

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL FOR INTERPRETING WORD ORDER IN CLASSICAL BIBLICAL HEBREW

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Abstract

In this paper we examine the function of fronting constructions in verbal clauses in Classical Biblical Hebrew, i.e. constructions that involve the placement of a core argument of the clause before the verb. We present a model that accommodates the vast majority of cases of fronting in a sample corpus of 1 Samuel. A key feature of our model is the recognition that fronting constructions include both categorical sentences, which make a predication about a base of predication, and alsothetic sentences, which present a unitary situation. We classify fronting constructions into three types: (i) narrow constituent focus constructions, (ii) selecting topic constructions, (iii)thetic constructions. An innovative idea that is developed in the paper is that constructions (i) and (iii), although exhibiting different configurations of information structure, nevertheless share various functional properties on the level of discourse organization. On account of these shared properties, we argue thatthetic constructions (iii) can be regarded as functional extensions of narrow focus constructions (i). Recognition of these various types of fronting and their interrelationship contributes to a better understanding of the phenomenon.

1. Introduction

Interpreting the linear order of constituents in Biblical Hebrew has received much attention in the last few decades.² Many scholars argue that a large proportion of the instances where a non-verbal clause constituent precedes the finite verb of a clause can be explained in terms of

information structure.³ Others have offered explanations based also on discourse organization and structure.⁴

Apart from differences in the metalanguage used to label the resulting X+verb construction, viz. fronting, preposing, topicalization, most scholars tend to regard Biblical Hebrew as a verb initial language. Since a discourse active subject in Biblical Hebrew is encoded as part of the finite verb, and the verbal forms that are typically associated with the sequentiality of events (*wayyiqṭol* and *weqaṭal*) do not allow clause initial non-verbal constituents, it is nearly inevitable that most verbal clauses in Biblical Hebrew are verb-initial.⁵ For this reason, we will regard the ‘dominant’ verb initial order as a statistical reality⁶ and clauses with a fronted construction as a marked construction.⁷

The aim of this pilot study, which is based on a corpus of finite verbal clauses in 1 Samuel, is to contribute towards a broader and more coherent theoretical model for the explanation of fronting in Biblical Hebrew. Our corpus falls within the parts of the Hebrew Bible that are written in what is generally known as Classical Biblical Hebrew. Our study, therefore, is concerned, strictly speaking, only with this layer of Biblical Hebrew. The distribution of fronting in other historical layers of Biblical Hebrew, in particular Late Biblical Hebrew, which has an extensive corpus, requires a separate study.

In a recent critical survey of research on Biblical Hebrew word order Hornkohl⁸ states: “In view of the semantic-functional polyvalence of XV structures, in some of which X is itself marked for topic or focus, and in others of which the fronted X marks the entire clause, at least two complementary pragmatic dimensions must be posited. On the relevance of one of these—information structure—to Biblical Hebrew, there is broad consensus. The exact nature of the other dimension is disputed.” We argue that the notions of categorical andthetic sentences, developed in particular by Sasse,⁹ may provide a framework for the understanding of this “other dimension” in cases where fronting “marks the entire clause.” According to Sasse¹⁰

“categorical sentences contain a predication base about which some state of affairs is predicated, while thetic sentences are simple non-predicative assertions of states of affairs”. Following Sasse we hold that the distinction between categorical and thetic sentences should be regarded as a distinction in ‘communication perspective’ rather than a distinction in information structure. It relates to the general shape a speaker/writer gives the state of affairs expressed in a sentence. Categorical sentences are bipartite, with a predication base and a predication about this, whereas thetic sentences present unitary situations. Thetic sentences, or more generally the category of utterance that Kaltenböck, Heine and Kuteva¹¹ call theticals, are typically used by a speaker/writer to manage the discourse in his/her interaction with the reader/listener. We shall argue that subjective choices concerning discourse structure and organization are the ultimate motivations for using thetic sentences. Subjective choices and perspectives relating to discourse structure, moreover, determine the way information structure is exploited in the linear ordering of clause components and so information structure is not the primary motivation for this linear ordering. Furthermore, identifying discourse structuring as the ultimate motivation for XV constructions reveals interrelationships between the various types of these constructions, which brings us nearer to a comprehensive model for understanding fronting in Biblical Hebrew.

After presenting some preliminary remarks and our basic assumptions, in the main body of the paper we describe with reference to instances of marked word order in 1 Samuel each of the categories of use that we believe should be distinguished. We start in section 3.1 and 3.2 with the two major types of categorical sentences. In section 4 we consider types of thetic sentences.

2. Preliminary Remarks and Basic Assumptions

2.1 The conceptual world of humans exists at the most basic level out of a complex collection of inter- and intra-related conceptualizations of entities, propositions and attitudes. Many of

these ‘collections’ are organised around scripts and frames, which can be exploited by a speaker/writer to impose presuppositions concerning entities and propositions that are not directly mentioned.

2.2 Human communication, in both spoken and written communication,¹² entails the ongoing alignment and modification of the common ground of the conceptual worlds of interlocutors. This may be called the common ground management and takes place mainly in the short-term memory. Interlocutors typically try to accomplish a shared common ground. The information structure of sentences relates to the management of the common ground.¹³

2.3 In addition to common ground management, communication involves also discourse management, which relates to strategies for structuring discourse to achieve subjective interactional goals of the speaker/writer.¹⁴ Constructions that function as mechanisms for the management of the common ground on the level of the sentence, such as certain fronting constructions, are exploited on a higher discourse level as strategies for structuring the discourse.

2.4 A distinction can be made between categorical sentences andthetic sentences.¹⁵ Categorical sentences are bipartite, consisting of a predication base and predication about this (§3). Thetic sentences present a situation as an undivided whole (§4).

2.5 On the level of discourse structure and organization, thetic sentences are typically used in a supportive role to manage the discourse. Categorical sentences play a wider range of discourse functions, including sequential advancement of the foreground (§2.8), marking of boundaries (§3.2), and support for the adjacent discourse (§3.1). Categorical sentences of the latter type (§3.1) have the closest family resemblance to thetic sentences.

2.6 Common ground management presupposes that a common ground for a communicative event—at least in time and space—has been established or exists between the interlocutors. Common ground is typically established at the outset of a narrative by a description of the profile of the actors—who were they?, where did they live?, which aspects of their situation and behaviour will be relevant for the subsequent story?, etc. Thetic sentences are typically one of the ways that are used to draw attention to situations that are needed for the common ground of a communicative event.¹⁶

2.7 In some cases the common ground is not explicitly established by components of the preceding discourse, but the speaker/writer may make subjective choices to present part of the contents of a sentence as if it were common ground in order to give prominence to a fronted item.

2.8 As the main line of the narrative foreground unfolds along the time-line, predication bases are made expressing the actions of the discourse-active participants, who have the status of topics (either primary or secondary topics).¹⁷ These develop the common ground between the narrator and the audience, as well as between the characters in their respective narrative spaces.¹⁸ Such sentences with continuing topics are categorical sentences in which the predication bases are the topic actors that have been established. In Biblical Hebrew, for events that unfold along the time-line or in logical sequence, *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal* forms are predominantly used in such categorical sentences. The predication bases (topics) are encoded as lexical specified items following the finite verbs or pronominal elements encoded in the verbal inflection, e.g.¹⁹

1	<p>וַיֵּצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל לְקִרְיַת פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְמִלְחָמָה וַיַּחֲנּוּ עַל־הָאֵבֶן הָעֶזֶר</p>	<p>The Israelites went out against the Philistines and they encamped at Ebenezer. (1 Sam. 4:1)</p>
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2.9 The fronting of an entity before the verb may occur in a categorical sentence when the verb is in the scope of the presupposition of the sentence. This applies to cases such as the sentence in bold in (2):

2	<p>מִי־יֵרֵד אִתִּי אֶל־שָׂאוֹל אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִישַׁי אֲנִי אֵרֵד עִמָּךְ:</p>	<p>‘Who will go down with me into the camp to Saul?’ Abishai said, ‘I will go down with you.’ (1 Sam. 26:6)</p>
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Here the verb is within the predication base and the fronted entity constitutes the informative asserted component. This should be interpreted, therefore, as a categorical sentence, with a bipartite structure. In such cases the predication base is a variable entity in the presupposed common ground ‘the person who will go down with you into the camp to Saul’, i.e. the speaker assumes that the hearer presupposes that somebody will go down with him into the camp to Saul. The assertion about the variable identifies this as ‘I’. The predication consists of the act of specifying the value of this variable. This, therefore, is a ‘specificational’ predication. In the general theoretical literature on copula sentences a distinction is often made between ‘specificational’ copula sentences, which assign a value to a variable, as here, and ‘predicational’ sentences, which assign a property to an entity.²⁰ It is important to note, therefore, that by using the terminology of Sasse ‘base of predication’—‘predication’ to describe the bipartite division of categorical sentences of this kind, we are using the term ‘predication’ in the broader sense of ‘making a statement about’ rather than ‘assigning a property to’.

Constructions such as (2) are said to be cases of ‘narrow constituent focus’. Dik²¹ classifies constituent focus into contrastive focus and non-contrastive focus. Contrastive focus has various subdivisions²² in Dik’s classification, all of which involve a contrast with a presupposed set of specific alternatives that the speaker assumes the hearer is entertaining for the role in question.²³ The construction in example (2) is a case of a non-contrastive complete focus, according to Dik’s terminology, in that it ‘completes’ the common ground by supplying the identity of the variable without contrasting it with another entity (see §3.1). Krifka²⁴ takes the view that all types of focus indicate “the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions” and the focus selects one of these alternatives.²⁵ This would include also Dik’s complete focus that supplies the variable of question words, since the focus selects from a set of possible alternatives. The question word ‘who’ (מִי) in (2), moreover, limits this set to humans. Furthermore it may be said that the contextual use of the question in this case limits the presupposed set to people present on the scene. The crucial difference from contrastive focus is that the presupposed set in the common ground is more open in that it does not contain specific referents that the hearer is assumed by the speaker to be entertaining for the role in question.

In a spoken language a constituent with narrow focus typically occurs within the same intonation group as the presuppositional component and takes the nuclear stress within this intonation group. A rendering of the sentence in spoken English would be: ‘I will go down with you^l’ (where the nuclear stress is marked by an acute accent and the intonation group boundary is marked by the symbol ^l). This prosodic feature of the construction is not directly recoverable from the transmission of the biblical text.

It is important to note that the categorical profile (predication base—predication) of constructions such as (2) with narrow constituent focus is less transparent on the morphosyntactic level than the categorical profile of sentences such as those in (1). In (1) the

predication base is a nominal or pronominal element and the predication is the verb and its complements. In (2), on the other hand, this is reversed. The predication base on the syntactic level is the verb and its complements and the pronoun is the predication. We see, therefore, that the term ‘categorical’ refers primarily to the semantic-pragmatic level of the sentence, which is not always coded transparently in the morphosyntax. One may say that the fronting in (2) is a configurational coding of the predication status of the constituent, which would correspond to the fronting of the predication verb in categorical sentences such as those in (1). In (2), however, there is no morphosyntactic coding of the base of the predication as nominal and no explicit morphosyntactic coding of the focus constituent as predication.

2.10 Another type of categorical sentence construction that involves fronting of a constituent is one that changes the topic constituent. This applies, for example, to the sentence in bold in (3), which changes the topic to ‘the Philistines’ after a sequence of sentences in which the topic was ‘the Israelites’:

3	וַיִּחַנּוּ עַל-הָאֶבֶן הָעֶזְרָא וּפְלִשְׁתִּים חָנּוּ בְּאַפֶּק:	They (i.e. the Israelites) encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek. (1 Sam. 4:1)
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This type of construction has two clear components. First the topic of the construction is identified (‘the Philistines’), then a statement about the topic is made (‘they camped at Aphek’). The component that identifies the topic can be regarded as involving focus, i.e. the selection of one of a set of alternatives. Unlike in constructions with narrow constituent focus such as (2), here the scope of the focus does not involve a presupposition of any propositional content. In (2) the presuppositional common ground is ‘somebody will go down with you’ and the scope of the focus is the entire sentence. In (3) one may say that that the presupposition of the focus

on the initial item is ‘x is the topic’, i.e. the variable whose value is supplied by the focus relates only to the selection of the topic. Here it can be identified as a type of selective contrastive focus, according to the terminology of Dik,²⁶ since it selects one rather than another of a presupposed set of specific possible candidates for the role of topic that has been triggered by the preceding context, i.e. {the Israelites, the Philistines}. In such constructions the candidates for the initial topic are all accessible in some way. They are typically recoverable from or anchored in some way to the preceding discourse, as in (3). In some cases they refer to a generic class, and so accessible through their denotation alone. This newly established topic acts as the base of predication of the sentence and the remainder of the sentence makes a predication about this. As remarked, the scope of the topic focus includes only the initial constituent. The remainder of the sentence is not fully presuppositional, as in narrow constituent focus constructions, such as (2), but rather has its own focus. The scope of this second focus includes the remaining part of the sentence, i.e. the predication about the base of predication, but not the initial constituent. One may say that on a semantic-pragmatic level the sentence is a compound of different focus domains. It is for this reason that such sentences can be appropriately rendered into English with an intonation group boundary after the subject (‘And the Philistines| camped at Aphék^l’) or paraphrased by a left dislocation construction (‘As for the Philistines, they camped at Aphek’). This compound structure on the semantic-pragmatic level is not made explicit in the Hebrew morphosyntax.

The second focus in the predication of these constructions can be narrow or broad. It is narrow when some elements of the predication are presuppositional and the focus applies only to the non-presuppositional component. This is how the predication in (3) can be interpreted. The presuppositional background of the predication can be reconstructed as ‘They (= the Philistines) encamped at x’. The verb and its subject argument ‘they encamped’ (נָחֲמָה) is, therefore, in the presupposition. This would have arisen from the conceptual frame of military

operations which was triggered by the preceding statement that the Israelites encamped at a particular place. According to the frame both armies would have been expected to encamp somewhere. The place name ‘Aphek’ (אַפֶּק) would, therefore, be in narrow focus. In other constructions of this type the focus in the predication is broad. For examples see §3.2.

The initial selected topic in such constructions may have a grammatical relation to the verb other than subject, such as object, prepositional phrase complement, or adverbial. In (4), for example, the initial item is the object of the verb:

4	וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבְבְּךָ אֶגִּיד לָךְ:	And all that is on your heart—I will tell you. (1 Sam. 9:19)
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Left dislocation constructions such as (5) have the same compound structure on the semantic-pragmatic level as fronting constructions such as (3) and (4). The difference is that they make this compound semantic-pragmatic structure more explicit in their morphosyntax by placing the initial item in syntactic isolation:

5	וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִכֹּנוּ יַעֲשֶׂהוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ עֲשֹׂר גָדוֹל	The man who strikes him—the king will enrich him with great riches. (1 Sam. 17.25)
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The choice to use left dislocation rather than object fronting relates to the level of discourse structuring rather than information structure and common ground management (see §2.3, §2.5). In broad terms a left dislocation construction such as (5) can be regarded as marking a greater boundary in the discourse than a construction with a fronted object with the same compound semantic-pragmatic structure such as (4).²⁷

2.11 We argue that many sentences with a fronted item in Biblical Hebrew arethetic sentences.

An example of athetic sentence with a fronted constituent is (6):

6	<p>וּשְׁמוּאֵל מָתָ וְיִסְפְּדוּ-לוֹ כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְבְּרוּהוּ בְּרָמָה וּבְעִירוֹ</p>	<p>And Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. (1 Sam. 28:3)</p>
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Such athetic sentence expresses a unitary situation ('The situation was that Samuel had died'). They are not bipartite categorical sentences in the senses described above for examples (2) and (3), i.e. it would be infelicitous to render them in English 'Sámuel died' or 'As for Sámuel,^l he died' (with the acute accent indicating the place of the nuclear stress and ^l indicating an intonation group boundary). Athetic sentence such as (6) has broad focus across all its parts. It may be said to be completive focus in that it supplies the variable in a presupposition that can be formulated thus: 'The situation is x', without contrasting it with any presupposed specific alternative. Some linguists refer to this type of focus as 'presentational focus' (Drubig and Schaffar²⁸), but as Krifka²⁹ argues, this still falls into the basic function of focus to select from an open set of presupposed possible alternatives triggered by an implicit question such as 'What is the situation?'

This differs from categorical constructions that have an internal bipartite focus structure consisting of one domain of focus involving a focus and a presupposition in the case of examples (1) and (2) or two domains of focus as in (3). In (6) there is one domain of focus and no presuppositional component.

In the theoretical literature it is normally stated that athetic sentence has a specific spatio-temporal deixis.³⁰ Erteschik-Shir³¹ claims, following Gundel,³² that athetic sentence takes this spatio-temporal deixis as its topic ('stage-topic' according to her terminology), i.e. the sentence is about the contextually specified space/time at which the reported situation holds. Likewise

K.É. Kiss³³ regards thetic sentences as “predication structures predicating about a phonologically empty, but deictically or anaphorically bound event argument.” We shall see (§4.0) that thetic sentences in Biblical Hebrew can also be habitual and deontic.

Unlike (3), the initial constituent in (6) does not set up a topic, about which a statement is made by the rest of the clause. Rather it is integrated into the clause on the semantic-pragmatic level. It would not be appropriate to render them in English with an intonation group boundary after the subject (*And Sámuel[|] had díed[|]) or with a left dislocation construction (*As for Samuel, he had died). In this respect it is analogous to narrow constituent focus constructions such as (2), in which the fronted item is integrated into the clause on the semantic-pragmatic level. Constituents in narrow focus in English cannot be separated from the presuppositional content of the clause by an intonation group bondary (*I[|] will go dówn with you[|]). Unlike (2), however, the content of the clause after the fronted item in thetic sentences such as (6) is not presuppositional, but rather the entire sentence is in focus. A thetic sentence such as (6), in fact, can be regarded as the extension of a narrow constituent focus construction such as (2) to usages where there is no presuppositional component, with the result that there is no internal component to act as base of predication. The verb still, however, has a defocalized profile, as does the presuppositional content of a narrow focus construction. As a result the predication function of the verb is deranked and the bipartiteness of the construction is eliminated.

Although such thetic sentences present non-predicative situations, the fronted item, nevertheless, has a particular prominence in the clause due to its initial position. One may say that it is profiled as a pivot within the rest of the situation or, in cognitive terms, a figure against the ground of the rest of the situation. This is not the same as a topical referent acting as a base of predication about which a statement is made in a categorical sentence. The fronted pivot in a thetic construction, although not acting as the topical base of predication of the sentence in

which it occurs, typically establishes a referent as topical or relevant in some way in the ensuing discourse. This can be seen in (6), in which the referent ‘Samuel’ has topic status in the clauses following the thetic construction. A thetic fronting construction such as (6), therefore, differs crucially from a bipartite fronting construction such as (3) in which a topic is established by the fronted item for the ensuing remainder of the same sentence.

As remarked, in such thetic sentences the verb is deranked in prominence by giving an enhanced degree of prominence to another component of the sentence by fronting it. This is a reflection of the non-predicative nature of the construction. Some languages achieve this by constructing thetic utterances in the form of cleft sentences, in which the verb component is deranked in prominence by putting it into a subordinate clause and enhancing the prominence of a fronted item by making it the complement of a copula. Sasse³⁴ cites the following example from colloquial French. The acute accent indicates the place of the main sentence stress, i.e. the nuclear stress of the intonation group. Intonation group boundaries are indicated by the symbol ^l:

(7) Qu’est-ce qu’il y á?^l—**C’est maman qui me bát.**^l

‘What’s the matter?—Mum’s hitting me.’³⁵

Cleft constructions are prototypically used to express narrow contrastive focus on the complement of the copula with the presuppositional background being contained in the subordinate clause component. In such cases the main nuclear stress is placed on the complement of the copula:

(8) **C’est máman qui me bat.**^l

‘It is Mum (and not somebody else) who is hitting me.’

(i.e. we share the presuppositional common ground that somebody is hitting me, but I assert that you should select ‘Mum’ rather than the referent you were entertaining for this role).

2.12 As Sasse³⁶ points out, the thetic–categorical distinction relates to “the general shape a speaker gives the state of affairs” and so is not primarily conditioned by information structure. It is not the case that all components of a thetic sentence are necessarily newly introduced. Some components may be contextually bound.

2.13 We acknowledge that thetic sentences may be expressed by constructions other than constituent fronting and have different contours. A construction such as (9), for example, with the initial particle הִנֵּה followed by a verb and subject constituent can also be interpreted as thetic, i.e. it presents a unitary situation rather than makes a statement about a predication base:

9	<p>הִנֵּה-בָּא אַבְנֵר אֵלַי לְמַה-זֶּה שְׁלַחְתָּו וַיֵּלֶךְ הָלוֹךְ:</p>	<p>Look Abner came to you. Why is it that you have sent him away and he has gone? (2 Sam. 3:24)</p>
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Following the terminology of Sasse³⁷ we may distinguish between entity-central thetic sentences and event-central thetic sentences. The thetic constructions with initial fronted constituents, such as (6), would be entity-central, whereas constructions such as (9) can be interpreted as event-central.

2.14 We acknowledge that Biblical Hebrew is an ancient language with a relatively limited and diverse corpus of texts. The corpus also has a complex transmission history. Nevertheless, we assume that Biblical Hebrew will reflect the reality of language as a dynamic and complex

system and fronting constructions can be explained in terms of communicative functions of use.

In the spoken language lying behind the written language the distinction between the three types of fronting listed above would have been doubtless made more transparent on the prosodic level by the position of the nuclear stress and the placement of intonation group boundaries. The tradition of Masoretic accentuation with its prosodic divisions within verses reflected by disjunctive accents may give us some insight into how the syntax of verses were interpreted in the oral reception of the text. It is now widely recognized that accent signs reflect a reading that has its roots in antiquity and that it has its origin in the prosodic patterns of spoken language. Evidence for the reading of the Biblical text can be traced to as early as the Second Temple period.³⁸ The occurrences of disjunctive accents, however, are conditioned not only by syntactic structure but also by the length of verses and the length of constituents.³⁹ In general it must be concluded that the written biblical text and its oral reception reflected in the accents and vowels do not give us full access to the prosodic signals of the spoken language. The interpretation of some fronting constructions in Biblical Hebrew must, therefore, remain ambiguous. It is for this reason that possible alternative interpretations are offered for some of the examples discussed below.

We will commence with those instances of fronting that occur in categorical sentences, i.e. where a predication base and a predication can be identified. Next we will consider instances where the use ofthetic sentences can be postulated.

3. Categorical Sentences

As stated above, we distinguish two major classes of categorical sentences containing fronting:

- (i) Those where there is narrow focus on the fronted entity (§3.1)

(ii) Those where the fronted entity is selected as the topic and this serves as the predication base of the ensuing sentence (§3.2)

In both cases the fronting of the constituent is a strategy for marking the constituent as a focus of the utterance.

3.1 Narrow Constituent Focus

As remarked in §2.9, a construction with a fronted constituent in narrow focus is used where the speaker/writer informs the reader of the identity of a variable in a presupposition in the common ground. The variable in the common ground can be regarded as the predication base on the semantic-pragmatic level of the sentence and the focus would be a specificational statement about this variable. Some narrow focus constructions can felicitously be rendered into English by cleft sentences, which reflect this semantic-pragmatic structure syntactically. Cleft sentences are given as alternative translations of the examples where appropriate.

Narrow focus may be classified into various types. We shall follow here the classification of Dik,⁴⁰ with some modifications.

3.1.1 Fronted Item in Non-exhaustive Completive Focus

Non-exhaustive completive focus is, according to Dik,⁴¹ non-contrastive. It specifies a variable in a presupposition triggered by a constituent question word without contrasting it with any other specific candidates that the speaker assumes the hearer may be entertaining for the role in question. As discussed above (§2.9), an example of completive narrow focus is (10). The presupposition triggered by the question is ‘somebody will go down with me’.

10	<p>מִי־יֵרֵד אִתִּי אֶל־שָׂאוֹל אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה</p> <p>וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִישַׁי אֲנִי אֶרֶד עִמָּךְ:</p>	<p>‘Who will go down with me into the camp to Saul?’ Abishai said, ‘I will go down with you.’ (1 Sam. 26:6)</p>
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As remarked in §2.9, completive focus can be regarded as involving selection from an open set of alternatives. In this case the open set of possible alternatives is not completely unspecified. The question word ‘who’ (מִי) limits this set to humans and the contextual use of the question here limits the presupposed set to people present on the scene. One may say that the properties of the alternatives in the presupposed set have some specification, but there are no specific referents in the set. Contrastive focus involves the selection of one of a presupposed set of specific alternatives. Here we have partial specification. We may say, therefore, that the focus has a low level of contrastiveness.⁴²

In an example such as (10) the focus is not exhaustive. Exhaustive narrow focus indicates that the selection of the item in focus is the only one that leads to a true proposition Krifka.⁴³ In principle the item in focus in (10) could be replaced by another item and the proposition would still be true.

The fronted item ‘for this boy’ in (11) followed by a presuppositional component can be interpreted as a type of completive focus. In this case there is no explicit question in the preceding discourse but the statement that ‘I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord’ could have triggered the presupposition that ‘I was praying for x’, which involves an implicit question concerning the identity of the variable ‘what were you praying for?’⁴⁴ The fronting focus construction completes the variable in this implicit question.

11	אֲנִי הָאִשָּׁה הַנִּצְבֶּת עִמָּכֶה בְּזֶה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל אֵל- יְהוָה: אֵל-הַנָּעַר הַזֶּה הִתְפַּלֵּלְתִּי	I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. For this boy I prayed. (1 Sam. 1:26-27)
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The fronting of the predicate of the verb הָיָה in (12) can also be interpreted as a complete focus that supplies the variable in an implicit question. The statement ‘we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them’ could have triggered a presupposition such as ‘they were x for us’, involving an implicit question about the identity of the variable.

12	וְהָאֲנָשִׁים טָבִים לָנוּ מְאֹד וְלֹא הִכְלַמְנוּ וְלֹא פָּקְדָנוּ מְאוּמָה כָּל-יְמֵי הַתְּהַלֵּכְנוּ אִתָּם בְּהִיּוֹתָנוּ בַּשָּׂדֶה: חֹמֶה הָיָה עָלֵינוּ גַם-לַיְלָה גַם-יוֹמָם כָּל-יְמֵי הִיּוֹתָנוּ עִמָּם רֹעִים הָצֹאן:	The men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them; (1 Sam. 25:15) A wall they were to us both by night and by day , all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. (1 Sam. 25:15-16) ⁴⁵
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On the level of discourse structuring and management, the constructions are all supportive in some way of what precedes. Example (10) has the function of a response to support the specific articulated question of the interlocutor by supplying the requested information. Example (11) has the discourse function of an explanation for the speaker’s actions. Here we see that the sentence with the fronting is not primarily motivated by information structure in the common ground. Rather the subjective strategy of discourse structuring adopted by the speaker exploits the pragmatic context by imposing the presupposition of an implicit question, which can

potentially be accommodated as a presupposition arising from what precedes. In (12) a similar process has taken place. The sentence with the fronting has the discourse function of an explanation of the actions of the men concerned. Its structure arises, as in (11), by imposing the presupposition of an implicit question, which can potentially be accommodated in the context, and this gives prominence to the fronted item.

3.1.2 Fronted Item in Exhaustive Completive Focus

The fronted demonstrative in (13) can be interpreted as being in narrow completive focus. There is a presupposition that somebody will rule over the people from an open set of possible candidates, without the hearer entertaining any specific candidates for the role in question. Unlike in (10)—(12), however, this can be interpreted as exhaustive focus, i.e. the selection of this candidate is the only one that leads to a true proposition. The sentence, therefore, can be rendered in English with a cleft construction, which requires an exhaustive reading:

13	<p>וּשְׁמוּאֵל רָאָה אֶת־שָׁאוּל וַיהוָה עֲנָהוּ הִנֵּה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ זֶה יַעֲזֹר בְּעַמִּי:</p>	<p>When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord told him, 'Here is the man of whom I spoke to you. <i>He shall rule over my people/It is he who shall rule over my people.</i>' (1 Sam. 9:17)⁴⁶</p>
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From the point of view of discourse structure, the fronting construction in (13) is used to express a command, which lays the ground for what follows.

3.1.3 Fronted Item in Restricting Focus

When the presupposition contains an open set of candidates for the role of the item in focus, the focus can have a restrictive sense. This applies to (14). The sacrificing frame invokes the presupposition that somebody will bless the sacrificial meal. With the fronting of the pronoun referring to Samuel, the focus construction signals that only Samuel can bless the sacrifice.

That is why the people did not eat before he arrived. This is restricting focus, since it selects the only possible candidate for the role from the presupposed open set. Such a type of focus is closely related to exhaustive completive focus (§3.1.2):

14	<p>כְּבֹאֲכֶם הָעִיר בֶּן תִּמְצְאוּן אֹתוֹ בְּטֶרֶם יַעֲלֶה הַבְּמִתָּה לֶאֱכֹל כִּי לֹא־יֵאֱכֹל הָעָם עַד־בֹּאוֹ בִּיְהוּא וַיְבָרֵךְ הַזֶּבֶחַ אַחֲרֵי־כֵן יֹאכְלוּ הַקָּרָאִים</p>	<p>As soon as you enter the town, you will find him, before he goes up to the shrine to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, since only he can bless the sacrifice/it is only he who can bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited eat. (1 Sam. 9:13)⁴⁷</p>
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In (15) there is restricting focus on a fronted adverbial phrase:

15	<p>בְּזֹאת אֶכְרֹת לָכֶם בְּנִקּוֹר לָכֶם כָּל־עֵין יְמִין</p>	<p><i>Only on this</i> (condition)/It is only on this condition that I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes. (1 Sam. 11:2)</p>
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Within the discourse structure, the fronting construction in (14) has an explanatory role. The construction in (15) lays the ground for what follows.

3.1.4 Fronted Item in Selective Focus

Selective focus, according to the terminology of Dik,⁴⁸ involves specifying a member of a presupposed set of possible specific alternatives as the variable within a proposition in the common ground. It is contrastive, in that it contrasts with the other specific members of the

presupposed set, but not corrective, since the speaker does not assume that the hearer is entertaining one specific candidate for the role.

In (16) the focus of the fronted subject pronoun ‘he’ is uttered against the background of a presupposition by the speaker that the hearers are entertaining a closed set of specific possible candidates (‘the Lord’ and ‘chance’) for the role of cause or reason for the great harm that has been done. The focus signals that the referent ‘the Lord’ (referred to by the pronoun **הוא**) should be selected from this set. The variable in the presupposition ‘x has done us this great harm’ is the base of predication, i.e. the semantic-pragmatic structure can be represented informally as ‘The one who has done us great harm (base of predication) is him (predication).’ Selective narrow focus of this type is exhaustive and so can be rendered by an English cleft construction:

16	<p>וְרֵאיוֹתָם אֶם-יֵרֶד גְּבוּלוֹ יַעֲלֶה בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ הוּא</p> <p>עָשָׂה לָנוּ אֶת-הָרָעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת</p>	<p>And watch; if it goes up on the way to its own land, to Beth-shemesh, then he has done us this great harm/it is he who has done us this great harm (1 Sam. 6:9).</p>
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With regard to the role of (16) on the level of discourse structure, one can identify this as having the function of an explanation for events in the adjacent discourse.⁴⁹

3.1.5 Fronted Item in Replacing Focus

In (17) the speaker (the Lord) utters the constructions with fronting against the background of a presupposition that Samuel, the hearer, believes that the people have rejected him. The focus construction **אֶתִּי מָאַסוּ** signals that the object argument in the presupposition should be replaced. This is a type of corrective contrastive focus and is exhaustive, so can be rendered by an English cleft. The categorical bipartite structure on the semantic-pragmatic level can be

represented informally as ‘the one they have rejected’ (base of predication) ‘is me’ (predication). The construction is preceded by a negative sentence $\text{לֹא אֶתְּךָ מֵאֲסוּ}$, in which the item in focus is negated. This is also a type of replacing focus, in that it denies that the object argument in the presupposition is the correct one and replaces the polarity. The scope of the negation includes only the item in focus.⁵⁰

17	<p>שָׁמַעַתְּ בְּקוֹל הָעָם לְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ כִּי לֹא אֶתְּךָ מֵאֲסוּ כִּי-אֲנִי מֵאֲסוּ מִמֶּלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶם:</p>	<p>Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for not you have they rejected/it is not you that they have rejected, but me have they rejected from being king over them/ it is me that they have rejected from being king over them (1 Sam. 8:7).</p>
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In (18) there is narrow replacing focus on the fronted manner adverb יַחְדָּו . The presupposition of the hearers is that they will divide the spoil unequally only among those who go down into battle.⁵¹

18	<p>וּמִי יִשְׁמַע לָכֶם לְדָבָר הַזֶּה כִּי בְּחֵלֶק הִירָד בְּמִלְחָמָה וּבְחֵלֶק הַיָּשֵׁב עַל-הַבָּלִים יִחְדָּו יִחְלְקוּ:</p>	<p>Who would listen to you in this matter? For the share of the one who goes down into the battle shall be the same as the share of the one who stays by the baggage; together they shall divide it/It is together that they shall divide it” (1 Sam. 30:24).</p>
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From the point of view of discourse structure, (17) functions as an explanation for the events in the surrounding discourse. The construction in (18) functions as a command that lays the ground for subsequent actions reported by the narrator.”

3.1.6 Fronted Item in Expanding Focus

The second sentence in (19) can be interpreted as expressing expanding focus on the fronted constituent. This is used against the background of the presupposition triggered by the first sentence. The focus construction signals that the object in the presupposition ‘He rescued everything that the Amalekites had taken’ should be expanded to include ‘his two wives’. The verb in the focus construction is presuppositional in the common ground. In English this type of focus is expressed by the additive focus particle ‘also’. It is not appropriate to translate with an English cleft construction:

19	וַיִּצֵל דָּוִד אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לָקְחוּ עִמָּלֶךְ וְאֶת־שְׁתֵּי נָשָׁיו הַצֵּיל דָּוִד:	He rescued everything that the Amalekites had taken. <i>Also his two wives David rescued</i> (1 Sam. 30:18).
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The construction in (19) has the discourse function of elaborating on the statement in the preceding sentence.⁵²

3.1.7 Fronted Item in Scalar Focus

The fronting construction in (20) with the initial constituent ‘his daughter’ (בָּתּוֹ) may be a case of scalar focus. The speaker assumes that the first statement triggers a presupposition ‘he (the king) will give him x’, where x is a set of possible gifts. The focus on the fronted object expresses that ‘his daughter’ is an extreme case in this set, and therefore not expected. In English such scalar focus is normally expressed by the focus particle ‘even’:

20	<p>וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִכֹּנוּ יַעֲשֶׂרְנוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ עֲשֶׂר גָּדוֹל וְאֶת־בֵּתוֹ יִתֵּן־לּוֹ</p>	<p>The man who strikes him—the king will enrich him with great riches (<i>Even</i>) his daughter he will give him. (1 Sam. 17:25)</p>
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The fronted quantifier in (21) can be interpreted as being in scalar focus:

21	<p>וְלֹא נִעְדָּר־לָהֶם מִן־הַקָּטָן וְעַד־הַגָּדוֹל וְעַד־ בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת וּמִשָּׁלָל וְעַד כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לָקְחוּ לָהֶם הַכֹּל הָשִׁיב דָּוִד:</p>	<p>Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken. David brought back (<i>absolutely</i>) everything. (1 Sam. 30:19)⁵³</p>
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3.2 Selecting a Topic

In categorical sentences with a fronted constituent that fall into this category both the fronted constituent and the following predication contain a focus. The focused fronted entity establishes the topic that acts as the base of predication. The remainder of the sentence serves as the predication about this. As remarked in §2.10, each of these two foci have their own separate scope. The scope of the first focus is the initial constituent, which sets up the topic that acts as the base of predication, and the scope of the second focus is the remainder of the sentence, which expresses the predication. The nature of each of these two instances of focus differs across the various examples. These can, again, be classified according to the classification of Dik.⁵⁴ Another way in which the extant examples differ is that the second focus, in the predication, may be narrow or broad. In the translations of the examples below the components in focus are marked with italics and the division between the two focus domains is indicated by a horizontal slash.

3.2.1 Predication with Broad Focus

In examples in bold in (22)—(29) the predication has broad focus, i.e. the entire predication is in focus. In (22) this is most easily identified as completive focus, according to Dik’s classification, since it answers the broad implicit question ‘What about the topic *all that is in my heart*?’’. The presupposition involved is ‘As for the topic *all that is in my heart*, x’ and the focus supplies the value of the variable x, i.e. the entire content of the predication about the topic. So long as there is not a presupposed set of specific alternatives triggered by the preceding context the focus must be a completive non-contrastive focus. One may say that the focus communicates an item from an open set of unspecified alternatives. With regard to the topic focus on the initial constituent in (22), this can also be regarded as a type of completive focus, since it selects from an open set of possible candidates for the role of topic, it being a condition for membership of this set of possible topics that the item is in some way accessible (§2.10).

22	<p>וַיַּעַן שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת-שָׁאוּל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי הָרֹאֶה עֹלֶה לְפָנַי הַבֹּמֶה וְאֶכְלֶתֶם עִמִּי הַיּוֹם וְשִׁלַּחְתִּיךָ בְּבֹקֶר וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבְךָ אֶגִּיד לְךָ:</p>	<p>Samuel answered Saul, “I am the seer; go up before me to the shrine, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and <i>all that is on your heart—I will tell you.</i> (1 Sam. 9:19)</p>
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The fronting construction in bold in (23) can also be interpreted as a topic selecting construction with a predication in broad focus. The topic, again, has completive focus in that it is selected from an open set of unspecified items inferrable from the preceding context. The predication also has completive focus (for the fronting construction with the initial constituent ‘his daughter’ see §3.1.7).

23	<p>וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִכֹּנוּ יַעֲשֶׂרְנוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ עֲשֶׂה גְדוֹל וְאֶת־בֵּתוֹ יִתֵּן־לּוֹ וְאֶת בֵּית אָבִיו יַעֲשֶׂה חֶפְשִׁי בְיִשְׂרָאֵל:</p>	<p>The man who strikes him—the king will enrich him with great riches Even his own daughter he will give him and <i>his family</i>—<i>he will make free in Israel.</i> (1 Sam. 17:25)</p>
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In (24) the construction marks a shift in topic to a section about David. The focus on the fronted constituent is selective, and so contrastive, since there is a presupposed set of alternatives consisting of two specific candidates, viz. Saul and David.⁵⁵

24	<p>וַיִּבְקֹשׁ שָׁאוּל לְהַכּוֹת בְּחִנִּית בְּדָוִד וּבִקֵּיר וַיִּפְטֹר מִפְּנֵי שָׁאוּל וַיִּדָּךְ אֶת־הַחֲנִית בִּבְקִיר וְדָוִד נָס וַיִּמָּלֵט בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא</p>	<p>Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear; but he eluded Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. <i>David—fled</i> and escaped that night. (1 Sam. 19:10)⁵⁶</p>
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In (25) the focus on the predication is broad. Unlike in the aforementioned examples, however, the sentence in the preceding context in this example could be interpreted as triggering a presupposed set of alternatives for the predication that is not entirely unspecified. The statement that David went away could be interpreted as triggering a presupposed set of possible movement activities that would be expected to be predicated of Jonathan, including the same movement activity that has been predicated of David. The members of the set would, therefore, be specified with regard to this property, but not fully specified denotations. The focus can be identified as non-exhaustive completeive, according to Dik's terminology, but with a low level of contrastiveness due to the partial specification of the presupposed set of alternative actions (see the remarks on partial specification in §3.1.1.). The topic focus, as in (24), is selective contrastive, according to Dik's terminology, since it selects one rather than another of a

presupposed set of specific possible candidates for the role of topic. In this case the set is binary, consisting of David and Jonathan.

25	וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיהוֹנָתָן בָּא הָעִיר: He got up and left; but <i>Jonathan—went into the city.</i> (1 Sam. 21:1) ⁵⁷
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In (26) two topic selecting constructions with fronted objects are used to present two parallel events. In the first construction the focus on the topic ('your sons') can be interpreted as completive, since no specific set has been invoked in what precedes. In the second construction, however, the focus can be read as selective, and therefore contrastive, since the first construction is assumed to trigger a set of specific close family members. In both cases the topic is accessible. The predication in the first construction is continued over several clauses.⁵⁸

26	וַיֹּאמֶר זֶה יְהִי מִשְׁפַּט הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיכֶם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם יִקַּח וְשָׂם לוֹ בְּמִרְכָּבָתוֹ וּבִפְרָשָׁיו וְרָצוּ לִפְנֵי מִרְכָּבָתוֹ: ... וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיכֶם יִקַּח לְרִקְחוֹת וּלְטַבָּחוֹת וּלְאִפּוֹת: He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: <i>your sons—he will take and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots.</i> (1 Sam. 8:11) ... <i>Your daughters—he will take to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.</i> (1 Sam. 8:13)
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In (27) two topic selecting constructions are juxtaposed. The two topics refer to generic classes, so are accessible through general knowledge of the description of the classes. The predications are in partially contrastive completive focus, since they come from a presupposed set of verbs sharing some property, in that they both express states of affairs associated with social status:

27	<p>כִּי־מְכַבְּדִי אֶכְבֹּד וּבֹזֵי יִקְלּוּ</p>	<p><i>For those who honor me—I will honor, and those who despise me—shall be lightly esteemed.</i> (1 Sam. 2:30)⁵⁹</p>
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In (28) there is a series of three topic selecting constructions. In each case the selected topic constituent is in some way accessible. In the first construction ‘these ten cheeses’ would have been identifiable from the speech situation. In the second construction ‘your brothers’ has been directly invoked in the preceding discourse. In the third construction ‘their token’ is anchored referentially to ‘your brothers’:

28	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר יֵשׁׁי לְדָוִד בְּנוֹ קַח־נָא לְאַחֶיךָ אֵיפֹת הַקֵּלִיא הַזֶּה וְעֶשְׂרֵה לֶחֶם הַזֶּה וְהָרֶץ הַמִּתְחַנֶּה לְאַחֶיךָ: וְאֵת עֶשְׂרֵת חֲרָצֵי הַחֶלֶב הָאֵלֶּה תָּבִיא לְשָׂר־ הָאֵלֶּף וְאֵת־אַחֶיךָ תִּפְקֹד לְשָׁלוֹם וְאֵת־עֲרֻבָתָם תִּקַּח:</p>	<p>And Jesse said to David his son, “Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers; (1 Sam. 17:17)</p> <p>and <i>these ten cheeses—take to the commander of their thousand</i>; and <i>your brothers—observe how they fare</i>; and <i>their token—take.</i>” (1 Sam. 17:18)</p>
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Topic selection constructions with initial independent subject pronouns are found in (29):

29	<p>וְעַתָּה הִשְׁמָר־נָא בַבֹּקֶר וְיִשְׁבֹּת בְּסֵתֶר וְנִחְבֵּאתָ:</p> <p>וְאֲנִי אֵצֶא וְעִמַּדְתִּי לִידְ-אָבִי בַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שָׁם וְאֲנִי אֲדַבֵּר בְּךָ אֶל-אָבִי וְרָאִיתִי מָה וְהִגַּדְתִּי לָךְ</p>	<p>Now take heed to yourself in the morning, stay in a secret place and hide yourself. (1 Sam. 19:2)</p> <p><i>I—will go out</i> and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and <i>I—will speak to my father about you</i>; and I will see what (happens) and I will tell you. (1 Sam. 19:3)</p>
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The second of the constructions in (29) with a fronted 1s independent pronoun continues the 1s topic from what precedes. The topic is, nevertheless, reidentified by a process of selective focus on the fronted pronoun.⁶⁰

With regard to the function of these constructions in the structuring of the discourse, it is clear that the fronting of the initial topic is a strategy for setting up a topic, which in turn has the purpose of marking a boundary of some kind in the discourse. In principle this item in (22)—(28) need not have been fronted or the initial independent subject pronoun need not have been used in (29). The fronting is not primarily conditioned by information structure of the common ground, but rather is the outcome of the subjective strategy of discourse structuring of the narrator. The narrator exploits the information structure of the context to select a pragmatically appropriate topic. The discourse boundary in the case of (25) breaks the sequentiality of events and so presents the event of Jonathan's entering the town as parallel to the departure of David. In (22) the boundary packages the telling 'all that is in your heart' as an independent event in order to give it heightened salience. In (23) the boundary packages the 'freeing of his family' as discreet, and therefore, prominent event. In (27) the use of two juxtaposed topic-selecting constructions has the function of marking each as two discreet poles

of a contrastive statement. In (28) the series of three fronting constructions presents the commands as three clearly discreet instructions, arranged in a list, thus, doubtless, facilitating memorization. In (26), likewise, the listing effect increases salience and clearly profiles the implications of what appointing a king will have for the addressees. The first sentence with the independent subject pronoun in (29) marks a shift in topic and presents the event as parallel to what precedes. The fronting of the pronoun in the second sentence does not mark a shift in topic, but it marks a boundary between the events, presenting ‘the going out’ and the ‘speaking to my father’ as two discreet and not necessarily sequential events.⁶¹

With regard to the predication component, again this is not primarily motivated by the information structure of the common ground. In (25), for example, the predication about Jonathan is not inevitably restricted by the context to a verb of movement. The selection of the verb of movement is the result of the subjective discourse structuring strategy of the narrator. One may say that the predication of a verb of movement to Jonathan after the predication of a verb of movement to David imposes the presupposition of a set of verb denotations with shared specified properties of movement. This, in turn, results in a degree of contrast being expressed by the predication of the construction with what precedes, and so further serves the discourse strategy of presenting the two events as occurring in parallel. The information structure of the construction is, therefore, in this case an epiphenomenon of the subjective structuring of the discourse.⁶²

3.2.2 Predication with Narrow Focus

In (30) below, which has been discussed already above (§2.0), the predication contains presuppositional material. It is expressed against the background of the presupposition ‘They (= the Philistines) encamped at x’, which was triggered by the preceding statement that the Israelites encamped at Ebenezer. The verb and its subject argument ‘they encamped’ (הָנִיחוּ) is,

therefore, in the presupposition and there is narrow focus on the place name ‘Aphék’. This can be regarded as a type of completive partially contrastive focus, since it is not selected from a completely unspecified set. Rather the presupposed set consists of items with the property of being geographical locations, which has been triggered by the statement that the Israelites encamped at Ebenezer. The set would be further limited, moreover, to locations in the same geographical area.

30	וַיִּחַנּוּ עַל-הָאֶבֶזֶר הַעֶזֶר וּפְלִשְׁתִּים חָנוּ בְּאַפֶּק:	They (i.e. the Israelites) encamped at Ebenezer, and <i>the Philistines</i> — encamped at Aphék (1 Sam. 4:1). ⁶³
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With regard to the discourse function of (30), similar remarks can be made as those made in connection with (22)—(29) in §3.2.1. The fronting of the initial component has the function of marking a discourse boundary with a new topic entity. This breaks the event sequence and presents the event as parallel to what precedes. The distribution of information structure in the predicate, with a verb as the same denotation as the one in the preceding clause and a set relationship between the locative adjuncts has the function of reinforcing the parallelism of the events. Again, the subjective choice regarding the structuring of the discourse in this way is the primary motivation for the construction and the information structure in the common ground with its potential for imposing presuppositions is exploited to achieve these goals.

Another case where the predication has narrow focus is (31). This can be identified as expanding focus. The presuppositional background for this is triggered by the content of the relative phrase that is set up as the topic. The object of ‘seek’ in the presupposition is expanded to include ‘also your life’. Expanding focus is a type of corrective contrastive focus and felicitously rendered into English by the inclusive focus particle ‘also’:

31	<p>שְׁבֵה אִתִּי אֶל־תִּירָא כִּי אֲשֶׁר־יִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־נַפְשִׁי</p> <p>יִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ</p>	<p>Stay with me, and do not be afraid, for <i>the one who seeks my life—seeks also your life</i>. (1 Sam. 22:23).</p>
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A particular type of narrow focus in the predication is one associated with negation. This is illustrated by examples (32—34). In (32) the statement that ‘Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the Lord’ triggers the presupposition that ‘Hannah went up’. The verb עָלְתָה in the predication is, therefore, presuppositional. There is narrow focus on the negator (לֹא), which changes the polarity of the predication from positive to negative. This can be classified as contrastive replacing focus according to Dik’s terminology, as it replaces a specific element in the presupposition. A similar analysis can be applied to the negated predications in (33) and (34), in which the negator in narrow focus replaces the positive polarity in the presupposition.

32	<p>וַיַּעַל הָאִישׁ אֶלְקָנָה וְכָל־בֵּיתוֹ לְזִבְחַ לַיהוָה ...</p> <p>וְחַנָּה לֹא עָלְתָה ...</p>	<p>The man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the Lord ... (1 Sam. 1:21).</p> <p>But <i>Hannah—did not go up</i>. (1 Sam. 1:22).</p>
33	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁאוּל אֶל־דָּוִד הִגַּדְתָּ הַגִּיד לָנוּ כִּי</p> <p>נִמְצְאוּ הָאֲתָנֹת וְאֵת־דְּבַר הַמְּלוּכָה לֹא־הִגִּיד לָנוּ</p> <p>אֲשֶׁר אָמַר שְׁמוּאֵל</p>	<p>Saul said to his uncle ‘He told us that the donkeys had been found.’ But <i>the matter of the kingship—he did not tell him</i>, of which Samuel had spoken. (1 Sam. 10:16)</p>

34	<p>אֶל־נָא יְשִׁים אֲדֹנָי אֶת־לְבֹ אֶל־אִישׁ הַבְּלִיעַל</p> <p>הִזֶּה עַל־נָבָל כִּי כְשֵׁמוֹ בֶּן־הוּא נָבָל שְׁמוֹ וְנָבָלָה</p> <p>עִמּוֹ וְאֲנִי אֲמַתְּךָ לֹא רָאִיתִי אֶת־נַעֲרֵי אֲדֹנָי אֲשֶׁר</p> <p>שָׁלַחְתָּ:</p>	<p>My lord, do not take seriously this ill-natured fellow, Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him; but <i>I, your servant—did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent</i> (1 Sam. 25:25).⁶⁴</p>
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The discourse function of negated constructions such as (32)—(34) is broadly analogous to that of other topic selecting constructions. It sets up a topic shift to mark a boundary in the discourse to break the sequence. This presents the sentence in parallel to what precedes, which reinforces the contrast of the negation.

4. Thetic Sentences

A large number of cases of fronting in the corpus fall into this category. The fronted item in the available examples is generally a subject, though a few examples have a fronted object. In such constructions the whole sentence is in broad focus with no presuppositional component. They involve only one domain of focus. They present the proposition of the clause as a unitary situation. The fronted item does not serve as the base of predication about which a predication is made. This item, nevertheless, has a particular prominence in the clause due to its initial position. One may say that it is the cognitive figure within a unitary situation (§2.11). For this reason a thetic sentence can divert attention from a topic referent in the preceding context and so break the sequentiality of the discourse. Unlike fronting constructions that select a topic (§3.2), however, thetic sentences do not shift attention to a new sentence topic about which a predication is made in the rest of the sentence. Rather they divert attention to a situation that supports the surrounding discourse by presenting circumstances, explanations or grounds for

the main line of the discourse. A thetic sentence may also support the following discourse, by presenting circumstances, grounds etc.⁶⁵ In such cases, the prominent fronted item may serve as the topic in ensuing categorical sentences, which make predications about it, but crucially the thetic sentence itself is not bipartite and the fronted item is only a pivot or figure within a unitary situation.

4.1 Thetic Constructions with Fronted Subjects

4.1.1 Supporting Mainline Narrative

In narrative, thetic sentences frequently present the circumstances in which a mainline event took place. This typically involves presenting the situation that resulted from an earlier event. In such cases a past *qaṭal* form verb is used with a resultative sense. Constructions of this type are in principle idiomatically rendered by an English perfect or pluperfect verb. The resultative meaning arises from the fact that the construction expresses a situation rather than directly asserting an event. Indeed, the characteristic resultative meaning of thetic S-*qaṭal* (i.e. Subject-*qaṭal*) constructions can be regarded as a heuristic to distinguish them from topic selecting S-*qaṭal* constructions, which express events and typically have a perfective meaning.⁶⁶

In cases where thetic S-*qaṭal* sentences present circumstances that set the frame for the following narrative, it is often appropriate to render the sentence with an English *when*-clause with a pluperfect verb, or, less idiomatically, with a perfect gerund ('so-and-so having done such-and-such'), as in (35):

35	<p>וּפְלִשְׁתִּים לָקְחוּ אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְאֵהוּ מֵעֵבֶזֶר הָעֶזְרָאִי אֶשְׁדּוֹד׃</p>	<p><i>(When) the Philistines had captured the ark of God/ the Philistines having captured the ark</i> [thetic], they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod [categorical, main foreground]. (1 Sam. 5:1)⁶⁷</p>
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In (36) an introductory situation is presented with a series of two thetic *S-qatal* sentences, which lay the ground for a foreground event expressed by a *wayyiqtol* construction:

36	<p>וְשָׁאוּל אָמַר לְנִעְרֹו אֲשֶׁר-הָמָּה בָּאוּ בְּאֶרֶץ צֹופִי עֲמֹו לָכֶּה וְנִשׁוּבָה פֶּן-יַחְדֹּל אָבִי מִן-הָאֲתָנוֹת וְדָאָג וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִנֵּה-נָא אִישׁ-אֱלֹהִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת לָנוּ:</p>	<p><i>(When) they had come to the land of Zuph [thetic] and (when) Saul had said to the boy who was with him [thetic], ‘Let us turn back, lest my father cease to care about the asses and become anxious about us.’ He said to him [categorical, main foreground] ‘Behold, there is a man of God in this city.’ (1 Sam. 9:5)</i></p>
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In (37) a thetic *S-qatal* clause is used in parallel with a clause consisting of a subject constituent and participle (*S-qotel*), which has a similar thetic function. Both express situations. The *S-qotel* clause denotes an imperfective situation, whereas the *S-qatal* clause denotes a resultative situation:

37	<p>הָמָּה עֲלִים בְּמַעְלֵה הָעִיר וְהָמָּה מִצְאוֹ נְעוֹרוֹת יִצְאוֹת לְשָׂאֵב מַיִם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהֶן הֲיֵשׁ בְּזֶה הָרְאָה:</p>	<p><i>(When) they were going up the hill to the town [thetic] and (when) they had met (they having met) some girls coming out to draw water [thetic], they said to them [categorical, foreground] ‘Is the seer here?’ (1 Sam. 9:11)⁶⁸</i></p>
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Thetic sentences may provide the circumstances of events that have been narrated in the preceding discourse. In (38) a cluster of three thetic subject initial sentences express the background of the preceding event of Samuel meeting Saul. The resultative function of the first thetic sentence is reflected clearly by the anterior adverbial phrase ‘the day before Saul came’:

38	<p>וַיַּעֲלוּ הָעִיר הַמָּה בָּאִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וְהִנֵּה שְׁמוּאֵל יֵצֵא לִקְרֹאתָם לַעֲלוֹת הַבִּמָּה: וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם גָּלָה אֶת-אָזְנוֹ שְׁמוּאֵל יוֹם אֶחָד לִפְנֵי בּוֹא- שָׁאוּל לֵאמֹר: וּשְׁמוּאֵל רָאָה אֶת-שָׁאוּל וַיְהִי עֹנֶהוּ הִנֵּה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי אֵלַיךְ</p>	<p>They went up to the city. As they were entering the city, (they saw) Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place. (1 Sam. 9:14)</p> <p><i>Now the Lord had revealed to Samuel the day before Saul came the following words:</i></p> <p>... (1 Sam. 9:15)</p> <p>....</p> <p><i>Samuel had seen Saul and the Lord had told him</i> ‘Here is the man of whom I spoke to you.’ (1 Sam. 9:17)⁶⁹</p>
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In (39) the resultative thetic sentence with a fronted independent pronoun presents the general biographical circumstances of the activities of Eli, whose death is narrated in the preceding discourse.

39	<p>וַיְהִי כִּהְזָכִירוֹ אֶת-אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּפֹּל מֵעַל- הַכִּסֵּא אַחֲרָנִית בְּעֵד יַד הַשַּׁעַר וְתִשְׁבֵּר</p>	<p>As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he</p>
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	<p>מִפָּרְקָתוֹ וַיָּמָת בִּי־זָקֵן הָאִישׁ וַכָּבֵד</p> <p>וְהוּא שָׁפֹט אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה:</p>	<p>died, for the man was old and heavy. He</p> <p>had judged Israel forty years. (1 Sam. 4:18)</p>
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In (40) the resultativethetic S-*qaṭal* clause is preceded by the causal conjunctive particle **כִּי** and presents the explanatory circumstances of the preceding events:

40	<p>וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד אֶת־הַחֲנִית וְאֶת־צַפְחַת הַמַּיִם</p> <p>מֵרֹאשׁ שָׁאוּל וַיִּלְכְּוּ לָהֶם וְאִין רָאָהּ וְאִין יוֹדָעַ</p> <p>וְאִין מִקִּיץ בִּי כָלֵם יְשָׁנִים בִּי תַרְדֵּמַת יְהוָה</p> <p>נָפְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם:</p>	<p>So David took the spear that was at</p> <p>Saul's head and the water jar, and they</p> <p>went away. No one saw it, or knew it,</p> <p>nor did anyone awake; for they were</p> <p>all asleep, because a deep sleep from</p> <p>the Lord had fallen upon them. (1</p> <p>Sam. 26:12)⁷⁰</p>
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Athetic S-*qaṭal* clause that presents the resultative situation of a prior event as the circumstances of the main narrative line is in some cases followed by a series of *wayyiqṭol* categorical clauses that do not continue the main narrative line but rather express actions that were sequential to the prior event. This is the case in (41) and (42). Thethetic S-*qaṭal* both presents the circumstances of the main line narrative and also the circumstances of a section of background narrative. This can be regarded as arising through a process of embedding of background clauses dependent on thethetic clause (indicated by square brackets).

In (41) the embedded sequence after thethetic clause ‘Samuel had died’ is followed by another thetic clause, which then is followed by main line *wayyiqtol* clauses:

41	<p>וּשְׁמוּאֵל מָתָּה וַיִּסְפְּדוּ-לּוֹ כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְבְּרוּהוּ בְּרָמָה וַיַּעֲבִירוּ וְשָׂאוֹל הַסִּיר הָאֲבוֹת וְאֶת- הַיִּדְּעָנִים מִהָאָרֶץ:</p> <p>וַיִּקְבְּצוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיַּחֲנּוּ בְּשׁוּנֵם</p>	<p><i>Samuel had died.</i> [All Israel mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city.] <i>Saul had expelled the mediums and the wizards from the land.</i></p> <p>(1 Sam. 28:3)</p> <p>The Philistines assembled, and came and encamped at Shunem.</p> <p>(1 Sam. 28: 4)</p>
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In (42) thethetic *S-qaṭal* construction that presents a setting is combined with a prepositional phrase with an infinitive. The situation resulting from the raid of the Amelekites is perceived by David and his men, although there is no explicit verb of perception. The following sentences with *wayyiqtol* forms are an embedded background sequence dependent on thethetic clause. This embedded background sequence extends from 1 Sam. 30:1 through 1 Sam. 30:2. It is only in 1 Sam. 30:3 that the main line narrative is resumed:

42	<p>וַיְהִי בַּבֹּא דָוִד וְאֲנָשָׁיו צָקְלָג בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַעֲמֻלְקֵי פָשְׁטוּ אֶל-נֶגֶב וְאֶל-צָקְלָג וַיִּכּוּ אֶת- צָקְלָג וַיִּשְׂרְפוּ אֹתָהּ בָּאֵשׁ:</p> <p>....</p>	<p>Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, (they saw that) <i>the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negeb and on Ziklag</i> [They overcame Ziklag, and burned it with fire.] (1 Sam. 30:1).</p> <p>David and his men came to the city, and they found it burned with fire (1 Sam. 30:3)</p>
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	<p>וַיָּבֹא דָוִד וְאֶנְשָׁיו אֶל־הָעִיר וְהִנֵּה שְׂרוּפָה</p> <p>בָּאֵשׁ</p>	
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In (43) thethetic resultative *S-qatal* clause with a fronted independent subject pronoun presents the circumstances of the events told in the previous clauses. It is followed by another fronting construction ‘and Ziklag we burnt down’. This appears to be embedded as a discourse component that is dependent on thethetic sentence, and elaborates upon it. Here the embedded component is best interpreted as a topic selecting construction, which presents the event as parallel to what precedes:

43	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ דָּוִד לְמִי־אַתָּה וְאֵי מֵזֶה</p> <p>אַתָּה וַיֹּאמֶר נָעַר מִצִּרְי אֲנִי עֶבֶד לְאִישׁ עַמְלִקִּי</p> <p>וַיַּעֲזֹבֵנִי אֲדֹנִי כִּי חָלִיתִי הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה:</p> <p>אֲנַחְנוּ פָשַׁטְנוּ נֶגֶב הַכְּרִתִּי וְעַל־אֲשֶׁר לַיהוּדָה</p> <p>וְעַל־נֶגֶב כָּלֵב וְאֶת־צִקְלָג שָׂרַפְנוּ בָּאֵשׁ:</p>	<p>Then David said to him ‘To whom do you belong? Where are you from?’ He said ‘I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite. My master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago. (1 Sam. 30:13)</p> <p><i>We had made a raid on the Negeb of the Cherethites and on that which belongs to Judah and on the Negeb of Caleb; and Ziklag—we burnt down.</i>’ (1 Sam. 30:14).</p>
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In (44) the *S-qatal* clause is preceded by the particle הִנֵּה and can be interpreted asthetic. The particle draws attention to a newsworthy (and probably unexpected) situation. In conformity with otherthetic *S-qatal* clauses discussed above, here also we can assume that it has a

resultative meaning, as it draws attention to a resultative situation that lays the ground for what follows and not to the event itself.

44	<p>וַיְהִי כְּכַלּוֹתוֹ לְהַעֲלוֹת הָעֹלָה</p> <p>וְהִנֵּה שְׁמוּאֵל בָּא וַיֵּצֵא שָׁאוּל לִקְרֹאתוֹ לְבָרְכוֹ:</p>	<p>As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, <i>behold Samuel had arrived</i> and Saul went out to meet him and salute him (1 Sam. 13:10).</p>
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In (45) athetic subject initial construction has a *yiqtol* verb, which has a habitual aspect.

45	<p>וְחֶרֶשׁ לֹא יִמָּצֵא בְּכָל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל</p>	<p><i>A smith was not found throughout all the land of Israel.</i> (1 Sam. 13:19)⁷¹</p>
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Within our corpus there is some uncertainty concerning the interpretation of several S-*qatal* constructions, in that they could be read as eitherthetic resultatives or topic selecting perfectives. This applies, for example, to the two clauses with the fronting of the subject constituent הָאִישׁ ‘the man’ in passage in (46).

46	<p>וַיָּרֶץ אִישׁ־בְּנִימִן מִהַמַּעֲרָכָה וַיָּבֹא שָׁלֹחַ בַּיּוֹם</p> <p>הַהוּא וּמִדִּיּוֹ קָרְעִים וְאַדְמָה עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ:</p> <p>וַיָּבֹא וְהִנֵּה עָלֵי יֹשֵׁב עַל־הַכִּסֵּא יָד דֶּרֶךְ מִצְפָּה</p> <p>כִּי־הִיא לְבֹ חֵרֶד עַל אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וְהָאִישׁ בָּא</p> <p>לְהַגִּיד בְּעִיר וְתוֹעֵק כָּל־הָעִיר:</p>	<p>¹² A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent and with earth upon his head.</p> <p>¹³ He arrived, while Eli was sitting upon his seat by the road watching, for his heart was trembling for the ark of God. <i>(When) the man had come into the city to tell the news</i></p>
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	<p>וַיִּשְׁמַע עָלָי אֶת־קוֹל הַצֹּעֲקָה וַיֹּאמֶר מָה קוֹל הַהֶמּוֹן הַזֶּה וְהָאִישׁ מָה־רַב וַיָּבֹא וַיִּגְדַּל לְעָלַי:</p>	<p>[thetic], all the city cried out. / (<i>As for</i>) <i>the man</i>, <i>he came into the city to tell the news</i> [topic selecting] and the city cried out.</p> <p>¹⁴ Eli heard the sound of the outcry and said, “What is the sound of this uproar?”</p> <p><i>The man having made haste</i> [thetic], he came and told Eli. / (<i>As for</i>) <i>the man</i>, <i>he made haste</i> (topic selecting) and came and told Eli. (1 Sam. 4:12-14)</p>
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4.1.2 In Dialogue

In dialogue, as in narrative, resultative *S-qaṭal* thetic clauses are used to present the circumstances of actions, e.g. (47).

47	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל וְלָמָּה תִּשְׁאַלֵנִי וַיְהִי סָר מֵעָלַי וַיְהִי עָרִיד:</p>	<p>Samuel said ‘Why then do you ask me, (<i>since</i>) <i>the Lord has turned from you</i> and become your enemy?’ (1 Sam. 28:16)⁷²</p>
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In (48) the *S-qaṭal*, which has an independent subject pronoun, can be read as a thetic clause with resultative stative meaning that supplies the grounds for the following question:

48	<p>וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֵלָיו הִנֵּה אֵתָּה יָדַעְתָּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה שָׁאוּל אֲשֶׁר הִכְרִית אֶת־הָאֲבוֹת וְאֶת־הַיִּדְעָנִי מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְלָמָּה אֵתָּה מִתְנַקֵּשׁ בְּנַפְשִׁי לְהַמִּיתָנִי:</p>	<p>The woman said to him ‘<i>You have come to know [= you know] what Saul has done</i>, that he has cut off the mediums and the wizards from the land. Why then are you laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?’ (1 Sam. 28:9)⁷³</p>
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It is also possible to interpret the fronting construction in (48) as a clause expressing narrow expanding focus (§3.1.6) on the initial pronoun: ‘*Also you know ..*’

The *S-qaṭal* construction in (49) with an independent subject pronoun can be interpreted as athetic resultative presenting an explanatory response to the preceding question, indicating the circumstances of the speaker’s letting David escape.

49	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל־מִיכָל לָמָּה כָּכָה רַמִּיתָנִי וַתְּשַׁלְּחִי אֶת־אִיבִי וַיִּמָּלֵט וַתֹּאמֶר מִיכָל אֶל־ שָׁאוּל הוּא־אָמַר אֵלַי שְׁלַחְנִי לָמָּה אַמְיִתָּךְ:</p>	<p>Saul said to Michal ‘Why have you deceived me like this, and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?’ Michal answered Saul ‘<i>He had said to me</i> “Let me go; why should I kill you?”’ (1 Sam. 19:17)⁷⁴</p>
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In (50) athetic resultative *S-qaṭal* construction is used to announce at the onset of speech a situation that constitutes the circumstances and explanatory background of the servants’ visit.

50	<p>וַיָּבֹאוּ עֲבָדֵי דָוִד אֶל־אֲבִיגַיִל הַכַּרְמֶלָה וַיִּדְבְּרוּ אֵלֶיהָ לֵאמֹר דָּוִד שְׁלַחְנוּ אֵלֶיךָ לְקַחְתֶּךָ לָּו לְאִשָּׁה:</p>	<p>When the servants of David came to Abigail in Carmel, they said to her ‘<i>David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife.</i>’ (1 Sam. 25:40)⁷⁵</p>
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Performative *S-qaṭal* clauses can also be interpreted as thetic constructions expressing situations holding in speech time, as in (51), where the subject constituent is an independent subject pronoun:

51	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי אֲנִי חֲרַפְתִּי אֶת־מַעְרְכֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה</p>	<p>And the Philistine said '<i>I have hereby defied today the ranks of Israel.</i>' (1 Sam. 17:10).</p>
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The performative can be interpreted as a resultative 'I have (by this utterance) defied' rather than perfective 'I defied', which would not be expected in athetic S-*qaṭal* construction.

In (52) athetic subject-initial construction has a *yiqtol* verb, which has a habitual aspect. This prepares the ground for the wish expressed in 1 Sam. 26:24:

52	<p>וַיַּעַן דָּוִד וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הַחֲנִית הַמִּלֹּךְ וַיַּעֲבֵר אֶחָד מִהַנְעָרִים וַיִּקְחָהּ: וַיְהִי הָיָה לְאִישׁ אֶת־צִדְקָתוֹ וְאֶת־אֱמֻנָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְיְהוָה הַיּוֹם בְּיָדִי וְלֹא אֲבִיתִי לְשַׁלַּח יָדִי בְּמִשְׁיַח יְהוָה:</p>	<p>²² David replied 'Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and get it. (1 Sam. 26:22) <i>The Lord rewards everyone for his righteousness and his faithfulness</i>; for the Lord gave you into my hand today, but I would not raise my hand against the Lord's anointed.' (1 Sam. 26:23)</p>
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Similarly in (53) the S-*yiqtol* clause can be interpreted as a habitual thetic construction presenting an explanation for why Samuel has rejected the request by Saul to accompany him to go and worship the Lord.

53	<p>וְגַם גִּצַּח יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִשְׁקֵר וְלֹא יִנָּחֵם כִּי לֹא אָדָם הוּא לְהִנָּחֵם:</p>	<p>What is more, <i>the Glory of Israel</i> [i.e. the Lord] <i>does not deal falsely</i> and does not change his mind, for he is not a human</p>
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		being who would change his mind. (1 Sam. 15:29) ⁷⁶
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4.1.3 Prayers and Commands

Prayers and commands are thetic when they express a wish for a situation and do not express a deontic predication about an individual. Examples of entity-central thetic prayers expressed by *S-yiqtol* clauses are (54)—(56):

54	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָתָן לְדָוִד לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְנוּ שְׁנֵינוּ אֲנִי וְאַתָּה בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה לֵאמֹר יְהוָה יִהְיֶה בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ וּבֵין זַרְעֵי וּבֵין זַרְעֶךָ עַד-עוֹלָם:</p>	<p>Then Jonathan said to David ‘Go in peace, since both of us have sworn in the name of the Lord, saying “<i>May the Lord be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants, forever.</i>”’ (1 Sam. 20:42)</p>
55	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּילָנִי מִיַּד הָאֶרֶץ וּמִיַּד הַדָּב הוּא יִצִּילָנִי מִיַּד הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הַזֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר שָׂאוּל אֶל-דָּוִד לֵךְ יְיָהוָה יְהוָה עִמָּךְ:</p>	<p>David said ‘The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, it is he that will save me from the hand of this Philistine.’ So Saul said to David ‘Go, and <i>may the Lord be with you!</i>’ (1 Sam. 17:37)</p>
56	<p>וְכִי-יִמָּצֵא אִישׁ אֶת-אֹיְבּוֹ וְשָׁלְחוֹ בְּדֶרֶךְ טוֹבָה וְיִהְיֶה יְשָׁלְמָךְ טוֹבָה תַּחַת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָה לִּי:</p>	<p>For who has ever found an enemy, and sent the enemy safely away? So <i>may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day.</i> (1 Sam. 24:20)⁷⁷</p>

The S-*yiqtol* construction in (57) is a command for a habitual situation to hold. It is not a predication about a razor. The initial constituent, moreover, is non-referential, which makes it difficult to construe it as a base of predication:

57	וְנָתַתִּיו לַיהוָה כָּל-יְמֵי חַיָּיו וּמִזְרָה לֹא-יַעֲלֶה עָלָיו- רָאשׁוֹ:	And I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and <i>a razor shall not go over his head.</i> (1 Sam. 1:11)
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4.1.4 Perceived Situation

In some cases athetic clause expressing a situation is the complement of a verb of perception. In (58) this complement is introduced by כִּי and in (59) by הִנֵּה. In both cases the clause is a S-*qatal* thetic resultative. In (59) the situation is elaborated by an embedded *wayyiqtol* in the manner described above (§4.1.1).

58	וַתִּרְאוּ כִּי-נִחָשׁ מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי-עַמּוֹן בָּא עֲלֵיכֶם	And you saw that <i>Nahash the king of the Ammonites had come against you.</i> (1 Sam. 12:12)
59	וַיֵּרְאוּ הַצָּפִים לְשָׂאוֹל בְּגִבְעַת בְּנֵימִן וְהִנֵּה הָהָמוֹן נִמְזָג וַיִּלָּךְ וְהָלַם	Saul's lookouts in Gibeah of Benjamin saw <i>behold the multitude had melted away hither and thither!</i> (1 Sam. 14:16) ⁷⁸

4.2 Thetic Constructions with Fronted Objects

A number of constructions with fronted direct objects in our corpus can be interpreted as thetic sentences. They express unitary situations in which the object referent is the pivot or figure. This referent typically has relevance in what follows. Their interpretation is sometimes

ambiguous, in that a case could be made to read some of them also as narrow focus constructions.

The O-*qatal* clause in (60) expresses the resultative circumstances of the predicted event referred to in the preceding clause:

60	<p>וְאָמַר עֲתָה יֵרְדוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֵלַי הַגִּלְגָּל וּפָנִי יְהוָה לֹא חֲלִיתִי וְאַתָּאֶפֶק וְאַעֲלֶה הָעֹלָה:</p>	<p>I said ‘Now the Philistines will come down upon me at Gilgal, and <i>I have not entreated the favour of the Lord</i>’. So I took it upon myself to offer the burnt offering. (1 Sam. 13:12)</p>
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A possible case of a thetic O-*yiqtol* construction is (61). It is difficult to reconstruct a clear presuppositional background to this that would allow reading it as having narrow focus on the initial constituent ‘a heifer’ (עֹגֶלֶת בֶּקָרָה). Rather it has the function of a command that lays the ground for the instructions in what follows. The command itself relates to an event, but this establishes the background situation for what follows. It is this status on the level of discourse structure that is crucial. The heifer is relevant for this following discourse, and doubtless for this reason has been made the pivot or figure in the situation by fronting it:

61	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֵיךְ אֵלַי וְשָׁמַע שָׁאוּל וַהֲרִגְנִי ס וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה עֹגֶלֶת בֶּקָרָה תִּקַּח וְאָמַרְתָּ לְזִבְחָה לַיהוָה בְּאַתִּי:בְּיָדְךָ</p>	<p>Samuel said ‘How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.’ And the Lord said ‘<i>Take a heifer with you</i>, and say “I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.” (1 Sam. 16:2).</p> <p>And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall</p>
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	<p>וְקִרְאתָ לְיֹשֵׁי בְזֻבַּח וְאֶנֶכִּי אֲדִיעֶדְךָ אֶת</p> <p>אֲשֶׁר־תַּעֲשֶׂה וּמִשְׁחַת לִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר</p> <p>אֱלֹהֶיךָ:</p>	<p>anoint for me him whom I name to you.’ (1 Sam. 16:3)</p>
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One could perhaps read it as having expanding narrow focus on the ‘heifer’: ‘Take also a heifer with your’, which would have been said based on an assumed presupposition by the hearer that he will take other items with him and the speaker asserts that this set should be expanded to include a heifer.

Whether it is read asthetic or narrow focus, however, its function on the level of discourse structure is the same, i.e. it lays the ground for the instructions that follow. This shows the close functional relationship betweenthetic fronting constructions and fronting constructions with narrow focus on the level of discourse, although they differ on the level of information structure.

Another possiblethetic construction with a fronted object is the first sentence in the speech in (62). This could be read as athetic sentence that presents the grounds for the following instructions. The 1st person pronoun is the pivot, i.e. the figure in the situation, since it is the agent of the following infinitive construction and also the implicit source of the speech of the Lord that will be uttered in what follows:

62	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־שָׂאוּל אֲתִי שָׁלַח יְהוָה</p> <p>לְמַשְׁחוֹךָ לְמֶלֶךְ עַל־עַמּוֹ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַתָּה שְׁמַע</p> <p>לְקוֹל דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה</p>	<p>Samuel said to Saul ‘<i>The Lord has sent me</i> to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord.’ (1 Sam. 15:1)</p>
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Alternatively it could be read as a restricting or replacing narrow focus ‘the Lord sent only me/me and not another’, which would be based on the assumed presupposition that the hearer had other candidates in mind for the role in question. Another possibility is that it is narrow restricting focus that confirms the shared common ground between speaker and the hearer, viz. ‘He, i.e. Samuel, is the one (restricting focus) that the Lord sent to anoint Saul as king.’ Again, the construction with any of these readings has the same function of laying the grounds for what follows on the level discourse structure.⁷⁹

Such different readings would, doubtless, have been disambiguated by the natural prosody of the language, which is not accessible to us.

5. Conclusions

In this paper we have proposed a model for interpreting fronting constructions in Classical Biblical Hebrew that accommodates all types of fronting. We have distinguished three main types of fronting:

- (i) Narrow constituent focus constructions
- (ii) Selecting topic constructions
- (iii) Thetic constructions

In previous studies of fronting, the constructions have been analysed mainly in terms of information structure. We attempt here to offer a more nuanced analysis by identifying differences in communicative perspectives, crucially between categorical and thetic sentences. We also attempt to identify motivations for the use of the constructions in subjective discourse structuring, which helps to establish interrelationships between the constructions.

Constructions (i) and (iii) share various properties. Both involve one domain of focus. On the level of discourse structure, furthermore, they play similar supporting roles, such as

presenting the grounds, explanation, elaboration or completion of what occurs in the adjacent discourse. Information structure does not seem to be the primary motivation for the use of these constructions. Rather information structure and management of the common ground are exploited to achieve the subjective goals of discourse organization and interaction. This family resemblance between narrow focus andthetic constructions explains why in some languages, such as colloquial French (§2.11), cleft constructions are used for both. Thetic constructions can, therefore, be regarded as functional extensions of narrow focus constructions, and both can be represented schematically as XVx (where x represents optional items in the post-verbal field).

Construction (ii) differs from (i) and (iii) in that it has two domains of focus. It also has a distinct function on the level of discourse structure, namely the marking of boundaries in the discourse and the breaking of continuity. In both these properties construction (ii) has a close family relationship with left dislocation constructions, which likewise have two domains of focus and mark discourse boundaries. Construction (ii) can be regarded as the outcome of a greater morphosyntactic integration of the two domains of focus than in left dislocation constructions. Both constructions can be represented schematically as X—Vx.

Verb-initial sequential constructions in the main line of narrative such as clauses with *wayyiqtol* verb forms can be represented schematically as Vx.

X—Vx constructions can be regarded as having a family relationship with XVx—Vx sequences in discourse. In both of these the initial component has its own focus domain and has the function of supporting and delimiting the second component.

Identifying these interrelationships between word order patterns brings us nearer to a comprehensive model for understanding fronting in Biblical Hebrew.

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² See, e.g., the literature referred to in W. Gross, *Die Satzteilfolge im Verbalsatz alttestamentlicher Prosa: Untersucht an den Büchern Dtn, Ri und 2Kön unter Mitarbeit von Andreas Diße und Andreas Michel* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 17, Tübingen 1996); S. J. Floor, 'From Information Structure, Topic and Focus, to Theme in Biblical Hebrew Narrative', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Stellenbosch 2004); N. P. Lunn, *Word-Order Variation in Biblical Poetry* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs, Bletchley 2006); A. Moshavi, *Word Order in the Biblical Hebrew Finite Clause: A Syntactic and Pragmatic Analysis of Preposing* (Winona Lake, IN 2010); P. J. P. Van Hecke, *From Linguistics to Hermeneutics: A Functional and Cognitive Approach to Job 12-14* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 55, Leiden 2011); R. D. Holmstedt, 'The Typological Classification of the Hebrew of Genesis: Subject-Verb or Verb-Subject?', *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 11 (2011), 2-39; and A. Hornkohl, 'Tense-Aspect-Mood, Word order and Pragmatics: Some observations on Recent Approaches', in N. Vidro, R. Vollandt, E. M. Wagner, and J. Olszowy-Schlanger (eds.), *Studies in Semitic Linguistics and Manuscripts: A Liber Discipulorum in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Khan* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Semitica Upsaliensia, Uppsala 2018), 27-56.

³ See, e.g., J. M. Heimerdinger, *Topic, Focus and Foreground in Ancient Hebrew Narratives* (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 295; Sheffield 1999); Floor, 'From Information Structure'; Lunn, *Word-Order Variation*; C.H.J. Van der Merwe, J.A. Naudé, and J. H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, 2nd edn (London 2017).

⁴ See, e.g., F.I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (Janua Linguarum, Series Practica 231, The Hague/Paris 1974); R.E. Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence—a Text-Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39-48* (Winona Lake 1989); A. Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series; Sheffield 1990); and Moshavi, *Word Order*.

⁵ This applies not only to narrative but also other genres of discourse. According to Lunn (*Word Order Variation*, 278), for example, 85% of verbal clauses in narrative and 66% in poetic texts are verb-initial.

⁶ See also V. Velupillai, *An Introduction to Linguistic Typology* (Amsterdam 2012), 284, who remarks in his chapter on word order: 'I am here following Dryer in using the expression "dominant word order", and not "basic word order" so as to emphasize that priority is given [...] to the criterion of what is more frequent in language use, as reflected in texts.'

⁷ See also Hornkohl, 'Tense-Aspect-Mood', 38-44 and 54.

⁸ Hornkohl, 'Tense-Aspect-Mood', 53-54.

⁹ H.-J. Sasse, 'The Thetic/Categorical Distinction Revisited', *Linguistics* 25 (1987), 511–80. Some of the

themes in this article were developed further in H.-J. Sasse, 'Theticity', in G. Bernini and M.L. Schwartz (eds.), *Pragmatic Organization of Discourse in the Languages of Europe* (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology, Berlin-New York 2006.), 255–308.

¹⁰ Sasse, 'The Thetic/Categorical Distinction', 511.

¹¹ G. Kaltenböck, B. Heine, and T. Kuteva, 'On Thetical Grammar', *Studies in Language* 35:4 (2011), 852–97.

¹² The interlocutors in written communication can either be a narrator and an audience or characters participating in a communicative event.

¹³ See A. Verhagen, *Constructions of Intersubjectivity: Discourse, Syntax, and Cognition* (Oxford 2005).

¹⁴ For the relationship between common ground management and discourse management see P. Ozerov, 'Tracing the Sources of Information Structure: Towards the Study of Interactional Management of Information', *Journal of Pragmatics* 138 (2018), 77–97, who argues that the former is ancilliary to the latter.

¹⁵ Sasse, 'The Thetic/Categorical Distinction.'

¹⁶ Some of the common ground that is required for a particular communicative event may be invoked by the time, space and culture that is shared by the interlocutors.

¹⁷ For a distinction between the notion 'primary topic' and 'secondary topic', 'tail topic' and 'topic frames', see Floor, 'From Information Structure,' 85-105. See also Floor, 'From Information Structure,' 195-228 on the notion 'discourse theme'.

¹⁸ Motivation by both the narrator and characters for what they are doing or saying is also one of the primary means of managing the common ground between interlocutors. See 1 Sam. 1:5b. Discourse particles, in turn, play a central role in managing the common ground as far as subjective attitudes and presentation of the construals of situations by the interlocutors.

¹⁹ The focus of these verb initial "unmarked" constructions could be regarded in the terminology of K. Lambrecht, *Information Structure and Sentence from: Topic, Focus and the Mental Representation of Discourse Referents* (Cambridge 1994) as instances of predicate focus. See also Van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, §47.1(4). For S. Dik, 'On the Typology of Focus Phenomena', in T. Hoekstra, H. van der Hulst, and M. Moortgat (eds.), *Perspectives on Functional Grammar* (Dordrecht 1981), 41–74, it will be a type of completive focus. See Van Hecke, *From Linguistics to Hermeneutics*, 116 and 120 and the discussion below concerning types of focus.

²⁰ F.R. Higgins, *The Pseudo-Cleft Construction in English* (New York 1979); L. McNally, 'Existential Sentences', in K. von Stechow, C. Maienborn, and P. Portner (eds.), *An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning* (Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science, HSK 33/2, Berlin 2011), 1829–48.

²¹ Dik, 'On the Typology,' 60.

²² These include 'corrective replacing focus', which is the type of focus that many linguists intend by the generic term 'contrastive focus'. This signals that the item in focus should be selected and replace an alternative item or items that the speaker presupposes that the hearer is entertaining for the role in question (M. Krifka, 'Basic Notions of Information Structure', *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* 55 (2008), 3–4.), e.g. (the focused item is in upper case, which represents prominent stress within an intonation group in English):

- (i) a *John hit Peter*
- b *No, SAM hit Peter*

The focus construction in (ib) is associated with the presupposition that the hearer believes that 'John hit Peter'. It replaces the subject constituent in this presupposition, leaving a presupposition of "common ground" shared by the speaker and hearer, namely that 'somebody hit Peter'. It may be said to be 'corrective', in that it corrects a specific item in the presuppositional background of the construction (Dik, 'On the Typology', 60). The construction in (ib) is clearly bipartite in that it consists of a non-informative presuppositional component (*X hit Peter*) and an informative item in focus (*Sam*).

Another type of contrastive corrective focus according to Dik's scheme is 'expanding' focus, e.g.

- (ii) a *John bought coffee*
- b *He also bought RICE*

(iib) expands the set of items bought by John that is in the presupposition triggered by (5a) by the item in focus. This is bipartite in that it consists of a non-informative presuppositional component (*John bought coffee*) and an informative item in focus (*also rice*). Other types of contrastive focus include 'restricting focus' (*John bought coffee and rice. No he only bought COFFEE*) and selective focus (*Did John buy coffee or rice. He bought RICE*). Non-contrastive focus in Dik's classification is 'completive' focus, which is found in responses to questions such as the following:

- (iii) a. *Who came?*
- b. *JOHN came.*

In (iiib) 'John' is the most salient item in the clause. It is uttered in response to the question in (iiia), which triggers the presupposition of the speaker of (iiib) that the speaker of (iiia) believed that 'somebody came'. The focus has

a ‘completive’ function in that it specifies the variable ‘somebody’ in the presupposition triggered by the question word *who*. In the dialogue in (iii), ‘somebody came’ is the common ground and so no correction is necessary. The speaker in (iiib) completes the common ground by the item *John* in focus. The remainder of clause, i.e. *came*, is presuppositional, i.e. part of the common ground. Again, the construction is bipartite, in that it is divided into the non-informative presuppositional component *x came* and the informative focus *John*.

A clause may contain more than one focus item. In (ivb), for example, there are two contrastive focus items, each correcting the specific items in the roles of the presupposition triggered by (iva).

- (iv) a. *Peter hit Sam*
 b. *No, SAM hit PETER*

In (vb) there are two completive focus items that supply the variables in the presupposition triggered by the two question words in the (va):

- (v) a. *Who hit whom?*
 b. *SAM hit PETER*

²³ See also Van Hecke’s (*From Linguistics to Hermeneutics*, 49-55, 111-120) use of Dik’s distinctions, as well as the modification of Dik’s distinctions by Moshavi, *Word Order*, 127-133.

²⁴ Krifka, ‘Basic Notions’, 18.

²⁵ Following the structuralist tradition, it can, in fact, be argued alternatives play a role in all linguistic expressions. M. Krifka, and R. Musan (eds.), *The Expression of Information Structure* (Berlin-Boston 2012), 7, refine the definition of focus by proposing that it ‘especially stresses and points out the existence of particular alternatives.’

²⁶ Dik, ‘On the Typology’, 60.

²⁷ For the function of left dislocation constructions on the level of discourse structure see G. Khan, *Studies in Semitic Syntax* (Oxford 1988), 78–96. For a discussion of the various features of their information structure in Biblical Hebrew see J. Westbury, ‘Left Dislocation in Biblical Hebrew: A Cognitive Linguistic Account’, unpublished PhD thesis (University of Stellenbosch 2014).

²⁸ H. B. Drubig and W. Schaffer, ‘Focus Constructions’, in M. Haspelmath et al. (eds.), *Language Typology and Language Universals. An International Handbook*, (Berlin 2001), 1079-1104.

²⁹ Krifka, ‘Basic Notions’, 23.

³⁰ G. Carlson, ‘A Unified Analysis of the English Bare Plural’, *Linguistics and Philosophy* 1 (1977), 413–58; G. Carlson, *Reference to Kinds in English* (New York 1977); Drubig and Schaffer, ‘Focus Constructions’, 1084.

³¹ N. Erteschik-Shir, *Information Structure: The Syntax-Discourse Interface* (Oxford Surveys in Syntax and Morphology 3, Oxford 2007).

³² J. K. Gundel, *The Role of Topic and Comment in Linguistic Theory* (Austin 1974).

³³ K.É. Kiss, 'Discourse-Configurality in the Languages of Europe', in A. Siewierska (ed.), *Constituent Order in the Languages of Europe* (Berlin 1998), 681–728 [685].

³⁴ Sasse, 'The Thetic/Categorical Distinction', 538–544.

³⁵ Some cleft-like constructions in Biblical Hebrew are also used with such a thetic function, see G. Khan, 'Copulas, Cleft Sentences and Focus Markers in Biblical Hebrew', in G.R. Kotzé, C.S. Locatell, and J.A. Messarra (eds.), *Ancient Texts and Modern Readers: Studies in Ancient Hebrew Linguistics and Bible Translation* (Leiden-Boston 2019), 14–62. Similar thetic cleft-like constructions are also found in Aramaic, see G. Khan 'Remarks on the Syntax and Historical Development of the Copula In North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Dialects', *Aramaic Studies* 16 (2018), 234–269.

³⁶ Sasse, 'The Thetic/Categorical Distinction', 518.

³⁷ Sasse, 'The Thetic/Categorical Distinction', 554.

³⁸ G. Khan, *A Short Introduction to the Tiberian Masoretic Bible and Its Reading Tradition*, 2nd edn. (Piscataway, NJ 2013), 39–41.

³⁹ R.E. Dresher, 'The Prosodic Basis of the Tiberian Hebrew System of Accents', *Language* 70 (1994), 1–52.

⁴⁰ Dik, 'On the Typology', 60.

⁴¹ Dik, 'On the Typology', 60.

⁴² Similar cases of completive focus in responses to explicit constituent questions include: 1 Sam. 28:11, 28:13; on an adverbial of direction: 1 Sam. 5:8; on an infinitive phrase expressing purpose: 1 Sam. 17:28. Constituent question words themselves are by definition narrow focus elements that invite completion from an open set, see 1 Sam. 12:3 (4x).

⁴³ Krifka, 'Basic Notions', 33.

⁴⁴ L. Velleman and D. Beaver, 'Question-Based Models of Information Structure', in C. Féry and S. Ishihara (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Information Structure* (Oxford 2016), 86–107.

⁴⁵ Other examples of narrow completive focus responding to implicit questions include 1 Sam. 3:18, 14:40, 17:32; with fronted prepositional phrases: 1 Sam. 1:20, 2:34, 6:12, 14:45b, 15:15, 20:8, 25:8, 28:1; on an adverbial expressing duration in time: 1 Sam. 10:8b; on infinitive phrase expressing purpose: 1 Sam. 16:2, 5, 17:25. In 1 Sam. 20:17 the quality of an affection is focused in this way, in 1 Sam. 2:35 the manner of behaviour and 18:24 a

manner of speaking. We may include here also constructions with fronted demonstratives such as *זֶה יְהִיָּה מְשַׁפֵּט* manner of speaking. We may include here also constructions with fronted demonstratives such as *זֶה יְהִיָּה מְשַׁפֵּט* 'This will be the way of the king who will reign over you' (1 Sam. 8:11), which responds to the implicit question 'What will be the way of the king?' Since it is possible that the cataphoric use of *זֶה*, could be part of a conventionalized construction, these fronted adjuncts of manner are not considered as marked constructions. See 1 Sam. 2:27; 3:17 (2x); 10:18; 11:9; 14:9, 10; 44 (2x); 15:2; 17:27; 18:25.

⁴⁶ Exhaustive focus of this type can be identified in 1 Sam. 22:22 ('*It is I who* is responsible for the lives of your father's house').

⁴⁷ Cases where the constituent in narrow restricting focus is accompanied by an explicit restricting particle include 1 Sam. 5:4 (*רַק*), 20:39 (*אֵין*).

⁴⁸ Dik, 'On the Typology', 60.

⁴⁹ Another example of selective focus on a fronted constituent is 1 Sam. 4:20. It can be argued that giving birth to a boy was crucial in a situation where a mother may die. The assertion is, therefore, about the gender of the child that was given birth to. The addressee is told not to fear, for she has given birth to a son and not a daughter, i.e. the focus asserts that 'son' should be selected from the presupposed binary set of specific alternatives {son, daughter}. An example of selective focus in the protasis of conditional constructions is 1 Sam. 26:19. Selective focus on time adverbial: 1 Sam. 9:12 (*הַיּוֹם בָּא לָעִיר*) 'it is today that he has come'.

⁵⁰ A negated item in replacing focus is found also in 1 Sam. 6.9, 17:47 (prepositional phrase). Replacing focus on a fronted item after a subordinating particle: 1 Sam. 2:25, 10:19, 17:9; in a clause introduced by an adversative particle: 1 Sam. 8:19, 12:12.

⁵¹ Replacing focus on adverbial prepositional phrases is found in 1 Sam. 1:16, 2:35. Replacing focus on a time adverbial: 1 Sam. 2:16b.

⁵² Other cases where a fronted item can be interpreted as being in expanding focus: 1 Sam. 7:14 ('and also their territory'), 25:43 ('and also Ahinoam'), 30:5 ('also the two wives of David'), on a locative adverbial: 1 Sam. 7:17 ('and also there'). In some cases the additive focus particle *וְ* is used in such constructions, e.g. 1 Sam. 16:8, 9, 28:19. When a constituent consists of two members in a context where there is an assumed presupposition by the hearer that it contains less, both members are in expanding focus and are both preceded by the additive focus particle *וְ*, see 1 Sam. 12:25, 17:36, 21:9.

⁵³ Scalar focus could be identified in 1 Sam. 26:10, where the sense could be interpreted '*The Lord himself* will strike him'. It can also be identified in the negative clause in 1 Sam. 27:11 ('not even one man or one woman did

he save’). In 1 Sam. 22:7 the use of the additive focus particle וְכָל is used to express extreme (and unlikely) selection of all in the set (‘every single one of you’). See also A.G. Auld, *I & II Samuel: A Commentary* (The Old Testament Library, Louisville, KY 2012), 265.

⁵⁴ Dik, ‘On the Typology’, 60.

⁵⁵ D. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Grand Rapids, MI 2007), 492, interprets it as a type of left dislocation (‘As for David, he fled’), but, as remarked, all topic selecting constructions are equivalent to left dislocation in their semantic-pragmatic structure with two domains of focus. The LXX treats the temporal adjunct at the end of 8b, as the temporal frame of the events of 19:11. See P.K. McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (Anchor Yale Bible 8, New Haven, CT 2008), 324, and *Common English Bible* (Nashville, TN 2011); *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York 1985); and *Tanach: The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia 1997 [electronic edition of 1985 version]).

⁵⁶ Similar examples with broad focus on the predication include 1 Sam. 5:12, 13:16, 14:41, 19:1, 23:18. In 1 Sam. 18:12 the constituent in the topic selecting position is a prepositional phrase. Such cases, as well as cases where the topic constituent has the object marker, reflect morpho-syntactic integration of the topic and predication domains. This differs from left dislocation constructions, in which the syntax clearly separates the two domains.

⁵⁷ Cf. 1 Sam. 14:46, 15:8, 15:34, 24:23, 26:25, 29:11, which exhibit a similar partial contrastiveness between two verbs in the predication.

⁵⁸ 1 Sam. 8:11 (2x), 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 (2x)

⁵⁹ Other cases of two juxtaposed topic selecting constructions, in some cases expressing with contrasting predications, include: 1 Sam. 8:5; 10:18-19, 14:40; 20:36; 23:17.

⁶⁰ See also 1 Sam. 12:2.

⁶¹ Cf. the use of the fronted independent pronoun in 1 Sam. 16:3 and 20:5, which marks off the sentence as a separate, corresponding action, distinct from the actions of the present speech situation. In 1 Sam. 1:28 a fronted pronoun marking a distinct, corresponding event is preceded by וְכֵן , which is a clause-level conjunction here (‘and in turn ...’).

⁶² See Ozerov, ‘Tracing the Sources’, who argues that information structure is an epiphenomenon in discourse. Further cases of topic selection constructions in the corpus with broad focus on their predications include: 1 Sam. 2:11, 14:41, 16:3, 23:18, 24:23, 26:25, 29:11 (subject); 6:10, 6:14, 14:36 (object); 18:5 (prepositional phrase).

⁶³ Cf. 1 Sam. 16:7, 17:2, 24:18, 1:5 (fronted prepositional phrase), 9:9 (fronted prepositional phrase), 18:8 (fronted prepositional phrase), in which part of the predication is likewise presuppositional. In 1 Sam. 13:18, 16:7 and 24:18 consisted of two juxtaposed topic selecting constructions.

⁶⁴ Other examples of narrow focus on negative polarity include: 1 Sam. 1:13, 15, 24:13, 14, 14:1 (fronted prepositional phrase), 25:19 (fronted prepositional phrase).

⁶⁵ This parallels in some respects a broader category of construction termed ‘parenthetical clauses’ in the study of T. Zewi (*Parenthesis in Biblical Hebrew*, Leiden 2007). The association of thetic expressions with parenthesis was pointed out by Kaltenböck, Heine and Kuteva ‘On Thetical Grammar’. The authors are grateful to the anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

⁶⁶ Event-central thetic sentences that begin with *qatal* verb (see §2.14), on the other hand, are most appropriately rendered into English as perfective.

⁶⁷ Further examples include 1 Sam. 16:14 (‘The spirit of the Lord having departed from Saul’), 19:18 (‘David having fled’); with the particle *וְעַד*: 1 Sam. 3:7 (וְעַד שֶׁלֹּא יָדָע אֶת־יְהוָה) ‘Samuel had not yet come to know [= did not yet know] the Lord’).

⁶⁸ 1 Sam. 9:27 can be interpreted in a similar way: ‘(When) they were going down on the outskirts of the town and Samuel having said to Saul [thetic *S-qatal* clause] “Tell the servant to pass on before us”, he (the servant) passed on.’

⁶⁹ Further examples of this type include 1 Sam. 14:3 (וְהָעָם לֹא יָדָע) ‘and the people had not come to know [= did not know, imperfective]’, i.e. the situation was that the people did not know), 15:35 (‘the Lord had repented’), 25:44. The verb *הָיָה* is used imperfectively in the past suffix conjugation, so its reading is not resultative in thetic constructions, e.g. 1 Sam. 1:18 (וּפָנֶיהָ לֹא־הָיוּ־לָהּ עוֹד) ‘and she no longer had her [disconsolate] countenance’), 3:1 (‘the word of the Lord was rare’), 3:19 (‘and Lord was with him’), 28:20 (‘moreover strength was not in him’).

⁷⁰ A further example is 1 Sam. 1:5 (‘for ... the Lord had closed her womb’).

⁷¹ In 1 Sam. 3:3 a *S-yiqtol* thetic clause expressing a background state has the particle *וְעַד* (וְעַד שֶׁלֹּא יָדָע אֶת־יְהוָה) ‘The candle of God was not yet in a state of being extinguished [was not yet extinguished].’

⁷² A similar thetic construction is 1 Sam. 16:1, 21:3 (‘The king has charged me with a matter’).

⁷³ A further thetic construction with *וְעַד* is 1 Sam. 17:28.

⁷⁴ Cf. also 1 Sam. 20:29.

⁷⁵ Cf. also 1 Sam. 21:3.

⁷⁶ Cf. 1 Sam. 25:28 ('Evil is not found in you').

⁷⁷ Cf. also 1 Sam. 1:17, 21:3 ('Let nobody know').

⁷⁸ See also 1 Sam. 4:6.

⁷⁹ Cf. 1 Sam. 1:5 כִּי אֶת־חַנָּה אָהַב יְיָהוָה סָגַר רַחֲמָהּ, where both fronting constructions could be read asthetic, presenting an explanation for Eli's actions ('for he had come to love [i.e. he loved, imperfective] Hannah but the Lord had closed her womb').