses: <sup>24</sup>**Instruct** (imperative) the children of Israel that **they should take** (*weqatal*) an offering for me;

<sup>33</sup> Note that although the procedural steps for the individual sacrifices are always introduced with a protasis-apodosis construction, sections may also feature an imperatival introduction (like instructional discourse) to the protasis-apodosis construction (e.g., Lev. 1:2; 4:2).

from everyone whose heart prompts them, you should receive (*yiqtol*) my offering. <sup>3</sup>And this is the offering that you should receive (*yiqtol*) from them: gold, silver, and bronze... <sup>8</sup>**And you should make** (*weqatal*) a sanctuary **so that I may dwell** (*weqatal*) in your midst. <sup>9</sup>According to all that I am going to show you (participle)—the pattern of the sanctuary and all its furniture—thus you should make (*yiqtol*) it. <sup>10</sup>**They should make** (*weqatal*) an ark of acacia wood; and its length (should be) two and a half cubits, its width a cubit and a half, and its height a cubit and a half. <sup>11</sup>**You should overlay** (*weqatal*) it with pure gold; inside and outside you should overlay (*yiqtol*) it, **and you should make** (*weqatal*) a molding of gold upon it all around. (Exod. 25:1–3, 8–11)

Despite the clear correlation between *weqatal* and foregrounded, temporally successive procedural/instructional steps, Longacre recognizes (1994: 55) instances of *weqatal* functioning in backgrounded result clauses in instructional discourse (e.g., Exod. 25:8; 26:16). Also, *yiqtol* appears to express foregrounded procedures/instructions in the examples (e.g., Exod. 25:9; Lev. 4:7). However, similar explanations as for the alternation of *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* in narrative discourse may be offered for the latter cases: *yiqtol* may be used in place of *weqatal* because of fronting of certain elements (e.g., Exod. 25:3), or to express complementary or contrasting simultaneous action (e.g., Lev. 4:7), or perhaps simply to express backgrounded explanations (e.g., Exod. 25:2). In any case, even with these greater correlations, it is difficult to make any stronger claim than that *weqatal* *predominately* expresses foregrounded procedural/instructional steps in these discourse types.

In conclusion, the varied role of *weqatal* in these non-narrative discourse types, with respect to both temporal succession and the foreground-background distinction, precludes the possibility that *weqatal* is marked for either temporal succession or foreground. However, correlations of varying degrees can be observed between *weqatal* and these values in the different discourse types. More specifically, *weqatal* has a distinctive, dominant meaning and discourse function in each of Longacre's discourse types, partly underscoring the validity of his distinctions: in hortatory discourse, *weqatal* mainly functions in backgrounded purpose or result clauses; in predictive discourse it functions primarily in foregrounded temporal apodoses in reference to future events; in procedural discourse it may appear in the introductory protasis-apodosis construction with a conditional-deontic sense (as it functions in other law codes), but then dominates the foregrounded procedural steps with a simple deontic

sense;<sup>34</sup> finally, in instructional discourse, *weqatal* has a simple deontic meaning throughout, introduced by a deontic imperative.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study has important implications, both methodological and substantive. Methodologically, this study has shown the deficiencies of proceeding with an analysis of verbs from the perspective of their discourse functions. This is not to say that discourse function is unimportant; rather, the claim is that semantic meaning and discourse function must be distinguished and that the latter should be studied in terms of the interaction of a form's meaning with the discourse context (Comrie 1985: 29). In particular, the semantic approach taken in this study undercuts theories of the Biblical Hebrew verb that feature temporal succession and foregrounding as the distinguishing parameter of the *waw*-prefixed verb forms *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal*. I have shown that foregrounding is a discourse-pragmatic property of the narrative verb *wayyiqtol*; its appearance in narrative discourse always marks events as foregrounded. *Weqatal* also regularly indicates foreground in procedural and instructional discourse; however, its utilization for backgrounded clauses (e.g., purpose and result clauses) alongside its appearance in foregrounded expressions precludes an identification of foregrounding as a discourse-pragmatic property of the form.

Substantively, this study has catalogued the variety of types of temporal overlay that occur in Biblical Hebrew narrative. By establishing that *wayyiqtol* is marked for foreground, the study has drawn attention to the exegetical significance in unexpected uses of *wayyiqtol* in narrative. The analysis of *weqatal* has demonstrated that the form may only be correlated with temporal succession and foregrounding to a limited extent and in specific non-narrative discourse types (namely, procedural and instructional discourse). Positively, the analysis has shown distinct meanings and functions for *weqatal* that pattern with some of Longacre's distinctions between non-narrative discourse types.

<sup>34</sup> I have changed my view on the meaning of *weqatal* in procedural discourse to some extent from the discussion in my dissertation (2002: 305). Throughout Leviticus 1–5, a conditional construction (with a deontic-conditional *weqatal* or *yiqtol*) is used to introduce sacrificial regulations (e.g., what type of animal to select), but the subsequent *weqatal* forms are more appropriately interpreted as simple deontics, as in instructional discourse.

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