

**THE MEANING OF THE BIBLICAL HEBREW
VERBAL CONJUGATION FROM
A CROSSLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

By

David O. Moomo

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Promoter: Prof. C.H.J. Van der Merwe

“Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declared that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date:

Abstract

One of the questions that have challenged scholars of BH for many years is whether the language should be regarded as a tense, aspectual or modal language. In this thesis, I argue that the lack and application of a metacategory for describing any language in general, and BH in particular, has been the main problem of the debate. A sound methodology is needed in order to be able to make an argument that can be tested empirically.

The present study presents such a viable methodological approach. Using Bhatian parameters for tense, aspect and modal prominent languages, crosslinguistic metacategories of tense, aspect and mood were developed. These were applied to BH and the outcome was the hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language.

After formulating the above-mentioned hypothesis for BH, a corpus had been selected in the light of which the hypothesis was tested. The result demonstrates that BH consistently maintains perfective and imperfective aspectual distinctions. It was found that even where aspectual distinctions are extended to modal categories, the distinction in meanings between the perfective and the imperfective forms of the BH verb are not neutralised.

From these observations, it has been concluded that there is the need to revisit the semantics of Proto Semitic. A model like the one used in this study could be replicated in the study of Proto Semitic. Such a revisit, it is hypothesised, may give fresh insights into the verbal system of Proto Semitic in general and BH in particular.

Opsomming

Een van die vrae wat reeds vir baie jare vir kenners van Bybelse Hebreeus (=BH) 'n uitdaging is, is of die taal 'n tempustaal, 'n aspektuele taal of 'n modale taal is. In hierdie tesis voer ek aan dat die gebrek aan die toepassing van 'n metakategorie vir die beskrywing van tale in die algemeen, en BH in die besonder, die hoof probleem in die debat is. 'n Deeglike begronde metodologie is nodig om 'n hipotese daar te stel wat empiries getoets kan word.

Hierdie studie wil so 'n metodologie formuleer. Deur gebruik te maak van Bhat se parameters vir tale waarvan die tempus, aspek en modaliteit prominent is, is kruislinguistiese metakategorieë vir tempus, aspek en modaliteit ontwikkel. Hierdie metakategorieë is op BH toegepas en die resultaat daarvan was die hipotese dat BH 'n aspek-prominente taal is.

Nadat die bogenoemde hipotese vir BH geformuleer is, is 'n korpus geselekteer in die lig waarvan hierdie hipotese getoets kon word. Die resultaat demonstreer dat BH konsekwent die perfektiewe en imperfektiewe aspektuele onderskeid handhaaf. Daar is gevind dat selfs wanneer aspektuele onderskeidings uitgebrei is na modale kategorieë, die onderskeid tussen die perfektiewe en die imperfektiewe vorme van die BH werkwoord nie geneutraliseer word nie.

Vanuit hierdie waarnemings is tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat dit nodig is om weer te gaan kyk na die semantiek van Proto-Semities. 'n Model soos die een wat in hierdie studie gebruik is, kan ook in die studie van Proto-Semities gebruik word. Die hipotese is dat so 'n hernude ondersoek nuwe insigte kan gee in die werkwoordsisteem van Proto-Semities in die algemeen en BH in die besonder.

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The Ebira people have a saying that goes thus, “Uvo onya o me ku oji irenu”. This may be roughly translated as ‘One hand can never cover the mouth of a water pot’. The above statement is true of this research project. The united efforts of many people make the research project to see the light of the day.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BH	Biblical Hebrew
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart 1983
BHVS	Biblical Hebrew Verbal System
CEV	Contemporary English Version
GNB	Good News Bible
GW	God's Word to the Nations
Imperf	Imperfect
Imperfve	Imperfective
KJV	King James Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
NP	Noun Phrase
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
Perf	Perfect
PROG	Progressive
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Preface

I have enjoyed the privilege of being involved in Old Testament translation since 1991 with the Nigeria Bible Translation Trust. In the course of the translation work, I began to study the Biblical Hebrew language. Later I began translating the Psalms into Ebira, one Nigerian language in which the NBTT is involved in the translation work. Under the able leadership and supervision of Miss Kuhn, a member of Wycliffe Bible Translators, who was serving in NBTT then, I was given the opportunity to help other translators working on the Psalms in the area of exegesis. This gave me more interactions with the Hebrew texts. We compared how the RSV struggles with the translations of the verb forms of Hebrew. We also had to look closer in the area of tense and aspect systems of those target languages.

As we compared the RSV with the Hebrew text, I began to note surprising phenomena. The RSV would translate the same verb form with different temporal meanings in English. The question then arose in my mind whether there would be any principled way of knowing why there are such different translations for the meaning of the same verb form.

My study of the literature on the meanings of verb forms of Biblical Hebrew, as will be seen in the survey, contributes to my understanding of the problem. However, they do not provide objective and empirically testable parameters that could be used to decide on how BH could be classified and the meanings of the verb forms be determined. Some argue that the language is a tense language, some argue that it is an aspect language while others claim that the verbs do not have any meanings in themselves at all (Ljunberg 1995:83). The question is: which of these solutions is the correct one? This led me into searching for guidelines that may help one to know why and when a language may be regarded as a tense, aspect or mood language.

This study is motivated, by and large, by the need to find a theoretical and empirical basis for classifying any language as a tense, aspectual or mood language. It is assumed that Biblical Hebrew being a human language ought to share the general universal characteristics of human languages. The desire to know the generalizable features on the basis of which languages may be grouped or classified, is one of the goals

of typological research in linguistics (cf. Gutt 2000:18). There ought to be some universal crosslinguistic criteria that can explain adequately the meanings of the BH verb forms. The goal of the present study is an attempt at providing such crosslinguistic criteria and to apply the same to the study of the meanings of the verb forms of BH.

This study, therefore, investigates the meanings of the Biblical Hebrew verbal conjugations from a crosslinguistic perspective.¹ The main question to which an answer is sought is whether the BH verb forms express tense or aspect. It is hypothesised that the works of aspectologists such as Comrie (1976) and Dahl (1985) provide a good understanding of aspect, a notion most used but least clearly explained or even understood. Furthermore, it is hypothesised that the development and use of the metacategories of tense, aspect and mood by Bhat (1999) may provide a well justified theoretical frame for the present study. Bhat uses the metacategories in his study of the Indian languages. (For illustration see the addendum at the end of the introduction below).

The first chapter surveys the most important contributions to the study of the meanings of the BH verb forms from 1817 to 2002. The focus of attention is on the perspectives identified in the literature by those authors whose contributions are significant to the study of the BHVS. I will not attempt to cover everything written on the BHVS. The survey on the most significant contributions to the study of the BHVS is intended to provide a background to the study. The central question that will guide the survey is whether any perspective is discernible, and whether such perspectives could be relied upon to provide an adequate explanation of the meaning of the BH verb forms.

The second and third chapters discuss the theoretical point of departure of this study. Chapter two introduces the notions “Nonmonad,” “Prominence” and “Trimodal,” as part of the tools of linguistic analysis in this study. The notions “Nonmonad” and “Trimodal” enable me to explain the reason why a language may use two verb forms that have essentially the same aspectual value and why one verb form may have both tense and aspectual meaning as its constitutive grams. If a verb form may be constituted of

¹ By meaning here is meant grammatical meanings of verb inflections indicating perfective/imperfective meanings in aspect-prominent languages and past and or future meanings of verb inflections in tense languages.

more than one gramm, what might be its dominant or prominent meaning? This question is answered by the notion “Prominence.”

Chapter three establishes the primitive meaning of verb forms in human languages. The discussion of the primitive meaning of verb forms in human languages helps one to understand that the basic semantics of verb forms in any language is aspect. Part of Cook’s (2002) argument that BH is an aspect-prominent language, is based on his view of the BH verb forms as in terms of an “event structure” and the “viewpoint aspect.” Therefore, the argument that the semantics of the verb form found in “event structure” is aspectual, may raise more questions than provide solutions to the problem of the BHVS. It may be argued that when the verb form of any language is analysed in terms of “event structure,” one will be able to find that the meaning of the verb form is basically aspectual. Therefore, the aspectual viewpoint in an event structure may not be a sufficient condition for regarding a language as an aspect-prominent language (Cook 2002:203). Cook (2002:203) argues that “qatal:yiqtol opposition is one of viewpoint aspect-perfective:imperfective.” One may ask: “is there any language in which verb form does not reflect a particular viewpoint aspect?” Research on the primitive meaning of verb forms in all languages show that aspect is the primitive meaning of verb forms in all languages (see 3.2.1 to 3.2.3 below). There is, therefore, a need to look for more universal and more objective criteria for determining whether a language may be regarded as aspect-prominent or tense-prominent. Such identifiable characteristics or criteria may serve as guide to understanding the differences between a tense, mood and aspect prominent language. Chapter three discusses such universal categories used in the analysis of the BH verb forms. This enables one to formulate some objective criteria that could be used to categorise BH as a tense prominent language or an aspect-prominent language.

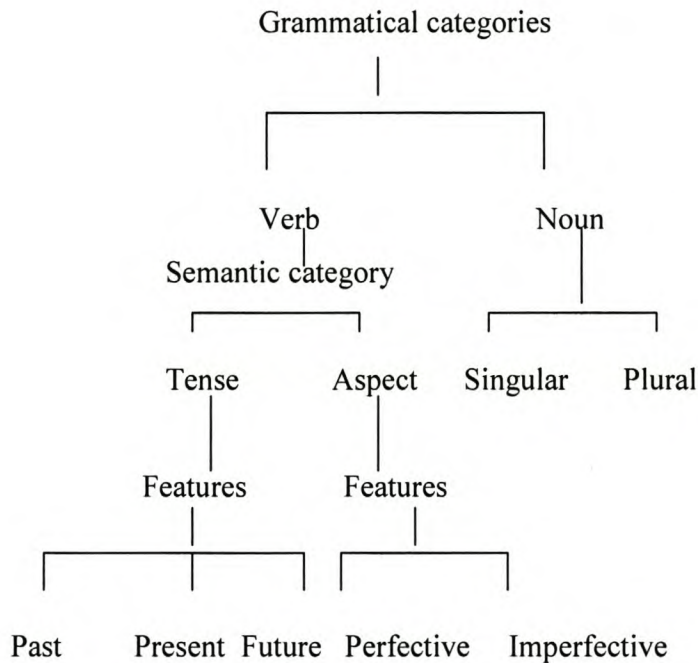
In chapter four, hypotheses are formulated to argue that BH is an aspect-prominent language. In the chapter, some views that counter the aspect perspective taken in this study are refuted. The aspectual hypothesis being made in this study does not discount or deny the possible effect of historical development in the morphosyntactics of the BH texts as we now have it. Rather the reexamination is done with a view of finding if indeed all the often-cited cases are really not interpretable differently in the light of our

aspectual hypothesis. If some of such cases are interpretable as being used to express one form of aspect or another, we shall have been able to reduce such disputed cases to a level where one is more confident that what remains that cannot be explained in terms of consistent aspectual distinctions, especially in the older books of the OT, may be explainable in terms of archaic influences on the BHVS.

Chapter five tests the hypothesis on a fixed corpus from Ex. 15, Jos. and Ps.1 and 37. The purpose of testing is to demonstrate the validity of the aspectual hypothesis that has been formulated. It was found that the claim could be held that BH is an aspect-prominent language. The verb forms are found to maintain aspectual distinctions consistently. Finally chapter six summarises the findings of the study and points out some of the implications of the findings. It suggests a way for further research in the area of the meanings of verb forms in other Semitic languages.

Addendum to the Preface

By metacategory I refer to universal non-language specific categories by which any language can be characterised. I follow Matthew’s notion of ‘category’ as quoted by Thieroff and Budde (1995:49). Category, according to them is the properties of the particular linguistic unit in question (see also Radford 1997:37). In this study, I use grammatical category to refer to the properties of the grammar of a language. Each subcategory of the grammar such as tense and aspect are also categories, having their own properties. Tense has the property of the morphology of the verb indicating time of speech relative to the time of the event. Aspect has the property of the morphology of the verb expressing the boundedness or unboundedness of an event or state. This is illustrated as follows:



Thieroff and Budde use the term ‘categorization’ to refer to what they call “supercategories” like tense and aspect (1995:49). I use the term ‘categorisation’ to refer to a process of classifying linguistic units into categories. The process may involve using some general criteria for the grouping. Each resultant group I call ‘category’ (cf. Transk 1997:99).

Chapter one

A Brief Survey of the Study of the Biblical Hebrew Verbal System²

1.1. Introduction

The Hebrew language, i.e. the Biblical Hebrew, (BH for short in this thesis), belongs to the Northwest Semitic languages. These languages were spoken, in ancient times, on the northwest of the “Fertile Crescent.” The area lies between the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates River.³ This language, which was the means of daily communication among the Hebrews of that time, passed through various historical stages and experiences. Conquest and exile combine to expose the people to multiculturalism and multilingualism. If there was any observation of its grammar while it was still being used as a language of daily communication, the records of such work are not yet available to scholars. According to McFall (1982:2), Saadia Gaon produced a grammar of Hebrew around 882 AD.⁴ McFall (1982:1), however, observes that “Saadia’s verbal system is closer to Mishnaic Hebrew than to BH.”⁵

² A detail treatment of the history of the Hebrew verbal system is found in McFall (1982).

³ According to Moscati (1964:3) “Semitic languages occupied in ancient times the following regions of Western Asia: Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Arabia.”

⁴ Gaon might have been influenced by the Greco-Roman grammatical tradition. The grammar of Dionysius Thrax, a Greek was translated into Aramenian and later into Syrian. The Arab grammarians drew upon the Syrians. Later the Hebrew scholars were influenced by the Arabic grammatical tradition (cf. Lyons (1968:18-19).

⁵ Mishnaic Hebrew was a language spoken up to 200 AD (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:10). It was the language used in discussing and resolving problems on the application of the religious law. It was a distinct dialect from BH.

It should be remembered that by 500 BC,⁶ BH had given way to Aramaic which became the standard language of communication among the Jews and with their neighbors in the region known as Palestine (Saenz-Badillos 1993:132). By this time most of what remained of the Hebrew language was contained in the “canonised texts of the Torah. The implication of this historical development for the study of BH today is that scholars cannot elicit information from the speakers of the BH language. There are no more living speakers of the language whom one can ask questions. If there were living speakers, it would have enabled one to determine when a particular verb form is used and why. Scholars of BH have to resort to various hypotheses as to what the rules governing the language might have been.

The brief survey of the literature on the study of the meaning of the BH verb forms is based on the identified perspectives of the various works examined. The discussions and evaluations of each perspective shall be conducted as follows: First, I investigate whether the perspective is based on a prior set of crosslinguistic category against which the BH verb forms are compared.⁷ Second, I examine whether the conclusion reached is based on any empirical evidence from any other known language. Third, I search to find whether there are any falsifiable criteria that one may use in confirming or invalidating the claims of each perspective.

Eight perspectives have been identified in the literature reviewed. I refer to them as the historical-comparative perspective, the syntactic perspective, the context-cum-accent perspective, the discourse perspective and the tense-aspect-neutral perspective, the eclectic perspective, the non-monadic perspective and the zero frame perspective. These are considered in eight sections below in the order listed above.

⁶ Scholars give various dates as to when Hebrew was spoken as a living language. For example, Saenz-Badillos (1993:2) tells us that BH was a spoken and literary language until the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC. Van der Merwe, Naude and Kroeze (1999:15) think that BH was a spoken language until 400 BC.

⁷ My hypothesis is that a crosslinguistic typology of the features of tense, aspect and mood languages should be used and that on the basis of this typology, BH can be more objectively classified as a tense, aspectual or mood language. If one can establish the features of a tense or an aspectual or mood language, then a way could be paved for a better understanding of the BHVS.

eclectic perspective, the non-monadic perspective and the zero frame perspective. These are considered in eight sections below in the order listed above.

1.2. The Historical-Comparative Perspective

In the nineteenth century, after Darwin published his “On the Origin of Species” in 1859,⁸ there was the “change of outlook that led to the adoption of the historical point of view” in most sciences (Lyons 1968:23). In the natural sciences, scholars have abandoned the a priori reasoning in favour of more empirical rule governed methods. “It was observed that all human institutions – laws, customs ... and languages – were continually changing” (Lyons 1968:23). Abstract principles were no longer acceptable as sufficient explanation of phenomena. Focus was shifted to the development of a phenomenon from previous stages through time. Linguistic enquiry also shifts to finding the evolution of languages, since it was assumed that the current state must have evolved from a proto type.⁹

The study of the meaning of the Hebrew verbal forms has a long history (McFall 1982:1). According to McFall (1982:27), “the period 1827-1954 covers the most active and formative period of investigation in the Hebrew verbal system.” However the work of Gesenius, of which the first edition appeared in 1817, is so important in the formation of the methodology of the study of the Hebrew verbal system that I think it merits consideration when discussing the formative years of the study of the Hebrew verbal system (HVS).

All the works based on historical-comparative perspective during the period under review shall not be discussed in this study, since there is already a good and detailed treatment in McFall (1982). We discuss only scholars whose views represent a particular significant trend or point of view within what we regard as the historical-comparative

⁸ See Haralambos (1980:454).

⁹ “The discovery of regular correspondences between Greek, Latin and Romance relatives ... was the principal factor in the development of comparative historical philology” (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:42). See also Rooker (1998:119). Here Rooker notes that “The first systematic comparison of the Indo-European languages comprised an analysis of the verbal affixes of Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and Persian, and German verbs by Franz Bopp in 1816.”

perspective on the problem of the HVS. Later in the study, there will be more elaboration on some of the scholars discussed in the section here. The works selected are those of Gesenius (1817), Ewald (1847), Driver (1892), Hughes (1970), Huehnergard (1988), Andersen (2000) and Cook (2002).

Gesenius, Ewald and Driver may be regarded as those belonging to the group of scholars whose work can be said to be based on an older historical-comparative perspective. The works of Ewald and Driver influence the study of the BHVS even till the present time.

The older historical-comparative perspective, on one hand, based their studies mainly on comparing BH with Akkadian or Egyptian (Cook 2002:106). The older historical-comparative perspective seeks to find equivalences between BH and Akkadian or Egyptian. On the other hand, the neo-historical-comparative perspective seeks to understand the meaning of the BHVS by tracing the evolutionary development of the verb forms and not just finding equivalences between BH and other ancient languages. Because of this small, but significant difference of approach, the older historical-comparative perspective is discussed differently from the neo-historical-comparative perspective. The works of Andersen and Cook are more recent and they also use more modern linguistic theories of grammaticalisation. They will, therefore, be given more detailed attention in this study.

The selection in this section is made for the following reasons. First, it shows the specific influential insight that each scholar who uses the approach brings to the study of the BH verbal system. Secondly, the discussion allows us to identify the common problems of the approach, and to formulate questions that may lead to ways of finding solutions to the problems.

1.2.1. The older historical comparative perspectives

1.2.1.1 Gesenius

Wilhelm Gesenius's work appeared in 1817 (Van der Merwe 1987:162). There have been 28 editions of Gesenius since it was first published. Scholars who revised the different editions may have expressed different views on the meaning of the BH verb forms. I do

not have access to all the editions except the 28th one. In this thesis, the discussion on Gesenius is based on the 28th edition.

“Gesenius ... set the description of Old Hebrew free from the constraints which dogmatics of his day had on it¹⁰ and described it rationally like any other language” (Van der Merwe 1987:162). Gesenius states his methods in the following words:

The chief requirements for one who is treating the grammar of an ancient language are

(1) that he should observe as fully and accurately as possible the existing linguistic phenomena and describe them, after showing their organic connexion (the empirical and historico-critical elements); (2) and that he should explain these facts, partly by comparing them with one another and by analogy of the sister languages, partly from the general laws of philology (the logical element) (Gesenius-Kautzch-Cowley 1909:21).

Gesenius considers BH verb forms as expressing tenses. He says “while the Hebrew verb, owing to ... derivative forms or conjugations is ... poor in the matter of tenses and moods ... the verb has only two tense forms (perfect and imperfect)” (Gesenius-Kautzch-Cowley 1909:117). According to Gesenius the verb forms that he calls perfect and imperfect can be used to express any of the tenses. He says “the perfect serves to express ... events or states ... whether they belong to a determinate past time or extend into the present, or while still future...” (1909:309). The imperfect, i.e. the *yiqtol* can also be used to express past time actions repeated in the past and also “to represent *futurum exactum*” (1909:314-316). On the use of *wayyiqtol* which Gesenius calls “the imperfect with *waw* consecutive” (1909:326), he says “it serves to express actions, which are to be regarded as the temporal or logical sequel of actions, events, or states mentioned immediately before” (1909:326). He sees the *wayyiqtol* in the narrative as that which connects loosely and externally with “that which has been narrated previously” (1909:327).

Gesenius’ work marks a very important watershed in the study of the BH verbal system. He gives great priority to empirical data and compares Hebrew with Arabic. His insistence on accurate observation, description and explanation is to be commended. One

¹⁰ On the hindrance of dogma to the study of Hebrew, see Rooker (1998:203).

area of weakness is that he assumes that the grammatical categories such as tense, which are found in Indo-European languages, are also present in Hebrew¹¹ and mean the same things. Empirical evidence is not provided to justify this assumption. He does not discuss what differentiates a tense language from an aspectual language, and how BH could have been classified by using those differentiating parameters.

In this section Gesenius' notion of perfect and imperfect forms, both of which are used to express past and future times, were discussed. In the section that follows, the notion of aspect as Ewald understands and explains it is considered.

1.2.1.2. Ewald

Heinrich von Ewald published his first grammar of BH in 1847 (McFall 1982:44). He works with an assumption of the evolutionary process in human thought and language. He observes,

Man has first acted, passed through an experience and sees before him something that is finished; but this very fact reminds him of that which does not yet exist ... Hence the speaker views everything either as already finished, and thus before him, or as unfinished and non-existent, and possibly becoming and coming (McFall 1982:44).

This led Ewald to group the verb system of BH into two categories. These he calls “the simple forms” and “the consecutive forms” (McFall 1982:44,46). According to Ewald, the simple forms consist of the perfect and the imperfect. The perfect “is used of actions which the speaker from his present (point) regards as actually past and therefore *complete*. It is also used for actions which are regarded as finished but which reach right into the present” (McFall 1982:45). Ewald includes stative verbs in this category. He explains that “the imperfect is used to describe *incomplete* action, also what does not yet exist, what is going on or progressing towards completion” (McFall 1982:46). Ewald also

¹¹ This might be due to the influence which Greco-Roman grammatical tradition had on Hebrew via Arab scholars (cf. Lyons 1968:18,19). Also it is of interest to note that Gesenius published his work in 1817 while Bopp published his Sanskrit conjugation system in 1816. In this work, Bopp “studies the connexions between Sanskrit, German, Greek and Latin” (de Saussure 1983:2).

makes a subdivision of the use of the imperfect. The imperfect, according to him, denotes the absolute future tense, and the incomplete or what is ‘becoming’ (McFall 1982:46).

The imperfect is used with a *wa* and *we*. As to the meanings of these conjugations, Ewald makes some interesting observations. He thinks that the wayyiqtol is a compound word which consists וַ plus ו. This yields וַו which changes into (va). This particle *va* becomes a temporal particle referring to the past (McFall 1982:48). When וַו is dropped, according to Ewald, leaving only ו (ve), it becomes a simple conjunction. However the dropped וַו leaves its tone on the final syllable to compensate for what was dropped. The resultant weqatal expresses future (McFall 1982:48).

One important insight that one gets from Ewald’s work is his idea about man’s experience of the world. Ewald argues that in the evolutionary process of human cognition, man first sees something as either finished or that which is not finished and not yet existed. It may just be beginning to exist. At this stage of human’s experience the focus is on the event/state as a whole or part of it. The idea of relating an event to time in a verbal expression is not the first impression on man’s mind. Modern linguistic studies have supported this view, e.g. Bache (1994:46, 47) and Andersen (1985:78). Bache argues that “aspect generally seems to be part of the intrinsic meaning of verb roots” (1994:78). It is also true, as Ewald observes that the perfect correlates with complete action and past, while imperfect also correlates with incomplete action and future. However, Ewald does not explain how to interpret the cases where qatal (his perfect) is used to express what appears to be imperfect meanings in some translations such as in the following texts:

Psalm 14:1

אמר נבל בלבו אין אלהים

‘The fool says in his heart there is no God’ (NIV).

Genesis 49:9b.

כרע רבץ כאריה

“Like a lion he crouches and lies down” (NIV).

The verb forms **אמר** in Psalm 14:1, and **כרע** Gen. 49:9 respectively are in the form of what is traditionally called perfect. Yet each expresses what the versions referred to view as on-going or habitual events, which is traditionally called imperfect.

Furthermore there is no trace found in the diachronic studies of Hebrew to support Ewald's position that wayyiqtol is the result of a fusion between **א** and yiqtol. The claim that tone is phonemic in BH is a contentious one (see McFall 1982:189-210 and Price 1990). Ewald's atomisation of wayyiqtol cannot therefore be accepted without some reservations. Finally, his aspect interpretation of the BH verb forms,¹² as he is usually understood to hold an aspect view of the meaning of the Hebrew verb forms, is not substantiated by way of comparing it with a tense or other aspectual languages. This would not only have made clear the difference between BH as an aspectual language and tense languages, but would also have given his arguments more weight.

With these remarks, we leave Ewald and consider a work that is based on Ewald's idea, but differs in the conclusions reached.

1.2.1.3. S.R. Driver

One very significant advance in the study of the Hebrew verbal system from the historical-comparative perspective is the work of S.R. Driver. McFall (1982:61) notes that Driver's theory is very close to that of Ewald's. Although Driver (1892) does not acknowledge Ewald, he probably was influenced to some extent by the work of Ewald. For instance, both argue that the BH verb forms express aspect. Ewald refers to his aspect as perfect for qatal and imperfect for yiqtol. According to him, qatal is complete and past,

¹² DeCaen (1996) has voiced a protest that Ewald never used the term aspect in his description of Hebrew verb forms. He complains "The first fact crying out for attention is that Ewald himself never used the term or the concept aspect ... despite the fact that the standard Anglo-American sources do actually cite Ewald's writing of the two grand and opposite aspects under which every conceivable action may be regarded" (1996:133). But Cook (2002:84-87) thinks that it is correct to understand Ewald's theory as aspect. He translates Ewald's explanation of his (Ewald's) theory of tense into English in footnote number 10 as follows, "Since therefore in virtue of the power and freedom accorded to the imagination, the idea of completeness may also be used relatively ... the speaker ... may conceive an action, can represent it either as complete, or as going on and coming." From this, Cook argues that Ewald's theory is aspectual.

yiqtol is incomplete and future. There is no present tense in Ewald's theory (cf. McFall 1982:45).

In Driver's theory qatal expresses complete action and is perfect while yiqtol designates an action as 'nascent and it implies imperfect' (cf. McFall 1982:61).¹³

Driver begins his analysis by noting that "The Hebrew language in contrast to the classical languages in which the development of the verb is so richly varied, possesses only two of those modifications which are commonly termed *tense*" (Driver 1892:1).¹⁴ Driver's work is based on two important ideas. The *first* is his notion of time. He conceptualises time in two forms. The first type of time he calls "order of time" (1892:2). According to him, in order of time, "a particular verbal form may exhibit a given action as prior or subsequent to some date otherwise fixed by narrative: this is a difference in order of time" (1892:2). This can be understood to mean a reference to an event in relation to the moment of speech. This would be tense. But Driver argues that the BH verb forms do not express this order of time. The second type of time Drivers calls "kind of time" (1892:2). He explains the kind of time as follows:

an action may be contemplated, according to the fancy of the speaker, or according to the particular point which he desires to make prominent, either as incipient, or as continuing, or as completed, the speaker may wish to lay stress upon the moment at which it begins, or upon the period over which it extends, or upon the fact of its being finished and done: these are differences in the kind of time (Driver 1892:2).

He argues that in Hebrew, "the tenses mark only differences in the kind of time ..." (Driver 1892:2). By this way of conceptualising how the verb forms express events in time, Driver regards the verb forms as expressing "incipiency, continuance and completion" (1892:3). These are represented by the "imperfect, the participle and the perfect" (1892:3).

¹³ Cook (2002:90-92) argues that Driver might have profited from the work of Curtis' theory of Greek verbs in his (Driver's) use of the notion "nascent" as the meaning of yiqtol. According to Cook, the German equivalent of 'nascent' is "eintretende" which could mean beginning, entry and end-point.

¹⁴ Driver uses the term "tense" to refer to what we in this study regard as aspect.

Driver's second principle for explaining the meaning of the Hebrew verb is the accent or tone. He sees accent as phonemic, especially in qatal and weqatal.¹⁵ In the case of weqatal, he argues

... a real difference of some kind or other exists between the use of the perfect with simple waw, and the use of the perfect with waw consecutive ... the external indication of this difference is to be found in the alteration of tone which constantly attends and accompanies it (1892:115).

McFall (1982), Norman (1987) and Price (1990) have discussed the question of tone in BH. The weight of evidence seems to be that tone is not critical in determining the meaning of the use of weqatal or qatal in BH.¹⁶

Randal Garr, writing an introduction in 1998 to a reprint of Driver's work says, "it was the first in English to expound the principles of the Hebrew syntax on lines at once philosophical and scientific" (Driver 1892:xviii). According to Garr, Driver is very consistent according the goal he sets for himself "to supply a systematic exposition" (1892:lxxxiv), in his work. But it may be argued that the system seems to break down when Driver attempts to use 'tone' as an explanatory theory for the different meanings of weqatal. Driver is very meticulous, especially in his treatment of tones and their

¹⁵ By 'tone' in modern linguistics is meant "a term used in phonology (the study of sound system) to refer to DISTINCTIVE PITCH level of syllable" (Crystal, 1997:389). Being distinctive, tone then causes a change in meaning of the word in which it occurs.

¹⁶ Sheehan (1970) offers an explanation of what he calls "the phonic law in operation in the shift of accent" in BH (1970:545). In support of Gordon (1938), Sheehan supports the view that the law of shift of accent in BH is not found in the "class of verb" but rather in "the nature of the syllable" (1970:546). According to him, the shift occurs when the penult is a close syllable, and also when the penult and the antepenult are both naturally long syllables (1970:545). 'Lamed alef' and 'lamed he' verbs as well as the presence of laryngeal are some of his exceptions. Other exceptions include the presence of "nahog ahor," a major pause or "other strong disjunctive accent." The law does not also hold in what he terms as "prophetic" and "gnomic" cases. One can infer from Sheehan that tone cannot be relied upon for the aspectual or tense meaning of weqatal. As Blake (1944) has observed, the tone theory has too many of exceptions to be a useful guide to the understanding of the perfective and imperfective meanings of the weqatal.

grammatical functions. However, McFall, Norman, and Price have refuted the validity of Driver's tone theory explanation for the meanings of *weqatal*.

We have noted that Driver is very consistent in his analysis of the BHVS. Another strong point of Driver's work is the amount of data he uses in his analysis. This increases the validity of his arguments that BH is an aspect language. Driver also covers all forms of the BH verb, which makes his analysis comprehensive. Such comprehensive treatment of the BHVS is a valuable source of data for other investigators. The present study benefits much from Driver.

One problem in Driver's work under consideration is that the way by which he arrived at his aspectual interpretation is not clearly demonstrated in terms of linguistic evidence. If Driver had described the features of tense and aspectual languages based on crosslinguistic metacategories, it would have been possible to compare the features of Hebrew with those of other languages. Such comparison would have clearly shown how Hebrew stands with such features of other languages. Then his aspect claim for Hebrew would have been on a more solid ground. So, our reservations about Driver are similar to those that we have against Ewald.

1.2.2. The neo-historical-comparative perspective

More recently, a number of Hebraists discussed the Hebrew verbal system also from a historical-comparative perspective. The scholars are Hughes (1970), Fensham (1978), Huehnergard (1988), Andersen (2000) and Cook (2002). They return to the early historical-comparative perspective. So, I will label them as having a neo-historical-comparative perspective. Since their perspectives are very similar, I group them together and discuss them as one entity. They all try to find the meaning of the Hebrew verb forms by tracing the forms in its evolutionary process from High Akkadian. However, some maintain that BH is a tense language, others regard it as an aspect language, (e.g. Andersen's significant insight from linguistic typology and Smith's grammaticalization).¹⁷

¹⁷ Smith holds the view that in BH "the converted imperfect and perfect may be traced to different origins" (Smith 1988:12). For Smith, the verb forms of BH indicate tenses. The *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* express past while the *yiqtol* express future.

1.2.2.1. Hughes

Hughes (1970) claims that the Hebrew verb forms do not express aspect, but tenses. In his study of the meaning of the BH verb forms, he asserts,

After an exhaustive survey of the uses of the simple Imperfect and the Perfect with waw in past time and the simple Perfect in future time in the prose sections of the Old Testament, we have reached the conclusion which are opposed to the aspect theory (1970:12).

Hughes argues that Hebrew “has two tense forms” (1970:12) only. These are the past and the future tenses. According to him, both of these Hebrew verb forms have an “aorist” meaning (1970:12).¹⁸ He says, “the aorist is not confined to past time. The present and future can be viewed aoristically” (1970:12). He goes further to say, “We are of the opinion that this aoristic concept ... covers the usage of the Hebrew tenses” (1970:12).

Hughes takes his notion of aoristic meaning of the Hebrew verb forms from his understanding of the meaning of the Akkadian *qatil* and *yaqtul*. He states “the situation in Akkadian suggests that in Proto Semitic speech, the preformative verb *yaqtul* denoted action, and the affirmative verb *qatil* signified state” (1970:12). He argues that the Proto Semitic *yaqtul* form might be termed active aorist, and the *qatil* form, the stative aorist. Hughes opines that in the course of the development of the Hebrew verb forms from the Proto Semitic, the *qatal* and the *yiqtol* would both be used for any of the tenses. In the light of the above, Hughes argues that *qatal* and *yiqtol* should be designated “affirmative aorist and preformative aorist” respectively instead of perfect and imperfect (1970:13).

The existence of what Hughes calls particles is very significant in his tense theory of the BH verb forms. He argues that particles such as *מי יתן* ‘would that’ *כה אמר יהוה* ‘thus says the LORD’ as well as *לעמן* ‘in order that’ *אז* ‘then’ *טרם* ‘not yet’ and ‘wa’ (1970:13,14) have strong influence on the meaning of the verb forms of BH.¹⁹ He states that these particles “regularly employed with imperfect are

¹⁸ Hughes (1970:12) defines ‘aorist’ as the verb “which expresses the action in an undefined manner, i.e. without regard to the completeness or incompleteness of the action.”

¹⁹ See section 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 below for a discussion of *טרם* and *אז*.

verb forms of BH.¹⁹ He states that these particles “regularly employed with imperfect are examples which seem to show beyond all doubt the validity of our contention that the particles cannot be ignored in the study of the verb” (1970:14).

Hughes’ observation that any of the Hebrew verb forms could be used to express any tense value may not be disputed. But his interpretation of aorist as far as Hebrew is concerned is problematic. Aorist is usually viewed in terms of past or perfect or future without any indication as to whether the action involved is momentary or continuous (cf. Crystal 1980:22). If Crystal is correct, how could *yiqtol* found in the following texts be explained in terms of Hughes aoristic meaning of the verb forms?

Genesis 31:39

טרפה לא הבאתי אליך אנכי אחטנה מירי

‘Whatever is turned I did not bring to you, I usually pay (אחטנה) from my hand.’

Genesis 37:7c

והנה תסבינה אלמתיכם

‘...and behold your sheaves were surrounding’ (תסבינה).

In these two examples, the actions indicated by the verb form *yiqtol* are repeated ones.

Another problem is the use of Akkadian as the standard for interpreting the meaning of the Hebrew verb forms. Where Hughes sees the Akkadian *yaqtul* as tense, others, like Isaksson (1987) sees the same *yaqtul* as aspectual. What then are the criteria that guide in arriving at the two contrasting views?

It is doubtful whether when the particles that Hughes discusses co-occur with verb forms, they could influence their meanings. The case of ‘*wa*’ that Hughes argues that influences the meanings of the verb forms is more apparent than real. In BH there is ‘*wa*’ found in ‘*wayyiqtol*,’ which marks sequentiality in narratives. It is used to express perfective meaning (cf. 4.6.1.2 below). There is another form, which is similar to ‘*wa*,’ but it is phonologically different and also semantically different from ‘*wa*.’ It is ‘*we*’ that can also prefix *yiqtol*. When this happens, the meaning is imperfective. The ‘*we*’ is simply used to conjoin series of events. For example,

¹⁹ See section 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 below for a discussion of **טרם** and **אז**.

Ps. 37:4

והתענג על-יהוה ויתן-לך משאלת לבך

‘Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.’

Am. 5:24

ויגל כמים משפט

‘Let justice flow like water.’

I also take another particle, which Hughes argues can influence the meanings of the verb forms of BH.

Gen. 12:13

למען ייטב-לי בעבורך

‘In order that it will be well with me because of you.’

Gen. 50:20b

למען עשה כיום הזה להחית עם-רב

‘So that he did/has done like this day to make alive a great people.’

Considering the examples cited above, there is no evidence to uphold the claim that the particles ׀ and למען change the semantics of the verb forms. As the examples show, qatal is used to express perfective meaning, while yiqtol is used to express imperfective meaning, though both are preceded by למען.

We have seen that neither ׀ nor לנען, two of Hughes particles, change the meanings of the verb forms they co-occur with. Some other particles in Hughes’ examples will be considered in section 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 below.

1.2.2.2. Fensham

Fensham posits that the Hebrew Bible is a composite of linguistic phenomena, viz that the Hebrew Bible comprises Early Biblical Hebrew and Late Biblical Hebrew. He maintains that each of the strands keeps part of its unique features. Some parts, e.g. poetic materials and the older books, exhibit a language closer to the Proto Semitic verb form. Other parts, e.g. the latter books, exhibit linguistic changes that have occurred over the time of the compilation of the entire Torah. According to Fensham (1978:13), it was

Moran that reconstructed the early usage of the verb in the Northwest Semitic languages. Moran, according to Fensham, argues that in the Northwest Semitic languages, there is the form “qatala” for expressing punctual meaning, “yaqtulu” for expressing “durative” meaning and “yaqtul” for expressing “jussive.” The finding of Moran seems to be the seminal idea on which the notion of BH being a composite linguistic phenomenon is based. Fensham argues that “one has, however, in certain parts of the Old Testament vestiges of archaic grammatical construction” (1978:10). Fensham argues that context must be put into consideration when determining the meaning of the BH verb forms. He himself does not indicate explicitly whether BH is a tense or aspectual language. He is discussed here because of his idea that the BH is a composite language and this feature of the language is important for the discussion of the BHVS. It is a line of thought that is taken by a number of other scholars too, e.g. Smith (1988).

1.2.2.3. Huehnergard

Huehnergard (1988) bases his analysis of the meaning of the BH verb forms on the theory of “perfective yaqtul and imperfective yaqtulu” that he claims to be the “primary forms” of Proto Semitic (1988:19). The explanation of the meaning of the BH verb forms in terms of Proto Semitic can be traced to Burney (1919). Burney argues that BH is a tense language. He bases his tense conclusions on his study of the Gilgamesh-epic and the Creation-epic (Burney 1919:204). Burney reports that the texts he used were from Table I and XI of the Gilgamesh-epic and Table IV of the Creation-epic. On the basis of these studies, Burney argues that “in Babylonian, we find the peculiarity that the ordinary historical tense is not as in other Semitic languages the perfect, but a form (usually called the preterite)...” In the light of these findings, Burney argues that there is some connection between the verb forms of BH and what he finds in Akkadian (1919:200).

Years later, Huehnergard, who supports other scholars like Rainey (1988) argues that the “perfective yaqtul and the imperfective yaqtulu were the primary forms of Proto Semitic (Huehnergard 1988:19). Yaqtul and yaqtulu, according to Huehnergard, perform the same function (1988:20). Huehnergard argues that “yaqtul was a single form that expressed the perfective aspect of verbal actions ... and injunctions.” He argues that a

verbal system in which two forms express verbal action in the past can be explained better by an aspect view than a tense view (1988:21). He argues,

If, as Rainey's examples show, both *yaqtul* and *yaqtulu* express verbal action in the past and yet are not identical in meaning, then it seems clear that we must posit a distinction between them other than the expression of tenses; in other words, they are also aspectually different (1988:21).

Huehnergard states that in the course of the development of BH, "*yaqtul*, *yaqtula*, and *yaqtulu* fell together morphologically in the singular sound verbs" (1988:21). The 'singular sound verbs' are the verbs that do not have weak radicals (1988:21). Huehnergard explains that at that stage when the morphologically different forms fell together, "the semantic distinctions between the corresponding plurals '*yaqtulu*' and '*yaqtulun(na)* likewise became blurred ... and new distinctions arose" (1988:21). He explains that the "form *yaqtulu* became generalised as the paradigmatic plural of singular *yaqtul* in all its functions" (1988:21). The generalisation took the function of the earlier *yaqtul* and *yaqtula* as well as the imperfect *yaqtulu*. According to Huehnergard, the original imperfect plural *yaqtulun(na)* became "redundant" (1988:21). The function of the original *yaqtulu(na)* shifted to "a new specifically imperfect form" and no longer "the only imperfect plural form" (1988:21).

As can be deduced from the sketch of Huehnergard's study above, he bases his study on an evolutionary development of BH. He may therefore be regarded as belonging to those scholars who base their studies of the BHVS on the neo-historical-comparative perspective. Huehnergard also holds that BH is an aspectual language and not a tense language.

Huehnergard's contribution is significant in the following ways. Firstly, he presents a clear picture of the evolution of *yaqtul*, *yaqtula* and *yaqtulu(na)* and their morphological changes that finally lead to their semantic differences. Secondly, Huehnergard makes a strong argument that if different verb forms express verbal actions in the past but do not have identical meaning such a phenomenon could not be a tense, but should be considered as aspectual differences.

Similar to the other perspectives discussed so far, Huehnergard does not provide any crosslinguistic criteria for determining a tense-prominent and an aspect-prominent

language. For instance he does not support his argument by demonstrating that there are other languages where different verb forms are used to express past actions, and the meanings are not identical. Thirdly, he does not explain why at a specific synchronic stage of BH, the earlier aspectual meaning of the verb form in the Proto Semitic could not have changed to acquire a tense meaning. On grounds of the above limitations, Huehnergard's solution may be regarded as not having explained adequately the meaning of the BH verb forms.

1.2.2.4. David Andersen

Andersen (2000), like Hughes, works from a historical-comparative perspective. He, in contrast to Hughes, holds that Hebrew is an aspectual language. He supports his claims by appealing also to Akkadian. In his argument he produces a table that shows what he claims is the path of change of the Proto Semitic verb forms from its Akkadian origin to its present status as found in BH. The table is reproduced below.

Andersen begins his study by defining the terms he uses.²⁰ He sees tense as “whether the verb is portraying a situation (event or state) in the past, present or future.” As for aspect he argues that it is seen as “how the temporal structure of a situation is portrayed in terms of whether the focus is on one complete event or state, one intermediate stage of an event, or on repeated occurrences of an event or state” (2000:1). He notes that though in some standard works on Semitic languages, “the term perfect is often used to label verb conjugations which are really perfective, and contrasting to imperfective”²¹ (2000:2).

Andersen attempts to use typological and diachronic approaches in his investigation of the BHVS. He says, “A linguistically sound diachronic analysis integrating insights from typological studies would provide a firmer foundation for a plausible synchronic description of the Hebrew verbal system” (2000:1).

²⁰ Andersen explains perfect as “a verbal aspect which portrays an event together with a continuing result of that event which is regarded as relevant at the moment of speech or another point of reference” (2000:58). He also defines perfective as “a verbal aspect which portrays an event as whole (2000:58).

²¹ Andersen (2000:2) defines imperfective as “indicating that the situation is viewed as not

He explains the function of the BH verbal system as follows:

In Hebrew, when the first word of a coordinated clause is a verb, there are two possibilities with regard to the semantic effect of coordination on the meaning of the verb. On the one hand, the verb form may have a radically different meaning from that of the same form without the *waw* prefix. In this latter case there are often phonological differences which help signal the meaning change, such as differences in stress patterns in the verb or different allomorph in the coordinating prefix *waw*... Whereas the primary meanings of the so-called imperfect conjugation are imperfective aspect or future tense, the primary meaning of *Waw-Consecutive plus Imperfect* forms is tense and perfective aspect. Similarly *Waw-Consecutive plus Perfect* forms usually convey future tense or imperfective aspect, quite different from the Perfect conjugation, the primary meanings of which are perfect or perfective aspect (2000:3-4).

After Andersen has made the above observations, he concedes that *weqatal* is ambiguous. He raises the problem, “how such a system (which he observes above), could have evolved diachronically?” (2000:4). To solve the problem Andersen (2000:5) formulates the following six questions:

1. What is the likely shape of the Proto-Semitic verbal system in terms of forms and meanings?
2. What are some of the paths of diachronic development attested in other languages for the types of verb meanings found in the Proto-Semitic and Hebrew verbal systems?
3. What hypothesis of stage-by-stage diachronic development can best explain how the Proto-Semitic system evolved into the Biblical Hebrew verbal system?
4. What mechanisms of language change provided the impetus for change from each stage to the next?
5. What particular verb types and clause constructions were the initial locus of changes which later spread throughout the system?

bounded. Imperfective focuses on an event or state as ongoing or continuous.”

6. What evidence is there in the biblical data of different diachronic stages of development of the verbal system and of relics of earlier stages?

Andersen then exploits the findings of the path of linguistic changes found by “Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca” (Andersen 2000:5), to answer the questions he posed. According to Andersen, linguistic expressions usually have ‘denotative’ and ‘connotative’ meanings. The denotative meaning implies the more central or primary meaning of a word, while the connotative meaning implies the peripheral meaning and or its implicature. He explains that, in the course of use, the peripheral meaning may acquire increase frequency of use. As it is used more frequently, it may evolve to become a denotative meaning for those ideas for which it is so frequently used. This new denotative meaning will also be extended to some new peripheral meanings. The process of change will continue. He says the same changes do occur in lexical meanings taking on grammatical meanings. From this, Andersen builds a diachronic path of change as shown below:

COMMON DIACHRONIC PATHS

Initial construction	Initial grammaticalization	Next development	Final stage
Be/have + past participle	Resultative	Perfect	Perfective or past
Main verb + finish/already, main verb + throw away , come + main verb	Completive	Perfect	Perfective or past
Locative + verbal noun, motion verb + main verb, have/be + main verb	Progressive	Imperfective or present	Future
Desire verb + main verb, motion verb + main verb, have/be	Intention	Future	

+ main verb			
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Table 6 (Anderson 2000:8).

The path of change, which Andersen presented in the table above, is said to be based on the findings of Bybee and Dahl, Bybee and Pagliuca (Andersen 2000:6). The left-hand column shows the initial construction. This could be a “copula plus participle of main verb, auxiliary *have*, past participle, main verb plus participle with an original meaning *already*, main verb plus auxiliary derived from verb meaning *finish, throw away or come from*.” (2000:8). The path of change can be predicted by examining the nature of the initial construction. For instance, be/have plus participle will change into resultative. The next change will be perfect and the final stage will be perfective. Andersen claims that this type of change has been observed in “seventy four diverse languages gathered from reference grammars” (2000:6).

Andersen then argues that “if a language has past imperfective, the perfect will probably take on any perfective function and not take other functions of the imperfective as well” (2000:10) in the process of change. Also, “if there is no past imperfective, the perfect can take on both perfective and imperfective past functions to become a simple past” (2000:10). He does not give examples from any natural language to illustrate this point. Andersen’s table does not contain his *past imperfective*, so it is difficult to know the reason why past perfect will influence the perfect to change into perfective.

Andersen also builds other tables consisting of what he calls Semitic and Afrasian languages. From this he selects the Semitic languages and argues that “evidence for Proto-Semitic yaqatal is rather scarce” (2000:14). Andersen’s work benefits very much from Diakonoff. Following Diakonoff, Andersen traces wayyiqtol to the Proto-Semitic Akkadian yaqtul. He (Andersen) claims that yaqtul is “Proto-Semitic preterit (that is past perfective)” (2000:17). He differs from Diakonoff in that Diakonoff uses *ipr* while Andersen uses *qtl* in his reconstruction of the Proto-Semitic development (cf. 2000:12,13). Also Diakonoff argues that the Proto-Semitic qatal and qatila “was originally used for predicate of state” (2000:31). In other words, Diakonoff understands qatala to express “quality, and state emerged as a result of action” (2000:31). Andersen reinterprets the state that emerged as a result of action as simple “resultative” (2000:31). While Diakonoff argues that qatala developed from stative to perfective, Andersen claims

that qatala develops from “have plus passive past participle of a transitive verb” (2000:33).

The remaining part of Andersen’s paper is to show how each Semitic language in his list derives its verb forms from Proto-Semitic Akkadian. He, like Diakonoff, also holds that yaqtul is perfective, i.e. aspectual (Andersen 2000:16). His own conclusion is that irregular cases encountered in Hebrew verbal system are due to archaic or archaising influences (2000:52, 56).²²

Andersen’s work makes some useful contributions to the study of the Semitic languages in general and to Hebrew in particular. Firstly, his use of typology makes it possible to compare Hebrew with any other human language both ancient and modern. As a result, it will be possible to use modern linguistic findings in studying the meaning of the Hebrew verb forms. Secondly, the way he traces how languages change gives good insight into the nature of diachronic influence on synchronic status of a language being investigated. Thirdly, the claim that Akkadian and Arabic may not after all be tense languages as some have claimed (cf. Hughes 1990), will open up new challenges for reinvestigating those languages. Up till now scholars tend to use them as proven cases and apply them in interpreting the verb forms of BH.

There are, however, some problems with the study. Firstly, Andersen does not show how his principle of semantic change from perfect to perfective or imperfective relates to Hebrew. He does not show the path of change in the development of the Hebrew verb forms that express perfect and then later became imperfective. He does not argue for or against whether Semitic languages including Hebrew have what he calls ‘past imperfective.’ Secondly, he does not show any criterion for determining tense and aspectual languages. Thirdly, he observes that weqatal is ambiguous, but he does not suggest ways of interpreting the ambiguity. Fourthly, he does not give examples from BH to illustrate any observed changes along the path that he suggests. Lastly, Cook (2002:99) observes that Andersen assumes that weqatal is imperfective without any demonstration to prove it. Cook continues the criticism by arguing that “if there once existed a

²² See Fensham (1978:10) as discussed in 1.2.2.2 above.

restriction to certain aspect types for qatal and weqatal, it is no longer exhibited in the Biblical text” (2002:99-100).

1.2.2.5. Cook’s Grammaticalization Theory²³

Cook (2002) is the latest study of the BHVS in the tradition of historical-comparative approach to the study of the BHVS. Since Cook’s theory is based on grammaticalization, I treat it as a historical-comparative because grammaticalization is essentially a historical phenomenon (cf. Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994:1).²⁴

According to Cook, grammaticalization can be thought of in two ways. One is “in reference to grammaticalization phenomena” (2002:189). According to Cook, “grammaticalization phenomena” “refers to changes that result in increased grammaticality of items – either lexical > grammatical, or grammatical >more grammatical” (2002:190). The second notion of grammaticalization, according to Cook refers to “grammaticalization theory” (2002:189). This theory, according to Cook, has “a heuristic value in that it has informed typological studies concerning various crosslinguistic phenomena and universal tendencies in language change” (2002:191). It is this second notion of grammaticalization that Cook uses as his model for analysing the meanings of the BHVS. With the model, he attempts to account for the asymmetry between form and meaning as well as make a case for the aspectual interpretation of the BHVS.

Cook begins his study of the BHVS by extensive review of literature on linguistic theories. This enables him to find an anchor for his own model with certain linguistic universals. He also surveys the existing literature on the study of the BHVS. His approach in this respect is to survey the proposed solutions to the problems of qatal: yiqtol, the waw-prefixed forms, and the indicative modal distinctions (2002:79).

Cook (2002:163) argues that

²³ Lehmann (1995:25) defines grammaticalization as the process by which one earlier lexical unit develops into another grammatical or functional category in a language. (See footnote in 1.5.4 below for Lehmann’s full definition).

²⁴ Cook based his grammaticalization theory on Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994).

a universal modal tense and aspect is necessary for a typological study of TAM: without well-defined universal categories, comparisons between TAM forms in individual languages are methodologically unsound since there is no measurable means to know whether the forms that are being compared are genuinely equivalent or not (2002:164).

In order to analyse the semantics of the BH verb forms, Cook makes use of the notions “event model,” “reference frame” “speech time” and “event frame.” Cook uses these concepts as developed by Klein (cf. Klein 1994). In “event frame” events (i.e. situations of affairs) are viewed in three parts, viz., initial stage, the nucleus (i.e. the event proper) and the coda (i.e. the end result). This is diagrammatised below.

Preparatory stage	Nucleus	Coda
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Reference frame is the time frame, which a speaker chooses to view the event frame. Event frame is equivalent to event model (Cook 2002:174). Based on these notions, Cook advances the following arguments:

1. The structure of the event frame determines the situation aspect (2002:188)²⁵.
2. The relationship of the reference frame with the event frame in scope and determines viewpoint aspect (2002:174).
3. Phasal aspect alters the event model to create an activity subevent (2002:182-183).
4. The precedence of relationship of both the event frame and reference frame to the speech time determines tense (2002:188-189).

After these semantic analyses, Cook discusses how the BHVS may be understood. He argues that the “most fundamental and crucial advance in our understanding of the BHVS derives from diachronic analyses, namely, the observation that *yiqtol* and (way) *yiqtol* are homonymous forms with different historical origins (i.e. *yaqtulu* and *yaqtul*, respectively)” (2002:192).

Cook combines what he sees as the effect of grammaticalization on the development of BH and semantic analysis of the BHVS based on event frame in his

²⁵ According to Cook (2002:201), situation aspect can be divided into stative and dynamic predicates. Stative predicate expresses states that do not change over time. Dynamic predicate expresses

explanation of the meaning of the BH verb forms. From that he argues for an aspect interpretation of the BHVS on the following grounds:

1. That the morphology of stative and dynamic predicates are different. He claims that in dynamic predicates, the 'a' vowel is thematic in qatal while the 'o' vowel is thematic in yiqtol. In stative predicate, is 'e/i' or 'u/o' thematic in qatal, while the yiqtol has an 'a' theme (cf. 2002:201). Cook states, however, that these vowels may be obscured by the presence of a pharyngeal or laryngeal in the third position of the verb root (2002:202).
2. He uses Dhal's (1985:21) argument that aspect represents a more basic verbal meaning than tense (2002:204).
3. He also argues that BH fulfils the condition of an aspectual language, which is "the presence of a distinct class of stative verbs" (2002:205).
4. He uses Endo's (1996) argument that states that there is usually an absence of tense shifting in aspectual languages.

Cook's main contributions to the study of the BHVS are important in the following areas. First is his use of modern linguistic theory in his semantic analysis of the BH verb forms. He discusses recent views concerning the notions tense, aspect and mood. From his treatment of these notions one knows exactly what is meant to say that a language is either tense, aspect or mood. Secondly, his panchronic approach enables a researcher to make use of the benefits of both diachronic and synchronic studies of the language. Thirdly, he establishes a metacategory such as the characteristics of tense and aspectual languages. This is methodologically sound as Bache (1995) advocates.

The excellent contribution notwithstanding, the work suffers in some areas that are crucial to a clearer, more satisfactory explanation of the meaning of the BHVS in term of whether the language is a tense or an aspectual language. First, Cook's semantic analysis of the BHVS based on his event model is characteristic of any language, whether tense, an aspectual or mood. Aspect is the primitive meaning of verb forms in all languages (see chapter three in this study). The semantics of the verb is not therefore a sufficient criterion for identifying a language as tense or aspectual. Secondly, Cook's

situations that change over time.

strongest point seems to be his claim that in aspectual languages, there is a distinct class of stative verbs (cf. 2002:205). There are evidences to contradict Cook's claims. Bhat (1999:154) reports that the "Sanskrit and most Indo-Aryan languages are aspect prominent, but they show non-verbal encoding of adjective predicates." Bhat also claims that though English is a tense language, yet "it does contain a class of state verb" (1999:154). I will give a few examples to illustrate what Bhat claims for English

The adjectives such as fat, black, dark could all be verbalised, e.g.

He shortens his stay in London

The farmer fattens his cow for use at Christmas

The smoke blackened the ceiling of the house

The cloud darkens

There are other adjectives that cannot be verbalised in English. There are stative or adjectives that cannot be used as verbs in BH also, e.g.

ירק 'to be green.' Others include,²⁶

ארום 'to be red'

ערום 'to be naked'

חיל 'to be generous'

קר 'to be cold'

These few statives selected from colours and physical and moral aspects of life are indicative that BH does not use every attribute as verb. The point is that some tense languages like English do use some of its attributes as verbs and some aspectual languages like BH do not use some of its attributes as verbs. It could, therefore, be argued that existence or otherwise of stative verbs in a language is not a sufficient criterion for determining whether the language is a tense, an aspectual, or a mood language.

These counter-examples call to question Cook's claims. There is, therefore, the need to search for parameters that are more stable and more sufficient to discriminate between tense and aspectual languages. Lastly, while one may concede that the BH verb forms attain their present status through diachronic changes, the way they are used in the

BH text cannot be assumed to be a patchwork of old and new forms. For instance if we know that resultative (have/be) and completive (finish) develop into perfect and simple past (Cook 2002:210), how does this tell us why wayyiqtol begins a clause in only some type of texts and what happens that allows wayyiqtol series to be interrupted by a qatal? This question can also be asked for weqatal and yiqtol. I claim that after the language has been identified as aspect or tense, the trimodal notion to be discussed in chapter two are needed to answer the questions raised above.

1.2.3. Summary

From the discussions of studies of the BHVS from a historical-comparative perspective, we saw that the synchronic status of BH, like any other language, owes much to its historical antecedent. We also saw that in the evolutionary process of BH it takes along and modifies, some elements of its Proto Semitic form. However, the historical-comparative perspective does not lead us to fully understand by what criteria languages are regarded as tense or aspectual at any particular synchronic stage. It has been argued that the criteria that Cook (2002) gives are not sufficient discriminatory criteria. The contention in the present study is that without any crosslinguistic criteria for grouping languages into tense and aspect categories, it becomes difficult to argue that a language, like BH, is either a tense or an aspectual language.

In the next section we will be looking at the contributions of scholars who approach the problem of the BH verbal system from a different angle other than the diachronic perspective. In our review of the work, the guiding principle will still be to determine whether they provide adequate criteria for determining the meaning of the BH verb forms.

1.3. The Syntactic Perspective

In the previous section, some of the important works, which use the historical-comparative perspective in investigating the meanings of the BH verb forms, were considered. It was argued that the perspective had offered no satisfactory solution to any undisputable understanding of these verb forms. I now discuss the works of some of the scholars who use what I refer to as a syntactic perspective. The scholars to be discussed

²⁶ See BDB (2000:298, 791 and 903).

in this group are Silverman (1973), Andersen (1974), Isaksson (1987), Waltke-O'Connor (1990), Peckham (1997) and Goldfajn (1998). First, a brief description of what I understand as syntax.

In the 20th century the focus of linguistics shifts from the study of the history of the word forms (the diachronic dimension of language) to the study of the relationship between linguistic units as a system (the synchronic dimension of language). Since 1950's (and Chomsky's seminal works) the clause, and syntax, became a focal point of linguists' interest. Syntax, according to Tallerman (1998:1), "means sentence construction." It is concerned "with the ways in which words can be combined together to form phrases and sentences" (Radford 1997:1). The rules that govern the ordering of words or phrases in the construction of sentences that yield particular meanings is one of the tasks of the study of the syntax of a language.

1.3.1. Silverman

Silverman's (1973) unique contribution to the study of the BH verbal system is his claim that BH has four tenses. Below I examine Silverman's claims and evaluate the validity of his four tense notions to find out whether they provide adequate explanations for the meanings of the BH verb forms.

Silverman proposes "to investigate the syntactic relationships" among what he calls the 'tenses' of BH, and to 'determine under what conditions each is apt to occur' (1973:168). He uses the term 'tense' in his study with some element of non-commitment. Silverman holds that there are two main varieties of consecutive tenses. These are logical consequence and change in time. His logical consequence implies the reason or result of the preceding verb. If the preceding verb is a past or future tense, the succeeding verb will also be a past or future tense. Gen. 2:24 and 2 Ki. 6:10 illustrate this. First Gen. 2:24

עַל כֵּן יַעֲזֹב אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד

'Therefore, a man will leave his father and his mother and will cleave to his wife and the two shall become one body.'

In this construction, the word **יעֲזֹב** is in the imperfective form, expressing a future event. It influences **ודָבַק** which is a perfective form with a waw prefix. It is also used to express a future meaning.

2 Ki. 6:10

וישלח מלך ישראל אל-המקום אשר אמר-לו איש האלהים והזהירה ונשמר
שם לא אחת ולא שנים

‘And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and he watched or used to watch carefully. This is not once or twice.’

In this passage the words **והזהירה** and **ונשמר** are the same weqatal like **ורבך** yet, as used here, they are viewed to express events that are punctiliar and past (cf. NIV translation of the verse).

I would argue later that such case could be regarded as durative in the past. The events expressed by weqatal in the passage is not punctiliar but frequentative or durative. This claim can be supported by the additional information **לא אחת ולא שנים** ‘not once or twice.’ It can be argued, therefore, that the syntax does not automatically change the meaning of the BH verb forms in line with the previous verb form in the sentence.

According to Silverman (1973:168), “if the basic tenses and those with waw consecutive are joined together, a system of four tenses emerges” (1973:168). The four tenses, which the Hebrew verb forms express according to Silverman, are:

qatal, simple past

wayyiqtol – past with waw consecutive

yiqtol, – simple future

weqatal – future with waw consecutive

He argues that there are two past tense forms and two future tense forms. Qatal marks simple past tense while yiqtol marks simple future tense. The wayyiqtol and the weqatal are “consecutive tenses.” Wayyiqtol marks consecutive past tense while weqatal marks consecutive future (1973:168).

It appears from his explanations that Silverman mixes the use of two forms to mark what is essentially the same ‘tense’ with a verb form that marks different points in time. He does not argue whether the semantics of the tense of wayyiqtol is different from the semantics of the tense of qatal. The same kind of argument is required for weqatal and yiqtol.

Other than his four tense notions, the conclusions that Silverman comes to are not very much different from those of Gesenius as discussed in section 1.2.1 above. Silverman's syntactic perspective does not provide an answer to the question whether BH is a tense language or an aspectual language. Also, Silverman's theory is based on a very unsophisticated syntactic theory (1973: 173). According to Silverman, it is the simple shift of the verb forms in different sequential positions that explains its tense value. This echoes the position of Blau as Cook (2002:115) points out.²⁷ In his criticism of Silverman, Cook (2002:116) points out that Silverman does not demonstrate why "the syntactic variation of clause initial versus non-clause initial should be important" in the tense interpretation of the BHVS. Added to these problems in Silverman's view is the fact that there are cases when qatal precedes weqatal, yet weqatal does not change to perfective (cf. 1.4.2 and 4.6.3 below).

Those who use a syntactic perspective in the study of the meaning of the BH verb forms do not necessarily see syntax from the same point of view. In the next work to be considered, we shall be discussing the syntactic view of Andersen (1974) whose syntactic approach is from a tagmemic point of view.

1.3.2. Francis I. Andersen

Andersen (1974) uses tagmemics in his study of the relationship of the verb forms in Hebrew.²⁸ He follows closely the main arguments of Silverman. Silverman claims that syntactic relationships, which the BH verb forms maintain, influence their temporal values. This claim itself echoes Jerzy Kurylowecz (1972).

Justifying the use of a syntactic perspective, Andersen (1974:18) argues, "without explicit and methodologically rigorous definitions of basic units and relationships, the classification of a linguistic datum remains whimsical, and the same clause will often be described differently without discussion of the reason for doing so." According to Andersen (1974), it is the syntax of the construction that explains adequately the use of

²⁷ Cook (2002:115-116) notes that Blau, Silverman and Revell follow basically the same line of argument and come to similar conclusions that the BH verb forms express tenses.

²⁸ Tagmemics is a linguistic concept developed by Pike (1967). It seeks to study the function of a

the verb in the immediate clause preceding weqatal is imperfect, then the weqatal is imperfect.

Andersen uses the notion perfect and imperfect to refer to complete past and incomplete future respectively. His 1994 work indicates that he holds a tense view of the BH verb forms. He maintains “the salient ... reading that makes the first claim on the hearer/reader of VS is indicative, its salient time reference is past, its implied aspect is perfective” (Andersen 1994:100).

Andersen’s use of syntax to explain the functions of weqatal when used as what he refers to as perfect and as imperfect is in line with the views of Gesenius and Silverman that have been mentioned in this study. The syntagmemic explanations, however, are not without problems (cf. 4.8.2 below). For example in Gen. 17:20, we read

ולישמעאל שמעתוך הנה ברכתי אתו והפרייתי אתו

‘And for Ishmael, I have heard you, I have blessed him and I will surely multiply him’ (cf. NIV).

In the above, qatal (perfective) precedes weqatal, yet weqatal is not changed into perfective. There are other cases that contradict Silverman and Andersen such as Num. 24:17, Isa. 5:14, 43:14 to mention only a few (cf. Driver 1892: 126).

It is not clear, however, how Andersen comes about his tense view of the verb forms. There is nothing in his analysis that could have prevented aspectual interpretation of the Hebrew verb forms. At a functional level there is a correlation between tense and aspect as far as temporal values are concerned. Andersen mentions this fact just in passing, but it will be dealt with fully in chapter three of the present study. Andersen does not provide any criteria for deciding why Hebrew is a tense and not an aspectual language. Such criteria are needed in order to validate any claim that Hebrew is a tense or an aspectual language.

The next work to be discussed is also from a syntactic perspective, but holds that the BH verb forms cannot be interpreted without recourse to their context.

linguistic unit in relationship to its construction frame or other units surrounding it (Crystal 1997:382).

1.3.3. Isaksson

Isaksson (1987) uses a syntactic approach when he studies the meanings of the verb forms in the book of Qoholeth. He bases his syntactic approach on the structural model developed by de Saussure (Isaksson 1987:11). By this model, Isaksson sees language as

a system in which all the elements fit together, and in which the value of any one element depends on the simultaneous coexistence of all the others. The value of a grammatical category is not a question of its inherent sense, but of its relative position in the system (1987:11).

Isaksson takes as his point of departure the studies of Rundgren (Isaksson 1987:25). He quotes Rundgren as saying that

the Proto-Semitic verbal system was based on the archaic aspectual opposition STATIVE/FIENS which had its grammatical expression in the morphomatic privative opposition qatal (SC)/yaqtul (PC)²⁹ (Isaksson 1987:29).

Basing his argument on the syntactic relationship of units in linguistic construction, Isaksson states that “there is no such thing as a conversive waw in Hebrew, nor is there a specific weak waw” (1987:29). He cites as an example,

1 Ki. 3:11

יען אשר שאלת את הדבר הזה ולא שאלת לך ימים רבים ולא שאלת
לך עשר ולא שאלת נפש איביך ושאלת לך הבין לשמע משפט

‘Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but would ask for discernment in administering justice...’ (1987:30).

In the passage quoted above, the verb form **ושאלת**, is a weqatal that in narrative is said to be used to express an imperfective meaning. But due to the syntactic influence of **שאלת** a perfective in the preceding clause, it is claimed by Isaksson that the weqatal takes on a perfective meaning. Isaksson says, “1 Kings 3:11 is an instructive example,

²⁹ SC and PC are abbreviations for suffix conjugation and prefix conjugation respectively. These are also traditionally called perfect and imperfect forms.

showing how a chain of thread of SC forms may have the same value independent of their having a waw prefix or not” (1987:30).

Isaksson continues “Most functions of the SC are determined by realization of the basic stative aspect in special semanthemes³⁰ and special speech acts” (1987:29).

To Isaksson, the meaning of the BH verb forms can only be known from the context where each occurs. Isaksson does not claim any particular meaning for the BH verb forms. He argues that “grammatical categories such as those represented by the two verbal conjugations are not accessible to analysis in naked conditions” (1987:15).

Isaksson makes use of a diachronic process in his description of the meaning of the BH verb forms. He also gives priority to context. However, the lower level, the basic meaning of the verb form is not adequately attended to. He argues that the prototype meaning of the BH verb forms is stative. But, at the synchronic level one still needs to know whether the verb forms express tense or aspect. One also needs to know what criteria can guide such interpretation. Isaksson does not provide this. In Cook’s (2002:127) opinion, Isaksson provides a good summary of Rundgren’s model of the BHVS, but he (Isaksson) “does not contribute anything new to the theory.” Added to the problems in Isaksson as noted above I would argue that his understanding of weqatal when preceded by qatal as he quotes from the text he uses above is not without difficulty. The expression **וּשְׁאַלְתָּ** can be understood as ‘and you were asking,’ or ‘you would ask.’ It can be argued that the use of weqatal in the passage is stating what Solomon was in the process of requesting for at the time, or that it is used to express a desiderative mood. This is because Solomon could be assumed as being in the process of making the request from the LORD expressing a desire. (See further discussions in section 4.7.2 below).

In the work of Waltke and O’Connor (1990) to be discussed below, the basic meaning of the BH verb forms is indeed taken into consideration. This is in opposition to Isaksson’s argument that the verb outside the context has no meaning.

³⁰ Isaksson (1987) does not define the notion ‘semanthemes.’ However if his ‘semantheme’ is the same notion as ‘semanteme’ which Noreen proposed, it is usually used to mean “basic semantic unit of the lexicon” (Trauth and Kazzazi 1996:420).

1.3.4. Waltke and O'Connor

Waltke and O'Connor (1990) based their exhaustive description of the Hebrew grammar on a syntactic perspective. The title of their book is *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. In this work they warn the reader that BH exemplifies multifunctionality. This means that one form may not always have one meaning. They state “the greatest multifunctionality involves the verbal system” (1990:343). After preliminary discussions in which they survey the history of the study of the Hebrew verbal system, they come to their own conclusion that the BH verb forms are aspectual. They say, “Biblical Hebrew has no tense” but “uses a variety of other means to express time relations” (1990:347). They arrive at this conclusion because they observe that the BH verb forms are not primarily inflected to indicate time.

We may look at one translation that is representative of the view that any of the BH verb forms can be used to express both perfective and non-perfective situations. Yiqtol as reflected in the GNB translation is viewed as having been used to express perfective and imperfectives in the past such as habitual and durative situations in the past (cf. Ex. 15:1, Jud. 5:6) to mention only these two.

Ex. 15:1

אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל

‘Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song’ (GNB).

The verb **ישיר** is in the imperfective form, yet it is translated as conveying a perfective sense, according to GNB. I argue that this is debatable. The verb could be understood as expressing imperfective (cf. 4.3 below).

Jud. 5:6b

והלכי נתיבות ילכו ארחות עקלקלות

‘travelers used to use the side roads.’

The verb **ילכו**, which is also imperfective in form, functions in practice as imperfective meaning in this text.

On the basis of the uses of imperfective form as shown in the examples above, the view of Waltke and O'Connor cannot be accepted as valid without questions. Their

argument that Hebrew verb forms are multifunctional is in line with Bache (1994), but it appears that there is no semantic neutralisation between the verb forms in BH that can be used as an example of what Bache is saying. Bache makes an observation in his study of the relationship between form and meaning that “the members of different metacategories sometimes seem to merge in one language specific manifestation”³¹ (1994:4). He observes that the English non-progressive can be used to mark both aspectual and non-aspectual values (1994:47). The observation corroborates the argument that human language is multifunctional and any analysis of it should take that into account. This is true. However, multifunctionality may not necessarily create communication confusion. Furthermore, a linguistic form in any language usually has a basic or a prominent function. The function that is most prominent could be assumed to characterize the features of the language.

According to Bhat (1999:13), modal prominent languages also do not indicate tenses by verbal inflection (Bhat 1999:13). As far as Waltke-O’Connor’s criteria for regarding BH as an aspectual language is concerned, the following needs to be taken into consideration. If the absence of verbal inflection alone were used as the criterion for judging a language as tense or aspectual, how would modal languages be differentiated? In order to add to the validity of Waltke and O’Connor’s view, one needs to look for other means such as categorial prominence³² for identifying BH as a tense, or an aspectual or a modal language.

The non-provision of objective criteria for interpreting the BH verb forms as tense or aspect constitutes one major stumbling block for many analysts of the HVS. The work to be discussed in the next section further reveals this problem.

³¹ Bache (1994) uses the notion of ‘metacategory’ to express a view of a language phenomenon in which one linguistic form possesses more than one category, but is provisionally categorised under one group of meanings. For instance, the verb ‘came’ in English possesses both tense and aspect in that it signifies a past event relative to the time of speech. It also possesses perfective aspect because the event is complete and bounded as a whole unit. The verb ‘came’ may provisionally be categorised as ‘tense’ in English.

³² The concept ‘prominence’ will be explained under the section *theoretical point of departure* in chapter two.

1.3.5. Peckham

Peckham (1997) contends that tense and aspect of BH cannot be determined from the BH verb forms alone. He argues,

The common assumption of grammarians that tense, like mood, in biblical Hebrew is determined by the form of the verb (qtl or yqtl) is the basic impediment to the understanding of the Hebrew tenses. A better theory ... is that tense and sometimes mood, is marked in the Hebrew by word order ... tense is expressed by syntax (Peckham 1997:141).

According to Peckham (1997:141), it is the specific “syntactic conditions” that determine the past or present indicative and future indicative of the clauses in BH. In explaining how syntax influences the tense of the BH verb forms, Peckham first identifies and introduces five types of clauses and three types of word orders. The clauses as listed below indicate how they are started in a construction. The clauses are

consecutive (wayyiqtol or weqatal).

disjunctive (waw + X + qatal or yiqtol).

paratactic (waw + 0 + qatal or yiqtol, weqatal or weyiqtol).³³

conjunctive (a conjunction).

asyndetic (without waw or a conjunction) (1997:142).

The three word orders he identifies are

subject or subjective modifiers first

object or objective modifiers first

verb or verbal modifiers (1997:142-143) first

Peckham argues that “the time and aspect of the clauses (i.e. those mentioned above) in the past or present indicative depend on word order and on the order of clauses

³³ Kelly (1920) identifies what he claims to be the four uses of weyiqtol. He calls the form “the imperfect with the simple waw.” The four uses, according to him are “coordinated.” This simply continues “separated units.” The form is also used to express what he calls “result” and “purpose.” It is also used to express what he calls “synonyms/intensive.” By this Kelly means “emphasis.” According to him, the weyiqtol is generally used to express what he terms as “voluntatives.” These include jussivescohortatives and imperatives (cf. 1920:2).

(1997:143). Two of his examples are given to illustrate his claims on how word order determines the tense of the BH verb forms.

Subject first before qatal:

Gen. 13:12

אָבְרָם יָשַׁב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן

‘Abram (had) settled in the land of Canaan.’

Here, Peckham argues that in the subject first clauses the qatal marks ‘prior time in the past. This is equivalent to pluperfect.

Verb first qatal:

Qoh. 1:2

הַבֵּל הַבְּלִים אָמַר קֵהֶלֶת

‘Vanity of vanities, says Qohelet.’

In this case, the verb ‘says’ is in the initial position of the clause, אָמַר קֵהֶלֶת ‘says Qohelet.’ Peckham argues that the qatal in the first position marks ‘simultaneous time which, following on a present, future, modal or nominal clause is present, but following a past tense is past’ (1997:147).

Subject first before yiqtol:

Ex. 19:19

מֹשֶׁה יָדַבֵּר וְהָאֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶנּוּ בְקוֹל

‘Moses spoke and God answered him by thunder’ (NIV).

Yiqtol first before the subject:

Isa. 1:11

לְמַה־לִּי רַב־זְבָּחִים יֹאמַר יְהוָה

‘What are your many sacrifices to me, says the LORD.’

Peckham's contribution adds to support the view that word order and syntax do play significant roles in the temporal values of the Hebrew verb forms.³⁴ Peckham gives several examples, of which some are cited above to support his argument for word order influence on the tense meaning of the BH verb forms. In the case of the subject first *yiqtol* clause (e.g. Ex. 19:19 above), he argues that the *yiqtol* in such a word order expresses "durative or habitual action" (1997:146). In the case of verb first *yiqtol* clause (e.g. Isa. 1:11 above), Peckham argues that this type of clause "expresses continuous (incomplete or progressive action in the present" (1997:147).

Peckham does not, however, tell his readers how his theory may be used to discriminate between tense and aspect languages. Why would not aspectual languages have behaved under the same word order and syntactic conditions as tense languages do? What are the characteristics of tense and aspect languages against which one could compare BH? What are the yardsticks for his classification of BH as a tense language? Peckham's word order theory does not provide answers to the above questions. Cook (2002:118) criticises Peckham by noting that the terms that Peckham uses lack "terminological clarity." Peckham states that his notion of "time" includes both tense and aspect characteristics such as different phases of an action as expressed by *Aktionsarten* (cf. Cook 2002:118-119). This can be confusing indeed.

Like in the case of Peckham, word order and context also play a prominent role in the next work to be discussed. But unlike the others considered thus far, the work identifies two notions of time like Driver, but the definitions of these times are different from that of Driver.

1.3.6. Goldfajn

Goldfajn (1998) is the most recent study of the BH verbal system from a syntactic perspective. Goldfajn's contribution is unique in the sense that she is the first BH scholar to use the notion "reference time" in describing the BH verbal system.

³⁴ Joosten (1989) has also used word order in his study of the participle. He has argued that when a subject follows the participle, it may express "voluntary action." But when the subject is followed by the participle, it may express "involuntary action" (1989:132). He also argues that subject

Goldfajn formulates her main thesis as follow: “The two temporal organizations underlying the BH verbal system can be understood in relation to two general parameters.” These are “the existence of two initial temporal sets”³⁵ and the role of the verb order in sequences in conveying the temporal relationship between events in sequence of sentences” (Goldfajn 1998:32). She sums up her view in the following statement: “My general argument is that the primary function of the BH verb forms ... is to indicate the temporal relations holding between events in the text” (1998:139). According to Goldfajn, the BH verb forms express tenses. She claims that the wayyiqtol and the qatal mark “past to the past” (1998:3).

She sets out to explain the temporal sets and the role of verb order in sequences. She first considers the “framework of propositional tense logic developed by Prior in 1967” (Goldfajn 1998:45). Combining Prior’s notion of propositional tense logic with the existential quantification of “Gamut in 1991 and Moens in 1987” (Goldfajn 1998:45), she gives a brief description of the propositional logic as follows:

“ P_p is true at (t) IFF there is a time (t’) such that t’ is before t and P is true at (t’)” (1998:45). In this formulation, P_p stands for a proposition expressing a past event and (t’) stands for a time prior to the time of speech, and (t) is the moment of speech. The expression (IFF) is used to express ‘if and only if.’

Thus the formulation states that a proposition in the past will only be true if the event expressed happened at a time prior to the time when the event is reported. This is what Goldfajn means by ‘existential quantification’ of tense logic taken from Prior. Goldfajn constructs two sentences in Hebrew to illustrate the formulation:

Wayyabo Moseh ‘wayyiqtol’ וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה And-wayyiqtol ‘to come Moses’

UMoseh ba (with qatal) וּמֹשֶׁה בָּא And Moses ‘to come’ (1998:45).

followed by participle expresses action while participle followed by subject expresses “constative present” (1989:130).

Wayyabo Moseh 'wayyiqtol' ויבא משה And-wayyiqtol 'to come Moses'

UMoseh ba (with qatal) ומשה בא And Moses 'to come' (1998:45).

However, Goldfajn comes to the conclusion that the notion of existential quantification³⁶ cannot accommodate the above-mentioned as well as “two apparently different uses of yiqtol ... the past and the future” (1998:51). Furthermore, the existential quantification also would not be able to account for the use of qatal to mark future. So she abandons the notion of propositional tense logic and turns to Reichenbach. She introduces and discusses Reichenbach’s notion of “three place structure temporal entities” (Goldfajn 1998:46). In this model, there is the speech time S, the event time E and the reference time R. Speech time is the actual moment of speech. Event time is the actual time when the event took place or when the state came into existence. The reference time is the “temporal standard from which the event is considered” (Goldfajn 1998:46)³⁷. Goldfajn explains that this notion of reference time is useful “when analysing the temporal relations established between multiple events introduced in discourse” (1998:50). By this explanation, she means that when wayyiqtol is followed by qatal, the qatal is relative to that wayyiqtol. The wayyiqtol may be the initial event. The speech moment by its very nature is always at the centre of the deictic points.

Goldfajn has added context and discourse consideration to the syntax in her analysis. This is a welcome development because it provides some ground for the pluperfect interpretation of some constructions in BH sentence. For example, in Genesis 11:5 it reads

וירד יהוה לראות את-העיר ואת-המגדל אשר בנו בני האדם

‘And the LORD went down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.’

³⁶ This is a logical formulation, which states “that there exists a time t, such that an event/state is true if such event/state is true at t. One Hebrew verb form does not always satisfy this truth condition. This makes any prediction of the verb forms difficult when Priorian logic is applied.

³⁷I understand this to be the relative time as used by Comrie (1985:58). According to him, relative tense is a time reference that is itself a reference to another “reference time point provided by the context

The expression בניו 'they built' is a qatal perfective. BH has no verbal form or any periphrases to express pluperfect. It is only the context that can provide such interpretation. In this passage, the fact that the narrator says that the men built the tower before the LORD went down to see what they had built makes plausible the pluperfect interpretation of the perfective form.

It is also to her credit that she, as some others, comes to see that one cannot advance temporal or tense arguments from the verb forms themselves. While this may be true in some languages, it is not yet generally agreed that such a claim holds for BH.

Having said this, it should also be noted that Goldfajn shares the basic problem of a number of the analysts of the BH verbal system. They have forgotten to consider that events are inseparable from time. There can be no event without being anchored in time³⁸. Time is part of the very ontology of any event. Time can go by without an event of some particular kind. For instance, there has been no war in Britain in 1998. This is true if one chose to focus on the event, 'war.' Also, it needs to be understood that to say that the verb forms of a particular language are not inflexed to indicate time is not the same thing as saying that such a language cannot, or does not, refer to time when expressing events. When linguists distinguish between tense and non-tense languages, the basic issue is whether the language in question inflexes its verb forms specifically for temporal deictic or not. Bhat (1999) has found that languages that inflex their verb forms for temporal deictic show some degree of consistency and rigidity in doing so more than those that do not inflex the verb forms to indicate time. As shall be demonstrated in the course of the study, Hebrew has not shown this consistent and rigid inflexion for time. Therefore, Goldfajn's argument that Hebrew verb forms are temporal deictic, when viewed in the light of the above, becomes rather weak.

The question of tense, aspect and mood as ways of viewing events and states by cultures can be likened to the ways cultures view the Divine Being. The Divine Being has many attributes. A particular culture may make one of the attributes prominent. That may form the basis for the name they use in referring to the Divine Being. That does not mean that what is not made prominent is denied or not true or does not exist. The nature of

³⁸ Prior (1968:1) states "genuine flowing or passage of an event is something which occurs *in time*,

human is such that he can focus on one element at a time and only one can be made prominent.³⁹ As an example, in Africa, there are many names used in referring to God, the greatest Divine Being. Some cultures like the Epira people in Nigeria call him *Ohomorihi*. This simply means *the great one that makes the rain*. To these agrarian people, the making of the rain is the attribute they give prominence to. Others are not denied. The Yorubas, also in Nigeria call the Divine Being *Olorun*. To the Yorubas, God is *the one that owns the heavens*. They do not deny that He makes the rains. They only do not give it prominence. Yet the Igbos again in Nigeria call God *Chineke*. To these people God is *the one that creates*. In the same way a non-tense language does not reject the logical inseparable temporal component of event. It is only that they do not make that temporal component prominent.

Goldfajn has argued for the possibility of searching for the temporal meanings which BH verb forms are used to express by her three place structure temporal entities. It is not quite clear how one can use her method to arrive at the conclusion that BH is a tense language. What constrains an aspectual language from functioning in the way she has described the BH verb?

Furthermore, Goldfajn states that *yiqtol* can be used to mark both past and future tenses. Is this the characteristic of tense languages? This question is all the more important in light of the studies of Bhat (1999:109) and Bertinetto (1994:124). Based on these studies, Goldfajn's position that Hebrew is a tense language becomes very shaky. The behaviour of the Hebrew verb forms as Goldfajn notes them manifest the characteristic features of aspect prominent languages, according to Bhat (1999). It is also disputative that *qatal* forms a sequence to *wayyiqtol*. It is probably more correct to say that in narrative, *qatal* is used to express the narrator's comment which is not directly related to the main event in the story. Talmon (1978:11) has shown that in some cases, a

and *takes* time to occur.”

³⁹ Chafe (1994:28) illustrates this by observing “Although every human mind is devoted to modeling a larger reality which it (or the organism it inhabits) occupies a central place, only one small piece of that model can be active at one time ... At any given moment the mind can focus on no more than a small segment of everything it knows.”

In the remaining body of the work, they give cases where the verb forms are used to express various temporal values. They note that “Hebrew temporal forms express at the same time tenses and mood of action (1991:355). Their observations on the functions of the Hebrew verb forms run as follows, “Like the qatal of active verb ... the qatal of the stative verbs can also be used for the past.” (1991:360). “Qatal can also be used in certain cases ... for truth of experience” (1991:361). “By extension of the preceding use, qatal is sometimes used for an action which in fact belongs to the (usually near) future ...” (1991:363). On the use of accents to distinguish tenses, Joüon-Muraoka say, “when the phonetic laws allow it, vocalization and stress are equally discriminant... w-qatalti ‘I killed’ w-qatalti ‘and then I shall kill” (1991:380).⁴¹ The stress in the first is on the penultimate syllable while the stress on the second is on the ultima.

Joüon-Muraoka hold that BH has both tense and mood. By mood, I understand them to mean what we refer to as aspect in this study. Tense seems to be what they hold to be the meaning of the BH verb forms.

The problem with the work however, is that it fails to provide the guiding principles of interpreting the grammatical meanings of the Hebrew verb forms as it promised. Secondly, it does not show whether BH is a tense, aspectual or mood prominent language. So one does not know how the authors arrive at the tense view of BH. Thirdly, if the same Hebrew verb forms can mean past, present and future, what might guide one to know which is meant in any particular context? Fourthly, on the issue of accents being used to mark tenses as Driver (1892) claims, McFall (1982), Norman (1987) and Price (1990) have made studies of the accent of BH. They argue that the accent is used to mark the following in BH.

1. the syllable that receives the principal stress
2. the degree of grammatical separation or connection between adjoining words and phrases
3. the relative intonation of a word in cantillation

⁴¹ Van Peursen (1999:136), a student of Muraoka, bases his study on Ben Sira’s Hebrew. He also claims that accent is used to mark tenses.

4. the poetic structure of the text

Their findings do not favour Joüon-Muraoka's claim that the accent marks any grammatical meaning in BH.⁴²

In the next section, we consider another way of describing a linguistic phenomenon. The so-called 'discourse approach' takes units larger than word and clause or sentence as the unit of analysis. What insight would the approach provide in the search for a model that could help in understanding the meaning of the BH verb forms? We shall examine some relevant contributions based on the discourse approach to see what possible illuminations the approach might provide.

1.5. The Discourse Approach

The main exponents of the discourse approach in the study of the BHVS are Niccacci (1990, 1994), Longacre (1992, 1994), Winther-Nielsen (1995) and Endo (1996). The discussion shall proceed in that order. Though scholars may use the same or similar perspective, as we have seen before, they do arrive at different conclusions; some holding a tense view while others hold an aspectual view.

By the late 1960s and the early 1970s, there had been a shift "in the ways of considering how meanings are constructed" (Macdonell 1986:1). According to Macdonell (1986) at that period, some works in discourse were produced in France.⁴³ These works were seminal to rethinking the way that humans produce and use language. Later in the 1980s one prominent discourse linguist, Robert Longacre, began his work in discourse grammar (cf. Longacre 1983). According to him, "language is language only in context" (1983:xv). He argues,

Sentences have been discussed and dissected as possible multiple meanings and ambiguities without taking into account the natural function of context in resolving most ambiguities (Longacre 1983:xv).

⁴² Hetzron (1969) also argues that the perfect yaqtul and the jussive yaqtul were not one form originally. He says they were distinguished by stress (1969:1). He bases his argument on his study of stress in Akkadian, Ge'ez, Hebrew, Arabic and Ugaritic (1969:3).

⁴³ Renkema (1993:6) states that "Teun van Dijk is viewed by many as the founding father of discourse studies." He reports that van Dijk published his work first in Dutch in 1978.

As a result of this way of perceiving language, it soon became clear to linguists of the discourse persuasion that language is socially and situationally conditioned.

Macdonell quotes Volosinov, a Russian linguist who wrote in 1930 to illustrate this line of thinking in the study of language.

Village sewing circles, urban carousers, and workers' lunchtime chats etc will all have their own type (Macdonell 1986:1) of discourse. Macdonell goes on to say, that discourses differ with the kinds of institutions and social practices in which they take shape, and with the positions of those who speak and those whom they address (1986:1).

Discourse can be defined as *a sequence of sentences in a coherent whole* (Dooley and Levinsohn 2000:10).⁴⁴ A discourse approach to the study of linguistic phenomena is motivated by the conviction that “all work on lower levels is lacking in perspective and meets inevitable frustration when the higher levels – especially discourse and paragraph - have not been analyzed” (Longacre 1976:2). So, in the late 20th century, some scholars of BH turn their attention to the use of the discourse perspective in the study of the BH verbal systems. The work of Niccacci is considered first in the line.

1.5.1. Alviero Niccacci

Niccacci bases his study of the BH verbal system on a textlinguistic approach.⁴⁵ According to Niccacci (1990), Schneider first introduced the textlinguistic approach to the study of linguistic phenomena in BH. Niccacci (1990:9-10) states,

The truth is that Schneider has opened the way for an approach to the problem, which I believe to be correct. The solution he proposes is not synchronic but diachronic in character and instead of considering the origins of verbal forms in isolation it is concerned with their actual use and function in a text.

⁴⁴ “A text is said to be coherent if, for a certain hearer on a certain hearing or reading he or she is able to fit its different elements into a single overall mental representation” (Dooley and Levinsohn 2000:11).

⁴⁵ In this study I will use textlinguistics and discourse as referring to one and the same thing. (See also de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981:19) and van der Merwe (1997:139) in this regard.

Niccacci is of the opinion that textlinguistics as an approach to the study of the BH verbal system will be more effective “than the traditional approach” (Niccacci 1990:10). He argues that “a verb form needs to be studied in texts, not in isolation but in connection with all associated linguistic markers”(1990:10).

Having explained his approach, Niccacci goes on to introduce the concepts he employs in his study. He uses the notion of “emphasis” to mean highlighting. According to him verb forms can be used to emphasise both “foreground” and “background” (Niccacci 1990:20). In terms of this framework, wayyiqtol is used to “emphasis” in the prose text of the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁶ He argues that this “means” past tense.

In considering clauses, he views sentences with nouns at the beginning as nominal clauses. He gives an example of a nominal clause from Genesis 3:13b:

‘It is the serpent who tricked me’ הַנָּחָשׁ הִשָּׂאֵנִי (Niccacci 1994:23).

Niccacci also introduces a range of other concepts, which he, too, uses in his own idiosyncratic way. He explains narrative as that “which concerns persons or events which are not present or current in the relationship involving writer-reader and so the third person is used” (Niccacci 1990:19). He defines discourse as the situation in which “the speaker addresses the listener directly (dialogue, sermon, prayer)” (1990:29). In his 1994 publication, Niccacci changes the term discourse to “direct speech.”⁴⁷ On the meaning of qatal, Niccacci says “it is not a narrative form ... because instead of being used to convey information concerning the degree of zero (i.e. the tense of the narrative, it conveys recovered information ... or flash back or even a comment on the main events...” (1994:35). In prose texts, Niccacci correctly observes that “qatal is always non-initial in narrative” (1990:35).

After his analysis, which in many instances are not very clear, Niccacci comes to the conclusion that “the tense of an individual form and construction ... is not tied to that actual form or construction but to its function in the text” (1990:165). Niccacci

⁴⁶ By “emphasis” Niccacci implies the promotion of the verb to first position in what he calls “verbal clause.” In narratives, the wayyiqtol is used for such “emphasis”(cf. 1990:175). This is the same as ‘foreground’ or ‘backbone.’

⁴⁷ Niccacci (1994:117-137).

(1994:128-129) simply appeals to his quotation of Gen. 42:11 and Ex. 26:6 as proof for interpreting BH verb forms as tenses. The texts he appeals to are the following:

Gen. 42:11 (sentence number 6 in Niccacci's sentence list)

- a כלנו
b בני איש אחד נחנו
c כנים אנחנו .
d לא היו עבדיך מרגלים .

- a. As for all of us,
b. We are sons of one man
c. We are honest men
d. Your servants have never been spying

Ex. 26:6 (Sentence number 7 in Niccacci's list).

- a ועשית חמשים קרסי זהב
b וחברת את־היריעת אשה אל־אחתה בקרסים
c והיה המשכן אחד

- a. Then you shall make fifty gold clips
b. And shall join the curtains one to another with clips
c. And so the Tabernacle will be a single unit

Niccacci uses the examples above to demonstrate that weqatal is used to express instruction and to express future events. In contrast to the above, Niccacci also gives other examples as presented below to demonstrate that wayyiqtol may be used to express sequentiality of events in the past.

Ex. 36:13 (sentence number 8 in Niccacci's list)

- a ויעש חמשים קרסי זהב
b ויחבר את־היריעת אחת אל־אחת
בקרסים

- a. Then he made fifty clips
- b. And joined the curtains one to another with the clips
- c. And so the Tabernacle became a single unit

Niccacci claims, “There is no justification for denying that the simple nominal clauses in 6b-c (of his text) place the information in the axis of the present (in direct speech). The negative qatal in 6d places it in the axis of the past (in direct speech). On the other hand, weqatal in 7 places the information in the axis of the future (in direct speech), and wayyiqtol in 8 places it in the axis of the past ...” (Niccacci 1994:129). He concludes with this statement of finality: “These are tenses and nothing else” (1994:129).

The first problem in Niccacci’s work is that it is not quite clear what he wants to say because of the nonconventional way he uses terms such as “emphasis” and “discourse.” His idiosyncratic use of terms, which have already acquired other widely accepted technical meanings in scholarly circles makes reading of Niccacci quite difficult. For instance, sermons, narratives, prayers are all types of discourse (see Longacre 1981, Macdonell 1986 and de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:19). Each type can be used in an appropriate social condition. More importantly, verb forms that express aspect can also perform the functions, which Niccacci allocates to the verb forms in tense languages. Niccacci does not demonstrate how functional prerequisites of the verb forms in discourse can help one to know whether the verb forms of a language are either tense or aspect.

1.5.2. Longacre

We have said that Robert Longacre is one of the foremost discourse linguists who uses the approach in the study of the meanings of the BH verb forms. His works based on a discourse approach include ‘Joseph, A story of Divine Providence,’ written in 1989, another one in Bodine (1992) and in Bergen (1994). It is in his 1992 and 1994 works that he discusses the problem of the tense and aspect system of the Hebrew verb. In his 1992 work he states the purpose of his paper. It was “to shed light on the various tense/aspect/mode forms of the verb in BH ... by placing each form in context with other forms in various types of discourse and enquiring as to the functions of each verb form

within a given discourse type” (Longacre 1992:177). Longacre intends to study the verb forms as they are distinctly used “in different discourse types such as narrative, predictive, procedural, hortatory, expository and judicial ...” (1992:177). He sees “each prose type as constellation or cluster of verb/clause types” ... and a given verb form is to be “functionally and semantically defined ... within such cluster.” “The uses of a given tense within a given cluster may differ quite strikingly from the uses of the same tense within another cluster” (1992:178).

Having formulated the principles that will guide his study, he proceeds to discuss the structures he identifies in a narrative. One of such structures he calls ‘foregrounding.’ In this section I only summarise how Longacre uses the concept. According to him, ‘foregrounding’ is the linguistic form or the verb form that advances the mainline of the story. Longacre calls the mainline story the ‘backbone’ or ‘storyline.’ He identifies wayyiqtol as functioning to mark this backbone. To him the wayyiqtol so used is a tense. He says “The backbone or storyline tense of BH narrative discourse is the waw consecutive with the imperfect. Since this form is historically descended from an archaic preterit, I simply call it a preterit⁴⁸...” (1992:178). To him the wayyiqtol expresses “sequential actions in the past” (1992:178). When considering the weqatal, he says, “In predictive discourse, the waw-consecutive plus the perfect ... is projected into the future ...” (1992:181). By this Longacre opens up the possibility of seeing how the verb forms function in different genre types.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Longacre simply assumes that the verbal system of Akkadian marks tense. It can be argued that one cannot just use Akkadian as an argument for the tense interpretation of the Hebrew verb forms, even given that the forms evolve from the Akkadian Proto type. Andersen (2000) traces carefully the development of the Hebrew verb from the Akkadian proto type. For Andersen, the Akkadian yaqtul is a perfective. Having tabulated the evolutionary process of the verb form, Andersen states “from the above table, it can be seen that the evidence for perfective yaqtul is quite clear” (2000:16). He does not demonstrate either why it could not have been tense. The point is that appeal to an archaic Akkadian form does not provide sufficient ground to interpret the BH verb forms as tense.

⁴⁹ Bowling (1997) bases his article on Longacre’s ideas. He follows Longacre closely and comes to the same conclusion as he, Longacre, does.

However, his study has not addressed the crucial question whether Hebrew should be considered a tense or an aspectual language. Also there are a number of the functions of the verb forms that are not explained. For example, what is the relationship between wayyiqtol and qatal in narrative? Why is weqatal used for both future and past events? Also what are the characteristic features of a tense language or an aspectual language against which BH may be compared? Longacre's discourse approach has not provided answers to these questions. In addition, there are cases such as Jos. 14:5 and 2 Ki. 4:37 when wayyiqtol does not advance the story.⁵⁰

Jos. 14:5

כִּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כֵּן עָשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּחֲלֶקוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ

'As the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel and they divided the land.'

Here, the verb form **וַיַּחֲלֶקוּ** is a wayyiqtol. It does not advance the story here, but rather ends it.

2 Ki. 4:37

וַתָּבֵא וַתִּפֹּל עַל־רַגְלָיו וַתִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֶרְצָה וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת־בְּנָהּ וַתֵּצֵא

'Then she came and fell at his feet and bowed toward the ground and took her son and she went out.'

According to Heimerdinger, only the verbs **וַתָּבֵא** and **וַתִּשָּׂא** "are key to the events" in the construction. The verb **וַתֵּצֵא** is also a wayyiqtol. It does not advance the story here, but closes it (Heimerdinger 1999:77). Heimerdinger cites another example from Gen. 15:11

1 וַיֵּרֶד הָעֵיט עַל־הַפְּגָרִים

2 וַיֵּשֶׁב אֹתָם אֲבָרָם

And birds of prey came down upon the carcasses

But Abram drove them away

⁵⁰ Gropp (1991:59) notes that "narrative wayyiqtol" may serve to summarize or recapitulate a whole narrative or narrative paragraph. E.g. Gen. 2:1, 49:28b, Jos. 10:40.'

Arguing that wayyiqtol does not always mark what Longacre calls ‘storyline,’ Heimerdinger claims that the two sentences above could be removed from the story “without affecting its development whatsoever” (1999:78).

1.5.3. Winther-Nielsen

Winther-Nielsen published his ‘A Functional Discourse Grammar of Joshua’ in 1995. This book is divided broadly into two sections. Section one deals with the theoretical issues and their implications for the understanding of the Hebrew verb forms. The other section deals with the macro-discourse structure of the book. My main concern in the work is the area that deals with the meaning of the Hebrew verb forms.

Winther-Nielsen bases his study on the Functional Discourse Perspective, especially as developed by Dik (1980). Winther-Nielsen’s definition of functional discourse is based on that of Dik’s. According to Winther-Nielsen, functional discourse grammar means “the study of connected discourse in order to render a complete and adequate account of the grammatical organisation” (1995:28). He sees the concern of discourse functional grammar to be the study of “intraclausal, interclausal and textual” relationships (1995:28). These levels should be analysed both at their own units and also to take note of the relationships each unit maintains with the other in the overall process of text productions and use. This is because “form is not understood as separate from the context-dependent nature of linguistic units” (1995:29). Winther-Nielsen develops and exploits the concept ‘layered structure.’ He sees linguistic units whether phrases, clauses, sentence or text in layers, consisting of nucleus, core and periphery (1995:40).⁵¹ He argues that “functional grammar treats semantic distinctions like tense, mood and aspect as grammatical operators, a limited number of rough distinctions ... sedimented in the grammatical system” (1995:44). This led him to view Hebrew verb forms as a composite entity having “innermost operator” that is, the dominant meaning of the verb form (1995:46). According to Winther-Nielsen, the innermost operator of the Hebrew verb is aspect. This follows the claims of Givon (1984:269) as quoted by Winther-Nielsen, as saying, “Any new solution to the Hebrew verbal system must take into account that

⁵¹ According to Winther-Nielsen (1995:40), the nucleus is the predicate, the noun phrases (subject and object) being the core, while the noun phrase locative is the periphery.

inflection systems always have tense-mood categories ... and that this grammatical subsystem is an obligatory category of languages” (Winther-Nielsen 1995:46). Winther-Nielsen infers from this that “Hebrew expresses the universal operators of aspect, mood and tense through a very simple multifunctional binary opposition between perfective and imperfective” (1995:52).

Winther-Nielsen’s contribution is a very important development in the understanding of the meaning of the Hebrew verb forms. His layered structure, to my understanding, is similar to the non-monadic way of viewing linguistic units as advanced by Bache (1994).⁵² His concept of ‘nucleus’ which is the *innermost operator*, I would liken to the idea of ‘primitive meaning’ of verb forms in human languages.⁵³ This primitive meaning has been shown to be aspect such as “states and different types of events: (Smith 1991:xviii, Halliday 1973, Bache 1994:44, Talmy 1985:78’ and Levinsohn⁵⁴).

The problem in Winther-Nielsen’s approach is that he stops short of making a case for the prominence of aspect in Hebrew. This is needed because each language has both aspect and tense and even mood (Gropp 1991:52). It is that which is prominent that is used to interpret the nonprominent category. Also since the debate on the meaning of the Hebrew verb form is whether it is aspect or tense, it would have been more helpful if it is demonstrated crosslinguistically that BH is, in fact, an aspect prominent language. This is possible if the features of BH verb forms are compared with the features of tense prominent languages and aspect prominent languages. Such demonstration should show

⁵² Bache observes that “members of different linguistic metacategories sometimes seem to merge into one linguistic specific manifestation form (1994:42). He gives an example from the English language where the “simple past or preterit seems to be not just anterior in meaning but also perfective (1994:47). He says such forms “which are used to express at the same time meanings from different metacategories must be regarded as non-monadic with respect to their grammatical subspecification because they require analysis in terms of more than one category” (1994:47).

⁵³ By ‘primitive meaning’ I mean the basic or primary understanding of what a verbal expression means before some later modifications are made to express time (cf. Smith 1991:xviii).

⁵⁴ In a personal discussion with Dr. Levinsohn in Jos in September 2001, when he was conducting a seminar on discourse analysis method for field linguists, he is of the view that the primitive meaning of verb forms in all languages is aspect.

what are the distinctive features of tense prominent and aspect prominent languages. Winther-Nielsen should, at least, have mentioned such distinctive features. The multilayered structure idea is helpful. However, Winther-Nielsen concentrates on the second layer without explaining or arguing for the first layer. It would have been more informative if one knows how the transfer from the first layer to the second layer is achieved pragmatically.

1.5.4. Endo

The last study of the BH verbal system from a discourse perspective to be discussed is that of Endo (1996). He states "... unless we admit that 'tense' in biblical Hebrew is also a discourse phenomenon which is observed on the linguistic level beyond the sentence, we cannot describe it adequately" (Endo 1996:27). Endo bases his study on Eskhult (1990), and Givon (1976). These works view the BH verbal system in terms of marking the opposition between sequentiality and counter sequentiality. According to this approach, the BH verbs perform the discourse function of maintaining the flow of a story, stopping the flow or continuing the flow. It is claimed that the verb forms do not primarily indicate differences in tense or aspect. Endo states his agenda as follows "... the matter of sequentiality in the verbal forms which controls the flow of the utterance (e.g. to begin, to stop or to continue the story), will be the main target of our investigation ..." (Endo 1996:28-29).

In the context of sequentiality, Endo tries to find "the interaction between 'tense,' 'aspect,' and 'word order,' and 'verbal sequence'" (1996:29). He then examines Hebrew verb forms in one clause, two clauses and multi clause levels. He tries to identify the tense and or aspects at each level. He relies very much on the existing English translations of the Bible for this part of the study. After Endo has examined the meanings of the BH verb forms from one clause level to the whole sentence level, he concludes, "word order tense and aspect were not always decisive in the choice of verbal forms in biblical Hebrew" (1996:232). He goes on to say,

the temporal distinction between past and non-past may be marked in the conjugations. However, we should note that at the translation level the distinctions between the present and the future (or modal), between the simple

distinctions between the present and the future (or modal), between the simple past and the (present/past) perfect and so on fully depend on the context (1996:232).

Endo then turns to investigate the verb forms in discourse. There he finds the primary opposition of perfect and imperfect or aspectual opposition of perfective versus imperfective. According to him, “[T]he parameter of sequentiality and un-sequentiality is purely syntactical, relating to the flow of the story as discourse function: the non-sequential form stops the flow of the story ... while the sequential form lets the story flow on” (1996:321-322). Endo also argues that “the verbal forms may appear in clause-initial position (i.e. X-QATAL/X-YIQTOL) without any temporal/aspectual difference” (1996:320).

Endo’s study further corroborates the views of Niccacci and Longacre that the function of the verb forms can be better understood when seen within discourse perspectives. Endo does not, however, tell whether the BH verb forms are predominantly aspectual, modal or tense. Endo argues that the BH verb forms primarily function to distinguish sequentiality and non-sequentiality of utterances. Does this imply that the Hebrew verb forms do not have primitive meanings in themselves? Crosslinguistic studies such as that of Bhat (1999) contradict such a position. Bhat (1999) has argued that in every language, there will be one category among tense, aspect and mood that is grammaticalized consistently.⁵⁵ The category that is more consistently grammaticalized in the verb system appears to be the basic meaning that the particular language assigns to the other categories. Other categories are usually interpreted in the light of the more systematically grammaticalized category (Bhat 1999:95-97). In Endo’s work, he does not indicate what features characterise a tense as distinct from an aspectual language. Without such defined features, it becomes difficult to establish whether BH is a tense or an aspectual language.

The discussion of the discourse perspective enables us to predict the type of verb forms that one expects to occur in the presentation of certain events in a particular genre.

However, the discourse model has not shown how one can differentiate a tense from an aspectual language.

In the next four sections that follow, there are a variety of other perspectives other than the ones considered so far, that scholars use in the study of the meaning of the BH verb forms. Some of the scholars who use these perspective hold that the BH verbs do not have any meaning of their own, while others claim that they do have their own meanings. Some also hold the tense view while others hold the aspectual view. We turn now to consider them.

1.6. The Eclectic Perspective: Gentry

There is one study on the meaning of the BH verb forms that is based on three perspectives. I refer to such multi-perspective as ‘eclectic perspective.’ Gentry (1998) is one of those using the eclectic perspective. He differs slightly from Muraoka (1991) in the sense that Gentry specifically selects and combines three perspectives in his study of the meaning of the BH verb forms.⁵⁶

Gentry (1998:7) aims to “provide a comprehensive description of classical Biblical Hebrew, explaining how tense, aspect and modality are signalled.” He notes that “at the heart of an adequate description of the BH verb is an adequate correlation of forms and functions” (1998:8). Gentry combines the fruits of diachronic, synchronic as well as discourse linguistics in his study of the BH verbal system. He makes a distinction between what he calls the “general meanings of verb forms” from what he calls “contextual meanings or implicature” (1998:10). His general meaning refers to the primary denotation of the verb forms. This may be understood as the verbal lexeme. To Gentry, this is aspect. The contextual meaning is the use of the aspect in context. Gentry accepts Huehnergard’s view that the distinction between *yaqtul* and *yaqtulu* was

⁵⁵ By ‘grammaticalisation’ is meant a process by which lexical units (lexemes) are used to express notions in a way that agrees with the rules of a particular language. Such uses may be achieved from a derivative format to inflectional one (Lehmann 1995:8).

⁵⁶ Cook (2002:144) states that scholars use what he calls a ‘multiparameter theory.’ His ‘multiparameter theory’ includes ‘tense,’ ‘aspect,’ ‘modal’ and ‘sequentiality.’ I regard what he refers to as “parameters” as “grammatical meanings” and not explanatory models such as diachronic, synchronic and discourse models.

“primarily a matter of aspect and secondarily of tense” (1998:11). Gentry bases his idea on Huehnergard, and notes that BH uses four forms of verbal conjugations. The verb forms are wayyiqtol, qatal, weqatal and yiqtol. These are paired in a two-way opposition, which mark primarily aspect and secondarily tense in a discourse and pragmatic framework. He presents the model as follows:

Assertive

	Perfective +/-past	Imperfective +/- Non-past
Affirmative Non-sequential	(X)qatal	(X) yiqtol
Negative	לֹא + qatal	לֹא + yiqtol
Sequential	Wayyiqtol	Weqatal

(Gentry’s diagramme on page 13 of his article) with some modifications.

Like Longacre (1994) and Buth (1994), Gentry regards wayyiqtol and weqatal as employed to mark sequentiality. The non-sequentials are used to mark backgrounding or to signal discontinuity. On the use of the prefix forms, Gentry accepts Huehnergard’s position that when a prefix form occurs at the “initial position in a conversation it is projective, non-initial position is assertive” (Gentry 1998:22).⁵⁷

Unlike Peckham,⁵⁸ Gentry recognises that linguistic forms have their general meanings separate from their pragmatic meanings. The argument that the verb forms have meanings of their own is an important observation, and is in line with Bache (1994). Bache argues that linguistic forms such as verbs do have their basic meanings. He calls this the “metacategory” (Bache 1994:44). Such a metacategory may acquire a different meaning when situated within the pragmatic context. Gentry also argues that the BH verb forms basically express aspects. According to him, when the verb forms are used in discourse at pragmatic level, they express tenses as secondary meaning.

One can concede to Gentry’s claim that at the functional /pragmatic level, the BH verb forms can be used to express tense. It can also be conceded that the verbal lexeme may mean aspect. Yet languages are identified as tense or aspectual. Welmers (1973) has classified African languages as aspectual languages. The issue is what is the index of

⁵⁷ By projective, Gentry means “imperative” (1998:30).

⁵⁸ Peckham (1997).

such grouping? To give a fuller account of the nature and function of the BH verb forms, it is necessary to go further by inquiring into whether tense, mood or aspect is prominent in BH. Such a claim should also be demonstrated by using the results of psycholinguistic studies such as Brown (1973). Brown's study demonstrates that aspect is the primitive meaning of verb forms in all languages. He argues that the progressive is an aspect since it expresses event/state in process (1973:316). Brown finds in his study of a child's language development that the child uses the progressive to express both temporal and generic or all time truth or state. That is, the child uses one verb form to express events whether they be past, present or even future. In adult language, according to Brown, the progressive is used to express temporal, non-permanent events or states. The child uses the progressive to express both temporal and permanent events or states because that is the first meaning that events and states impress on his mind. Later, as the child develops his/her language skills, he/she is able to inflex the verb to express time such as future and past. (1973:317). By this Brown shows that aspect is the first view of events and states that impresses upon the child's mind. By inference, it can be said that aspect is the primitive meaning of verb forms in human language (see section 3.2.1 below).

Although Gentry correctly recognises that tense is a secondary meaning of the BH verb form, and that the primary meaning of BH verb forms is aspect, the case for the primary meaning needs to be argued. I will indicate in chapter 4 that such argument should include a prior characterisation of tense and aspectual languages. A crosslinguistic comparison can then be made. If a language is shown to possess a particular feature as its dominant character, that feature can be used to classify the language concerned. The characterisation mentioned above is lacking in Gentry's analysis. The limitation mentioned above notwithstanding, Gentry's combination of diachronic, synchronic and discourse linguistics in his analysis represents a major forward stride in the study of BH. His approach is indicative that a language cannot be fully described by using one model alone.

The scholars considered thus far each hold a different view as to whether the BH verb forms express tense or aspect. There are other scholars who reject either tense or aspectual meaning of the BH verb forms. Their views and conclusions form the topic of discussion in the next section.

1.7. The Tense and Aspect Neutral Perspective

In the search for the meaning of the BH verb forms, there is a perspective used in which it is claimed that the BH verb forms in themselves do not have any meaning. I refer to the perspective as '*tense and aspect-neutral perspective.*' The works of Schneider (1980), Talstra (1978) and Baayen (1997) represent the tense and aspect-neutral perspective. Below, the three works based on the 'tense and aspect neutral perspective' are discussed. But first I discuss Weinrich whose theory lies behind the Tense and Aspect Neutral perspective.

1.7.1. Weinrich

Weinrich's (1994) discourse theory was developed to explain discourse features of European languages (Cook 2002:137). According to Weinrich, verbs do not primarily express semantic values, but "discourse-pragmatic" ones (Cook 2002:137). Verb forms, according to Weinrich, help the speaker and the listener to sort out the world of the discourse. This may be understood to mean that verb forms are means of indicating who is doing what, where and when, and how are these reflected in types of discourses such as "speech" and "narrative" (Cook 2002:137). Weinrich claims that present, future and perfect verb forms statistically dominate in speech, whereas in narrative the statistically dominant verb forms are imperfect, past present and conditional verbs (Cook 2002:137). Weinrich also introduces the notion "relief." Relief refers to whether the event is highlighted (foreground) or not highlighted (background).

Hebraists such as Schneider, Talstra and Niccacci use Weinrich's insights in their analyses of the BHVS. Weinrich could be said to have laid the foundation for many discourse approaches to the study of the BHVS.

1.7.2. Schneider

Schneider is regarded as the first Hebraist who applies the discourse approach to the study of the meanings of the BH verb forms (cf. Talstra 1978:169, Goldfajn 1998:73, Cook 2002:136). Schneider treats language as a means of communication between humans. He therefore argues that the study of the verb forms should involve units longer

than the sentence. He argues that it is at only this level that formal structures of texts can be analysed.

Schneider categorises the BH verb forms into two functional groups, viz. those that occur in what he calls “discursive” and those that occur in “narrative” speeches (Goldfajn 1998:73). By “discursive,” Schneider implies the speech interaction between the interlocutors in a dialogue. He uses “narrative” to imply the speech situation in which the persons and actions being discussed are not present (Goldfajn 1998:73). According to Schneider the *yiqtol* form is the “dominant” verb form in discursive speech, while *wayyiqtol* is the form that dominates in the narrative speech.

Schneider’s theory sheds some light on the functions of the BH verb forms at the pragmatic level. It does not, however, lead one to know what the basic meanings of the BH verb forms are. This is because he denies that the verb forms have any meanings of their own. Schneider does not discuss *qatal* and *weqatal* and the roles they play in a text. Another problem in Schneider’s analysis is that he does not define his notion of “dominance.” This makes it difficult for one to know the exact role he assigns to the verb forms.

1.7.3. Talstra

Talstra (1997:88) bases his study of the meanings of the BH verb forms on Schneider. He argues “it is more appropriate not to derive ‘aspect’ and ‘mode’ directly from the morphological paradigm, but to analyze them as syntactic categories.” Talstra supports this view by quoting Bartelmus (1982:43, 1994:202) who states that the BH verb forms “do not mark either ‘tense’ nor ‘aspect’” (Talstra 1997:89). Using a discourse frame of reference, Talstra argues, like Weinrich and Schneider, that the meaning of a linguistic unit in a text is largely determined by the function it performs in relation to other units in the text. Tense and aspect are viewed as “external categories of text reference” (Van der Merwe 1997:15).

Talstra argues, “To use language does not mean producing isolated words or even sentences; rather, it is the formation of coherent structure of sentences, i.e. texts.”⁵⁹ It is

⁵⁹ Hoftijzer (1985:1) has opposed this idea. He warns that an approach that fails to take the form/morphology seriously may not lead to good solutions.

divides the clause into two groups. Clauses beginning with verbs he calls verbal clause (VC). Those that begin with nouns or pronouns he calls nominal clauses (NC). If a clause begins with a noun phrase and contains verbal phrase, he calls it complex nominal clauses (CNC). He argues that, “in the VC, the perfect is used after *asher*, *ky* etc; in the CNC the perfect is used after a noun in first position” (Talstra 1978:171). He also sees “*wyqtil* in narrative as marking foreground event” (1997:139).

If one goes by the claims of Talstra, it will no longer be relevant to ask whether a language is tense or aspectual.⁶⁰ Yet, crosslinguistic studies such as Refsing (1994), Elena (1995) and Bhat (1999), to mention only three, show that languages do differ in terms of tense and aspect oppositions.

1.7.4. Baayen

Baayen (1997) also holds the view that the BH verb does not possess any intrinsic or primitive meaning on its own. He claims that, “the qatal form has no intrinsic semantic value and that it serves a pragmatic function only” (Baayen 1997:245). Baayen calls his theory of the BH verb forms as “Focal Referential Concern and Linkage” (1997:247). In this theory, Baayen explains: “Focal deictic for objects and events demand the immediate attention and reaction of the hearer” (1997:247). There is also the second aspect that Baayen calls disfocal deictic. In disfocal deictic the hearer is allowed “to relax into less demanding modes of communication” (1997:247).

According to Baayen, these ideas are based on “Weinrich’s distinction between the relaxed speech mode (*Sprechhaltung*) of narrating (*Erzählen*) and the tension of the speech mode of discussing (*Besprechen*)” (Baayen 1997:247). Baayen applies the notion of ‘relaxed speech mode’ and the ‘tension of the speech mode’ to his interpretation of qatal form of BH. He states

⁶⁰ This position finds support in the views of Kurylowicz. Cook (2002) reports that Kurylowicz has argued that the BH verb forms does not mark tense or aspect. This was based on the assumption that generally, “the West Semitic is not primarily defined by aspect or tense” (Cook 2002:112). Kurylowicz argues that *yaqtulu* (equivalent to *yiqtol* in BH) and *qatal* (*qatal* in BH) express non anteriority and anteriority respectively. Cook (2002) has criticised this view. He argues that recent linguistic studies such as Binnick (1991), Comrie (1976) and Dahl (1985) do not support that a language can be without verb forms expressing either tense or aspect.

speech mode of discussing (*Besprechen*)” (Baayen 1997:247). Baayen applies the notion of ‘relaxed speech mode’ and the ‘tension of the speech mode’ to his interpretation of qatal form of BH. He states

By means of the qatal form, the speaker tells the hearer that the event or state denoted by the verb cannot be tightly linked to the hearer’s discourse representation, given the speaker’s assessment of their common ground (1997:246).

Being tightly linked to the main event is similar to backgrounding in discourse linguistics. On *yiqtol*, Baayen argues that it expresses “focal referential concern” (1997:255). He argues that “since the *yiqtol* allows both perfective and imperfective readings, its semantic function cannot be an aspectual one” (1997:255). Baayen does not extend his analysis to *wayyiqtol*. He does state that his focus is on the qatal form. He acknowledges that the zero semantic value of the verb form he advocates is strange. He argues, “if my analysis is correct, the qatal is a tense form that has a pragmatic function without having a semantic value of its own. To my knowledge, this is exceptional for verb forms” (1997:281). To solve this anomaly, Baayen posits that “in BH, the absence of a semantic value for the qatal may be the result of language loss” (1997:281). He hypothesises that when the final redactors did the final compilation, BH was no longer a living language. By then, he assumes, the qatal had lost its semantic value.

Baayen’s hypothesis that qatal lost its semantic value by the time the redactors did their final redacting is at variance with Saenz-Badillos (1993). Saenz-Badillos opines that qatal existed in Proto Semitic as “nominal form with suffixes” (Saenz-Badillos 1993:24). This form, according to him, “developed into a truly verbal form which expressed a state or condition that had been brought to completion” (Saenz-Badillos 1993:24). If Saenz-Badillos is correct then qatal never lost its semantic value. Baayen’s claim that *yiqtol* is used to express perfective is also debatable (cf.4.6.2 below). So, his argument based on the behaviour of *yiqtol* stands on shaky ground. Baayen’s view cannot be used against the aspect view of BH. The findings of Bhat (1999) suggest that languages can be classified in terms of tense aspect or mood.⁶¹ Also if Baayen had considered a non-monadic

⁶¹ Blake (1944:275-276) had observed that, “it is possible for a single verb form to be used words

approach, he might have come to a different conclusion. He might have seen that verb forms are multifunctional and that they do have primitive and pragmatic meanings.

The tense and aspect neutral perspective does not give a satisfactory solution to the search for the meaning of the BH verb forms. Indeed, Baayen's model violates one of the principles of adequacy of an explanatory model of a linguistic phenomenon. This is the principle of "learnability" (Radford 1997:6). The principle states that for an explanatory model of a linguistic phenomenon to be adequate, it should specify how children could use the model to acquire the language in question with relative ease. How will the child use his natural ability to make generalisations to formulate few rules that could help him construct novel sentences? If the BH verb forms have no meanings other than those assigned by the context, how would a Hebrew child wade through infinite contexts to assign meaning to any specific form?

Before this survey is concluded, there are two other works that should be discussed. By doing that a fair representation of the various perspectives would have been covered.

1.8. The Nonmonadic Perspective

One of the remaining two works to be considered is based on an approach that analyses linguistic phenomena at word and sentence levels as well as at the level of the text. The approach recognises two levels of meaning. There is the basic meaning of small units such as words and sentences. There is then the higher level meaning, which is the function of words or sentences within context in a text. Since the approach recognises meanings at two levels, I have borrowed Bache's (1994) notion of 'nonmonadic' to refer

of time, is shown by the fact that this condition prevails in many languages, e.g. Chinese, unchanged in all tense relations, the time of expression being denoted by the known situation or by Siamese, Annamite, Samoan, etc. This was in all probability the original status of the Semitic imperfective, it was what might be designated an omnitemporal form, and might denote past, present, or future time with equal facility. The perfect is judged from its meaning in the oldest Semitic (Akkadian and Egyptian) must have been stative in character, originally perhaps also without regard to tense."

to this perspective.⁶² In this section, I discuss the work of Joosten (1997) who uses the ‘nonmonadic’ perspective in his study of the meaning of the Hebrew verb forms.⁶³

Joosten (1997) makes an important contribution to the study of the Hebrew verbal system. His approach is different from others in that he sees the Hebrew verb in a non-monadic way. Joosten bases his idea on Benveniste (Joosten 1997:53). Benveniste sees four levels of linguistic analysis. These are the morpheme, the phoneme, the word and the sentence. These Benveniste calls “merisms” (Joosten 1977:53). Joosten observed that for the past twenty years or so, the research in BH has moved from clause level to text level analysis. He is not very optimistic about this development. He cautions against an uncritical application of the textlinguistic frame of reference in the study of the BH verbal system. He states, “[T]he textlinguistics is not a panacea; discourse factors alone cannot explain all the features of the BH verb” (Joosten 1997:51). He argues that “a satisfactory solution to the enigma of the BH verb will be one that integrates insights of the analysis on the level of the single form with the sentence and the text” (Joosten 1997:51). For Joosten “a word has its own meaning of itself” (1997:54). This led him to argue that “qatal expresses anteriority to, while the participle expresses contemporaneity with, the moment of speaking” (1977:60). He also argues that “wayyiqtol does not express the same function of qatal” (1977:60). As for yiqtol, Joosten states that the “yiqtol usually expresses that an action will happen in the future, that it may, should or could happen: they are modal” (1977:59). At a discourse level, Joosten maintains that wayyiqtol expresses past tense in narrative. He adopts the views of Niccacci (1994) on the function of the BH verb forms at the level of the text.

Joosten is correct, in my opinion, by insisting that a linguistic unit, be it verb or noun, possesses its own intrinsic meaning. When used in context, it may acquire a secondary or pragmatic meaning that may be different from its primary or primitive

⁶² By ‘nonmonadic’ is meant the view of a linguistic form as a composite of meanings (cf. Bache 1994:50). The notion is discussed more fully in chapter two of this thesis. Here it is stated that it differs from the eclectic perspective discussed in section 1.7 in that it does not take the evolutionary trend in language change into account. It recognises meanings at the basic level of the verb forms as well as at the level of pragmatics.

meaning (Bache 1994). Joosten does not show what is the primitive meaning of the Hebrew verb form.⁶⁴ He also does not consider the fact that languages do use any of the categories such as tense, aspect or mood as prominent. Joosten also does not provide us with the features of a tense or an aspectual language against which BH may be compared. So the question, ‘what is the meaning of the BH verb forms’ still remains unanswered.

In the last work in this survey, which seeks to explain the meanings of the BH verb forms, it is difficult to associate the work with any particular perspective; so, I refer to it as ‘zero frame perspective.’

1.9. The Zero Frame Perspective

Zevit (1998) does not base his study on any identifiable perspective or approach. In this survey, I simply refer to his work as that which is based on *zero frame perspective*. However, Zevit holds that wayyiqtol and qatal express anteriority.⁶⁵ His arguments are discussed below.

Zevit (1998) studies the ‘anterior construction in classical Hebrew.’ He notes that “Hebrew lacks a conjugated verbal form marking this chronological sequencing of events” (1998:3). Therefore, he seeks “to describe a device in Biblical Hebrew, the anterior construction that marks this chronological sequencing of events” (1998:4). He claims that from such a study it will be possible to gain some insight into the system of “the marking of time by the Hebrew verbal system and how it evolved with that system” (1998:4). The medieval commentators such as Rashi Shelomo ben Isaac (Zevit 1998:7) and Ibn Ezra (Zevit 1998:8) influence Zevit’s perspective.⁶⁶ His thoughts are also influenced by the work of Bergstrasser. Zevit quotes him as saying “wayyiqtol forms

Joosten does not say that his perspective is nonmonadic. It is my understanding of the perspective he uses.

⁶⁴ It is necessary to explain the elements of the composites in the verb form because Bauer (McFall 1982:95) also advocates for multiple meaning of the Hebrew verb forms. To Bauer the forms compose “present,’ future or past meaning.” As shall be explained later in this study, our concept of multifunctional nature of BH verb forms is different from that of Bauer.

⁶⁵ Zevit (1998) does not define his notion of anteriority. My understanding of the term is that it is used to refer to the situation in which an event forms a temporal reference point to another event.

⁶⁶ This claim is based on the initial and extensive quotations on pages 17 and 18 in Zevit’s work.

could express the pluperfect when they continued qatal forms functioning as pluperfect” (Zevit 1998:10).⁶⁷ Zevit’s main thesis is as follows:

“When authors of narrative prose wished to indicate unambiguously 1) pluperfect, i.e. that a given action in the past had commenced and concluded before another action in the past, or 2) perfect, i.e. that a given action in the past had commenced but not necessarily terminated in the past prior to the beginning of another action, they employed a particular construction to express this sequencing, a type of circumstantial clause. These clauses consist of a subject, a noun or pronoun, followed by a qatal past tense” (1998:15).

Zevit excludes some clauses from the type of clauses that satisfy this condition. They include וייהי, ויהנה and verbs in parenthetical, inserted sentences that interrupt main narrative flow” (1998:15,16). He also excludes participles. Zevit then gives several citations from the masoretic text to illustrate his claims. His translations of X-qatals in these texts appear to be made to conform to his thesis⁶⁸. Zevit states that “anterior construction is used for backgrounding” (1998:34). By this he sees a difference between author’s /speaker’s comments or parenthetical statements in narrative and “the mention of detail or an event that may not be relevant to its immediate context” (1998:34). This is in

His understanding of the notion anteriority is based on the ideas of these medieval commentators.

⁶⁷ Collins (1995) has argued that wayyiqtol is used to express “pluperfect.” He postulates three conditions that allow a pluperfect interpretation of wayyiqtol. These are 1) “when some anaphoric reference explicitly points back to a previous event.” 2) “The logic of the referent described requires that an event presented by a previous verb form actually took place prior to the event presented by a previous verb.” 3) “The verb begins a section or paragraph” (cf. 1998 127-128).

⁶⁸ As an example, he translates Gen. 6:7-8 as follows

וימאר יהוה אמחה את האדם אשר בראתי מעל פני האדמה ונח מצא חן בעני יהוה

‘And YHWH said, “I will wipe the people that I created from the surface of the earth...” wnh ms’ hn and/but Noah had found favour in the eyes of YHWH.’

Here, there does not seem to be any compelling reason to translate ונח מצא חן as pluperfect. The New International Version of the Bible and the Good News Bible, for example, do not translate this portion as pluperfect.

agreement with views expressed by scholars working from a discourse perspective (cf. Longacre 1973, Buth 1999, 1998 and Bowling 1997).

Zevit divides the verb forms of Hebrew into two groups. He states, “verbs expressing telicity and punctuality were usually classified as pluperfect” (1998:39). He cites Gen. 16:1 where he finds ילדה ‘she bore’ and Gen. 21:1 פקד ‘he took into account’ as examples. That is his first group. Of the second group he states “those not expressing telicity and those expressing it but lacking a well defined sense of punctuality were classified as preperfect” (1998:39). The example he gives in this case is from Gen. 19:24 (The LORD) המטיר ‘he caused it to rain.’

As Zevit completes his anteriority argument for (X) qatal, he comes to the following conclusion, “the anterior construction engages the Hebrew verbal system only insofar as that system indicates tense, not aspect” (1998:40).

One can agree with Zevit when he says that Hebrew does not possess any morphological system for indicating pluperfect or anteriority. However, Zevit’s anteriority thesis is not very convincing because of the reasons given below. In Gen. 4:1 the sentence begins with a X-qatal.

והאדם ידע את חוה אשתו

‘And the man knew Eve his wife.’

One can argue that there is nothing in the construction or any translation reason why the verb ידע should be construed to mean ‘had known.’ It will be difficult to argue that the text means, ‘the man had known his wife before they were driven from the garden.’ How also would one translate 1 Ki. 11:1?

והמלך שלמה אהב נשים

‘And King Solomon loved women.’

Going by Zevit’s thesis, one would translate this as ‘and King Solomon had love women.’ Another passage may yet be added from 1 Chr. 8:1

ובנימן הוליד את בלע בכרו

‘And Benjamin bore Belah his first born...’

Will one be correct to translate this as, ‘And Benjamin had borne...?’ If translators were to follow Zevit’s principles, it is likely that they can mistranslate a number of passages. This is more so since pluperfect is essentially a relative past. In the cases cited, the verbs do not relate the event to any known prior event either immediately or remotely.

1.10. Summary

Although the eight perspectives mentioned above are discussed as though each is independent of any other, this is not the case in the real world. One cannot always regard a perspective as having nothing to do with some other perspectives. We only abstract a dominant perspective that appears to be what a particular scholar uses as his/her main approach in his/her analysis.

In this brief survey, the eight main perspectives on the meanings of the Hebrew verb forms identified are:

1. The historical-comparative perspective. In this perspective, scholars seek predominantly to explain the grammatical meanings of the BH verb forms by appealing to their supposed meaning in the Proto Semitic origin and the effects of the grammaticalisation process on its synchronic status.
2. The syntactic perspective. Those who use this perspective argue mainly that the relationship a verb form maintains with the verb that immediately precedes it in a clause is central to the temporal interpretation of the verb.
3. The context-cum-accent perspective. Joüon-Muraoka who base the analysis of the BHVS on the context-cum-accent perspective argue that the context where weqatal appears and the accent of the weqatal provide the key to the interpretation of weqatal. According to Joüon-Muraoka, qatal could have past, present or future meaning depending on the context.
4. The discourse perspective. A number of other scholars seek to solve the same problem of the meanings of the BH verb forms by using a discourse linguistic frame of reference. Like other perspectives, some of these discourse linguists hold that the BH verb forms denote tenses while others deny this line of thinking and argue that the verb forms denote aspects.
5. The eclectic perspective. This is a combination of diachronic, synchronic and discourse perspectives in searching for the meaning of the BH verb forms.

6. The tense-aspect-neutral perspective. The scholars who use this perspective draw their arguments from textlinguistic/discourse theory, but they deny that BH verb forms have any intrinsic grammatical meanings of their own. They see the verb forms as simply performing pragmatic functions.
7. The nonmonadic perspective. In this perspective, linguistic units are viewed as having meanings at two levels. There is the basic level meaning and there is the meaning at the level of the text.
8. The zero frame perspective. In this type of approach, no identifiable model is used as frame of reference in the study of the meaning of the BH verb forms.

These perspectives do give some useful insights into the problem under consideration. These are:

1. The historical-comparative perspective provides us with rich source of information on the probable development of BH from the Proto Semitic origin. From the perspective we learn the benefit of crosslinguistic comparison. We learn that when one doubts the status of a particular linguistic phenomenon, in a language, a comparison of such a phenomenon with similar other ones found in another language may shed some light on the doubtful case. The use of a crosslinguistic phenomena, of course, needs to be done with some caution.
2. The neo-historical-comparative perspective represent an improvement of the “older” historical-comparative perspective in that the neo-historical-comparative perspective builds its method on a more systematic process of grammaticalisation. The process is compared crosslinguistically and some more general pattern can be discovered. The discovery of a pattern of a grammaticalisation process may enable a researcher to be able to predict the possible destination of some verb forms when their original state and path of development is known.
3. From the discourse perspective, we learn the type of verb forms that one may expect to find in certain genre types. The discourse perspective also enables one to explain the functions of such verb forms at the level of pragmatics.
4. The eclectic perspective informs us that language, being a human phenomenon, cannot be explained by a single model. A multimodel approach may be able to offer more adequate explanations to the multifunctional nature of any language. The

nonmonadic perspective, also supports the awareness that language is multifunctional and that it requires more than one model when analysing it.

However, the attempts of some BH scholars who try to explain the BHVS were less successful for a number of reasons:

1. They did not take full cognisance of what was happening in the field of general linguistics. Cook (2002) is an exception.
2. They tend to embrace a particular linguistic model without a critical evaluation as to how such model may apply to BH.
3. They make unjustifiable assumptions such as thinking that what applies in Indo-European languages can be uncritically carried over to BH
4. They do not provide a crosslinguistic, universally applicable parameter for distinguishing typological categories such as tense, aspect and mood. Such non-consideration of universal parameter is a methodological flaw.

In this study the four areas of weakness noted above, which could increase the validity of any argument that Hebrew is an aspectual language, shall be taken into account. Attempts will be made to redress them. But before then, the next topic in chapter two will be to clarify and critically evaluate the concepts and the approaches that will be used in this study. We will introduce the notions ‘nonmonadic,’ ‘prominence’ and ‘trimodals.’ It will be argued that these notions are relevant at different levels of the study of the meanings of the BH verb forms. In chapter four the notions will be applied in analysing the functions of the BH verb forms. It will be demonstrated how the notions can help to explain the meanings and functions of the BH verb forms at the appropriate levels.

Chapter two

Theoretical Points of Departure: The Notions Nonmonadic, Prominence and Trimodalism

2.1. Introduction

In chapter one the perspectives which scholars use in the study of the meanings of the BH verb forms were identified. From the review of the literature on the study of the meanings of the BH verb forms, it was found that not enough consideration had been given to the need to find the basic meaning of verb forms in human language. None of the authors consulted also considered the specific features of a language that make the language tense, aspect or mode. In the present study, it is assumed that every language can express tense, aspect and mode (Dahl 1985:9-10). The question is whether there is any one of the categories of tense, aspect and mode that are dominant in a particular language. If there is, by what means could such a dominant category be identified? It is argued that to be able to do such identification, there is the need to use appropriate models. In this chapter models, which are considered useful in identifying the features of a language in terms of tense or aspect categories, are discussed. At the pragmatic level, we also try to determine which models are most appropriate for accounting for the function of the language in communicative settings.

One may ask, why we are using models instead of just a model? It is argued that human language is multidimensional and complex (Fairclough 1992:9, Van der Merwe 1997:15 and Bache 1994). Language may be likened to a machine with several parts. There is no one spanner that will be able to grip all the bolts in a machine. In the same way it can be argued that no one model will be able to explain all the complex components of the human language. Therefore, there is the need to use a set of models to explain the different levels of language. By adopting such a multimodel analytical approach, one can hope to be able to give fuller explanations of the various facets of a language. Three notions will be central in the models I am using, viz. the notions 'nonmonadic,' 'prominence' and 'trimodalism.'

2.2. The Notion “Nonmonadic”

It is rarely the case that a linguistic form has only one meaning. In some languages such as BH, the morphologically single unit such as הָצִיף ‘he found’ has the following elements. The semantics of the verb is constitutive of the gender of the verb, masculine. There is also the number and person, viz. third person singular deduced from the zero marking of the form. There is the tense/aspect also. Temporally, it is past; aspectually, it is perfective. All these meanings are fused together in one morphological unit. In just one single form הָצִיף there are five grammatical elements, all in one. Bache (1994) studies the English perfect. He observes that “the simple past or preterite seems to be not just anterior in meaning but also perfective” (Bache 1994:47). The different elements meanings, which a form encodes, each are what Bache (1994) calls ‘gramm.’ From his examination of the English finite verb forms, he argues that the verb forms of English “inevitably belong to more than one gramm” (1994:50).

Bache uses the notion of ‘metacategory’ to explain what he calls “the ideal index” of the meaning of a form crosslinguistically. According to him, verb forms contain more than one categorial meaning, e.g. tense, aspect and/or mood. When verb forms are so viewed, a category is *provisionally* assigned to the form. Bache refers to the provisional category as ‘metacategory.’ When such categorial meanings are considered in context, Bache states that sometimes the form and the metacategorial ideals may not correspond. He illustrates this by considering the verb ‘talked.’ He explains that ‘talked’ could be regarded as past tense when considered “in relation to the non past form of TALK” (1994:50). The same ‘talked’ could be regarded as a perfective aspect form of TALK in relation “to imperfective form, *were talking*” (1994:50).

In order to be able to give a more accurate description of the meanings of linguistic forms, Bache argues that a ‘nonmonadic approach’ is more viable. By ‘nonmonadic’ he means the view of a linguistic form as a composite of meanings. Binnick (1991) had earlier held the nonmonadic view of the meaning of a linguistic form. He notes that the “perfect is both tense and aspect” (1991:268). In such a nonmonadic approach, Bache sees the description of tense and aspect as a question of “opposition or relationships between forms rather than form in isolated self contained entities” (1991:50). The notion of opposition or relation between forms and the choice made at

functional level is important. A verb form is both tense and aspect at the same time. However, when in function, the manner of the relationships of the verb forms to one another and to the other elements in the construction, will manifest the category that is more prominent. Usually, the category that is more prominent is used to express the non-prominent categories. For example, the English language does not have any inflection in its verb system to express mood. It uses some of its tense forms to express mood. I quote another example from Comrie (1985:19) to illustrate this. "If you did this, I would be very happy." The past tense forms 'did' and 'would' do not express pastness, but desiderative mood. For a language to be able to perform its communicative function economically, it should be possible to use one form to express more than one meaning. The analysis of forms involving more than one meaning, therefore, requires a nonmonadic approach.

2.3. The Notion "Prominence" in Linguistic Analysis

One basic step in the scientific study of a class of phenomena is to know the similarities and the differences between the classes of objects of study (Longacre 1976:5). An example of the study of the similarities and differences between classes of objects can be taken from the biological science. When biologists study the living things they do two things, among other aspects of their study of living things. Firstly, they identify what makes living things different from non-living things. Secondly, within the living things, they would like to know what make plants different from animals. In studying animals, biologists would like to know what is common to certain species of animals that could be used to group them into one class. The process continues until all the objects that fall within the study of biology are classified in terms of certain criteria. If any other biologist uses the same criteria, the result will be very similar to the one arrived at by the other biologist.

There are other types of studies in which things are grouped into classes. In some of such studies, the differentiating criteria are not absolute. One example is when economists study and group countries in terms of poor versus rich, or developed versus underdeveloped continuum. In such studies, economists use what they call 'per capita income' as one of the variables they use in classifying a country on the rich-poor continuum. They may say, for instance, that the per capita income of people living in

Canada is US\$30,000 per annum. They may compare this with the per capita of people living in Africa, which may be put at US\$3,000 per annum. One may want to ask whether it is the case that every one living in Canada earns US\$30,000 per annum. Certainly this is not the real case. Nor is it the case that every one living in Africa earns US\$3,000 only per annum. When economists say that the per capita income in country X is US\$30,000, what such statements imply is that the average of the population in the country being considered falls within the stated per capita income. There may be some people living in Africa that earn more than US\$30,000 per annum while some people living in Canada earn less than US\$3,000 per annum. These statistical averages are also referred to as 'norm' because they usually fall within the broad group of the population considered. The classification of a country in terms of rich-poor categories is based on what is the dominant feature. This dominant feature is what can be referred to as 'prominence.'

In linguistic study, when a particular language is described as belonging to a particular type, it is the main or dominant or prominent feature observed in that language that is used to do such classification (Dahl 1985:8). Linguists that are interested in classifying languages on the basis of one feature or the other are called 'typologists.' Their works usually involve crosslinguistic comparisons. The classificatory method belongs to the area of crosslinguistic typological study. Two of such typological studies are given below for illustration.

Word order is one feature by which languages of the world are classified. According to Comrie (1981) and Andersen (1990), Greenberg is in the forefront among linguists that study word order in the languages of the world. Word order is the relationship that is found in the clauses of the languages of the world. The English language, for example, is said to have subject + verb + object, (SVO), as its prominent word order. Some languages are said to be SOV while others are said to be VSO (Comrie 1981:87). The BH is said to be a VSO language (Goldfajn 1998:91). What this means is that the prominent structure of the clause is verb + subject + object. There are times when the order is violated. When such counter examples are met, they are said to be 'marked' phenomena.

Another way of classifying languages is by considering the structure of their morphology. Some languages are classified on the basis of 'agglutinating' versus

'isolating parameters' (Comrie 1981:43, Dressler 1990:286). According to Comrie, "in an agglutinating language a word may consist of more than one morpheme, but the boundaries between morphemes in the word are always clear-cut" (1981:43). In contradistinction to agglutinating languages, are 'isolating' languages. In 'isolating' languages, it is claimed that "there is one-to-one correspondence between words and morphemes" (Comrie 1981:43). Comrie gives a construction from Vietnamese to illustrate this.

Khi toi den nha ban toi,
When I come house friend I
Chung toi bat aau lam bai
PLURAL I begin do lesson
'When I came to my friend's house, we began to do lesson.'

Comrie explains that each of the words in the Vietnamese sentence above cannot decline. There is no variation for tense. Plurals are not indicated by any variation in the noun, but a separate word is added to indicate plurals.

In the same way Bhat (1999) classifies the Indian languages on tense, aspect and mood categories. In all the examples given above, what the crosslinguistic typologist does is not to argue for absolute characteristics, but he searches for dominant features, which he uses in his classification. Such dominant features are what Bhat (1999) calls 'prominence.' Prominence is a statistical notion of tendency (Shibatani, Masayoshi and Bynon 1995:5). When the notion 'tendency' is drawn upon as a guide in classification, it is recognised that a language may possess and use elements of tense, aspect and mood. Yet, the language in question will use one more prominently in its communicative function than others.

The relevance of the notion of prominence will be discussed below. It is argued that the notion offers a more satisfactory way of understanding the nature of languages in terms of types. Later in chapter three of this study, it will be demonstrated how the notion of prominence is used to isolate and identify the characteristic features, which can form the basis for classifying a language as either tense, aspect or mood.

Now, why is the notion of 'prominence' relevant in the study of the meaning of the verb forms of a language? How does the notion contribute to our understanding in

terms of whether the verb forms convey tense or aspect? We have noted that when humans use language in the context of communication there are usually many factors that come into play that make the forms used to be multidimensional. It was argued that the study of the meanings of the forms has to be nonmonadic. It was also argued that the rules formulated to explain the behaviour of a language phenomenon could not be absolute rules, but tendencies only. If absolute rules are made, there will be cases that such rules cannot account for. Sometimes such exceptional cases are sizeable and could not be ignored. Let us take word order in English as an example. Suppose there is a rule that states that 'English is an SVO language.' A student learning English comes across a sentence like the following:

The bottom line is that they kept out humanitarian aid for days and that in itself is a crime, said a senior UN official.⁶⁹

The expression 'said a senior UN official' is verb + subject in word order. We know that English speakers will not find the expression ungrammatical. They know that the change from the usual order is marked for some communicative purpose (cf. Longacre 1965:66). Nevertheless, one cannot, on the basis of such special cases, deny that English is predominantly, an SVO language. The special cases may be treated as statistically non significant when deciding on the feature that is prominent in terms of word order in the English language. The same can be said about studying other features in any language. The type of 'quantitative count' being advocated is very important in crosslinguistic typological studies (cf. Myhill 1992:11). Going by the example above, it could be argued that the notion of prominence is very important in classifying languages under any category, including tense and aspect. One claim being made in the present study is that most discussions on whether the BH verb forms denote tense or aspect, have not explored what the notion of prominence can contribute to the solution of the problem. Dahl (1985) has argued that linguistic categories are not one dimensional, but multidimensional. He also suggests that linguistic categories should be considered in terms of dominance (Dahl 1985:9). The notion of 'dominance' has not been applied to the discussion of tense and

⁶⁹ From the Sunday Independent. April 21, 2002. Independent News and Media, South Africa.

aspect of BH. Myhill (1992:12) has observed as a flaw any linguistic analysis that does not pay attention to tendencies or dominance. He complains,

“Another problem with traditional studies of function is that data are used anecdotally without any evidence that they are indicative of *general* patterns. Any claim that a certain form is associated with a certain function should be accompanied by quantitative data demonstrating that this association represents *general* pattern in the language.”

It is such a general pattern that is meant by the notion ‘prominence’ in the present study. Every language possesses tense, aspect and mood as grammatical categories coded by the verb forms. It is of great importance to know which one of these a particular language prominently uses in communication, and which are secondary. When the feature that is prominent is identified, it could be used as a criterion for classifying a language as belonging to a particular type.

The last notion to be described in this chapter is the notion of ‘trimodalism’ as a feature of linguistic phenomena. The notion explains the situation in which two apparently different linguistic forms encode essentially one meaning. As will be seen, this is also relevant in accounting for the meanings of the BH verb forms.

2.4. The Notion “Trimodalism”

In the narratives of BH, one finds two forms expressing essentially the same aspectual values. In Genesis 3:14 and 16,⁷⁰ the following sentences are found,

ויאמר יהוה אלהים אל-נחש כי עשיתה זאת ארור אתה מכל-הבהמה ומכל חית
השדה

‘And the LORD God said (wayyiqtol) to the serpent, because you have done this, you are cursed more than all the beasts and more than all the animals of the field’ (Gen. 3:14).

אל-האישה אמר הרבה ארבה עצבותך

‘To the woman he said (qatal) I will surely increase your sorrow...’ (Gen. 3:16).

⁷⁰ Taken from Niccacci (1997:167).

In the passages above, the verb forms wayyiqtol (ויאמר) and qatal (אמר) are both perfective aspectually. They both express events that are complete and past. The question is why do two different surface forms express one aspectual value?

Let us take another example from Numbers 8: 5-7

וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר קח את-הלויים מתוך בני ישראל
וטהרת אתם וכה-תעשה להם לטהרם הוזה עליהם מי חטאת
והעבירו תער על-כל-בשרם וכבסו בגדיהם והטרו

‘And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, take the Levites from the people of Israel and consecrate them. This is how you will consecrate (yiqtol) them. Sprinkle upon them the water of purification and they will shave (weqatal) all their body and will wash (weqatal) their clothes and they will be clean (weqatal).’

In the passage above, the yiqtol and the weqatal express what may be called ‘irrealis,’ that is, events that are yet to happen. They are non perfective, aspectually. The two different forms express what is essentially the same aspectual value. I argue that the notion of ‘trimodalism’ which recognises variations of the same phenomenon in different environments could account for the use of two forms to express what is essentially the same meaning. The issue will be discussed fully in chapter four of the present study. Here, I only define the trimodal notion.

The trimodal concept is taken from the theory of tagmemics⁷¹ as developed by Pike (1967) and Longacre (1965, 1976). The present study is not based on the tagmemic theory per se. However, the concepts of feature, manifestation and distribution modes are part of the concepts developed and used by Pike in his tagmemic theory. I find the notion ‘trimodalism’ relevant to the explanation of the use of two forms to code one aspectual value. The notion of trimodalism implies the view of a linguistic unit as having three properties. These are the ‘feature mode,’ the ‘manifestation mode’ and the ‘distribution mode.’ The three modes are described below.

⁷¹ Tagmemics is the method of language analysis that sees a linguistic unit as “composed of function and filler” (Platt 1971).

The Feature Mode. A linguistic unit has characteristics that enable an observer to identify it among other elements. It has contrastive and identificational components. Such a unit has a boundary which separates it from other units (Longacre 1976:258). Such defining character is the 'feature mode' of the unit.

The Manifestation Mode. A linguistic unit may change its physical form because of certain conditions in which it exists. One of such conditions may be the relationship that the unit maintains with other units. An example from the BH phonology may help to illustrate this. The phoneme (ב) may sound as a voiced bilabial plosive 'b' when it begins a word or when it occurs immediately after a close shva. However, when the same phoneme is preceded by an open syllable, it will be pronounced as labio-dental fricative 'v.' When a phenomenon varies due to its relationship with other phenomena without change in its essence, i.e. meaning, the varied form is referred to by tagmemists as 'manifestation mode.'

Distribution Mode. A linguistic unit has a function or role within a larger unit. The function of a unit within a larger setting is its 'distribution mode.' It answers the question, 'where is it found and what is it doing there?'

Pike (1967) explains that the feature mode, the manifestation mode and the distribution mode may not be seen as absolutely independent entities. He argues that the three are all in some dynamic functional relationship, especially at points where they interrelate.

One important question that could be asked at this juncture is whether the notion of trimodalism represents the world of natural languages. Since a model is supposed to mirror the real world, it is necessary to ask such a question. I attempt to suggest an answer to the question here. To do so, another set of notions is introduced. These are the 'particles,' 'waves' and 'field.' These notions are also taken from Pike (1967). By 'particle' Pike means the smallest unit of human perception from his environment. Such things could be every day common elements such as house, trees or words such as beauty. According to Pike, the human mind is able to understand the world around it by thinking of it as one thing after another. He argues that if the mind cannot isolate things one from another, it will not be able to organise the world in any meaningful way. The BH verb forms, with which this study is concerned, are wayyiqtol, qatal, yiqtol weqatal and weyiqtol. These are particles, from Pike's perspective. They are formally distinct

from one another because they each have their 'features' that make them different from one another formally.

As it were, particles do change either their surface structure or their deep structure when they come in close relationship with other particles. When particles merge in sequence, that is what Pike refers to as 'wave.' For example one form of pluralisation in English is to affix the 's' morpheme at the end of the noun phrase. This morpheme 's,' a voiceless dental fricative may change to 'z,' a voiced dental fricative. This depends on the phoneme that the 's' plural marker follows. 'Dogs' is pronounced as 'dogz' while faces is pronounced as 'faces.' The feature is 's' but it manifests as 'z' in a certain environment, the 'wave' factor.

As for the 'field,' Pike means the wider context or environment in which the phenomenon is found. He argues that no item itself has any significance other than the relationship it has with a certain context. The context is the 'field' where the phenomenon is found and what it does there.

I claimed that two forms might be used to code what is essentially one meaning. An example from Andersen (1974:29) illustrates this claim.

A girl, Mary by name
a girl, named Mary
a girl they call Mary
a girl whose name is Mary
a girl, her name is Mary

Andersen notes that these constructions "represent different formal (surface) means of realizing essentially the same basic (deep) relationships between Mary, name and girl" (1974:29). The choice of any of the above constructions may be influenced by the discourse contexts, which Pike would refer to as 'field.' Each construction has its feature mode, (identifiable contrastive forms), the manifestation mode, (variations in different environments) and the distribution mode (their function in context). If natural language can behave in this way, then it will no longer be an 'enigma' that in BH, two different verb forms may express what is essentially the same meaning. The 'same meaning' here refers to the essential proposition of the constructions. From the example above, it can be argued that the notion of trimodalism can help to explain the different faces of a linguistic

unit and their functions at the pragmatic level. The notion of trimodalism reflects the world of natural language. It models a real world.

2.5. Summary of Chapter Two

In this chapter, the notion of ‘nonmonadic’ has been introduced and described. It is based on the fact that linguistic units are multidimensional and so any analysis of it should take into account that one form may not always express only one meaning.

Secondly, it has been argued that all languages express tense, aspect and mood. However, they may grammaticalize only one of either tense, aspect or mood in such a way that the language may be regarded as a tense, aspect or mood “prominent” language.

Lastly, the variations found in forms that appear to code the same meaning are discussed in terms of trimodalism - particle, waves and field. These notions form the basic tool of analysis of the BH verb forms in the study. These will be applied in chapter four of this study. In chapter three, we shall discuss the yardstick that one may use in the determination of a tense and an aspectual “prominent” language. The way tense and aspect correlate in terms of expressing temporal values at pragmatic level will also be discussed.

Chapter three

A Model for Determining Tense, Aspectual and Mood Languages

3.1. Introduction

The discussions on the meanings of the BH verb forms as surveyed in chapter one reveal some general problems. Firstly, most of the explanations of the BHVS were not based on one or other well-defined linguistic model regarding aspect, tense or mood in natural languages. Secondly, no criteria have been formulated for determining the differences between tense and non-tense languages. As a result it is difficult to compare BH with any known tense or aspectual languages. Such a comparison would have provided scholars with parameters in terms of which BH can be classified as a tense, aspectual or mood language. Thirdly, scholars of BHVS have not asked what is the primitive meaning of the verb forms in human languages. If this was known, it would be easy to discover how languages grammaticalize the primitive meaning into secondary meanings, and how the inflections that express secondary meanings become the dominant meanings in some languages. Other questions of interest would include, how do people in some cultures perceive the world of events and how are these perceptions expressed in a particular way? What is the predominant form of such expressions? Answers to such questions could provide information that may contribute to an understanding of the origin of the differences between tense, aspectual and mood languages.

The purpose of this chapter is to address the above mentioned questions. The discussion shall be based on the studies of Brown (1973), Antinucci and Miller (1976), Smith (1991) and Bardovi-Harlig (2000). Next, drawing on the existing literature, the meanings of the notions tense aspect and mood or mode shall be discussed. I will also introduce and use the notions, “grammaticalization,” “systematicity” and “consistency.” I shall make use of Bhat’s notion of “pervasiveness.” In order to establish parameters by which tense, aspect and modal languages could be differentiated, I will exploit the parameters mentioned above, which were developed by Bhat (1999) for the characterisation of tense, aspectual and modal languages. In particular, how he employs

the notions aspect, tense and mood prominent languages as well as the notion of grammaticalisation in his analysis of the languages he studied. The notions mentioned above will be used as tools for distinguishing between categorial types of languages. It is assumed that a language that has a particular dominant feature will exhibit the feature in its grammatical forms of the verb, and that the language will do so systematically. Other categories that may not be dominant in the language, by necessity will have to be expressed in one way or the other. The notion ‘pervasiveness’ will be used to explain how such necessity to express a non-dominant category is met. Thirdly, it shall be argued that this crosslinguistic comparative model provides stronger theoretical explanations for the meaning of the BH verb forms than the perspectives and models surveyed in chapter one.

3.2. The Primitive Meaning of verb forms in human languages

Dahl (1985:1) observes that “the semantics of TMA categories is connected with concepts that are fundamental to human thinking.”⁷² While one may agree with Dahl, one still would like to know which of TMA is more innate to the human mind. Most literature on Tense Aspect and Mood (TAM) such as Comrie (1976, 1985), Binnick (1991), Bache, Baseball and Carl-Erik (1994), and Bhat (1999) does not deem it necessary to ask which of the categories of TAM is most primitive to all humans. This may leave a student of aspect and tense wondering what might be the evolutionary relationship between tense, aspect and mood. The impressive work of Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994) contributes to fill this vacuum. They show, for instance, how lexical items such as ‘be’/‘have’ become grammaticalized as resultative and then developed further into grammatical forms that mark perfective and past (1994:105). Cook (2002) exploits the grammaticalisation theory of Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994) in an attempt to show that the BH wayyiqtol, qatal yiqtol and weqatal develop from different sources and meanings. However Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994) and Cook (2002) do not argue for the primitivity of aspect meaning of verb forms in human languages. As a matter of fact, many BH scholars have not looked into the possibility that aspect may be the universal primitive meaning of verb forms in human languages. This may be one of the

⁷² TMA is an abbreviation Dahl (1985) uses for Tense, Mood and Aspect.

reasons why Cook (2002) relies so much on the semantics of the BH verb forms as one of his reasons for arguing that BH is an aspectual language. If he had considered the possibility that the basic semantics of verb forms in all languages whether tense, aspect or mood is aspect, his discovery that the semantics of BH is aspectual would not have been regarded as a sufficient ground for arguing that BH is an aspect-prominent language. He would have searched for more universal criteria that explain why BH should be classified as an aspectual language.

In this section, the findings of psycholinguistics are drawn upon to argue that aspect is the fundamental meaning of verb forms in the cognitive development of humans. This will explain why the semantics of verb forms is primarily aspectual. I regard it as important to determine the most primitive meaning, since to argue that BH is an aspectual language because the semantics of its verb forms is aspectual could lead to a charge of circularity. Secondly, the search for the categories that are prominent in any language, whether tense, aspect or mood, will not depend too heavily on semantics of the verb forms of the language being studied but on other criteria that are more powerful in discriminating between tense, aspectual and mood languages.

3.2.1. Brown's study of the use of the progressive

Brown (1973) studies the meanings of the sentences that children who are acquiring their native language construct and the linguistic means they use in expressing those meanings (Brown 1973:3). The subjects in Brown's experiment were three children whose first language was English. The experimental subjects were preschool children and they were one and a half years old when they were selected for the experiment. The study was a longitudinal one. The researcher observes the language development of the children and records his observations. The period of the observation of the children is divided into five stages. The researcher records the stage at which certain grammatical categories begin to develop in the children's speech. Notice was taken of which category comes first and which category follows. To enable him to measure the development of certain grammatical categories in the children's language, Brown sets what he calls the "criterion" of performance. This is a percentage score that a child has when he makes

correct use of the required grammatical category in the context where it is obligatorily required if an adult were to be speaking.

One of the tests Brown gives to the experimental subjects is the use of the progressive in English. He defines “progressive” as an expression of a verb to denote “temporal duration including the time of the utterance” (Brown 1973:316). Brown calls this definition the “primitive progressive” (1973:216). He explains that the way he defines progressive excludes the past and future use of the progressive. He claims as follows:

1. that the progressive does not always express goal. This is contrary to the views held by Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994:127-129). According to Brown, the progressive may simply express a state.
2. that the progressive is an aspect.
3. that the progressive expresses the beginning of an event, but not yet complete at the time of speech. The event is still in process.
4. that the progressive may express a state of affairs as well as action (1973:316).

The findings of Brown are presented below.

Stage I. The children at this stage use verbs in generic unmarked forms. Brown (1973:317) reports that the parents of the children in the experiment understand the generic use of the verb in one of four ways, viz

As an imperative: Get book

As a past: Book drop (dropped).

As expressive of an intention or prediction: Mommy read (gona read or will read).

As a progressive expressive of present temporary duration: Fish swim (is swimming).

Stages II to III. The children begin to use the primitive progressive by “adding” ‘ing,’ “but no auxiliary and almost always naming an action or state in fact of temporal duration and true at the time of utterance” (1973:318). By “state” I understand Brown to be referring to “state of affairs.”

Stages IV to V. The children now modify the verb to ‘-d’ to express only immediate past.

By the time full progressive is developed, Brown states that the children use the primitive progressive to express “temporal duration as well as present time” (1973:319). Brown interprets the result to mean that the use of verb in a generic way, which expands “semantic range with no change of formal expressive means is a general feature of language development” (1973:320). Brown also finds that at a very late stage of the child’s cognitive development he is able to “speak about remote past and future time” (1973:319).

From the experiment, it can be inferred that tense, the inflection of the verb to locate an event relative to the moment of speech, is not the primitive meaning of verb forms. It appears that humans first perceive events/states that are present or current that one can see or perceive as one speaks. At latter stages the temporal notion begins to develop in the cognitive faculty. Then verbs are modified to express it.

3.2.2. Antinucci and Miller

Antinucci and Miller (1975) study the development of past tense expression in the speech of seven children. The children in the experiment are one and a half to two and a half years of age. The native languages of the children are Italian and English. These languages are tense languages. The authors report that they base their study on the earlier works of Bowerman in 1974 and Veneziano in 1974 (Antinucci and Miller 1975:168). Antinucci and Miller assume that “cognitive development is ... at the base of language development” (1975:168).

The number of children studied was eight. Bardovi-Harlig and Miller also studied another forty children in a non-longitudinal manner. The records of these forty children were added to Antinucci and Miller’s study.

Antinucci and Miller studied how the children use Italian “Passo Prossimo.” According to them, the “Passo Prossimo is used to express the past of non-statives” (1975:168). The Passo Prossimo consists of have/be plus participle. When ‘have’ is used, the Passo Prossimo expresses transitivity. When ‘be’ is used the Passo Prossimo expresses intransitivity. In addition, when the object of the verb is pronominalised, the participle agrees with gender and number of the pronominalised object of the participial verb.

When the experiment was carried out, Antinucci and Miller found that all the children made the same error. They all used the participle form that agrees with the gender and number of the object of the verb even though the object of the participial verb was not pronominalised. According to Antinucci and Miller, in adult language it is only when the object of a transitive verb is pronominalised that the past participle form has to agree with number and gender.

Antinucci and Miller query the reason for the consistency in the error that all the children make. The experimenters argue that the reason for the consistency of the error by all the children lies in the fact that the “children are focusing on the result of the event described by the verb. The children seem to have assigned a function of ‘ATtribution’ to the past participle” (1975:172). In other words, the children treat the past participle as an adjective; they see it as describing a state of the object. The authors explain further,

As a result of the change denoted by a transitive verb, the object come to be in a state; for example, the action described by *somebody broke the toy* results in *the toy is broken*. The children are using the past participle to describe the END-STATE of a process or action. In more general terms, they are describing the state of an object that results from a transformation (1975:172-173).

An inference that one can make from the study is that time is not the salient meaning of the verb forms to the mind. Time is a concept that develops later. It is of interest to note that Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca ((1994) trace the grammaticalisation forms to the initial stage of be/have plus past participle, which first grammaticalized into resultative.

In the result of the English experiment that Antinucci and Miller add to their records, they also find that the child uses present tense where past tense is expected very consistently (1975:180). It is only later, from the age of one year nine months to two years that the child could add ‘ed,’ the past tense inflection.

3.2.3. Bardovi-Harlig’s Studies and Her Reports of other Studies

Bardovi-Harlig (2000) studies the process of acquiring a second language. In the study, she formulates what she calls “aspect hypothesis” of first language learners. Bardovi-Harlig bases the study on what she terms the “theory of lexical or inherent aspect”

(2000:193). She uses this notion to imply a non-morphological form of aspectual verbs. According to her, “lexical aspect refers to the inherent temporal make up of verbs and predicates” (2000:193). The lexical aspect, as she explains, describes whether the situation described is punctual, durative, culminative or stative. She argues that all the affairs mentioned above “are aspectual qualities” (2000:193).

The study of the primitive meaning of verbs in human languages is not restricted to the study of children acquiring their mother tongues alone. Bardovi-Harlig (2000) reports several studies on the type of grammatical category that second language learners acquire more easily. She wants to know whether tense or aspect category is more easily acquired. The study is based on the assumption that the grammatical category more innate to the human mind tends to be what is easier to learn than the category that is less innate.

In the study, the researchers group aspect into two classes. There are what they call the “lexical aspect” and the “grammatical aspect.” Bardovi-Harlig (2000:213) defines lexical aspect as “inherent semantic properties of the linguistic expression used to refer to situations.” She defines “morphological aspect” or “grammatical aspect” as the aspect that “is conveyed morphologically. This is also known as viewpoint aspect” (2000:205). It denotes different ways of viewing a situation. An example of “lexical aspect” would be verbs that express accomplishment, achievement and states, while “morphological aspects” or “grammatical aspects” are those that express activities e.g., John is crossing the road.

According to Bardovi-Harlig (2000), the studies she reports are based on what the authors call the “aspect hypothesis.” The aspect hypothesis states that “in beginning stages of language acquisition only inherent aspectual distinctions are encoded by verbal morphology, not tense...” (2000:196). Among several studies reported by Bardovi-Harlig, are the studies conducted by Sinclair, Bergsrom, Salaberry, Hasbun and Ramsay (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 2000:194, 199). An example of such studies given by Bardovi-Harlig is described below.

Bardovi-Harlig and Salaberry each independently carried out a study to validate the “aspect hypothesis.” The test items they use are similar. They study a total of 182 learners of English as second language. The learners are given 32 passages that contain

62 test items. In each test item, the researchers supply what they call the base form of the verb to be used by the respondents. The verbs are taken from Vendler's grouping. They are activity, accomplishment, achievement and states. The researchers want to know in which verb group the respondents will use the simple past correctly. An example of such test items is given below:

Last night John (work) (ACT).....very hard. He (write).....two papers (ACC) and (finish)all his grammar homework (ACH) (cf. 2000:233).⁷³

Bardovi-Harlig reports that the results show that learners use simple past correctly more times in accomplishment and achievement situations than in activity or state cases (cf. 2000:232-233).

It is to be noted that achievements and accomplishments are telic, they have end results. Activities and states are atelic (cf. Binnick 1991:181). The mind can perceive whole situations (perfective) easier than non-whole ones.

The findings of Brown (1973), Bowerman and Veneziano (1974), Antinucci and Miller (1975) led linguists like Smith (1991:xvii-xviii) to conclude,

I will assume that aspectual categories are not language dependent, but are based on human cognitive abilities. People distinguish between the basic situation types on the basis of their perceptual and cognitive faculties, just as they make certain other distinctions such as mass and count noun. Human beings make aspectual distinctions automatically. States, activities, etc impress themselves on our notice, organizing the way we see the world... Among the concepts that humans distinguish without being taught are states, and different types of events.

Bardovi-Harlig reports other findings in Sinclair's study of 74 French children. Their ages are 2 years and 11 months to 7 years 8 months. According to Bardovi-Harlig, "the result of the experiment led Sinclair to conclude that before the age of 6, the aspectual distinction between perfective and imperfective events seems to be of more importance

⁷³ ACT = activity. ACC = accomplishment. ACH =achievement.

than the temporal relations between action and the moment of enunciation... ” (2000:194).

These other findings confirm the views of Smith (1991) that aspect is a more primitive meaning of verb forms in human languages.⁷⁴ However, linguistic studies have shown that some languages use tense more prominently while others use aspect more prominently. It would be of interest to students of evolution of grammar to pursue how tense prominent languages develop from original aspect prominent ones.

If the primary meanings of the semantics of verb forms in human languages are aspects, then it becomes a circular argument to say that a language is aspectual as opposed to a tense, language because the semantics of the verb is aspect. This is a charge that one is inclined to levy against Cook (2002), hence our reservations on his conclusions and his reasons why the BHVS should be understood to express aspect. It is argued that the criterion/criteria for classifying BH as an aspectual language cannot be in the semantics of the verb forms or their grammaticalization per se. If the primary semantics of the verbs of tense-prominent languages are studied, they will be found to belong to either of the Vendlerian groups mentioned above (cf. Smith 1991:153). It appears, therefore, that some other criteria are more fundamental in determining whether a language is a tense prominent or an aspect-prominent language. Those criteria will be investigated in sections 3.4.1 to 3.6.2 below. Meanwhile, I would like to discuss the meaning of tense as a grammatical category before investigating the criteria for identifying them.

3.3. The Meaning of Tense

When things happen, which are usually referred to as situations or simply events, they do happen in time. This is apparently why the notion of time and event are so integrated that difficulties arise in attempting to isolate them when discussing tense, aspect and mood as ways of viewing an event (cf. Declerck 1986, Reichenbach 1947, Klein 1994). The notion of time seems to be what every culture has. For instance, poets in many cultures have expressed the concept of time in various ways. Isaac Watts says, “time is like a

rolling stream” (Prior 1967:1). The Israelite prophet Isaiah once spoke as a representative of Israel’s YHWH, saying

אל-תזכרו ראשנות וקדמיות אל-תתבננו הנה עושה חדשה עתה תצמח
הלוא תדעוה

‘Do not remember former (things) and old (past) things do not keep to heart. Behold I am doing something new, now it is happening, do you not see it’ (Isaiah 43: 18, 19).

An Ebira poet had said,⁷⁵

Eeri da isa wu wa si o ri, u na ku eeri uhu

Ajini, o ewa tama ayi uhwoo de,

Oo nee tu uhwoo, ajini si vara eeri

‘Yesterday gives you food, and you have eaten it,

Then you turn around to haul insults at yesterday,

Today, please remember tomorrow,

Because by tomorrow, today would have become yesterday.’

While the material world, like time, is common to all cultures, it is the ways that each culture expresses that world that differs (cf. Bach 1981:64). Whether time is an ever rolling stream as Watts is reported to have said, or discrete or continuous (Bach 1981), whether it flows or is stationery (Comrie 1985), time is a shared phenomenon by all known cultures.

The concern in this section is to explore attempts being made at explaining how languages express events in relation to time as reflected in the verb, and what other ways languages use to express events in time without indicating time in the verb ostensibly. Even though every culture can and does express events in time, it is not quite generally agreed by linguists and philosophers how this may be described. The difficulty and the

⁷⁴ This is contrary to the view held by many linguists that tense-distinction is the chief characteristic of verbs in most languages (cf. Jespersen 1963:254, Blake 1968:2, Gropp 1991:52, Cook 2002:2, 160).

⁷⁵ Ebira is a language spoken in the Kogi State of Nigeria. This song is one of the several oral poems in the language (cf. Moomo 1983).

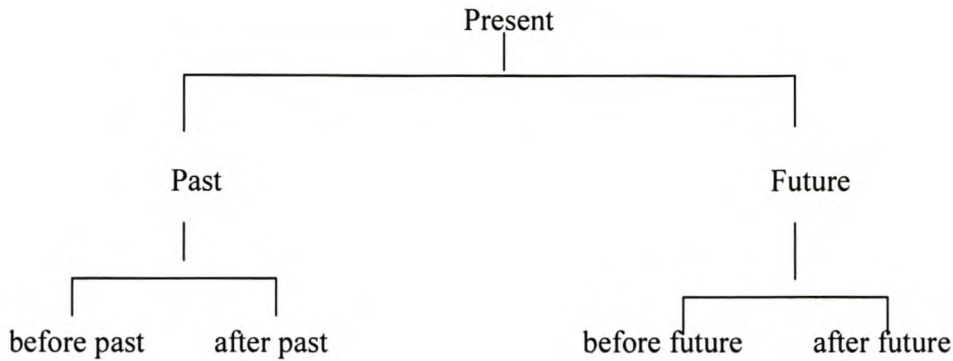
confusion that ensue in trying to describe tense in languages are aptly captured by the first paragraph of the preface to Binnick (1991:vii). It is worth quoting in full.

Whoever has read in one book that English has three tenses, in another that it has two, and in yet a third that it has sixteen; or has been told by one authority that the French *imparfait* represents an incomplete or habitual action in the past, by a second that it is used of an action simultaneous with another action, and by a third that it is used for circumstances and background descriptions; or has read in one text that the perfective tenses of Russian are just like the perfect tenses of English, but in another that they are totally different; or has read here that Biblical Hebrew has tenses and there that it does not, may be pardoned for some confusion and some skepticism as to the claim of linguistic scholars to know a great deal about tense.

We will follow the traditional division of the ways events are viewed by different cultures such as tense, aspect and mood. Since these are not absolutes in any language, but some combination of them, emphasis will be on that which is more prominent in any language being discussed. I now turn to discuss the notion “tense.”

3.3.1. Locating events in time relative to the moment of speech

According to Jespersen (1963:254), “tense” can be thought of as “time distinctions that find expression in the verbs of the best known languages.” Jespersen bases his argument on Madvig’s Latin grammar and claims that there are three tense systems. These are “present, past and future” (Jespersen 1963:254). For these three tenses, Latin grammarians refer to them as “Praesens,” “Praeterium” and “Futurum” (Jespersen 1963:254, Binnick 1991:6). Each of these three tenses can further be divided into two, viz, past has before past and after past. Future has before future and after future. The present is at the centre from where other times take their reference points. Thus the Latin grammarian has seven tenses. Below is the reproduction of Jespersen’s diagraph for the tenses



Binnick (1991:110) has criticised Jespersen’s view of tense. One of such criticisms is that Jespersen does not make provision for the “*would*” and “*would have*” construction. Another criticism levied against the theory is that Jespersen’s ‘after past’ and ‘after future’ “do not seem to be realized in any language” (Cook 2002:6). In an attempt to correct the weakness in Jespersen’s theory of tense, as Binnick points out, Reichenbach (1947) develops his tense system.

3.3.2. Reichenbach

Reichenbach has three elements in his tense system. These are “speech act,” “event” and “reference point” (see Declerck 1986:306). Reichenbach’s tense theory is diagramatised below.



The use of three elements in the diagramme enables Reichenbach to account for various tenses such as past, past perfect, conditional, present perfect future and future perfect (Declerck 1986:307). Declerck (1986:207) gives examples of how Reichenbach’s Event, Reference and Speech times are combined to achieve different temporal locations of an event in time. In the model, a comma implies that the elements coincide. A dash means that one element follows the other.

- E-R-S e.g. I had done it (past perfect)
- E,R-S e.g. I did it (past tense)
- R-E-S } I would do it (conditional)
- R-S,E } I would do it (conditional)
- R-S-E

E-S,R	e.g. I have done it (present perfect)
S,R,E	e.g. I do it (present)
S-R-E } S,E-R }	I will have done it (future perfect)
E-S-R	
S,R-E } S-R,E }	I will do it (future)
S-R-E	

Declerck criticises Reichenbach’s model by arguing that it generates more possibilities for tenses than are actually to be found in natural languages. One may respond to the criticism in the following way. If one may take R to represent the mental position of the speaker (i.e. where he psychologically views the event from) as he refers to various times in relation to both event and speech time, then Reichenbach may really reflect possibilities in natural languages. Also a careful reading of Reichenbach seems to show that the model has three reference points and not one as Prior is said to have criticised (cf. Declerck 1986:307). The reference points are R before the event, R from the event time and R after the event.

If the model be allowed to represent the speaker’s mental position, then it could even be expanded to accommodate Dahl’s sentence type, “when I arrived Peter had tried to phone me twice in the preceding week” (Declerck 1986:308). Such expansion could look like as shown below,



In this representation, the speaker takes the time of his arrival as the reference time. From the moment of speech, it is past. The time of the phone is the previous week before he arrived. Phone₁ and phone₂ all took place (E) before when I arrived (R), which itself is prior to S. So, E-R-S holds.

When one compares Reichenbach to Comrie’s model of relative tense, one may notice that Comrie introduces more metalanguage such as pluperfect and future in the future which are actually realisable in Reichenbach’s model. It appears that Reichenbach’s model provides a more iconic representation of where the speaker is viewing the event from. Reichenbach satisfies psychological adequacy and his

explanation is easier to understand. This is not to ignore the problem of the stability of Reference point, viz., whether it is stable or not (cf. Cook 2002:10).

Another difference between Reichenbach and Comrie is that Comrie (1985:78) does not see the past perfect as different from the past nor future perfect as different from future. Comrie argues that there are three basic tenses, viz past, present and future. He acknowledges that past perfect is different from simple past. The past perfect is past, but with additional information, such as having current relevance. Past and future may have degrees of remoteness, but they are essentially past or future in relation to the deictic centre – the now. (Comrie's notion of 'relative tense' and remoteness of future could be assumed to include various tense points that Reichenbach seeks to achieve in his tense model).

There are other linguists that are not quite satisfied with Reichenbach or Comrie. In attempts to rectify what they see as flaws in Reichenbach and Comrie, Declerck (1986) introduces the notion of "time referred from" and "time referred to" (Declerck 1986:320). These are supposed to redefine Reichenbach's "reference time." As Declerck explains Reichenbach, "time referred from" is the reference to posterior time – future, while "time referred to" is prior time – past (cf. Declerck 1986:320).

Klein (1994) on his own decides to move from what he calls the "canonical view" of tense. According to him, the "canonical view" is the notion that tense is "the grammatical expression of time of the situation described in the proposition, relative to some other time. This other time may be the moment of speech" (1994:2). Klein introduces his own notion of times. First he speaks about "topic time." According to him, "the topic time" is the time that a claim is made (cf. 1994:3). Klein calls his second notion of time as "time of the situation." According to him, "time of the situation" means a reference to the time when an event took place (cf. 1994:5). The third time he refers to as "time of utterance." By "time of utterance," Klein means the time when the speaker really speaks. Klein defines tense as "the relation between Topic Time (TT) and Time of Utterance (TU)."

One problem with Klein's model is that it is difficult to identify the difference between "Topic Time" and Reichenbach's Reference Time (R). In the tense theory of Comrie (1985), it is possible to relate the time of utterance or moment of speech to the

time of the event. In the case of Klein, it is not quite clear from his examples why the speaker will be interested in TT. Klein (1994:40) gives a hypothetical court situation, where a witness was asked the question “What did you see when you entered the room”? One of the possible answers the witness could give on which Klein bases his argument on TT on is “A man was lying in the floor.” According to Klein, this answer will be a TT, an event that existed before the witness entered the room. He claims, correctly that TT could be any time before or after the utterance time. It appears that Klein’s TT is the same as Reichenbach’s R. The relevance of TT is only if the speaker wants to specifically state the time frame, from which he chooses to view the event. But in an unmarked expression of an event relative to the moment of speech, a simple inflection of the verb is usually used to convey it. For instance, if I utter the sentence ‘I am writing,’ nobody is interested at the time I sat down and took my pen. But if I had said ‘I sat down then wrote,’ then my time of sitting down becomes relevant to the utterance. I may then take my sitting down as a Reference time for the event under discussion.

The argument above is related to Klein’s (1994:8) illustration in which he gives the diagramme below

Mary was leaving the room
[.....].....+ + + +

Mary had left the room
+ + + + [+ + +]+ + + +

Mary left the room
[....+ +]+ + +

The dotted line in the square bracket indicates the Reference time. The symbol [...] stands for an ongoing event that serves as Reference time to another event. The symbol [+ +] symbolises an event that had taken place before another event, and the already completed event serves as the Reference time.

The problem with the illustration is that his “Mary was leaving the room” cannot be discussed in isolation. The event of ‘leaving the room’ may serve as reference time to some other event. In such a case, ‘leaving the room’ is a reference point from which the

other event is viewed. For instance, one may say ‘Mary was leaving the room when John entered’ (see also Dahl’s criticism in Cook 2002:35), that there is no relationship between E and S.

In view of the problems indicated above, it could be argued that the scholars who oppose the speech time as the deictic centre, from which other tenses take their reference points, do not seem to be able to provide a clear and cognitively adequate explanation for tense phenomena. Declerck (1986), who claims that Reichenbach and Comrie “are deficient” in respect of their tense theories, finally concedes that “it is ultimately the speaker’s here-and-now that serves as ‘the centre’ for the sentence as a whole” (1986:334).

In this study, the ideas of Jespersen (1963), Reichenbach (1994) Comrie (1985) and Binnick (1991) are followed in my definition of tense. *Tense is thus viewed as the grammaticalized expression of location of event in time* (Comrie 1985:9). Basically when events are expressed in relation to time, time is usually divided into three parts. These are the past, the present and the future. According to Aristotle, only the past and the future are real (Binnick 1991:4). The present, if thought of in terms of point in the temporal lineation, poses some difficulty (Binnick 1991:5). For example, in the sentence ‘he is writing,’ it will be noted that it takes time to complete the sentence. By the time the sentence is completed, the time of writing can no longer be at the same point as when the utterance began. To overcome this type of difficulty, the present is modified to the notion of “extended now” (Binnick 1991:5, Bhat 1999:17). The present “now” takes a little bit of time from the past and a little bit of time from the future.

The philosophical question of the possibility of now is an interesting one. However, it will not be pursued further than the indication that there are such questions that scholars debate about “now.” I follow Binnick (1991) who argues that “we certainly take and act as if these times were real segments of the universe within which events and states of affairs are situated” (1991:6).

3.3.3. The concept of time

Most literature on tense view time as a phenomenon which is linear (cf. Jespersen 1963:257, Comrie 1985:2, Binnick 1991:297-298, Klein 1994:114-115). The past is seen

to be to the left of the deictic centre while the future is seen to be to the right of the deictic centre. The present is at the centre. It is assumed that all cultures view time this way (Comrie 1985:3,4).

For practical purposes the horizontal view of time shall be assumed in this study. However, it should be pointed out that not all cultures view time horizontally. Borodistsky (2001) reports that the Mandarins talk about time as a vertical phenomenon. Borodistsky does not relate this view of time in Mandarin to any study of tense aspect and mood in Mandarin. It would be an interesting study to see if the Mandarin verbal system reflects their vertical view of time.

As mentioned before, we accept the horizontal view of time, and tense is defined as how verbs are inflected to show the relationship between the time of an event and the moment of speech. The next question, which is our main concern, is how verb systems that express tense grammatically differ from those that do not? What are the parameters of a tense-prominent language? This question is methodologically important. There is the need to establish some general non-language specific criteria against which verb forms in any language can be tested for tense, mood or aspect. Any language that passes the test or meets the requirements for tenseness may qualify to be regarded as a tense-prominent language. The language that does not meet the requirement may meet other types of requirements and they may belong to another category such as aspect or mood. Without such a methodological control, any discussion of tense, aspect and mood will be fraught with difficulties (cf. Bache 1995).

3.3.4. The parameters of tense, aspect and mood

In the first chapter of this study, one recurring issue is that those who are involved in the investigation of the meaning of the BH verb forms do not use a crosslinguistic or universal parameter in their assigning BH as a tense, aspectual or modal language. This is basically a methodological problem. Bache (1995) has made a strong case for the need to provide a metacategory, which has universal applicability in the study of languages and linguistic features of any language. According to Bache such a metacategory is usually obtained from the knowledge of features of specific languages. From such knowledge, obtained from the studies of specific languages, certain general characteristics do emerge

that will be seen to be shared by human languages. As may be expected, usually, there will be specific details where languages differ from one another.

In order to be able to describe and relate features such as noun classes, pluralisation, tense, aspect and mood, one needs to establish metacategories for describing such grammatical categories independent of any specific language. A language can be characterised in terms of such metacategories so that the differences or similarities may be known. In this section, such metacategories as tense and what criteria make a language to pass the test of tenseness are provided. In chapter four, we will discuss the verb forms of BH against the criteria provided in this section. The result of the test will show more clearly whether BH could be classified as a tense or an aspectual or a mood language.

3.4. The Parameters of Tense-prominent Languages

In chapter two, it was argued that the categories of tense, aspect and mood cannot be taken as absolute categories that are grammaticalized to the same extent in a language, but that one should search for the category that is prominent. When tense is used in this section it should be understood to mean tense-prominent (Bhat 1999:95).⁷⁶

My point of departure in this section is Bhat (1999). I will use his notions of “degree of grammaticalization, obligatoriness, paradigmaticization/systematicity and pervasiveness.” I will define each parameter in terms of its role in providing an instrument for identify a tense, aspect or mood prominent language.

3.4.1. Grammaticalization

Grammaticalization has to do with the rules of a language. It is different from lexical or content words of a language. In a language, the content words are words that refer to things, e.g. ‘boy,’ ‘girl,’ etc. Some languages have rules for pluralising the words such as ‘boy’ and ‘girl.’ In English, plural forms of many regular nouns take a suffix ‘s,’ e.g.

⁷⁶ Dahl (1995:24) provides three properties of tense. These are

1. They are expressed by the choice of one of several possible morphological forms of the finite verb or auxiliary.
2. They semantically depend on the relation between the time that is talked of in the sentence and the time of the speech act – what is often referred to as ‘the deictic centre.’
3. They have to be expressed - the choice of tense form has to be made whether or not there is an explicit time indicator such as an adverbial in the sentence.

'boys,' 'girls.' Such a rule is what I mean by grammar and the application of the rule to give more information to the lexical words is meant by the notion grammaticalization. Grammaticalization may be obtained by 'inflection' or by 'derivation' (Bhat 1999:96, Lehmann 1995:2). In inflection, the morpheme is changed in order to express differences in meaning. For example, the word 'do' in English may be changed to 'did' to express that the action took place prior to the moment of speech.

According to Bhat (1999) one criterion required of a tense language is that verbs expressing events or states of affairs be grammaticalized to reflect their locations in time. The grammaticalization is required to be very consistent. This consistency is Bhat's second criterion. Since it is so intertwined with grammaticalization, they are treated together. Consistency implies that whenever there is a change in time reference, the change should show by grammaticalization (Dahl 1995:24). In his study of tense languages, Dahl (1985:122) provides an example from the Kamba language in which the three degrees of remoteness in the past are grammaticalized. I present the example below.

1. The immediate past: ningootie 'I pulled (this morning)'
2. A recent past: ninina:kootie 'I pulled (e.g. yesterday)'
3. A far past: Akamba maia:tua vaa tene ('The Kamba did not live here in the past').

This third example is difficult to compare by non-speakers of Kamba because the verb is different from the verbs in numbers 1 and 2 above. However, 1 and 2 clearly show that the degrees of remoteness in the past in Kamba are inflected differently in the verb.

Comrie (1985:98) provides an example that shows how degrees of remoteness in the past are grammaticalized in Yandruwandha. The Yandruwandha consistently change its suffixes to achieve their five degrees of remoteness in the past. I present the example below.

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| -na | very recent |
| -na na | within the last couple of days |
| -nukarra | within the last few days |
| -nga | weeks or months ago |
| -lapurra | distant past |

Bhat (1999:106) provides two paradigms from the Kannada language that show how consistently the past and the non-past are grammaticalized by changes in the personal suffixes. The paradigms are presented below.

Past paradigm for the verb 'to go'

Singular	plural
1 Singular ho:d-e	ho:d-evu
2 Singular ho:d-I	ho:d-iri
3 MASC ho:d-a	ho:d-arau
3 FEM ho:d-alu	ho:d-arau
3 NEUT ho:yi-tu	ho:d-uvu

Non-past paradigm for the verb 'to go'

Singular	plural
1 ho:gutt-ene	ho:gutt-e:ve
2 ho:gutt-I	ho:gutt-i:ri
3 MASC. ho:gutt-a:ne	ho:gutt-a:re
FEM. ho:gutt-a:le	ho:gutt-a:re
NEUT. ho:gutt-ade	ho:gutt-ave

When a language so consistently grammaticalizes every change of time reference, Bhat argues that such a language meets the criterion of tenseness and can be so classified as a tense-prominent language. In a language where tense is not prominent, Bhat argues that such consistency of grammaticalisation of time reference may not obtain. Bhat (1999:15) provides examples to illustrate the fact that in a tense language every nuance of change in time reference is grammaticalized. Below is one of Bhat's examples from Kurkh sentences.

- | | | |
|----|-----------|----------------|
| a) | e:n | ij-d-an |
| | I | stand-PRES-1SG |
| | 'I stand' | |
| b) | en: | ij-k-an |
| | I | stand-PAST-1SG |
| | 'I stood' | |

c)	e:n	ij?-on
	I	stand- (FUT)-1SG
	'I will stand'	

3.4.2. Obligatoriness and systematization

Bhat argues that “tense markers” should be obligatory in a tense language. This should be so even when temporal adverbials are included in the sentence. For example, in English, one can say ‘I went to Okene town.’ It is not acceptable to say

‘?I go to Okene town yesterday.’

Bhat also argues that in a tense language, “the use of tense markers is also systematic” (1999:109) as opposed to non-tense languages. By “systematization” Bhat implies that verbs rarely show or allow “any gaps or neutralizations of distinction” (1999:109). This implies that one verb form cannot be used to express two different temporal values, or allow for “alternative interpretation...” (1999:10). Lehmann (1995:126) refers to the notion of systematization as “paradigmatic.” According to Lehmann, paradigmatisation exists when a category opposes “a certain substance which allows it to maintain its identity, its distinctiveness from other signs.”

If the notion of systematization is strictly applied, one may call to question the claim that some languages like Bahinemo are tense languages. Comrie (1985:102,103) uses Bahinemo as an example of a tense language, but having the feature of neutralisation. Comrie states, “In Bahinemo, the neutralised tense verb forms in question have overtly the form of present” (1985:103). He gives this sentence from Bahinemo as an example.

Nem na ya-tagiya-m, du-qi-yasinu,
 We sago eat-satisfy-remote:past neutral-repeat-get-up:present
 de tenowa-s, niba la-hina-fanel,
 neutral-ascend-present ridge immediate-upstream-arrive:present
 idu du:wei
 to: right neutral-walk:along:ridge:present

‘After we ate Sago until we were satisfied, we got up again, we ascended, immediately we went up the stream bed and arrived at the ridge, to the right’ (1985:103).

Comrie himself notes that such a neutralisation could cause problems in the semantics of tenses in languages like Bahinemo.

Perhaps instead of using the notion ‘tense neutralisation, a closer examination of such languages should be done in light of Bhatian model. Such a reexamination may lead to a suggestion for possible alternative reclassification. The outcome may be a less forced categorisation of some languages like Bahinemo.

Some may question whether the suggestion above is necessary, especially in light of the fact that eminent scholars such as Dahl (1985) and Comrie (1976, 1985) have been involved in language classification in terms of tense, aspect and mood. There is no doubt that the works of these scholars are of the highest quality. One may ask whether the suggestion intends to ignore the valuable contributions of these scholars to our present knowledge of tense, aspect and mood? Bache (1995:9) has this to say about the works referred to above: “However, there is in this productive development of the field often a worrying lack of concern for certain methodological and terminological issues.” It can be argued that Bhat’s (1999) work is a major contribution towards rectifying this methodological gap. Bhat (1999:100) has called for a reevaluation of the classification of Indo-Aryan languages in light of his parameters. He argues that the Indo-Aryan languages that had been classified as tense prominent may actually not be so. It is therefore justified to suggest that languages hitherto classified as tense-prominent, aspect-prominent or mood-prominent be reevaluated in light of Bhatian parameters.

3.4.3. Pervasiveness

According to Bhat (1999:96), the “concepts that are restricted to a small area in the grammar are less prominent than the ones that scope over a larger area.” He argues that there are languages in which categories that are prominent “extend from the verbal to other areas respectively like the nominal ones as well” (1999:96). He cites Kayardild and Austrasian languages in which modal distinctions are expressed both by verbal affixes as well as case markers. He reports that there are some languages that are either mood-

prominent or aspect-prominent. These languages do relegate aspectual or mood distinctions to non-verbal areas respectively. He says that in Finnish, which is a tense language, “the perfective-imperfective distinction is expressed by the accusative-dative case distinctions” (Bhat 1999:97). He gives some Finnish examples to illustrate pervasiveness of tense. I present the example below.⁷⁷

- a) Outi luki kirjan
 Outi read(PAST) book(acc)
 ‘Outi was reading a book’
- b) Outi luki kirja a
 Outi read(PAST) book(partitive)
 ‘Outi was reading a book.’

Bhat argues that in sentence (a) above, the object in the accusative case denotes “a bounded (perfective) event,” whereas in (b), the object occurs in partitive case, denoting “an unbounded (imperfective) event” (1999:156,157). Finnish does not have verb forms that express aspects such as perfective and imperfective, so it extends its tense used ub accusative endings to cover its aspect meanings.

It should be noted that a grammaticalized category is usually obligatory, systematic and pervasive. This is so because the non-prominent categories have to be accommodated. In order to do so, the prominent category is stretched or extended into the areas of the non-prominent categories (Bhat 1999:100-102).

3.5. Aspect

According to Binnick (1991:135), the notion aspect is not quite understood as well by speakers of European languages as tense is. Binnick traces the observation of ‘aspect’ as a feature of language to the Latin grammarian Varro. He reports that Varro uses the term “perfectus” and “imperfectus” to represent actions considered as complete and incomplete respectively (Binnick 1991:135).

West European grammarians get the idea of aspect as a grammatical category “from the study of Slavic grammar” (Binnick 1991:136). According to Binnick, the term aspect is borrowed from the Russian word ‘vid.’ This word, according to him,

⁷⁷ See also Heinamaki, (1994:212).

etymologically means “view” or “vision” (1991:136, Bache 1995:268). In Slavic, aspect is clearly marked in the verbal morphology. The two ways of viewing the temporal structure of situation of affairs are ‘perfective’ and imperfective.’ These are similar to the Latin notion referred to above. Binnick (1991:136) gives the following expressions to illustrate the meanings of the differences between the perfective and imperfective in Russian. The Russian word *Cita* may be translated as ‘she was reading.’ *Procita* could be translated as ‘she had read.’ The notion aspect, as Binnick explains “proceeds from the fact that the very same situation (event or state of affairs) may be *viewed* either imperfectively or perfectly” (Binnick 1991:136).

Comrie (1976:3) defines aspect as “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation” (Binnick 1991:207, 208, Smith 1991:3, Bhat 1999:43). This definition is similar to the one offered by Chung and Timberlake (1985:213). Chung and Timberlake understand aspect as a notion that “characterizes the relationship of a predicate to the time interval over which it occurs.”

According to Binnick (1991:140), Boldyrev has five semantic classes of the verb. These are inchoative, indeterminate duratives, frequentative, semelfactive and unitary completives. Inchoative implies action that is in its beginning stage such as ‘beginning to fade.’ Indeterminate duratives include what is usually called the simple present, e.g. I play golf. Frequentative is the action that is performed repeatedly. Semelfactive implies an action that is performed just once, e.g. cough. Unitary completive involves just one action that has a total result, such as cut down the tree (see Binnick 1991:140). Boldyrev does not himself give these types of actions the name ‘Aktionsarten,’ but his idea is foundational to the notion of Aktionsarten. Binnick reports that it is the Western aspectologists that later give the term ‘Aktionsarten’ as a general term for Boldyrev’s classes of verbs.

Discussions on Aktionsarten reveal that scholars are not agreed on what it is. Streitberg uses the term to refer to aspect, while Goedsche (1940) and Garey (1957) argue that Aktionsarten is not the same as aspect (cf. Binnick 1991:144). According to Binnick (1991:202-205), the definition which most scholars adopt for aspect, is broad enough to accommodate different types of action, including the one that is called ‘Aktionsarten’ in the literature. Binnick reports that the works of Woisetschlaeger,

Noreen and Keniston have influenced the traditional understanding of aspect as reflected in the definition cited above. In this study, I follow the definition that Comrie gives as my working definition of aspect, viz., that aspect refers to “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation” (Comrie 1976:3).

3.5.1. Types of situations

In the study of aspect, situations expressed by aspectual categories are usually viewed in two types. These are ‘states’ and ‘activities.’ States are said to be static, non-dynamic situations (Smith 1991:28, Binnick 1991:83), while activity is dynamic (Smith 1991:30). Static and dynamic situations constitute the situation aspect (Smith 1991:27). Smith (1991:30) gives a comparison of the features of the different situations. I present Smith’s situation types below.

Features of situation types

Situations	Static	Durative	Telic
State	+	+	-
Activity	-	+	-
Accomplishment	-	+	+
Semelfactive	-	-	-
Achievement	-	-	+

In Dowty’s representation of Vendler’s categories of situation, semelfactive is not included (cf. Evans 1998:38). I present Dowty’s representation of Vendler’s classes of situations with examples of events/states as contained in Evans (1998:38).

States	Activities	Accomplishments	Achievements
know	run	paint a picture	recognise
believe	walk	make a chair	spot
have	swim	deliver a sermon	find
desire	push a cart	draw a circle	lose
love	drive a car	recover from illness	die

In Evan's list, 'push a cart' also appears on the accomplishment column. Following Smith (1991:47), it appears that it is more appropriate to put it on the activity column only.

The different situations described in the paragraph above are usually viewed in two ways. These are 'perfective' and 'imperfective.' According to Comrie (1976:18), "a very frequent characterisation of perfectivity is that it indicates a complete action. Perfective presents "all parts of the situation as a single whole" (Smith 1991:103). Smith gives this example from English to illustrate the meaning of perfective.

Martin walked to school

From this sentence, it can be argued that if Martin walked to school, it cannot be the case that Martin did not get to school.

As for imperfective, Comrie (1976:24) defines it as the "explicit reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation, viewing a situation from within." Smith (1991:111) states that "imperfective viewpoints present part of a situation, with no information about its endpoints." Smith (1991:103) gives the following sentence to illustrate the meaning of imperfective.

Martin was walking to school

Smith argues that it makes sense to ask: "Did he get there?" It is reasonable to assume that Martin may begin walking to school, but never gets there for several possible reasons.

With this brief definition and explanation of the meaning of aspect, the next section examines what are the parameters that one may use to identify aspect-prominent languages.

3.5.2. Parameter of aspect-prominent languages

The same parameters used in identifying tense-prominent languages in section 3.4 also apply to aspect-prominent languages. The difference is that in the case of tense-prominent languages there is consistent change of the verb whenever there is a change in time. In the case of aspect-prominent languages, it is the changes in aspectual views that the verb forms consistently inflex or is grammaticalized to indicate. Below I will consider

how the parameters such as grammaticalization, obligatoriness, systematicity and pervasiveness characterise an aspect-prominent language.

3.5.3. Grammaticalization

Bhat (1999:122) gives an example from the Koromfe language where the grammaticalization parameter is shown.⁷⁸ Koromfe uses a combination of tone and inflection to indicate differences between perfective and imperfective. I reproduce the example below.⁷⁹

Base (Perfective)		Imperfective		Gloss
cugo	[LL]	cuguli	[LLL]	deep
ceme	[XX]	cenmi	[XL]	transplanted
muguro	[XXX]	mugure	[XXX]	smile
kwu	[L]	kwuu	[LL]	die
bya	[X]	byii	[LL]	drink
ce	[X]	cen	[XX]	know
kanha	[XX]	kanre	[XX]	be tired
yige	[XX]	yige	[LL]	take out

Bhat states that in Koromfe there is no verbal inflection to denote present or future reference. In case of past reference, the Koromfe language usually uses the unmarked perfective form to mark the past. If there is markedness in the pastness,⁸⁰ the language uses an 'e' suffix with the perfective form to indicate the marked past reference. Modal distinctions are not grammaticalized, except in the case of imperfectives (cf. Bhat 1999:123).

⁷⁸ Koromfe belongs to the Gurr family of Niger-Congo (Bhat 1999:122).

⁷⁹ The square brackets [] show the tone in the vowels. A vowel without tone is marked X. L means a low tone

⁸⁰ By markedness is meant a linguistic form that is restricted in use or used only in special cases (Crystal 1997:234).

3.5.4. Obligatoriness

The grammaticalisation of aspect is also obligatory in aspect-prominent languages. This means that the inflection to show the difference between perfective and imperfective aspect is not optional (Bhat 1999:125). In an aspect-prominent language, time reference is not consistently or obligatorily marked as in the case of tense-prominent languages. Bhat cites the example of Lango, a Nilotic language of Nilo-Saharan family. Nooman (1992) gives the information (cf. Bhat 1999:125). In Lango, “out of context, the perfective will be interpreted as past, habitual and present progressive as future” (1999:125). An example from Yoruba (Welmers 1973:347), where a verb form is the same irrespective of time it refers to, may make the picture clear.

O fe owo ‘he wants money’
 O fe owo l’ana ‘he wanted money yesterday’

In the Yoruba example, the existence of temporal adverbial ‘yesterday’ does not affect any change in the verb in the construction.

The category that is prominent, as Bhat argues, also forms a system or paradigm. This makes it possible to predict fairly accurately the expected inflectional form when the base of the perfective and the imperfective are given. Bhat does not provide the feature of systematicity for Koromfe, so I use the example of written Arabic provided by Comrie (1976:95). The example is “the verbal morphology for ‘he wrote.’”

		Perfective	Imperfective
Singular 3	MASC.	kataba	yaktubu
	FEM.	katabat	taktubu
	2 MASC.	katabta	taktubu
Dual	3	katabtu	?aktubu
	3 MASC.	katabaa	yaktubaani
	3 FEM.	katabtaa	taktubaani
Plural	2	katabtmaa	taktubaani
	3 MASC.	katabuu	yaktubuuna
	3.FEM.	katabna	naktubu
	2 MASC.	kabatum	taktubuuna

2 FEM.	katabtunna	taktubna
1	katabna	taktubna

If the root pattern ‘kataba’ is isolated, one can see how systematic the perfective and the imperfective are inflected. This is the paradigm for Arabic and similar cases are expected to be found in languages where perfective and imperfective are systematically differentiated.⁸¹

3.5.5. Pervasiveness

The category that is prominent in a language is often extended to the non-verbal category also (Bhat 1999:97). As Bhat observes from his study of the Indian languages, one such extension is the tendency of “some of the mood-prominent and aspect-prominent languages to relegate the expression of tense distinctions to nominal or adverbial systems” (1999:97). Bhat (1999:127) gives one example of such categorial extensions in the Punjabi language. His example is reproduced below.

- a) sau-ndi: kuRi:
sleep-imperf. Girls
‘Sleeping girl’ (in the action of sleeping)
- b) su-tti: kuRi:
sleep-perf. Girl
‘Sleeping girl’ (in the state of sleeping).

In the example above, the perfective su-tti: and the imperfective sau-ndi, which are verbal categories have been extended to ‘sleeping girl,’ which is a noun phrase. Sometimes, perfective and imperfective extend to temporal adverbials. Bhat (1999:131) cites an example from the Gujarati language as reported by Cardona in 1965. The example is presented below.

- a) Awti kale ‘tomorrow (imperfective with ‘come’).
- b) gei kale ‘yesterday’ (perfective with ‘go’).

⁸¹ The double vowels represent cases where Comrie uses a bar on the vowel to express vowel length.

3.6. Mood

Mood has been defined as “an expression that characterises the actuality of an event” (Chung and Timberlake 1985:241). Event here, means all possible worlds that are conceivable. Some of these worlds may exist in reality, others may not. Such a world may also be imposed either externally or internally. If the conceived world is actual, it is referred to as ‘realis.’ If it is not actual, it is referred to as ‘irrealis.’ Realis is equivalent to indicative – an assertion. The irrealis is equivalent to subjective, conditional, hypothetical and the like (Chung and Timberlake 1985:141).

Moods may also express the source of the knowledge of the event, such as whether the speaker identifies the event as real or he relies on what someone else says. These two sources are known as “primary” and “secondary” sources respectively (Chung and Timberlake 1985:141, Bhat 1999:71). A general name for mood that expresses source of knowledge is “epistemic mood” (Bhat 1999:64). According to Chung and Timberlake (1985) and Bhat (1999) in some languages the various moods are expressed in the verbal morphology. Such languages Bhat (1999) refers to as “Mood-prominent languages.”

Mood may be used to express the imposition of the world on an addressee whether externally or internally. That type of imposition is referred to as “deontic” (Chung and Timberlake 1985: 246, Bhat 1999:75). The notion “deontic” suggests obligation of some sort (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994:177). Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca state that the deontic mood is agent oriented, since an agent imposes the world on the addressee. Direct commands, requests and wishes are examples of external impositions. Internal impositions include expressions for ability, willingness and desire.

I will now discuss the parameters for identifying mood-prominent languages. Bhat (1999) uses the same parameters such as grammaticalization, obligatoriness, systematicity and pervasiveness referred to before as tests for mood-prominent languages.

3.6.1. Grammaticalization

Bhat cites examples from the study conducted by Van der Berg in 1988 to illustrate how a mood-prominent language grammaticalizes modal distinctions. In Van der Berg’s

study, he claims that the Muna language expresses realis and irrealis in the verbal morphology by inflections.⁸² The example Bhat gives is produced below.

Realis	Irealis	(Gloss of irrealis form)
a-kal	a-k-um-ala	'I will go'

Another example of the way realis and irrealis are distinguished is provided from Russian by Chung and Timberlake (1985:251).⁸³ In Russian, mood is marked by tense distinctions, while adding a particle 'by' to the verb form that expresses past tense of the verb marks the irrealis. The example from Russian further shows how a category that is inherent in a language is consistently grammaticalized, e.g.

- a) Esli by ja pribyl na vokzal
 if I arrive (IRR) at station
 manja by posadili v tju'mu
 me put (IRR) in prison
 'If I had shown up at the station, they would have thrown me in prison.'
- b) Esil ja pribudu na vokzal
 if I arrive (REALIS) at station
 manja posadjat v tju'mu
 me put (REALIS) in prison
 'If I arrived at the station, they will throw me in prison.'

3.6.2. Systematicity

The source of data for illustrating how a mood-prominent language systematically marks mood distinctions on the verb comes from the study of De Angulo and Freeland in 1931 (Bhat 1999:136). De Angulo and Freeland find that the Achumaivi language of the Shastan family has a primary distinction between indicative and volitional moods (Bhat

⁸² Muna is "an Austronesian language belonging to the Western Malayo-Polynesian branch (spoken in the Muna Island of Indonesia)" (Bhat 1999:133).

⁸³ Russian is not a mood-prominent language. The use of Russian mood distinction in the verb is simply to illustrate how mood is grammaticalized in a mood-prominent language.

1999:136). The indicative expresses a simple sentence without indication of time. The volitional expresses the will and intention of the speaker to carry out an action. E.g.

- a) I-am [XL]⁸⁴
I (VOLITIONAL) eat
'Let me eat
- b) S-a m-a [FH]
I (INDICATIVE) eat-Ending
'I eat now, will eat later on, ate.'

3.6.3. Pervasiveness

As was explained in section 3.4.3 above, when a parameter is pervasive, it implies that it can be extended to other categories. Bhat 1999:137) reports the study done by Robert (1990) in the Amele language. In Amele, "verbs in clause chaining do not show any tense or aspect distinction, but when the subjects of chained verbs are different (and the actions simultaneous), they show realis and irrealis modal distinctions." In such cases, past and present situations are regarded as realis. This shows that mood has been extended to tense area. Other categories such as future, imperative, prohibitive counterfactual prescriptive hortative, apprehensive, etc. are expressed as irrealis (Bhat 1999:137). e.g.

- a) ho bu-busal-en age qo-in
pig SIMUL-run-out 3SG:REALIS 3PL hit-3PL:REMOTE PAST
'They killed the pig as it ran out.'
- b) ho bu-busal-eb age qo-qag-an
pig SIMUL-RUN-OUT 3SG:IRREALIS 3PL hit-3PL-FUT
'They will kill the pig as it runs out.'

3.7 Summary

In this chapter we draw on the studies of psycholinguistics to argue that aspect is the primitive meaning of verb forms in human languages. The notion tense as the expression of an event relative to the moment of speech was discussed. We also treated the notion of mood. It is the expression of the attitude of the speaker to a situation.

⁸⁴ L = low tone, F = falling tone, H = high tone.

Parameters for identifying a language that uses any of the categories tense, aspect or mood as a prominent verbal category were described, using Bhatian principles. It is being hypothesized that the parameters are productive in helping to identify a language in terms of the category prominent to it. It was argued that the usefulness of Bhatian parameters lies in its ability to reduce arbitrariness in the classification of languages in terms of tense, aspect and mood. This type of arbitrariness has characterised the discussions of BH as pointed out in chapter one of this study. The Bhatian principles seem to satisfy Bache's (1995) demand. Bache argues that metacategories that are crosslinguistic in nature should first be established, so that any language may be tested in order to find whether such a language has the features that may be used in categorising it. A categorisation that is made by using such metacategory will provide some objective criteria in cases where there are some potentially contentious issues.

I think it is important at this juncture to mention the advantage of the parameters being advocated here over the one that Cook (2002) uses. As pointed out in the evaluation of Cook in section 1.2.4, Cook's strongest criterion seems to be his argument that in aspectual languages there usually exists a distinct class of stative verbs. It has been pointed out that there are aspectual languages that do not have a distinct class of stative verbs. There also exist tense languages that do have a class of stative verbs. Cook's parameters do not, therefore, sufficiently discriminate between tense, aspectual and mood languages. I argue that the insights obtained from the psycholinguistic studies show that aspect is more primitive in human languages. If that may be the case, it will no longer be surprising that the semantics of BH is aspectual. Consequently, one may not base his conclusion that BH is an aspect language simply because the semantics of the verb forms is aspectual (Cook 2002:204). More universal crosslinguistic criteria are needed other than what is the basic meaning that is common to all languages.

The parameters presented here do discriminate between tense, aspectual and mood languages more sufficiently. The reason for this is that there is yet no known language which grammaticalizes both its temporal deictics as well as aspectual and mood expressions obligatorily and consistently. What exists is that one of these categories that the language uses as prominent is more grammaticalized, more obligatory and more systematic. Such a category is usually extended to other categories. A language is not

able to grammaticalize and make obligatory and also make consistent its tense, aspect and mood simultaneously. The reason for this is that once one category is grammaticalized other categories cannot any more be made consistent or obligatory because of the interrelationship between tense, aspect and mood (cf. Huehnergard 1988:21). All are expressions of events and states that take place in time. If it were possible to find one language, which can grammaticalize tense, aspect and mood and use such obligatorily and consistently all at the same time, then the thesis presented here will be invalid. Until such a language is brought to light, the parameters presented here seem to be the well-justified parameters for discriminating between tense, aspect and mood in languages.

In the next chapter, the verb forms of BH and how they are used will be compared with the parameters set out above. From the results, it will be possible to make a case for BH whether it is a tense, aspectual or mood language.

Chapter Four

The Meanings and Functions of the BH Verb Forms

4.1 Introduction

The notions tense and aspect were discussed in the previous chapter. There, it was argued that aspect is the primitive meaning of verb forms in all languages. This claim was supported by the reports of findings in the field of psycholinguistics. Such studies, it was argued, demonstrate that it is precarious to rely on the semantics of verbs as the main criterion for classifying a language as an aspectual language (cf. Cook 2002). An alternative criterion, considered to be more viable, was argued for. A metacategory that is crosslinguistic and non-language specific was proposed. Bhat's (1999) parameters for tense, aspect and mood were considered as the criteria that meet the metacategorical requirement. It was argued that the Bhatian criterion was methodologically a more sound procedure in the quest for the explanations of the meanings of the BH verb forms.

The question that will be addressed in this chapter is whether the verb forms in BH primarily have the grammatical meaning of tense, aspect or mood. In other words, is BH a tense-prominent, aspect-prominent or mood-prominent language? To answer this question, the way the verb forms of BH are used in the BH texts will be examined. The parameters that will be used are the degree of grammaticalisation, obligatoriness, systematicity and pervasiveness (cf. Bhat 1999). The test will be carried out in the following manner. The different verb forms – wayyiqtol, qatal, yiqtol and weqatal will be examined in the situation of use. If it is found that verb forms in BH that are scrutinised consistently grammaticalize every nuance of change in time, and obligatorily do so, then it shall be concluded that the verb forms express tense. However, if the verb forms consistently grammaticalize perfective and imperfective and obligatorily do so and even extend to other areas of the grammar of the BH language, then it shall be taken that BH is an aspect-prominent language. Equally if the BH verb forms are found to grammaticalize consistently and obligatorily as well as being pervasive in expressing realis and irrealis oppositions, then it can be concluded that BH is a mood-prominent language.

The aim of this chapter is to determine whether BH is a tense, aspect or mood prominent language. For this purpose, I will gather evidence in order to formulate a hypothesis to be tested systematically in chapter five. My strategy in formulating this hypothesis is to take a few random examples and test whether they give me reason to believe that BH is either a tense, aspect or mood prominent language. To be either a tense, aspect or mood prominent language, BH must grammaticalize consistently and obligatorily the prominent category, as well as being pervasive by extending that category to other categories (e.g. aspect to mood).

If these few random examples suggest that BH does not meet the criteria to be, e.g. a tense-prominent language, I will assume therefore, that it is not a tense-prominent language.

If a similar few examples provide no reason not to believe that BH is an aspect-prominent language, I will hypothesise that BH is indeed an aspect-prominent language. However, I will then consider the validity of my provisional hypothesis in the light of evidence documented in other studies of the BH verb, in particular the often cited examples that might imply that BH is not an aspect-prominent language. If it can be indicated that those examples do not necessarily contradict the hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language, my hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language will be upheld or strengthened, and it will be outruled that BH can be a mood-prominent language. The fact of the matter is, it will be argued that if it could be indicated that BH consistently extends its aspectual expression forms to cover mood, it will be interpreted as additional evidence that BH is indeed an aspect-prominent language (in terms of the parameters of pervasiveness).

At this point it will be recognised that most of the argumentation has been based on the qatal-yiqtol distinction in BH. However, to uphold the hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language, all the BH verb forms, and all the possible meanings attached to them have to be considered. The question is, can the functions of these forms be reconciled with the hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language. For this reason the following will be done: I will investigate the use of wayyiqtol qatal (and the meanings they may express, e.g. general truth, performative action, the prophetic perfect), yiqtol and weqatal.

I will also discuss the participle. Participle is also used to express durative in the past, a function that *yiqtol/weqatal* sometimes also perform. A crucial question that will be addressed is: what is the difference between the durative expressed by *yiqtol/weqatal* in the past and the durative expressed by participle with regard to past events?

4.2 Is BH a Tense-prominent Language?

The goal in this section is to investigate whether the BH verb forms respond by way of inflexion to changes in time relative to the speech moment. I will do this by scrutinising verb forms taken from a selection of texts from the Hebrew Bible. In the texts I will examine whether a particular verb form changes by way of inflexion in response to the moments of speech and if it does so consistently and obligatorily.

It was noted in section 3.3.1 in this study that tense has been defined as the “time distinction expressed in the verb” (Jespersen 1963:245, Binnick 1991, Comrie 1985 and Reichenbach 1994). A claim was made in section 3.4.2 that in a tense-prominent language, temporal adverbials do not neutralise tense inflexions in the verb. Cases where there are clear evidences of the presence of temporal adverbials that show that the events and or states referred to are past, future or present shall now be investigated. The goal is to find if verb forms in BH are changed to reflect each nuance of change in time.

1 Sam 4:7b

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֹי לָנוּ כִּי לֹא הָיְתָה כִּזֹּאת אֶתְמוֹל שֶׁלֹּשׁ

‘And they said we are done for, because it had never been like this before.’

The verb that expresses ‘had never been’ is *הָיְתָה* which is a qatal. It expresses a situation that existed in the past prior to the time of speaking.

1 Sam 14:21a

וְהָעִבְרִים הָיוּ לְפָלִשְׁתִּים כְּאֶתְמוֹל שֶׁלֹּשׁוֹם אֲשֶׁר עָלוּ עִמָּם בְּמַחֲנֵה סָבִיב

‘And the Hebrews who were with the Philistines before, that went with them at the camp returned...’

In the passage, the verbs *הָיוּ* ‘were’ and *עָלוּ* ‘went up’ are qatal. In this case the qatal is used to express events that are clearly in the past, prior to the time of speaking. The

expression **כאתמול שלשום** 'before' is a temporal adverbial. In the two examples given above, the temporal adverbials show clearly that the events discussed are in the past, and that qatal is used to express that, which was in the past.

We shall look at another set of examples where temporal adverbials 'tomorrow' or future are explicitly indicated and the verb form, which is used to express the events in the passages where such temporal adverbials occur.

Ex. 9:5

וישם יהוה מועד למאר מחר יעשה יהוה הדבר הזה בארץ

'And the LORD set a time saying tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.'

The verb used to express what the LORD will do tomorrow in the passage is **יעשה** a yiqtol. The temporal adverbial being **מחר** 'tomorrow.'

1 Sam 9:16

כעת מחר אשלח אליך איש מארץ בנימין ומשחתו לנגיד על-עמי ישראל והושיע את-עמי מיד פלשתים

'This time tomorrow I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin and you shall anoint him to lead my people Israel and to deliver them from the Philistines.'

In the passage the verb that expresses the sending of a man from Benjamin is **אשלח** - a yiqtol. [For simplicity of analysis we ignore the weqatal in the passage. That will be treated later]. The temporal adverbial, again, is **מחר** 'tomorrow.'

In the examples given above, it is seen that qatal and yiqtol with temporal adverbials express events or states in the past and in the future respectively. In a tense-prominent language, one would expect that whenever events or states in the past are referred to, the verb should indicate the pastness of the event or state. Also whenever future events or states are referred to, the verb or its auxiliary should indicate that the event or state is in the future (cf. 3.4.1 above). However if one considers the following examples, it appears that this is not always the case in BH.

Gen. 2:6

וַאֲד יַעֲלֶה מִן הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה

‘And mist used to rise from the earth and watered all the surface of the ground.’

If one reads the story from verse 5, one finds that the situation described is a past one. At that time there was no rain yet. What existed was the rising of mist from the earth to water the ground. The verb used to express this habitual past event is *yiqtol* – a non-perfective verb form. In the examples from Ex. 9:5 and 1 Sam. 9:16, *yiqtol* was used to express future events. Here in Gen. 2:6 the same *yiqtol* is used to express a past event that was habitual.

2 Sam. 4:2b

כִּי גַם־בְּאֲרוֹת תַּחֲשַׁב עַל־בְּנֵימִין

‘For Beroth used to be thought of as Benjamin.’

The way Benjamin used to be called is expressed here with **תַּחֲשַׁב** a *yiqtol*. The former way of thinking or considering Benjamin as Beroth is expressed with the non-perfective form – *yiqtol*, the same form that is used to express future events and states.

Gen. 16:12b

וְעַל־פְּנֵי כָל־אֲחָיו יִשְׁכֵּן

‘And he shall dwell/live in hostility towards all his brothers.’

The text is taken from the story where Hagar had a discussion with the LORD concerning Ishmael. In stating what Ishmael will do to his brothers in time to come, a *yiqtol* form is used. The same *yiqtol* form that is used in Gen. 2:6 to express past habitual event is also used in Gen. 16:12b to express a future event. It is clear from such a use that the *yiqtol* form is not consistently used to express either past or future tenses.

A few cases of *qatal* and *yiqtol* have been considered. We see that changes in time of event are not consistently or obligatorily indicated in the verb forms of BH. We shall now consider the case of *weqatal*.

Gen. 30:33

וענתה־בי צדקתי ביום מחר

‘Tomorrow (i.e. in future) my righteousness will bear witness against me.’

As shown here, weqatal can also be used to express future events or states. The aspectual value in such cases is the same with yiqtol. The change in form is due to the nature of the environment in which the weqatal is used. When a phenomenon changes its form without any change in its essence, Pike (1967:221) calls it “manifest mode” (cf. 2.4 above). The verb ‘to bear witness’ as used in Gen. 30:33 is וענתה and it is weqatal.

Ex. 8:25

וסר הערב מפרעה מעבריו ועמו מחר

‘And he will remove the lice from Pharaoh and his people tomorrow.’

The verb וסר expresses ‘to remove’ in the future and it is a weqatal.

2 Ki. 23:4b

וישרפם מחוץ לירושלם בשדמות קדרון ונשא את־עפרם בית־אל

‘And he burned them outside Jerusalem near the valley of Kidron. Then he was carrying the ashes to Bethel.’⁸⁵

In the passage above, the verb ‘then he was carrying’ expresses an event that was past and the verb form that is used here is ונשא and it is a weqatal.⁸⁶ It is the same verb form that is used to express an event that was in the future in Gen. 30:33 and Ex. 8:25 cited above.

Why should the weqatal be interpreted as expressing imperfective meaning as I have done in this passage? The question is necessary in view of the fact that Joüon-

⁸⁵ For the rendering of weqatal as imperfective in the past, see section 4.6.3 below. Note that in the NIV 2 Ki 23 4b is rendered as ‘and took the ashes to Bethel.’

⁸⁶ Endo (1996:149) holds that the weqatal in the text expresses perfect(ive). He basis his argument on Huehnergard (cf. Footnote 9 in Endo). It appears that Endo does not have in his analysis any provision for a durative event in the past in BH. However the NIV, though inconsistent on this does recognise the phenomenon of durative in the past in BH. See NIV and GNB translations of Num. 11:8 on this. GNB is more consistent in translating this portion than the NIV.

Muraoka (1991:404) argues that the weqatal in the passage should be interpreted as perfect(ive). I will discuss the question of the meaning of weqatal in section 4.6.3 below. But I argue here that Joüon-Muraoka's argument can be contested. In 2 Ki 23:12b, the BHS apparatus suggests that 'וִירֵץ מִשָּׁם' is probably problematic. The apparatus indicates that the clause is added or that it should read 'וִירֵצוּם' 'and he crushed them,' but the apparatus says it is not certain.⁸⁷ Another problem in the clause is 'מִשָּׁם' 'from there.' The preposition 'from there' does not seem to be normal as it stands in the text. Given these problems, an alternative translation might be 'and he crushed them there, and was pouring the ashes into the Kidron Valley.' This suggested alternative translation enables me to discuss the grammatical meaning of wayyiqtol and weqatal in the passage.

The situation may be described as follows: The images were burned outside Jerusalem. This is a description of an event that has an end and is closed. The ashes from the burned altars may be in large heaps. This could be inferred because the text states that the altars burned were those of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah built, and those built by Manasseh in two courts of the house of the LORD (cf. 2 Ki. 23:12). It is probable that the carrying of such great heaps of ashes took some trips before it was completed. That may be the reason for using the imperfective form to express the repetitive action of going and coming as the carriers of the ashes took successive loads to the Kidron Valley. Otherwise, the speaker/writer could have used wayyiqtol if he wanted to express simply that the ashes were carried into the valley.

In 1 Sam. 2:22, we have a situation where the perfective form of a verb begins a sentence, and it is continued with weqatal. The text reads,

וְעַלֵּי זָקֵן מְאֹד וְשָׁמַע אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן בָּנָיו

'And Eli had become very old (x-qatal), and he used to hear (weqatal) all that his sons used to do (yiqtol)...

The fact that Eli had become very old is expressed by the verb זָקֵן, a qatal perfective. This is 'qatal' in our model. However the sentence is continued by weqatal (וְשָׁמַע). The

⁸⁷ The BHS apparatus does not have any evidence from other Hebrew manuscripts or early

weqatal is used to express what Eli used to hear from time to time. It is a durative of the repetitive type (Hendel 1996:166). When the things he used to hear were introduced before the next verb form, the verb form becomes yiqtol because of the fronting of the things heard. This yiqtol is also used to express what the sons of Eli used to do from time to time. It is also used to express a durative event of the repetitive type (Crystal 2000:310, Smith 1991:6). This maintains the symmetry between yiqtol and weqatal. It is therefore possible to begin a sentence with the perfective form that is interpretable as expressing perfective meaning and follow with weqatal that expresses imperfective meaning.

Hendel (1996:165) documents similar examples. I cite one of his other examples taken from Gen. 29:2-4.

וירא והנה באר בשדה והנה שם שלשה עדרי־צאן רבצים עליה כי מן־הבאר ההוא
 ישקו העדרים והאבן גדלה על־פי הבאר ונאספו־שמה כל־העדרים וגללו את־האבן
 מעל פי הבאר והשקו את־הצאן והשיבו את־האבן על־פי הבאר למקמה
 ויאמר להם יעקב אחי מאין אתם ויאמרו מחרן אנחנו

‘He saw and behold, a well in the field, and beheld, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it, for from that well they *used to water* (impf.) the flocks, and there was a big rock on the mouth of the well; all the flocks *would be gathered* (Conv. Pf.) there, and they *would roll* (Con. pf.) the rock from the mouth of the well, and they *would water* (Con. pf.) the sheep and *would return* (Con. pf.) the rock to its place on the mouth of the well. Jacob said to them, ‘My brothers, where are you from?’ And they said ‘We are from Haran.’

The example above and others cited by Hendel (1996) show that it is possible to have a sentence that begins with a perfective form such as זקן in 1 Sam. 2:22 and וירא in Gen. 29:2, and is continued with the imperfective form, as the sentence continues in Gen. 29:3. The imperfective form can be interpreted as being used to express imperfective meaning. It is usually used by a narrator to give some background information of events in which the main story is situated.

2 Ki. 23:12b

וירץ משם והשליך את-עפרם אל-נחל קדרון

‘And he ran from there and was pouring (or poured) the ashes into the river of Kidron.’

In the text above the verb ‘was pouring’ or ‘poured’ expresses an event that was past. The verb form used to express this past event is weqatal. Does the weqatal express perfective or imperfective meaning? The answer is not easy to give.

This difficult example from 2 Ki. 23:12b is added here in order to show that there are cases where weqatal is used, the meaning of which is difficult to decide. In the text being discussed, there is wayyiqtol (perfective) that is followed by a weqatal (imperfective form). If one argues on the basis of perfective forms being followed by imperfective forms as noted in 1 Sam. 2:22 above, one may be able to say that the weqatal in 2 Ki. 23:12b is used to express an imperfective meaning. The problem with such an argument, however, is that the structure of the sentence in 2 Ki. 23:12b is not the same as the one in 1 Gen. 29:2-4 and 1 Sam. 22:2. In Gen. 29:2-4, there is a change in participants, i.e., the participant in the event that is expressed by wayyiqtol is different from the participant in the event that is expressed by weqatal. The same occurs in 1 Sam. 2:22, where the participants in the events expressed by qatal and weqatal are the same, but the verb form that precedes weqatal is a wayyiqtol. This structural difference makes it difficult to interpret the two structures as having the same semantic value.

Driver (1892:162) had examined the use of weqatal in 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Chronicles. He came to the conclusion that the way weqatal is used in these books “may be fairly regarded as attributable to the influence of Aramaic usage.” If this argument may be relied upon, 2 Ki. 23:12a and 12b may be among those cases where weqatal has begun to take on a perfective meaning in texts that are assumed to be influenced by Aramaic. However, it seems to me that the context of 2 Ki 23:12, as argued above, makes it plausible to interpret the weqatal in the text as being used to express an imperfective meaning.

In view of the long tradition of translating the weqatal in the constructions as found in 2 Ki. 23:12b (e.g. NIV, GNB, CEV and RSV), the interpretation being argued for may seem as if there is tension between the data and the analyst’s theory. However, if

one takes another example from a Late BH such as Zech. 8:3, the imperfective interpretation of weqatal being argued for in 2 Ki. 23:12b may have some merit. I cite the example below:

Zech. 8:3

כה אמר יהוה שבתִי אל־צִיֹן ושכנתי בתוך ירושלם

‘Thus said the LORD, “I have returned (qatal) to Zion, and I will dwell (weqatal) in the midst of Jerusalem.”’

I consulted some versions such as GNB, RSV, and NIV. All these versions translate שבתִי as “I will return.” However I also consulted the KJV, and in the version the qatal is translated as “I have returned.” In other words, the translators of the KJV understand שבתִי as being used to express a perfective meaning, while they understand the weqatal as being used to express an imperfective meaning.

Commentators such as Meyers and Meyers (1988:413) and Moore (1968:110) as well as Hartom (1972:161) support the KJV. The commentators mentioned understand the qatal in Zech. 8:3 as being used to express a perfective meaning, while the weqatal in the same passage is understood to be used to express an imperfective meaning.

It should be noted that in 2 Ki 23:12b the sentence begins with a wayyiqtol, while in Zech. 8:3 the sentence begins with a qatal. The point is that both wayyiqtol and qatal are used in BH to express perfective meaning. So, it may be argued that it is not impossible to begin a sentence with a qatal that is used to express a perfective meaning and to continue the same sentence with an imperfective form being used to express an imperfective meaning. If such cases are identified it may reduce the cases where weqatal/yiqtol is said to be used to express perfective meaning.

Sometimes one meets situations in BH where wayyiqtol, that is usually used to express situations that are closed, is also used in situations that are yet to occur, i.e. future.⁸⁸ This may be regarded a ‘future perfective.’ Now, I give a brief explanation of the notion ‘future perfect.’ In future perfect a speaker may refer to an event that would have taken place before a given reference time in future. An example given by Declerck (1986:307) based on Reichenbach’s model is “I will have done it.” Declerck models this

sentence structure as S-E-R (cf. 3.3.2 above). Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca find that Abkhaz and Bailing have this ‘future perfect’ structure (cf. 1994:95). See also Cook (2002:219). I take one example from BH found in

Deut. 17:2-3

כִּי־יִמְצָא בְקִרְבְּךָ בְּאֶחָד שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ אִישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה
אֶת־הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲבֹר בְּרִיתוֹ וְיִלְךְ וַיַּעֲבֹד אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לָהֶם

‘For you may/if you find among you in any of your towns which the LORD your God is about to give you a man or woman who will do evil in the eyes of the LORD your God to transgress his covenant and he went and served other gods and bowed down to them...’

In the passage above, the verbs **וַיִּלְךְ** and **וַיַּעֲבֹד** and **וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ** are all perfect(ive), but they all refer to hypothetical events that may occur in the future to the time of speaking. However, the reference time is “if you find a man or a women...”

Wayyiqtol, however, is never used to express future.⁸⁹ Later in section 4.6.1.2 I shall give more attention to the issue of wayyiqtol. Apart from wayyiqtol and participle,⁹⁰ the examples above reveal that the use of verb forms does not comply with the requirements of the parameters of tenseness. Time is not consistently indicated in the verb.

From these examples, it can be seen that it is difficult to form a paradigm for tense in BH. There is also no evidence of tense being pervasive. Therefore, it can be argued on the basis of these few examples that BH may not be regarded as a tense-prominent language.

4.3 Is BH an Aspect-prominent Language?

4.3.1. Introduction

In the previous section, the investigations of a few examples carried out do not provide sufficient grounds to allow a tense interpretation of the BH verb forms. In this section I again select a few more passages from BH for further scrutiny. I will examine how the

⁸⁸ This type of situation is usually referred to as ‘future perfect’ (cf. 5.2.1 below).

⁸⁹ See Driver (1892:89).

verb forms behave when events they are used to express are closed and when they are not closed. If the verb forms inflex according to whether the events they are used to express have end points or do not have end points, then they would have met the criterion of an aspect-prominent language as Bhat (1999) argues. The investigation in this section is done in order to have more data for making the hypothesis that BH may be an aspect-prominent language. In other words, the goal is to find out whether the verb forms grammaticalize aspectual categories such as perfective and imperfective obligatorily, consistently and systematically. We will also investigate the verb forms to know whether aspectual categories are extended to other grammatical categories in BH.

In order to be able to formulate my hypothesis that BH may be an aspect-prominent language by scrutinising the few examples in this section where aspectual distinctions may be identifiable, I rely on Huehnergard (1988:21). Huehnergard provides a criterion by which it is possible to know that the different verb forms in BH reflect aspectual distinctions. The feature is when “two forms express verbal action in the past” but do not have identical meaning, Huehnergard argues that such a feature is an indication that such verb forms express aspectual and not tense meanings (1988:21), (see also section 1.2..2.3 above). In our random text for building our aspectual hypothesis for BH, I will search cases where two or more verb forms are used to express verbal action in the past. I will also search for cases where imperfective verb forms are extended pervasively to other categories such as mood. Later in chapter 5, more data will be analyzed in order to strengthen the hypothesis.

4.3.2. Random examples where aspect is consistently grammaticalized

Gen. 22:1

והאלהים נסה את־אברהם

‘And God tested Abraham.’

In the text above, the verb form for ‘tested’ is a qatal. It is a perfective form, used to express events that are regarded as done and complete, the action is in the past.

Gen. 22:6a

⁹⁰ See section 4.7.1 below for the meaning and functions of participle.

ויקה אברהם את-עצי העלה

‘And Abraham took the woods for the offering.’

In Gen. 22:6a, the verb form for ‘took’ is a wayyiqtol. It is also a perfective form used to express events that are regarded as part of events that occurred in the past. The action is regarded as complete and done. In the two examples, we have two verb forms being used to express actions that occurred in the past.

Ex. 2:7

האלך וקראתי לך אשה מניקת מן העברית ותינק לך את-הילד

‘Shall I go and will call for you a nurse from the Hebrews and she will nurse the child for you?’

In the text above the verb that is used for what will be done in future is weqatal. It is used to express an irrealis situation.

1 Sam. 1:3

ועלה האיש ההוא מעירו מימים ימימה

‘And he used to go every year from his city ...’

One will note that in the examples from Ex. 2:7 and 1 Sam. 1:3, the verb form weqatal, is used both to express an event that lies in the future (Ex. 2:7) and an event that was a habitual practice in the past (1 Sam. 1:3).

Jon. 3:9

מי-יודע ישוב ונחם האלהים

‘Who knows if God may-turn and he-may-have-mercy.’

The example from Jon. 3:9 shows a situation where the King of Nineveh was expressing what he hoped God may probably do in the light of Jonah’s prophecy of doom. The verb forms used to express what God may probably do are yiqtol (ישוב) and weqatal (ונחם). From the examples it could be said that the imperfective verb form of BH could be used to express habitual action in the past, events that are yet to occur as well as probabilities.

From the few samples examined above, it might be hypothesised the BH is most probably an aspect-prominent language. The verb forms are used to express aspectual distinctions and they could be extended pervasively to express mood.

4.4. Investigation of Cases where the Imperfective Form is Claimed to be Used to Express Preterite

Hughes (1970) observes the existence of particles such as **יָתֵן**, **מִי**, **פֶּן**, **לְמַעַן**, **אֵז**, and **טָרַם**. He then argues,

[T]he criterion for determining verbal usage is not to be found in the verbal form itself ... Accordingly, it would appear that an imperfect form occurs in past time not because it denotes the incompleteness of continuance of an action ... but it is due to the kind of construction in which it is employed. It seems reasonable to assume that such construction became stereotyped somewhere along the line in the historical development of the language and thus resisted change. If this analysis is correct, all the imperfects in past time are vestiges of an old preterite tense of performative type (which was found in two forms: *yaqtulu* and *yaqtul* (1970:14).

There are cases of the use of the verb forms of BH that are not as clear as those used in the examples above. In those cases, the texts, especially from poetic material, are said to be very old. Some times the *yiqtol* is preceded by **טָרַם** or **אֵז**. Those who hold a tense theory of BH use those cases to argue that there are archaic forms where *yiqtol* is used to express preterite or perfective meaning and not durative in the past (Fensham 1978:11, Rainey 1988:35, Greenstein 1988:8,9).

Fensham (1978), Rainey (1988) and Greenstein (1988) claim that the BH text contains remnants of archaic forms and new forms. The archaic form theory leads them to think that in poetic materials *yiqtol* used to express past events is the survival of *yaqtul* preterite in Proto Semitic. Contrary to this claim, Peckham (1977), and Sasson (2001), as cited above, demonstrate that the claims of Fensham, Rainey and Greenstein are debatable. I will discuss some of those passages often used as proof texts and argue that there is an alternative and perhaps more accurate explanation of the use of *yiqtol* to express past events or states. The line of argument will follow Driver (1892:31-33),

Peckham (1977) and Sasson (2001). Since I have hypothesised in section 4.3.2 above that BH is most probably an aspect-prominent language, I will attempt an aspectual interpretation of the cases in question. The cases where imperfective interpretations are most unlikely will be noted.

Before doing this, I will first take an excursion into explaining the differences in the duratives expressed by the *yiqtol/weqatal* imperfective forms and those expressed by the predicate participle. My argument is that different verb forms in BH are used to express different semantic values. There is the need, therefore, to explain what different semantic value is expressed by the predicate participle as being used to express a form of durative and also *yiqtol/weqatal* that are also used to express some kind of durative. I consider it reasonable to argue that if the predicate participle primarily express “aspect,” one may interpret it as significant evidence to support my hypothesis that BH may be an aspect-prominent language.

Excursion 1. A brief Excursion into Types of Duratives

Before I discuss the meaning of *yiqtol* when used to express past events, there is the need to take a short excursion to discuss the semantic differences between the type of durative that is expressed by *yiqtol/weqatal* and those expressed by the participle. This is necessary in order to clarify the differences between the two types of duratives. I will cite two cases to illustrate the possible confusion that could exist in the semantics of the two duratives.

In Gen. 2:6, we read,

וַאֲדַר יַעֲלֶה מִן־הָאָרֶץ

‘And mist used to rise from the earth...’

Gen. 37:7

הִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מֵאֲמֻלִּים

‘Behold, we were binding up sheaves...’

Both events in the two passages above are durative in the past. Each occupies a period of time in the past.

To say that an event is durative is not the same thing as saying that it is progressive. Durative “contrasts with ... punctual” (Crystal 2000:310) and is not necessarily progressive. Dahl (1985:91) also argues,

The label ‘durative’ for PROG which is quite commonly found in literature is misleading in that it gives the impression that PROG is used in contexts where the duration of a process is stressed.

Greimas and Courtes (1982:95) also make a distinction between types of durativeness. They define durativeness as:

An aspectual seme⁹¹ indicating, on the syntagmatic axis, that a temporal interval situation between an inchoative term and a terminative term is entirely filled by a process ...

The same temporal interval can be filled with identical or comparable entities ... In such a case one speaks of discontinuous durativeness (or iterativeness), by contrast with continuous durativeness which characterises a single process.

It appears to me that the durativeness of “a single process” is that which is expressed by the participle when it refers to past events. *Yiqtol/weqatal* may be used to express the durativeness that may include discontinuity, repetitiveness, iterativity and habitualness.

An event may be durative but not progressive in the sense of occurring continuously without any discernible break. For example, if I say, ‘In 1999, I was teaching English at King’s College, Lagos,’ there is nothing in the statement that does not allow the possibility that within that period I had some holidays or that I may have taken time off to study music in the evenings. In the case of continuous progressive events, there is no room for stoppage at any interval until the goal is reached.

⁹¹ By ‘seme’ Greimas and Courtes (1979:278) imply “the minimum unit of signification.” An aspectual ‘seme’ may be regarded as the distinctive meaning in aspectual situations. The ‘seme’ of durativeness type expressed by *yiqtol/weqatal* is that in one durativeness, a situation may occupy a time period within the given time period, and there may be stoppages and continuations, stopping and restarting repeating an action within the given time period. In another type of durativeness, that is expressed by the participle, an activity may occupy the whole given time period without ever stopping or restarting. Such continuous ongoing of an activity within a given period of time may be regarded as ‘progressive.’ Its ‘seme’ is different from that of the repetitive activity that occupies a period of time.

Dahl (1985:91) gives an example that illustrates a progressive, continuous event as follow, “At twelve o’clock, John was still writing the letter.” According to Dahl, “the prototypical PROG contexts would be imperfective” (1985:92). Even though durative and PROG are imperfective, they are not exactly the same in meaning.

It should be added at this juncture that BH uses predicate participle for expressing progressive either in the past or in the present. I present three examples only just for illustration.

Gen. 18:1

והוא ישב פתח־האהל

‘... and he was sitting at the entrance of the tent.’

Gen. 37:9b

והנה השמש והירח ואחד עשר כוכבים משתחוים לי

‘And behold the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.’

1 Sam. 2:18

ושמואל משרת את־פני יהוה

‘And Samuel was serving before the LORD.’

In BH, imperfective may be expressed either with *yiqtol*, *weqatal* or predicate participle. While events so expressed may be thought as durative, there is difference in the durativeness represented by *yiqtol/weqatal* and the durativeness represented by the predicate participle. Driver (1892:165) states that “the participle is a form of noun, but one partaking at the same time of the nature of the verb.” He goes further to state that the predicate participle expresses “the continuous manifestation, actively or passively as the case may be ...” I give one example from:

Gen. 41:2

והנה מן־הניאר עלת שבע פרות

‘Behold from the Nile were coming up (PARTICIPLE) seven cows.’

Driver argues further that predicate participle “predicates a state either actively ... or action necessary to produce it” (1892:165).

The predicate participle inherits a stative nature. It is used to express a continuous event or a state (Driver 1892:27). “State may be expressed as event” (Smith 1991:118). Smith gives an example from Chinese where ‘zhe,’ that is normally used to express stative and it is imperfective, is used to “impose a stative coloration on a non-stative situation” (Smith 1991:117).

Following Smith (1991), I argue that when a participle is used to express past events, it is so used in order to stativise what would normally be an event. That may explain the nature of the durativeness of participle in the past. It is similar to the “English PROG. Yiqtol may be used to express what is normally a stative situation as an event. For instance the expression ‘ירעב,’ ‘he will be hungry’ and ‘תמות’ ‘you will die’ are so used to make an event of what is normally a state. Participle in the past is open within the time interval. That is to say that the events that are expressed by the participle when they occur in the past are viewed as happening or ongoing at that moment in the reference time in the past. This is similar to the case of PROG in English and in Chinese (Smith 1991:119). Smith (1991:121 gives an example, and I reproduce it below:

Zhangsan dao jia de shihou Mali xie gongzuo baogao

Zhang arrive home time Mali report work

“When Zhangsan arrived at home, Mali was writing the work report.”

The example above is one of the readings of the meaning of the participle from the Chinese sentence construction that Smith gives to illustrate that the PROG. is used to express an ongoing event at the Reference time.

It appears that yiqtol in the past may be open or may be closed. When open, the event expressed by a yiqtol or weqatal may be viewed as occupying a particular period of time in the past. It may be repetitive over time, or iterative over time or habitual.

I come to the end of Excursion 1. I will now discuss the cases that are often used to support the claim that yiqtol may be used to express perfective meanings.

I begin the discussion of the alleged cases when imperfective forms are said to be used to express perfective meaning by listing some of the texts often cited and discuss

just few of them to illustrate an alternative way of understanding the texts.⁹² The texts often so interpreted are many enough, so they merit some extended discussions. Since the texts and the claims are considered important, and that they could be viewed as counter arguments to my claims, it is necessary to investigate them anew in order to demonstrate that there are alternative and perhaps more plausible explanations for the texts in light of my aspectual theory of BH.

Genesis	Exodus	Numbers	Deuteronomy
24:45	15:1	21:17	2:12
	15:5	23:7	4:41
		24:17	32:10-17
Joshua	Judges	1 Samuel	1 Kings
10:12,13	5:26	3:7	3:4,16,
22:1		21:15	8:1
Isaiah	Jeremiah	Jonah	Psalms
43:17	6:4	4:5	2:2
45:4			17:12
			8:6,7
			73:17
			106:17,19
			126:2
Job	Qohelet	Lamentations	2 Chronicles
3:3	2:3	3:8	29:34
4:5			
10:11			
32:19			
38:21			

Following Peckham (1997) and Sasson (2001) I claim that when *yiqtol* is used to express a past event or state, it is so used to express durativeness of the event or state. Peckham

⁹² In addition to some of the lists found in Driver (1892) and Greenstein (1988), a few others are from my findings in reading through the BH texts viz, Gen. 24:45, 1 Sam. 3:7, 21:15, Jer. 6:4 Jon. 4:5, Ps. 2:2, 17:12, 8:6, 7, 73:17, 106:17, 19, Jos.3: 3, 4:5, 10:11, Qoh. 2:3, Lam. 3:8, 2Chr. 29:34.

bases his claim that the use of *yiqtol* in the past expresses durative on “word order” (1997:139). I would like to go further by suggesting that word order is motivated by pragmatic needs of interlocutors and therefore not necessarily relevant for the interpretation of the imperfective form.

Having explained the position of Peckham, I now discuss the problem inherent in assuming that two linguistic forms, viz *qatal* and *yiqtol* with two different meanings could be used interchangeably at the same time. I would like to argue that if two forms of a linguistic phenomenon, which have different meanings exist in a language at a particular time, it will be difficult to use one to express the meaning of the other without communication problems. Either one completely replaces the other or else each will retain their individual meaning. This seems to be the general tendency in language change. Usually the different meanings will be fixed and the disequilibrium settled so that the normal communication function of language can continue. I raise doubt whether there is any other language where two forms with different meanings are used interchangeably other than cases of metaphoric usages of such forms or in cases of homonymy. How then, could there exist in BH the use of *qatal* and *yiqtol* to express perfective simultaneously? This question becomes more important when one considers that *qatal* expresses perfective while *yiqtol* expresses imperfective in the texts of BH. Could BH be expected to be isolated from the general laws governing languages of humans? It is therefore, necessary to reexamine the theory that *yiqtol* used to express past events or states is so used to express perfective meaning. This is necessary in order to invite a more careful reexamination of the ‘archaic *yaqtul* perfect theory.’ This theory proposes that when *yiqtol* is used to express past events or states, it is so used to express perfect (Fensham 1978:11, Smith 1991:12). A few examples will be discussed in an effort to present an alternative explanation.

My strategy for discussing the samples where *yiqtol* is claimed to be used to “express preterite” or “perfect” is to divide the samples listed above into four groups according to the genre in which they are found in the BH texts. The division allows one to know whether the cases where *yiqtol/weqatal* are claimed to be used to express a perfective meaning are from the assumed Older BH or Late BH. For example, the Pentateuch may be assumed to be older than 1 and 2 Chronicles, which are among the

historical books. Such division may allow one to observe the frequency of the use of the verb forms in question and their grammatical meaning in the pericope where they are found.

However, there is a problem with the assumption of the Pentateuch being older than the historical books. The problem is that the divisions in time between the historical books may even be greater than the divisions in time between the Pentateuch and some historical books. Therefore, the division below from which examples are taken should be regarded as an arrangement for working convenience only and not necessarily on a chronological order.

- (i) examples from the Pentateuch
- (ii) examples from the historical books
- (iii) examples from the prophets
- (iv) examples from the Psalms

Furthermore I will investigate other examples of the use of particles that precede *yiqtol*. In section 4.7.1, I will discuss the origin of *yiqtol*. In that section I will add further evidences to demonstrate that it expresses primarily imperfective meaning.

In selecting these examples, I assume that they are fair representatives of the cases in which *yiqtol* used to express a past event is said to be so used to express preterite or perfect(ive). This assumption is based on the fact that the examples appear in most literature on the problem (cf. Driver 1892, Fensham 1978, Rainey 1988, Greenstein 1988). The examples I investigated include cases where **טָרַם** or **אָז** precedes *yiqtol*. The intention is not to deny that there might be archaic influences on the meaning of the verb forms of BH. However, there is the need to scrutinise the cases often cited in order to find out if indeed there are no other more plausible explanations. If other theoretically more plausible explanations are available, I suggest that such options should be explored. Whatever is left may be perhaps explainable by the archaic theory. My assumption is that these cases discussed would be fairly representative of those cases not discussed in detail.

4.4.1. Examples from cases that have טרם in the construction

Gen. 24:45

אני טרם אכלה לדבר אל לבי והנה רבקה יצאת וכדה על־שכמה
ותרד העינה ותשאב ואמר אליה השקיני־נא

‘On my part, before I had finished (lit. will have finished) speaking in my mind, behold Rebecca was coming out, and her pot on her shoulder. Then she went down to the spring, and she drew water and I said to her, “please give me to drink.”’

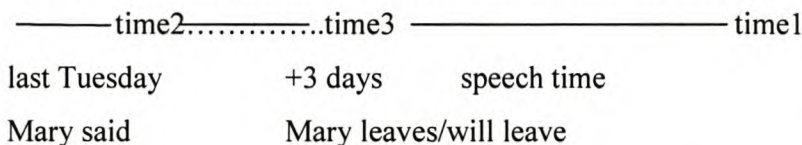
Here I argue that טרם followed by yiqtol in the past is used to express an irrealis situation viewed from the perspective of the speaker.

This type of situation is what Smith (1991:102) refers to as “viewpoint aspect.” According to Smith, “viewpoints are necessary to make visible the situation being talked about” (1991:91). Smith argues that temporal clauses such as “when” and “after” are part of the “semantic properties” that present situations in temporal relations to one another (1991:102). טרם ‘before,’ like other temporal particles, may present situations as ‘before the event.’

There are cases when future is used in the context of past events. This feature is attested in the natural languages. Smith (1991:142) gives this example from English.

“Mary said last Tuesday that she was leaving in 3 days.”

He explains the above statement diagrammatically as shown below.

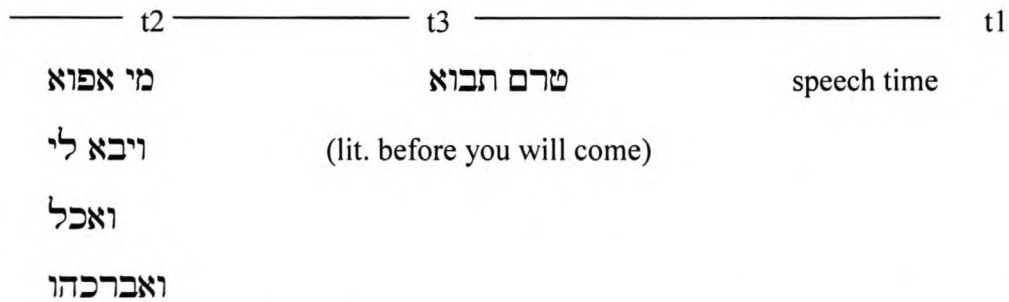


Smith argues, “in this sentence the main clause past tense indicates a Past time (time 2), which is anterior to speech time (time 1); the event [Mary said something] is located at t2. The embedded adverbial clause indicates a time posterior to time 2 (i.e. time 3), at which the event [Mary leave] is located” (1991:141). Smith’s model explains a similar situation found in Genesis 27:33 shown below.

מי אפוא הוא הצד־ציד ויבא לי ואכל מכל טרם תבוא ואברכהו גם ברוך יהיה

‘Who is he who cooked the meat and he brought it to me and I ate it all before you came (you will come) and I have blessed him, what is more, he will be/remain blessed.’

Using Smith’s model, the statement above can be modelled as



In the case of the model above, the event at t3 is posterior to the event at t2. Literally t3 could be translated as ‘before you did not come yet.’ It should be noted here that we are trying to express the ideas of one language in another language, whose worldviews and ways of expressing them are different from each other. The yiqtol in the case like the one above should not be assigned the English past tense meaning. In BH, t3 is viewed as what had not happened before event t2 happened; t3 was still future to t2. Temporal adverbials may be used as “viewpoint” to present a situation. This allows a listener to be able to interpret the situation whether it is complete, on-going or yet-to-be (Smith 1991:92). **טרם** may be regarded as temporal adverbials that function to show the viewpoint of the situation being described when they precede any verbal form.

If the above line of reasoning is correct, it appears therefore, that yiqtol is used consistently to mark imperfectives in BH. In chapter 5, this consistent use of yiqtol shall further be demonstrated with evidences from the corpus used in this study.

The verb that follows **טרם** is usually a yiqtol (Even-Shoshan 1981:418). The event preceded by **טרם** is presented as that which will take place anterior to the other verb that it is related to, which had already taken place. An event expressed by yiqtol preceded by **טרם** is yet to occur in relation to the other event that is used as a benchmark

reference. The yiqtol in such a case may be in the process but has not yet reached an end point (Smith 1991:102).

The speaker may decide to describe a situation from a particular viewpoint in terms of sequence of events. This is similar to what is often referred to as “Reference time” (cf. Reichenbach 1986:306, Van der Merwe 1999:94) in terms of tense perspective. Smith (1991:14) explains that in a tense-prominent language like English a past time may indicate an anterior time to an event that is posterior from the speakers’ perspective.

The case in Gen. 24:45 **טרם אכלה לדבר** ‘before I had finished speaking’ is similar to the situation Smith describes. That is to say that Rebecah arrived while the process of speaking (perhaps praying) will only end posterior to (i.e. after) the arrival of Rebecah. Viewed in this way, it may not be correct to argue that the imperfective form that follows **טרם** has a preterite meaning (cf. Blake 1968:68). Therefore, **אכלה** in this text still retains its irrealis (a situation that is-yet-to-occur). It is only potential. Such a situation may be regarded as an irrealis mood (Chung and Timberlake 1985:141, see also section 3.6 above). In the case above, the imperfective form is being extended pervasively to express a situation that is potential only. It has not yet been realised. It is an irrealis. The perfective and imperfective meaning is what the BH verb forms are predominantly used to express. When referring to cases where the imperfective form is extended to a modal meaning, I will be referring to such moods as part of what I will be regarding as ‘imperfective’ meaning in this study.

Interestingly, Sarna (1989:167) gives a very idiomatic translation of this text. He translates it as “I had scarcely finished praying in my heart ...” He does not comment on the use of the imperfective form of the verb in this verse, but his translation suggests that he regards the prayer as not yet having an end point when Rebecah arrived on the scene. Westerman (1981:380) virtually follows Sarna in his translation, but also makes no comment on the use of the imperfective form of the verb in the verse. Wenham (1994:136) on his own makes a very brief comment on the use of **טרם** plus yiqtol. He states “**טרם** is normally followed by impf.” It seems to me that Wenham is correct. When a yiqtol is preceded by **טרם**, the semantics of the yiqtol is imperfective. It is usually used to express the view that the event being described will hold in future

(posterior) to another event that may be used as a benchmark, from which the speaker views the yet-to-be event or the not-yet-complete event.

Genesis 27:4, we read,

בעבור תברכך נפשי בטרם אמות

‘In order that my soul will/may bless you before I should die.’

Even-Shoshan (1981:418) regards the use of בטרם that precedes yiqtol in the passage above as designating future events.

Even-Shoshan (1981:418) lists two cases where טרם precedes qatal and he says that it expresses past (perfective). I cite one example

1 Sam. 3:7

ושמואל טרם ידע את יהוה

‘And before Samuel knew the LORD.’

In the statement above, at the time the LORD appeared to Samuel, Samuel had not known the LORD. The notion “future perfect” could help one in explaining the use of qatal here. The time had not reached when Samuel would have known the LORD. The use of qatal to express such future perfect does no violence to the perfective interpretation of qatal in situations like the one in the passage above.

4.4.2. Example from cases that have אִז in the construction

אִז does not always put the event it precedes in the past. The grammatical meaning of the verb is in the verb form itself. In other words, imperfective forms are usually used to express imperfective meanings. When the verb forms are used pervasively such as extending the forms to mood, the perfective form is usually used to express realis, while the imperfective form is usually used to express irrealis. For instance, in Genesis 24:41 we find,

אז תנקה מאלתי

‘Then you will be free from my oath.’

Ex. 15:1

אז ישיר־משה ובני ישראל את־השירה הזאת ליהוה ויאמרו למאד

‘At that time, Moses and the children of Israel used to sing/were singing this song to the LORD (they said) saying...’

The particle אז is a temporal adverbial particle. BDB (2000:23) gives three possible lexical meanings of אז. They are “then,” “at that time” and “therefore.” If one interpretes the BH verb forms in terms of the tense paradigm, one may choose the “then” option as the meaning of אז in this context. Such a choice will force an analyst to find a plausible explanation for the use of yiqtol to express a past tense, that is, preterite. Since yiqtol is, according to this view, also used for future tense, one way out of the dilemma for such an analyst is to appeal to the diachronic theory and to argue that yiqtol being used to express past tense is a vestige of yaqtul-perfect (Greenstein 1988:10,11 Fensham 1978:10, Cassuto 1967:173).

Even-Shoshan (1981:29) explains that אז could mean ‘באותם הימים’ (literally ‘in those same days’). This suggests that sometimes אז could be used to express events that overlap with other events that were happening repeatedly over a period of time. Such an event seen over a time interval is repetitive, and not just once at a point in time.

The verb שיר appears five times in its yiqtol form in the BH texts. These are Ex. 15 where it appears twice. (אז ישיר־משה, and (אשירה). The first has אז preceding it and is the only case where אז precedes its yiqtol form. Others are Ps. 59:17, (אני אשיר), 65:14, (אפי־אשירו) and 137:4. (איך נשיר). Apart from Ex. 15:1, the NIV renders all other yiqtol forms of the verb שיר as imperfective. The commentaries examined also understand the yiqtol form of ישיר as expressing an imperfective meaning in the broad sense of imperfective as used in this study (cf. Allen 1983:235, Tate 1990:92, 136, Dahood 1968:66, 109, 1970:286).

Since it is only in Ex. 15:1 that there is the yiqtol form of שיר preceded by אז, does אז change the yiqtol form into perfective? As I argue in 4.6.1 below, אז does not

automatically change the verb it precedes into perfective meaning. It is precarious, therefore, to single out Ex. 15:1 and force a perfective interpretation on **שיר** as used there.

There are cases in BH where **אז** precedes qatal. In such cases the meaning of such qatal can be interpreted as perfective, e.g. Ex. 4:26b

אז אמרה חתן דמים למולת

‘At that time she said “bridegroom of blood” referring to circumcision’ (NIV).

Even-Shoshan (1981:29) explains that **אז** that precedes qatal (in Ex. 15:15a) designates a past event.

Ex. 15:15a

אז נבהלו אלופי אדום

‘The chiefs of Edom were terrified.’

The two examples from Ex. 5:1 and Ex. 15:15a are intended to demonstrate that when **אז** precedes yiqtol, the yiqtol has a different grammatical meaning from that of qatal when it is preceded by **אז**. When **אז** precedes a qatal, the qatal is still being used to express perfective meaning. The interpretation of the verb form preceded by **אז** therefore is the normal aspectual value of the verb form.

If this line of reasoning is correct, it can be argued that the cases where **אז** precedes yiqtol to express events in the past, such events are durative or repetitive. When **אז** precedes yiqtol in such a manner, it is used to express imperfective in the past and not just a preterite. Durham (1987:199), and Houtman (1996:277) translate Ex. 15:1 as “Moses and the children of Israel *sang*...” In the light of the argument above, the adequacy of such a translation is disputable. It is therefore preferable to understand **שיר** as used here as expressing a durative action in the past. It expresses imperfective. This is how Sarna (1991:76) understands it. He states that the song was sung antiphonally. The problem with the translation “Moses ... sang” is, largely, perhaps, due to the theory, which states that yiqtol used to express past events is a remnant of yaqtul perfect in the Proto Semitic.

The story in Num. 21:17, one of the texts in our sample, is the same as the one found in Ex. 15:1 just discussed above. Since the linguistic problem is exactly the same, the explanations offered for Ex. 15:1 apply here as well. So, no further discussion of it is deemed necessary.

Deut. 4:41

אז יבדיל משה שלש ערים בעבר הירדן מזרחה שמש

‘At that time, Moses separates the eastern side of Jordan the three cities ...’

Christensen (1991:96) translates the passage as “then Moses set apart ...” He does not comment on the use of *yiqtol* to express this past event. One may assume that he interprets the *yiqtol* as preterite. Merrill (1994:136) does not comment on the semantics of the verb **יבדיל** ‘to separate.’⁹³ He indicates that the verse suggests that Moses was setting about to do what the LORD had commanded him in Deut. 3:12-17. If one takes Merrill’s interpretation, then the verb is used to express an imperfective meaning. One may also take a historic present view as discussed in the previous passage. The semantic information is still the same, i.e. that action is presented as if it has not yet reached an end point. In such a view, the explanations of Myhill (1992:70) that the imperfective form may be used as present tense in order to create vividness, excitement and drama, may hold.

In Russian, Smith (1991:306) found that the imperfect may be used to express an event that is known to have occurred. She appeals to what she calls “Conventions of Use” theory to explain such a phenomenon. Smith states that the ‘Conventions of Use’ is a pragmatic notion that is used to explain what interlocutors may understand as what is held to be conventional and the shared knowledge of the world of the communication context. When a speaker uses the imperfective form to express an event that may be regarded as “closed,” the listener is not confused, because he knows that the speaker is not focusing on the end point or on the completion of the event, but simply states “that the event took place” (1991:306). She gives the example in Russian as presented below to illustrate her argument:

Vojnu i mir pisal Lev Tostoy

Lev Tostoy wrote (impf.) *War and Peace*

She explains,

The use of the imperfective does not mislead the receiver into concluding that Tolstoy did not complete the novel or that the speaker is describing the action in progress. Rather (the sentence) focuses on the fact that the event took place. If the perfective viewpoint were used the focus would be on the completion of the event.

The use of the imperfective form to express events that are past and perhaps their repetitive or habitual nature is not unique to BH alone. So it may be possible to regard the imperfective form as being used to express imperfective meaning in the sense that the end or close of the event is not in focus.

Even-Shoshan (1981:29) cites 38 examples in which אַז precedes qatal. He explains that those cases are past (perfective). One of his examples falls within our corpus, which is Joshua 10:33.

אז עלה הרם מלך גזר לעזר את-לכיש

‘Then Horam the king of Gezer went up to help Lachish.’

In Jos. 8:30-31 we have

אז יבנה יהושע מזבח ליהוה אלהי ישראל בהר עיבל כאשר ציוה משה עבד-יהוה
את-בני ישראל ככתוב בספר תורת משה מזבח אבנים שלמות אשר לא-הניף עליהן
ברזל ויעלו עליו עלות ליהוה ויזבחו שלמים

For the purpose of the discussion of this passage I will reproduce the translation given in the NIV.

‘Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it

⁹³ This may perhaps be due to the view held by some that Deut. 4:41-43 “could well represent a late addition to the text.” (Auld 1978:29).

according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses – an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used.’

The problem in the text above is how may the expression ‘אז יבנה’ be understood. Does it express a perfective or an imperfective meaning? The NIV quoted above and Howard, Jr (1999:221-222) understand ‘אז יבנה’ as expressing a perfective meaning. Since I hypothesise that BH is an aspect-prominent language, the perfective and imperfective forms are, in terms of my hypothesis, used to express perfective and imperfective meaning fairly regularly. Is there any possibility then that ‘אז יבנה’ could be interpreted as expressing imperfective meaning in this text? Or is this another case of yaqtul perfect at work?

To be able to answer these questions, there is the need to ask another one. What features of situation aspect has the verb ‘בנה’ ‘to build’? We have discussed the notion of situation types in section 3.5.1 above. The verb ‘build’ is regarded as an example of accomplishment situation (Smith 1991:50). Smith cites Vendler who views accomplishments as heterogenous. According to Smith, in accomplishment situations “the internal stages are successive, and it differs from each other because they represent advances towards the final points.” Smith further states “accomplishments are dynamism, duration, completion and non-detachability” (1991:54). Accomplishments involve a process (Smith 1991:50). It begins, continues and reaches completion.

If, for example a sentence specifies “Mary build a bridge” (Smith 1991:51), it shows that the final stage of the event is in focus. When such a final stage is in view, the whole event is being considered. In such cases, one usually expects the perfective form of the verb to be used. If, on the other hand, the process of accomplishments is being considered, then the event is continuing. The normal verb form is imperfective (Smith 1991:55).

Although the verb ‘build’ is used to express a dynamic and durative event, it is still difficult to posit an imperfective meaning for ‘בנה’ in the text being discussed. All commentators consulted take a perfective interpretation of the verb. As it is, I regard the form in the text above as not fitting neatly into my hypothesis that imperfective verb forms

in BH are usually used to express imperfective meanings. The text may therefore, be regarded as one of the few cases that may reflect the effect of historical development of BH.

Jos. 10:12

אז ידבר יהושע ליהוה ביום תת יהוה את־האמרי לפני בני ישראל
ויאמר לעיני ישראל

‘At that time, Joshua was speaking to the LORD on the day of the LORD’s giving of the Amorites (lit. ‘before’) to the sons of Israel, and he said before Israel.’⁹⁴

Let me briefly discuss the coexistence of wayyiqtol and yiqtol in the sentence in Jos. 10:12. The yiqtol preceded by אַז in the passage could be understood to be used to express the possibility that Moses was engaged in speaking with the LORD for some duration of time. The wayyiqtol in the example above may be understood as being used to express the entire speech viewed as one unit of event seen as a complete whole. The whole period of the speech could be said to be regarded as one whole event. (For one example of another wayyiqtol other than the quotative frame being being discussed, see section 4.6.1. below).

The sentence is an introduction to what Butler (1983:111) recognises as a poem. This is similar to other poems sung or recited after victory in a war (see Ex. 15:1, Num. 21:17). Butler (1983:107) follows the yaqtul-perfect tradition and renders אַז ידבר יהושע as ‘Then Joshua spoke ...’ It appears that the yiqtol as used here could be understood more correctly as expressing imperfective meaning. The speech could be understood as reference to a son, which normally have some duration especially if Butler’s view is accepted that the speech was in fact a song. The content of what Joshua said, which is presented as אַז ידבר ‘he was speaking,’ is the song. Since song is an activity that usually takes some time, or that may be repeated, it is plausible to regard the yiqtol preceded by אַז in the passage as being used to express an imperfective meaning.

Jos. 22:1

⁹⁴ ‘On the day that the LORD gave the men of Israel victory over the Amorites, Joshua spoke to the LORD’ (GNB).

אז יקרא יהושע לראובני ולגדי ולחצי מטה מנשה ויאמר עליהם

‘At that time Joshua summoned the Rubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manaseh and he said to them...’

Boling (1980:508) translates יקרא as “then Joshua summoned.” Hess (1996:34) understands יקרא ‘Joshua addresses ...’ By this one wonders whether Hess tacitly recognises the imperfective meaning of yiqtol in this passage. If one follows the yaqtul-perfect theory, one possible conclusion is to interpret yiqtol in the passage as being used to express a preterite or perfective meaning. However, if BH is an aspect-prominent language, could the archaic yaqtul theory fit into an aspect interpretation of yiqtol when used to express past events? In other words, if yiqtol in this passage does not express durative, will this contradict the aspectual theory of BH? This question is relevant in the light of Jos. 23:2, where wayyiqtol is used in a structure that is similar to the one in Jos. 23:1.

It may be possible to think of the use of the imperfective form in Jos. 22:1 as a case of “conventions of use” (Smith 1991:306) in connection with our discussion of Deut. 4:41 above. If one does not want to apply the theory of “the conventions of use,” it appears to me then that Jos. 22:1 should be consigned to the yaqtul perfect theory for explanation with all its difficulties.

Examples of other cases where אַז precedes yiqtol, and is used to express imperfective in the past include Num. 4:41, Jos. 8:30. These cases do not pose problems. It is plausible to interpret yiqtol in the passages as expressing imperfective meaning.

There are cases where אַז + perfective form is used. An example is Jos. 22:31b

אז הצלתם את־בני ישראל מיד יהוה

‘Then you have delivered the children of Israel from the LORD.’

In the passage above the verb הצלתם ‘you delivered’ is a perfective form expressing perfective meaning. It is preceded by אַז.

1 Ki. 3:16

אז תבאנה שתיים נשים זונות אל־המלך ותעמדנה לפניו

‘Then two women that were harlots came(?) and stood before the king.’

The problem in this text is that it is difficult to know how to translate the verb תבאנה ‘to come.’ If one interprets it as a historic present, (they come), it will be difficult to explain why the historic present is not continued. Why does the narrator continue the action of the women with wayyiqtol, which is a clear perfective in meaning? If the sentence would continue with ועמדו, it would have been possible to translate it as historic present. Alternatively one would have expected the second verb to be a wayyiqtol, but this is not the case. It appears that the case here is truly anomalous as it stands because even an appeal to the theory of ‘conventions of use’ does not help.

4.4.3. Example of cases where there is no טרם, or אז, but only yiqtol and weqatal as used to express events that occur in the past.

Ex. 15:5

תהמת יכסימו

‘The deep was covering them.’

In the passage above, the reference is made to the killing of the Egyptians in the Red Sea as they were pursuing the Israelites. The yiqtol used here יכסימו suggests a repetition or durative act of covering of the Egyptian army by the waves of the Red Sea. The army was probably in a long file following the Israelites. The waves began somewhere at a point and kept rolling and covering the long file in succession until the last batch was covered. It was probably not the case that all the Egyptian army was covered in one swoop. Rather, successive waves kept covering sections of the army until they were all covered (Sasson 2001:608-609). Making a case for the imperfective meaning of yiqtol in the past, Peckham (1997:143) had argued that “in yiqtol clauses, the subject first construction expresses durative or habitual action in the past.”

I do not necessarily agree with Peckham because in Amos 1:2 we read

ויאמר יהוה מציון ישאג

“he said ‘the LORD from Zion will roar.’”

The phrase יהוה 'the LORD' is the subject of the clause. Another example where subject comes first in a yiqtol clause is Ps. 65:3b:

שמע תפלה עריך כל-בשר יבאו

'O you that hear prayer, to you all men must/will come.'

The phrase 'כל-בשר' 'all men' is the subject of the verb 'יבאו' 'must/will come.' In the examples above, the subject begins each clause, and the yiqtol in the clauses is used to express future events, but not necessarily durative or habitual action as Peckham claims. However, Peckham is correct in saying that yiqtol in the past should be regarded as expressing imperfective. This interpretation seems to be a more plausible interpretation of yiqtol when used to express past events than the diachronic theory of yiqtol (cf. Rainey 1988:35). Rainey (1988:35) admits that there are cases where yiqtol is also used to express past events that could be regarded as imperfective.

Num. 23:7

מן-ארם ינחני בלק מלך-מואב מהררי-קדם

'From Aram, from the eastern hills Balak the king of Moab brings me.'⁹⁵

Budd (1984:251) translates 'ינחני' as "he brought me." He does not discuss the linguistic difficulty of 'ינחני' in the verse. Ashley (1993:467) also translates 'ינחני' as "he brought me," but in contrast to Budd, he takes note of the difficulty of the verb 'ינחני' in the text. He cites section 45 of Davidson's syntax and section 75 of Driver where they (Davidson and Driver) regard 'ינחני' as having imperfective meaning. They, therefore, translate the verb as a historic present. Ashley (1993:467) argues that "it (i.e. 'ינחני') is probably not an imperfect, however but a preterite, a true past tense." He quotes Seow (1987:158) in support. Milgrom (1989:195) translates the same verb as "he brought me." He does not discuss the use of yiqtol to express this past event. Levine (2000:163) follows the same pattern as Milgrom.

⁹⁵ The NIV has 'Balak brought me from Aram.'

One may ask for the reason why these commentators implicitly and explicitly assume the perfective meaning of **יִנְחֲנִי** a yiqtol form. It may be because they view the BH verb forms as expressing tenses, or they hold to the theory that yiqtol in the past is an old yaqtul-perfect still found in some BH texts, especially those containing pieces of poetry.

In the text under discussion, there are problems with a ‘yaqtul-perfect’ interpretation of **יִנְחֲנִי**. If it is argued that the yiqtol in the text being discussed is used to express perfective meaning in the past, will other yiqtol in the same song such as **אֲרִאֲנִי** ‘I (will see)’ in verse 9 be also interpreted as perfective? None of the commentators consulted chooses such a view. If some yiqtol are interpreted as meaning imperfective, on what account will others be identified as perfective? If archaic form is the argument, why does the poet use different forms to express perfective meaning in a poem written, if we may so assume, at the same period of time? These questions pose difficulty for a perfective interpretation of **יִנְחֲנִי** in the text. Rather, they tend to make Davidson’s and Driver’s imperfective interpretation of **יִנְחֲנִי** in the passage more attractive.

I argue that one of the characteristics of present tense is that it “may not include end point situations” (Smith 1991:151). Smith cites French as one of the languages that uses the imperfective form of the verb to express present tense. Another language that Smith cites is Russian. He reports that “Russian present tense has both imperfective and perfective forms, but only the former is taken to refer to the present” (Smith 1991:151). Smith also reports that “Navajo has no present tense, imperfectives are taken as referring to present time, in the absence of information to the contrary.” The case of Navajo is similar to that of BH, which does not have a present tense form. The imperfective form of the verb is usually used to express such present tense meaning. It should be mentioned that Russian is an aspect-prominent language, of which the use of the imperfective form of the verb to express present tense is similar to BH.

It is, therefore, possible to interpret **יִנְחֲנִי** as imperfective in meaning. As Davidson and Driver are said to have interpreted the verb, it should be regarded as being used to express a historic present. Myhill (1992:70) states that “historic present makes

past events more vivid, exciting and dramatic to the listener by making them feel as though they were actually there at the time.” Bringing the analysis to our text, one could argue that Balam at this point was in a crisis situation. He was actually agitated and emotional as the situation was getting complicated.

One other possible interpretation is to regard the imperfective form as being used to state that Balak brought Balaam without focusing on the end point of the event of bringing. This would be similar to the notion of ‘conventions of use’ as Smith (1991:306) found in his study of Russian and Navajo.⁹⁶ While recognising the difficulty of the text, it could be argued that it is not completely out of place to propose an imperfective interpretation of the imperfective form in the text. This is based on the fact that Ashley (1993:46) reports that Davidson and Driver hold such a view. Besides, from a crosslinguistic perspective, Russian and Navajo are reported to use imperfective forms of the verb to express situations that are regarded as closed.

It is therefore reasonable that in this song, Balaam dramatises his crisis by using the historic present.

Another text often used to argue for a yaqul-perfect theory of the use of yiqtol to express past events is found in Deut. 32:10-17. This is a rather long passage, so I will not write it out or translate it. However, I will make comments on the use of series of yiqtols in the passage.

There are 25 verbs in the passage. Of these, 6 are wayyiqtols while the number of yiqtols is 14. Tigay (1966:304-306), Christensen (2002:790, 800) and Merrill (1994:411-412,416) translate the yiqtols as preterite without indicating that the use of yiqtol in the passage is problematic.

Unlike these commentators, I would like to argue that an interpretation based on the aspect view of BH is preferable. If BH is an aspect-prominent language as argued (cf. 4.3), it is reasonable to assume that when yiqtol is used to express events that occur in the past, it may not be interpreted as perfective or preterite. The more plausible option is to interpret the use of yiqtol in the situation as either historic present, or a habitual event in the past, or a repetitive event in the past. The notions ‘historic present,’ habitual or repetitive event fall within the domain of imperfective aspect. It appears, therefore, more

plausible to interpret *yiqtol* in Deut. 32 as meaning imperfective. Probably the text tells what the LORD habitually did in the past for the Israelites in their history.

Jud. 5:26

ידה ליתר תשלחנה וימינה להלמות עמלים

‘Her hand to the peg was being stretched and her right hand to the workman’s tool.’

Consistent with his *yaqtul*-perfect interpretation of *yiqtol* in the past, Boling (1985:104) translates the text above as “With her left hand she stretched for a tent peg...” The way in which Jael killed Sisera is what is reflected in the verb used. The picture of the killing is distorted by Moore (1895:163). He says “As he (Sisera) was hastily draining the bowl, Jael seized some heavy object that lay close at hand and fell him to the earth with a blow.” He comments that the verb used in the text “describes the collapse of a man who, standing, receives a mortal blow on the head and not the writhing death agony of one who is pinned to the ground.”

Since modern commentators such as Boling do not see the need to point out Moore’s problematic explanation, there is the need to point out that what Moore says lacks merit. His explanation is more of eisegesis than exegesis. Now an alternative explanation is offered.

The story in chapter 24:18-21 states that Sisera was covered with a blanket. Apparently he did not know what Jael was planning. Jael herself quietly took the instrument of death with which she slew Sisera. The careful taking of the instrument is suggested by the verb *תשלחנה* ‘she was stretching her hands’ (Driver 1892:31). There was time interval or duration, a gradual and quiet process, lest the tired victim be stirred and will rise to fight or flee. Driver (1892:31) argues that one use of *yiqtol* to express imperfective is when it is “describing a single action and so not capable of explanation as a frequentative, operates by bringing into prominence the process of introducing” the action.

Using Driver’s (1892:31) arguments, one may explain the use of *yiqtol* in the passage as describing the process of taking the hammer. The storyteller then uses *qatal* to

⁹⁶ See section 4.7.2 below for further discussion on Russian and Navajo.

express the first blow on Sisera's head. The next verb forms in the verse are **וּמַחֲצָה** and **וַחֲלָפָה**. The storyteller uses them to express actions that were repeated. The weqatal may be interpreted as 'and she was crushing (kept crushing) him and she was piercing (kept piercing) his head.' We have made reference to Hendel (1996:165) for this type of construction. It is the storyteller's comment, describing the process of the killing of Sisera. If the instrument used was not a gun that is fired once, it seems reasonable to think that Jael must have inflicted several blows on Sisera with the instrument she used. The possibility of several blows is probably the meaning of weqatal as used in the passage.

The poet now paints the picture of the death of Sisera. He slumped and fell at Jael's feet, reeling. This perhaps suggests his struggle with death after his head had been pierced. It is argued that the imperfective interpretation of yiqtol as used in the text being discussed reveals more clearly the drama of death involving Jael and Sisera.

Isa. 43:17

הַמוֹצִיא רֶכֶב-וּסוֹס חֵיל וְעֹזוֹז יַחֲרוּ יִשְׁכְּבוּ בַל-יָקוּם

'The one that brings out chariot and the horse and the strong army together. They (will) lie down and they do/will not rise.'

In this text, the verb **יִשְׁכְּבוּ** 'they lie down' is the verb whose grammatical meaning is in dispute. Is it used here to express imperfective meaning or perfective meaning? First, it should be noted that the Biblia Hebraica of the Kittel and Kahle (1937) edition suggests that the verb is probably **וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ** a wayyiqtol, which is usually interpreted as perfective. The BHS, however, does not raise any question about the status of the text.

Westerman (1969:126), Watts (1987:124) and Blenkinsopp (2002:226) translate the verb as "they lie." They understand it as a historic present. Oswalt (1998:150) translates the verb as "they will lie down." He understands the verb form as used to express a future event. It is of interest that none of the commentators cited above interprets the verb to mean a perfective. I tend to agree with the imperfective interpretation of the verb by the commentators cited above. It is not clear therefore, why

the text is included among the set of yiqtol that are supposed to be used to express perfective or preterite.

Isa. 45:4b

ואקרא לך בשמך אכנך ולא ידעתני

‘I called/have called you by your name, I will establish you, though you do not know me.’

Westerman (1969:153) and Blenkinsopp (2002:244) translate both the wayyiqtol and the yiqtol in the text as historic present. They do not make any semantic distinction between the two here. In contrast to these two, Oswalt states that “both LXX and Targ. seem to struggle with אכנך. While the LXX expresses the verb as “will accept,” the Tar. interprets it as “I have fashioned” (Oswalt 1998:198). The point of interest in these translations is that one interprets the verb as used to express imperfective meaning, while the other thinks that it is used to express perfective meaning. Added to this are their differences in what the basic root of the verb is, but that is not of interest in this study.

I would argue that, since BH is an aspect-prominent language, it is reasonable to interpret the wayyiqtol in the text as being used to express perfective meaning, while the yiqtol is used to express an imperfective meaning, either as historic present or as an irrealis. If such a suggestion is accepted, it is no longer necessary to impose imperfective meaning on wayyiqtol in the text, as Westerman and Blenkinsopp have done. If an aspectual proposal is accepted, the translation may read: ‘I have called you by your name, I will establish you, even though you have not known me.’

Perhaps after the LORD has done this favour to the addressee, then the LORD said “everyone” including the beneficiary of the favour “may know that I am the LORD” (cf. verse 6). This seems to justify the use of perfective in the proposed translation.

Jer. 6:4b

אוי לנו כי פנה היום כי ינטו צללת-ערב

‘We are in trouble, for the day has turned, for the shadow of the evening will fall.’ The problem in this text is the meaning of the verb ינטו ‘to fall/stretch.’ Thompson (1980:252) translates the verb as expressing progressive. His translation reads “the

evening shadows are lengthening.” If this is to be understood as an expression of that which will soon take place, such understanding is possible. But it should be said that usually BH would use a qotel, i.e a predicate participle to express such imminent future meaning. Lundbom (1999:413) on his own translates the verb being discussed with a perfective meaning, stating, “for the shadows of the evening have stretched out.” It is doubtful whether this pluperfect understanding reflects the grammatical meaning of the verb form in question. In contrast to Lindbom, Craigie, Kelly and Drinkart (1991:98) render the text as “the evening shadows lengthen.”

It seems to me that an interpretation based on a semantic distinction of perfective and imperfective aspect is possible and indeed, plausible. If for the first verb פנה ‘to turn,’ a qatal perfective is taken to be an expression for a day that has turned and ended, one could expect that what follows or what will follow is the stretching of the evening shadow. A test question may help to make this clearer. If one asks; “Now that the day has turned, what next”? One can reasonably expect an answer such as “the night will come” or “the evening shadows will cast.” These possible imperfective meanings are reflected in the suggested translation above. It is equally possible, as the RSV and the Modern Language have done, to translate the verb in question as meaning a simple present tense. In such a case, the meaning would be an existing state of time without having an end point. With such possibilities, there is no need to force perfective meaning on the yiqtol in the passage.

Ps. 2:2a

יִתְצַבּוּ מַלְכֵי-אָרֶץ

‘The kings of the earth (or of the land) usually station themselves.’

The yiqtol in this text is one of those usually cited to justify the claim that yiqtol in the past is used to express perfective or a preterite. Contrary to the perfective or preterite view of the yiqtol in this Psalm, Craigie (1983:62) translates it as “take their stand.” Probably Craigie understands the use of the yiqtol in this text as meaning habitual or it is used to express a general truth of what shall always be. Whichever the case, he seems to regard the yiqtol as used to express imperfective meaning. This is the view also taken by the NIV and the RSV.

If the Psalm may be taken as a coronation Psalm that is usually recited whenever any new king of the Davidic dynasty is crowned, it could be argued that whenever each of such kings is enthroned, the surrounding enemy kings do not feel comfortable (Craigie 1983:66). It is possible in that light to understand that the enemy kings usually station themselves together to form a solidarity in order to oppose the newly anointed king. If this interpretation is correct, then there is no difficulty in interpreting the *yiqtol* in the Psalm as being used to express such a habitual action. Whenever a new king is anointed, it is possible to think that the enemy will do what they always do with new anointed kings.

Ps. 106:17 and 19

תפתח־ארץ

יעשו

In verse 17, the translation is ‘the earth opened’ while that of verse 19 is ‘they made.’

The *yiqtol*s in the text above are textually problematic as indicated by the apparatus in the BHS. The only problem noted in the apparatus is whether פ should be pointed as plosive or aspirated. Such phonological value is not relevant to the grammatical meaning of the word. There is another kind of problem that is not noted either in the BHS apparatus or in any of the commentaries consulted. On reading Ps. 106 from verses 8 through to 20, the events reported in the first hemistich of every line in every verse are expressed with *wayyiqtol*. But verses 17 and 19 have *yiqtol*. The problem is that it is not clear whether the *wayyiqtol* influences the commentators to translate the *yiqtol*s in question as perfective as Kraus (1989:314) and Allen (1983:45) have done. As one reads the story in Num. 16:32 where this event is narrated, the verb form used is ותפתח, a *wayyiqtol*. One wonders whether these texts were originally prefixed with ‘wa.’ If the BHS had suggested that such a possibility existed in the text, one would have considered problematic. However since no such hint is given in the BHS, the interpretation of the meaning of תפתח as it is in the text remains a difficulty. The reason for that is that an imperfective interpretation does not make sense here, so it is not a plausible option.

The yiqtol in the remaining cases such as Job 3:3, 4:5, 10:11, 32:19, Qoh. 2:3, Lam. 3:8 and 2 Chr. 29:34 can be interpreted as being used to express imperfective meaning. Such imperfective meaning may be irrealis, a wish or a habitual. As I have discussed, Jos. 8:30-31, 1 Kgs 3:16 and Ps. 106:17,19 are the truly difficult cases that do not conform to the imperfective interpretation of yiqtol when used to express past events as being hypothesised in this study.

The discussion above concludes the investigation of the texts that are often cited as evidence that yiqtol used to express past events are either preterite or perfect. They are said to be vestiges of archaic yiqtol perfect in Proto Semitic. If these cases are the evidences for such a claim, then the claim cannot be relied upon. This is because there is a possible alternative interpretation, which the investigation carried out above allows. This study does not investigate all the poetic material in the OT. The conclusion reached may not be generalisable to include all poetic materials in the OT. The conclusion does demonstrate that the often-cited texts cannot be accepted without reservations. A study based on our model may be needed for a large corpus of poetic materials, before any valid generalisation for all the poetic materials in the OT can be made.

Furthermore, I like to argue that even if yaqtul perfect is accepted, it does not contradict the aspectual theory of BH. In section 1.3.2 above, Andersen (2000) argues that Akkadian that is regarded as Proto Semitic, which forms the basis of interpreting the meaning of BH verb forms, may not be, after all, a tense-prominent language. It may be that in the Proto Semitic, yaqtul was used to express perfective meaning, while yaqtulu was used to express imperfective meaning. If yaqtul perfective finds its way into BH yiqtol that is being claimed to be used to express past events, one still needs to find out what form would the imperfective meaning have been?

Contrary to the imperfective understanding of yiqtol when used in the past, Hughes (1970) argues that such past uses of yiqtol express perfect(ive). This claim is based on the ground that such use of yiqtol is a vestige of yaqtul perfect. Yaqtul perfect, it is argued, is found in Old Semitic such as Akkadian (cf. Greenstein 1988, Hendel 1996, Fensham 1978, Smith 1991). It appears to me that the perfective interpretation of yiqtol when used in the past is due to tense interpretation of BH verb forms.

If BH is a tense-prominent language, it becomes difficult to understand *yiqtol* when it is used to express past events. One way out of the dilemma is to appeal to diachronic theory. The problem with such a solution is that it cannot explain why in a text of the same historical time, *qatal* and *yiqtol* are used together to express past events such as found in Exodus 15. One would expect that if *yiqtol* were a vestige of *yaqtul* perfect, it should be dominant in older BH texts and less frequent or even cease in LBH. This does not seem to be the case from the corpus used in this study, for in Jos. 7:12 we read,

ארף יפנו לפני איביהם

‘They used to turn their neck before their enemies.’

The statement above is in connection with the incidence of Israel’s defeat by the people of Ai because Achan had sinned previously before they went to fight the people of Ai. The running away from the enemy is clearly a reference to this past event. Joshua is not considered to belong to the LBH (cf. Saenz-Badillos 1993:56). On the basis of an aspectual view of BH, and on the evidences from other aspect-prominent languages, I wish to argue that it is more plausible to interpret the *yiqtol* as being used to express an imperfective meaning in the past when it is used to express events that occurred in the past. It has been shown (cf. 4.3 above) that BH meets the Bhatian parameters for aspect-prominent languages. As Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994:91-92) and Cook (2001:234) argue, in aspect-prominent languages, perfective and imperfective oppositions maintain their distinctive semantics. It is plausible and indeed normal to interpret *yiqtol* in the past as expression for imperfective in such situations. This concurs with the views of Driver (1892), Watts (1964),⁹⁷ Hendel (1996), Saenz-Badillos (1993:5-9) and Sasson (2001). The argument above may not be construed to imply a denial of possible archaic influence on some difficult cases noted above.

In short, I therefore propose here that before the law of historical influence is applied, it must be demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that, when *yiqtol* is found to be used to express past events, such events could not possibly be interpreted as imperfective in the past.

⁹⁷ See Hughes (1970:13).

Having given some examples to show how the perfective and imperfective are used in BH, it will now be shown how the perfective and imperfective aspects are systematised or paradigmatised. This implies that if the base /root of the verb is given, the perfective and imperfective forms can almost be predicted fairly accurately. This is illustrated by the verb קטף 'to pluck off'

	Perfective	Imperfective
1 cs	קטפתי	אקטוף
2 ms	קטפת	תקטוף
2 fs	קטפת	תקטפי
3 ms	קטף	יקטוף
3 fs	קטפה	תקטופנה
1 cp	קטפנו	נקטוף
2 mp	קטפתם	תקטפו
2 fp	קטפתן	תקטפו
3 mp	קטפו	יקטפו
3 fp	קטפו	תקטופנה

In BH the perfective and the imperfective forms of the verb are extended to expressions that involve time as well as mood. In sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 above, it was shown how perfective qatal and imperfective yiqtol are used with temporal adverbials that indicate changes in the different times of the events being discussed. Qatal is used consistently to express perfective meaning while yiqtol is also used consistently to express imperfective meaning.

It is possible, as BH shows, for both qatal and yiqtol to be used to express general truth, e.g. Ps. 15:3

לא-רגל על-לשנו לא-עשה לרעהו רעה

‘He does not slander’ (qatal) ‘with his tongue, he does not do’ (qatal) ‘evil to his neighbour.’

In the passage above, the general truth of a perfect man is expressed by qatal, a perfective.

Prov. 31:11

בטח בה לב בעלה ושלל לא יחסר

‘Her husband trusts her’ (qatal) ‘and he does not lack’ (yiqtol).

The verb בטח a qatal is used to express general truth of a virtuous wife. The expected blessing/consequence of being married to the said wife is expressed by yiqtol, although the yiqtol could be understood as an irrealis (will not lack). However, the sense in which it is used in the text above is a description of the state of confidence that the husband of a virtuous wife is in.⁹⁸

The semantics of qatal and yiqtol when both are used to express general truths will be discussed fully in section 4.5.2 below. It will be argued that each maintains its different semantic nuance.

In the section above, it was demonstrated that the BH verb forms meet the requirements for an aspect-prominent language. In sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.3, there was an investigation of cases, where yiqtol used to express past events is claimed by some, that such yiqtol cases are interpretable as meaning perfective. In the course of investigating those cases, three of them were found uninterpretable as meaning imperfective. The cases are 1 Ki. 3:16, Ps. 106:17,19. It was argued that these cases do not invalidate the aspectual theory of BH being claimed in this study.

From the foregoing and our observation of the general behaviour of the BH verb forms, we may conclude that in BH, the norm is that the perfective and the imperfective aspect are grammaticalized and are obligatory when each is used. Both are also used to express general truths.

⁹⁸ For examples of some of the other languages that use imperfective forms of their verbs to express general truth, see 4.5.3 below.

4.5. Is BH a Mood Language?

4.5.1. Introduction

From our discussion of the behaviour of the BH verb forms with respect to time of an event and the moment of speech, we saw that BH cannot be regarded as a tense-prominent language. We also examined the behaviour of the verb forms with respect to differences in whether an event is regarded as having an end point or is regarded as ongoing. We found that the verb forms respond consistently and obligatorily to changes in the aspectual distinctions of events. On the basis of such findings, the question of BH being a possible mood-prominent language is ruled out. This is because if the verb forms respond to changes in aspectual distinctions consistently and obligatorily, they cannot again respond to mood changes consistently and obligatorily. However, BH may use its verb forms pervasively by extending them to express other categories such as mood. In this section, I discuss the use of the verb forms to express modal situations.

4.5.2. The imperfective forms used to express moods

In BH there are two forms that are used to express volitions.⁹⁹ These are *yaqtulu* (long form) and *yaqtul* (short form). In BH these forms tend to have removed most of their morphological differences that probably existed in the older proto type. However, a few are said to still remain. The differences are said to be recognisable in their short and long form (Waltke and O'Connor 1990:566). I present the list as Waltke and O'Connor identify them below:

Long form	Short form
יכרית	יכרת
יגלה	יגל
יראה	ירא
יחרה	יחר
יקום	יקם

⁹⁹ Volitions are non-declarative clauses. In BH volitions can be expressed by imperfectives. Such volitions could also be referred to as moods (cf. Waltke and O'Connor 1990:564).

In section 4.6 below, I will discuss the views on the historical relationship between yaqtulu and yaqtul and the present yiqtol in BH. In this section I will concentrate on the issue of whether the short form and the long form as they exist in BH have different aspectual meanings. This is necessary because some scholars argue that both long and short forms of yiqtol are all indicative, basing their arguments on Canaanite yaqtul and yaqtulu (Waltke and O'Connor 1990:499). Waltke and O'Connor themselves argue that even the wayyiqtol form is not usually used to express preterite situations. They cite Psalm 29:5 and 9 as examples. I present the text below:

Ps. 29:5

קול יהוה שבר ארזתם וישבר יהוה את-אזרי הלבנון

‘The voice of the LORD breaks/usually breaks/is a breaker of cedars. It broke/had broken the cedars of Lebanon.’

Ps. 29:9

קול יהוה יחולל אילות ויחשף-יערות ובהיכלו כלו אמר כבוד

‘The voice of the LORD usually kills deers. It made bare the forests and in his temple all are saying blessed.’

Waltke and O'Connor (1990:499) translate the participle in Ps. 29:5 and the yiqtol in Ps. 29:9 with the same meaning as the wayyiqtol in both of the verses. However, one may argue that the first cola in their example expresses general truth about what is known about the voice of the LORD as given in the translation above. The second colon gives specific examples from experience as supports for the general truth claimed in the first cola. If this is the case, it is doubtful that wayyiqtol expresses imperfective just as yiqtol or participle does in the texts under consideration.

Now I turn to the issue of the use of both long and short forms of yiqtol to express volitions. According to Driver (1892:51), and Waltke and O'Connor (1990:566), the short form of yiqtol in BH is used to express jussive. This is usually used for the third person. The long form of yiqtol, on the other hand, is usually used to express “direct

volitive and indirect volitive” (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:573). The long form of yiqtol is sometimes used to express the cohortative mood.¹⁰⁰ For instance in Ex. 3:3 we read,

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרֶה־נָּא וְאָרָה אֶת־הַמְרֹאָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת

‘And Moses said “Let me go over and see this great sight.”’

The verbs אֶסְרֶה ‘to go over’ and וְאָרָה ‘to see’ are long forms of yiqtol.

However, Waltke and O’Connor (1990:566) cite the case of the Aaronic blessing in Num. 6:24-26 where this rule is broken. In that passage, there are six verbs that express volition. Four of them are long yiqtols and two are short ones. The volitions they expressed are jussive. Waltke and O’Connor argue that in cases like that, form is not necessarily equal to meaning. They suggest that the entire volition should be understood as jussive, that is, both the long and the short yiqtols.

In terms of aspectual distinctions between perfective and imperfective, it appears that Driver (1892) is correct by considering both long and short forms of yiqtol as non-perfective in meaning. They are used to express volitions or moods in BH. I follow Driver and treat both the long and the short yiqtol as capable of being used to express mood. They are under the broad category I would like to refer to as imperfective aspect. When the imperfective form is used to express volition, it should be remembered that it has no temporal or aspectual value in terms of tense or whether the event is viewed as one whole or as continuing. As Bhat (1999) has shown, languages do extend the category that is prominent to them to other categories that are not prominent. In the case of BH, the category of moods do not have a special form to express them except in cases of the direct imperative mood category. BH extends the imperfective form of its verb to express mood category. I present some examples below to show how BH does this. The imperfective form is used to express moods, e.g.

Ex. 20:4

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ־פֶסֶל

‘Do not make for yourself an idol.’

In the sentence above, the imperative mood ‘do not do’ is expressed by a yiqtol.

¹⁰⁰ Cohortative is used for first person, e.g. Let me give it to him.

Gen 16:2b

כֹּאֲנִי אֶל־שִׁפְחֹתַי אֲבִנָּה מִמֶּנָּה

‘Please go into my house maid perhaps I will have a child from her.’

In the sentence above, the expression for what may probably happen, an irrealis is expressed by a *yiqtol*. This is an example of pervasiveness where a category is extended to other areas (cf. 3.5.5 above).

Jos. 1:8

לֹא־יִמוּשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ

‘This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth.’

Ex. 15:1

אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי גָאֵה גָאֵה סוֹס וּרְכֹבֹו רָמָה בַּיָּם

‘I will sing to the LORD for he has certainly thrown the horse and its rider into the water.’

In the examples from Ex. 20:4, Gen. 16:2b, Jos. 1:8 and Ex. 15:1 above, it is demonstrated that all incompletives, in addition to past events that are durative and future events, other irrealis modes are consistently expressed by imperfective form of the verb. In contrast, where durativity or repetition is not intended, i.e. completives and resultatives are expressed by perfective form in BH. The examples are in line with the behaviour found in aspect-prominent languages crosslinguistically (cf. Smith 1991:174-175, Porter 1993:219-222, Evans 1998, Bhat 1999).

In view of the fact that it is the aspectual categories that are more grammaticalized obligatorily, systematically and pervasively, one may argue that it is justified to hypothesise that BH is an aspect-prominent language. The examples in Gen 16:2b and Ex 20:4 indicate that there is no forms other than the imperfective and perfective forms, which are used pervasively to express mood in BH.

That BH is an aspect-prominent language is similar to the conclusion that other Hebraists such as Driver (1892), Waltke and O’Connor (1990), Andersen (2000) and Cook (2002) have come to. However, I differ from them as far as the ground for coming

to this conclusion is concerned. While the conclusion of others except Cook (2002) is not based on crosslinguistic evidence, the present work is based on crosslinguistic categories against which any language may be tested. The weaknesses of Cook (2002) have already been pointed out in section 1.3.4 above.

In this section it has been argued that BH makes distinctions between the perfective and imperfective aspect. Aspect was found to be grammaticalized. Furthermore, the grammaticalisation appears to be consistent and pervasive. The use of perfective and imperfective forms of the BH verb to express general truth will be discussed further in section 4.6.2.3 below. It will provide more justification for my hypothesis that BH is most likely an aspect-prominent language.

4.6. Aspect and the Meaning of the BH Verb Forms

We have ample reason to believe that BH is most probably an aspect-prominent language, and not a tense or mood prominent language. The next question that is addressed in the section is: “How can all the verb forms of BH be described in terms of aspect?” Could the aspectual view explain wayyiqtol, qatal, yiqtol, weqatal and the participle? What about the cases where qatal and yiqtol are used to express general truth situations? The discussion proceeds as follows. I commence with a discussion on the problems of the origin of wayyiqtol and its perfective use in narrative. Qatal is also examined with a view to explaining its perfective use in narrative, general truth or global truths as well as speech acts. Thirdly, the aspectual nature of yiqtol is treated. In this regard, the imperfective and non-perfective uses of yiqtol are discussed. The influences of **וְ** and **אִם** when any of them precede yiqtol are also examined. Fourthly, weqatal will be discussed, arguing that it is a variant of yiqtol, only conditioned by the environment. It is argued that the aspectual view of BH adequately explains the use of both yiqtol and weqatal to express events that occurred in the past. The aspectual view of BH also provides a more plausible explanation for the use of qatal and yiqtol to express general truth situations. Lastly, there will be a brief discussion on participles.

The review on the discussion of wayyiqtol, qatal, yiqtol and weqatal is done with a view to finding their origins and what light it may shed on their meanings. The review is also done in order to find if each of the verb forms maintains aspectual distinctions or

whether they allow semantic neutralisation. The predicate participle is also investigated in order to find the difference between the nature of the durative it is used to express and the durative that is expressed by the use of *yiqtol*/*weqatal* when used to express past events.

4.6.1. Wayyiqtol

4.6.1.1. Origin

There are two constructions in BH that are similar, yet they differ qualitatively and functionally. These verb forms are *wayyiqtol* and *weyiqtol* (Driver 1892:70, Blake 1944:272, Hetzron 1969:9). In this section the discussion is on *wayyiqtol* and not *weyiqtol* or what Fred (1920) simply calls the imperfect with simple *waw*. The phonological differences are important, since they do not represent the same meaning in BH. The ‘*waw*’ in *weyiqtol* is clearly a conjunctive ‘*wa*.’ That of the *wayyiqtol* is more than just a conjunction as shall be discussed briefly below.

Waltke and O’Connor (1990) state that *wayyiqtol* forms 29% “of the finite verbs in the Hebrew Bible.” What is the origin of this frequently occurring phenomenon in BH, especially in the narrative? Hetzron (1969) reports that a Semitist by the name J. D. Michaelis made a proposal in 1745 as to the probable origin of *wayyiqtol*. According to Hetzron, the proposal is based on the theory that at a point in the history of the development of the BH language, the short form *yiqtol* used to be the form for expressing past events. At that time, as Michaelis is claimed to have argued, the present ‘*wa*’ in *wayyiqtol* was a verbal form “*haway*,” meaning “it was” (Hetzron 1969:9). But when the prefix-perfect began to give way to the suffix-perfect, there was the need to “reinforce the past-tense meaning” of the prefix-perfect. In order to do this, according to the theory, the particle ‘*haya*’ was added to the prefix-perfect, thus the survival of the old prefix –perfect in the present *wayyiqtol*.

While this explanation is ingenious, the problem is that it fails to ask why *wayyiqtol* coexists with *qatal*, which is used to express past events also. If ‘*wa*’ is added to the old prefix-perfect to distinguish it from the new prefix-perfect, why is it not being used consistently in all perfective cases?

There are other attempts to explain the origin of wayyiqtol. Waltke and O'Connor (1990:544-546) summarise some of these attempts, which range from Storr's (1779) idea that the 'wa' is a remain of "he-interrogativum," "he-demonstrativum" to "waw-copula as signifying a direct consequence of the event thus referred to." Added to this is König's (1897) view that the "waw most probably is 'and' that became solemn, which connects the consequence that happened in relationship to that past moment" (Waltke and O'Connor 1990:545).

Young (1953), Gordon (1957) Sheehan (1970) and Rendsburg (1981) try to trace 'wa' in wayyiqtol to the Egyptian 'iw' as a verbal particle (see also Martins 1991:3). Sheehan (1968:55), however, pointed out that the 'iw in Egyptian and 'wa' in BH developed differently. Lipinski (1997:470) observes that 'wa' is the "common Semitic particle of simple coordination." Concerning the doubling noticed in wayyiqtol, Lipinski explains,

The hypothetical reconstruction for 'wan' of the Hebrew conjunction used in wayyiqtol tense is never attested as such. The doubling of the consonant y, t, n, which follows 'wa' is a secondary phenomenon. It results probably from a pronunciation of 'way-' that aimed at avoiding the monophthongisation of 'ay which might easily occur if 'y' was not geminated ..."¹⁰¹

The problem with most, if not all of the explanations for the origin of 'wayyiqtol is that there is no historical evidence for each claim (cf. Martins 1981:1-2). So, one can easily agree with Waltke and O'Connor (1990:544) that "scholars have not reached a consensus regarding the origin of either the wa(y)- or the yiqtl of the compound form. Although the weight of scholarly opinion is tipped in favour of recognizing a distinct source for the short prefix form."

So, one has to conclude that little is known about the origin of wayyiqtol, and scholars differ on the issue. Another controversial issue regarding the wayyiqtol in BH is its meaning. The big question is: "Does wayyiqtol express tense or aspect?" The next

¹⁰¹ Monophthongisation means the manner of articulating a vowel without any detectable change in vowel quality (Crystal 1997:247). This is in opposition to diphthong such as 'wine,' 'boy,' etc. In this case wayy in wayyiqtol is intended to be diphthongised.

section argues that wayyiqtol may be more plausibly explained by regarding it as expressing perfective aspect instead of past tense.

4.6.1.2. Wayyiqtol as perfective aspect in narratives

In BH, there are two types of verb forms that appear similar in the consonantal texts.¹⁰² In the pointed text, the vowels are different and they also differ in use. The first is what Driver (1892) refers to as “simple waw with shwa (ו).” This type of ‘waw’ plus yiqtol does not convert the yiqtol to perfective or past tense as wayyiqtol is said to do (Driver 1892:70). The other ‘waw’ plus yiqtol is what this section is concerned with. Morphologically this type of ‘waw’ plus yiqtol usually has a patah as the vowel that goes with it (ו). As Driver (1892:20) observes, in some cases where the ‘waw’ is followed by ‘yod,’ ‘nun’ and ‘tav,’ the dagesh is usually dropped. In other cases the radicals that follow ‘waw’ carry a dagesh in order to “avoid monophthongisation of ‘ay’” (see 4.6.2 above).

Longacre (1.5.2 above) argues that wayyiqtol is used to mark foregrounding in narratives, and so it is preterite (Longacre 1992:178, Zevit 1998:15, Goldfajn 1998). If one holds that BH is a tense-prominent language, one will naturally conclude that wayyiqtol is a marker for preterite or past tense. However, if BH is understood as an aspect-prominent language, as hypothesised, in this study, how then can wayyiqtol be explained? First it should be remembered that both tense and aspect have a temporal property in their use as well as the structure of the event as expressed in the verb. The issue is ‘which property does a language give prominence to?’ The claim being made here is that wayyiqtol can be understood as expressing perfective aspect. Wallace (1982:208) cites linguists such as Grimes, Hopper and Thompson, Junes and Jones, Longacre and Levinsohn who divide the type of information in a narrative discourse into two types. One is foreground and the other is background.

According to Wallace (1982:208), foreground “are the more important events of a narrative, the more important steps in a procedure, the central points of an exposition, the

main characters or entities involved in an episode.” The background, according to Wallace, includes less important events in a narrative, procedures that are subsidiary, descriptions and digression as well as minor characters or things. Wallace goes further to argue that in Greek the aorist and the perfect in Latin “provide the basic narration, that is, the presentation of the central sequential events” (1982:208). In contrast to this, Wallace argues that “imperfect in these languages is the verb form of description, the depiction of attendant circumstances” (1982:208). He regards the Greek aorist and the Latin perfect as aspects (1998:208). Porter (1993:77) says of Greek

Applying this (i.e the principle of grammaticalization of tense on page 76 of Porter) to Greek examples ... it becomes clear according to a principle of contrastive substitution ... by which the identical form is used in temporal contexts – that Greek does not grammaticalize absolute tense with the Present.”

Cook (2002) also discusses the notion ‘foreground and background.’ He observes that almost all linguists recognise the distinction between foreground and background, but it is not easy to define the notion (2002:285). Drawing on the works of psycholinguists such as Mary Erbaugh and Gestalt psychologists such as Tanya Reinhart, Cook (2002:286-289) gives a bird’s view of the psychological and linguistic features of foreground and background.

The notion of foreground and background could be explained by an analogy of a plain field and a hill. The plain helps the mind to see the hill as a figure unlike the plain. The hill stands out in a plain. Texts are classified into genre types. The types are assumed to have certain prototypical features. When the mind receives a stimulus such as a piece of discourse, it first sorts it out into a likely set of prototypes according to the script in the cognitive world of the one that receives the discourse stimulus (Bower and Cirilo 1985:74). The prototype is what psycholinguists refer to as “schema” (Graesser, Gersbancher and Goldman 1997:297). With such schema, the mind is assumed to be able to predict some salient features in any particular genre. This usually includes the way

¹⁰² ‘Consonantal texts’ are the original texts of the HB that do not have the pointings or vowel signs. The vowels signs were added much later between 600 to 1000 AD (cf. Van der Merwe, Naude and Kroeze 1999:28).

events are expected to be presented. Whatever is expected to be salient is what is referred to as ‘foreground.’ What is non-salient in that particular genre is referred to as ‘background.’ I present with some modifications the principles of foreground and background as taken from Cook (2002:287).

1. Foreground is functionally dependent upon the background. The ground being the genre type.
2. Foreground events are usually temporally successive.
3. Punctual (+telic) events more easily serve as foreground events.
4. Foreground events are usually perfective aspect.

Going by Porter (193), Wallace (1982), Cirilo (1985) and Graessen et al (1997), it could be said that the verb form used in aspect-prominent languages to mark foreground is the perfect(ive) form. In the case of aspect prominent languages, Porter and Wallace argue that the verb forms used to express sequentiality of events are to be regarded as perfective aspect and not just simple preterite. In this vein, it could be argued that wayyiqtol, which is used to express foreground in narratives in BH is perfective and not preterite, as Longacre would argue.

In chapter three above, the characteristics of tense-prominent and aspect-prominent languages were discussed. In sections 4.2 and 4.3 above, it was hypothesised that BH does not grammaticalize tense, but does grammaticalize aspect. It follows that wayyiqtol could be considered as perfective aspect. It is used to express series of complete events in sequence. Heimerdinger (1999:126) has disagreed with the claim that wayyiqtol is used to mark sequence of events or foreground in narratives. However, Levinsohn (2002:29) reviewing Heimerdinger demonstrates convincingly that Heimerdinger may have misunderstood Longacre’s claim that wayyiqtol is used to mark sequentiality or foreground in narrative in BH.

Wayyiqtol may be regarded as perfective aspect that sets the stage for an event. It does not inflex time just as other verb forms in BH do not inflex time (cf. 4.2 above). Levinsohn (2002:29) opines that

Wayyiqtol verbs should not be described as punctiliar, since this views events as completed, a finished event followed by another one. Rather they should be

described as perfective; a situation is seen as a whole, regardless of time contrasts that may be part of it.

Pular is a language spoken in Guinea in West Africa. According to Evans (1998) the verb forms in Pular are used to mark sequentiality or foreground. Evans regards Pular to be an aspectual language. According to him, Pular uses four types of perfective aspects. Evans refers to them as Perfective₁ Perfective₂ Perfective₃ and statively marked Perfective (1998:85). I present below Pular Perfective Anterior Suffixes as contained in Evans (1998: 57).

Mood	Perfective ₁ /Ant.	Perfective ₂ /Ant.	Perfective ₃ /Ant.	Perf./Neg-Ant.
Active	-uno	-unoo	-lino	-aano
Middle	-ino	-inoo	-inoke	-anooki
Passive	-ano	-anoo	-anooma	-anooka

In explaining the uses of these perfective forms, Evans (1998:58) states

The difference in the anterior perfective₁ and the anterior perfective₂ is syntactically determined, the anterior perfective₂ being used in subordinate environments, focused environments ... and in statively-marked clauses; the anterior perfective₁ is used in all other environments. The anterior perfective forms have a separate semantic value, which could be understood to mean *a while* or *since*.

BH is not the only language that uses the special perfective form to mark sequentiality in narratives. In Aghem, the verb form “me” [HF] is used to mark “consecutive action in the past where the action on one clause follows closely on the action on the preceding clause” (Hyman 1979:92). According to Hyman, “me” [HF] is used only when the clause has no direct object. If the clause has a direct object, “me” [HF] can no longer be used. If the clause has an object, the high and low tones are neutralised.

Evans also reports that “some researchers have suggested that Perfective₂ can be understood as being restricted to narrative” (1998:104). If Evans’ report is correct, it can be argued that languages do have special verb forms for marking sequentiality like

wayyiqtol in BH.¹⁰³ The use of special verb forms for sequentiality is, therefore, not unique to BH.

In chapter five of this study the use of wayyiqtol for foregrounding shall be examined in detail.¹⁰⁴ It will be shown that wayyiqtol as perfective aspect is used in the book of Joshua to express a series of complete events or events that are seen as a whole in a narrative. Though it may have other uses, it will be shown that, statistically it is used more for foregrounding than its use for other functions. It may be regarded as its prototypical use.

4.6.2. Qatal

4.6.2.1. Origin

While scholars agree that qatal/qtl belongs to the Semitic language, there is controversy as to whether it is older than yaqtul or a later development from yaqtul. Lee, writing in 1827, argues that qtl is formed from concrete nouns. He bases his argument on the ideas held by Arab grammarians, who claim that the verbs in Arabic are formed from masdars. Lee understands masdars to be nouns (McFall 1982:29). The idea that qatal is formed from a noun and or participle is supported by Paul Haupt and Knudtzon (McFall 1982:87 and 89).

In 1910, Bauer disputed the priority of qatal/qtl over yaqtul. He claimed that yaqtul is the oldest form of the finite verb in Semitic (McFall 1982:97). He argues that only later, in the course of the development of the Semitic languages, qatal found its way into the Semitic languages. At a point in time the former meaning expressed by yaqtul was being encroached by qatal. A formal split occurred in which qatal was being used to express perfect(ive), while yaqtul took on imperfective meaning (McFall 1982:98).

Rainey contributed to this debate in 1988. He argues that there were two original verb forms in Proto Semitic. These were yaqtul and yaqtulu (Greenstein 1988:7,8,

¹⁰³ Dooley and Levinsohn (2000:73) report a similar situation in which a special story development marker “kan” is used in Tyap language. In the text the authors give, “kan” is used to mark sequentiality of events.

¹⁰⁴ By ‘foreground’ is meant the parts of a discourse “that extend the basic framework of the mental representation” (Dooley and Levinsohn 2000:41).

Huehnergard 1988:19). Qatal, according to Rainey is a later development from yaqtul. As was the case with wayyiqtol, scholars have not come to any consensus as to the origin of qatal.

In addition to the controversy about the origin of qatal, another question that needs attention is why are there two perfective forms in BH? More important though is the question: “How can one explain by the aspectual perspective, the meaning of qatal?”

4.6.2.2. Qatal as perfective aspect in narratives

In section 4.6.1 above, it was argued that wayyiqtol is a perfective aspect used in narrative to express foreground or sequentiality. Sequentiality does not necessarily mean a chronological order in the real world (Levinsohn 2002:129). It simply means the order of events according to the perspective of the narrator. It was also shown from the examples from Pular that it is natural for languages to have more than one perfective form. In BH qatal is also used as perfective aspect in addition to wayyiqtol. In this section an explanation is suggested as to why there are two perfective forms in BH. It has since been recognised by BH scholars that qatal is used in narrative to express background information (cf. Longacre 1992, 1998, Niccacci 1990, Endo 1996). The argument that wayyiqtol is a marker for foreground events while qatal is a marker for background events may have been satisfactory. However, the claim should be taken as a statistical tendency and not an absolute rule. BH scholars have found cases where wayyiqtol does not express foreground (cf. Heimerdinger 1999, Endo 1998, Buth 1994). Equally Heimerdinger (1999) supported by Levinsohn (2002) finds cases where qatal is used to mark foreground events. The question that arises, therefore, is whether there is any distinctive reason for the existence of two perfective forms in BH? The question is relevant since there are cases where any of them may be used for foreground or background.

It appears that the existence of elements such as a noun phrase (NP), pronominal phrase (PRO), relative pronoun and particles such as כִּי as preposed elements are critical to the choice between wayyiqtol and qatal perfectives in any construction. Preposed NP may be used to mark focus and or topic (Van der Merwe 1999:292-293). Van der Merwe argues that the perceived cognitive environment of interlocutors involved in the

communication situation affects the structuring of the information to be conveyed in that specific situation.

If BH does not change verb forms, i.e., does not use different perfective forms, there would not have been the problem of why there is the use of different verb forms to express the same perfective or imperfective meanings. For in other languages such as English, the structure of information can change due to the assumed cognitive environment of the interlocutors without necessarily changing the verb forms, e.g.

- a) John went to school.
- b) It was John that went to school.
- c) What John did was that he went to school.
- d) And John went to school and met the principal.

The meanings of the four sentences are different; yet, the predicate verb form does not change. In the case of BH the verb forms seem to be sensitive to the presence of any elements in their environments. Evans (1998:89) finds a similar sensitivity of the verb form to its environment in Pular. Evans reports that there are focus particles that he refers to as ‘ko’ and ‘duu.’ Whenever any of the particles is present in the environment of the perfective form in Pular, it influences the form of the perfective that can be used. He reports “the sensitivity of the perfective forms to the presence of either these focus particles supports the argument that the verb forms themselves are sensitive to focusing ... “It can be argued, therefore, that the use of different perfective forms in different environments or contexts is not restricted to BH alone. There is evidence that other languages behave in this manner too.

What is observed in the use of more than one perfective form in BH can be explained further by the trimodal theory of Pike (cf. 2.6 above). Wayyiqtol and qatal may be referred to as the same ‘aspecteme.’ This is coined in analogy to phoneme, tenseme etc as Pike uses them in his tagmemic theory.¹⁰⁵ As Pike uses the notion of tenseme and aspecteme, the same tense value or aspectual value may be changed in form due to the environment where they are found. Wayyiqtol and qatal both refer to the same perfective aspect, but one being a conditioned variation of the other due to elements in the

¹⁰⁵ For the use of these notions see Pike (1997).

immediate context or environment. I argue that the combination of the structure of the information as influenced by the cognitive environment of the interlocutors and the trimodal theory offer a plausible explanation for the existence of more than one perfective form in BH. This seems more plausible than the historical-comparative philological explanation offered by scholars of BH verbal system. If an analysis is restricted to information structure alone, one is still left wondering why one form does not convey the different nuances of meaning brought about by changes in the structure of the sentence like the example of English above. The observation that elements in the environment of verb forms may modify the forms, may provide the answer for the existence of more than one form used to express perfective in BH.

4.6.2.3. Qatal as used to express general truth

4.6.2.3.1. Introduction

In sections 4.6.1.2 and 4.6.2.2 it was argued that both wayyiqtol and qatal are used to express perfective meaning. There are other cases of the use of qatal, where the interpretations are not so clear. In this section I discuss some of such cases. The examples are intended to be illustrative only and not an exhaustive study of the entire problem that is found in the Hebrew Bible.

There is a particular way that qatal is used in BH, the semantic interpretation of which is not generally agreed upon by scholars of BH. This particular way of using qatal is usually referred to as “general truth” (Driver 1892:17), “gnomic aorist” (Rogland 2001:15) and “omnitemporal proposition” (Lyons 1977:680). According to Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994:141), gnomic situations are not restricted to any particular time. Gnomic statements, he explains, are omnipresent for “they apply to generic subjects and basically held for all time.” Lyons (1977:680) defines an omnitemporal proposition as

one that says that something has been, is and always will be so: it is a proposition whose truth-value is constant for all values of t_i in a finite set of time-points or time intervals $\{t_1, t_2, t_3 \dots t_n\}$.

Lyons explains that the temporal status of the propositions embodied in gnomic utterances is diverse. Some of such expressions are timeless and others are omnitemporal.¹⁰⁶ In the languages of the world it is found that perfective, imperfective tense and mood are used to express gnomic situations (cf. Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994, Waltke and O'Connor 1990, Rogland 2001, Lyons 1977, Cook 2002). While scholars agree that gnomic situations may be expressed by any of perfective, imperfective past and non-past tenses, there is, however, no agreement on whether gnomic expressions, when the perfective and imperfective form is used, should be understood as having the same semantic value or not. Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994:221) argue that there are no semantic differences between perfective and imperfective when both are used to express gnomic situations. Cook (2002:221) cites Buth (1982) to support the view expressed by Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca that there are no semantic differences between perfective and imperfective when they are used to express gnomic situations. Applying this to BH, Cook argues "However, in majority of instances both the qatal and yiqtol forms have present gnomic sense and their alteration is stylistic" (2002:221). Cook's conclusion is similar to the views of other scholars whom Rogland (2001:18) cites. They include Driver, Gibson, Joosten, Eskhult and Fensham. According to Rogland, these views are based on the idea that "qatal was originally a universal present ... and that the use of qatal in gnomic statements is a survival from an older stage of the language." This diachronic argument seems to be the reason why some scholars argue that there is no difference semantically when qatal and yiqtol are used to express gnomic situations. However, there are contrary views to the one expressed above.

Lyons holds a view that is contrary to the idea that there is no semantic difference between perfective and imperfective forms when both are used to express gnomic situations. He argues that there is diversity in the temporal status in gnomic utterances. According to him,

¹⁰⁶ According to Lyons (1977:680), "a timeless proposition is one for which the question of time-reference whether deictic or non-deictic simply does not arise: the situation or state-of-affairs that it describes is outside time altogether. Obvious examples of timeless propositions are the so-called eternal truths of mathematics and theology." An example will be "God reigns." Any proposition

some are timeless and others are omnitemporal, but many of them could hardly be said to describe anything more than tendencies, generalities and assumed regularities. Some languages are said to have special gnomic tenses (in a rather broad sense of the term ‘tense’). More commonly, however, gnomic utterances will employ, as they usually do in Modern English, a tense, mood or aspect that is employed characteristically, with rather different functions (1977:281).

It appears to me that Lyons’ arguments are more convincing in regard to aspect-prominent languages such as BH, which grammaticalizes its aspectual distinctions. It may be conceded that in BH, like any other language, diachronic changes have effects on the synchronic situation. Nevertheless, it appears that qatal is used to express perfective meaning, while yiqtol is used to express imperfective meaning (Sasson 2002). The arguments of Lyons and Sasson have some implications when one wants to understand the meaning of qatal when it is used to express general truth. In this discussion I will be talking about general truth and not gnomics. As Sasson argues, the majority of cases where yiqtol is said to have expressed perfective can be understood as imperfective meaning (4.4 above). In support of semantic differences between perfective (qatal) and imperfective (yiqtol) when both are used to express general truth, Lyons offers a helpful insight. He argues, “Moreover, we can base our assertion of a general truth upon the evidence of our past experience: hence the use of past” (1977:681). “Alternatively our belief in the validity of some general truth may be based upon our knowledge of what is usually the case; this makes the habitual or iterative aspect appropriate in languages that grammaticalize aspectual distinctions of this kind” (1977:681). In section 4.3 above, it was argued that BH grammaticalizes its aspect and not tenses. BH does not have a morphology to express present tense where an event and the verb form used to refer to it is in the form S,E,R (cf. Declerck 1986:307, Rogland 2001:15). An interpretation of perfective gnomic as present tense, or imperfective as present tense (Cook 2002:221) appears coercive. BH is not a tense-prominent language. Events are regarded either as perfective or imperfective. (I use imperfective in this way rather broadly to include future and other irrealis in BH). It is most likely that, by paying attention to these aspectual

that is not timeless like the definition of omnitemporal given above will be called time bound. An

distinctions as Sasson (2002) does and as Lyons (1977:681) argues, one may come closer to the semantic distinctions in perfective and imperfective general truth statements.

I follow Lyons, therefore, and argue that in BH, when perfective is used to express a general truth situation, it is so used on the basis of past experiences or a set of complete whole experiences of the speaker about those events. It is like saying ‘we have known that this had always been the case and have no new evidence to suppose any contrary.’ Also when imperfective is used to express a general truth situation, it is so used on the basis of what the speaker believes to be the usual case. The speaker can be assumed to be saying ‘this is the habitual way things have been, if even it does not seem to be so now, it will be like that later, because that is the habitual way it will always be.’ I give examples from languages other than BH to illustrate this point. After that some examples from BH will be presented.

4.6.2.3.2. Examples from English (Rogland 2001:22)

- a) Never a duck was hatched by a drake
- b) Never a duck is hatched by a drake
- c) Never a duck will be hatched by a drake

In the sentences above, sentence (a) may express a belief based on past experience. It may be a response to a question such as ‘Did you ever see a drake that hatched a duck’? Sentence (b) may be a response to a question such as “Do drakes hatch ducks”? In sentence (c) the probable question might be “Do you think that one day a drake will hatch a duck”? In the sentences, though English tense morphology is used, they are not necessarily temporal deictics. English has extended its tense system to express what is pragmatically tenseless. This is an example of pervasive parameter (cf. Bhat 1999). Rogland (2001:22) notes that “all these examples express very similar ideas, yet this can hardly mean that the English tenses are simply interchangeable or have lost their semantic marking.” He goes on to say that example (a) indicates the way things have typically happened, example (b) indicates the way things typically happen now, while example (c) indicates the way things will typically happen in the future.

example of time bound proposition will be “Boys will always be boys.”

4.6.2.3.3. Examples from Yoruba (Ogunbowale 1970:135)¹⁰⁷

- a) Awurebe ni on le yeno tani je to ono Awurebe
Awurbe said it could clear-road who has ever-gone road of-Awurebe
'Awurebe said (Perf) it could clear a path/road, but who has ever gone on
the road cleared by Awurebe?

According to Comrie (1985), Yoruba is an aspect-prominent language. From the literal translation of the text above, the verb 'ni' (said) is perfective. It expresses what Awurebe had been observed or heard to have said. Apparently Awurebe never performs what he claims that he can do. The proverb, which now becomes a common saying in Yoruba, is based on the past experience of what Awurebe had been heard to have said, but never performed. In this case, like in some other African languages, the statement may have been made once and it can be taken over as a saying or proverb in illustrating other cases of claims without actions to back them up. The saying may not need to have been repeated many times by Awurebe in this case.

- b) Bi ologbo ba pa eku a fi iru re de ile
when/if cat if kill(Imperf) mouse it take(Imperf) tail its keep in-house
"When the cat kills a mouse, it keeps its tail" (Ogunbbowale 1970:136).

In Yoruba imperfective forms used in the second sentence also express a general truth situation, based on what is known to be the usual/habitual practice of cats. The semantic differences between the perfective and the imperfective is kept distinct.

4.6.2.3.4. Examples from Ebirá¹⁰⁸

- a) Aa si ita ngwa, ozi aaa ma ni.
"If/when one removes the clothes, (Imperf.) it is a child that one usually
brings out (Imperf).
- b) Isi e te, Ohomorihi oo ye.
The thing which is hidden (Perf), God knows (Perf).

¹⁰⁷ Yoruba is a tone language. The tones are not represented in these examples, but Ogunbowale did represent the tones. Subscripts are also not added here as Ogunbowale did.

¹⁰⁸ The examples are from Ebirá oral proverbs or wise sayings.

Sentence (a) in the Ebira example above is based on what is usually observed about women in the process of giving birth to babies. It expresses a habitual act. The act has been incorporated into the stock of proverbs in the language to express the idea that once the unexpected event happens, people have to face it and accept responsibility to work out the problem. People should not shy away from it.

In sentence (b), people have known from past experience that things done in secret eventually become known. It is believed that God had known such secrets when they were done. The perfective form of Ebira verb is used to express such a general truth.

These examples may point to the possibility that in these languages and other African languages the changes in the form of the verbs used to express general truth situations do have different semantic nuances. If that may be so, it appears that different verb forms used in BH to express general truth may also be expressing different semantic meanings. Two examples are taken from Rogland (2001:35) to illustrate.

Prov. 1:7

חכמה ומוסר אוילים בזו

‘Fools have (ever/always) despised wisdom and discipline.’

In this example the verb **בזו** is perfective. It could be understood as what fools had done consequence of which is their present behaviour. That is, the behaviour exhibited shows what the fools had done to wisdom and discipline. The perfective, therefore, expresses this whole act that the fools had taken and upon which they based their manifested behaviour.

Prov. 6:8

תכין בקיץ לחםה אנרה בקציר מאכלה

‘The ant usually prepares her food in summer, at harvest her food.’

The imperfective use in the text above may be understood as a habitual behaviour of the ant that allows the speaker to know what the ant usually does in summer. The point being made is that BH uses perfective and imperfective forms to express general truth situations similar to the way other aspect-prominent languages do. Poetry is a corpus that is usually appealed to in the claim that *yiqtol* in the past is used to express perfective. A

reconsideration of the use of imperfective in poetry in expressing past events may show that an imperfective meaning may be more likely and less coercive. A crosslinguistic study of aspect-prominent languages gives us more insight into the use of qatal and yiqtol for expressing general truth.

Before I conclude the discussion on the use of perfective and imperfective forms to express a general truth, I will cite a few examples from cases that are often quoted to be representative of general truth expressions. For the data on the most often quoted examples, I rely on Driver (1892:17).

Isa. 1:3a

ידע שור קנהו

‘An ox knows its owner.’

Ps. 7:16

בור כרה ויחפרהו

‘He cuts a hole, and he digs it.’

Ps. 10:6

אמר בלבו בל-אמוט

‘He says in his heart, ‘I shall not be moved.’”

Jer. 10:13b

ברקים למטר עשה

‘He makes lightning in the rain.’

Qoh. 8:14

אמרתי שגם-זה הבל

‘I say even this is useless.’

There are some general truth sentences that are expressed by the imperfective form, e.g.

Ps. 7:16b

ויפל בשחת יפעל

‘And he fell, in the wickedness he usually does.’

Ps. 5:10

קבר־פתוח גרונם לשונם יחליקון

‘The grave opens its throat, its tongue is usually smooth.’

Qoh. 8:3b

כי כל־אשר יחפץ יעשה

‘For all that he usually desires/he will desire, he usually does/will do.’

According to Driver (1892:17), the cases when qatal is used to express a general truth are the cases that people have “known to have actually occurred, and so proven from experience.” As I have argued in 4.6.2.3 above, the examples where yiqtol/weqatal are used to express a general truth, may be regarded as cases that people believe will be the way things will happen because they probably have seen similar cases before.

Having argued for the different semantics of perfective and imperfective when they are used to express general truth situations, it should be mentioned that general truth utterances do not have their primary focus on time or on the whole or part of an event in question. The primary function of general truth utterances is to express a truth or what is believed to be a truth as part of the natural order of things.

4.6.3. Qatal as used in performative sentences

Closely related to the use of qatal in expressing general truth is the issue of the use of qatal in what is known as ‘performative sentences.’ This issue is the topic of this section. It is argued that an aspectual view of BH and a comparison with other aspect-prominent languages could provide insight into the meaning of the use of qatal in the so-called performative sentences.

The ‘performative sentence’ is used by Austin to describe certain sentence types of which the truth-value can neither be affirmed nor denied. Austin (1999:64) gives the following descriptions of what he refers to as ‘performative sentence.’¹⁰⁹

- a) they do not ‘describe’ or ‘report’ ... anything at all, are not true or false
- b) the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of, doing of an action, which again would normally be described as or ‘just’ saying something ... (1999:64).

¹⁰⁹ The original work of Austin on this subject was produced in 1962, with the title “How to do things with words” (cf. Jaworski and Coupland 1999:64).

Austin gives some examples to illustrate his description of a performative sentence. I give two of them below.

- a) I do take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife.
- b) I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth (1999:64).

How may the semantics of qatal be understood when used to express a performative sentence? Is it past tense, present tense perfective or imperfective?

To those who regard BH as a tense-prominent language, qatal in a performative sentence means past tense (Rogland 2001:103). However, to those who view BH as aspect-prominent language, qatal performative sentence is understood as perfective aspect. Waltke and O'Connor, Hendel, Tupper and Gentry are examples (Rogland 2001:103).

I argue that the theory of aspect based on crosslinguistic evidence can contribute to our understanding on the problem of qatal as used in performative sentence. It should be remembered that BH, unlike English, has no verb form to mark present tense. This is not surprising if the language is viewed as an aspect-prominent language. The issue of participle as imperfective verb form is discussed in section 4.9 below. BH like other aspect-prominent languages regards events either as complete whole (perfective) or incomplete (imperfective). The language may extend these to other areas such as the use of qatal to express performative sentences. This is in consonant with the behaviour of other languages (cf. Bhat 1999). Although a performative sentence does not primarily focus on time or completion or non-completion of an event, nevertheless, it can theoretically be argued that there is a logical reason for perfective to be used as found across languages. Theoretically, it can be assumed that a performative sentence is regarded as a whole unit, a complete event or act performed by the speech act. It cannot be future or an on-going process. By saying it, constitutes having done it. It is therefore a whole complete event. If this line of reasoning is correct, then it can be argued that what is expressed with perfective verb forms in performative sentences in aspect-prominent languages reflects that which had taken place and is regarded as a whole event.

If the argument above may be held, I would then follow Driver (1892:15) and interpret the qatal in a performative sentence as perfective. The perfective understanding of qatal in performative sentences may be corroborated by similar examples from other

languages. For example, in the Epira language, perfective is marked by the preverbal particle ‘maa’ or in the case of pluperfect ‘ma raa.’¹¹⁰ When two people had a quarrel and the elders settle the quarrel between those two people, it is usually required that a statement is made to the effect that each has agreed to terminate the quarrel. In order to terminate the quarrel, each will say “Maa va huuni ani” or “Ma raa va huuni ani.” Literally it says ‘I turned away from it.’ That is to say, ‘I declare the quarrel is over.’ Without saying that, the quarrel is not deemed to be over. I cite another example where forgiveness is effected by one person saying to the other that he or she has forgiven the other. In Shona, a language spoken in Zimbabwe, the one who forgives the other, would say “Ndaduregerera.”¹¹¹ Literally, this means ‘I have forgiven you.’ It is interesting to note that some languages like Epira and Shona will even use pluperfect to express performative sentences. This, theoretically, may be a pointer to the suggestion that what is said reflects what had been decided and done. The statement in a performative sentence is used to express an event and its performance as intrinsically one entity with its beginning an end of what had taken place. There is really no time interval between the act of saying and doing. The saying and the doing are wrapped up as one whole event. This is in agreement with Comrie (1985:37) that performative sentences are not momentaneous.

I now cite two examples from BH to illustrate the use of performative sentences in BH.

Deut. 26:3a¹¹²

הגדתי היום ליהוה אלהיך

‘I declare today to the LORD your God ...’

The verb ‘הגדתי’ is a hiphil perfective. In the text or in the story, there is nowhere when declaring was first done. The very act of saying the sentence to the people by the priest as

¹¹⁰ Epira is the mother tongue of the present writer. It is spoken in the Kogi State of Nigeria.

¹¹¹ This information was elicited from Rev. Chomotiri Enos, a Shona from Zimbabwe who was studying at the University of Stellenbosch. The information was given on January 2, 2003 at Weidenhof, Stellenbosch.

he was commanded is the actual declaring to the LORD that he (the priest) has come to the land that is promised to the people.

Deut. 4:26 (Rogland 2001:109).

העִירְתִּי בְכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ כִּי־אֲבֹד תֵּאֱבְדוּן

‘I call heaven and earth as witness against you this day that you will certainly perish ...’

The expression **העִירְתִּי** is qatal and it is perfective. By stating that heaven and earth are called as witnesses constitutes calling them as witnesses. The perfective understanding of qatal in BH when used in performative sentences is similar to what is observed in other languages as Rogland (2001) reports. In BH it is the perfective form that is found to be used to express performative sentences. There is, therefore, no compelling reason to force a present tense interpretation of qatal when used in performative sentences. It is perfectly normal to understand it in its perfective meaning. This once again demonstrates that qatal is consistently used to express perfective in BH. It also shows that where tense view of BH will create coercion in forcing a present interpretation on qatal, an explanation based on the aspectual view appears more plausible and more felicitous.

4.6.4. The so-called prophetic perfect¹¹³

Some have claimed that qatal (perfective form) may be used to express events that are posterior to the moment of speech. Those who hold this view argue that such a way of using qatal “imparts to descriptions of the future a forcible touch of reality, and reproduces vividly the certainty with which the occurrence of a yet future event is contemplated by the speaker” (Driver 1892:18). This way of using the qatal is usually referred to as “prophetic perfect” (Driver 1892:18). Those who hold the prophetic perfect view of qatal assume that the speaker psychologically shifts his point of view of the event he describes. He may at one time think that what he is describing at the moment of speech was yet to occur and at another time thinks of them as if they had occurred already (Driver 1892:19).

¹¹² The text is taken from Rogland (2001:109).

Driver gives three ways of identifying what he refers to as prophetic perfect. I present them below.

- a) The description of the future scene may begin with the perfect, whether the verb following ... falls back into the future or not.
- b) It frequently appears after **וַיִּבְרַח**, the reason for an assertion or command being found in some event occurrence which, though still future, is deemed certain.
- c) when the perfect appears in the midst of a series of imperfects.

From Driver's categories I found about 63 cases where qatal is supposed to be used to express a prophetic perfect.¹¹⁴ I investigated all the cases. In my investigation I first ask how may one know from linguistic signals or from a cognitive environment that an event being described is yet to occur, and that at the same time is thought to have occurred already? Does the explanation describe a normal mind of a normal speaker? It is assumed that an event being described either has occurred or has not yet occurred. It is also assumed that the cognitive environment of the interlocutors usually provides the pragmatic key to mutual understanding in communication situations. As I tried to subject the definition of prophetic perfect to the above assumptions, I found difficulty in fitting the theory of prophetic perfect to the assumed normal way of using language. It is not clear to me whether the future event expressed by the imperfective form is less certain than those expressed by the perfective form. This is more so since the same person is speaking about the same idea.

In view of the difficulty stated above, I attempt an interpretation of the 63 cases based on aspectual distinctions. I decided to allow perfective form to be interpreted as being used to express perfective meanings, while the imperfective form is used to express imperfective meaning. My finding is that the use of qatal in the predictive discourse in very many cases that Driver cited can be interpreted as 'future perfect' (cf. 3.3.2 above). In future perfective, a speaker may take an aspectual viewpoint (Smith 1991:92). See also

¹¹³ According to Klein (1990:45), many of the constructions "are found in the Prophets." Klein argues that the construction is also found in non-prophetic material.

¹¹⁴ Klein (1990:59) lists what he says are the legitimate "prophetic Perfects" They are found in Gen. 17:20, Num. 24:17, Isa. 5:13, 9:1-5, 10:28, 11:9, 19:7, 48:41, Jer. 48:41, 51:30, and Dan. 7:27.

section 3.3.2 above. From such a viewpoint, the speaker relates the information he wishes to convey “to the temporal schema of the situation” he focuses on (Smith 1991:2). I cite an example from Driver’s list to illustrate.

Isa. 11:9

לֹא־יִרְעוּ וְלֹא־יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל־הָהָר קִדְשׁוֹ כִּי־מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ דַּעַת אֶת־יְהוָה כַּמַּיִם
לַיָּם מְכַסִּים

‘They will not harm (imperfective) and they will not kill (imperfective) in all his holy mountain, for the earth had been filled (perfective) with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.’

In the text above, the whole event of not harming and not killing as well as the knowledge filling the earth, are all in the future. However, the earth before the existence of people not harming or killing would have been filled with the knowledge of the LORD. The earth being filled with the knowledge of the LORD is an event that has occurred and is complete before the cessation of harming and killing on the mountain of the LORD. Such a complete event before another event occurs is expressed with the perfective form, and the perfective form expresses such a perfective state of affairs. I will cite an English example as given by Smith (1991:150).

“Next week, Melvin will have arrived.”

Smith explains that the adverbial phrase, next week, specifies the Reference Time, and that the situation, i.e. the coming of Melvin, precedes the Reference Time. That is to say that Melvin’s coming would have happened (perfective) before the Reference Time “next week.” For a discussion on Reference Time see section 3.3.2 above.

There are some cases when the perfective may be found in a series of events that are yet to occur. The perfective in such cases may be used to disrupt the sequence of the predicted events to give some background information (cf. Hendel 1996). See also section 4.2 above. An example of this is found in Isa. 5:28, one of Driver’s cited cases. I present it below.

Isa. 5:28

פְּרִסוֹת סוּסָיו כְּצֶר נִחְשְׁבוּ לַגִּלְגָּלִיּוֹת כְּסוּפָה

‘The hooves of his horses are thought (perfective) as a flint and their wheels like wind.’

In Isa 5:27, there is a description of what will take place in the future, using imperfective forms for the description. The speaker now breaks the main description to give a background of the horses of the army that will invade the land. He tells how people had thought about the quality of these horses. The people already know the quality of the horses. So a perfective form is used to state that the quality of the horses is already known. The GNB reflects such existing knowledge.

There are other cases in which a prediction of what will happen is asserted. The perfective form is used in such cases. I wish to argue that even in such cases the pragmatic situation of the text provides a key for interpreting the perfective form that is used. I cite one example from Driver’s list.

Jud. 4:14

קום כי זה היום אשר נתן יהוה את־סִסְרָא בִיָּדְךָ

‘Arise, for this is the day that the LORD has given (perfective) Sisera into your hands.’

It is clear from the text that at the time the statement above was uttered, Siserah had not been killed. However, taking the context of the discourse into consideration, the listeners know that the defeat of Siserah, though not yet a reality, is perceived by the speaker as already accomplished by the LORD. The GNB translates the perfective form by the English past perfect, “has given.”

There are two cases that I find, which do not fit into either the future perfective theory or Hendel’s theory of sequential breaking in order to give background information. These are Jer. 47:3 and Isa. 18:5. There are a few other cases as well as, Isa. 8:8; 47:9 and 51:11b. However, the BHS quoting some manuscripts and versions suggests that the latter texts suffer from some corruptions.

I have argued that most of the cases cited by Driver (1892:18, 19) can indeed be explained by aspectual distinctions, whereas the notion of prophetic perfect may be considered not very helpful in providing an adequate explanation for the perfective form in situations that are deemed to be future. Whenever constructions in BH like any of the

three types identified by Driver (1892:18, 19) are encountered, they may be interpreted either as being used to express future perfective, general truth or a background information that breaks the sequentiality of the predicted events. It appears that the above provide more plausible explanation of the use of the perfective in future situations. If that may be accepted, then I wish to suggest that the notion of prophetic perfect is either abandoned or redefined.

To conclude this section, it should be said that the main argument in the present study is that BH is an aspect-prominent language. The verb forms do not inflex in response to the changes in the time of an event relative to the moment of speech. Aspect is the way a speaker views an event in his thinking. If language is an expression of thought, and if a speaker thinks of an event that is yet to occur as if it has already occurred, this thought might as well be reflected in the form of the verb form that he may choose to use to express it. It does not, therefore violate our argument that the verb forms maintain aspectual distinctions as perceived by a speaker.

4.7. Yiqtol and Its Origin

4.7.1. Origin

In Akkadian, which is generally taken as the Proto Semitic, the following verb forms are identified. They are yaqtul for expressing perfective and yaqtulu for expressing imperfective and qatil for expressing state (cf. Hughes 1970, Janssens 1972). In his contribution to the debate on the development of these verb forms, Hetzron (1969:9) argues, “the imperfect yaqtulu and jussive yaqtul merge to become yiqtol” in BH. According to him, weqatal entered the development of BH “as an equivalent of yiqtol” (1969:9).

Janssens (1972:3) reports that opinions have been expressed and defended that the old “iparras,” which no longer exists, leaves its trace “in West Semitic.” After this disappearance, “a new verbal form would have arisen in West Semitic, the imperfect, which had developed from the old preterite (jussive)” (1972:3). Janssens argues that the West Semitic imperfect did not develop from any form that relates to iparras. Rather, according to Janssens, the Akkadian present and the West Semitic imperfect “have the

same origin.” Janssens traces Proto Semitic jussive yaqtul (from Akkadian *iprus*), to West Semitic yaqtul, (which in Hebrew becomes *yiqtol*) (Janssens 1972:3)

Janssens is in agreement with Hughes (1970) that *qatel* originally was used to express stativity before it became an expression for an active situation. Note that Janssens relies on the role of the stress in his argument. He also argues that the imperfect yaqtulu could be thought to have “originated from yaqtul” in West Semitic (1972:3). It then developed into *yiqtol* in BH (1972:3). However, according to Cook, there is no attested grammaticalisation path between yaqtulu imperfective and yaqtul preterite. Therefore, the origin of *yiqtol* is still shrouded in mystery, as Cook (2002:240) states: “the origin of yaqtulu long form has eluded compelling explanation.”

4.7.2. *Yiqtol* as imperfective¹¹⁵

Just as scholars of the BHVS do not agree about the origin of *yiqtol*, there is also no general consensus on the meaning of *yiqtol*, especially in cases where it is used to express past events. Some argue, as we have discussed in 4.4.1 above, that when *yiqtol* is used to express events in the past, it is past tense (perfective), while others argue that it is so used to express imperfectives in the past. The arguments are examined below.

According to Driver (1892:2) *yiqtol* may be used to express any of the following:

- 1) It expresses movement of an event; i.e. an event viewed as a process or taking time and not at rest like perfect(ive).
- 2) It expresses reiterated or frequent action and habituals.
- 3) It expresses future and other irrealis modes.
- 4) It expresses desiderative mode.

Driver argues that the use of *yiqtol* in the past is to represent the event while nascent rather than while at rest (1892:30). Driver observes, correctly in my view, that the use of *yiqtol* to express past events is found more frequently in poetry. Driver’s notion of “nascent” is not quite clear in terms of whether it is imperfective. However, he seems to observe correctly that *yiqtol* used to express past events is so used to express imperfectivity.

4.8. The Semantics of Weqatal

4.8.1. Origin

The origin and meaning of weqatal are as problematic as any of the BH verb forms discussed so far. In this section, there will be a brief discussion on the origin of this verb form and also its semantics. It shall be argued that an aspectual view of BH appears to give a more felicitous explanation of the meaning of the verb form than the perspectives discussed in chapter one of this study.

Young (1953:249) argues that the ‘waw’ (i.e. ‘ve’ in the case of weqatal) in BH probably originated from the cognate particle similar to ‘iw’ of Egyptian. He considers ‘waw’ as an adverbial particle. Cook (2001), in contrast to Young (1953), opines that weqatal and qatal are from the same source, resultative (‘be’/‘have’) and completive (‘finish’). These, according to Cook, grammaticalize to perfect. The result of further grammaticalisation is that qatal became either perfective or simple past. The simple past is what Cook prefers to refer to as modal qatal (this is the same as what is usually referred to as weqatal). The perfective he refers to as indicative qatal (Cook 2002:210-225). The origin of weqatal is not yet resolved. It is fortunately not a concern of the current study.

Whatever the origin of weqatal might have been, the primary concern in this section is to attempt an explanation of its meaning from the perspective of aspect. First I discuss the tense interpretation of weqatal and its inherent problems. Young (1953) argues that weqatal can be explained by the “sequence of tenses” theory. According to him, the tense value of the clause that precedes a verb form or a following clause modifies the verb or clause that follows the earlier clause or verb form. Accordingly, he argues that in BH, the effect of ‘waw’ on the perfect modifies that perfect in the direction of conforming to the preceding verb. He cites Gen. 1:14 as an example where **וַיְהִי** modifies **יְהִי** in the direction of future (Young 1953:250). Silverman (1973:169) follows the same line of reasoning (1.3.1. above). Silverman in a footnote of his work motivates his claim by citing among others, Gesenius-Kautsch-Cowley (1910:326,330 sections 111a and 112a) and Weingreen (1959:91). Andersen (1994), probably influenced

¹¹⁵ In this discussion the term ‘imperfective’ is used in a rather broad way to include future and other irrealis.

by Kurylowicz (1972:82), follows this further by providing syntactic explanations for the past and future meanings of weqatal. According to him, past tense or future tense meaning of weqatal is determined syntactically (see 1.3.2. above). He argues that a weqatal at the beginning of a clause expresses a future event. Andersen maintains that “the time reference for the whole paragraph is usually indicated by some clear sign at speech onset” (1994:102).

If BH is viewed as a tense-prominent language, the arguments above appear convincing. However, a more careful reflection reveals a serious problem for the above-mentioned view of weqatal. In a tense-prominent language, important temporal values such as future and past should have been morphologised or grammaticalized in the verb or in the auxiliary (Bhat 1999). In BH this is not the case. Indeed, Joosten (1999) has argued convincingly that weqatal does not express perfective or preterite in BH. This means then, that the tense view should be abandoned or there will be a theoretical contradiction. A more plausible explanation should be sought.

4.8.2. Aspectual interpretation of weqatal

In this section we again pick up Driver’s (1892) point of view. (We discussed Driver briefly in section 1.2.1.3 above). We noted that Driver’s theory of the BHVS is based on aspect. He recognises that weqatal has two aspectual values. These are imperfect(ive) in the past identified by stress on the final syllable (1892:114) and imperfect(ive) identified by the stress on the penultima. Driver makes the following distinctions: Firstly, if the clause begins with imperatives, weqatal may be used to continue the imperatives, e.g. Gen. 6:14, 21, Ex. 3:16 (cf. 1892:124-125). Secondly, if the clause begins with an element such as כִּי or temporal adverbial, weqatal is usually used to continue the imperfective when no NP precedes the subsequent clause, e.g.

Gen. 18:19,

כִּי יִדְעֶתִי לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה אֶת בָּנָיו וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דֶרֶךְ יְהוָה

‘For I have known that he will command his sons and his household after him and they will keep (weqatal) the way of the LORD...’¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ The translation follows the BHS suggestion that some manuscripts have כִּי יִדְעֶתִי.

Note that after a NP followed by *yiqtol* the continuation is achieved by the use of *weqatal* since no other elements preposes the verb. The same phenomenon is found in Gen. 40:13 and 1 Sam. 2:35 to mention only these.

The third observation that Driver (1892:126) makes is that after a performative perfect(ive), *weqatal* may be used to express what will follow, e.g. Gen. 17:20. Fourthly, Driver notes that after NP + desiderative imperfect(ive) *weqatal* may be used to express other desideratives that follow. His fifth observation (1892:128) is that after NP + habitual imperfective, the subsequent habitual verbs that are not preceded by NP may be expressed by *weqatal*, e.g. Gen. 2:6. Lastly he notes that after participles that are regarded to have imperfective meaning, *weqatal* may be used to continue the sentence and such *weqatal* usually expresses imperfective. Driver also argues that when *qatal* is followed by *weqatal* in a sentence, the perfective meaning of *qatal* does not change such *weqatal* into perfective. This is contrary to Young (1953), Silverman (1973) and Andersen (1994). For example, in Gen. 31: 7 we have

ואביכן התל בי והחלף את־משכרתי עשרת מנים

‘Your father hated me, and he has been changing my wage ten times.’

In the passage, perfective form that has a perfective meaning is on the onset of the sentence, yet the *weqatal* is not changed to a perfective meaning.¹¹⁷

Driver also argues that “sometimes after a fact has been stated ... by a perfect(ive) we find this tense succeeded by perfect(ive) with ׀ consecutive ... the frequentative sense of which is unmistakable” (1892: 129). He cites Num. 11:8 as an example,

שטו העם ולקטו וטחנו ברחים או דכו במדכה ובשלו בפרור ועשו אתו ענות

‘The people spread, and they were gathering and they were grinding in millstone or they pounded it in a mortar and were cooking it in a pot and were making it into cake.’

Joüon-Muraoka, as reported by Cook (2002:208), supports Driver that *weqatal* is usually used to express imperfective meaning. Joüon-Muraoka is reported to have argued, “the

¹¹⁷ This example is from Driver (1892:159). See also the NIV translation for this passage, which renders the *weqatal* as ‘by changing’ reflecting their imperfective understanding of the *weqatal*.

aspect of w-qatali is that of repeated or durative action.” However, Cook (2002:209) argues that qatal and weqatal are essentially a single conjugation that is used to express perfective aspect. He assumes that weqatal is semantically the same as qatal, when he states, “an examination of the grammaticalization and semantic marking of qatal (including weqatal) is offered that will justify treating qatal and weqatal as a single conjugation marked for perfective aspect” (2002:209).

Having considered carefully the use of weqatal in all the examples that Driver (1982) provides, I can agree with Driver that weqatal is nowhere used to express perfective meaning. I also examined Joüon-Muraoka’s (1991:404-405) list of examples of weqatal that according to them cannot be interpreted as being used to express imperfective meaning.¹¹⁸ I use the same approach as for the cases cited by Driver discussed above. On careful examination of the cases, it appears to me that most of them could indeed be interpreted as expressing imperfective meaning. The only two cases of weqatal in Driver’s list that may not yield to imperfective interpretation at first reading are Gen. 15:6, Jud.3:23. The BHS apparatus has an editorial opinion that ונעל in Jud. 3:23 is probably וינעל. This opinion has no support from any manuscript or any earlier version. So, the interpretation of ונעל should be regarded as difficult or not fitting into my imperfective interpretation of weqatal.

I discuss Gen. 15:6 because it has an example where weqatal begins a sentence and there is also a wayyiqtol in the same sentence. The text reads,

והאמן ביהוה ויחשבה לו צדקה

‘And he believed in the LORD and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’

There are two difficulties in this text. Firstly one would have expected a wayyiqtol reading. But no manuscript suggests such a reading. Secondly, the passage has a weqatal at the beginning of a clause, contrary to Joosten’s (1992:3) observation. Since there is no wayyiqtol prior to weqatal, Kurylowic’s (1972:88) syntactic explanation also does not apply.

¹¹⁸ Their list includes Gen. 15:6; Jud. 3:23; 1 Sam. 5:7; 2 Sam. 7:10; 13:18; 1 Ki. 12:32; 2 Ki. 14:14; 1 Chr.17:10; 12:10; Neh. 9:7-8; Ez. 37:7; 10.

According to Joosten (1992:3), weqatal does not usually begin an indicative clause. If that is correct, weqatal in the text we are discussing cannot be taken as expressing indicative. However, the NIV and the GNB do take the weqatal in the passage as expressing indicative. This may be a possibility, but it is doubtful.

However, it appears that it is possible that the weqatal in the text is used to express the idea that at every instance when the LORD spoke to Abraham, Abraham used to believe in God. In Gen. 12:1 for instance, the LORD calls Abram and tells him to go out of his homeland. Abraham obeys. This obedience may be seen as evidence that Abram believes God, although the term 'he believes' is not used in Gen. 12:4. Again in verse 7 of Gen. 12, the LORD reveals himself to Abram, and promises to give him descendants. Abram then builds a tent and also an altar and prays to (call on) the name of the LORD (cf. Gen. 12). Such a response is another evidence that Abram believes in God. It is not, however, so stated.

There are some intervening events before Gen. 15. In Gen. 15:1, the LORD speaks to Abram again, encouraging him not to fear. In verse 2, Abram responds by questioning what will the LORD give him. After all, Abram complains, he has no child. It appears that at this point Abram's faith was going through a period of tension (cf. Sarna 1989:113). In verse 4-5 the promise is renewed and intensified.

Now in verse 6, the narrator probably wants to tell his reader that for every encounter between the LORD and Abram, Abram used to believe what the LORD said. This seems to corroborate Joosten (1992:3) that when weqatal begins a clause, "it does not express consequence." It is probable that the weqatal in Gen. 15:6 is referring to the narrator's observation about Abram's attitude (Wenham 1987:329). Since the narrator has reported specific incidences in which Abram displays an attitude of belief, the narrator makes the note to characterise Abram as someone who used to believe in the LORD (Wenham 1987:329). Wenham states, "the verbal form וְהֵאֱמִין (waw + perfect) "he believed" probably indicates repeated or continuing action."

To support the argument above, I cite Joosten (1992:4) where a similar narrator's comment is noted. The example is taken from Gen. 47:22

רק אדמת הכהנים לא קנה כי חק לכהנים מאת פרעה ואכלו את-חקם אשר נתן

להם פרעה

‘Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priest had fixed allowance from Pharaoh, and they used to eat their portion that Pharaoh gave them.’

After Joosten has given the translation above, he argues, “by the use of (ואכלו) the Hebrew text indicates that this action occurred more than once over a certain period of time in the past: the priests used to eat from the allowance of Pharaoh ...” Joosten gives another example from

1 Sam. 2:22a,

ועלי זקן מאד ושמע את כל-אשר יעשון בניו

‘And Eli was very old and he used to hear all that his children used to do.’

According to Joosten, the verb ושמע ‘and he used to hear’ is not used to express consequence, but a narrator’s comment to express what used to happen for a period of time in the past. On the basis of these examples, I submit that the weqatal in Gen. 15:6 may be interpreted as being used to express habitual action in the past.

There is a case in 1 Sam. 5:7 where weqatal is used that it is said to be interpretable as expressing perfective meaning. The text reads,

ויראו אנשי-אשדוד כי-כן ואמרו לא-ישב ארון אלהי ישראל עמנו

‘And the men of Ashdod saw that it was so. And they said (WEQATAL) the ark of the God of Israel shall not return with us.’

I wish to suggest that the weqatal in the passage resembles the narrator’s comment on the talk that was going on among the people of Ashdod when they saw the trouble that the ark of the LORD caused to them. It might probably suggest some form of debate and discussion that went on for some time before the community will take action on whether to keep the ark or not. If this were probable, ואמר may be translated as ‘and they were saying.’

One case where weqatal does not seem to be interpretable as imperfective in Joüon-Muraoka’s list is Neh. 9:7-8. The text reads,

אתה-הוא יהוה האלהים אשר בחרת באברהם והוצאתו מאור כשדים ושמת

שמו אברהם ומצאת את־לבבו נאמן לפניך וכרות עמו הברית לתת
את־ארץ הכנעני ההתי האמרי והפרזי והיבוסי והגרנשי לתת לזרעו ותקם
את דבריך כי צדיק אתה

‘You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham. You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzite, Jebusites and Girgashites. You have kept your promise because you are righteous’ (NIV).

One question that may be raised about this text is that it may not represent a ‘pure form’ of the BH language. It could be argued that on such grounds it may not be cited in support of the claim that weqatal is used to express perfective as Joüon-Muraoka (1991:404-405) supposes. I present reasons for the argument.

OT scholars agreed that the book of Ezra and Nehemiah constitute one book regardless of the fact that they are divided into Ezra and Nehemiah, e.g. Breneman (1993:40) and Williamson (1985:xxi) argue that Ezra and Nehemiah is most likely one book, worked by one redactor.

If Ezra and Nehemiah is indeed one book, it follows that the work is one, composed probably by one editor or redactor. It is known that Aramaic passages occur in Ezra 4:8-6:10 and 7:12-26 (cf. Rosenthal 1963:5). If one redactor compiled the two books as one piece of work originally, it is reasonable to assume that the structure of one language that is similar to the other may be mistakenly used. The morphological difference between wayyiqtol and weqatal in the consonantal text is only the ‘yod.’ It is quite easy to miss out the ‘yod’ since weqatal in Aramaic is used to express perfective meaning. This is the line of reasoning in Driver (1892:160). Driver may be correct, then, when he argues that in cases where weqatal is used to express perfective meaning this may be due to infiltration of Aramaic into the text.

If Driver is correct, then, it could be argued that in ‘unadulterated’ Hebrew weqatal is not usually used to express perfective meaning. The citing of Neh. 9:7-8 among the texts used to argue for the perfective meaning of weqatal may, therefore, be questionable.

Driver (1892:161-162) has some reservations whether the influence of Aramaic usage observed in the Late BH may be extended to earlier books such as “Genesis to 2 Samuel, Amos and Isaiah.” Though Driver does not give specific references from the books he cites, he argues that in the books there are “few places” where “an explanation based on the influence of Aramaic usage is more than doubtful.”

The argument that Driver makes, which is based on his observations in Gen. to 2 Sam., Amos, and Isa. is countered by Rendsburg (2002). Rendsburg made a detailed study of regional dialectical differences found in the book of Kings. He found two main dialects, which he refers to as the “Judean Hebrew” and the “Israelian Hebrew.” Rendsburg found “Israelian Hebrew” in 2 Samuel. He also suspects that even in the stories in Genesis, the “Benjaminite sources may be used with all due caution to enlarge the Israelian Hebrew picture” (2002:18). According to Rendsburg, Benjamin shared a border with neighbouring peoples where Aramaic was more in use.

Perhaps scholars studying the BHVS may still need to wait until more evidence is available from older books of the OT. In the meantime, it seems that in every case where the imperfective form is used, it may be evaluated by first assuming an imperfective meaning. In doing such an evaluation, I wish to suggest that consideration for the possibility that the imperfective form may be used to express habitual, repetitive or other forms of frequentative actions should be allowed. Where a sentence may begin with a perfective form, one may want to consider whether the perfective form is used to express an event that is complete and done, which then serves as a reference time and or condition that had existed before the other event would occur in future, or where a continuous or repetitive action follows. Where the above possibilities are not plausible, then one may apply the archaic influence notion to interpret the meaning of such a text. There may also be the need to await more studies about the behaviour of aspect-prominent languages in order to have more crosslinguistic evidence that may shed light on the use of the imperfective verb form in BH.

Van Peursen (1999:136) also makes a list of cases where weqatal is used, where he claims that weqatal does not allow imperfective interpretation.¹¹⁹ For instance, Van Peursen claims that 1 Chr. 7:21 cannot be interpreted as imperfective. The text reads

וזבד בנו ושותלח בנו ועזר ואלעד והרגום אנשי־גת הנלדים בארץ כי
ירדו לקחת את־מקניהם

‘And Zebad his son and Shotlah his son and Azer and El-Ed were killed by the men of Gath that were born in the land because they went down to take their property.’

Significant of all of Van Peursen’s examples is that all of them are from the latest books of the Hebrew Bible.

I have cited earlier (4.4.1) the case of Russian, which according to Smith (1991:306) does use imperfective to express events that would normally be regarded as closed. Smith appeals to the theory of ‘Conventions of Use’ to explain that in such situations the focus of the imperfective use may be to express that the event took place and not to focus on its end or completion. One wonders whether this may be what is happening to the use of the imperfective form in some cases in BH where the event does not seem to yield to repetitive or habitual in the past interpretation. It may be that the narrator does not want to focus on the fact of the completion of the killing, but just to report that the killing took place. The phenomenon of using the imperfective form to express situations that are closed when their end is not in focus is also attested in Navajo (Smith 1991:406).

Before a strong case for the application of ‘conventions of use’ theory could be made in BH, there might be the need to await more studies from many more aspect-prominent languages. If the feature is observed in several more languages, it will increase the level of the validity of the application of the theory for explaining the meaning of some vexing BH verb forms.

¹¹⁹ Peursen’s list contains the following: 1 Chr. 7:21;8:7; Ezr 8:13; Neh. 10:33; Esther 9:23,27,29; Dan. 8:11;10:7; 12:5.

Weqatal, on the whole, is prototypically used to express an imperfective meaning. It is a variant of yiqtol conditioned by the environment. This is especially the norm in the older BH.

To conclude, despite the fact that not all instances of weqatal can be explained in terms of our hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language, I think we have sufficient grounds to conclude that BH can be regarded as an aspect-prominent language.

If yiqtol and weqatal may be regarded as variants of the verb form that is normally used to express an imperfective meaning, it may be argued that it is probably more plausible to pair it with yiqtol and not with qatal as Cook (2002) does. The entire BH finite verb forms may be paired as shown below.

Verb forms	Perfective	Imperfective
<i>Wayyiqtol</i>	Yes	No
<i>Qatal</i>	Yes	No
<i>Yiqtol</i>	No	Yes
<i>Weqatal</i>	No	Yes

In chapter five the verb forms in the corpus for this study, which are Exodus chapter 15, Joshua and Psalms 1 and 37, will be analysed with a view to demonstrating the consistent use of yiqtol and weqatal as imperfectives and wayyiqtol and qatal as perfectives. The last topic to be discussed in this chapter is the question of participles. That is examined below.

4.9. The Participle in BH

The participle is a grammatical element that can both be used as a noun or as a verbal predicate (Driver 1892:165). In this section, the goal is to discuss the participle when used as a verbal predicate. When a participle in BH is used as a verbal predicate, Blake (1968:30) correctly explains that it can be interpreted as having an imperfective meaning. This is so since a participle, when used as a verbal predicate, expresses an on-going event

or an existing state.¹²⁰ This includes when it is used to express such imperfective events or states in the past (Driver 1892:166). An on-going event or state is imperfective (cf. Dahl 1985:24).

Whenever a participle is used as a finite verb, it appears that it is so used as imperfective (Cook 2002:267, 268). The statement above is in agreement with findings in other languages (cf. Evans 1998:70, Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994:133).

4.9.1. Functions of participles in BH

Joosten (1989:128) explains that the participle in BH may need not take an explicit subject. He identifies two syntactic forms of the participle in BH. There is the participle followed by subject and there is the participle preceded by the subject. According to Joosten, when a participle is followed by a subject, the participle is used to express voluntary action. Joosten cites Gen. 31:5 to illustrate this,

ראה אנכי את־פני אביכן כי איננו אלי כתמל שלשם

‘I see that your father is no longer friendly with me as before.’

Joosten argues “I ‘see’ does not here refer to a process ongoing in the present but to Jacob’s interpretation of his impression” (1989:132). Joosten argues that the process of interpreting the event is a voluntary act of the speaker.

When a subject precedes a participle, Joosten claims that it is so used to express involuntary action. Joosten gives an example from

2 Sam. 18:27.

ויאמר הצפה אני ראה את־מרוצת הראשון כמרצת אחימעץ בן־צדוק

“And the watchman said ‘I see the first runner to be like the runner Ahmaaz son of Zadok.’”

Joosten (1989:132) states that the vision of the watchman here was impressed upon him. He simply “relates the passive process” of the seeing.

¹²⁰ Wernberg-Moller (1958) claims that the participle in BH is sometimes used as infinitive absolute without an agent. Since infinitives are undeclineable and do not express tense or aspect, it does not fall within the scope of this study.

Joosten's claim does not seem to be convincing. Granted that the speaker's interpretation is the issue, that interpretation is an ongoing process in his mind. It is this ongoing process that participle as imperfective is used to express. It appears that the explanation for the different word order that Joostens observes can be found in the idea of fronting for focus and the need to be unambiguous. In BH, when a subject is fronted in finite verb clauses, it is said that it is for focus (Heimerdinger 1999:171, Van der Westhuizen 2002:4). However, the unmarked word order in participial clauses is usually subject-participle. In such cases, the subject may be in focus or not (Buth 1999:88).

The cases I wish to investigate are the simpler cases where the pattern may be Subject-Predicate or Predicate-Subject. When the subject of the participial verb occurs in situations where ambiguity can exist, the need to disambiguate necessitates that the subject be made explicit. In 2 Sam 18: 27 cited by Joosten, if the subject of the participle had been left out, it would have been difficult to know who is seeing something. It could have been the watchman or any of the runners. In non-participle verb forms the prefix usually makes it clear who the referent is, especially if the referent is the first person speaking to another person as the case in the example above. Also in his example from Gen. 31:15, if the referent were not added, it would have been difficult to know who was seeing the face of 'your fathers.' It appears that the change of the word order in cases when the participle is used does not change the meaning of the verb form, but rather it is used to either mark focus or to disambiguate or both.

Another use of the participle in BH as verbal predicate is to express imminence. In some cases an event that is not taking place or happening at the moment of speech is expressed by the participle. This usually has the pragmatic function of expressing imminence and certainty, e.g.

Gen. 6:17

וְאֲנִי הֹנֵנִי מְבִיא אֶת־הַמְבּוּל מִיָּם עַל־הָאָרֶץ

'Behold I am bringing (about to bring) a flood of water upon the earth.'

In the passage, the LORD was speaking to Noah about what he, the LORD, was about to do. At the time of speaking the flooding process had not begun. The participle does not express contemporaneity of event and speech. Rather it is used to express an event that is

yet to occur. However, because it was thought to be imminent and certain, the participle is used to express it. Another example may be in order.

Gen. 7:4

כי לימים עוד שבעה אנכי ממטיר על-הארץ ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה

‘For in seven days time, I am causing to rain (will cause to rain) upon the earth forty days and forty nights.’

The use of the participle here also shows that the time of the event for which the participle is used to express and the time of speech are not simultaneous.

The participle can also be used to express an event that is co-temporal with the moment of speech. In such a situation, the participle functions as progressive. In Excursion 1 above, I discussed the participle as used to express an event that is durative in the past, with emphasis on its ongoing nature or continuousness within the given period of time. The participle can also be used to express an event that is in progress as the speaker talks about the event. I present only three examples.

Gen. 16:8b

ותאמר מפני שרי גברתי אנכי ברחת

‘And she said, “I am fleeing away from Sarah my mistress.”’

Num. 11:27b

ויאמר אלדד ומידד מתנבאים במחנה

‘And he said, ‘Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.’

Isa. 1:7b

זרים אכלים אתה

‘Strangers are devouring it.’

The examples above are to illustrate that the predicate participle is used to express events that are viewed as progressive at the given reference time. Such progressive events are also durative. Their durativeness differs from the durativeness expressed by *yiqtol/weqatal* in that the predicate participle is used to express an ongoing, non-stop

event at the period of time that the event was taking place. The durativeness expressed by *yiqtol/weqatal* may be repetitive, frequentative or habitual (see excursion 1 above).

4.10. Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to justify the hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language. For this purpose we first illustrated why BH cannot be regarded as a tense-prominent language.

The BH verb forms such as *wayyiqtol*, *qatal*, *weqatal*, *yiqtol* and the non-finite participle were all scrutinised. The purpose for the scrutiny has been to determine their semantic interpretations in terms of aspectual distinctions. *Wayyiqtol* was found to be used in an environment of sequentiality in narratives. It is used to express perfective meaning. *Qatal* was found to be used in an environment of background information. It is also used to express perfective meaning. *Weqatal* and *yiqtol* were also found to be used to express imperfective meanings. They are extended pervasively to express other categories such as moods, irrealis and or future. The choice of *weqatal* or *yiqtol* in such categories is due to the environments where they are used. Such environmental changes are due to the structure of the information to be conveyed between interlocutors. An exception where a *wayyiqtol* is followed by a *weqatal* and the difficulty of deciding its meaning was noted. The predicate participle was found to be used to express an event that was ongoing at the reference time.

From the investigations, it was argued that an aspectual view of BH, which is based on crosslinguistic evidences, provides a more plausible explanation for the meanings of the BH verb forms than the tense view.

In chapter 5, below, the verb forms of the selected corpus will be used to test further whether the tentative conclusion, arrived at in 4.4 above, could be held in the light of data from a fixed corpus.

Chapter Five

Testing the Hypothesis in a Selected Corpus

5.1. Introduction

In chapter three, parameters for determining tense-prominent and aspect-prominent languages were established. Based on those parameters, it was argued in chapter four that BH meets the requirements for an aspect-prominent language, but not a tense-prominent language. It was, therefore, argued that BH is most probably an aspect-prominent language. Then a refutation of some views that counter the aspectual theory of BH as being advocated in this study was made. To strengthen my hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language, I illustrated that all the verb forms one encounters in BH can be explained in terms of our notion of BH as an aspect prominent language.

In this chapter I use a fixed corpus of BH to test the hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language. How will the test be carried out? In this section I describe the procedure for carrying out the test.

The first step in the testing is to chart all the texts of the corpus that is used in the analyses.¹²¹ This is done by separating wayyiqtol, qatal, yiqtol and weqatal into different columns (cf. appendix I). All other elements in each sentence of the texts in the corpus including the participles are lumped together in one column. Each of the verb forms that are of primary concern in this study is examined. The goal is to find whether they are used consistently to express aspectual distinctions in the selected corpus. In each case where wayyiqtol and qatal are used, a perfective interpretation is chosen. If the verb form is weqatal or yiqtol, an imperfective interpretation is chosen. Sample texts that contain the particular verb form in focus will be cited. An attempted interpretation based on aspectual distinctions will be the basis of the translations of the sample texts. Then arguments will be made to justify the rendering. If it were found, on the one hand, that each verb form consistently maintains perfective and imperfective aspectual distinctions meaningfully, the hypothesis is upheld that the BH verb forms express predominantly

aspectual meanings. If, on the other hand, it were found that there are a significant number of cases of semantic neutralisations, i.e. where a verb form is used to express a perfective meaning in one instance and the same verb form is used to express an imperfective meaning in another instance in the selected corpus, then the hypothesis that the BH verb forms predominantly express aspectual meanings has to be called into question. This will be done only where interpretations based on aspectual distinctions do not make sense. Such inconsistency will demonstrate that the verb forms in the selected corpus do not comply with the requirements of an aspect-prominent language as developed by Bhat (1999) and used in this study. There are cases where aspectual distinctions are extended to other categories such as mood. In such cases I will investigate whether perfective and imperfective forms used do have different meanings from one another, e.g. realis versus irrealis mood. My interest is to find out if perfective forms are used to express realis mood consistently and if the imperfective form is also used to express irrealis mood consistently.

One may rightly argue that interpretations could be bent to suit the hypothesis. This is a possibility and a legitimate concern. But it should be remembered that where, for example, tense fits a particular translation, aspect will also be meaningful in such cases. The issue then is the overall behaviour of the verbal system. Since it has been demonstrated that BH does not meet the parameters for a tense-prominent language, it is only rational that the behaviour of the verb forms should be considered in the light of another paradigm. In the same way, there may be cases where *yiqtol*, for example, may seem to allow for perfective interpretation. Where this is the case, the deciding criterion is to ask whether imperfective interpretation is also a possible candidate. If it is, it is reasonable to assume that aspectual distinction is more natural to an aspect-prominent language. It is also less coercive. Therefore, an interpretation based on an aspectual distinction is given priority consideration.

In section 2.6 of this study, it was hypothesised that the conditions in the environment of the verb can help to explain why there are two verb forms in BH that are used to express perfective and imperfective meaning. Pike's trimodal theory was

¹²¹ According to Dooly and Levinsohn (2000:22), "text charting refers to the visual display of a text

appealed to as a possible explanation. In the corpus selected for this study, the conditions in the environment of wayyiqtol and qatal, which I argued are used to express perfective meaning, will be examined. The purpose is to find if the verb forms do indeed respond to the conditions in their environments. The same shall be done for yiqtol and weqatal.

The ideal method of testing claims of a linguistic phenomenon is to turn to the native speakers of the language concerned. They are the ones to verify the correctness or otherwise of the hypothesis claimed to explain the problem that is being investigated. The native speaker will be able to say whether a certain construction means what it is claimed to mean. The judgement of the native speaker serves as control for the semantics of the construction based on a proposed model (Pike 1982:70). However, in the case of this study, we are dealing with a language of which speakers are no longer found in the present world.¹²² This makes testing any claims all the more difficult. In order to overcome this difficulty, albeit partially, one has to rely on other principles that could help to control the analyses. Two of such principles are the principle of “simplicity” or “economy,” the other is the principle of regularity (Grunfeld 1982:20). If a model can explain how the BH verb forms operate on aspectual distinctions between perfective and imperfective in the way it expresses events and states without many and complicated rules and exceptions, this will be simple enough for the mind to comprehend. If the model makes such an explanation simple, with as few rules as possible, it meets the criterion for ‘economy’ (Crystal 1997:130, Gutt 2000:11-12).¹²³ Also if the behaviour of the BH verb forms is regular according to the prediction of the model used, then the criterion of regularity is met. On regularity, (Gutt 2000:18) argues,

in such a way as to make features of interest apparent.”

¹²² The Israeli Jews today are speaking a type of Hebrew different in some important respects from the BH, which is our language of investigation.

¹²³ Crystal gives an illustration of the principle of economy and I present it here:

(1) S...NP+ VP (2) V...V + NP (3) NP + Det + N. “If rule (3) had been written before rule (2); the NP in rule (3) would then REWRITE that introduced in (1) and the NP in rule (2) would still need to be expanded, thus requiring an additional rule (4), as follows (with subscripts added, for clarity:(1) S... NP₁ + VP (2) NP₁ ... Det + N(3) VP... NP₁ (4) NP₂ .. Det + N. The first ordering would thus be superior, in terms of economy” (Crystal 1997:31).

To the extent that phenomena with similar properties tend to behave in similar ways, this approach is also vested with a certain amount of predictive or explanatory power.

It should be said that the ‘economy principle’ does not demonstrate that the meaning assigned to the verb forms is correct or wrong. It only shows that the model used is tidy enough. The principle of regularity points to the possibility that the meaning assigned may be right. This is because if there is any contradiction in the predicted meaning, it could be a pointer to the fact that the model does not adequately predict the behaviour of the verb form as hypothesised. It is the principle of regularity that is more useful in the control of the predictive value in this study. For instance, if wayyiqtol and qatal can be shown to be used to express perfective meaning whenever any of them occurs, then it is regular. That may be an indication that that is the behaviour of the verb form. Equally if it can be shown that yiqtol and weqatal are used consistently to express imperfective meaning, it may be a pointer that that is the meaning of yiqtol and weqatal. On the extended use of the verb forms, I will investigate the use of qatal and yiqtol or weqatal in the expression of moods. If realis is always expressed by the perfective form and irrealis is also always expressed by the imperfective form, it will add to support the claim that the BH verb forms do not tolerate semantic neutralisation between forms.

So, I use the principle of economy and regularity as controls in the aspectual hypothesis of the meaning of the verb forms of BH. For each wayyiqtol and qatal, a perfective interpretation will be attempted. If it makes sense in the situations where they occur, and if there are no frequent inconsistencies found, the aspectual hypothesis is upheld.

To say that an interpretation makes sense, as I use the term, ‘make sense’ in this study should be understood to mean that the perfective or imperfective interpretations for wayyiqtol and qatal and also for yiqtol and weqatal respectively would be meaningful. I use the term ‘meaningful’ following Lyons (1995:31). According to Lyons, sentences are meaningful “if and only if they have a determinate truth-value. For instance, I may say,

‘Yesterday, I saw John crossing the road.’

This can be said to be true if it is the case that there is someone by the name John, and that this John was in the process of crossing the road, and that at the time he was crossing the road, I saw him doing so. But if it is the case that John had completed the act of crossing the road before I saw him, the statement cannot be said to be true.

However, this type of verification is not possible, because there are no speakers of BH whom one could ask if what one analyst claims is supported by native speakers. Nevertheless, if it is accepted that BH is an aspect-prominent language, it could be reasonably assumed that when imperfective forms are used to express past events, such usages are most likely intended to mean imperfective in the past. The events so expressed may be durative, repetitive or habitual in the past. Since such experiences are universal, one can argue that that is how they are expressed in BH, unless there is an alternative and plausible other explanation. This argument is based on the fact that duratives and repetitives as well as habituais do not have end points. Events or states that do not have end points are usually regarded as imperfectives (Smith 1991:100). Unless it can be shown that imperfective interpretation of such cases is not possible or reasonable, the imperfective interpretation should be given priority when considering the possible meaning of imperfective forms used to express past and present events.

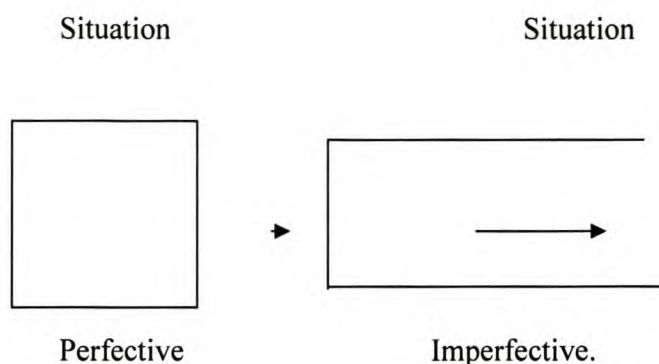
Therefore, it should be reasonably possible to understand the events or states that are expressed by wayyiqtol and weqatal to be either a series of events that are a complete whole in the case of wayyiqtol or events or states that could be regarded as a complete whole in the case of qatal. Such events or states are referred to as perfective in this study. I will explain my notion of 'complete whole' in a moment. In the same vein, it should be possible to regard events expressed with weqatal as a series of events that will be ongoing or that were ongoing at some time in the past. It should also be possible to regard yiqtol as an expression for events that will take place or that usually take place or that it used to be the case that it usually took place some time in the past, or that one wants them to take place. All these types of events or states are what are referred to as imperfective in this study. I give more explanation of perfective and imperfective before continuing with the discussion.

In section 3.5 above, I gave a working definition of aspect. There I used the notion 'complete' as an essential feature of perfective. Here I wish to elaborate on what I

mean by an event being viewed as ‘complete’ or ‘whole’ or ‘complete whole’ as used in this study. To say that an event or a state (which for the purpose of this definition I shall simply refer to as ‘situation’) is a ‘complete whole’ is to focus on the “boundedness” view of such a situation (Bhat 1999:46). Verbs and their forms may be regarded as part of linguistic units used in the construction of a sentence or text. A particular view of a situation may be expressed by one form of the verb of a language or another. A situation may be viewed as “a unified entity” (Bhat 1999:46) strung together in the construction of a sentence or text. Such a situation may be viewed as a complete entity, an entirety of the situation. This may be likened to building blocks in a house. Each block is a unit and self-consistent. The boundary of each block is discernible by someone standing outside of the block to view the whole unit. Even when such units of blocks are put together in a structure without any plastering, the boundary of each unit of block can still be seen. An event or state may be viewed as having a point of beginning and a point at which it ends, and it is one whole.

The imperfective is the opposite of the perfective. In the case of imperfective, an imaginary person may be inside a block. The person may be able to look forward and see from the inside of the block without seeing its end. He may also look back and see the block as it extends backward without seeing where it began. It is also possible that the block can be seen from afar as that, which is not yet within reach of the viewer, and its end is not yet seen. The imaginary person will not be able to view the whole unit. What he sees may be an unending entity. As I use imperfective in this study, it may also be that the situation is yet to occur or that it is in process or ongoing. An ongoing situation may be in the present moment or in the past or is believed that it will be an going event in the future.

Wayyiqtol can be likened to series of blocks of situations strung together to construct a text or to make a sentence. Qatal may be viewed as units of blocks, which do not necessarily or primarily follow each other in sequence. The ways situations are viewed as described above can be illustrated diagrammatically as below:



Every *yiqtol* and *weqatal* will equally be interpreted as imperfective in meaning. If such interpretations make sense and are not frequently contradicted, then the imperfective aspectual meaning hypothesis for *yiqtol* and *weqatal* is upheld.

It should be mentioned that one could equally make the tests above on the tense hypothesis of the BH verb forms. The problem, however, is that one will soon meet cases where the same verb form may be used to express two types of tenses. Some of such cases were shown in section 4.2 above. As it was argued, BH does not meet the required parameter for a tense-prominent language. Without such a parameter, there would be no ground for rejecting or accepting the claims of any rival theories (Grunfeld 1982:31).

Since the BH verb forms have been shown to comply with the parameters of an aspect-prominent language, the testing can proceed by considering each verb form in the selected corpus. The issue is to find out if aspectual interpretations of each verb form make sense in terms of the established parameters.

There are a few cases from the selected corpus that were discussed in chapter four (cf. 4.2). There will be no need to repeat those cases in this chapter.

Before leaving this section, something should be said about the pervasiveness of aspect in aspect-prominent languages (cf. Bhat 1999). This was discussed above in some detail (cf. 3.4.3). In BH, the perfective form and the imperfective form of the verb are extended to modal categories. What would have been a realis mood may be expressed with a perfective form of the verb. Equally what would have been an irrealis mood may be expressed by an imperfective form of the verb. These may be regarded as cases of pervasiveness of aspect. In such cases, aspectual distinctions are extended pervasively to modal distinctions. In this study, when such aspectual distinctions are extended to modal distinctions, the term perfective and imperfective are employed to describe them. For

example, the imperfective forms used to express aspectual distinctions are also used to convey volitions such as jussive and cohortative. While the forms are those used to express aspectual distinctions, they are semantically moods. When aspectual verb forms are so extended, the notion of boundedness and unboundedness of aspectual distinctions may no longer apply. The modal differences in such contexts should be borne in mind. This extended use includes when *yiqtol* and *weqatal* are used to express certain volitions.

5.2. The Corpus Selected: Some Justifications

The corpus selected on which the hypotheses of this study are tested consists of texts from Exodus chapter 15, Joshua and Psalms 1 and 37. In testing linguistic data, any text from the language in question can be used. The text, however, must not be consciously produced by the analyst to fit his or her theory. The text should ideally preexist the theory. In the present discussion the BH texts used have been in existence prior to our theory. The issue is to test how our model plausibly explains the meanings of the verb forms found in the texts in terms of aspectual distinctions.

The choice of Exodus is based on the fact that it is viewed as a piece of ancient poetry. Such old poems are thought to retain the typical features of the original forms and their meanings. Sarna (1991:26) says of Exodus chapter 15, “the language of the poem is thoroughly archaic.” He bases his opinion on a number of factors. One of them is the use of what Sarna calls “*yqtl* (imperfect)” as the standard narrative tense. Scholars of the BH verb forms have debated this claim for a long time. The text in Exodus, therefore, is chosen in order that aspectual meaning in terms of perfective and imperfective distinctions may be applied to the text. The purpose is to find if such interpretation is possible and makes sense.

Another text in the corpus is the Book of Joshua. Joshua is the story of the conquest and sharing of the land of Canaan (cf. Winther-Nielsen 1995). Joshua is mostly narrative. It gives a good example of the type of text where the behaviour of the BH verb forms in a long narrative could be observed. The Book of Joshua also contains a good portion of descriptive genre. The descriptive genre portion covers the story of the sharing of the land (cf. Jos. 13:8-21:42). The text describes how things are. It tells about the

boundary of each tribe's portion of the land. This affords the possibility to observe how the BH verb forms are used to describe such situations.

In the book of Joshua there are also a few cases where conditional sentences are found. Some of the conditional sentences have qatal after the protasis, while others have yiqtol after the protasis. I will investigate them in order to find if there are semantic differences between the two forms when they occur in conditional sentences. The finding will further strengthen my hypothesis that the perfective verb form and the imperfective verb form of BH do differ in the aspectual values they are used to express consistently. Furthermore, the discussion of conditional sentences will make the coverage of the meaning of the BH verb forms more exhaustive.

My assumption is that whatever is found in these genres may provide a fairly good picture of the meanings of the BH verb forms. Do they express aspectual distinctions in their meanings?

The issue of the use of perfective and imperfective verb forms to express general truth situations was discussed in section 4.6.2.3 above. Psalms 1 and 37 provide additional texts with more evidence on the matter. It is hoped that if poetic license allows the verb forms of BH to be used in any way, these Psalms may provide examples. If it is the case that all the verb forms such as wayyiqtol, qatal, yiqtol and weqatal maintain their perfective and imperfective meanings consistently in the Psalms selected, this might be a pointer to the possibility that even in poetry the verb form of BH does not allow semantic neutralisation. This should, of course, be taken as tentative only, because the poetic portion of the corpus is relatively very small compared to the large portion of poetry in BH. Further studies in terms of our model are required before any generalisations or final conclusions can be drawn.

As the aspectual distinctions of perfective and imperfective meanings of BH verb forms are investigated in the corpus, I assume that this will yield evidence that will help evaluate the hypotheses in this study. In addition to the fact that the Psalms selected are poetic, they are also considered as wisdom literature (Craigie 1983:58 and 296). Wisdom literature teaches general truths about the world. In these Psalms it is hoped that general truth situations will be found. Such will give the possibility of observing the use of the verb forms of BH to express such general truth situations and their meanings. It was

hypothesised that the use of perfective and imperfective verb forms of BH reflects some distinctions in the semantics of the forms so employed. An attempt at interpreting general situations expressed with perfective and imperfective verb forms will be made. It will be observed whether the different interpretations made make sense.

The above is the method of testing that is being adopted and the reasons why the method is used. I have checked all the verb forms in the selected corpus (cf. the chart in appendix I). Since it is not practicable to discuss all of them, I select random samples from the corpus. It is assumed that these random samples fairly represent the behaviour of the verb forms in the selected corpus. In the next section, I begin the testing with the narrative texts in the corpus by considering the verb forms in the Book of Joshua.

5.2.1. Wayyiqtol in Joshua: evidences that they mark sequentiality in narratives

As scholars have argued, wayyiqtol is used mostly to mark sequentiality in narratives of BH (cf. Niccacci 1990, Longacre 1992, Endo 1996, Hataav 1997, Levinsohn 2002), to mention only a few. In the Book of Joshua, I counted the number of times that wayyiqtol is used, and I found that it occurs 590 times. There are two cases where one may argue that the wayyiqtol used there does not mark sequentiality. These are Joshua 5:9 and 14:5

Jos. 5:9

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַיּוֹם גִּלְגָּל עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
הָיָה גִלְגָּל עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

“And the LORD said to Joshua, ‘today I have rolled away from you the reproach of the Egyptians.’ And he called the name of the place Gilgal until this day.”

וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא גִלְגָּל

‘And he called the name of the place Gilgal.’

This is the narrators’s comment, stating the reason for the name ‘Gilgal.’ Though this comment is not, strictly speaking, part of the main story. It nevertheless forms part of a series of events in the narrator’s world. So, it is still a case where the clause beginning with וַיִּקְרָא follows the preceding sequences. Therefore, it could be argued that this last clause is a concluding remark that forms part of the series of events in the narrator’s world.

Jos. 14:5

כאשר צוה יהוה את־משה כן עשו בני ישראל ויחלקו את־הארץ

‘As the LORD commanded Moses so did the children of Israel, and they divided the land.’

The wayyiqtol in the last clause ויחלקו ‘and they divided’ does not mark sequentiality, but a closure.

On a more careful reflection, however, one could argue that closures or concluding remarks in a series of reported events are part of the sequence of items in the report (Levinsohn 2002:129). Heimerdinger (1999) argues that the use of wayyiqtol in cases like the ones cited above do not necessarily advance the main line of the story. In answer to this, Levinsohn (2002:129) argues that wayyiqtol clauses are “typically in chronological sequence when they form part of a narrative, (the linear presentation of events in the real world), without requiring that this be so.” If Levinsohn’s argument may be accepted, it could be argued that wayyiqtol as used in Joshua usually marks sequentiality of events. If one argues in terms of this definition of perfective, a wayyiqtol is best suited for a concluding remark. It is a remark that sees a series of events as a whole. This corroborates the findings of other analysts. The evidence in Joshua also supports the claims made in the present study (5.2.3 above).

The statement above should not be taken as saying that wayyiqtol is always used to mark sequentiality in narratives. BH scholars have recognised for quite some time that wayyiqtol may be used to present non-sequential events. One of such uses of wayyiqtol is what Martin (1968) refers to as “dischronologized” narrative. He cites many examples among which Jos. 2:15 and 16 are just two.

ותורדם בחבל בעד החלון כי ביתה בקיר החומה ובחומה היא יושבת ותאמר להם ההרה לכו פן־יפגעו בכם הרדפים ונחבתם שמה שלשת ימים עד שוב הרדפים

‘And she (Rahab) let them down by a rope through the window opening, for her house was on the city wall, and she dwelt on the wall. Now she had (ותאמר) said to them “Get away to the hill-country, lest the pursuers meet you ...”’

Martin argues that the letting down of the spies could not have occurred before they were told what to do. While Martin refers to this use of wayyiqtol as “dischronologized” narrative, Collins (1995) observes the same use of wayyiqtol and he refers to it as “pluperfect.”

Buth (1994) notes this phenomenon whereby wayyiqtol is used not to express sequentiality, but to repeat part of what had been stated by another wayyiqtol form. Buth (1994:139) explains

the standard narrative wayyiqtol will be used as though the story is marching forward on its time line, but the story actually does an about-face and picks up the time-line at an earlier point that had already passed.

Among Buth’s several examples, I cite just one for illustration. This is from:

Ju. 4:15

ויהם יהוה את־סיסרא ואת כל־הרכב ואת־כל־המחנה לפי־חרב לפני ברק וירד
סיסרא מעל המרכבה

‘And the LORD routed (wayyiqtol) Sisera and all the chariotry and all the camp with the sword before Baraq. And Sisera got down (wayyiqtol) from his chariot.’

On a careful reading of this text, one will note that the routing of Sisera by the LORD and Sisera’s getting down from his chariot are not sequential either in the real world or on the world of the narrator. The type of reporting what happened last before what happened first is reported, is what Buth refers to as “unmarked temporal overlay” (Buth 1994:139).

These examples are representatives of others that the scholars mentioned above have noted. They are evidences that wayyiqtol is not only used to present events in sequence in narratives. And, one may argue that the instances where wayyiqtol is used are not prototypical of the verb form, but possible extensions of its meaning. Although the use of wayyiqtol to present sequentiality of events in narratives may be statistically more dominant, other non-sequential use of wayyiqtol also exists in a significant number in the BH texts. Whether wayyiqtol is used to present sequentiality of events or not, its semantic status does not change.

Even though it is argued that wayyiqtol marks sequentiality, how does this provide evidence for a perfective interpretation of wayyiqtol itself? This question is

important because the tense-prominent languages also use past tense of the verb form to express sequentiality (Dooley and Levinsohn 2000:69). Also Long (2002:90), who bases his grammar book on Cook (2002), argues that wayyiqtol conveys past tense. Long argues that qatal is perfective aspect while wayyiqtol is past tense.

I interpret wayyiqtol as perfective aspect because other verb forms of BH consistently mark semantic distinctions between perfective and imperfective (cf. 4.4.2 above). Wayyiqtol is used to present the main line of a story, viewed as whole events one after the other chronologically in the world of the narrator. In such cases, the main focus of wayyiqtol is not to express events in relation to time, but to express complete whole events in chronological order. The arrangement of the events is viewed chronologically, because events logically occur in time. Some languages however, do not reflect the relationship between the event and speech moment in the verb form because such relationship is not given prominence in the language.

5.2.2. וַיְהִי as a form of wayyiqtol

וַיְהִי is a form of wayyiqtol that occurs frequently in BH text, in particularly in the narratives. However, scholars do not quite agree on its meaning and functions. My focus is to investigate how it might be interpreted in term of our hypothesis that wayyiqtol has a perfective meaning? How could it be interpreted? Does וַיְהִי have aspectual meaning as wayyiqtol? Could וַיְהִי be viewed as an expression of locating an event in a temporal reference time in the past? I hypothesise that, although it may have specific discourse functions, as a wayyiqtol, it displays the perfective function as any other wayyiqtol form.

To be able to answer the questions raised above, I will investigate the discussions on וַיְהִי in the literature in order to learn what its functions are.

Endo (1996:273) opines that וַיְהִי may be regarded “as a sequential adverbial form mostly at the beginning of a thread of discourse ... as a temporal adverbial adjunct.” Endo cites Longacre and Tsumura who argue that וַיְהִי “should be treated as one level away from the main line of the narrative discourse” (Endo 1996:273). This could be understood as saying that וַיְהִי may be used to mark a separation between the main line

story and a sideline story. Such a sideline story may give some background information to the main line story in a discourse. This view is similar to the argument that וַיְהִי is used “as a macro-syntactic sign” that marks “the relationships among segments of the text” (Endo 1996:177). וַיְהִי may also function to emphasise “the temporal setting of the incidence” (Endo 1996:179).

Van der Merwe (1999:83) observes that though a number of plausible functions of וַיְהִי had been attempted by scholars of BH verb forms, “they seldom provide clearly defined criteria for interpreting specific occurrences.” In his review of the debate, Van der Merwe reports that Richter argues that sometimes וַיְהִי may not function as a verb, but only a text-deicticon. “It is used to isolate constructions, in particular temporal adjuncts” (1999:85). In the report, Bartelmus is said to have argued that וַיְהִי is used mainly to “specify the temporal position of a subsequent sentence” (1999:86). According to this view, וַיְהִי “does not have any semantic value at the level of the sentence” (1999:86). The view that וַיְהִי does not have semantic value is also said to be held by Floss (Van der Merwe 1999:87).

Contrary to the view of Bartelmus, Vanoni is said to have argued that וַיְהִי is not a text-deicticon, but “marks progress rather than time” (1999:86). As for Gross, his focus on the study of וַיְהִי is said to have been on “the paradigmatic distribution of וַיְהִי in order to determine under which syntactic condition it could be regarded as a sentence in its own right” (1999:87). Gross is said to have come to the conclusion that “whenever וַיְהִי is followed by a temporal construction” such as וַיְהִי followed by subject + predicate (=finite verb, participle or preposition phrase) + waw + subject + verb, “וַיְהִי constitutes a sentence in its own right” (Van der Merwe 1999:87). Other conditions in which וַיְהִי constitutes a sentence, according to Gross, are,

וַיְהִי followed by adjunct + waw + subject + qatal

וַיְהִי followed by temporal adjunct + qatal + subject

As far as Schneider is concerned, Van der Merwe reports that he (Schneider) regards וַיְהִי and וַיְהִיָּה as “introductory formulae used when circumstantial (usually temporal) modification is placed before the ‘main clause’ that it modifies” (1999:88). These formulaic uses include change of character as well as change of places. In some cases וַיְהִי may be used to mark “the beginning and temporal aspect of the narrative” (1999:89).

After his survey of the discussions on the meaning of וַיְהִי, Van der Merwe considers the implications of Reichenbach’s notions of ‘event time,’ ‘speech time’ and ‘reference time’ for his description of וַיְהִי. (For a full discussion of the meanings of these terms, see section 3.3.2 of the present study). Van der Merwe (1999:98) formulates the goal of his description of וַיְהִי as follows:

- (a) the distinction of major syntactic classes of וַיְהִי based on the syntagmatic distribution.
- (b) The semantic features of adjuncts following וַיְהִי (in other words does the temporal adjunct refer to a point in time, duration or frequency).
- (c) The pragmatic distribution of the syntactic classes.

For the purposes of this study, two of Van der Mewe’s most important findings are the following:

1. וַיְהִי is used in a context where the reference time of an event or events is updated.
2. וַיְהִי is used to introduce a nominal clause that introduces or concludes a scene or episode.

My focus in this study is to investigate its aspectual value. My point of departure is the hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language in contrast to a tense-prominent language on which Van der Merwe bases his analysis. I also regard וַיְהִי as a verbal lexeme ‘and it was’ that is used as a loose connection in which the passage of time is viewed as part of events in the world of the narrator. It is of interest to note that וַיְהִי has some of the functions of wayyiqtol (Heimerdinger 1999:141, section 5.2.1 above and

5.2.3 below). I now investigate the aspectual value of **וַיְהִי** in the framework that it is a verbal entity.

וַיְהִי may be translated roughly as “and it was.” That implies that the expression has an implicit subject (it) and a predicate **הָיָה** ‘was.’ **וַיְהִי** is used to express a stative situation or an existence ‘to be.’ In the form and in the way **וַיְהִי** is conjugated, it is similar to wayyiqtol. Since BH verb forms are viewed as expressing aspect, it is assumed that **וַיְהִי** is also used to express aspectual meaning. **וַיְהִי** does not express an event, but it is used to locate an event to some indefinite or definite time as a point of reference in the time movement within which an event occurs. Though time is ever flowing (Prior 1967:1), yet it is theoretically possible to think about a time when an event begins and when it ends. Between the beginning and the end of such an indefinite or definite time when an event occurs, **וַיְהִי** may be used to express such time. I give some examples.¹²⁴

1 Sam. 14:1

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹנָתָן בֶּן־שָׂאוּל אֶל־הַנָּעַר נֹשֵׂא כְלָיו

‘One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man that carries his armour.’

1 Sam. 20:35

וַיְהִי בַבֶּקֶר וַיֵּצֵא יְהוֹנָתָן הַשָּׂדֶה

‘And so it was that in the morning Jonathan went into the field.’

According to Van der Merwe (1999:100), **וַיְהִי** may also be used with a nominal clause

“to introduce a new scene,” e.g.

1 Sam. 1:1

וַיְהִי־אִישׁ אֶחָד מִן־הַרְמַתִּים

‘And there was a man from Harmatim.’

Theoretically, a chunk of time may be viewed as having a beginning and an end point. One of such chunks may be used as a benchmark for signifying the onset of an event or a

¹²⁴ The examples are taken from Van der Merwe (1999:105).

story. It may also be used to precede a temporal unit at which a segment of a story begins (Van der Merwe 1999:113). If וַיְהִי may be so regarded, it is then plausible to argue that it is used to mark sequentiality in narratives.

וַיְהִי functions differently. Like other weqatal it is used to express imperfectives in the broad sense as used in this study. For instance, in Gen. 24:14 we have,

וְהָיָה הַנְּעֵר אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר אֵלַיָּה

‘And it shall be that the young woman to whom I shall say ...’

Gen. 24:14

וְהָיָה כִּי־יִקְרָא לָכֶם פַּרְעֹה

‘And it shall be that Pharaoh will call you ...’

In the two examples of וַיְהִי given above, the times of the events being talked about are in the future. We have argued that weqatal may be used to express future events, and that such usage is an example of extending the aspectual category pervasively to a modal category (4.5.2 above).

I have shown how languages use special perfective forms to express sequentiality in narratives (4.6.1.2 above). I give an example from our corpus below to show how wayyiqtol is used to express sequentiality of events.

Jos. 2:21-22

וּתְאֹמַר כְּדַבְּרֵיכֶם כִּן־הוּא

וּתְשַׁלְּחֵם

וַיֵּלְכוּ

וּתְקַשְׁרֵם אֶת־תְּקוּת הַשְּׁנַי בַּחלוֹן

וַיֵּלְכוּ

וַיָּבֹאוּ הַהֵרָה

וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם

‘And she said let it be according to your word. And she sent them away, and they went and she tied the two ropes on the window and they went and they reached towards the hill and they stayed there.’

Note that the main line of the story in the passage is marked by wayyiqtol. These express a series of whole events in chronological order in the world of the narrator. Since the perfective interpretation does no violence to the meaningfulness of the sentences, I argue that the perfective meaning is valid, because it is part of the system in the verb forms that conforms to the requirements of an aspect-prominent language. There is no compelling reason to assign a different category to wayyiqtol alone as Long (2002) has done. Long suggests that wayyiqtol should be described in terms of tense theory, while other verb forms should be described in terms of aspect theory. Equally וַיְהִי is interpreted as having a perfective meaning. It is used to express the passage of a sequence of time viewed as events. וְהָיָה is also used to express imperfective meaning.

5.2.3. More evidences of wayyiqtol being used to mark sequentiality

I now provide more consistent evidences for the claim that wayyiqtol is used mainly to mark sequentiality. To do this, I first mark off every tenth place where wayyiqtol occurs in the Book of Joshua. I then select the first twenty cases and investigate them. The purpose is to see if there is any place where wayyiqtol cannot be interpreted as being used to express perfective in meaning and sequentiality of the events reported.

I will now discuss the semantics of wayyiqtol from a sample of cases in the book of Joshua.

Jos. 2:2

וַיֹּאמֶר לַמֶּלֶךְ יְרִיחוֹ לֵאמֹר

‘And he said to the king of Jericho saying...’

וַיֹּאמֶר in the passage above forms part of a series of events in verse 1. In verse 1b we read

וַיֵּלְכוּ

וַיָּבֹאוּ בֵּית-אִשָּׁה זֹנָה וְשִׁמְהָ רַחֵב

וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ שָׁמָּה

and in verse 1, we have ויבאו so, ויאמר is part of the series of events previously mentioned. Each of the wayyiqtol used can be understood as expressing perfective meaning. It is used to express sequence of one unit of event after the other.

Jos. 3:1

וישכם יהושע בבקר

‘And Joshua arose early in the morning...’

According to the world of the narrator, the rising of Joshua early in the morning is part of the series of events that took place at the end of chapter two. So, wayyiqtol is used to express the fact that the rising is part of the sequence of the other events at the end of chapter two.

Jos. 3:6

ויאמר יהושע אל-הכהנים לאמר שאו את-ארון הברית

‘And Joshua said to the priests saying, take the Ark of the Covenant ...’

In this text, Joshua gives a series of talks to the people of Israel. He gave a talk to all the people in verse 5, and then to the priests in verse 6. These speeches are reported as a sequence of speeches. So, wayyiqtol is used to signify such sequence.

Jos. 4:8

ויעשו-כן בני-ישראל כאשר צוה יהושע

וישאו שתי-עשרה אבנים

ויעברום עמם אל-מלון

וינחום שם

‘And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded ... and they took up twelve stones ... and they took them across to their camp ... and they put them down there.’

Jos. 2:21

ותשלחם וילכו ותקשר את-תקות השני בחלון

‘And she sent them away, and they went, and she tied the two red cords to the window.’

The two examples of wayyiqtol follow one another is a situation, in which events are listed in sequence. In such cases the participants are not explicitly mentioned, since they are available to the hearer in their cognitive environment. The participants are probably already in activated form in the minds of the interlocutors, or because the pronominal prefixes that sometimes identify the gender and number of the subject of the verb is easy to identify. In any case, the events are viewed as sets, of which each is a complete whole in a sequence. Each event may be interpreted as having a perfective meaning.

Jos. 4:15

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לֵאמֹר

‘And the LORD said to Joshua saying ...’

The use of wayyiqtol here marks the beginning of a new paragraph. The LORD is a reactivated participant. The reactivation is needed because since the LORD was mentioned last in the narrative, some other participants had been introduced. Without the LORD being reactivated, it will be difficult for the reader to identify who said something to Joshua. The wayyiqtol is used because it is part of a series of actions performed by the LORD. In the previous paragraph, the LORD had made Joshua great in the eyes of all Israel (see 4:14). After this promotion of Joshua, the LORD was going to do another wonder. This was the dividing of the water of Jordan. This new event, which is a sequel to the previous ones, is begun by wayyiqtol at the beginning of verse 15.

Jos. 5:8

וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר־תָּמּוּ כָל־הַגּוֹי לְהַמּוֹל

‘And it was as all the people had finished to circumcise ...’

The וַיְהִי can be interpreted as being used to express a perfective meaning. It is used as an expression of a chunk of time, at which such sideline events were anchored. When so viewed, וַיְהִי may be said to be used to bring an important background information of a narrative, which is not, strictly speaking, in sequence to the main story. Yet the background information is intended to be regarded as having equal status to the foreground information. The temporal adjunct that follows וַיְהִי in such cases is used to express a sequence of time chunk at which such an important event in the background

information is anchored. The use of וַיְהִי may therefore be to indicate that ‘sideline’ events are part of the main line of the story and do not merely provide background information.

Jos. 5:13

וַיְהִי בַהֲיוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בִּירִיחוֹ

וַיִּשָׂא עֵינָיו

וַיִּרְאֵ

‘And it was as Joshua was in Jericho then he raised his eyes and he saw ...’

In this text, just as in 5:8 above, the sequence of events open with וַיְהִי. The וַיְהִי is a wayyiqtol, and it is used to initiate a new episode that is anchored in some definite time. וַיְהִי is a form of wayyiqtol. It may be viewed as a means of elevating the status of a background information to a level at par with the foreground information. וַיְהִי may be used to express either a definite or an indefinite time that specifies whether the event it refers to is beginning, being updated or continuing a previous suspended event. In the case of Jos. 5:13, וַיְהִי is used to specify a definite point in time, i.e., when Joshua was in Jericho.

Jos. 6:2

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

‘And the LORD said to Joshua...’

וַיֹּאמֶר is a wayyiqtol and has a perfective meaning. It is usually a quotation formula that is used to introduce a direct speech (cf. Miller 1996). As used above, it could be understood to mark some form of sequentiality. A background is given in 6:1 about the security conditions of Jericho. Wayyiqtol in the form of וַיֹּאמֶר is loosely a sequel to this state of security report. It suggests that something new and different from the security position of Jericho is going to happen.

Jos. 6:14

וַיִּסְבוּ אֶת־הָעִיר בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי פַעַם אַחַת

וישבו המחנה

‘And they went round the city on the second day one time, and they returned to the camp.’

The events in 6:14 are sequel to the events reported in 6:12-13. There, Joshua rose up in the morning, the priests took the Ark of the Covenant and the seven priests took the seven trumpets, and so on. In verse 14, wayyiqtol verb forms are used to express the events that are sequel to the events immediately before. Thus wayyiqtol maintains its main use to mark sequentiality in a narrative.

Jos. 6:20

וירע העם

ותקעו בשפרות

ויהי כשמע העם את־קול השופר

ויריעו העם תרועה גדולה

‘And the people shouted, and they sounded the trumpets and as the people heard the sound of the trumpets then the people shouted a loud shout ...’

In 6:17-19, instructions were given about what will be dedicated to the LORD when Jericho will have fallen. Verse 20 continues the story with wayyiqtol. The wayyiqtol is used to mark the sequence of events that followed the instructions given in verses 17-19. The first wayyiqtol in the text signals a change from instructions to the main activities of the soldiers. These activities are presented as a series of events in sequence.

However, it is noted that in the text there is ויהי + כ + infinitive construct שמע. It has been discussed that one of the functions of ויהי is to update a current reference time (Van der Merwe 1999:103). In the text above, the clause introducing the infinitive construct שמע, preceded by ויהי, locates the events described at a specific point in time. In this case the point in time is ‘on the hearing of the trumpet.’ I cite a similar example given by Van der Merwe (1999:105) and taken from:

1 Sam. 16:6.

ויהי כבואם וירא את־אליאב ויאמר

‘As they arrived, he saw Eliab and thought ...’

The narrator does not want to say that the arousing of the people, the blowing of the trumpet and the shouting of the people occur as one single series of events. The narrator probably wants to say that the response of the shouting took place at a particular time – on hearing the trumpet. This is perhaps to highlight the fact that the people followed exactly the instructions that the LORD gave them in Jos. 6:5.

Jos. 6:27

וַיְהִי יְהוָה אִת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיְהִי שָׁמְעוּ בְכָל־הָאָרֶץ

‘And it was that the LORD was with Joshua, and it was that all the earth heard.’

The text above may be regarded as וַיְהִי + what is referred to as a “nominal or verbless clause” (Miller 1999:3, Dyk and Talstra 1999:133, Van der Merwe 1999:101). According to Miller (1999:3), a nominal clause is different from a verbal clause in that a nominal clause does not indicate tense, aspect or mood. Miller (1999:6) discusses different views about the verbless clause. She and Dyk and Talstra would regard a clause without any verbal predication as a nominal clause.

I follow the definition of nominal clause above, and regard the clause under discussion as וַיְהִי + nominal clause. The nominal clause being יהוה את־יהושע, ‘The LORD (was) with Joshua.’

Van der Merwe (1999:100-111) identifies three functions of וַיְהִי + nominal clause,

- (a) it may be used to introduce a new scene.
- (b) it may be used to express the outcome of events in the conclusion of a sub-scene.
- (c) וַיְהִי + nominal clause may be found in the setting of an episode.

According to Van der Merwe (1999:102), “וַיְהִי anchors a state of affairs to a point on the time-line. This point is determined by preceding events, namely that point in time that a previous event or series of events was/were completed.”

Basing my analysis of Jos. 6:27 on the foregoing, I argue that וַיְהִי in the passage may be regarded as being used to express some background information, which is for a good understanding of the events reported in the main narrative. The וַיְהִי introduces a reference to the promise that the LORD made to Joshua in Jos. 1:5 and as desired by the Israelites in Jos. 1:17. In Jos. 6:24-26, we learn that Joshua and his men destroyed the city of Jericho. They burned the city and placed a curse on anyone who may want to rebuild it in the future. This provides the time setting of the events, the outcome of which וַיְהִי in Jos. 6:27 anchors the statement יהוה את יהושע 'the LORD was with Joshua.' The next statement is וַיְהִי שְׁמֵוֹ בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ 'and his fame was in the whole land.' It adds a nominal clause that refers to a state of affairs, which was an outcome of the preceding sequence of events, to the utterances that refer to those events. The וַיְהִי has a role that is similar to that of the "concluding" wayyiqtol in Jos. 5:9

Jos. 7:3

וַיָּשׁוּבוּ אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אֶל־יַעַל כָּל־הָעָם

'And they returned to Joshua, and they said to him all the people should not go up.'

The wayyiqtol in 7:3 above continues the series of other events continued from 7:1. It could be seen that once again the events are presented as sequence of events one after the other.

Jos. 7:6

וַיִּקְרַע יְהוֹשֻׁעַ שִׁמְלֹתָיו
וַיִּפֹּל עַל פָּנָיו אֶרֶצָה
וַיַּעֲלוּ עִפְרָאֵל־רָאשִׁים

'And Joshua tore his clothes ... and he fell upon his face to the ground ... and they put dust on their heads ...'

The first wayyiqtol in the text above is used to express what Joshua did following their defeat in battle at Ai. Other wayyiqtol are used to express other series of events that

Joshua and his people did in response to the defeat. These events are reported as if they occurred in sequence in the world of the narrator.

Jos. 7:17

ויקרב את־משפחת יהודה

וילכד את משפחת הזרחי

‘And the clan of Judah drew near and it (the lot) took the clan of Zerahite.’

From verse 16 of the chapter being discussed, we read that Joshua arose in the morning. Other series of events were reported. The wayyiqtol in verse 17 follow in sequence of other events previously reported. The wayyiqtol are perfective in meaning and are used to present the events sequentially.

Jos. 7:22

וישלח יהושע מלאכים

וירצו האהלה והנה טמונה באהלו והכסף תחתיה

‘And Joshua sent messengers and they ran to the tent, and there it was, they were hidden in his tent and the money underneath it.’

All the main events in this text are presented in sequence by using wayyiqtol.

Jos. 8:1

ויאמר יהוה אל־יהושע אל־תירא ואל־תחת

‘And the LORD said to Joshua, do not fear and do not be terrified.’

At the end of chapter 7, it is reported that the LORD turned from his wrath and spoke to Joshua. ויאמר is used to mark the opening of the direct quotation speech that follows. The use of wayyiqtol is to signal that what is said is part of the sequence of what the LORD did.

Jos. 8:10

וישכם יהושע בבקר

ויפקיד את־העם

ויעל הוא וזקני ישראל לפני העם העי

‘And Joshua rose early in the morning and mustered the men, and he and the leaders of Israel in front of the people went up to Ai.’

The series of events are reported in sequence. Wayyiqtol is used to mark such chronological order.

Jos. 8:13

וישימו העם את-כל-המחנה
וילך יהושע בלילה ההוא

‘And the people took their positions ... and Joshua went in that night ...’

Jos. 8:18

ויאמר יהוה אל-יהושע נטה בכידון אשר-בירך אל-העי

“And the LORD said to Joshua, ‘hold out the javelin that is in your hand against Ai.’”

Joshua 8:13 and 18 quoted above do not differ in terms of the use of wayyiqtol as had been discussed above before. They also do not differ from their usual perfective meaning.

The examples of the use of wayyiqtol demonstrate that wayyiqtol is used mainly to present events or situations in sequence. Such events are also perfective in meaning. In the next section I test the perfective meaning of qatal in Joshua. The goal is to find if qatal consistently maintains its perfective meaning as hypothesised. Such consistent distinction from imperfective meaning will be investigated in cases where qatal is used pervasively, i.e. where it extends to other categories such as mood.

5.2.4. Qatal in Joshua: its contexts of occurrence and its meaning.

The number of times qatal is used in the Book of Joshua is 434 according to my counting. I will cite only twelve examples to illustrate a hypothesis that qatal is a form of the verb in BH used to express perfective meaning in background information or contexts where there is no continuity between events/actions/happenings (Van der Merwe 1994:33, Bowling 1997:66). I approach this analysis by selecting every 2nd chapter of the book of Joshua. In each 2nd chapter, I take the 3rd occurrence of qatal. In my random sampling, I find that in Joshua chapter 16, there is only one qatal and it does not fall within the 3rd

occurrence criterion. So, I replace that with chapter 17 and the 3rd occurrence of qatal in that chapter. There is no qatal in 21:6 where the next sample falls. I replace that with 20:6. Two qatals in chapter 24, the 3rd and the 6th occurrence are chosen to make up for the remaining. This is how the twelve qatals came to be chosen.

Jos. 2:2

וַיֹּאמֶר לַמֶּלֶךְ יִרְיָחוֹ לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה אַנְשִׁים בָּאוּ

‘And he said to the king of Jericho, “Behold some men came ...”’

In the sentence, the clause **אַנְשִׁים בָּאוּ** ‘men came’ is begun by the subject ‘אַנְשִׁים’ ‘men.’ Since a NP is placed before the verb and the event is a past one, qatal is used. Its aspectual value is perfective. This type of use of qatal that is non-sequential has been noted by Hebrew scholars (cf. Endo 1996:287, Longacre 1994:66, Buth 1994:140, Niccacci 1994:177).

Jos. 4:4a.

וַיִּקְרָא יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל-שְׁנַיִם הָעֹשֵׂר אִישׁ אֶשֶׁר הֵכִין מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

‘And Joshua called the twelve men whom he had selected from the children of Israel.’

The context in which qatal **הֵכִין** is found is background information that describes the type of men that Joshua called. The verb form found in this environment of background information is perfective. Its grammatical meaning is also perfective. It is used to express an event that is viewed as one complete whole.

Jos. 6:8

הָעָם וְשִׁבְעָה הַכֹּהֲנִים נֹשְׂאִים שִׁבְעָה שׁוֹפְרוֹת ... עָבְרוּ

‘The people and the seven priests who were carrying seven trumpets ... passed.’

The expression **עָבְרוּ** ‘they passed’ is a qatal, in the 3rd person plural form. The expression is not sequentially linked to the main story. It is an explanatory gloss. It will be noted that because a NP, an element, e.g. the people and the seven priests that were carrying the seven trumpets, precedes the verb, such environment cannot allow a

sequential form of the perfective. So qatal is the appropriate form in such an environment. Its aspectual meaning is perfective.

Jos. 8:8

וְהָיָה כִּתְּפֹשְׁכֶם אֶת־הָעִיר תְּצִיתוּ אֶת־הָעִיר בְּאֵשׁ כְּדַבַּר יְהוָה תַּעֲשׂוּ רְאוּ צִוִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם

‘And it shall be when you will have taken the city, set it on fire. You shall do according to the word of the LORD. Take note, I have commanded you.’

In verse 8b, the verb צִוִּיתִי “I have commanded” is used. It will be noted that צִוִּיתִי does not continue the series of the specific command given by Joshua. It is used in the context of a background information. The information is that Joshua reminded the soldiers to understand that he (Joshua) had given them the instruction. It is a reminder that he is the commander in charge of the forces. The command has been given as a complete event having a clear end. Qatal is used to express it. Its grammatical meaning is perfective.

Jos. 10:1

כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לִירִיחוֹ

‘As he did to Jericho ...’

The expression appears in the context of describing how the situation was with Jericho. This description forms a background to the main story that is to be started in the chapter. The existence of כַּאֲשֶׁר, a pronoun with a comparative particle כִּי, before the verb is similar to what was observed in Jos. 6:8 above where a NP precedes the verb.

Jos. 13:1b.

וְהָאָרֶץ נְשֹׂאֵרָה הַרְבֵּה־מְאֹד לְרִשְׁתָּהּ

‘And a lot of the land is left to be conquered.’

The clause in the text begins with a NP, וְהָאָרֶץ ‘the land.’ As has already been observed in the preceding paragraph, when a NP precedes the verb in a narrative, BH requires only qatal to be used and not wayyiqtol. The grammatical interpretation as we saw is perfective (Endo 1996:239).

Jos. 14:2

בְּגֹרֶל נִחְלַתְּם כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה

‘They divided their land by lot as the LORD commanded them.’

The sentence above is the comment of the narrator explaining how the land was divided. **כאשר** precedes the verb **צוה** ‘he commanded.’ So, there is no sequence of events intended to be presented. The verb **צוה**, a perfective form, is therefore interpreted as being used to express a perfective meaning.

Jos. 17:4

ותקרבנה לפני אלעזר הכהן ולפני יהושע בן־נון לפני הנשיאים לאמר
יהוה צוה את־משה לתת־לנו נחלה בתוך אחינו

‘And they drew near Eliazer the priest and to Joshua the son of Nun and the leaders and (they) said, “The LORD commanded Moses to give to us inheritance in the midst of our brothers.”’

In some cases qatal is found to be used at the beginning of a direct quotation. Such is the case in the text above. The beginning of the direct quote in the sentence is **יהוה צוה** ‘the LORD commanded.’ In such cases, qatal can be interpreted as being used to express a perfective meaning, since it is used to express events that are regarded as a ‘complete whole’ but not in sequence.

Jos. 18:3

עד־אנה אתם מתרפים לבוא לרשת את־הארץ אשר נתן לכם יהוה

‘How long are you going to wait till you go and take the land which the LORD has given to you?’

The description of the land carries the sense that the land had been given, an action considered complete and ended. So, by default the qatal **נתן** as used in the passage is used to express a perfective meaning.

Jos. 20:6

וישב בעיר ההיא עד עמדו לפני העדה

‘And he shall stay in that city until he has stood trial before the assembly ...’

The verb form being discussed in the text is עמדו 'to stand.' This verb form is normally used to express events that are viewed as past, and it is usually interpreted as perfective. But in the text here the form appears in the context of a future event. Using the notion of 'Reference Time' (section 3.3.2 above), a situation may be temporally located in terms of a particular reference time (Smith 1991:147).

The verb 'עמדו' in the text above is interpreted as being used to express a perfective meaning. It is deemed to be what must have happened before the offender would leave the prescribed city. It is only after he has been עמד made to 'stand before the assembly' that he may leave the city. The verb form is preceded by עד 'until.' Since עד 'until' precedes the verb, by the nature of the BH language the sequential form cannot be used any more. The meaning is still perfective, and event is viewed to have occurred at a specific time in the past. It is an example of future perfective.

Jos. 22:4

ועתה הניח יהוה אלהיכם לאחיכם כאשר דבר להם

'Now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers as he told you.'

We have discussed the use of כאשר in Joshua 10:1 above. The text in Jos. 22:4 functions like the one in Jos. 10:1 described above.

Jos. 24:4b

ויעקב ובניו ירדו מצרים

'And Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.'

The use of qatal in this passage is similar to the one discussed previously in Jos. 17:4. In this text, Joshua was narrating the history of the people of Israel as part of his farewell address. In narrating the series of what the LORD did for the people, Joshua makes a sort of parenthetical statement as a background information in his narration. Contrasting the history of Jacob with that of Esau, he mentions Jacob and his children that went to Egypt in contrast to Esau that lived on the hill of Seir. Syntactically the structure of this contrast is X-qatal. This confirms that when anything precedes a verb that is used to express an

event in the past that is considered as complete and done with, qatal is expected to be used. Our last example of the use of qatal in the book of Joshua is found in:

Jos. 24:7

ויצעקו אל־יהוה וישם מאפל ביניכם ובין המצרים ויבא עליו את־הים ויכסהו
ותראינה עיניכם את אשר עשיתי במצרים

‘And they cried unto the LORD, and he put darkness between them and the Egyptians. And he brought the sea and it covered them and your eyes saw that which I did to the Egyptians.’

In this text, the series of events that transpired at the crossing of the Red Sea are narrated. The last sentence begins with ותראינה עיניכם ‘and your eyes saw.’ The object of what their eyes saw is אשר עשיתי במצרים ‘that which I did to the Egyptians.’ This thing that their eyes saw, i.e ‘their seeing of the events’ is not part of a series of events that the LORD performed. Their seeing of the things is a background information used in order to bring this past history to the memory of the listeners in a lively way. This combination of the background nature of the expression אשר עשיתי במצרים and also the fact that the relative pronoun אשר precedes the verb, qatal is the most appropriate verb form that may be used. Such qatal is used to express perfective meaning since it expresses a complete vision of the acts being referred to. This claim that qatal is found in the environment where sequentiality is not intended or where a background information is given, is not novel (cf. Goldfajn 1998:130, Endo 1986). The examples are only illustrative to confirm these earlier findings. The earlier findings as supported by the examples above serve to further validate my hypothesis that qatal is used to express a perfective meaning.

5.3 Yiqtol and Weqatal in Joshua: What Aspectual Distinctions Do They Express?

5.3.1. Yiqtol

As discussed in section 4.7 in this thesis, BH scholars identify two types of yiqtol. There is the yiqtol long form and there is the yiqtol short form. The yiqtol long form is often

used to express a cohortative function (Driver 1892:51). When the short yiqtol is used to express a jussive, “it is obtained by shortening the imperfect in a manner that the form of each particular word will allow. I cite two examples (Gen. 21:16, Ps. 7:18) from the list that Waltke and O’Connor (1990:573) give and one example from 1 Sam. 14:1.

Gen. 21:16

אל-אראה במות הילד

‘I will not watch the death of the boy.’

Ps. 7:18

ואזמרה שם יהוה עליון

‘I will praise the LORD most high.’

1 Sam. 14:1

לכה ונעברה

‘Come, and let us cross over ...’

There are a few cases where the long form of yiqtol is used to express a jussive (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:566). Waltke and O’Connor advise that in such cases the form should be ignored and a jussive interpretation be taken.

In this section I am discussing the short form of yiqtol. Such short form is used to express future events as well as other non-perfective meanings (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:496), which may include what could be regarded as mood in mood-prominent languages. It may be worth noting that BH has no morphology to express mood except in the case of the imperative mood. That is, the verb is not inflexed to indicate types of moods. BH uses its form for perfective and imperfective aspect to express ideas that may be regarded as a form of mood.

I select the data for yiqtol in the book of Joshua as follows. I select every 4th chapter of the book of Joshua. In each 4th chapter I choose the 4th occurrence of yiqtol. Where the randomly selected chapter and verse does not have yiqtol, substitution is made from either the immediately previous chapter or the immediately following chapter. The last yiqtol is taken from chapter 24. I use only seven examples of a total of 197 occurrences of yiqtol in Joshua to illustrate that yiqtol is found in background situations where there is no sequentiality of events that it is used to describe.

Jos. 4:21

ויאמר אל-בני ישראל לאמר אשר ישאלון בניכם מחר

‘And he said to the children of Israel saying, “when your children shall ask you tomorrow.”’

The situation in the story above is the need to create a memorial about what the LORD has done for the people of Israel. The speaker assumes that in the future, **מחר**, the new generation of the Israelites will ask questions about the event of crossing the River Jordan, an event that is potential only, **ישאלון** “they will ask” is expressed by the imperfective form. The imperfective form is here extended pervasively to express the irrealis mood.

Jos. 8:4

ויצו אתם לאמר ראו אתם ארבים לעיר מאחרי העיר אל-תרחיקו מן-העיר מאד
והייתם כלכם נכנים

‘And he commanded them saying, “See, you are ambushing the city behind the city, you should not be very far from the city. All of you should be on the alert.”’

In this sentence Joshua gives instruction to his soldiers on the strategy for taking Ai. In the negative command *yiqtol* is used. The command is the first in the chain of commands that continue in the rest of the verse. The other instructions in the sequence are expressed by ‘we’ + *qatal*, **והייתם** ‘and you shall be.’ In this case, *yiqtol* is used to express what is usually referred to as jussive or an imperative mood (Longacre 1994:51-52, Bowling 1997:52).

Jos. 13:3

מן-השיחור אשר על-פני מצרים ועד גבול עקרון צפונה לכנעני תחשב

‘... from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, northward the boundary of Ekron, it was considered as Canaanite.’

The translation provided by Howard, Jr (1998:295) and Butler (183:145) of **תחשב** in the passage as “reckoned” and “counted” respectively hides the grammatical meaning of the

verb form in question. The GNB and the NRSV seem to be closer to the grammatical meaning of the verb **תחשב** when they translate the verb form as “was considered” and “is reckoned” respectively. The semantic nuance in the translations given by the GNB and the NRSV is that Shihor was usually thought of as Canaanite. It appears to me that the use of *yiqtol* in the passage is intended to express the fact that people used to think, or usually thought that Shihor was Canaanite. If that is the case, the *yiqtol* in the passage could be said to be used to express an imperfective meaning. It is probably used to state a habitual way of thinking about Shihor. It could be argued that a translation such as “used to be reckoned as Canaanite” may equally be in order.

Jos. 13:6

אנכי אורשם מפני ישראל

‘I, myself will drive them out from before the Isrelites.’

The construction in the text above begins with a pronominal subject, **אנכי**. The action is only envisaged, it is yet to occur. As discussed in Jos. 4:21 above, the imperfective form is the normal way of expressing such yet-to-occur events when a clause begins with a NP or a pronominal relative phrase such as **אשר**. The imperfective form is extended pervasively to a mood category, in this case, a future event.

Jos. 17:18

כי הר יהיה-לך כיער הוא ובראתו ויהיה לך תצאתיו

‘For the hill country will be for you. Although it is a forest, you must cut it (i.e the forest) down. And its going out shall be for you.’

In the passage above, *yiqtol* is preceded by a subject, **הר**, ‘a hill.’ The context is the description of the boundary of the land allotted to Ephraim and Manasseh, of the tribe of Joseph. At the onset of the description, there is the hill, which describes this portion of the allotment. The hill precedes the verb that is used to express the idea of ‘belong to.’ The verb is **יהיה**, a *yiqtol*. This is normally the form that is used when describing something and the description is not in any series or in a sequence. The description is also not presented as what the listener knows already, but how the object being described will

appear or unfold to him in the course of following the description; hence the *yiqtol* has an imperfective meaning.

Jos. 20:9

ולא ימות ביד גאל

‘So that he may not die by the hand of the avenger’ (Butler 1983:210).

As the translation shows, the *yiqtol* is used in the passage above pervasively to express a modal meaning.

Jos. 24:27

ויאמר יהושע אל-כל-העם הנה האבן הזאת תהיה-כנו לעדה

‘And Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be to us for a witness...”’

In the passage above, Joshua had addressed the people and charged them to serve the LORD (Jos. 24:14). The people promised that they would serve the LORD. Joshua then erected a stone and told the people that the stone would be a witness in future years against the people, if they should turn back on their promise. It is to be noted that האבן ‘the stone’ precedes the verb תהיה ‘will be,’ and the form of the verb is *yiqtol*. This illustrates that among its functions, *yiqtol*, an imperfective form, is used to express, by way of pervasiveness, a yet-to-occur or future event.

BH does not have markings for future like the Hopi language that has a future suffix ‘ni,’ which can occur with both perfective and imperfective forms (Bhat 1999:48). BH has two basic forms of the verb, which it modifies and uses to express perfective and imperfective meanings. The imperfective form is used to express future and volitions such as jussive and cohortative. This is similar to other aspect-prominent languages such as Supyire (a Gur family of Niger-Congo), Kiowa of Mexico (cf. Bhat 1999:46). When a form that is normally used to express a prototypical meaning is extended to express other categories that are not prominent to the language, Bhat (1999) refers to such use as “pervasiveness” or “extended use.”

As was mentioned in 4.5.2 above, BH uses its “imperfective” form of the verb to express categories such as irrealis and mitigated command or jussive. In this study such

categories are referred to as imperfective. I use imperfective to express such situations for convenience and due to the fact that irrealis does not have end points. Furthermore, jussives or mitigated commands are expressed in BH as what should be done or what one will do. They have aspectual values in the sense that they are events that are expected to occur in future from the point of speaking. When jussives are given in sequence, the ‘weqatal’ form is used (Endo 1986:213). Most importantly, we may argue that on the basis of the yiqtol forms we have analysed, our hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language has been confirmed by the data from Joshua.

5.3.2. Weqatal

In the book of Joshua, I counted 194 occurrences of weqatal. It has been observed that weqatal may be used to express “predictive, imperative, cohortative, purpose or result” (Bowling 1997:60). In section 4.8.1 above I discussed the semantics of weqatal. In this section, I will illustrate the imperfective interpretation of weqatal from the book of Joshua. As discussed in section 4.6.3, weqatal may be found in an environment where there is a background information that is in sequence. Weqatal as Joosten (1992:3) observes may not begin an indicative clause. Weqatal may begin a sentence, it may be a narrator’s comment, which gives a background information relevant for the understanding of the story. In a non-narrative genre, a yiqtol may be preceded by either a NP or ׀ particle or a relative clause. Such yiqtol is usually used to set off either descriptions of things or to express jussives. Other series of events in sequence are then usually expressed by weqatal when nothing precedes the verb. Like yiqtol, weqatal may be used to express mood categories such as future.

I cite a few examples to illustrate that weqatal is used to express imperfective meanings, including non-perfective meanings such as mood which is subsumed under the notion imperfective. The examples are, as others, chosen randomly. Weqatal is not frequently used in narratives. So, I turn to the instructional section of Joshua for examples. Joshua chapters 15-23 contain mainly the instructional genre type. From Jos. 15-23, I select every 5th occurrence of weqatal in each odd chapter. Chapters 17 and 21 do not have weqatal, so I substitute them with chapter 23.

Jos. 15:3

ויצא אל-מנגב למעלה עקרבים

‘And it was going out towards Negev (South) upwards to Akrabbim.’

The sentence above describes the location of the land that was allotted to Judah. It will be noted that the verb form *weqatal* is used to describe the extent of the boundary. I argue that the *weqatal* is used because the writer describes the areas as they appear to anyone tracing the way assumably for the first time. The imperfective suggests that as one goes, the boundaries begin to appear. It is not that the person tracing the way will just see all the boundaries in one complete whole. The gradual appearing of the areas as one moves on is expressed by the form *weqatal*. The NIV Bible and the GNB do not reflect this imperfect meaning in their translations. This may be due to the fact that every translation is geared towards the natural grammar and idioms of the target language. It may also be due to the view some BH scholars hold that *weqatal* may express a perfective meaning according to its syntactic position (cf. Andersen 1994). There are, however, some versions of the Bible in English that recognise and reflect the imperfective meaning of *weqatal* in the passage being discussed. One of such versions is the Revised English Bible (REB). The REB renders Joshua 16:1-2 as,

This is the lot that fell to the sons of Joseph: the boundary *runs* from Jordan at Jericho, east of the waters of Jericho by the wilderness and *goes* up from Jericho into the hill-country to Bethel. It *runs* from Bethel to Luz...’

God’s Word to the Nations, another Bible version in English, reflects the imperfective meaning of *weqatal* used in the passage. The same goes for the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Jos. 19:12

ושב משריד קדמה מזרח השמש על-גבול כסלת תבר

‘And turning from Sarid eastwards from the rising of the sun toward the boundary of Kisloth Tabor.’

The use of *weqatal* in this text is similar to the one discussed in Jos. 15:3 above. The verb **ושב** is used to express the idea of how the area described appears to a newcomer. The

turning or the turn unfolds gradually, before a full view is attained. This seems to be the reason for the use of weqatal in the passage. As such the weqatal could be interpreted as being used to express an imperfective meaning.

Jos. 23:12

כִּי אִם־שׁוּב תִּשׁוּבוּ וּדְבַקְתֶּם בִּיתֵר הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה

‘If indeed you will turn and you will cleave to the remaining of these nations ...’

This example is used to illustrate a case where the imperfective form of the verb is being used to describe what may happen in future. The sentence begins with **כִּי אִם** plus infinitive absolute. This is followed by a yiqtol **תִּשׁוּבוּ** ‘you will turn.’ The other action that is sequel to the turning in the future is expressed by a weqatal, **וּדְבַקְתֶּם** ‘and you will cleave.’ It is an irrealis mood that is expressed by the “imperfective form” weqatal. Future or irrealis is a non-perfective category that in this study is broadly referred to as imperfective.

In the examples given so far, it can be seen that the same imperfective forms, yiqtol and weqatal, are used to express different types of mood. This can be taken to support the claim that the BH verb forms express aspectual and not tense distinctions. The use of yiqtol when preceded by **אִם** has been argued (cf. 4.4.2. above). Both the two passages in Jos. 10:12 and 22:1 have been cited (cf. 4.4.2). No more comments are deemed necessary on them. It may only need to be pointed out that I find no place where the argument in 4.3.1 above, viz., that BH is an aspect-prominent language, is contradicted in the Book of Joshua.

5.4. Conditional Sentences in BH

5.4.1. Introduction

In Jos. 22:19, there is a feature that should be commented upon briefly. The case is when **אִם** precedes yiqtol. This is usually referred to as a conditional sentence. Jespersen (1963:313-321), Parker (1991:166-187), and Hataav (1999:46) regard conditional sentences as modals. In New Testament Greek, conditional sentences are also regarded as moods (cf. Wenham 1965:16). Crystal (2000:80) understands conditional sentences as

expression of modal meanings across languages. In BH, the verb form used, by extension, to express conditional moods is either a perfective or an imperfective form. What might be the difference in meaning when any of the verb forms is used? If it were found that in conditional sentences the perfective and the imperfective verb forms are used to express perfective and imperfective meanings consistently, it will add further to the validity of my hypothesis that BH maintains aspectual distinctions in the use of the perfective and the imperfective verb forms.

In BH, conditional sentences are usually divided into two parts. There is the first part that lays the condition. This first part is referred to as the ‘protasis.’ The second part stipulates the expected consequence. This is often referred to as the ‘apodosis’ (Hatav 1999:147, Van der Merwe, Naude and Kroeze 1999 353). Parker (1991:167) would refer to the two as “antecedent” and “consequent” respectively.¹²⁵

In BH conditional sentences, some have **אם** plus qatal in the protasis and either qatal or yiqtol in the apodosis. There are others without **אם** in the construction of the conditional clause (Ferguson 1882:40, Van Rooy [no date:9], Blake 1968:66, Van der Merwe 1999:303). The form of conditional sentence without **אם** in the construction is referred to as “unreal conditional sentence.” The conditional sentence that has **אם** in the construction he refers to as “real condition sentence.” I take these labellings as conventions for differentiating the two forms of conditional sentences. I simply use the labels in this analysis.

I cite an example from Ferguson (1882:42) to illustrate what he regards as a conditional sentence that does not have **אם** preceding the protasis, i.e. an unreal conditional sentence

Prov. 18:22

מצא אשה מצא טוב

‘He who finds a wife, finds something good.’

¹²⁵ For details of the types of conditional sentences, see Parker (1991:167). They are open conditionals, hypothetical conditionals, counterfactual conditionals and concessive conditionals.

The data on conditional sentences in BH for the present study is taken from the construction of conditional sentences with **𐤀𐤍** preceding the protasis plus either qatal or yiqtol in the apodosis. The real conditional sentence is the more prototypical type of conditional sentences. Both real and unreal conditional sentences can have the perfective or the imperfective forms of the verb in the apodosis (Ferguson 1882:42). The semantic of the verb forms is not affected, whether the conditional sentence is real or unreal. Therefore I base my investigation on the real conditional sentence, which is the prototypical.¹²⁶

In this section, I investigate whether the conditional sentences with **𐤀𐤍** plus qatal in the protasis are different in meaning from those with **𐤀𐤍** plus yiqtol in the protasis. This is to further test whether perfective and imperfective forms of the BH verb are consistently used to express different meanings. This section benefits very much from Blake (1968). Blake bases his study on a tense perspective of BH, but I base this analysis on an aspectual perspective of BH.

I propose that all conditional sentences are hypothetical. I do not discuss how the degree of probability of occurrence or non-occurrence of the events referred to could be measured or determined from the form of the verb in the conditional sentence as Parker (1991:167) does in his study. Ferguson (1882:69) discusses the situation when conditional sentences are probable and improbable. He argues that “when however, the supposition is either improbable or indefinite or contrary to reality ... the imperfect is the usual tense.” His ‘imperfect’ is what I refer to as ‘imperfective’ in this study.

My focus is to investigate whether the perfective form is used to express what could have happened in the past or what could have been the case, and whether the imperfective form is used to express what may yet be the case in future. I hypothesise that if the event referred to is thought of as having occurred already (complete and ended), the protasis is preceded by qatal. If, on the other hand, the event referred to is thought of as having potential only in the future, the protasis is preceded by yiqtol.

¹²⁶ The detail of the structure of conditional sentences is outside the scope of the present study. Interested readers are referred to Ferguson (1882, Van Rooy [no date], and Blake 1968:66-69 and Joüon-Muraoka 1991:627-633).

5.4.2. Probability of occurrence in the past.

Gen. 47:6b

ואם ידעת וישבם אנשי-חיל ושמתם שרי מקנה על-אשר-לי

‘If you know that there is a man among you that is capable, then you should put them as chiefs over my flock.’

In the passage above, the knowledge of anyone who may be skillful in animal management is something that is assumed to have been in existence prior to the time of speaking. Such a state of cognition is not in the process of formation or a yet-to-be situation. It exists, it had already been formed and is viewed as that which had come into existence. So perfective form of the verb is used to express it.

Num. 11:15b

אם מצאתי חן בעיניך ואל-אראה ברעתי

‘If I have found favour in your eyes, then let me not face my evil.’

In this text, Moses speaks with the LORD. He appeals to the LORD on the assumption that he had probably found favour with the LORD. The act of finding this favour, if it exists, must have taken place. It is not in process or something that will come into being.

2 Ki 7:4¹²⁷

אם אמרנו נבוא העיר והרעב בעיר ומתנו שם ואם-ישכנו פה ומתנו

‘If we said (decided) that we will go into the city, there is famine in the city, and we will die there. But if we sat here, then we will die ...’

This text tells the dilemma that the lepers found themselves in, when there was famine in Israel because of the war between Israel and Aram (Syria). The LORD wrought a miracle by which the Syrian forces were driven away, leaving their possessions and food supplies. Some lepers happened to discover the situation. The lepers begin to discuss what could be the consequence of any probable action they might have taken. Their reasoning goes as follows: ‘suppose we have agreed and said that we shall go into the city, what will be the consequence? In other words, the perfective form is used to express

¹²⁷ This text is taken from Blake (1968:66).

a probable option that the leper could have thought in their minds. Hendel translates the sentence as “if we were to say” (Hendel 1996:178).

The perfective forms of the verb used in the text to express the decision of the lepers reflect a probable course of action available to them. They reasoned ‘if we have decided’ (though they have not done so), or ‘if we sat here’ (they did not really take that decision), and then the consequences of both options are given. The decisions are viewed in terms of ‘if they had been taken.’ As Blake (1968) has correctly observed that such probable or hypothetical actions, which are considered to be a possible option that one could have taken in the past are usually expressed by the perfective form of the verb in BH.

Another example is taken from Blake (1968:64). The text is:

Ps. 41:7

וּאִם־בָּא לִרְאוֹת שׁוֹא יִדְבֵר לְבוֹ

‘And if he shall have come to see (me), his heart will speak vanity.’

Givon (1990:831) would refer to the type of conditional clause above as “counter-fact condition.” He explains that counter-fact conditionals “involve states or events that could have or would have been true – if other states were true” (Givon 1990:831). He gives an example, which I reproduce here.

“If she had known, she would have done it.”

Givon explains that the inference of the sentence is that she did not know and so she did not do it.

If probable or hypothetical actions are viewed as what may happen in future or at present, they are usually expressed by the imperfective form of the verb in BH (cf. Blake 1968:66). This is discussed in the next section.

5.4.3. Events which probability of occurrence are in future or in process

Gen. 4:7

אִם־תִּשָּׁבַע שְׂאֵת וְאִם לֹא תִשָּׁבַע לִפְתָּח חַטָּאת רִבֵּץ

‘If you do (PRESENT) well, you will be accepted, but if you do not do well (PRESENT), sin is crouching at the door’ (Blake 1968:67).

This example illustrates that the possibility of the events expressed by the imperfective form of the verb that is preceded by **אם** to be that which has not yet happened. It is a potentiality realisable in time to come, if it will be realised at all.

Gen. 18:28

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֶשְׁחִית אִם־אֶמְצָא שָׁם אַרְבַּעִים וְחַמֵּשָׁה

‘And he said I will not destroy it if I will find there forty-five.’

In the text above, the apodosis is stated first before the protasis. In the protasis, a probable condition or situation in time to come is expressed first, that is, when the LORD goes to find out about the situation in Sodom. This is preceded by what the LORD will do when he will have found the situation. Since all the actions are what may be done in the future, the imperfective form of the verb is used to express them.

Gen. 13:16

וְשָׂמְתִי אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אִם־יֹכֵל אִישׁ לִמְנוֹת אֶת־עֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ
גַּם־זֶרְעֶךָ יִמְנֶה

‘And I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth such that if a man is able to count the dust of the earth, he will be able to count your descendant.’

In the passage, the event of counting the dust of the earth is an event that is viewed as what someone may attempt to do in future. It is not what someone had thought to do, but what one probably may attempt in future.

Lev. 3:7¹²⁸

אִם־כֶּבֶשׂ הוּא־מִקְרִיב אֶת קֶרְבָּנוֹ

‘If it is sheep that he is bringing/offering as his offering ...’

This text refers to the regulations concerning offerings. The participle suggests that the event is what people may be doing in the process of bringing a sacrifice (Ferguson

¹²⁸ The text is taken from Blake (1968:67).

1882:59). The participle may be used to express that very process in progress of such events. Predicate participle is usually interpreted as being used to express imperfective meaning.

Pragmatically, conditional sentences with participles in the protasis may be used to express any of the following: (a) events or situations that are enduring (Ferguson 1888:64). The example from Lev. 3:7 cited above falls into this category. The issue of sacrifice is assumed as an enduring occurrence in the religious practice of the Jewish people. (b) The event or state, present occurrence, of which is emphasised (Ferguson 1888:59). Ferguson adds that ‘perfect(ive) form of the verb may also be used in such cases.’

Even though the degree of the probability of the occurrence of an event is difficult to measure in conditional sentences, it appears that events or states that are more certain tend to be expressed by the participle in conditional sentences. This observation only corroborates what Ferguson and Van Rooy had noted.

On the basis of the analysis of conditional sentences with the perfective and the imperfective forms of the verb, it could be argued that our hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language is further supported. The aspectual distinctions of the perfective and the imperfective forms of the verb are extended pervasively and consistently to express different meanings in conditional sentences with the perfective forms of the verb and the conditional sentences with the imperfective forms of the verb.

5.4.4. Conditional sentences in the book of Joshua

In the book of Joshua, there exist conditional sentences similar to the ones described above. There are conditional sentences of the אם plus qatal type, e.g

Jos. 22:19

וַאֲךָ אִם־טָמְאָה אֶרֶץ אֲחֻזַּתְכֶם עָבְרוּ לָכֶם אֶל־אֶרֶץ אֲחֻזַּת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁכַן־שָׁם מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה וְהֵאָחֲזוּ בְּתוֹכָנוּ

‘Indeed if/since your inheritance has been defiled, cross over to the land, the inheritance of the LORD where he dwells in the tabernacle of the LORD and have inheritance with us.’

As may be noted, the verb **הטאה** ‘to be defiled’ is an ‘achievement’ (cf. Smith 1991:58). According to Smith, “an achievement presents an event consisting of a single stage, which constitutes a change of state.” Such verbs of achievement are used to express “a completion and duration, all at the same time” (1991:58). Since an achievement is both dynamic and telic, their meaning is usually perfective.

In the book of Joshua, I find only one instance of a conditional clause of the **אם** + qatal type, which I have discussed above. But I have cited a few other cases outside the book of Joshua where **אם** precedes qatal (cf. 5.4.2. above). I now discuss some examples of **אם** + yiqtol in Joshua.

From the cases where we have **אם** plus yiqtol in the book of Joshua, I discuss three examples.

Jos. 2:14

וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהּ הָאֲנָשִׁים נַפְשֵׁנוּ תַחְתִּיכֶם לְמוֹת אִם לֹא תִגִּידוּ אֶת־דְּבָרֵנוּ

‘And the men said to her, “Our souls for your soul, if you do not tell anyone our word.”’

In the text above, the spies make a promise to save the life of Rahab. Given the protection that Rahab had offered them and the fact that she speaks in their favour and in favour of their God, the spies hoped that in time to come, after they had departed, Rahab and her family would not disclose their mission. Since the probability of such disclosure, if it will be done, lies in the future, it is not regarded as having been done. So yiqtol is used to express it (cf. Blake 1968:66).

Jos. 2:19

וְהָיָה כָּל־אִשֶּׁר יִהְיֶה אִתְּךָ בַּבַּיִת דָּמוֹ בְּרֹאשֵׁנוּ אִם־יִד תִּהְיֶה־בּוֹ

‘And it shall be that everyone that will be with you in the house, his blood will be upon us if a hand will touch him.’

The conditional sentence in the text above is similar to the one discussed in Jos. 2:14. The probability of the event expressed by the yiqtol is expected to be in the future. It is only a potential, and so an imperfective form is used to express it.

Jos. 2:20

אִם־תִּגִּיד אֶת־דְּבָרֵנוּ זֶה וְהִינּוּ נָקִים מִשְׁבַּעְתְּךָ

‘If you (will) tell anyone this discussion (with others), we shall be free from our oath to you.’

In this passage, the event being discussed is that Rahab should not tell others the deal struck with the spies. The probability of Rahab doing this lies in the future of the time of the discussion. Because the probable event is viewed as what may happen in the future, the imperfective form of the verb is used to express it.

From the analysis of the conditional sentences in BH, it can be stated that qatal and yiqtol maintain their different meanings. This is further evidence that BH is an aspect-prominent language. The perfective and imperfective forms hardly neutralise each other. Each one maintains its distinctive meaning.

5.4.5. Conclusion

The analyses of the verb forms as used in the Book of Joshua confirm the argument that BH is an aspect-prominent language. Tense distinctions are not marked, but aspectual distinctions are marked. Wayyiqtol is a form of perfective found in an environment of sequentiality in narratives. When such sequentiality is broken or background information is introduced into the narrative, qatal, another perfective form may be found. In non-narratives weqatal is found in an environment of sequentiality, while yiqtol is found in an environment of discontinuity. Future conditional sentences beginning with אִם may have qatal or yiqtol in the protasis.

Conditional sentences, in which אִם precedes the perfective form in the protasis, are viewed as events that could have happened and regarded as complete and bounded if they had happened. A conditional sentence, in which אִם precedes the imperfective form in the protasis, is usually viewed as events whose occurrence is thought to be probable in the future.

In the next section the situation of the BH verb forms in poetic materials in the corpus will be discussed. Evidence from the fixed corpus will be used to validate the

claim that BH makes consistent aspectual distinctions in terms of perfective and imperfective meanings.

5.5. Analysis of Verb Forms in Exodus 15: Do They Show Consistent Aspectual Distinctions?

Many scholars of BH who study the meanings of the verb forms of the language, have argued that the most ancient forms of BH verb can be found in poetry. Poetry, it is claimed, is more resistant to change (Fensham 1978, Greenstein 1988:8 and Smith 1991:5). In this section the verb forms in Exodus are used to further test whether wayyiqtol and qatal are used to express perfective meanings, and whether weqatal and yiqtol are used to express imperfective meanings. In the introduction of this chapter, it was noted that Exodus 15 is viewed as one of the very ancient pieces of poetic material that still exist in the Hebrew Bible (Sarna 1991:76). We consider the meaning of the verb forms in this ancient poem.

5.5.1. Exodus chapter 15

5.5.1.1. Wayyiqtol and Qatal in the book of Exodus 15

In Exodus chapter 15, the wayyiqtol is used 18 times. In verse 1 it is used as in a quotative frame,¹²⁹ viz.,

אז ישיר־משה ובני ישראל את־השירה הזאת ליהוה ויאמרו

‘At that time Moses and the children of Israel were singing/used to sing this song to the LORD *and they said ...*’

The expression ויאמרו ‘and they said’ is a wayyiqtol. According to Miller, the example above is like a quotative frame that has one finite speech verb. It indicates what Moses conveyed in the song to the LORD.

¹²⁹ Miller (1996) investigates quotative types in BH. In that study she identifies three types of direct quotation in BH. Using לאמר and ויאמר, that she refers to as “quotative frames,” she differentiates the three types of direct quotation. The first is the direct speech with one finite verb as in 2 Sam. 18:29. The second is the direct speech with multiple finite verb quotative frames

In verse 1, **וַיֹּאמְרוּ**, which is a wayyiqtol form, is also a quotative frame. It orients the audience to the content of the speech. The phenomenon of using wayyiqtol to express events that are regarded as complete and done in poems is found in other poetic material besides Exodus chapter 15, e.g.

Ps. 73:16

ואחשבה לדעת זאת

‘And I tried to understand these.’

Ps. 50:1

אל אלהים יהוה דבר ויקרא-ארץ

‘God, the LORD God spoke and he called the earth.’

The remaining wayyiqtol forms in Exodus 15 are used in the narrative section. They are found in verses 20-27. The section is not poetry. Since the use of wayyiqtol in narrative had been discussed, no further discussion will be necessary here again.

Qatal appears 30 times in Exodus chapter 15 in its various syntactic forms. There are cases when an element precedes qatal (X-qatal), e.g. verses 4, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, and 26. I give two examples from the list.

Ex. 15:4

מרכבת פרעה וחילו ירה בים

‘The horse riders of Pharaoh and his soldiers he (God) threw into the sea.’

Ex.15:8

וברוח אפיך נערמו מים

‘With the breath of your nostrils the waters piled up.’

There are other cases when qatal precedes the subject. This is usually its default form, e.g. verses 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 17. Two examples illustrate this.

Ex. 15: 5

all referring to the same speech event, e.g. 2 Kgs. 5:13. The third is the direct speech with

יִרְדוּ בַמְצוּלָה כְּמוֹ-אֶבֶן

‘They went down into the deep like a stone.’

Ex. 15:10

נִשְׁפַת בְּרוּחְךָ כִסְמוּ יָם

‘You blew your breath, the water covered them.’

As the translations show, I tried a perfective interpretation in all these cases and I found no case where this did not make sense. On examining the manner the NIV expresses these cases I found that the past tense form of the English verb is used to express them. This can be expected because perfective aspect that views an event or state as a complete whole correlates with past tense in tense-prominent languages (cf. 3.7 above).

The evidence available in Exodus chapter 15 does not show that qatal is used to express any other meaning in this poem than perfective meaning. In the next section I examine the use of yiqtol and weqatal in Exodus chapter 15.

5.5.1.2. Yiqtol and Weqatal in Exodus 15

There are two cases where weqatal is used in the corpus under discussion. They are found in verse 26. In each case weqatal is used to continue the event that follows a previous event. I have discussed the yiqtol in Ex. 15:1 (cf. 5.5.1.2). I discuss here another yiqtol in Ex. 15:16. Usually the first verb in the clause where this occurs is yiqtol, e.g.

Ex. 15:16

תִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶם אִימַתָּה וּפְחָד בְּגִדְלִי זִרְעֶךָ

‘Fear and terror will fall upon them, by your great power.’

Many translations such as the ‘Modern Language,’ the ‘Jerusalem Bible’ and the ‘Good News Bible’ translate the yiqtol in the passage above as past tense or as a historic present. Also commentators such as Houtman (1996:288) and Durham (1987:200) understand the yiqtol in the passage as being used to express a perfective meaning. They thus translate the yiqtol as a past tense.

quotative frame לְאִמֹר, e.g. Ex. 30:31 (cf. Miller 1996:149,153).

Sarna (1991:81) and Propp (1999:464) translate the *yiqtol* in the passage being discussed as a historic present. However, Hartom (1972:56) understands the *yiqtol* as being used to express an imperfective meaning. He explains that the *yiqtol* in the text is used to express a future event. The KJV and the NIV follow the imperfective understanding of the *yiqtol* in the passage.

Although a “past tense” interpretation of the *yiqtol* and *weqatal* is possible, these forms may also be interpreted as having an imperfective meaning in this context. This supports the argument that *yiqtol* and *weqatal* are used to express imperfective meanings. *Yiqtol* imperfective may begin such a clause, and if the clause continues without any element preceding the verb, *weqatal* is usually employed to continue the sentence. This is similar to the way *wayiqtol* and *weqatal* are also used in narratives too (Endo 1996:95).

There are two cases where *weyiqtol* is used in the corpus. These are Ex. 15:2 and 17. In Ex. 15:2 we have,

ואננהו אלהי אבי וארממנהו

‘And I will praise him, (the) God of my father and I will exalt him.’

Ex. 15:17

תבאמו ותטעמו בהר נחלתך

‘You will bring them in and you will plant them on the mountain of your inheritance’ (NIV).

One notes that in Ex. 15:17 above *yiqtol* is followed by *weyiqtol*. The ‘we’ in ‘we + *yiqtol*’ is an ordinary conjunctive ‘we.’ It is used to join two events expressed by imperfective forms. Usually in a clause where the phenomenon occurs, the first *yiqtol* is without ‘we,’ while the second *yiqtol* has ‘we’ prefixed. Driver states that a *yiqtol* followed by a *weyiqtol* in clauses are rare (Driver 1892:164). According to Driver, a clause may be begun by a *yiqtol* and continued by a *weqatal*. This type of construction supercedes those cases where *yiqtol* is continued by *weyiqtol* (1892:164). When *yiqtol* is followed by *weyiqtol*, it could be used to express future events or jussives, just as *yiqtol* continued by *weqatal* may be used.

What may be the pragmatic function of *yiqtol* followed by *weyiqtol*? Driver (1892:164) provides two explanations. Firstly, the speaker may desire to lay stress on the event that is expressed by the *weyiqtol* that follows *yiqtol*. Secondly, if the verbs in the *yiqtol* form are synonyms, the single action is stressed by using the synonyms.

The text in Ex. 15:17 being discussed in this section belongs to the first category in terms of structure. Usually in a series of events that are future, the first event may be expressed by a *yiqtol*, especially if there is an element that precedes the verb. As the other events are described without any change in participant and nothing precedes the verb, the expected verb form that continues the other future events in the sequence is usually *weqatal* (Endo 1986:151, Bowling 1997:61). Some commentators and translations (Sarna 1991:83, Durham 1987:200, Hartom 1972:56, the Jerusalem Bible, the NIV and the RSV) support the explanation above.

However, Propp (1999:464) understands the *weyiqtol* as being used to express desideratives. So he translates the *weyiqtol* as “May you bring them and plant them.” This is a possibility, because desideratives are moods. In BH the imperfective form of the verb can be used to express mood.

Houtman (1996:290) interpretes the *weyiqtol* as “you had brought them,” a pluperfect. It appears that Houtman’s view in this regard cannot be accepted without serious doubts. At least, there is no theoretical justification for translating the *weyiqtol* as expressing a pluperfect meaning.

The verb **תבאמו** ‘you will bring them’ and **ותטעמו** ‘and you will plant them’ are both imperfective forms. They are not synonyms. The speaker probably wants to express events stressing that the LORD will bring his people and plant them, i.e. establishing his people on the mountain of his inheritance.

I cite more examples from Driver (1892:164). In each case of the examples below, it will be noted that *weyiqtol* could also have been replaced by *weqatal*, which is the more regular form, where no stress or any form of emphasis is desired. It could also be that the object or subject of the sentence is different. *Weqatal* may not be suitable if one would capture such differences.

Gen.1:9

ויאמר אלהים יקוו המים מתחת השמים אל־מקום אחד ותראה היבשה

‘And God said “let the water gather (yiqtol) under the heaven in one place and let appear (weyiqtol) the dry land’

Gen. 1:26

ויאמר אלהים נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדומנו וירדו בדגת הים

‘And God said, “let us make (yiqtol) man in our image in our likeness and let them rule (weyiqtol) the fish in the sea ...’ One may note that it is the LORD that will make, while the man will be the one to rule the fish in the sea.

Jos. 7:3b

כשלשת אלפים איש יעלו ויכו את־העי

‘About three thousand men will go up and they will strike Ai.’

In the example in Jos. 7:3b, the reason for weyiqtol may be that it is used for the purpose of laying stress on the intended action.

The case of **שיר** in Ex. 15:1 was discussed (4.4.2 above). Other cases of yiqtol as found in Exodus chapter 15 can be interpreted as imperfective in meaning. As said before, Exodus is regarded as an old poem, which represents older forms of the BH verb forms and their meanings. From my examination of Exodus chapter 15, I found no compelling evidence to state that yiqtol is not used in the text to express imperfective meaning. This implies that in Exodus 15, yiqtol is used consistently to express imperfective meaning.

The examination of Exodus chapter 15 reveals that in this poem, the verb forms maintain consistent aspectual distinctions. Qatal is used to express perfective meaning. Yiqtol, weyiqtol and weqatal are used to express imperfective meanings.

5.5.2. Analysis of verb forms in Psalms 1 and 37: do they show consistent aspectual distinctions?

In Psalm 1, wayyiqtol is not used. But in Psalm 37, wayyiqtol is used four times. These are Ps. 37:36 and 40. Of these four, two are found in verse 36. They are **ויעבר** ‘and he passed’ and **ואבקשהו** ‘and I sought for him.’ The wayyiqtol as used here marks

sequentiality in a piece of narrative embedded in the poem in this verse. The poet passed by, if we follow the BHS **ואעבר** and not **ויעבר**.¹³⁰ The poet narrated his experience, ‘I passed by and I sought for him, but he was not there.’ The other two wayyiqtol forms are found in verse 40. They are **ויפלטים** and **ויעזרים**.

We have discussed wayyiqtol in sections 4.6.1.2 and 5.2.1. The wayyiqtol forms in Ps. 37:36, 40 do not have different semantics from those already discussed above. In the Psalms it is not unusual to find wayyiqtol forms embedded in what is largely poetry. I present a few examples from other Psalms.

Ps. 50:1

אל אלהים יהוה דבר ויקרא-ארץ

‘God, the LORD God spoke, and called forth (wayyiqtol) the earth.’

Ps. 52:9b

ויבטח ברב עשרו

‘And he trusted (wayyiqtol) in his great wealth.’

Ps. 73:16

ואחשבה לדעת זאת

‘And I tried (wayyiqtol) to know this.’

We could infer from the evidences from the Psalms that they add further support to the view that wayyiqtol may be used to mark sequentiality even in a piece of narrative embedded in poetry.

Qatal appears four times in Psalm 1 and nineteen times in Psalm 37. In the places where qatal is used in Ps. 37, it is preceded by an element such as a NP in verse 13, a particle **גם** in verse 25, **לא** in verse 25 and **כי** in verse 40.

In Ps. 1 the three qatals are used to express general truth observed over time. The poet describes the characteristics of the righteous person. He notes the life style of the righteous and the result of such a life style from his experience. Qatal is used to express the observed world of the righteous. When qatal is so used, it can be interpreted to

¹³⁰ **רבעיו** and **רבעאו** are both wayyiqtol. The aspectual meaning is the same for both.

express a complete whole view of what had been observed and known to have always been the case. It is used to express a perfective meaning (4.6.2.2 above).

I will discuss the aspectual meaning of *yiqtol* and *weqatal* in Ps. 1 and 7 shortly. Before doing that, I would like to note here that the fate of the wicked is expressed by the *yiqtol* form in Ps. 1, e.g. verses 4b, 5 and 6. The *yiqtols* in Ps. 1 are also used to express a general truth. The fate of the wicked is what people believe will be the inevitable end of the wicked. The wicked people may not be suffering such fate at the moment. However, based on the worldview of the people in question, those who used to be wicked are known to be punished by God. So, those who are wicked now are believed that they will share the fate of the wicked. This, I wish to argue, perhaps explains the difference in the verb forms used to describe the lot of the wicked and those of the righteous in the Psalm. It may be argued that the theological perspective of the ancient being reflected in Ps. 1 is that God rewards the good people by prospering them, while the evil are punished by allowing bad things to happen to them. So, if even the wicked is not being punished at the moment, it was believed that they will certainly be punished later in their lifetime.

The use of *qatal* to express general truth is also found in Ps. 37, e.g. verse 14 where we have

חרב פתחו רשעים ודרכו קשתם להפיל עני

‘The wicked drew/have drawn (their) sword, and (they) were aiming at the poor with their bow in order to bring him down.’

In this text, verse 14 poses a problem, which is that *qatal* begins the sentence and *weqatal* continues the subsequent events or actions of the wicked. Kurylowicz (1972:82) and Andersen (1994:102) would argue that the meaning of *weqatal* in such situation is determined by the meaning of the verb form at the beginning of the sentence or the clause. I take a different view (cf. 4.6.2 above). If *qatal* and *weqatal* in the passage were viewed as expressing perfective and imperfective meanings respectively, how would it make sense in this passage? I would like to propose that it is possible to view **פתחו** as perfective expressing a general truth observed over time. That is to say that, according to the poet, the wicked, as a matter of habit and predictable pattern of life, always draws his sword seeking to harm the good person. The action is seen as a state of the life of the

wicked. The weqatal **וּדְרַכּוּ** that follows may be viewed as expressing imperfective meaning in the past. The masoretic punctuation indicates a pause after **רָשָׁעִים**. The next clause begins with ‘weqatal,’ suggesting a habitual act. The ‘weqatal’ relates well to the entire statement. This will yield a translation given above. It may be argued that the act of aiming at a victim by the bowler could be understood as a process that is a habitual, durative act expressed by weqatal. It is not usually an event that happens in one moment of time like a sword drawn. This is more so since the statement expresses a general truth perceived by the speaker. It usually has duration. This may probably be the reason why weqatal that expresses an imperfective meaning is used. If this is the case, the perfective and imperfective distinctions could be said to be consistently maintained in this text.

There are other uses of qatal in the Psalm that do not express general truth. In verse 25 the poet reports his experience. Qatal is used here to express a state, **הָיִיתִי** ‘I have been’ and **זָקַנְתִּי** ‘I have become old’ or ‘I am old.’ The others are found in verses 35 and 36. They express a complete whole view of a state.

In Psalm 1, yiqtol is used mainly to describe the habit of the righteous in verses 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. They express imperfective meanings. This is in line with our interpretation of the imperfective meaning of yiqtol in a sense.

Ps 37:5-6

וּבִטַח עָלָיו וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה וְהוּצֵא כְאֹר צְדָקָךְ

‘Trust in him and he will act, and he will bring out your righteousness like the light.’

The expression **וְהוּצֵא כְאֹר צְדָקָךְ** in verse 6, ‘and he will bring your righteousness like the light’ is an expected consequence in the future of the decision to trust the LORD now. In verses 10 and 29, weqatal, like in verse 6, is used to express that which will happen in the future. Future belongs to events that have not yet occurred. It is potential only; it is an irrealis mood (Bhat 1999:65). Therefore weqatal as used in verse 6 can be argued that it so used pervasively to express a mood category.

The analysis shows that weqatal in Psalms 37 is used consistently to express imperfective meanings. The findings in Psalms 37 are that wayyiqtol is used to express

sequentiality of event in a piece of narrative embedded in the poem. It is interpreted as perfective in meaning. Qatal is also used to express perfective meaning both when it is used to express general truth situations as well as in declaratives where the poet reports his experience. Yiqtol and weqatal are used to express imperfective meanings.

5.5.3. Findings of the Meanings of Verb Forms in the Poetic Section of the Corpus

The findings of the meanings of the BH verb forms in the poetic section of the corpus for this study can be summed up as follows. Wayyiqtol is interpretable as a form that is used to express perfective meaning. It is used to mark sequentiality of events. It maintains this function and meaning even when used in a very small piece of narrative embedded in a poem. It was also noted that wayyiqtol in a narrative section embedded in a poem may be used to express non-sequential functions such as ‘temporal overlay.’ Qatal is also found to be used to express perfective meaning when used in non-sequential situations. It may be found in a background environment. It is sometimes found at the beginning of a clause in a poem, e.g Ps. 10:6. Sometimes some other elements may precede qatal where one form of focus or the other is needed. Qatal is also used to express general truth situations. Qatal, it may be noted, is the base of the BH verb forms. Most languages do not have a distinctive form for expressing general truth situations. Morphological simple forms are often used (Trask 1993:110). Yiqtol and weqatal are also found to be used to express imperfective meanings. When extended to mood category, each form maintains its distinctive meaning, and no form-meaning neutralisation is found. In the corpus, there are no cases found where qatal cannot be interpreted as being used to express perfective meaning. Nor are yiqtol and weqatal found that could not be interpreted as being used to express imperfective meanings. From the findings of all the poetic section of the corpus, including Exodus chapter 15, there does not seem to be any compelling evidence for accepting the view that yiqtol is used to express preterite or perfective meaning.

My findings of the meanings of the verb forms in the poetic section of the corpus used in this study do not support the claim of some scholars cited by Rogland (1968:12-13) in his work. According to Rogland, these scholars argue that “the functions of the verb in poetry radically differ from its functions in prose.” Based on my investigation of the often cited cases of yiqtol that are claimed to be used to express perfect(ive) (cf. 4.4.1 to 4.4.3 a above), only two cases, 1 Ki 3:16 and Ps 106:17 where yiqtol is used to express

past events, could not be interpreted as imperfective in the past. I think, therefore, that Rogland seems to be correct when he argues that “it is clear that a unified model of Hebrew verbs which applies to poetry as well as prose, is to be preferred to two separate models for each literary genre” (1968:13). This advice needs to be repeated because recent grammar work such as Long (2002) advocates separate models for wayyiqtol that is different from other verb forms of BH. He proposes that a tense model should be used in interpreting wayyiqtol, while an aspectual model should be used to interpret other verb forms. In the light of the findings in this study, I wish to argue that Long’s proposal is not necessary. The BH verb forms appear to maintain consistent aspectual distinctions between perfective and imperfective meanings.

5.6. Summary

In this chapter, the hypothesis that BH is an aspect-prominent language was tested. Data from Ex. 15, Jos. and Ps. 1 and 37 were used. The findings reveal that:

1. Wayyiqtol is used mostly to express sequentiality of events. Events so expressed are viewed as perfective in meaning. They are a series of events viewed as complete wholes. Time is not the primary focus of wayyiqtol. Time is on the periphery of its dominant meaning.
2. Qatal is also used to express perfective meaning in expressing non-sequential cases.
3. Yiqtol and weqatal, are used to express imperfective meanings.
4. Weqatal is found in a non-narrative environment. There, the sequential of narrated events is not in focus. However, even in non-narrative texts where sequentiality may not be the primary reason for the use of weqatal, it may still entail some sequence of events. These are usually digressions that are backgrounds in narratives, (e.g. Gen. 29:2b-3).
5. Weqatal is not only used in background environments. As Longacre (1994:51) has observed, weqatal may be used in “predictive, procedural and instructional discourses.” In such cases, weqatal functions “as backbone structure.” Weqatal used to express such backbone in procedural or descriptive genres can be interpreted as being used to express imperfective meaning (cf. 4.7.2) above.
6. Each and every form of the verb in BH as found in the corpus could be interpreted either as perfective or imperfective in meaning. I found a few cases that may be

considered as abnormal. These are Jos. 8:30-31, 10:12, 1 Ki. 3:16, 1 Chr. 7:21, Ps. 106:17, 19. In such cases, what would have been regarded as imperfective in meaning cannot be so interpreted (cf. Driver 1892:161). The norm in BH is that one verb form does not neutralise the semantics of another verb form. Each verb form tends to maintain its aspectual semantic distinction consistently.¹³¹

¹³¹ Hackett (1980:104) finds that in the 'Balaam Text' the perfect is used to express habitual or durative actions in a subordinate clause. I do not find such use in the corpus used in the present study.

Chapter Six

Summary and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The present study investigated the meanings of the verb forms of BH. It used a crosslinguistic model based on metacategories of tense and aspect-prominent languages as developed by Bhat (1999). It argued that such a metacategory is needed in order to be able to establish the features that are prominent in tense, aspect and mood languages. In the survey of some of the important literature on the meanings of the verb forms of BH, it was found that such a metacategory is lacking.

An investigation was made on the primitive meaning of verb forms in human languages. It was assumed that there should be a universal common primitive meaning of verb forms in human language from which variations such as tense and mood might have developed. Using the research findings of psycholinguists, it was found that aspect is the primitive meaning of verb form in human languages. This finding enables me to state that tense and mood are departures from the aspectual primitive meanings of verb forms in human languages. The characteristic features of such departures manifest in the ways some languages inflex their verb forms to reflect changes in time, views of events and attitudes of a speaker to the situations of events or state whether they are real or not real.

The insight from psycholinguistic findings together with Bhat's parameters for tense, aspect and mood prominent languages were applied in investigating the meanings of the verb forms of BH. Hypotheses were formulated that are expected to be able to help to explain why BH is regarded as an aspect-prominent language. Other hypotheses were formulated that were intended to be able to help account for the semantics of wayyiqtol, qatal, yiqtol and weqatal. The participle was also discussed briefly (cf. 4.8 above).

A corpus was selected on which the hypotheses were tested. Based on the results of the testing, conclusions were arrived at on the meanings of the verb forms of BH. Below is the summary of the contents of the study.

6.2 Chapter 1

In chapter one, previous studies of the HBVS were discussed. These contributions were organised according to their dominant theoretical frame of reference. The survey began by discussing the works from a historical-comparative perspective. The works of Gesenius (1817), S.R. Driver (1892) and others up to 1950 were discussed. Other works based on the same perspective from 1950 to 2002 such as Hughes (1970), Smith (1988); Andersen (2000) and Cook (2002) are among the works that were also surveyed. One main weakness that all these works suffer from is that they do not provide any metacategorical criterion against which their claims could be validated.

There are many other works on the study of the meanings of the BH verb forms. They are based on a syntactic and/or discourse perspective. Like their counterparts that are based on a historical-comparative perspective, the syntactic and discourse perspectives also do not provide any universal metacategory against which their claims could be tested.

In the remaining part of chapter one I investigated the works of scholars whose works on the BHVS are not based on any clearly defined perspective. One thing common to them is the claim that the BH verb forms do not have aspect or tense meanings in themselves outside their structural relationships.

All the perspectives investigated contribute in one or other way to our understanding of the problems of the BH verb system. They help us to appreciate the nature of the problem and the various perspectives that have been used in trying to find a plausible solution. The work of Driver (1892) was found to have made a significant contribution to the study of the BHVS in that he collected a large quantity of data from BH and systematically explained them. He also compares BH with other cognate languages like Arabic and Aramaic, which helps to shed some light on difficult cases. However, he, like other works based on the historical-comparative perspective, does not provide a universal crosslinguistic parameter that is needed to distinguish typological categories such as tense and aspect in an objective way. This empirical and objective criterion, I argue, is one of the most important requirements that are needed in order to be able to categorise BH or any other language for that matter as tense, aspect or mood language. The works based on historical linguistics and grammaticalisation are

significant in that they enable us to understand how grammatical forms develop in languages. Such knowledge enables one to be able to predict the path of grammaticalisation historically. However, the grammaticalisation theory does not help much when faced with categorising a language at any particular synchronic level. While the discourse perspective enables us to predict the type of verb forms that may be found in particular genres, it does not enable us to be able to explain the semantics of a verb form on the basis of an empirical crosslinguistic criterion. The use of such empirical, objective and crosslinguistic criteria is the most significant contribution of the present study.

6.3 Chapter 2

The chapter discusses the notions ‘non-monad’ and ‘trimodal.’ The notion ‘non-monad’ helps one to know that in most cases, a linguistic form may have more than one meaning, but usually one of the meanings may be more prominent in a particular language. The notion ‘trimodal’ also helps us to be able to explain why two forms, such as wayyiqtol and qatal, can express a perfective meaning, and imperfective meanings could be expressed by yiqtol and weqatal. The notion ‘trimodalism’ is found to be a useful tool that helps to explain the existence of two forms such as wayyiqtol and qatal to express perfective meaning. The notion is helpful in explaining that in the natural world, a phenomenon may take on certain features because of the environment where it is found.

The notion “prominence” was also introduced and discussed in the chapter. A verbal form in a natural language may be thought of as having more than one category. However, one is usually more dominant and prototypical in its use. The notion “prominence” as discussed was later used in classifying BH, whether it may be regarded as an aspect-prominent or as a tense-prominent language. It was found that BH like any other language could express tense aspect and mood. However, in any language one of the categories is usually the dominant feature. In the case of BH, aspect is found to be the prominent category while other categories are expressed by extending aspectual categories pervasively to them.

6.4 Chapter 3

The purpose of chapter 3 was to investigate what might be the primitive meaning of verb forms in human language. It was assumed that if this were known, it would be possible to regard any other meaning expressed by the verb other than the primitive meaning as a departure from the primitive meaning. It would then be possible to investigate the features that characterise the meaning of the form of the departures from the primitive meanings of verb forms to “new” meanings. Furthermore, the observation that the semantics of the verb forms of a language are aspectual will no longer be taken as a sufficient criterion to describe that language as an aspectual language (Cook 2002:204).

To accomplish the goal, the literature on psycholinguistic research/experimental findings was consulted. I had to consult these secondary sources, because I am not trained in psycholinguistics, nor do I have the resources and the skill needed to conduct such an experiment.

From the sources consulted, the findings were that the meaning, which verbs in a language first impress on a learner’s mind is aspectual and not tense distinctions. Even among people, whose languages are regarded as tense-prominent, the first impression of the verb on the learner’s/child’s mind is aspectual distinctions. Tense was found to be a later development.

Based on the finding from the literature on psycholinguistics, a case for establishing the primitive meaning of verb forms in human languages was made. It was demonstrated that aspect is the primitive meaning of verb forms in human languages. On grounds of such demonstration, we are hesitant to adopt the view that “event structure” model may be a sufficient condition for regarding BH as an aspect-prominent language (Cook 2002:203). Rather we sought for more objective and universal criteria for classifying a language as a tense, aspect or mood prominent language.

The chapter also discusses the notion “tense” and reviews Reichenbach’s tense system, among other things. The Reichenbach reference time, for instance, is important in explaining ‘viewpoint aspect.’ This is because a reference time may serve as a temporal adverbial, which may be used to present situations in a particular temporal way. It should be remembered that there is a close relationship between aspect and tense. Reichenbach’s tense system helps one to be able to clarify the notion of tense as used in literature. Such

understanding was needed, before one could determine the behaviour of languages and compare them and know the degree of similarity and difference between aspect prominent and tense prominent languages. The viewpoint aspect in conjunction with reference time were used to make possible an explanation why a sentence may begin with a perfective verb form, and then be continued with an imperfective verb form. An event may be regarded as having come into existence (perfective), and such an event may be used as the condition that is fulfilled, which is a preparatory ground for another event that will occur. An imperfective form of the verb in such situations may express the event that will occur.

I then discussed the parameters that could be used to distinguish tense-prominent and aspect-prominent languages. Bhat developed the parameters and used them in his study of Indian languages. These parameters are grammaticalization, systematicity, obligatoriness and pervasiveness. It was argued that in tense-prominent languages, the verb forms or their auxiliaries normally respond to changes in the time of an event relative to the moment of speech. Such a response is usually predictable or systematic. It will also be obligatory. It is also usually extended to other categories such as mood.

Aspect-prominent languages also systematically grammaticalize aspectual distinctions obligatorily. Such languages also usually extend the aspectual category to other categories in the language. These parameters help one to discriminate between tense-prominent and aspect-prominent languages. It is the Bhatian parameters that were used to test the behaviour of BH verb forms.

6.5 Chapter 4

In chapter four, the parameters for tense and aspect prominent languages are applied to the BH verb forms. A few samples were investigated to determine whether the verb forms of BH are inflexed to reflect changes in the time of the events they are used to express relative to the speech moment. This enabled me to formulate my hypothesis that BH may not be a tense-prominent language. It is found that the BH verb forms do not respond to changes in the time of an event relative to the moment of speech. Rather, the verb forms respond to changes in the ways events and states are viewed; whether they are regarded as 'complete whole' or whether their focus is on the internal structure of the

event. This aspectual distinction is consistently grammaticalized, and it is found to be obligatory too. Aspectual category is also found to be pervasive.

There are some passages in BH that, as some scholars of BHVS have argued, do not maintain consistent aspectual distinctions. These are investigated in this chapter. Such arguments which appear to counter the claim being made here that the BH verb forms consistently make aspectual distinctions, are refuted. Hypotheses are formulated to explain the meanings of wayyiqtol, qatal yiqtol and weqatal. It is argued that these verb forms maintain perfective and imperfective aspectual distinctions consistently. Crosslinguistic examples are given in support of the claims.

In the chapter, the meanings of the participle, general truth expressions and performative sentences are also discussed. It is argued that in general truth and performative sentences qatal maintains its perfective meaning, while yiqtol and weqatal also maintain their imperfective meanings. It was also found that the predicate participle is used to express an event that is in progress at the reference time.

6.6 Chapter 5

In chapter 5, Exodus 15, the book of Joshua and Psalms 1 and 37 are used as fixed corpus for the study. The hypotheses about aspectual distinctions of wayyiqtol, qatal, weqatal and yiqtol are tested. It is found that wayyiqtol is used to express perfective meaning. It is predominantly used to mark narrative sequentiality or foreground. Qatal is usually found in the environment where background information is given. It is used to express perfective meaning. In non-narratives, weqatal is used to express sequentiality or found in a foreground environment. It is so used to express imperfective meaning. Yiqtol is also usually used to express imperfective meaning. It is usually found in the environment where background information is given, where the events described are not in sequence.

This study relates to the ongoing debate about the meanings of the verb forms of BH. The study, which is based on universal crosslinguistic criteria, has demonstrated that BH is an aspect-prominent language.

6.7. An Implication of the Study

This study has one other important implication that should be mentioned briefly. An understanding of the meanings of the BH verb forms is important for the BH exegete and

translator (cf .4.7.2 above). I now demonstrate exegetical and translation implications of this study. In the preface to his work, Driver (1892:v) argues,

In Hebrew, as in most other inflexional languages, the verb is a flexible and elastic instrument, the smallest movement of which it portrays; and hence, without a vivid sense of the difference between its principal parts, the full power and beauty of the language can be but imperfectly appreciated.

The discovery of the message of a text, that is its ordinary meaning as can be deduced from the rules of its grammar and syntax, I presume, is one of the principal tasks of an exegete and a translator. This is the same with the Hebrew Bible. I argue, therefore, that it is of utmost importance for an exegete or translator of the Hebrew Bible to know whether a text expresses an event as having taken place (perfective in terms of aspect or simple past tense in terms of tense) or as going to take place (imperfective in terms of aspect or future in terms of tense) or as taking place now (also imperfective in terms of aspect). I will demonstrate the importance of this claim by presenting a situation from the translations of a Biblical Hebrew text. I will show that in the passage it is important to understand whether the event referred to be viewed as a complete whole event or was yet to take place, a situation we refer to as imperfective in this study. I use Isaiah 9:5 and compare it with Isaiah 5:2. The goal is to illustrate how the same verb form is translated with different temporal meanings. In Isaiah 9:5 we have

כי-ילד ילד-לנו בן נתן-לנו ותהי המשרה על-שכמו ויקרא שמו...

Any suggested translation is left out first until the problem is discussed. I will first discuss how some commentators and some versions of the English Bible have translated the passage. I will propose that an understanding of BH as an aspect-prominent language and the natural characteristics of such languages as demonstrated in chapter 3 of this study could offer a more objective criterion for deciding for a particular interpretation of the verb forms in the text. I will then propose a translation based on such a criterion.

Watts (1985:130) interprets ותהי 'and it was/be' and ויקרא 'and he called' as future events by rendering them as "when the administration comes to be on his shoulders, when one begins to proclaim his name." Supporting this yet-to-be view of the

meaning of the two wayyiqtol in the text, Watts claims that he notes a decisive change in the tense of the passage. He states that the perfects, which have characterised 8:23 to 9:4, give way to consecutive perfect (1985:130). By consecutive perfect I understand Watts to be referring to what I refer to as wayyiqtol in this study.

It is difficult to see what is so decisive or marked or extraordinary in the structure of the verb forms used in the text. Naturally in BH, when narrative or poetry has כִּי ‘for,’ or אֲלֵּ ‘not’ or a noun phrase or any other element preceding a qatal, (i.e. perfective form) the perfective form is usually used to express perfective meaning. I argue that in the text under consideration, the verb forms used are used in their natural morphosyntactic ways. There is nothing decisive or extraordinary in the way they are used. One cannot, therefore, support the non-perfective or imperfective interpretation of wayyiqtol in the text as Watts does. Driver (1892:89) has said, and I think he is correct, that wayyiqtol is never used to express future events. It seems that the reason, why Watts is forced to ignore what Driver had noted long ago, is because there is no consensus among biblical scholars as to the identity of the child or king being referred to in the passage historically. I would like to argue that to change an obvious grammatical meaning to favour a problem of historical identity of a referent in a passage is not the most helpful method in exegesis and translation. The problem of grammatical meaning and the problem of historicity of the referent may be related in some way, but they are two different problems. So, each should be accorded its status and be treated according to its merits.

Oswalt (1986:244), in dealing with this text, follows virtually Watts as just discussed. Oswalt explains that the passage begins by stating that “God has delivered his people from oppression” (1986:244). Then, curiously, Oswalt poses a question, “how will he (God) do that”? The problem here is why Oswalt does not say, “how did he do it?,” since he has said, “God has delivered his people...” Oswalt continues his discussion of the passage by arguing that the deliverance “lies in the coming of a person” (1986:244). The problem is that it is not clear whether for Oswalt the deliverance has taken place or not.

Blenkinsopp (2000) struggles through the problem of the passage by translating וַתְּהִי and וַיִּקְרָא as present and future respectively. He does not provide any justification

why he decided to translate wayyiqtol in one place as meaning a present tense and at another place as meaning a future tense. However, in contrast to Watts and Oswalt, Blenkinsopp argues that the child in question “is an actual historical ruler rather than a projection of hopes for the future after the monarchy had passed from the scene” (2000:248). The problem then is, if the referent is a historical figure and is already named, why is ויקרא translated as a future tense?

Brueggemann (1998:81) also translates ותהי as a present tense, “rests” and ויקרא as a past tense “named.” He also holds the view that the child is a historical figure that had been born before the song was sung. If Brueggemann’s present tense interpretation of ותהי is due to the fact that it suggests something that is in existence, i.e. a present state that may not be disputed, then such a view can associate with his past interpretation of ויקרא.

As for Childs (2001:80), he translates the two wayyiqtol as future tenses. He also does not offer any justification for such a radical interpretation of wayyiqtol. In his comments on the passage, Childs clearly shows that he holds an eschatological view of the passage, thus devoiding it of any historical referent (2001:80).

If one may ask why these commentators find themselves in such difficulties, one possible answer may be that they do not base their interpretations of the BH verb forms on an objective criterion that has empirical crosslinguistic validity. This lack of an objective crosslinguistic criterion also shows in some of the major English versions available. I demonstrate this by comparing how 8 versions have translated the two wayyiqtol in Isaiah 9:5 and another two wayyiqtol in Isaiah 5:2. “F” will mean future, “P” will mean past while “PR” will mean present tense.

Versions	Isa. 9:5.	ותהי	ויקרא	Isa. 5:2.	ויעזקו	ויסקלו
NASB		F	F		P	P
RSV		F	F		P	P
NRSV		PR	P		P	P
NIV		F	F		P	P
REB		F	F		P	P
GW		F	F		P	P

GNB	F	F	P	P
CEV	F	F	P	P

This comparison serves to underscore the argument that some commentators and translators do not translate the BH verb forms consistently in terms of their grammatical meanings. This is due, I claim, to the fact that these commentators and translators do not have any objective and empirically testable crosslinguistic criterion for interpreting the meanings of the BH verb forms. I now offer a suggested translation based on such a criterion as discussed in chapter 3 and demonstrated in chapter 4. (For the purpose of the analysis, the translation is intentionally very literal).

כי ילד ילד לנו בן נתן לנו ותהי המשרה על-שכמו ויקרא שמו...

‘For a child has been born to us, a son he gave to us, and the government laid on his shoulder, and he called his name ...’

This translation above is based on a view that the BH verb forms are used to express aspectual meanings. The wayyiqtol/qatal are regarded as being used to express perfective meaning, while the yiqtol/weqatal are regarded as being used to express imperfective meaning. The aspectual understanding of the verb forms suggests that the child being discussed had been born by the time the speaker spoke. The event of the birth is a complete whole.

An understanding that BH is an aspect-prominent language and the characteristics of such a language as is known crosslinguistically allows one to treat the form of the verbs as normal features of the language. If the verb forms are regarded as normal, priority will also be given to their normal or natural meaning in the interpretation exercise. Such a method will allow for a disciplined, systematic and predictive interpretation of the verb forms. Since every exegete and translator bring their own ideologies to the task, a disciplined and objective crosslinguistic criterion for deciding the meaning of a verb form in a passage will reduce the influence of the prior ideologies that exegetes and translators unconsciously bring to their task.

There are many African languages being studied today. Categories are imposed on them, as has been done to BH without any universal crosslinguistic criterion being used. Since there is no yardstick provided, it becomes difficult to refute or accept the

claims that these languages are tense or aspectual languages (cf. Welmers 1973). This can hardly be said to advance our understanding of the way such languages are classified as they have been. This lack of any universal crosslinguistic parameter for classifying many of the African languages is also the bane of the study of the meanings of the BH verb forms. This study is a contribution to a viable path that future debate on the BHVS may follow. The important issue is not whether one analyst accepts the work of another analyst. The question is what are the criteria used? Whatever other claims may be made, it is of extreme importance that criteria be established for validating any claims.

Appeals to Proto Semitics have been made to support the claim that BH is a tense language or an aspectual language or combination of the two (Isaksson 1987). There may be a need to revisit such debates according to this study. The first thing to do is to establish parameters for tense, aspectual or mood languages. Semitists may now test the behaviour of verb forms of Akkadian and the Old Arabic or any other older Semitic language. If it were found that they meet either the parameters for tense-prominent language or aspect-prominent language or mood-prominent language, then the language being investigated may be so classified. Even in cases where *yiqtol/weqatal* are claimed to have been used to express a perfective meaning, one will need to find out what would the imperfective meaning have been, if the test of aspectual parameters were applied. This may be an important way of breaking the impasse that is often met in this field of study. If that is done, it may enable a forward movement in the age-long debate. Otherwise, unprincipled appeals to Proto Semitic and to the notion “archaism” may validate a possible accusation that “history is the lies that the living tell against the dead.”

I would like to conclude by submitting, therefore, that a study of the kind undertaken in this thesis has very important implications for the study of Semitic languages in general and BH in particular as well as biblical exegesis and translation. It is not important that other scholars should accept the interpretation of the BH verb forms as suggested in this thesis, but it is important that any interpretation should be based on some objective criteria, which are demonstrable on an empirical and crosslinguistic evidence. A study based on a model like the current one could contribute towards such a search. BH is part of human language. It cannot be treated as if it is outside the systems known to be operative in human languages.

Appendix I.

Occurrences of Wayyiqtol, Qatal, Yiqtol and Weqatal in the Corpus used for the testing of the Aspectual Hypothesis of the study. One 'x' represents one occurrence of the form in the reference, two 'x's represent two occurrences and so on.

Text	Wayyiqtol	Qatal	Yiqtol	Weqatal
Ex. 15	x		x x	
15:1			x	
15:2	x		x	
15:4		x x		
15:5		x	x	
15:6		x		
15:7		x x x		
15:8		x x x		
15:9		x	x x x x	
15:10		x x x		
15:12		x	x	
15:13	x x x			
15:14	x x		x	
15:15	x x	x		
15:16	x		x x x x	x
15:17		x x	x x	
15:18			x	
15:19	x	x x		
15:20	x x			
15:21	x	x x		
15:22	x x x	x		
15:23	x	x x		
15:24	x		x	
15:25	x x x x	x		

15:26	x	x	x x x	x x
15:27	x x			
Joshua				
1:1	x x			
1:2		x		
1:3		x x	x	
1:4			x	
1:5		x	x x x x	
1:6		x	x	
1:7		x	x x	
1:8			x x x x	x
1:9		x	x x x	
1:10	x			
1:12		x		
1:13	x			x
1:14		x	x	x
1:15		x	x	x x x
1:16	x	x	x x x	
1:17		x x	x x	
1:18			x x x x	
2:1	x x x x			
2:2	x	x		
2:3	x	x x		
2:4	x x x	x x		
2:5	x	x x x	x	
2:6	x	x		
2:7		x x x		
2:8		x	x	
2:9	x	x x x		
1:10		x x x x		
2:11	x	x		

2:12		X		X X
2:13				X X
2:14	X		X	X X
2:15	X			
2:16	X			X
2:17	X		X	
2:18		X	X X	
2:19			X X X X	X
2:20		X	X	X
2:21	X X X X			
2:22	X X X X	X X		
2:23	X X X X X			
2:24	X	X X		
3:1	X X X		X	
3:2	X X			
3:3	X		X	X
3:4		X	X X X X	
3:5	X		X	
3:6	X X X			X
3:7	X	X	X X X	
3:8			X	
3:9	X			X
3:10	X		X X	
3:13		X X	X	
3:14	X			
3:15		X X X		
3:16	X	X X X X		
3:17	X	X X		
4:1	X X	X		
4:2		X		X X X
4:3		X	X	

4:4	x	x		
4:5	x			x
4:6			x x	
4:7		x x		x x
4:8	x x x x	x x		
4:9	x	x		
4:10	x x	x		
4:11	x x	x		
4:12	x	x		
4:13		x		
4:14	x	x x		
4:15	x			
4:16				x
4:17	x			
4:18	x x x	x		
4:19	x	x		
4:20		x x		
4:21	x		x	
4:22		x		x
4:23		x x x x		
4:24			x	
5:1	x	x x x		
5:2		x		x
5:3	x x			
5:4		x x		
5:5		x x		
5:6		x x x x x		
5:7		x x x x		
5:8	x x	x		
5:9	x x			
5:10	x x			

5:11	x			
5:12	x x	x		
5:13	x x x x x			
5:14	x x x x	x		
5:15	x x			
6:2	x	x		
6:3			x	x
6:4			x x	
6:5			x	x x x
6:6	x x		x	
6:7	x		x	x
6:8	x	x		x
6:9				x
6:10		x	x x x	x
6:11	x x x			
6:12	x x	x		
6:14	x x	x		
6:15	x x x			
6:16	x x	x x		
6:17		x x	x	x
6:18			x	x x x
6:19			x	
6:20	x x x x x x x			
6:21	x			
6:22		x x		x
6:23	x x x	x		
6:24		x x		
6:25	x	x x x		
6:26	x		x x x	x
6:27	x x	x		
7:1	x x x			

7:2	X X X X	X		X
7:3	X X		X X X	X
7:4	X X			
7:5	X X X X X			
7:6	X X X			
7:7	X X	X		
7:8			X	
7:9			X X	X X
7:10	X			
7:11		X X X X X		
7:12		X X	X X X	
7:13		X X	X X	X
7:14			X X X X X X	X X
7:15		X X	X	X
7:16	X X X			
7:17	X X X X			
7:18	X X			
7:19	X	X	X	X X
7:20	X X	X X		
7:21	X X X			
7:22	X X			
7:23	X			
7:24	X			
7:25	X X X X	X	X	
7:26	X X	X		
8:1	X	X	X X	X
8:2		X	X	X
8:3	X X X			
8:4	X		X	X
8:5			X X	X X
8:6		X	X X	X

8:7			X	X X
8:8		X	X X X	X
8:9	X X X X			
8:10	X X X			
8:11	X X X	X		
8:12	X X			
8:13	X X			
8:14	X X X X	X		
8:15	X X			
8:16	X X X			
8:17	X X	X X		
8:18	X X		X	
8:19	X X X X X	X		
8:20	X X	X X X		
8:21	X X	X X X		
8:22	X	X		
8:23	X	X		
8:24	X X X X	X		
8:25	X			
8:26		X X		
8:27		X X		
8:28	X X			
8:29	X X X	X X		
8:30			X	
8:31	X X	X		
8:32	X	X		
8:34		X		
8:35	X X X			
9:1	X			
9:2	X			
9:3		X X		

9:4	x x x x			
9:5		x		
9:6	x x	x		
9:7	x			
9:8	x x		x x	
9:9	x	x x x	x	
9:10		x		
9:11	x			x x
9:12		x	x	x
9:13		x x x		
9:14	x	x		
9:15	x x x			
9:16	x x	x		
9:17	x x			
9:18	x	x x		
9:19	x	x	x	
9:20		x	x x	x
9:21	x x	x	x	
9:22	x x	x		
9:23			x	
9:24	x x x x	x		
9:26	x x	x		
9:27	x		x	
10:1	x x x	x x x x		
10:2	x			
10:3	x			
10:4		x		x x
10:5	x x x x			
10:6	x	x	x	x x
10:7	x			
10:8	x	x	x x	

10:9	x	x		
10:10	x x x x			
10:11	x x	x x x		
10:12	x	x	x	
10:13	x x	x x	x	
10:14		x x		
10:15	x			
10:16	x x			
10:17	x	x		
10:18	x			x
10:19		x	x x	x
10:20	x x	x x		
10:21	x	x		
10:22	x			x
10:23	x x			
10:24	x x x x x			
10:25	x		x x x	x
10:26	x x x x			
10:27	x x x x	x x		
10:28	x x	x x x x		
10:29	x x			
10:30	x x x x	x x		
10:31	x x x			
10:32	x x x			
10:33	x	x x		
10:34	x x x			
10:35	x x	x		
10:36	x x			
10:37	x x x	x x		
10:38	x x			
10:39	x x x	x x x x		

10:40	x	x x		
10:41	x			
10:42		x x		
10:43	x			
11:1	x x			
11:4	x			
11:5	x x x			
11:6	x		x x	
11:7	x x			
11:8	x x x x	X		
11:9	x	x x x		
11:10	x x	x		
11:11	x	x x		
11:12	x	x x		
11:13		x x		
11:14	x	x x x		
11:15		x x x x		
11:16	x			
11:17		x x x		
11:18		x		
11:19		x x		
11:20		x x		
11:21	x x	x		
11:22		x x x		
11:23	x x	x x		
12:1	x	x		
12:6		x x		
12:7	x	x		
13:1	x	x x x x x		
13:3			x	
13:6		x	x	

13:8		X X X		
13:12	x x	x		
13:13		x		
13:14		x x		
13:15	x			
13:16	x			
13:21		x x		
13:22		x		
13:23	x			
13:24	x			
13:25	x			
13:29	x x			
13:30	x			
13:32		x		
13:33		x x		
14:1	x x			
14:2		x		
14:3		x x		
14:4		x x		
14:5	x	x x		
14:6	x x	x x		
14:7	x			
14:8		x x x		
14:9	x	x x	x	
14:10		x x x x		
14:12		x x x		x
14:13	x x			
14:14		x x		
14:15		x		
15:1	x			
15:2	x			

15:3				X X X X X X
15:4			x	X X X
15:6				X X
15:7				X X X
15:8				X X
15:9				X X X
15:10				X X X X
15:11				X X X X X
15:13		x		
15:14	x			
15:15	x			
15:16	x		x	X X
15:17	x x			
15:18	x x x x			
15:19	xx	x		x
15:21	x			
15:63	x		x	
16:1	x			
16:2		x x		
16:3	x			x
16:4	x			
16:5	x x			
16:6				X X X
16:7				X
16:8			x	X
16:10	x x	X		
17:1	x x	x		
17:2	x			
17:3		x		
17:4	x	x		
17:5	x			

17:6		x x		
17:7	x			
17:8		x		
17:9	x			x
17:10	x		x	
17:11	x			
17:12	x	x		
17:13	x x	x x		
17:14	x	x		
17:15	x			x
17:16	x		x	
17:17	x		x	
17:18			x x	x
18:1	x x	x		
18:2	x	x		
18:3	x	x		
18:4			x x x x x	
18:5			x x x	
18:6			x	x x
18:7		x x		
18:8	x x x		x	x x x
18:9	x x x x			
18:10	x x			
18:11	x x			
18:12	x			x x x
18:13				x x
18:14				x x x
18:15				x x
18:16				x x
18:17				x x x x
18:18				x x

18:19				X X
18:21				X
19:1	X X			
19:9	X	X		
19:10	X X			
19:11				X X X
19:12				X X X
19:13		X		X
19:14				X X
19:17		X		
19:18	X			
19:22				X X
19:24	X			
19:25	X			
19:26				X
19:27				X X X
19:28				X
19:29				X X
19:32		X		
19:33	X X			
19:34		X		X X X
19:40		X		
19:41	X			
19:47	X X X X X X X X			
19:49	X X			
19:50	X X	X X		
19:51	X	X		
20:1	X			
20:2		X		
20:3				X
20:4				X X X X X

20:5		X	X X	
20:6		X X	X X	X X
20:7	X			
20:8		X		
20:9		X X	X	
21:1	X			
21:2	X	X		
21:3	X			
21:4	X X			
21:8	X	X		
21:9	X		X	
21:10	X	X		
21:11	X			
21:12		X		
21:13	X			
21:20	X			
21:21	X			
21:40	X			
21:42			X	
21:43	X X X	X		
21:44	X	X X X		
21:45		X X X		
22:1			X	
22:2	X X	X X		
22:3		X		X
22:4		X X X		X
22:5		X		
22:6	X X X			
22:7	X	X X X		
22:8	X			
22:9	X X	X		

22:10	x x			
22:11	x	x		
22:12	x x			
22:13	x			
22:15	x x			
22:16		x x		
22:17	x	x		
22:18			x x x	x
22:19		x x	x x	x
22:20		x x x		
22:21	x x			
22:22			x x	
22:23			x	
22:24		x	x	
22:25		x		x
22:26	x		x	
22:27		x		
22:28	x	x	x	x x
22:30	x x	x		
22:31	x	x x x		
22:32	x x			
22:33	x x	x		
22:34	x			
23:1	x	x x		
23:2	x x	x x		
23:3		x x		
23:4		x x		
23:5		x	x	x x
23:6				x
23:7			x x x x	
23:8			x x	

23:9	x	x		
23:10		x	x	
23:11				x
2:12			x	x x x
23:13		x x	x	x
23:14		x x x x		x
25:15		x x x x	x	x
23:16		x x		x x x x x
24:1	x x x			
24:2	xx	x		
24:3	x x x x			
24:4	x x	x		
24:5	x x	x x		
24:6	x x x			
24:7	x x x x x x	x		
24:8	x x x x x			
24:9	x x x x			
24:10	x x	x		
24:11	x x x x			
24:12	x x			
24:13	x x	x x x		
24:14		x		x x x
24:15		x	x x	
24:16	x x			
24:17	x	x x x		
24:18			x	
24:19	x		x x	
24:20		x	x	x x x x
24:21	x		x	
24:22	x x	x		
24:23				x

24:24	x		x x	
24:25	x x			
24:26	x x x			
24:27	x	x x	x x	x
24:28	x			
24:29	x x			
24:30	x			
24:31	x	x x x		
24:32	x	x x x		
24:33	x	x x		
Psalm 1				
1:1		x x x		
1:2			x	x
1:3		x	x x x x	x
1:4			x	
1:6			x	
Psalm 37				
37:1			x x	
37:2			x x	
37:3				x x
37:4			x	x
37:5			x	x
37:6				x
37:7			x	x
38:7			x	
37:8			x	
37:9			x x	
37:10				x
37:11			x	x
37:13		x	x x	
37:14		x		x

37:15			X X	
37:17			X	
37:18			X	
38:19			X X	
37:20		X X	X	
37:21			X	
37:22			X X	
37:23		X	X	
37:24		X	X X	
37:25		X X X X		
37:27				X X
37:28		X X	X	
37:29			X	X
37:30			X X	
37:31			X	
37:33			X X	
37:34			X X	X
37:35		X X X		
37:36	X X	X		
37:37				X
37:38		X X		
37:39	X X	X	X X	

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