AN ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT-BEFORE-FINITE-VERB CLAUSES IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS BASED ON TRADITIONAL GRAMMARIANS

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AN ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT-BEFORE-Finite-VERB
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ON TRADITIONAL GRAMMARIANS

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PREFACE

This work would not have been accomplished without the help and encouragement of a number of individuals. Professor Russell T. Fuller, my supervising professor, has guided me through this project. His pursuit of excellence has challenged me and, as a result, has made this a better dissertation than it otherwise would have been. Professors John B. Polhill and Ken D. Fentress have provided tremendous assistance and sustaining support throughout the process. Professor Isaac Jerusalmi, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Religious Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio, gave me a marvelous insight to Semitic languages during my coursework. I will always be grateful for having studied under such fine scholars.

I also acknowledge my friends and colleagues who have faithfully and fervently prayed for me during this journey. In particular, I wish to express my gratitude to Terry J. Betts, Eric A. Mitchell, John P. Flanagan, and Matthew C. Simpson for their friendship as we worked together over these past six years. And I also want to express my appreciation for Dean Russell D. Moore for showing me confidence in my work.

Many others have given me support along the way. My parents have given me so much support that I could not adequately express my gratitude for them. My son, Hayyiyem, has been patient with his father’s busy schedule, for which I am grateful. No words can express my gratitude for my wife, Jiyoun. She was willing to follow me to this country and make tremendous sacrifices in order to support me during this season of our lives. Never once did she express anything but encouragement and support during this process. I look forward to what God has in store for us.

Most of all, I want to express my thanksgiving and praise to my Lord, Jesus Christ. My prayer is that the results of this dissertation will bring glory to Him and edify
the church. It is only by His sustaining grace that I have been privileged and able to complete this work.

Louisville, Kentucky
May 2006
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Definitions of Verbal and Nominal Clauses According to Traditional and Modern Grammarians

Traditional grammarians of Biblical Hebrew classified Hebrew clauses into two general categories: verbal and nominal.¹ Verbal clauses focus on the verb, its development and progress. Nominal clauses, by contrast, focus on the subject, describing or emphasizing it in some manner.

Traditional grammarians and modern grammarians defined nominal and verbal clauses differently. Influenced by the Arab grammarians, Medieval Jewish grammarians applied the Arabic classification of clauses to Biblical Hebrew clauses, classifying the clauses according to the first element of the clause: a clause beginning with a finite verb is verbal, and a clause beginning with a subject is nominal.² Verbal clauses focus on the verb, focusing on what the subject does; and nominal clauses focus on the subject, describing what the state of the subject is. This distinction between verbal and nominal clauses is essential to traditional grammarians.³ Later, around the turn of the 20th century,

¹Traditional grammarians are Medieval Hebrew grammarians and Arabic grammarians. Other grammarians who follow the approach and methodology of Medieval Jewish grammarians and Arabic grammarians may also be considered traditional grammarians.


grammarians of Biblical Hebrew changed this classification by redefining verbal and nominal clauses based upon the predicates—a clause with a finite verb predicate is a verbal clause; a clause with a noun, adjective (including participle), or prepositional-phrase predicate is a nominal clause. In fact, the change from the traditional definition to the modern definition of verbal and nominal clauses occurred in the West seemingly without debate. Most grammarians today accept the new definition, classifying any clause with a finite verb as verbal, and any clause without a finite verb as nominal. Yet, this new definition is problematic as Kautzsch, a catalyst in changing the definition, admitted:

> Though this [Arab grammarians’] definition of the different kinds of sentence, which we formerly accepted ... the subject does sometimes precede even in the verbal-clause proper, in the continuation of the narrative; ... especially so if there is special emphasis upon it. ... In the great majority of instances, however, the position of the subject at the beginning of a verbal-clause is to be explained from the fact that the clause is not intended to introduce a new fact carrying on the narrative, but rather to describe a state. Verbal-clauses of this kind approximate closely in character to noun-clauses, and not infrequently (viz. when the verbal form might just as well be read as a participle) it is doubtful whether the writer did not in fact intend a noun-clause.

Similarly, T. Muraoka downplayed the significance of the contrast between verbal and nominal clauses, as traditionally understood, stating, “This division [between nominal and verbal clauses] ought not to be pressed so far as to obscure some significant features

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4This is a standard definition accepted by grammarians since the 25th edition of *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, edited by Kautzsch. Kautzsch’s classification excludes clauses with the verb הָיְתָה as a copula in the sense of *to be*.


shared by the two types of clause." Most modern grammarians follow Muraoka’s opinion of de-emphasizing the distinction between nominal and verbal clauses.

Survey of Modern Understanding of Nominal Clauses

Modern scholars have investigated verbal and nominal clauses. They have focused on the various tenses and aspects of verbs within verbal clauses since verbal clauses carry the actions or events of the narrative. Though the conjugations have a “natural” tense and aspect, the study of verbal clauses often falls into exegetical studies, rather than grammatical. Currently, modern scholars generally agree on the function of verbal clauses. Thus, modern scholars have mostly focused on the nominal clauses, now understood as “verbless clauses,” following the work of C. Albrecht. Continuing the research for verbless clauses, C. Brockelmann and R. Williams investigated the word order, concluding that the normal word order is subject first then the predicate. If the

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9Perfect – past, simple action; imperfect – present/future, on-going action; participle – present, on-going action. Context ultimately determines the tense and aspect of a particular verb or participle.


11Most modern grammarians consider all clauses with a finite verb as verbal.


predicate is first, the predicate is emphatic. F. Andersen criticized this concept of
emphasis claiming that it was exegetical, not grammatical, and studied the grammatical
functions of the clauses and suggested nine rules for analyzing the verbless clauses.
Andersen concluded that for verbless clauses without participles or infinitives when the
subject is first, the clause is "identification"; when the predicate is first, the clause is
"classification."14 Later, J. Hoftijzer criticized Andersen's presentation as "self-evidently
highly determined by the special type of linguistic approach he prefers."15 He also
challenged Andersen's presuppositions, which he deemed vague, for identifying the
subject and predicate. After a careful investigating of Andersen's research and after
studying nominal clauses with a predicate preceding a subject, Hoftijzer concluded that
"a prepositional phrase preceding a determined noun category in such a clause indicated
that the preceding core constituent was of a contrastive character . . . a determined noun
category preceding a prepositional phrase gave no indications whether one of the core
constituents was contrastive or not."16 Even though modern scholars differ on the

14Andersen, The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch, 17, and 39-49.
The nine rules are as follows: (1) The sequence is S-P in a clause of identification, in
which both S and P are definite. (2) A pleonastic pronoun in a clause of identification
comes before the predicate, in keeping with Rule 1. Contrast Rule 4. (3) The sequence is
P-S in a clause of classification, in which P is indefinite relative to S. (4) A pleonastic
pronoun in a clause of classification comes after the predicate, in keeping with Rule 3.
Contrast Rule 2. (5) Circumstantial clauses of classification have sequence S-P, in
contrast with Rule 3 and 4. (6) When a suffixed noun is predicate, the sequence S-P (Rule
1) is used for a clause of identification in which the suffixed noun is definite; the
sequence P-S (Rule 3) is used for a clause of classification in which the suffixed noun is
indefinite. (7) When the predicate is a participle (phrase), the sequence P-S (Rule 3) is used for a clause of classification in which the suffixed noun is indefinit.
(8) When the predicate is a participle (phrase), the sequence S-P is preferred in precative clauses. Compare Rule 8. (9) The sequence P-S is used when the
subject of a declarative clause is an infinitive; the predicate is always an indefinite noun.
Compare Rule 3.

15Jacob Hoftijzer. "Nominal Clause Reconsidered," Vetus Testamentum 23
(1973): 446.

16Ibid., 509.
meanings and functions of the verbless clauses, they have come to partial consensus on
the verbless clause.\footnote{Andersen’s views, with some modifications, represent the “partial
consensus” today. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, \textit{An Introduction to Biblical
Hebrew Syntax} (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §8.4a; J. C. L. Gibson, 
\textit{Davidson’s Introductory Hebrew Grammar – Syntax} (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), §49; Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, \textit{A Biblical
Hebrew Reference Grammar} (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), §34.3, and §47.3 (248-9, 349-50). Also, see the various discussions about verbless clauses in Cynthia L. Miller, \textit{The Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Approaches}, ed. Cynthia L. Miller (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999).}  

Although modern scholarship has focused on the verbless clauses, they have not devoted the same attention to the subject-before-finite-verb clauses. Probably, this lack of interest is due to their classification of these clauses as verbal. Some grammarians, however, have devoted some attention to subject-before-finite-verb clauses. Kautzsch asserted that subject-before-finite-verb clauses mostly describe pluperfect events.\footnote{See the numerous examples in \textit{Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar}, 28th ed., §106f, §107c, §111g, q, §118u, §142b, and so forth.} Jotion treated subject-before-finite-verb clauses as an alternate construction when the Vav-consecutive chain is broken. To Jotion, subject-before-finite-verb clauses express notions such as the pluperfect, contrast, simultaneous action, and restating of the action.\footnote{Jotion, \textit{Grammaire de l’hébreu Biblique}, §118d-g} Similarly, Gibson suggests the various functions of subject-before-finite-verb clauses as describing circumstances, emphasis, chiasmus, and contrast.\footnote{Gibson, \textit{Davidson’s Introductory Hebrew Grammar – Syntax}, §133, §136, §137, §140, and §141.} Some scholars explain that subject-before-finite-verb clauses describe background information, whereas the clauses with a finite verb occurring before the subject describe foreground events.\footnote{J. Heimerdinger, “Topic, Focus and Foreground in Ancient Hebrew Narratives,” \textit{Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 295} (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); J. Joosten, “Biblical w’qatal and Syriac hwa qatel Expressing Repetition in the Past,” \textit{Zeitschrift für Althebräistik} 5(1): 1-14 (1992), 3; Waltke and O’Connor, \textit{An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax}, 521-23; Duane A.
Although traditional and modern grammatical works have commented on subject-before-finite-verb clauses, there has not been a systematic examination and analysis of these clauses. Since one can expect such a systematic presentation from the modern perspective in the future, this dissertation will follow the traditional perspective of Hebrew and Arabic grammarians. Traditional grammarians have studied and used these clauses for centuries. Many of these grammarians have spoken subject-before-finite-verb clauses from their birth. Their understanding of subject-before-finite-verb clauses is not an idle speculation, a theoretical construct – it is in their soul, it is part of who they are. Their understanding, knowledge, and experience with subject-before-finite-verb clauses are greatly needed for Biblical Hebrew. Students and scholars of Biblical Hebrew will both benefit from a study of subject-before-finite-verb clauses based on the work of traditional grammarians over the past centuries.

**Thesis**

The research of this dissertation, following the understanding of traditional grammarians concerning subject-before-finite-verb clauses, furnishes the following thesis: all subject-before-finite-verb clauses render the subject prominent by both emphasis and description.

Although the thesis is straightforward and simple, a few explanatory comments are necessary for further clarity. Subject-before-finite-verb clauses project the subject before the verb, the opposite of normal word order – verb first then subject – in Hebrew, rendering the subject conspicuous, immediately noticeable. This is what is meant by prominent\(^\text{22}\) in the thesis. This prominence manifests itself in an emphasis, a special attention given to the subject so as to make it stand out, giving it importance, stress,

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\(^{22}\) *Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language*. 
weight, and forcefulness;\textsuperscript{23} and in a description that announces descriptive details about the subject. In subject-before-finite-verb clauses, the subject is prominently set forth for emphasis and description.

**Methodology**

To establish this thesis, this dissertation applies the understanding of traditional grammarians to all subject-before-finite-verb clauses in the book of Genesis. Chapter 2 briefly describes traditional grammarians, their methods and important personalities. Then their understanding of verbal and nominal clauses, including subject-before-finite-verb clauses, is outlined. Finally, analogies are given to understand better the meaning of subject-before-finite-verb clauses for English speakers. Chapter 3 applies the traditional grammarians’ approach to subject-before-finite-verb clauses in the narrative portions\textsuperscript{24} of Genesis. Chapter 4 applies the same approach to the non-narrative portions\textsuperscript{25} of Genesis. Chapter 5 discusses selected issues in current scholarship and their impact upon this study. The first issue discusses the redefining of verbal and nominal clauses by modern grammarians, specifically E. Kautzsch. The second issue discusses normal, primary word order in Biblical Hebrew. If the normal word order in Biblical Hebrew were subject-verb, then the traditional approach fails. If, however, verb-subject

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{24}Narrative statements can be defined as any statements that are not a direct speech. Recently, A. Niccacci suggested separate analyzing clauses in narrative and in discourse. He suggested that finding general patterns in different speeches, namely narrative and discourse, is useful in interpreting the text. His study concludes that subject-before-finite-verb (he calls “complex nominal”) clauses generally belong to the background in both categories of narrative and discourse (Qatal or Yiqtol in narrative; Yiqtol only in discourse), emphasizing the contrast between characters. Alviero Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose*, trans. W. G. E. Watson (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 23-29, and 32-34.

\textsuperscript{25}Non-narrative statements include direct speech in narrative. Of course, narrative can occur within direct speech, but for this dissertation, narrative statements in direct speech will be considered non-narrative statements.
is the normal word order in Biblical Hebrew, then the traditional approach remains viable. Chapter 6 briefly summarizes the most important findings and furnishes a conclusion.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF RESEARCH:
TRADITIONAL GRAMMARIANS AND THEIR
UNDERSTANDING OF VERBAL AND
NOMINAL CLAUSES

Influences of Arabic Grammar on Medieval Jewish Hebrew Grammarians

Biblical Hebrew had effectively disappeared as a vernacular sometime after the fourth century before Christ. With no more native speakers of Biblical Hebrew, later Rabbis taught it as a foreign language. How Jewish scholars analyzed the grammatical structures and categories of Biblical Hebrew from the end of the Old Testament canon to Medieval times is unknown. Ancient translations, of course, reflect a general analysis of the language similar to traditional understandings. The study of Biblical Hebrew, as we know it, actually began in the Middle Ages, perhaps under the impact of Karaism.

The Medieval Jewish grammarians chose Arabic, a living Semitic language remarkably similar to Biblical Hebrew in many grammatical categories, as the model to analyze Biblical Hebrew. The Karaites and the Masoretes, along with other Medieval

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1 Phillip Alexander stated, “By the late second century CE Hebrew was no longer in use as a vernacular, so there was no ‘native’ population from whom the Rabbis could have learned it as a ‘foreign’ language.” Learning Biblical Hebrew as a foreign language “is totally different from competence at the level of street-language. [Consequently,] the Rabbis were indeed interested in quirky, aggadic way in words, in etymologies and in syntactic structures, but they lacked an apparatus for the serious, scientific analysis of Hebrew: they did not distinguish the parts of speech; they had no sense of the triliteral structure of the Hebrew verb; and they had little scientific understanding of etymology or of the derivation of nouns.” See Philip S. Alexander, “How Did the Rabbis Learn Hebrew?” in Hebrew Study from Ezra To Ben-Yehuda, ed., William Horbury (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 72, 77. Alexander’s description of the Rabbis is exaggerated. His description is true for some Rabbis, but others were more “scientific” in their approach, such as Ibn Ezra and Ibn Barūn.
Jewish scholars – including Saadia ben Joseph (usually known as Saadia Gaon), Abu Joseph Ya'qūb al Qirqisāni, Judah Ibn Quraysh, David Ibn Abraham, Dūnash Ibn Tamīm, Hai Gaon, Judah Ibn Ḥayyūj, Solomon Ibn Gibirol, Ibn Janāḥ, Samuel Hanāḡīd, Abū Ibrāḥīm Ibn Yashūḥ, Moses Ibn Jiqaṭīla, Judah Ibn Bal'ām, Abu 'l-Fahm (Levi) Ibn al-Ṭubbān, and Ibn Barūn – following classic comparative methodology, applied Arabic grammatical categories to Biblical Hebrew. Near the middle of the tenth century, Saadia Gaon (882-942), not only applied Arabic categories to Biblical Hebrew, but he even wrote his Hebrew grammar in Arabic. Although Hebrew was the focus of his study, Saadia considered Arabic as the model language for the study of Biblical Hebrew. In fact, Arabic was the language of most Hebrew grammatical works for the next two centuries after Saadia Gaon. Though their grammatical works, preserved only in fragments today, do not directly discuss verbal or nominal clauses, the Medieval Jewish grammarians certainly understood verbal and nominal clause similar to Arabic analysis, as later Hebrew grammarians – also influenced by Arabic – demonstrate. For example, H.

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3Saadia is the first Jewish author who has left records of philological research, titled Agron, which aims to provide a dictionary of the Hebrew language and to assist liturgical poets in constructing acrostics and finding suitable rhymes. In the later edition, Saadia added the Arabic translation of each word discussed, due to imperfectness of his first edition, as well as an Arabic preface with the new title Book of Poetics. Hartwig Hirshfeld, Literary History of Hebrew Grammarians and Lexicographers: Accompanied by Unpublished Texts (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 11-15.

Ewald, a noted Arabist and Hebraist, apparently accepted this classification for Biblical Hebrew clauses, as did E. Kautzsch in the 22nd to 24th editions of Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.

Medieval Jewish study of Biblical Hebrew emerged and flourished in Arab culture and society. When the Geonim were active around 650-1250 AD, Babylonia was under Arab dominion, and Baghdad, the capital, was the center of Arabic study and research. The Geonim learned from the Arab grammarians and brought their linguistic knowledge to the study of the Biblical text, leaving visible evidences of Arabic influence in their works on Hebrew philology. Naturally, therefore, the Medieval Jewish grammarians wrote their works in Arabic until the second half of the twelfth century, not only because some of their vernacular was Arabic, but also, as Hirshfeld properly pointed out, "for Hebrew philology there was scarcely any other possibility on account of method and terminology, which at that time was firmly established in Arabic, but was in its infancy in Hebrew." Therefore, the understanding and presentation of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of Jewish grammarians were often identical to the understanding and presentation of Arab grammarians.

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5 Heinrich Ewald, Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache des alten Bundes, Sechste Ausgabe (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1855), 671-72.


7 Geonim (גוארים), Talmudic sages who were the generally accepted religious leaders (Rabbis) of the Jewish community in the early Medieval era, played an important role in teaching of Torah and Jewish law during the period of the Talmud.

8 Hirshfeld, Literary History of Hebrew Grammarians and Lexicographers, 6-7. For example, the Jewish grammarians named the three principal short vowels, a, i, and u, patah, kasra, and dama following Arabic terminology. Hebrew term patah, identical to the Arabic term fatah, is still used today.

9 Ibid., 45-6.
Many Jewish grammarians employed Arabic in studying Hebrew grammar and philology. Abu Joseph Yaʿqūb al Qirqisānī, Judah Ibn Quraysh, and David Ibn Abraham, accepted the fundamental notions of the Arabic language and wrote their Hebrew grammatical works in Arabic. Abu Joseph Yaʿqūb al Qirqisānī wrote his commentary on the Pentateuch in Arabic.\(^\text{10}\) He even emended the Masoretic text – rearranging a number of verses – to provide a more “logical sense” to the Hebrew text and to conform verses and sections of the Masoretic text to Arabic style.\(^\text{11}\) Judah Ibn Quraysh wrote to Jewish scholars to encourage the study of Arabic and Aramaic, especially the Targum, to understand properly the Biblical text. He employed Arabic lexicography to explain rare words in the Masoretic text. David Ibn Abraham took up the challenge of Ibn Quraysh by composing a dictionary in Arabic for students of Biblical Hebrew, similar to Saadia’s Arabic/Hebrew dictionary (\textit{Agron}).\(^\text{12}\)

When an occasional Jewish grammarian departed from the Arabic paradigm for Hebrew, other Jewish grammarians would correct any problems by Arabic. For example, Menahem Ibn Saruq, the first Jewish grammarian to write in Hebrew instead of Arabic, discarded Arabic and composed a dictionary of the Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. Consequently, Menahem’s dictionary became extremely helpful to Jews outside the Arabic-speaking world in Asia and Europe, and became rapidly popular in Spain, France, and Italy.\(^\text{13}\) Dūnāsh Ibn Labrat, of course, immediately responded to Menahem’s work by improving it by Arabic. With his profound knowledge of Arabic, Hebrew, and an incisive critical ability, Dūnāsh corrected many errors in Menahem’s

\(^{10}\) Cf. Hartwig Hirshfeld, \textit{Qirqisānī Studies} (London: Jews College, 1918).


\(^{12}\) Ibid., 21.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 24-26.
Although Menaḥem’s work was popular, Jewish grammarians continued to use an Arabic paradigm to understand Biblical Hebrew at the beginning of the twelfth century.

While an occasional Jewish grammarian neglected Arabic, most continued to write their works in Arabic and to base their understanding of Hebrew on Arabic. With a special attention to Arabic poetry, Dūnāsh for the first time attempted to adapt the laws of Arab poetry to Hebrew verse. Moses Ibn Jiqaṭīla compiled an independent treatise on the *Masculine and Feminine Genders* in Arabic. Isaac Ibn Yashūsh wrote a treatise to *Conjugations* in Arabic. Some Medieval Jewish grammarians, such as Judah Ibn Bal'am, whose works are no longer extant, claimed that they followed Arabic models for understanding Biblical Hebrew. 15

Later, Medieval Jewish grammarians continued to produce lexicographical works based on Arabic and grammatical works on philology, morphology, and syntactical comparisons between Arabic and Biblical Hebrew. Dūnāsh Ibn Tamīm wrote on lexical similarities between Arabic and Hebew, 16 and Judah Ibn Quraysh wrote a comprehensive comparative study of Arabic and Biblical Hebrew. 17 At the end of the eleventh century, Yisḥaq Abū Ibrāhīm Ibn Barūn, a Spanish Jew, enhanced comparative philology in his work, *The Book of Comparison between the Hebrew and the Arabic Language*, 18 that thoroughly examined lexical and grammatical similarities (and

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18 The Arabic title is الجزء الثاني من كتاب الموازنة بين اللغة العبرانية والعريَّة.
dissimilarities) of particles, nouns, verbs and matters relating to these categories between Arabic and Biblical Hebrew.19

In conclusion, Arabic and Hebrew shared many similarities with regard to morphology, phonology, and syntax. Consequently, Medieval Jewish grammarians established the study of Biblical Hebrew upon the foundation of Arabic grammar, which in turn influenced nearly all Hebrew grammarians to this day. Thus, the following discussion on the verbal and nominal clauses follows the understanding of traditional grammarians (Arab and Medieval Jewish).

Outline of Verbal and Nominal Clauses According to Traditional Grammarians

The following discussion summarizes and outlines verbal and nominal clauses according to traditional grammarians. The numeric system employed in the following discussion corresponds to the summary chart at the end of the outline.

Verbal Clause (I)

In verbal clauses, a finite verb occurs before the subject. The subject may be explicit (A) or implicit (B). Though the verb may occur without Vav-consecutive (A.1) as in "Moses spoke," or with Vav-consecutive (A.2) as in "And Moses spoke," it always comes before its subject. The subject may be explicit as in following examples.20

19 The section concerning the particle is missing, though Ibn Barūn made reference to it in other portions. The final section of Ibn Barūn’s work is missing also. For the distinctive characteristics that both Arabic and Hebrew share, see Wechter’s work, Ibn Barūn’s Arabic Works on Hebrew Grammar and Lexicography, 25-53.

A.1

Subject  הָנַשְׁתָה
Predicate (Verb)  נִבְרַת

"Moses spoke."

A.2

Subject  הָנַשָּׁתָה
Predicate (Verb)  נִבְרַת

"And Moses spoke."

Verbal clauses may consist of a verb with an implied pronominal or hidden subject, such as וַיִּשְׁחַה "he spoke," or וַיִּשְׁחַה "And he spoke." In this case, the verb itself constitutes a verbal clause as follows:

B.1

Predicate (Subject [pronoun] implied)  נִבְרַת

"He spoke."

B.2

Predicate (Subject [pronoun] implied)  נִבְרַת

"And he spoke."

Verbal clauses carry the action or event. Thus, relatively speaking, what the subject does is more significant than what the subject is – the action is more significant than the actor. In verbal clauses, Arab grammarians called the subject אָנֶגֶס ("the agent" or "the doer"), and the predicate אָנֶגֶס ("the verb" or "the action").

A verbal clause, with its finite verb preceding the subject, is the normal word order for both narrative and non-narrative statements. In narrative, a verbal clause focuses on the action, the event; in non-narrative, it also focuses on the action and is the language of natural, dispassionate speech.

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21 Carolus P. Caspari, Grammatica Arabica in usum Scholarum Academicarum (Lipsiae: Sumtibus C. L. Fritzscheii, 1848), §501. Contrast these terms with their nominal counterparts on page 16.
Nominal Clause (II)

Traditional grammarians defined nominal clauses, in contrast to verbal clauses, as clauses where a finite verb does not precede the subject. This definition covers two categories: 1) a clause without a finite verb (= a verbless clause), and 2) a clause in which the subject occurs before a finite verb. In nominal clauses, Arab grammarians, in contrast to verbal clauses, called the subject أَلْوَجُدُ (\\textit{quito incipitur}) ("that with which a beginning is made") or \textit{inchoativus} ("the inchoative"), and the predicate أَلْوَجُدُ (\\textit{enuntiativus}) ("enunciative") or "announcement (about the subject)." In analyzing nominal clauses, traditional grammarians focused on the subject and its state, and considered the subject as making "a new beginning." Hence, in nominal clauses with a finite verb, the subject receives the prominence rather than the action by making a new beginning with an announcement about the subject. These subjects ("the new beginnings") may start, transition/resume, and end narratives. These "new beginnings" also introduce a new subject (actor) to the narrative or contrast subjects. Therefore, to traditional grammarians, "Moses was good," "Moses was dwelling," and "Moses, he spoke" are all descriptive statements or announcements about the subject.

The predicate of nominal clauses may be a noun, adjective, prepositional phrase, or clause. The following diagram illustrates the structures of the predicate of nominal clauses according to traditional grammarians:

\footnote{Ibid., §501.}
Predicate of Nominal Clause

A. Word
   1. Noun
   2. Adjective
   3. Prepositional phrase

B. Clause
   1. Nominal (verbless) clause
   2. Verbal clause

Clause without a finite verb (Verbless clause)
Clause in which the subject occurs before a finite verb

The following diagrams illustrate in more detail the structure of nominal clauses.

Nominal clauses may have words (noun or adjective) or prepositional phrases for predicate (A). The predicate may be a noun (A.1).

 Predicate (Noun) Subject
“The Lord is my rock.” (2 Samuel 22:2)

Noun predicate may occur alone in the undetermined state in a clause as in “The king is a lad.” When the predicate occurs with a pronominal suffix, construct package, or with a definite article, the predicate is determined as in

23 Unlike many modern grammarians who consider  הִי יּוֹם as a copula and clauses with הִי יּוֹם as nominal, traditional grammarians considered הִי יּוֹם as a verb that often takes an accusative. The predicate to הִי יּוֹם (كان) occurs in the accusative case, not in the nominative, because Arabic, like Hebrew and Syriac, “has no abstract or substantive verb to unite the predicate with the subject of a nominal sentence, for הִי יּוֹם (كان) is not an abstract verb, but, like all other verbs, an attribute, ascribing to the subject the attribute of existence.” Thus, in the clause “Rehoboam was a lad” (2 Chr 13:7), the predicate יִשְׂרָאֵל is in the accusative case (Hal, נני) to be translated precisely “Rehoboam came to be in the status of a lad.” See Carl P. Caspari, A Grammar of the Arabic Language, 3rd ed., vol. 2, ed. and trans. William Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), §122.

24 A noun with a definite article is usually not a predicate of a clause, but an attributive apposition. Therefore, a clause הִי יּוֹם (אָוַן, הָעִם) may be usually translated, “The king, the young lad.”
"The king is my lad" and "The king is the lad of Jesse." Normally, the word order for these clauses is Subject–Predicate. If the predicate precedes the subject, the predicate is emphasized.²⁵

The predicate may be an adjective (A.2).²⁶

 Predicate (Adjective) Subject

"The men of Sodom were wicked." (Genesis 13:13)

Adjective predicate may occur alone in the undetermined or determined state. The predicate usually occurs in undetermined state as in "The lad is young," but rarely occurs in determined state as in (Exodus 9:27) "The Lord is the righteous one." The adjective, as a predicate, usually precedes the subject but it may also follow the subject.

The predicate may be a prepositional phrase (A.3).

 Predicate (Prepositional phrase) Subject

"The Lord is in His holy temple." (Psalm 11:4)

Prepositional-phrase predicate may occur before or after the subject in the clauses, as in "In the temple is the lad." The normal word order of this clause is


²⁶Traditional grammarians recognized only three parts of speech: verb, noun, and particle. The concept of adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns are classified as nouns. To traditional grammarians, a noun may be used adjectively or adverbially. Particles include conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections. See Farhat J. Ziadeh and R. Bayly Winder, An Introduction to Modern Arabic, 20.
Subject—Prepositional phrase. If the prepositional phrase precedes the subject, the prepositional phrase is often emphasized.

Nominal clauses may have clauses for predicate (B). These clause predicates may be a verbless clause or verbal clause. In these constructions, traditional grammarians considered the initial noun as the subject of the entire sentence and the following clause as the predicate to the subject. The clause predicates may occur in a verbless clause (B.1), a verbal clause with an explicit subject (B.2.a), or a verbal clause without an explicit subject (B.2.b).

Nominal clauses (sentence) may have a predicate that is itself a verbless clause (B.1).

The entire sentence is a nominal clause (sentence). On the entire sentence level, יוהו is the subject of the predicate clause במשנהו ובששראת. On the predicate clause level, במשנהו ובששראת is the subject for יוהו. Therefore, the verbless clause במשנהו ובששראת is the predicate for the subject, יוהו. יוהו stands first for emphasis, and the entire predicate describes יוהו.

Nominal clauses (sentences) may have a predicate that is itself a verbal clause (B.2). The subject of the entire sentence will precede a finite verb. The predicate, a

27 One can view this construction as *casus pendens* (“pending case”) construction. Arab grammarians view this element as the subject that “preoccupies the sentence.”
verbal clause, may have an explicit (B.2.a) or implicit (B.2.b) subject. Thus, the basic structures are as follows:

(B.2.a) Subject of predicate clause | Predicate of predicate clause (Verb)

 Predicate of entire sentence (Verbal clause)  
 Subject of entire sentence

"(As for) Shechem my son, his soul longs for." (Genesis 34:8)

(B.2.b) Predicate (Verb, Subject implied)

 Predicate (Verbal clause)  
 Subject of entire sentence

"(As for) Moses, he spoke."

This entire sentence is a nominal clause (B.2.a). On the sentence level, רְכֵּם לֵבָנִי is the subject of the predicate clause רָעַב יַעֲשֹׁר. On the predicate clause level, רָעַב יַעֲשֹׁר is the subject for רְכֵּם לֵבָנִי. Therefore, the verbal clause רָעַב יַעֲשֹׁר is the predicate for the subject, רְכֵּם לֵבָנִי.28 Within the predicate, the verb is merely a verb in verbal clauses and

28 Rarely, nominal clauses (sentences) may have a predicate that is itself a subject-before-finite-verb clause as in הָעָשְׂרוּת יִבְשַׂמְךָם “The Lord, may He require it” (Josh 22:23, cf. Gen 4:22, 19:38, Pss 23:4 and 27:2). The structure of this sort of clause is as follows:

 Predicate of predicate clause | Subject of predicate clause (Verbal clause)

 Predicate of entire sentence (Subject-before-finite-verb clause)  
 Subject of entire sentence

"The Lord, may He require it." (Josh 22:23)

If a clause (sentence) has a noun preceding a subject-before-finite-verb clause, the entire clause is also a nominal clause because the noun is the subject for the entire clause, and the subject-before-finite-verb clause is the predicate. As the entire clause is nominal, the subject-before-finite-verb-clause predicate is also a nominal clause with a subject and a predicate that is a verbal clause.
is not concealing a verbal clause. Yet, the entire sentence is a nominal clause (sentence) describing שִׁכְמָה בָּנִי, the subject. Traditional grammarians regarded this construction (שִׁכְמָה בָּנִי יָשָׁב) as having “two faces” – verbal and nominal aspects.29 The entire sentence is a nominal clause describing the subject. The predicate, however, is a verbal clause, carrying the action of the subject. So the sentence partakes both of nominal and verbal aspects, hence, “two faces.”

A verbal-clause predicate may have a subject implied in the verb as in לֹא יָשָׁב “As for Moses, he spoke” (B.2.b). Again, on the entire sentence level, יָשָׁב is the subject of the predicate clause לֹא יָשָׁב, that is not merely a verb but a verbal clause. On the predicate clause level, the verbal clause לֹא יָשָׁב implies the subject. Therefore, a sentence such as לֹא יָשָׁב מְלֹא יָשָׁב is a simple verbal clause (“Moses spoke”), but מְלֹא יָשָׁב is a nominal clause (sentence) with a predicate that is a verbal clause, consisting of a verb and an implied pronoun (“As for Moses, he spoke”). This construction (מְלֹא יָשָׁב לֹא יָשָׁב) is the construction of “two faces,” having verbal and nominal aspects.

Summary Chart of the Discussion Above

I. Verbal Clauses

A. With an Explicit Subject
   1. Without Vav-consecutive – לֹא יָשָׁב
   2. With Vav-consecutive – מְלֹא יָשָׁב

B. Without an Explicit Subject
   1. Without Vav-consecutive – לֹא יָבֵר
   2. With Vav-consecutive – מְלֹא יָבֵר

29 Arab grammarians called this sort of clause as גֶּמלָה דָּאָה וּזֶּהָה, “a clause with two faces or aspects,” because it partakes both of the nominal and the verbal nature. See Caspari, A Grammar of the Arabic Language, vol. 2, §120.
II. Nominal Clause

A. Predicate: Noun, Adjective, or Prepositional Phrase

1. Noun
   a. Undetermined
   b. Determined
      ① With pronominal suffix
      ② With construct package
      ③ With article (this is usually not a clause, but an attributive apposition)
   c. Word Order: If the predicate comes first, the predicate is emphasized.

2. Adjective
   a. Undetermined
   b. Determined
   c. Word Order: If the predicate comes first, the predicate is emphasized.

3. Prepositional Phrase
   a. Prepositional Phrase
   b. Word Order: If the predicate comes first, the predicate is emphasized.

B. Predicate: Clause

1. Nominal (Verbless) Clause
2. Verbal Clause
   a. With an explicit noun with a verb or a pronoun attached to the verb
   b. With an implicit pronoun in the verb
Verbal and Nominal Clauses According to Traditional Grammarians

For traditional grammarians the distinction between these two clauses is vital to understand the subtlety of Arabic and Biblical Hebrew clauses. In fact, this distinction is so important that entire works on Arabic syntax are based on the difference between the verbal and nominal clause. This distinction determines whether the focus is on the action, as in a verbal clause, or on the subject, as in all nominal clauses, including subject-before-finite-verb clauses.

This distinction between verbal and nominal clause may be compared to a play on a stage. If an actor is pounding a hammer on an anvil on stage and the author of the play wishes to focus on the action rather than the actor, then the spotlight will be on the hammer and anvil, not the actor. Of course, audience sees the actor on the stage, but the attention of the audience is on the action of the hammer striking the anvil. Similarly, when an author of Scripture wants the reader to focus on the action (verb) of a clause rather than the actor (subject), he places the spotlight on the action by writing a verbal clause. If, however, an actor is pounding a hammer on an anvil on stage and the author of the play wishes to focus on the actor rather than the action, then the spotlight will be on the actor, not the hammer and anvil. Again, the audience sees the action on the stage, but the attention of the audience is on the actor himself, not his act of striking the anvil with a hammer. Likewise, when an author of Scripture wants the reader to focus on the

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30 William Wright referred to the importance of this matter, stating “The difference between verbal and nominal sentences, to which the native grammarians attach no small importance, is properly this, that the former relates an act or event, the latter gives a description of a person or thing, either absolutely, or in the form of a clause descriptive of state. This is the constant rule in good old Arabic, unless the desire to emphasize a part of the sentence be the cause of a change in its position.” Carl P. Caspari, A Grammar of the Arabic Language, vol. 2, §113 REM. b.

31 I am thankful to Ihab Griess, an Egyptian and native Arabic speaker, who suggested the idea of stage, and I also want to thank him for reading over this and agreeing with the ideas of the zipper sign and the hourglass.
actor (subject) of a clause rather than the action (verb), he places the spotlight on the actor by writing a nominal clause. Verbal clauses, therefore, render the action prominent; nominal clauses render the subject prominent.

Subject-before-finite-verb clauses, as a subset of the nominal clause, render the subject prominent by description and emphasis. In every subject-before-finite-verb clause, the subject is both described and emphasized, but in some subject-before-finite-verb clauses, the subject is described more than emphasized, and in other subject-before-finite-verb clauses, the reverse is true – the subject is emphasized more than described. Subject-before-finite-verb clauses, then, may be compared to grains of sand in the upper and lower sections of an hourglass. Sometimes more sand is in the upper section; at other times, more sand is in the lower section; and yet at other times, the sand is equally distributed between the upper and lower sections. But for this analogy, there must always be sand in both the upper and lower section. Similarly for subject-before-finite-verb clauses, sometimes the sands of description are more than the sands of emphasis, and at other times the reverse is true – the sands of emphasis are more than the sands of description. And yet, other times, the sands of description and emphasis are equally distributed. But again, there must always be both description and emphasis.

Subject-before-finite-verb clauses with their description and emphasis are foreign to speakers of Indo-European languages. Their descriptive aspect may be compared somewhat to the English construction: The man who came here today (was unknown). The subject of the sentence, “the man,” is described by the relative clause, “who came here.”32 English speakers feel the descriptive nature of the relative clause, as Semitic speakers feel the descriptive nature of subject-before-finite-verb clauses on the

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32 Isaac Jerusalmi, a noted Arabist and Hebraist, shows a similar understanding in his translation of the clause נַעֲרֵי קָרָא in Gen 37:3 as “As for Israel, »well/why he loved . . . .” Isaac Jerusalmi, The Story of Joseph: A Philological Commentary (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1981), 5.
subject. The relative clause in English, of course, is a dependent clause, but the subject-before-finite-verb clauses are independent for Hebrew and Arabic. The emphatic aspect is more difficult to compare between the languages. If one asked the question, “Are you sure that the man came?” one could emphasize the subject by responding, “The man – he did come.” Again, English speakers feel the emphatic nature of the response, as the Semitic speaker feels the emphasis of the subject in subject-before-finite-verb clauses. English, however, cannot effectively combine the descriptive/emphatic aspects as subject-before-finite-verb clauses of Biblical Hebrew and Arabic can. Perhaps an analogy may be the electronic signs in Times Square, called zipper signs, that give news headlines in motion. Headlines run right to left across the zipper: World Headlines...... Hebrews and Arabs are having trouble getting along, though they have reached agreement on the understanding of Semitic languages. Similarly, the subject-before-finite-verb clauses projects its subject like a zipper (though the message would run left to right on a zipper for Hebrew): “Melchizedek, the king of Salem,..... he brought forth bread and wine” (Gen 14:18). In the English example, the first element, “World Headlines,” is a heading; in the Hebrew example, the first element, “Melchizedek,” is prominent like a heading, but it also functions as the subject of the entire sentence. In English and Hebrew, however, the second element (the words after the dots) gives an announcement about the first element (the words before the dots). The prominent placement at the beginning of the clause furnishes the subject with emphasis; the announcement at the later half of the clause furnishes the subject with description.

All comparisons, of course, between English and Hebrew – the stage, the hourglass, the zipper sign – have their limitations. They are analogies to understand

33 Perhaps a better rendering of the subject-before-finite-verb clause would be “The man (is) he (who) came here today.” This renders the sentence as in independent clause with the descriptive feel of a relative clause.
better the idea, concept and meaning of subject-before-finite-verb clauses. No comparison or analogy is perfect, but they are certainly helpful.34

Finally, subject-before-finite-verb clauses are more complicated, more nuanced than verbal clauses. The role of verbal clause is straightforward, carrying the actions of the subject. Verbal clauses have one “face.” Subject-before-finite-verb clauses, however, have “two faces.” Thus, subject-before-finite-verb clauses are nominal, describing the subject, but the predicate is a genuine verbal clause. The “two faces” of subject-before-finite-verb clauses have many usages particularly in narrative and a few usages in non-narrative statements.

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34For other analogy of verbal and nominal clauses, see p. 154.
CHAPTER 3
SUBJECT-BEFORE-FINITE-VERB CLAUSES
IN NARRATIVE STATEMENTS

The authors of Scripture employ subject-before-finite-verb clauses in various ways in narrative statements. Broadly speaking, as mentioned earlier, these clauses describe and emphasize the subject. Specifically, these clauses make “new beginnings” by starting, by transitioning/resuming, and by ending sections and narratives. Moreover, they sometimes interrupt the flow of the verbal clauses, which carry the actions of the narrative, to give general announcements about the subject. And sometimes, they appear to emphasize strongly the subject.

There are issues, to be sure, concerning functions of subject-before-finite-verb clauses in starting, transitioning/resuming, and ending sections and narratives. One issue, of course, is defining sections and narratives. A cursory reading of the translations of the Old Testament demonstrates the many ways into which sections and narratives are arranged into paragraphs in the Old Testament. For example, the NIV starts a new paragraph at Genesis 4:7; the ESV starts a new paragraph at Genesis 4:8; the NASB starts a new paragraph at Genesis 4:9; and the NRSV considers all these verses as one paragraph. Any translation, however, if followed for dividing the text into sections and narratives, would still show that subject-before-finite-verb clauses start,

\[\text{Arab grammarians refer to the subjects of subject-before-finite-verb clauses as “new beginning.” Carolus Paulus Caspari, Grammatica Arabica in usum Scholarum Academicarum (Lipsiae: Sumtibus C. L. Fritzschii, 1848), §501.}\]

\[\text{Subject-before-finite-verb clauses also avoid the successive notion of the Vav-consecutive.}\]
transition/resume, and end sections and narratives. In this dissertation, for simplicity and because it follows the traditional approach, Masoretic “paragraph” markers will divide sections and the תהלים headings will divide the narratives. Any time, therefore, a subject-before-finite-verb clause follows a closed or open section marker or a תהלים heading, the subject-before-finite-verb clause starts a new section or narrative.

3A section is defined as an open (ס) or closed (ס) sections of the Masoretic text; and the narrative is structured by the eleven “תהלים” headings, occurring at 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1, 36:9, and 37:2. It can be assumed that the beginning of the book also implies a heading.

Israel Yeivin describes these sections as “paragraphs (based on content), called תהלים pisgot or תהלים parashiyot, are marked by spaces in the text. These spaces must occupy the width of at least three letters. They are of two types: the תהלים petuhah (open) in which the word starting the new paragraph must be written at the beginning of the line, (so that if enough space cannot be left on the last line of the old paragraph, a whole line must be left blank) and the תהלים setumah (closed) in which the first word of the new paragraph is either written on the same line as the last of the old, or, if space is not available for this, it is written after an indentation on the next line.” Israel Yeivin, Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah, trans. and ed., E. J. Revell (Scholar’s Press, 1980) #74.


A Vav-consecutive may start a new story, section, or narrative, but also a whole book, such as Leviticus (יאב) and Numbers (יבר). Vav-consecutive starts 2
when coming before a closed or open section marker or a הַדִּוְרָה heading, the subject-before-finite-verb clause ends a section or narrative. Another issue concerns defining “transitioning/resuming” the story within sections and narratives. Transitioning often introduces a new subject into the story. This is often a matter of individual judgment whether a particular subject-before-finite-verb clause is transitioning or resuming a narrative. Some examples clearly transition the section:

Gen 3:1

הָרָה הַדִּוְרָה, וּכְרֹתֶם נְחַלֶּה וּאֶשְׁתָּה

וַיֵּאָמְרוּ אֶלָּא אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי לִאֶחָדָם לָא הָאֲלָבֶּל מָכָל וְתֹאֵן

2:25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. 3:1 Now the serpent - it was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”

Other examples resume the section or narrative:

Gen 39:1

וָרָה הַדִּוְרָה, וּכְרֹתֶם נְחַלֶּה

וַיֵּאָמְרוּ אֶלָּא אֲשֶׁר אֲמַרְתִּי לִאֶחָדָם לָא הָאֲלָבֶּל מָכָל וְתֹאֵן

Kings and 2 Chronicles (continuing 1 Kings and 1 Chronicles). Additionally, הַדִּוְרָה starts many books, such as Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, and Esther.

5 The term “story” should not be understood as implying fiction or anything that is not true; rather it should be understood as an historical account or narrative.

6 The Masoretic text treats 2:4 to 3:15 as one section, divided by a closed section marker הַדִּוְרָה. If a verbal clause shifts a story within a section, this may be discerned only by context.

7 To bring out the descriptive and emphatic notion, subject-before-finite-verb clauses will be translated literally.
Now Joseph - he had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there.

Resuming the section or narrative often occurs after a verbless clause or after subject-before-finite-verb clauses that give a general description:

Gen 13:14

So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord. And the Lord - He said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward.”

Since deciding whether a particular subject-before-finite-verb clause is transitional or resumptive is often subjective, they will be combined: transitional/resumption. The reader may, according to the context, distinguish between transition and resumption.

There are also issues for subject-before-finite-verb clauses that provide general description and emphasis. All subject-before-finite-verb clauses describe the subject even when they start, transition/resume, and end narratives, but not all subject-before-finite-verb clause start, transition/resume, and end narratives. When a subject-before-finite-verb clause does not start, transition/resume, or end a narrative, and interrupts the actions of the storyline to state an announcement about the subject or to depict the subject in some manner, the subject-before-finite-verb clause is a statement of general description.
Whether a particular subject-before-finite-verb clause starts, transitions/resumes, and ends narrative may be debatable, but the issue of emphasis is even more difficult. Like description, all subject-before-finite-verb clauses have emphasis. Moreover, emphasis is subtle and often a matter of opinion. Yet, there are some clues when a subject-before-finite-verb clause strongly emphasizes a subject. First, contrastive constructions may be strongly emphatic:

Gen 37:11

וַיָּצָא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשְׁכַּב אָדָם לְכָלָהוּ אֲבָנָיו בְּאָדָם.

And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father – he kept the saying in mind.

Sometimes, however, the emphasis is mild:

Gen 11:3

וַיָּמָר אִישׁ אֲלֵיהֶם כָּלַל הָלָבָה לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָyo

And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.

In contrastive statements, to be sure, both description and emphasis can be more or less equal:

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8Caspari thought that all subject-before-finite-verb clauses are contrasting structures and emphasize the subject, stating, “[subject-before-finite-verb clauses] are always (tacitly or expressly) contrasted with another subject of a subject-before-finite-verb clause, having not the same predicate but a different or even an opposite one.” Carl P. Caspari, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 3rd ed., vol. 2, ed. and trans. William Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), §119C. In most subject-before-finite-verb clauses that start, transition/resume, or end a narrative, the subject has weak or mild emphasis.

9If this subject-before-finite-verb clause were a verbal clause with Vav-consecutive construction (וַיָּמָר אִישׁ אֲלֵיהֶם כָּלַל הָלָבָה לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו לַעֲבָיו L,R, H, V) then the notion of contrast would be lost, and the usual concept of succession (“and then”) of the verbal clause would be gained: “And they used brick for stone, and then they used tar for mortar.” Moreover, subject-before-finite-verb clauses view the verbal actions as simultaneous and not successive as with the Vav-consecutive construction.
Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived – they fled to the hill country.

Second, as a general rule, if subject-before-finite-verb clauses are not starting, transitioning, or ending sections/narratives and are not general descriptive statements, and they carry the action of a section/narrative like a verbal clause, then the subject-before-finite-verb clause may emphasize the subject:

Jonah 1:4

But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. And the Lord – He hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.

Third, subject-before-finite-verb clauses may strongly emphasize the subject after certain introducing phrases and clauses:

Gen 22:1

Now it came about after these things, that God – He tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”
Complete Data of Subject-Before-Finite-Verb Clauses in Narrative Statements

All subject-before-finite-verb clauses have description and emphasis.

I. Description (with weaker emphasis)
   A. Start a new section or narrative
   B. Transition/resume a story within a section
   C. End a section or narrative
   D. General description

II. Description and Emphasis (more or less equal)
    Contrastive constructions

III. Emphasis (with weaker description)
    A. Adding Particle and/or Independent Pronoun
    B. Carrying the actions of the storyline (like a verbal clause)
    C. After certain introductory formulas
    D. Multiple subjects with modification

Classifying subject-before-finite-verb clauses yields the following chart.

These categories are general, suggestive, and often overlap. A verse may be contrastive, transitional, and emphatic at the same time. These categories, therefore, are given to show various usages of subject-before-finite-verb clauses – not to rigidly classify each verse.

Description (With Weaker Emphasis) [I]

Starting a New Section or Narrative (A)

All these occurrences happen after ☙ (closed section marker). There is no example of one starting after ☛ (open section marker).

4:1

Now the man—he had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord.”

6:9

These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah—he was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

10:15

And Canaan—he became the father of Sidon, his first-born, and Heth.

11:12

And Arpachshad—he lived thirty-five years, and became the father of Shelah.

11:14

And Shelah—he lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber.
Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah – he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran – he became the father of Lot.

16:1

Now Sarai, Abram’s wife – she had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.

21:1

Then the Lord – He took note of Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised.

24:1

Now Abraham – he was old, advanced in age; and the Lord – He had blessed Abraham in every way.

25:19

Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham – he became the father of Isaac.

36:2

Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom). Esau – he took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite. (vv. 1-2)
These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph a seventeen years of age—he was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.

Now Joseph—he had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there.

Transitioning/Resuming a Story within a Section (B)


All these occurrences make distinctive transitions/resumptions within sections. They often introduce new subjects to the story.

And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. Now the serpent—it was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” (2:25-3:1)
And Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son. Now to Enoch was born Irad; and Irad — he became the father of Mehujael; and Mehujael — he became the father of Methushael; and Methushael — he became the father of Lamech. And Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah. (vv. 17-19)

And the sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. Now Cush — he became the father of Nimrod; he — he became a mighty one on the earth. He — he was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord.” And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. (vv. 7-10)
And Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. And Mizraim – he became the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabin and Naphtuhim. And Pathrusim and Casluhim (from which came the Philistines) and Caphtorim. (vv. 12-14)

And the sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash. And Arpachshad – he became the father of Shelah; and Shelah – he became the father of Eber. And two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother’s name was Joktan. (vv. 23-25)

And two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother’s name was Joktan. And Joktan – he became the father of Almodad and Shelep and Hazarmaveth and Jerah. And Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah. (vv. 25-27)
Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah – he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran – he became the father of Lot. And Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. (vv. 27-28)

So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord. And the Lord – He said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward.” (vv. 11-14)

Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem – he brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth.” (vv. 17-19)
Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off. And the Lord – He said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do. Since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?” (vv. 16-18)

Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom – they surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter. And they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.” (vv. 3-5)

10This clause is also classified in I.D. General Description category.
The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the Lord — He rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. (vv. 23-24)

22:23

וַיִּרְעַם הַשָּׁמֶשׁ אַל-טוֹב-עֵר תְּרוּמָתָו לְאָדָם לִשְׂכַּל אֹרְחָיו לָתוֹם יְהוָֽה׃

23

וַיָּרֶד הַשָּׁמֶשׁ אַל-אָדָם

24

וַיִּרְעַם הַשָּׁמֶשׁ אַל-אָדָם לִשְׂכַּל אֹרְחָיו לָתוֹם יְהוָֽה׃

"And Cheded and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel." And Bethuel — he became the father of Rebekah: these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah. (vv. 22-24)

25:3

וַיִּקְרָאֶהוּ כְּעֵדֶת שְׂכַל אָדָם לְעֵין עָפָר וּשְׁמוֹ נָא אֶת שִׁבְעָה שִׁלֹאָה אֵלָה:

וַיְהִי ברֹאשׁ לְעֵין עָפָר לְעֵין עָפָר אֶת שִׁבְעָה שִׁלֹאָה אֵלָה:

וַיְהִי בַּרְצֹן לְעֵין עָפָר לְעֵין עָפָר אֶת שִׁבְעָה שִׁלֹאָה אֵלָה:

וַיִּקְרָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ אַל-שִׁבְעָה שִׁלֹאָה אֵלָה:

וַיְהִי בַּרְצֹן לְעֵין עָפָר לְעֵין עָפָר אֶת שִׁבְעָה שִׁלֹאָה אֵלָה:

וַיְהִי בַּרְצֹן לְעֵין עָפָר לְעֵין עָפָר אֶת שִׁבְעָה שִׁלֹאָה אֵלָה:

וַיְהִי בַּרְצֹן לְעֵין עָפָר לְעֵין עָפָר אֶת שִׁבְעָה שִׁלֹאָה אֵלָה:

Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. And she bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. And Jokshan — he became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan — they were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. And the sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah. (vv. 1-4)

26:26

וַיִּקְרָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ אַל-שִׁבְעָה שִׁלֹאָה אֵלָה חַיָּה זוּבָרָה אָסְרָה לְאָדָם אַלָּא לְעֵין עָפָר גִּיאָה אֵלָה:

25
So he built an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well. Then Abimelech — he came to him from Gerar; with Ahuzzath his adviser, and Phicol the commander of his army. And Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, since you hate me, and have sent me away from you?” (vv. 25-27)

27:6

And Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home, Now Rebekah — she said to her son Jacob, “Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying.” (vv. 5-6)

29:9

But they said, “We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep.” While he was still speaking with them, now Rachel — she came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came about, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, that Jacob went up, and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother. (vv. 8-10)
And he kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him. **Now the news**—it was heard in Pharaoh’s house that Joseph’s brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan.’” (vv. 15-17)

**Ending a Section or Narrative (C)**


All these occurrences are followed by Masoretic section markers ס or ס.

6:4

The Nephilim—they were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

6:8

But Noah—he found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

17:27

And all the men of his household, who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner—they were circumcised with him.
Meanwhile, the Midianites – they sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh’s officer, the captain of the bodyguard.

General Description (D)


Interrupting the sequence of the actions, these occurrences supply information about the subject. These clauses, not starting, transitioning/resuming, or ending a section, describe the subject for a better understanding of the verbal actions of the storyline.11 For these examples, if a verbal construction were used (instead of the subject-before-finite-verb clause), the meaning would be radically altered with the notion of succession by the verbal clause. When preceded by a nominal clause (and sometimes by a verbal clause), a subject-before-finite-verb clause may communicate an “overlapping” (see 15:17 below) notion with the preceding clause.

1:2

11If these subject-before-finite-verb clauses were verbal clauses with Vav-consecutive construction, then the notion of simultaneity would be lost, and the usual concept of succession (“and then”) of the verbal clause would be gained.
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth — it was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (vv. 1-3)

2:5 (x2) and 2:6

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven. Now shrub of the field — it was not yet in the earth, and plant of the field — it had not yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth; and there was no man to cultivate the ground. But a mist — it would rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (vv. 4-7)

The repetition of "לְלִיָּה (לְלִיָּה)" with subjects adds some emphasis to the subjects.

4:20 and 4:21

The repetition of "כְּלָל (כְּלָל)" with subjects adds some emphasis to the subjects.
And Adah gave birth to Jabal, he – he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. And his brother’s name was Jubal, he – he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. (vv. 20-22)

6:1

Now when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters – they were born to them. And the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. (vv. 1-2)

7:6

And Noah did according to all that the Lord had commanded him. Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water – it came upon the earth. Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood. (vv. 5-7)
There went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood — it came upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. (vv. 9-11)

8:5

And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat. And the water — it decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible. (vv. 4-5)

10:8b and 10:9

Now Cush — he became a father of Nimrod; he — he began to become a mighty one on the earth. He — he was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord.” And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. (vv. 8-10)
So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. Abram—
he settled in the land of Canaan, but Lot—he settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord. Now the Lord—He said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward.” (vv. 11-14)

And in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar; Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). All these—they came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled. (vv. 1-4)
And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. When the sun went down, a deep sleep—it fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. And God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.” (vv. 11-13)

15:17 (x2)

And God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.” And it came when the sun—it had just set, that darkness—it came, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.” (vv. 13-18)

If this clause were a verbal clause, the Vav-consecutive would communicate the notion of succession, “And the sun was about to set and then darkness fell upon Abram.” The subject-before-finite-verb clause communicates an “overlap” in time, “And the sun was just about to set, when sleep fell upon Abram.”
And he said to him, “Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar. The sun — it had just risen over the earth, Lot — when he came to Zoar. Now as for the Lord, He rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. (vv. 21-24)

Just as the case in above, the subject-before-finite-verb clause communicates overlapping actions.

The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the Lord — He rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. (vv. 23-24)

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19:23 (x2)

And he said to him, “Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar. The sun — it had just risen over the earth, Lot — when he came to Zoar. Now as for the Lord, He rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. (vv. 21-24)

Just as the case in above, the subject-before-finite-verb clause communicates overlapping actions.

The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the Lord — He rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. (vv. 23-24)

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12This clause is also classified in I.B. Transition/Resume a Story within a Section category.
But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, “Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married.”

Now Abimelech – he had not come near her; and he said, “Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless?” (vv. 3-4)

And Abraham – he was old, advanced in age; and Lord – He had blessed Abraham in every way. And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, “Please place your hand under my thigh.” (vv. 1-2)

And it came about before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder. And the girl was very beautiful, a virgin whom a man – no one had had relations with her; and she went down to the spring and filled her jar, and came up. Then the servant ran to meet her, and said, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar.” (vv. 15-17)
And Jokshan – he became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan – they were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim.

Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had just gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, 

This subject-before-finite-verb clause communicates overlapping actions to the prior clauses.

And he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had gathered, his acquired livestock which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. Laban – when he had gone to shear his flock, then Rachel stole the household idols that were her father’s. And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean, by not telling him that he was fleeing. (vv. 18-20)

And Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob – he had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen – he camped in the hill country of Gilead.
Then Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword?” (vv. 25-26)

So Laban went into Jacob’s tent, and into Leah’s tent, and into the tent of the two maids, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah’s tent and entered Rachel’s tent. Now Rachel—she had taken the household idols and put them in the camel’s saddle, and she sat on them. And Laban felt through all the tent, but did not find them. And she said to her father, “Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is upon me.” So he searched, but did not find the household idols. (vv. 33-35)

So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, “Get me this young girl for a wife.” Now Jacob—he heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; but his sons—they were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob kept silent until they came in. Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. (vv. 4-6)
Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. **Now the sons of Jacob – they came in** from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved, and they were very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob’s daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done. But Hamor spoke with them, saying, “The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage.” (vv. 6-8)

Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male. And they killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem’s house, and went forth. **Jacob’s sons – they came** upon the slain and looted the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their flocks and their herds and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field; and they captured and looted all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives, even all that was in the houses. (vv. 25-29)
And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho and Gatam and Kenaz. And Timna — she was a concubine of Esau’s son Eliphaz and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These are the sons of Esau’s wife Adah. (vv. 11-12)

36:13 and 36:14

And these are the sons of Reuel: Nahath and Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These — they were the sons of Esau’s wife Basemath. And these — they were the sons of Esau’s wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon: she bore to Esau, Jeush and Jalam and Korah. (vv. 13-14)

37:3

These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. Now Israel — he loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. (vv. 2-3)

38:25

Now Israel — he loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. (vv. 2-3)
Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry.” Then Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!” It was while she was being brought out that she—she sent to her father-in-law, saying, “I am with child by the man to whom these things belong.” And she said, “Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?” And Judah recognized them, and said, “She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not have relations with her again. (vv. 24-26)

This could be classified as emphatic.

39:22

But the Lord was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. And the chief jailer committed to Joseph’s charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he—he was responsible for it. The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph’s charge because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made to prosper. (vv. 21-23)

41:56

So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, you shall do.” Now the famine—it was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. (vv. 55-56)
Then he commanded his house steward, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the youngest, and his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph had told him. As soon as it was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. They had just gone out of the city, and were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, "Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.'" So he overtook them and spoke these words to them. (vv. 1-6)

In a consecutive subject-before-finite-verb clause constructions, the subject-before-finite-verb clauses of 44:3b and 44:4b also express overlapping actions.

48:10

13 The subject-before-finite-verb clause of 44:3b is also classified under III.A. Added Particle and/or Independent Pronoun category, because of חַלֶק.
When Israel saw Joseph’s sons, he said, “Who are these?” And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me here.” So he said, “Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them.” Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. (vv. 8-10)

**Description and Emphasis (More or Less Equal)** [III]

**Contrastive Constructions**


These occurrences exhibit a more or less equal amount of description and emphasis. Of course, like most subject-before-finite-verb clauses the notion of succession of the verbal clause is lost. The actions, therefore, are viewed as simultaneous.

4:2

And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain – he was a tiller of the ground.

4:4

14 This clause is also classified in III.A. Adding Particle and/or Independent Pronoun category because of the inclusion of אָבָל.
So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. **And Abel - he also brought** of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering. (vv. 3-4)

4:22

And Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. And his brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. **And Zillah - she also gave birth** to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. (vv. 20-22)

7:11

In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, **and the floodgates of the sky - they were opened.**

11:3

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15This clause is also classified in III.A. Adding Particle and/or Independent Pronoun category because of the inclusion of אִמֶּרָה. 
And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.

13:12

And Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. Abram – he settled in the land of Canaan, but Lot – he settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord. Now the Lord – He said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward.” (vv. 11-14)

14:10

Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived – they fled to the hill country.

18:33

And as soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the Lord departed; and Abraham – he returned to his place.
And the first-born bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger—she also bore a son, and called his name Ben-ammi; he is the father of the sons of Ammon to this day. (vv. 37-38)

And Jacob said, “First swear to me”; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob—he gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. (vv. 33-34)

Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah’s eyes were weak, but Rachel—she was beautiful of form and face. (vv. 16-17)
Now Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, **but Jacob – he called** it Galeed. And Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me this day.” Therefore it was named Galeed. (vv. 47-48)

And Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob – he had pitched his tent in the hill country, **and Laban with his kinsmen – he camped** in the hill country of Gilead. Then Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword?” (vv. 25-26)

And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place. **Now Jacob – he went** on his way, the angels of God met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, “This is God’s camp.” So he named that place Mahanaim. (vv. 1-3)
So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. And Jacob — he journeyed to Succoth; and built for himself a house, and made booths for his livestock, therefore the place is named Succoth. Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city. (vv. 16-18)

35:18

And it came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father — he called him Benjamin.

36:4 and 36:5

And Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath — she bore Reuel. And Oholibamah — she bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. (vv. 4-5)

37:11

And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father — he kept the saying in mind.

42:8

But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they — they did not recognize him.
Then he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept; and Benjamin – he wept on his neck.

47:26

And Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt valid to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests – it did not become Pharaoh’s.

Emphasis (With Weaker Description) [III]

Adding Particle and/or Independent Pronoun (A)


4:4

So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. And Abel – he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering. (vv. 3-4)

Abel receives even a stronger emphasis by the inclusion of particle and a pronoun (who) later.18

17This clause is also classified in II. Contrastive Constructions category.

And Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. And his brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. And Zillah—she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. (vv. 20-22)

And the first-born bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger—she also bore a son, and called his name Ben-ammi; he is the father of the sons of Ammon to this day. (vv. 37-38)
And he put the maids and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. **But he himself – he passed on** ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. (vv. 2-3)

38:14

So she removed her widow’s garments and covered *herself* with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she – she *had not been given* to him as a wife. When Judah saw her, he thought she *was* a harlot, for she had covered her face. (vv. 14-15)

42:23

Then they said to one another, “Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore this distress has come upon us.” And Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not tell you, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood.” **But they – they did not know** that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between them. And he turned away from them and wept. But when he returned to them and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. (vv. 21-24)
As soon as it was light, the men – they were sent away with their donkeys.

Carrying the Actions of the Storyline (like a verbal clause) [B]

Occurrences: 7:19, and 41:57.

7:19

And the water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark floated on the surface of the water. And the water – it prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. (vv. 18-19)

41:57

When the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. And the people of all the earth – they came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth. (vv. 56-57)

21 This clause is also classified in I.D. General Description category.
After certain Introductory Formulas (C)


Now it came about after these things, that God – He tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

This subject-before-finite-verb clause emphasizes the subject after an introductory clause.

Multiple Subjects with Modification (D)


So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh – they entered as God had commanded him; and the Lord closed it behind him. Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days; and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. (vv. 15-17)
And all flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; Of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life – they died.

Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. (vv. 21-23)

So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth – they went out by their families from the ark. Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. (vv. 18-20)

Conclusion

In narrative, the authors of Scripture interrupt the actions of verbal clauses for various reasons: starting, transitioning/resuming, ending sections or narratives, giving general descriptions about the subject, emphasizing the subject. Moreover, these “categories” often overlap in reality. In Genesis 19:24, for instance, the subject is resumed, emphasized, and also somewhat described. Subject-before-finite-verb clause, therefore, because of their flexibility, resist rigid classification. This explains why

22 Of course, there may be other reasons for using a subject-before-finite-verb clause. Sometimes a subject-before-finite-verb clause simply avoids the notion of succession of the verbal clause.
traditional grammarians avoid such categories. They simply give description and emphasis and let the context determine the proper categories. This is not to imply that the classifications above are unfounded. They simply show the various nuances and usages of subject-before-finite-verb clauses. With the understanding that these categories are not "air-tight," these categories may be helpful.

One general conclusion is clear for narrative statements. While every subject-before-finite-verb clause has both description and emphasis, the descriptive notion seems stronger than the emphatic notion overall. There are exceptions, to be sure, when the emphasis is stronger than the description, but in general the descriptive notion is somewhat stronger than the emphatic notion in narrative statements.
CHAPTER 4

SUBJECT-BEFORE-FINITE-VERB CLAUSES
IN NON-NARRATIVE STATEMENTS

Subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements\(^1\) usually express an emphatic notion; occasionally, they express a descriptive notion in a contrastive sentence, in a narrative in direct discourse, or in a prophetical/poetical statement. In non-narrative statements, the descriptive categories of starting, transitioning, and ending of accounts usually do not apply. General statements of description only rarely apply. Apart from a rare exception, subjects in subject-before-finite-verb clauses of non-narrative statements are emphatic. The levels of this emphasis may vary.

In general, traditional grammarians recognize that repetition furnishes emphasis.\(^2\) Repetition of substantives (or nouns), adjectives, or adverbs expresses exceptional or highest degree of quality.\(^3\) For example, 2 Kings 25:15 repeats nouns for emphasis:

\begin{verbatim}

וַאֲשֶׁרֶתְמוֹרְתָּהוּ אֶת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ אַשֶּׁר בְּאוֹרֵּב אֶת־הָאֶשֶׁר־בְּסַפַּח

লֶית רֶבֶךָהוֹ?

The captain of the guard also took away the firepans and the basins, what was pure (= finest) gold and what was pure (= finest) silver.

\end{verbatim}

\(^{1}\)Non-narrative statements are statements in direct speech. Of course, narrative can occur within direct speech.


Repetition of adjectives in Isaiah 6:3 also expresses emphasis:

וַיֹּאמֶר הַנַּעֲרֵי הָאֱלֹהִים: אַלֹּהִים קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ יְהוָה קָדוֹשׁ

And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.”

Not only twice, but three times an adjective is repeated for emphasis. An adverb can also be repeated to express emphasis, as Genesis 7:19 shows:

וַיַּמְתָּח הָעָרֹת בָּגֶּן אֵין חָרְבָּה

And the water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.

As the examples above show, repetition of any grammatical element may generate emphasis.

Subject-before-finite-verb clauses also show an emphatic repetition of the subject with the pronominal element of the verb. Traditional grammarians considered the

4The Piel, Pual, and Hithpael repeat the second root letter for emphasis according to traditional grammarians. Caspari states, “The signification [of Piel] agrees with the form in respect of being intensive (intensive) or extensive (extensive). Originally it implies that an act is done with great violence (intensive), or during a long time (temporarily extensive), or to or by a number of individuals (numerically extensive), or repeatedly (iterative or frequentative).” Carl P. Caspari, A Grammar of the Arabic Language, 3rd ed., vol. 2, ed. and trans. William Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), §40. Similarly, Ziadeh and Winder note, “A verb of form II [Piel] modifies the meaning of the root form so as to express the idea of a causative or intensive action.” Farhat J. Ziadeh and R. Bayly Winder, An Introduction to Modern Arabic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 61. Kautzsch stated the same idea concerning the intensiveness of Piel, “The fundamental idea of Piel, to which all the various shades of meaning in this conjugation may be referred, is to busy oneself eagerly with the action indicated by the stem. This intensifying of the idea of the stem, which is outwardly expressed by the strengthening of the second radical, appears in individual cases as a strengthening and repetition of the action (cf. the intensive and iterative nouns with the middle radical strengthened).” Gesenius, Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar, 28th ed., §52f.
The explicit pronouns include the pronominal suffixes of 1cs, 2ms, 2fs, 3fs, 1cp, 2mp, and 2fp. The 3ms and 3cp (with a “Vav of plurality”) have implicit pronouns. The following chart illustrates this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perfect Forms</th>
<th>Pronominal Suffixes Considered by Traditional Grammarians as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1cs</td>
<td>explicit pronoun (cf. יָבֹאֵל)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ms</td>
<td>explicit pronoun (cf. רַעְשַׁנָה)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2fs</td>
<td>explicit pronoun (cf. רַעְשַׁנָה)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3ms</td>
<td>implicit pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3fs</td>
<td>explicit pronoun הבנ (cf. יָבֹאֵל)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1cp</td>
<td>explicit pronoun (cf. רַעְשַׁנָה)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2mp</td>
<td>explicit pronoun (cf. רַעְשַׁנָה)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2fp</td>
<td>explicit pronoun (cf. רַעְשַׁנָה)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3mp</td>
<td>implicit pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3fp</td>
<td>implicit pronoun (with Vav of plurality)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, traditional grammarians considered the prefixed pronominal element of the imperfect verb as tense indicators and as pronoun substitutes with the suffixed

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6 The second person feminine singular independent pronoun was originally יָבֹאֵל as in Aramaic (יָבֹאֵל), Syriac (אִרְאֶל), and Arabic (אִרְאֶל). This form is found seven times as קַטְרֶה (Judg 17:2, 1 Kgs 14:2, 2 Kgs 4:16, 4:23, 8:1, Jer 4:30, and Ezek 36:13), and, especially, appears before pronominal suffixes to the finite verbal forms, as the perfect קַטְרֶה. See Sabatino Moscati, *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964), §13.8; and Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 28th ed., §32h.

7 Compare the imperfect forms with the imperative forms that are without tense indicators.
pronominal element considered as the actual pronoun. The pronoun substitute includes
the prefixed element of all forms. Explicit pronouns include the suffixed forms: 2fs, 2fp,
and 3fp. The 2mp and 3mp forms have the “Vav of plurality.” The following chart
illustrates this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperfect Forms</th>
<th>Suffixed Element: Explicit Pronouns and Vav of Plurality</th>
<th>Prefixed Element: Tense Indicators/Pronoun Substitutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1cs</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ms</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2fs</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3ms</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3fs</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1cp</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2mp</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג (Vav of plurality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2fp</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3mp</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג (Vav of plurality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3fp</td>
<td>כָּל</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pronouns of the Perfect and Imperfect actually repeat the subject of subject-before-
finitive-verb clauses. This repetition of the subject, which furnishes emphasis,\(^8\) can be a
single repetition by the pronoun of the verb or a double repetition by the pronoun
attached to the verb and an independent pronoun.\(^9\) Genesis 30:29 illustrates a single
repetition of the subject by a pronoun attached to the verb:

\[

dן אֶלְיָהוּ אָבְנֵי רָאוֹ בָּרֵא אֶלְיָהוּ אַבְרָהָם
\]

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\(^8\)Even for the subject-before-finite-verb clauses that are descriptive in narrative statements, repetition brings some degree of emphasis.

\(^9\)This is similar to Greek, as Smyth states, “The nominative of the personal pronoun is usually omitted except when emphatic.” Herbert W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), §1190.
And he said to him, "You know how I have served you, and how your cattle have fared with me."

The explicit pronoun (נָהַע) repeats the subject for emphasis. 10 Joshua 22:23 illustrates a double repetition by the pronoun attached to the verb and an independent pronoun:

"If we have built us an altar to turn away from following the Lord, or if to offer a burnt offering or grain offering on it, or if to offer sacrifices of peace offerings on it, the Lord - He may He require it."

10 According to traditional grammarians, the third person verbs (singular and plural) of verbal clauses do not imply a pronoun for repetition, but the verb and the subject form a grammatical package – somewhat like a construct package, as a verbal clause (יהו נָהַע מְשַׁמֵּר) in Deut 1:3 shows:

And it came about in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel, according to all that the Lord had commanded him to give to them.

The original verbal form רָבֵר (with a Sere) is vocalized as רָבֵר (with a Segol) when it is read with its subject together (again similar to a construct package, such as יָשִׂיד בֶּן יָשִׂיד [Gen 11:31, 16:15, 21:3; 1 Sam 8:2; Pro 30:4, usually יָשִׂיד [Gen 12:1], etc. Notice the Maqeqef.) Notice conjunctive accent (Mahpāḵ) that packages the subject with the verb. On the other hand, when it is read separately from its subject, the expected form with Sere may be found in 1 Kgs 14:11:

"Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the Lord has spoken it."

Notice the disjunctive accent (Ṭiḥḥā) with הָיוֹדֵה which separates הָיוֹדֵה from the verb רָבֵר. Additionally, if an independent pronoun comes after the verb, traditional grammarians regarded the pronoun as a repetition, as Exod 4:16 shows:

"And he shall speak for you to the people; and it shall come about that he shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be as God to him.

The subject of the verbal clause is repeated independently (נָהַע) for emphasis.
The independent pronoun (אַתָּה) and the pronoun substitute in the verb (ָּוְָה) repeat the subject (יהָוּדָה) twice. This double repetition expresses a higher level of emphasis for the subject.

Subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements at times express a descriptive notion. Such cases are usually limited to narrative statements within direct speech or prophetical/poetical statements. Of course, the descriptive notion also frequently appears in contrastive sentences.

Classifying subject-before-finite-verb clauses yields the following chart:

I. **Primarily Emphatic**
   
   A. Noun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption
      
      1. Repetition of Explicit Pronoun
      2. Repetition of Implicit Pronoun
      3. Repetition of Pronoun Substitute

   B. Pronoun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption
      
      1. Repetition of Explicit Pronoun
      2. Repetition of Implicit Pronoun
      3. Repetition of Pronoun Substitute

   C. Noun Subject with Double Pronominal Resumptions
      
      1. Emphasis with Double Resumptive Subjects
      2. Emphasis with Double Resumptive Pronouns

   D. Pronoun Subject with Double Pronominal Resumptions

   E. Contrast

II. **Primarily Descriptive**
   
   A. Starting a story
   B. Transitioning a story
   C. General descriptive statement
The emphatic categories are based on the grammar of the passage; the descriptive categories are more subjective.\(^{11}\)

Noun subject with repetition of an explicit pronoun occurs as in (I.A.1):

Gen 37:20

を通וה לֶא הנְהָרָה וְנִשְׁלָלָה בַּאָתָר הַנְּהָרָה אֶפְרָיָה וְיַחְתָּר רָשָׁה אֶפְרָיָה

Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A wild beast – it devoured him.’ Then let us see what will become of his dreams!”

The pronominal element of the verb (גָּעַם) explicitly repeats the subject (רָעָה) for emphasis. If the speaker did not desire emphatic notion, he would invert the word order into a verbal clause, as אֶפְרָיָה רָעָה “a wild beast devoured him.”

Noun subject with repetition of an implicit pronoun occurs only in the perfect, third person masculine singular and common plural (with a “Vav of plurality”) [I.A.2]:

Gen 44:16

אָמַר יְהוֹשָעַה מְחַלֶּפָה כָּאֵרָה מְחַלֶּפָה וְמִצְוָה לְסַג

So Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God – He has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.”

The verb (כִּנָּה) implies a third person singular pronoun that repeats the subject (וּלְרָא) for emphasis. If the speaker did not intend emphatic notion, he would invert the word order into a verbal clause, as כִּנָּה אֱלֹהִים “God has found.” The third person verb in a verbal clause does not imply a pronoun if the subject is explicit.

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\(^{11}\)See p. 31.
On the other hand, a noun subject with repetition of a pronoun substitute occurs in the third person singular or plural of the imperfect tense (I.A.3):

Gen 41:16

Then Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God — He will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”

The pronoun substitute in the verb (יְהִי in יְהִי) explicitly repeats the subject (אֱלֹהֵי) for emphasis. Just as the cases above, if the speaker did not intend emphatic notion, he would invert the word order, as יָהֲעִי אֱלֹהֵי “God will give an answer.”

Pronoun subject with repetition of an explicit pronoun occurs in the first and second persons, singular or plural, of the perfect tense (I.B.1):

Gen 16:5

And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done me be upon you. I — I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

The pronominal element of the verb (יָד in יָדֵנֵי) explicitly repeats the pronoun subject (אֱלֹהֵי) for emphasis. If the speaker did not desire emphatic notion, he would omit the pronoun subject, as יָדֵנֵי “I gave.” Unlike the cases above (I.A.1, I.A.2, and I.A.3), inverted word order, יָדֵנֵי אֱלֹהֵי, also express emphasis according to the repetition of the pronoun subject.

Pronoun subject with repetition of an implicit pronoun occurs only in the third person singular of the perfect tense (I.B.2):

Gen 20:5

Then Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God — He will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”

The pronoun substitute in the verb (יְהִי in יְהִי) explicitly repeats the subject (אֱלֹהֵי) for emphasis. Just as the cases above, if the speaker did not intend emphatic notion, he would invert the word order, as יָהֲעִי אֱלֹהֵי “God will give an answer.”

Pronoun subject with repetition of an explicit pronoun occurs in the first and second persons, singular or plural, of the perfect tense (I.B.1):

Gen 16:5

And Sarai said to Abram, “May the wrong done me be upon you. I — I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

The pronominal element of the verb (יָד in יָדֵנֵי) explicitly repeats the pronoun subject (אֱלֹהֵי) for emphasis. If the speaker did not desire emphatic notion, he would omit the pronoun subject, as יָדֵנֵי “I gave.” Unlike the cases above (I.A.1, I.A.2, and I.A.3), inverted word order, יָדֵנֵי אֱלֹהֵי, also express emphasis according to the repetition of the pronoun subject.

Pronoun subject with repetition of an implicit pronoun occurs only in the third person singular of the perfect tense (I.B.2):

Gen 20:5
He – did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she – even she – she said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.”

The verb (אַלְכָּל), generating emphasis. If the emphatic notion is not desired, the speaker would omit the pronoun and simply say "לָכָל אָנָף לָי.

"Did he said to me?"

Pronoun subject with repetition of a pronoun substitute occurs in the first person singular and plural, the second person masculine singular, and the third person feminine singular (I.B.3):

Gen 21:24

And Abraham said, “לָי – I swear.”

The pronoun substitute in the verb (אַלְכָּל) explicitly repeats the pronoun subject for emphasis. If the speaker did not intend emphatic notion, he would omit the pronoun subject and simply said "לָכָל I swear.”

Moreover, noun subject with repetition of double resumptive subjects expresses a higher level of emphasis for the subject, expressing a very strong emphasis (I.C.1):

Gen 17:17

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? Or Sarah – will a ninety years old woman bear?”

12For example, Gen 2:18 shows plain statement without independent pronoun:

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”
The noun subject (בתו של אדם) and the pronoun substitute in the verb (יהלך) repeat the subject (בתו של אדם) for strong emphasis. The speaker expresses strong emphasis by repeating the subject twice.

Likewise, noun subject with repetition of double resumptive pronouns also expresses strong emphasis (I.C.2):

Gen 3:12

וַתֹּאמֶר הַאֲדֹם, כִּי יָדַעְתָּ לָהּ שֶׁנִּחַלְחָלָה מִצְּרָיִם הֹוא נִבְּהַד בּוֹ וָאֵין נְכָלָה.

And the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me – she – she gave to me from the tree, and I ate.”

The independent pronoun (��ֹד) and the explicit pronoun to the end of the verb (יהלך) repeat the subject (בתו של אדם) for strong emphasis.

Pronoun subject with repetition of double resumptive pronouns also expresses strong emphasis (I.D):

Gen 20:5

וַיֹּאמֶר לֵאמֹר, כִּי מָתַן לָהּ שֶׁנִּחַלְחָלָה מִצְּרָיִם הֹוא נִבְּהַד אֲחָס הָא חָי הָא.

He – did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she – even she – she said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.”

The pronoun subject (the second��ֹד of the subject-before-finite-verb clause) and the explicit pronoun of the verb (יהלך) repeat the subject (the first��ֹד of the subject-before-finite-verb clause) for strong emphasis. A double repetition expresses a higher level of emphasis than single resumption of the subject expresses.

A subject that is a noun or pronoun within a contrasting structure may occur in any person, number, or tense (I.E). Subject-before-finite-verb clauses in a contrasting structure within non-narrative statements usually express emphasis:
Gen 15:15

And He said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. But you — you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.” (vv. 13-15)

At other times, subject-before-finite-verb clauses in a contrasting structure express descriptive notions as well as emphatic notions (II.A):

Gen 1:20

And God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.”

This subject-before-finite-verb clause may not express a strongly emphatic notion as the other examples above. It, however, may express more of a descriptive notion, or an equal degree of both emphatic and descriptive notions. All subject-before-finite-verb clauses that are contrastive view the actions as simultaneous, in contrast to the Vav-consecutive constructions that express successive actions.

Occasionally, there may be a speaker who relates narrative statements, a historical account, past event(s), or prophesy in direct speech (II.B). For the same

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13 In the book of Genesis, these are several places where a speaker relates a story: Abraham’s servant tells of Abraham and Isaac to Laban and Rebekah in Gen 24:34–49; Pharaoh’s cupbearer tells of Joseph to Pharaoh in Gen 41:9–13; Jacob blesses his sons in Gen 49:2–32, and so forth.
purpose with the functions in narrative statements, a speaker may employ subject-before-finite-verb clauses for starting a new section, transitioning within a section, ending a section, or giving general descriptions about the subject.\(^{14}\) In this case, subject-before-finite-verb clauses have more of a descriptive notion than an emphatic notion. As a general rule, if subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements are starting, transitioning, or ending sections and are giving general descriptions about the subject, they are descriptive just as the usage in narrative statements.\(^{15}\) For example, a subject-before-finite-verb clause in Genesis 24:35, occurring in direct speech of Abraham’s servant, starts a new section, reporting the past event(s):

So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. Now the Lord—He has blessed greatly my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and maids, and camels and donkeys. And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master in her old age; and he has given him all that he has. (vv.34-36)

The speaker starts an historical account by employing a subject-before-finite-verb clause after introducing himself.

\(^{14}\) Of course, a speaker can start a story with a verbal clause in non-narrative statements just as in the case of narrative statements.

\(^{15}\) A speaker can express personal emotion or interpretation to the past event(s), inserting emphasis of the subject by employing subject-before-finite-verb clauses in relating an historical account.
Finally, some prophetical/poetical statements may be more descriptive than emphatic. For example, in Genesis 49:13 and 49:16, Jacob prophesies about his sons, transitioning to each one by a subject-before-finite-verb clause:

49:13

"Zebulun – he shall dwell at the seashore; and he shall be a haven for ships, and his flank shall be toward Sidon."

49:16

"Dan – he shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel."

These individual names, standing at the first place of the sentences as the subject to the following verbless or subject-before-finite-verb clauses, make transitions of Jacob’s prophecies, just like some subject-before-finite-verb clauses transition a story in narrative statements.

Complete Data and Analysis:
Primarily Emphatic (I)

Noun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption:
Repetition of Explicit Pronoun (A.1)


37:20

19הנה בֶּנְיָמִין נשָּפִּיטָה עָלָּ֫יהָ
20זֶהְזָה לְךָ יְהוָ֥ה וָנֶעָלָּ֫ה הַמֶּלֶּ֣חָה בָּהָֽו קָאָ֖ם הַמִּלְּחָ֥ה וָנֶעָלָּ֫ה הַמֶּלֶּ֣חָה בָּהָֽו קָאָ֖ם הַמִּלְּחָ֥ה וָנֶעָלָּ֫ה הַמֶּלֶּ֣חָה בָּהָֽו קָאָ֖ם הַמִּלְּחָ֥ה וָנֶעָלָּ֫ה הַמֶּלֶּ֣חָה בָּהָֽו קָאָ֖ם H"
And they said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer! And now, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A wild beast – it devoured him.’ Then let us see what will become of his dreams!” But Reuben heard this and rescued him out of their hands and said, “Let us not take his life.” (vv. 19-21)

The pronominal element of the verb (הע, בַּעֲלָחָה, pausal form of בַּעֲלָחָה) repeats the subject (יָדָיו, רוּחַ) for emphasis.

37:33

And they sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, “We found this; please examine it to see whether it is your son’s tunic or not.” And he examined it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast – it devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!” So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days. (vv. 32-34)

Noun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption: Repetition of Implicit Pronoun (A.2)


3:13
And the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent – it deceived me, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. (vv. 12-14)

The verb (השָׁפָל) implies a third person singular pronoun that repeats the subject (נָשִּׁי), generating emphasis.

3:22

And the Lord God said, "Behold, the man – he has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. (vv. 22-23)

The verb (לֹא-לָכַר) implies a third person singular pronoun that repeats the subject (לָכַר).
Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have become old, shall I have pleasure? And my lord— he is old.” And the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child? And I— I am old.’” (vv. 11-13)

The verb (ל failed) implies a third person singular pronoun that repeats the subject (ל והם הלכו אל הפר Здесь אתי נא א前に אלל ונטלים).

But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him. And he said, “Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.” But they said, “Stand aside.” Furthermore, they said, “This one—he came in as an alien, and he is surely acting like a judge; now, we will treat you worse than them.” So they pressed hard against the man, against Lot, and came near to break the door. (vv. 6-9)
And Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, and he and his two daughters. Then the first-born said to the younger, “Our father – he is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him, that we may preserve our family through our father.” (vv. 30-32)

Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When they arose in the morning, he said, “Send me away to my master.” But her brother and her mother said, “Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go.” And he said to them, “Do not delay me, since the Lord – He has prospered my way. Send me away so that I may go to my master.” And they said, “We will call the girl and consult her wishes.” (vv. 54-57)

Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you.” So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field. And he said to them, “I see your father’s face that it is not as it has been in the past, but the God of my father – He has been with me.” (vv. 3-5)
And said to them, “I see your father’s attitude, that it is not friendly toward me as formerly, but the God of my father has been with me. And you know that I have served your father with all my strength. Your father - he has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; God, however, would not let him do me harm.” (vv. 5-7)

Then Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword? Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with timbrel and with lyre; and did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father - He spoke to me yesterday, saying, ‘Be careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob.’” (vv. 26-29)
Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob answered and said to Laban, “What is my transgression? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? Though you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats – they have not miscarried, the rams of your flocks I have not eaten. That which was torn I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself. You required it of my hand whether stolen by day or stolen by night.” (vv. 36-39)

The verb (שָׁכַל) with a “Vav of plurality” implies a third person singular pronoun that repeats the subject (ואֵלֵיהָ).

“Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob answered and said to Laban, “What is my transgression? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? Though you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats – they have not miscarried, the rams of your flocks I have not eaten. That which was torn I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself. You required it of my hand whether stolen by day or stolen by night.” (vv. 36-39)

The verb (שָׁכַל) with a “Vav of plurality” implies a third person singular pronoun that repeats the subject (ואֵלֵיהָ).
And he asked the men of her place, saying, “Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?” But they said, “There has been no temple prostitute here.” So he returned to Judah, and said, “I did not find her; and even the men of the place – they said, ‘There has been no temple prostitute here.’” Then Judah said, “Let her keep them, lest we become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this kid, but you – you did not find her.” (vv. 21-23)

The verb (אָבָר) with a “Vav of plurality” implies a third person singular pronoun that repeats the subject (אָנָשִׁי נִפְקְדִים). The particle הֶזֶּם strengthens the emphasis of the subject. 16

And it came about after these events that his master’s wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, “Lie with me.” But he refused and said to his master’s wife, “Behold, my master – he does not concern with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God?” (vv. 7-9)

The particle הֶזֶּם strengthens the emphasis of the subject. 17

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And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them, and said to them, “You are spies; you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land.” And they said to him, “No, my lord, but your servants – they have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man; we are honest men, your servants are not spies.” (vv. 9-11)

“And it came about when we came to the lodging place, that we opened our sacks, and behold, each man’s money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full. So we have brought it back in our hand. We have also brought down other money in our hand to buy food; we do not know who put our money in our sacks.” And he said, “Be at ease, do not be afraid. Your God and God of your father – He has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them. (vv. 21-23)
And Joseph said to them, “What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?” So Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God – He has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.” But he said, “Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.” (vv. 15-17)

Then Judah approached him, and said, “Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’ “And we said to my lord, ‘We have an old father and a little child of his old age. Now his brother – he is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father – he loves him.’” (vv. 18-20)

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18 This clause is also classified in I.E. Contrast category.
Then Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive.” And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s household, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, ‘My brothers and my father’s household, who were in the land of Canaan — they have come to me. And the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.’” (vv. 30-32)

47:1

Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and he said, “My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have — they have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen.”

47:5

Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?” So they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers.” And they said to Pharaoh, “We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants’ flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen.” Then Pharaoh said to Joseph,
“Your father and your brothers – they have come to you. The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock.” (vv. 3-6)

Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, “Behold, your father is sick.” So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. When it was told to Jacob and he said, “Behold, your son Joseph – he has come to you,” Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed. (vv. 1-2)

The particle הָלַכְתָּו strengthens the emphasis of the subject.

Then Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty – He appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and He said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.’” (vv. 3-4)

“The blessings of your father – they have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors, to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.”

The particle הָלַכְתָּו strengthens the emphasis of the subject.
And when the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh, saying, 'My father – he made me swear, saying, “Behold, I am about to die; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.” Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.'" (vv. 4-5)

When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph should bear a grudge against us and pay us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!” So they sent to Joseph, saying, “Your father – he charged before he died, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph, ‘Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.’” And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. (vv. 15-17)
And behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth – it shall perish. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark – you and your sons and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.” (vv. 17-18)

The pronoun substitute in the verb (‘ in יִֽשְׁמָע הָאָדָם חַיָּה שֵׁם) repeats the subject.

And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. Yet all days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night – they shall not cease.” (vv. 21-22)

The pronoun substitute in the verb (‘ in לָכֶם חַיָּה שֵׁם חַיָּה שֵׁם) with a “Vav of plurality” repeats the subject.

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the terror of you – it shall be on every
beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.” (vv. 1-2)

9:3

“Every creeping thing that is alive – it shall be food for you; as the green plant, I give all to you. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, its blood.” (vv. 3-4)

13:16

And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. And I will make your seeds as the dust of the earth; so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your seed – it can also be numbered. Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.” (vv. 14-17)

The particle בּ strenghtens the emphasis of the subject.

17:6
“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings— they shall come forth from you.” (vv. 4-6)

17:16

Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples—they shall come from her.” (vv. 15-16)

17:18

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? Or Sarah—will a ninety years old woman bear?” And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael—he might live before You!” (vv. 17-18)
And the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, since Abraham – he will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him." (vv. 17-19)

Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears – he will laugh with me." (vv. 5-6)

On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad – we will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you." And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. (vv. 4-6)

The pronoun substitute in the verb (I in לָלְךָ בְּכָלְכֶם נִקְא אֲבָרֹכַּם שָׁם יִשְׁרָאֵל) repeats the subject (הַנָּאוּת הַיּוֹם).
And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” And Abraham said, “God – He will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together. (vv. 7-8)

And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, “Hear us, my lord, you are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our graves; A man from us – he will not refuse you his grave for burying your dead.” So Abraham rose and bowed to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. (vv. 5-7)

“And he said to me, ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked – He will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives, and from my father’s house; then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my relatives; and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.’” (vv. 40-41)

And Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled...
together within her; and she said, “If it is so, why then am I?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb; 1) and two peoples – they shall be separated from your body; 2) and one people – it shall be stronger than the other; 3) and the older – he shall serve the younger.” (vv. 21-23)

26:11

Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Behold, certainly she is your wife! How then did you say, ‘She is my sister’?” And Isaac said to him, ‘Because I said, ‘Lest I die on account of her.’” And Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.” So Abimelech charged all the people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife – he surely will be put to death.” (vv. 9-11)

28:3

So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him, and said to him, “You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother. And God Almighty – may He bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.” (vv. 1-3)

28:22
Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the Lord will be my God. “And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar – it will be God’s house; and of all that You give me, I will surely give a tenth to You.” (vv. 20-22)

31:53

And Laban said to Jacob, “Behold this heap and behold the pillar which I have set between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass by this heap to you for harm, and you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father – He (They) will judge between us.” So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. (vv. 51-53)

34:10

But Hamor spoke with them, saying, “The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage. And intermarry with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. Thus you shall live with us,
and the land – it shall be before you; live and trade in it, and acquire property in it.” (vv. 8-10)

35:11 (x2)

Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name.” Thus He called him Israel. God also said to him, “I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations – it shall come from you, and kings – they shall come forth from your loins.” (vv. 9-11)

41:16

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; and I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” Then Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God - He will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” So Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, “In my dream, behold, I was standing on the bank of the Nile.” (vv. 15-17)

42:19
Now Joseph said to them on the third day, “Do this and live, for I fear God: If you are honest men, one of your brothers — let him be confined in your prison; but the rest of you, go, carry grain for the famine of your households, and bring your youngest brother to me, so your words may be verified, and you will not die.” And they did so. (vv. 18-20)

“Take your brother also, and arise, return to the man; and God Almighty — He may grant you compassion in the eyes of the man, that he may release to you your other brother and Benjamin. And I, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.” (vv. 13-14)

29 As he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, he said, “Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?” And he said, “God — may He be gracious to you, my son.”

“And now, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, but the lad — let him go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest I see the evil that would overtake my father?” (vv. 33-34)
And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. I - I will go down with you to Egypt, and I - I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph - he will set his hand upon your eyes." (vv. 2-4)

And when that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the cattle are my lord's. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands. Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land - may it not be desolate." So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh's. (vv. 18-20)

19This clause is also classified in I.E. Contrast category.
Then Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and He said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.’ “And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh – they shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.” (vv. 3-5)

And he blessed Joseph, and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, The angel who has redeemed me from all evil—may he bless the lads; and may my name live on in them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.” (vv. 15-16)

And Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father, for this one is the first-born. Place your right hand on his head.” But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I
know; he – he also shall become a people and he – he also shall become great. However, his younger brother – he shall become greater than he, and his seed – it shall become a multitude of nations.” (vv. 18-19)

49:19

גֵּר בְּעֵרְרֵי יִנָּהֳרָה
רֹאָה גֵר עָבָד

“As for Gad, raiders – they shall raid him; but he – he shall raid at their heels.”

50:24

Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father’s household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim’s sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph’s knees. And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God – He will surely take care of you, and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.” (vv. 22-24)

Pronoun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption:
Repetition of Explicit Pronoun (B.1)


14:23
And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I - I have made Abram rich.'" (vv. 21-23)

The pronominal element of the verb (יה in הָדַל) repeats the subject (אני) for emphasis.

16:5

And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight. And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done me be upon you. I - I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the Lord judge between you and me." (vv. 4-5)

18:13

Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" And the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a child? And I - I am old.'" (vv. 11-13)
Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, “Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless? He – did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she – even she – she said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.” Then God said to him in the dream, “Indeed I – I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.”

The particle יְ יְ strengthen the emphasis of the subject.

But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized. And Abimelech said, “I do not know who has done this matter; even you – you did not tell me, and even I – I did not hear of it until today.” And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them to Abimelech; and the two of them made a covenant.

Again, יְ יְ strengthen the emphasis of the subject.
And it came about that when he saw the ring, and the bracelets on his sister’s wrists, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, “This is what the man said to me,” he went to the man; and behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. And he said, “Come in, blessed of the Lord! Why do you stand outside? Since I – I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels.” (vv. 30-31)

Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with his adviser Ahuzzath, and Phicol the commander of his army. And Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, since you – you hate me, and have sent me away from you?” (vv. 26-27)

The pronominal element of the verb (ם in שאנא) repeats the subject (ם).

But Laban said to him, “If now it pleases you; I have divined that the Lord has blessed me on your account.” And he continued, “Name me your wages, and I will give it.” And he said to him, “You – you know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me.” (vv. 27-29)
And he said to them, “I see your father’s attitude, that it is not friendly toward me as formerly, but the God of my father has been with me. And you – you know that I have served your father with all my strength.” (vv. 5-6)

The pronominal element of the verb (יֵלְדוּתָה) repeats the subject (אֲבֵלַי).

32:13

38:23

And Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who didst say to me, ‘Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,’ I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You has shown to Your servant; for with my staff! crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me, the mothers with the children. And You – You said, ‘I will surely prosper you, and make your seeds as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted for multitude.’” (vv. 10-13)

And he asked the men of her place, saying, “Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?” But they said, “There has been no temple prostitute here.” So he returned to Judah, and said, “I did not find her; and even the men of the place
Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; and I have heard about you, saying, you can hear a dream to interpret it.” (vv. 14-15)

“And your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons.’” (vv. 27)

“And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, you did not send me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay.’” (vv. 7-9)
Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and
go to the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households and come to me,
and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you shall eat the fat of the
land.’ Now you – you are ordered, ‘Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt
for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come.’” (vv. 17-19)

The pronominal element of the verb (גָּדָל) repeats the subject (גָּדָל).

Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you,
and bring you back to the land of your fathers. And I – I give you one portion more
than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and
my bow.” (vv. 21-22)

Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are
your servants.” But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place?
And you – you meant evil against me, but God – He meant it for good in order to
bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” (vv. 18-20)
Pronoun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption:
Repetition of Implicit Pronoun
(B.2)

Occurrences: 20:5a and 38:28.

20:5a

Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, “Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married.” Now Abimelech – he had not come near her; and he said, “Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless? He – did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she – even she – she said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.” (vv. 1-5)

38:28

And it came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb. And while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and then the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, “This one – he came out first.” (vv. 27-28)
Pronoun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption: Repetition of Pronoun Substitute (B.3)


3:15

וַיָּמָר יְהֹוָה אלֹהֵי צְרִיָּה: כִּי מְשַׁחֲתָּה אָנֹ wyqwn

And the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life; and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” (vv. 14-15)

4:7

וַיַּאֲמֹר חֵינָה אֶתְיוֹן: wyqwn

Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you – you must master it.” (vv. 6-7)

5:29

וְיֵרֵיחַלְקָם שֵׁםָה וְשֵׁםָה שֵׁםָה וַתְּמַאת שֵׁם: wyqwn

Then, the Lord confused the names of all peoples; and they ceased to be names. (v. 28)
And Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. And he called his name Noah, saying, “This one – he shall give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands from the ground which the Lord has cursed it.” (vv. 28-29)

16:12

The angel of the Lord said to her further, “Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. And he – he will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, and everyone’s hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers.” (vv. 11-12)

19:19

But Lot said to them, “Oh no, my lords! Now behold, your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have set with me to save my life; but I – I am not able to escape to the mountains, lest the disaster overtake me and I die; now behold, this town is near to flee to, that my life may be saved.” (vv. 18-20)

21:24

But Lot said to them, “Oh no, my lords! Now behold, your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have set with me to save my life; but I – I am not able to escape to the mountains, lest the disaster overtake me and I die; now behold, this town is near to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved.” (vv. 18-20)
Now it came about at that time, that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, “God is with you in all that you do; now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, or with my offspring, or with my posterity; but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me, and to the land in which you have sojourned.” And Abraham said, “I swear.” (vv. 22-24)

“Behold, I am standing by the spring, and may it be that the maiden who comes out to draw, and to whom I say, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar”; and she will say to me, “You drink, and I will draw for your camels also”; let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master’s son.’ I – before I had finished speaking in my heart, and behold, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder, and went down to the spring and drew; and I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’” (vv. 43-45)

Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid, for I said, ‘Lest you would take your daughters from me by force.’ The one with whom you find your gods – he shall not live; in the presence of our kinsmen point out what is yours among my belongings and take it for yourself.” For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. (vv. 31-32)
Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob answered and said to Laban, “What is my transgression? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? Though you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats – they have not miscarried, the rams of your flocks I have not eaten. That which was torn I did not bring to you; I – I bore the loss of it. You required it of my hand whether stolen by day or stolen by night.” (vv. 36-39)

And Laban said to Jacob, “Behold this heap and behold the pillar which I have set between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I – I will not pass by this heap to you, and you – you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father – He (They) judge between us.” So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. (vv. 51-53)

20 This clause is also classified in I.E. Contrast category.
So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, “Here now, let me come in to you”; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, “What will you give me, that you may come in to me?” And he said, “I will send out you a kid from the flock.” And she said, “Will you give a pledge until you send?” (vv. 16-17)

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you.” (vv. 39-40)

And their father Jacob said to them, “You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me.” Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, “You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my care, and I will return him to you.” (vv. 36-37)
And Judah said to his father Israel, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones. I – I will be surety for him; you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever." (vv. 8-9)

As soon as it was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. They had just gone out of the city, and were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, "Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? 'Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and he – he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.'" (vv. 3-5)

“Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and even we – we will be my lord’s slaves.” (vv. 8-9)
And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “Jacob, Jacob.” And he said, “Here I am.” And He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. I – I will go down with you to Egypt, and I – I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph – he will set his hand upon your eyes.” (vv. 2-4)

When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.” And he said, “I – I will do as you have said.” (vv. 29-30)

And Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father, for this one is the first-born. Place your right hand on his head.” But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know; he – he also shall become a people and he – he also shall become great.
However, his younger brother – he shall become greater than he, and his seeds – they shall become a multitude of nations.” (vv. 18-19)

49:19b21

“As for Gad, raiders – they shall raid him; **but he – he shall raid** at their heels.”

49:20

“As for Asher, his food shall be rich; **and he – he shall yield** royal dainties.”

50:21

Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? And you – you meant evil against me, **but God – He meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I – I will provide** for you and your little ones.” So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. (vv. 18-21)

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21This clause is also classified in I.E. Contrast category.
Noun Subject with Double Pronominal Resumptions: Emphasis with Double Resumptive Subjects (C.1)

Occurrence: 17:17.

17:17

Then God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples — they shall come from her.” Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? Or Sarah — will a ninety years old woman bear?” (vv. 15-17)

The noun subject (בְּחֵיָּםָּם) and the pronoun substitute in the verb (פָּדְתֶּם) repeat the subject (שָׁרָה) for strong emphasis.

Noun Subject with Double Pronominal Resumptions: Emphasis with Double Resumptive Pronouns (C.2)


3:12

The noun subject (בְּחֵיָּםָּם) and the pronoun substitute in the verb (פָּדְתֶּם) repeat the subject (שָׁרָה) for strong emphasis.
And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” And the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me — she — she gave to me from the tree, and I ate.” (vv. 11-12)

The independent pronoun (וַיֵּ SATA) and the explicit pronoun to the end of the verb (N נִי) repeat the subject (וַיֵּ SATA) for strong emphasis.

14:24

14:24

The independent pronoun (וַיֵּ SATA) and the explicit pronoun substitute in the verb (N נִי) with a “Vav of plurality” repeat the subject (וַיֵּ SATA) for strong emphasis.

15:4

And Abram said, “Since You has given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.” Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This one will not
be your heir; but one who shall come forth from your belly — he — he shall be your heir.” (vv. 3-4)

The independent pronoun (אלה) and the pronoun substitute in the verb (לְךָ in בָּאתָ) repeat the subject (אֱלֹהִי) for strong emphasis.

Then Abraham said to him, “Beware lest you take my son back there! The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me, and who swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give this land’ — He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there. But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this my oath; only do not take my son back there.” (vv. 6-8)

The independent pronoun (אלה) and the pronoun substitute in the verb (לְךָ in בָּאתָ) repeat the subject (אֱלֹהִי) for strong emphasis.

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And Joseph said to them, “What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?” So Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God—he has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.” But he said, “Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found—he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.” (vv. 15-17)

Pronoun Subject with Double Pronominal Resumptions (D)

Occurrence: 20:5b.

20:5b

הלא תוהו אפריל, אתיה תהוה והיה בטעמה, אמר אתי יהוה בך-כלוב תכין כופו ושתי יהוה:

“He—did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she—even she—she said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.”

The pronoun subject (the second נוח of the subject-before-finite-verb clause) and the explicit pronoun to the end of the verb (וה in והיה) repeat the subject (the first נוח of the subject-before-finite-verb clause) for strong emphasis.

Contrast (E)


Subject-before-finite-verb clauses in a contrasting structure within non-narrative statements express strong emphasis or more or less equal amount of description and emphasis, viewing actions as simultaneous.

1:20

יוסף אלכסים שרהה שלמה ישכן נפש חיה
Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and birds – let them fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.”

1:22

And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply; and fill the waters in the seas, and birds – let them multiply on the earth.”

3:15

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he – he shall bruise you on the head, and you – you shall bruise him on the heel.”

This subject-before-finite-verb clause expresses strong emphasis.

3:16

To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply your pain in conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, but he – he shall rule over you.”

15:15

And He said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred
years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. “But you – you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.” (vv. 13-15)

21:26

And Abimelech said, “I do not know who has done this matter; even you – you didn’t tell me, and even I – I didn’t hear of it until today.”

28:16

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, but I didn’t know.”

31:52 (x2)

And Laban said to Jacob, “Behold this heap and behold the pillar which I have set between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I – I will not pass by this heap to you, and you – you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father – He (They) judge between us.” So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. (vv. 51-53)

33:14

22 This clause is also classified in B.3. Pronoun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption: Repetition of Pronoun Substitute category.
“Please let my lord pass on before his servant; and I – I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir.”

35:10

And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; you shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel – it shall be your name.” Thus He called him Israel.

44:10

So he said, “Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, but you – you shall be innocent.”

44:20

Then Judah approached him, and said, “Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’ And we said to my lord, ‘We have an old father and a little child of his old age. Now his

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23 This clause is also classified in I.A.2. Noun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption: Repetition of Implicit Pronoun category.
brother – he is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father – he loves him.” (vv. 18-20)

And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “Jacob, Jacob.” And he said, “Here I am.” And He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. I – I will go down with you to Egypt, and I – I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph – he will set his hand upon your eyes.” (vv. 2-4)

“And at the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths – it shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food and for those of your households and as food for your little ones.”

“As for Gad, raiders – they shall raid him; but he – he shall raid at their heels.”

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24 This clause is also classified in LA.3. Noun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption: Repetition of Pronoun Substitute category.

25 This clause is also classified in LB.3. Pronoun Subject with Single Pronominal Resumption: Repetition of Pronoun Substitute category.
Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? And you – you meant evil against me, but God – He meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” (vv. 18-20)

**Primarily Descriptive (II)**

**Starting a New Story (A)**

Occurrences: 24:35, 41:10, and 44:19.

24:35

So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. **Now the Lord – He has blessed greatly** my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and maids, and camels and donkeys. And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master in her old age; and he has given him all that he has. (vv. 34-36)

41:10
Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, “I would make mention today of my own offenses. Pharaoh – he became furious with his servants, and then he put me in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, me and the chief baker.” (vv. 9-10)

44:19

Then Judah approached him, and said, “Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh. My lord – he asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’” (vv. 18-19)

Transitioning a Story (B)


49:13

“His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk. Zebulun – he shall dwell at the seashore; and he shall be a haven for ships, and his flank shall be toward Sidon.” (vv. 12-13)

49:16

“When he saw that a resting place was good And that the land was pleasant, He bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, And became a slave at forced labor. Dan – he shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.” (vv. 15-16)
General Descriptive Statement (C)

Occurrence: 49:22.

49:22

בּוֹ מַרְחֵה יִשְׂפֵּח וּכְ בּוֹ מַרְחֵה יַעֲלִיָּהוּ

כִּנָּה צֵּדֶרֶה עֵילִיתוֹ:

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; branches – they run over a wall.”

Conclusion

Subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements function almost the opposite to those in narrative statements. Subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements mostly express an emphatic notion, and occasionally, they express description as in the narrative statements. Even though the emphatic notion predominates in subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements, emphasis never completely overrides description, but at least some description remains.

Emphasis

Subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements mostly express emphatic notion with a single or double repetition by a pronoun. A single repetition of a pronoun attaches to the verb as an explicit pronoun, as an implicit pronoun, or as a pronoun substitute. A double repetition adds a noun or pronoun, written independently of the verb, to the pronoun attached to the verb. With a single repetition of a pronoun, subject-before-finite-verb clauses express strong emphasis in non-narrative statements. With a double repetition, subject-before-finite-verb clauses obviously express a stronger level of emphasis.

Similar to their use in narrative statements, subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements may express emphasis by contrast. This emphasis may be stronger than the descriptive notion. Sometimes, subject-before-finite-verb clauses
express a more or less equal amount of description and emphasis, with the action viewed _a-temporally_ or simultaneously by the speaker.

**Description**

Even though the emphatic notion cannot be completely eliminated, some subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements express mostly descriptive notions. This usage is limited to a few cases, as when a speaker narrates a story by starting, transitioning, ending, or giving general descriptive statements of the subject.
The Issue of Redefining Verbal and Nominal Clauses (I)

Modern and traditional grammarians differ in their understanding of subject-before-finite-verb clauses. Traditional grammarians regard subject-before-finite-verb clauses as nominal clauses; modern grammarians, on the other hand, see them as verbal clauses. This difference, of course, stems from the difference in defining verbal and nominal clauses between traditional and modern grammarians. These differences of definition may seem slight and insignificant to readers of modern grammars of Biblical Hebrew. Indeed, most modern grammars discuss verbal and nominal clauses as defined from the time of Kautzsch, but the discussions seem formal and perfunctory. Yet, traditional grammarians view verbal and nominal clauses, as traditionally defined, as an essential distinction to understand Hebrew syntax.

For example, Jouion defined verbal and nominal clauses: "Depending on whether the predicate is a noun or a verb, a clause is said to be nominal or verbal" in the section §153. He continued to discuss nominal clauses in §154: "The category nominal clause includes every clause the predicate of which is a noun or the equivalent of a noun, i.e. for instance, a participle, a preposition with a noun or a pronoun; or, put negatively, every clause the predicate of which is not a verb (but with the exception of to be in the sense of to be) is a nominal clause." Jouion says little about verbal clauses other than listing examples. Waltke and O'Connor, and Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze use the term verbal and nominal clauses, but they do not elaborate on their meaning or significance. Paul Jouion, A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew, trans. and rev. T. Muraoka (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991), §§153-55; Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 4.3c; Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).
But does this difference of definition and of opinion really matter? On the one hand, the difference may not seem much. Most modern grammarians and many interpreters still understand Biblical Hebrew very well. They have simply adapted to the new definitions of verbal and nominal clauses with adjustments made for problems of subject-before-finite-verb clauses. Some of these adjustments include, for instance, seeing subject-before-finite-verb clauses as background for the narrative and verb-before-subject clauses as foreground for the narrative.

But on the other hand, the difference of opinion is vitally important. In fact, Kautzsch, a prime mover for redefining verbal and nominal clauses, understood this very well, stating:

The above distinction between different kinds of sentences — especially between noun- and verbal-clauses — is indispensable to the more delicate appreciation of Hebrew syntax (and that of the Semitic languages generally), since it is by no means merely external or formal, but involves fundamental differences of meaning. Noun-clauses with a substantive as predicate, represent something fixed, a state or in short, a being so and so; verbal-clauses on the other hand, something moveable and in progress, an event or action. The latter description is indeed true in a certain sense also of noun-clauses with a participial predicate, except that in their case the event or action (as distinguished from that expressed by the verbal-clause) is of a fixed and abiding character.²

If Kautzsch is correct — and traditional grammarians most certainly agree that he is correct here — that a proper understanding of verbal and nominal clauses is essential “to the more delicate appreciation of Hebrew syntax,” since it “involves fundamental differences of meaning,” then this difference in definition between traditional and modern grammarians is essential to avoid confusion and error in understanding Hebrew. Of course, Kautzsch’s statement raises a host of questions. If something this fundamental in the analysis of the language ought to be changed, why was there not extensive debate over this change? Why did he and others wish to change this definition in the first place?

For such a fundamental change, one would expect extensive debate and discussion on these questions. But amazingly, there is little information to go on here.

Apparently, Kautzsch and modern grammarians changed the traditional definition of nominal and verbal clauses based on the verbal nature of subject-before-finite-verb clauses. This is quite understandable because subject-before-finite-verb clauses contain a verb. He, therefore, understood subject-before-finite-verb clauses as a verbal clause that was "movable and in progress an event or action," instead of nominal clause (or verbless clause as he redefines a nominal clause) that represents "something fixed, a state or in short, a being so and so." Indeed, subject-before-finite-verb clauses clearly have a verb that is "movable" and "in progress." Surely, traditional grammarians saw this as well. Moreover, he understood subject-before-finite-verb clauses as continuing narrative like a verbal clause, "Nevertheless, the subject does sometimes precede even in the verbal-clause proper, in the continuation of the narrative . . . especially so if there is emphasis upon it." Again, a traditional grammarian would surely not dispute Kautzsch's evidence. He would certainly agree with Kautzsch's analysis of these verses. The changing of the definition of verbal and nominal clauses, therefore, seems like an open and shut case, but certain problems persist.

For one, Kautzsch himself did not seem completely satisfied with redefining verbal and nominal clauses. He recognized that most subject-before-finite-verb clauses are clearly more nominal than verbal:

In the great majority of instances, however, the position of the subject at the beginning of a verbal-clause is to be explained from the fact that the clause is not intended to introduce a new fact carrying on the narrative, but rather to describe a state. Verbal-clauses of this kind approximate closely in character to noun-clauses, and not infrequently (viz. when the verbal form might just as well be read as a participle) it is doubtful whether the writer did not in fact intend a noun-clause.  

\[^3\]Kautzsch demonstrates this truth by appealing to several verses: Gen 7:19; 1 Sam 18:1; 2 Sam 19:12. For examples with emphasis, Kautzsch cites Gen 2:5 and 3:13.

This admission is serious. If the Hebrew authors intended “the great majority of instances (of subject-before-finite-verb clauses)” to be understood as nominal clauses, as Kautzsch states, again one wonders why a fundamental change in definition is necessary for a minority of instances. Kautzsch further concedes:

Though this definition of the different kinds of sentence (that is, verbal and nominal clauses), which we formerly accepted (in §144a of the 22nd to the 24th German editions of this Grammar), is rejected above, a-d, we must, nevertheless, mention here the point in which this more complicated view of the Arab grammarians may be regarded as at least relatively correct, namely, in classifying verbal-clauses according as the subject precedes or follows the verb, a distinction which is often of great importance in Hebrew also.\(^5\)

This is another serious admission. If the Arab grammarians are “relatively correct, namely, in classifying verbal-clauses according as the subject precedes or follows the verb” and that this distinction is “often of great importance in Hebrew also,” again one must seriously question the wisdom of attempting the change of this importance.

Another problem, perhaps, is why do traditional grammarians not see the error of their way if Kautzsch’s redefinition is correct. Traditional grammarians, as mentioned earlier, do acknowledge some of Kautzsch’s points. Subject-before-finite-verb clauses do have a verbal dynamic. Indeed, in subject-before-finite-verb clauses, the entire sentence is a nominal clause, but the predicate is a genuine verbal clause according to traditional grammarians. In other words, the subject-before-finite-verb clauses have “two faces” because they partake of both verbal and nominal aspects. As such, subject-before-finite-verb clauses are grammatically flexible. They can continue narrative, but usually with emphasis, as Kautzsch recognized, and without the notion of succession of the Vav-consecutive. Kautzsch, to be sure, understood this “two faces” or dual aspect of subject-before-finite-verb clauses, one face by classifying them as verbal clauses and the other face by conceding that “a great majority” of subject-before-finite-verb clauses are

\(^5\)Ibid., §140f.
actually nominal clauses. Moreover, one should remember that this issue of subject-before-finite-verb clauses is real to Arabic speakers. This is not an idle speculation, an academic theory. They have spoken, written, and thought with subject-before-finite-verb clauses for millennia. They feel subject-before-finite-verb clauses. It is a part of their ethnic and national identity as French is to the French and German is to the Germans. That they would misunderstand something this fundamental for century after century is beyond reason and probability. Furthermore, Kautzsch admits that the Arabic grammarians are “relatively correct” in their view of subject-before-finite-verb clauses and that this is “a distinction which is often of great importance in Hebrew also.” The truth is that traditional grammarians will never change to Kautzsch’s view until they lose their ethnic and national soul.

Kautzsch’s redefinition leads to other problems as well. First, it leads to confusion. By labeling subject-before-finite-verb clauses as verbal clauses, Kautzsch brings confusion to a “great majority” of subject-before-finite-verb clauses. While some scholars will adjust to this confusion, students will grope to understand the significance of subject-before-finite-verb clauses in relation to verbal and nominal clauses. Second, Kautzsch’s redefinition leads to further complications in defining clauses. By defining subject-before-finite-verb clauses as verbal clauses, he must add a third category of clauses – compound clauses, such as הָדָעֵלָה מַעֲרֵיהָ, “God – his way is perfect” (Gen 34:8). These clauses contain a casus pendens element. But again, traditional grammarians view the casus pendens as the subject of the nominal sentence, a much simpler view than Kautzsch’s three categories of verbal, nominal, and compound, accepted by some modern grammarians. All subject-before-finite-verb clauses are “compound” with its clause predicate according to traditional grammarians. The complications of a third category are unnecessary and even more confusing. Third, Kautzsch’s redefinition has devalued the importance of understanding verbal and nominal
clauses. This understanding Kautzsch himself recognized “is indispensable to the more
delicate appreciation of Hebrew syntax (and that of the Semitic languages generally),
since it is by no means merely external or formal, but involves fundamental differences
of meaning.” Finally, Kautzsch’s redefinition has led to misunderstanding of the
nominal nature of subject-before-finite-verb clauses. Although Kautzsch acknowledge
the nominal nature of subject-before-finite-verb clauses, other grammarians rarely
mention this important fact. One of the “two faces” of subject-before-finite-verb clauses,
the nominal aspect, is virtually lost in modern grammatical works on Hebrew.

Another problem of the modern understanding of verbal and nominal clauses is
seen in the popular notion that clauses following verb-subject word order relate the
foreground actions of narrative and that clauses following subject-verb word order relate
background action of narrative. This viewpoint, of course, shows the nominal nature of
subject-before-finite-verb clauses. Yet, this viewpoint, however, is not completely
accurate. In fact, clauses that follow verb-subject word order may supply background to
the narrative as 1 Samuel 1:3 shows:

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6Ibid., §140e.
7Alviero Niccacci, The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose
(Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1986); Robert E. Longacre, Joseph: A Story of
Divine Providence: A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39-48
(Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 64-82.
Now there was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. And he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. **Now this man would go up** from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were priests to the Lord there. (vv. 1-3)

Here, the verb-subject word order clause that begins verse three clearly gives background to the narrative. And, of course, clauses that follow subject-verb word order can supply foreground to the narrative, as Genesis 4:1 shows:

Now the man — he had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord.”

Here, the foreground of the narrative begins with a subject-before-finite-verb clause.

This popular analysis, therefore, is only partially accurate. The issue of foreground and background is based on context rather than word order. To traditional grammarians, in verbal clauses, the verb is in the “foreground,” and subject is in the “background.” In nominal clauses, by contrast, the subject is in the “foreground,” and the verb or predicate is in the “background.” Concerning verbal clauses, Ewald states:

That the predicate, according to the simplest mode of arrangement, precedes the subject, because, in most cases, it contains the new and more important element which the speaker wishes to bring forward. . . . But there is all the greater reason for the verb, as the predicate, being placed first, because, like all the persons of the verb, the third really already includes a subject within itself.8

Further, concerning nominal clauses, he states:

By putting the subject first, and the predicate afterwards, the action, its development, and its progress do not come into the foreground, as in ordinary narrative discourse; but the person is placed first, by himself, in order to be immediately thereafter more fully described and depicted as he is; and the whole proposition, in a manner quite the opposite of the usual narrative style, presents us with a harmonious and placid picture of something continuous, permanent — just as the speaker conceives it. This inverse arrangement of words for the purpose mentioned, is, accordingly, of the

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highest importance and significance throughout the whole language: it is substantially carried out in the Arabic also, and is thus one of the most important peculiarities of the Semitic.

An improper understanding of verbal and nominal clauses, therefore, often leads to other inaccurate notions about Hebrew narrative, as the popular foreground and background idea demonstrates.

Although most modern scholars have accepted the new definition of verbal and nominal clauses, the traditional definition should be revived. The traditional definition is more simple, clear, and accurate. If one distinguishes between narrative and non-narrative when reading Hebrew prose, the interpretation of subject-before-finite-verb clauses becomes even more simple and clear. Few modern grammars highlight the importance of verbal and nominal clauses. By restoring the proper definition to verbal and nominal clauses, the importance of the distinction and of the meaning of verbal and nominal clauses will be rediscovered.

The Issue of Normal (or Basic) Word Order (II)

Related to the redefining of verbal and nominal clauses is the issue of word order. To traditional grammarians a verbal clause, with its verb-subject word order, is normal\(^9\) and primary for all Biblical Hebrew. Of course, for nominal clauses the normal word order is subject-verb, but this word order is secondary. A narrative could be related completely with verbal clauses, but a narrative cannot be related completely with nominal clauses. Of course, the modern definition of verbal and nominal clauses impacts the issue of word order, since subject-before-finite-verb clauses are now, as redefined, regarded as verbal clauses. This would increase the number of verbal clauses in the Old Testament.

\(^9\)Ibid., 306c.

\(^{10}\)“Normal” means the usual order of words when a statement is made without emphasis or other considerations. Normal word order is the order of calm, dispassionate speech.
substantially, with nominal clauses now consisting of only verbless clauses. But this redefinition generates another issue: what is the normal word order for the verbal clause as redefined, verb-subject or subject-verb? Certainly, traditional grammarians insist on verb-subject since subject-verb is a nominal clause in their understanding. If, however, the proper word order for verbal clauses or for Hebrew in general is subject-verb, then the traditional understanding of verbal and nominal clauses in particular and of Hebrew narrative in general would be fatally flawed.

The recent work of Robert D. Holmstedt, now of the University of Toronto, in his 2002 dissertation at the University of Wisconsin, “The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew: A Linguistic Analysis,” challenges the normal, or in his term “basic,” word order of verb-subject. Holmstedt asserts that the “basic word order” in Biblical Hebrew is subject-verb in “pragmatically neutral, main, indicative” clauses. Apparently, by “basic word order” Holmstedt refers to what is termed “normal word order above.” By “pragmatically neutral,” which he does not define, he perhaps means non-emphatic, dispassionate, or calm state of mind. His claim is based on his linguistic analysis of the book of Genesis. His linguistic method, like others linguistic approaches, ignores or rejects the importance of the verbal and nominal clause as defined by traditional grammarians. If Holmstedt’s view is correct that the basic word order in pragmatically neutral, main, indicative clauses is subject-verb, then the traditional view, founded on the distinction between verbal and nominal clauses and the primary of verb-subject word order, must be rejected.

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11 Reading modern linguistic works on Hebrew with their opaque and convoluted style is challenging. Rarely, does one find clear and understandable definitions to their terms. The same, to be sure, could be said of their sentences. Holmstedt’s work fits this genre well; therefore, the word “apparently” will be necessarily overused.
Holmstedt asserts that Biblical Hebrew is a subject-verb language based on the comparison of 151 subject-verb “pragmatically neutral” clauses with a few verb-subject “pragmatically neutral” clauses in the book of Genesis. To establish his claim that subject-verb is the basic word order for pragmatically neutral, main, indicative clauses, Holmstedt collects all examples of pragmatically neutral, main, indicative clauses in the book of Genesis. This is largely a process of elimination. Holmstedt eliminates four categories of clauses:

1) Clauses with modal nuance, including modal yiqtol and modal qatal clauses\(^{12}\)
2) Clauses with a negative function word, because of its frequent connection to modality\(^{13}\)
3) Clauses preceded by a function word, or a fronted prepositional phrase, which exhibit a “triggered inversion,” including wayyiqtol clauses\(^{14}\)
4) Clauses with a nuance of “pragmatically non-neutral”\(^{15}\)

Response to Holmstedt’s Views

There are many problems with Holmstedt’s conclusions. Only the most important issues will be addressed.

First, Holmstedt’s entire methodology and conclusions must be seriously questioned since they are based on only 151 clauses out of thousands of clauses (or finite verbs) in the book of Genesis.\(^{16}\) Holmstedt’s conclusion is based on a very small number of clauses.


\(^{13}\)Ibid., 141.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., 133, 148, and 151-55.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., 139.

\(^{16}\)Holmstedt himself claims that there are 5500 clauses (finite verbs) in the book of Genesis. Out of these 151 clauses, 51 are direct speech and 100 are statements of the narrator. Most statements of direct discourse are subject first for emphasis, as is common in direct speech; most statements of the narrator are subject first for description.
percentage of clauses. Obviously, the book of Genesis is almost totally narrative.\textsuperscript{17} Narrative, in almost any language including Hebrew and English, abounds in “basic word order” and in “pragmatically neutral, main, indicative clauses.” To determine basic word order in any language based such a small percentage of clauses out of thousands stretches the imagination. To claim that the basic word order in Hebrew is subject-verb based upon such a small percentage of clauses is utterly fantastic.

To arrive at 151 clauses and his conclusion, Holmstedt must banish the Vav-Consecutive from his data.\textsuperscript{18} This Holmstedt accomplishes by “triggered inversion,” the idea that certain grammatical elements, such as fronted phrasal constituents, subordinating conjunctions, interrogatives, or modals, trigger an inversion of the basic word order so that the verb precedes the subject. In the case of the Vav-Consecutive with the imperfect form, the doubling of the tense indicator (Dagesh Forte in the \textit{'} of לכנפל) triggers the inversion to verb-subject instead of the subject-verb, the basic word order.\textsuperscript{19}

“Triggered inversion” is the essential component in Holmstedt’s methodology— with it, his theory lives or dies. Apparently, Holmstedt noticed that a perfect or imperfect verb followed by the subject rarely begins a narrative statement. Usually, of the subject. Holmstedt does not give the exact numbers for verbs with overt subjects since he excludes Vav-Consecutive forms.

\textsuperscript{17}By the term narrative here is meant historical account including direct speech.

\textsuperscript{18}Holmstedt states, “[Setting aside the Vav-consecutive] does appear to be wise. If non-verb-subject word order is impossible with the \textit{wayyiqtol}, then it is methodologically precarious to use it when determining basic word order.” Holmstedt’s statement shows a complete lack of understanding for the Semitic viewpoint. All Arab grammarians would say that non-verb-subject word order is impossible for every verbal clause, not just \textit{wayyiqtol}. Holmstedt also states that there are 2,113 \textit{wayyiqtol} clauses in Genesis. Holmstedt, “The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew: A Linguistic Analysis,” 133 n.7.

\textsuperscript{19}Holmstedt excludes the Vav-consecutive with the perfect form probably because he considers them modal.
when the verb comes before the subject, some grammatical element precedes the verb-subject. When subjects come before the verb, however, there is often no preceding grammatical element. Hence, preceding grammatical elements trigger the inversion of the word order.

Several problems exist for Holmstedt’s triggered inversion. First, although Holmstedt’s idea has a logic, he cannot prove, in any way, that his theory of triggered inversion is correct for Hebrew or Semitic, nor can he account for exceptions to his view. There are examples, he admits, where the verb comes before the subject, but he does not explain why the supposed basic word order of subject-verb was abandoned. Second, that basic word order would be inverted at least ninety percent of the time is impossible. The inverted word order would become the basic word order on such a ratio. Hebrew narrative is not in denial concerning its own word order. Third, and most importantly, Holmstedt’s view fundamentally misunderstands Hebrew narrative. Hebrew narrative is the Vav-consecutive. It controls, dominates, and carries Hebrew narrative. A cursory reading of Hebrew narrative demonstrates this. In fact, books may begin with a Vav-consecutive because Vav-consecutive is Hebrew narrative. When for some reason – such as the need for a negative, an initial prepositional phrase, a clause of emphasis or description, and so forth – the Vav-consecutive must be abandoned, then if description or emphasis is needed, a subject-before-finite-verb clause will occur. Otherwise, a (verbal) clause will occur with the verb occurring before the subject, as is usual. Of course, Hebrew does not normally have a simple perfect or imperfect begin a statement of narrative because this is usually the role of the Vav-consecutive, but again, Hebrew can and does begin a narrative statement with a simple perfect or imperfect to avoid the successive notion of the Vav-consecutive, among other things. Surely, instead of arbitrarily eliminating the Vav-consecutive based on an imaginary trigger that is
constantly inverting basic word order time after time, the more sensible and accurate approach is to view the Vav-consecutive as representing a normal and basic word order.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{Arguments for Verb-Subject as the Normal (or Basic) Word Order in Biblical Hebrew}

Since verb-subject word order is essential to the traditional understanding of Biblical Hebrew, arguments will be given to support verb-subject as the normal, primary word order in Biblical Hebrew. Moreover, these arguments will further refute Holmstedt’s assertion that the basic word order is subject-verb. Of course, verb-subject word order is normal only for verbal clauses, not for nominal clauses, which include subject-before-finite-verb clauses.\textsuperscript{21}

First, the morphology of the verb indicates verb-subject word order. As referred already in chapter four,\textsuperscript{22} the morphology of the perfect shows a verb-subject word order. The verb comes first followed by the subject pronoun. The perfect 2ms suffixes the pronoun subject to the verb. Imperfects, on the other hand, according to Arab grammarians, place a tense indicator/pronoun substitute\textsuperscript{23} at the

\textsuperscript{20}Another problem for Holmstedt includes determining what is “pragmatically neutral.” Who or what decides this. From his linguistic perspective, pragmatic neutrality can only be a guess or hunch. Only an indigenous Semitic grammarian can truly help us here.

\textsuperscript{21}The modern redefinition of the verbal clause fails to understand the significance of this normal word order and the clarity that it brings. Verb-subject word order is verbal clause; subject-verb is nominal clause. This is simple, clear, and accurate. To see subject-verb as a verbal clause misses the importance of the initial noun. Moreover, to see a subject-before-finite-verb clause as a verbal clause and then to see a great majority of these clauses as nominal in meaning blur's clarity and obscures understanding.

\textsuperscript{22}See pp. 72-73.

beginning, followed by the verb, and then sometimes followed by a subject pronoun. The imperfect 2, 3fp הָלַל prefix the tense indicator (י) and suffixes the subject pronoun (וֹ) to the verb (כָּלָל).

Second, the Masoretic accents confirm that verb-subject is normal word order. In verbal clauses, the Masoretes most often^{24} conjoin the verb to the subject with conjunctive accents, allowing no pause between the verb and subject. Arabic works similarly often conjoin the verb and subject in verbal clauses. In subject-before-finite-verb clauses, however, the Masoretes most often disjoin the subject from the verb, creating a pause between the subject and verb. Again, Arabic does the same. In a typical verbal clause, both Hebrew and Arabic do not allow pauses between the verb and subject. In the typical subject-before-finite-verb clauses, however, both Hebrew and Arabic place a pause between the subject and verb. This pause or lack of pause often indicates the difference between verbal and subject-before-finite-verb clauses. Since Arabic is clearly a verb-subject language, and it conjoins the verb and subject for verbal clauses and disjoins the subject and verb for subject-before-finite-verb clauses, just like Hebrew, Hebrew is also a verb-subject language. Moreover, other secondary word orders, such as object-verb-subject, show a disjunction between the object and the verb-subject,^{25} just like the secondary word order of subject-verb. The following examples demonstrate:


^{25}Gen 21:6

וַתִּהְמַרְנָה שְׁרוֹן זָעַהְתָּ עִשָּׁה לָהּ אֲלָחוֹתָם

כִּלָּה הַשָּׁמָּתָּ תְּיָחֲקָרָה

And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.”

Furthermore, if the word order is object-subject-verb, both the object and the subject will be disjoined from the verb.

2 Kgs 5:13

וַיַּחְפֹּר לַעֲבֹר אֲלָחוֹת אֵלָיו כָּלָה בַּלְוֹל

וִנָּהֲמַה בְּרֶכֶר אֲלָחוֹת הַלָּהָה מְשָׁחֵת אֲלָחוֹת אֲלָחוֹת בֵּרוֹפָה

And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.”
Gen 46:5

Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob and their little ones and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

The verbal clauses conjoin verb to the subject. Similarly, Arabic works the same way: 

\[
\text{kataba-lmaliku) "the king wrote."} \text{26 Here, the two words must be pronounced as one word without a pause.}
\]

Gen 44:16

So Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God — He has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord’s slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.”

Subject being before the verb, the subject is disjoined from the verb by Rebia, creating a pause after the subject. Similarly in \(\text{(al-maliku kataba)}\) “the king — he wrote,” Arabic like Hebrew puts a pause. These two words must be pronounced as two words with a pause in between.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, the sheer volume of the verb-subject word order indicates that verb-subject is the normal, primary word order. Any

\[\text{26In certain cases, Arabic even adds a vowel to the verb to connect the verb to the following subject. In } \text{katabati-lmalikatu} \text{ "the queen wrote," the verb should be without final vowel (""), but to conjoin the verb to the subject, a connecting vowel ("" [i] under the last letter) is added.}\]
unprejudiced reader of Hebrew, who puts aside a preconceived notion about what changes normal word order, and who simply looks at the language as is without any theoretical or artificial filter, will certainly observe that Hebrew is a verb-subject language.27

Holmstedt’s contention that subject-verb is the basic word order for Hebrew is an important challenge to the traditional view of clauses, including subject-before-finite-verb clauses. His arguments, however, remain theoretical and artificial, without sound basis or evidence. The evidence for verb-subject word order is firm and clear. The traditional view need not be abandoned.

Conclusion

When the traditional view concerning verbal and nominal clauses is compared to the modern redefined view of verbal and nominal clauses and to modern linguistic views that reject the traditional understanding such as Holmstedt’s, the traditional view looks better than ever. The traditional view has a beauty born of clarity and simplicity. Verb-subject word order is a verbal clause; subject-verb is a nominal clause. This is simple, clear, and accurate, both for form and for meaning.

To redefine clauses with a subject-verb word order as verbal clauses or to ignore the importance of the traditional distinction between verbal and nominal clauses obscures a vital grasp of the language understood for centuries. Kautzsch’s redefining subject-before-finite-verb clauses as verbal clauses, and then declaring “the great majority” of them are actually intended by the Hebrew author to be nominal clauses hopelessly perplexes and complicates matters. The challenge of Holmstedt to viewing

27 Holmstedt, no doubt, would respond that “surface statistics of word-order can be deceptive” (quoted from M. Rosenbaum, Word-Order Variation in Isaiah 40-55 [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1997], 222-23) and that only pragmatically neutral sentences should determine basic word order. Holmstedt, “The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew: A Linguistic Analysis,” 127 n.2.
verb-subject as the normal, primary word order for Biblical Hebrew, ignores the essential
distinction between verbal and nominal clauses and thereby he fundamentally
misunderstands subject-before-finite-verb clauses. His contention, if proven, would
refute the traditional understanding. But his contention has failed. The traditional view
remains impressive and attractive.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

This dissertation has applied the understanding of traditional grammarians (chapter two) to subject-before-verb-clauses and has, in the process, tried to demonstrate that the traditional understanding of subject-before-verb-clauses remains the soundest method for reading Hebrew. The results are relatively clear and simple:

Chapter 1: The research of this dissertation, following the understanding of traditional grammarians concerning subject-before-finite-verb clauses, furnishes the following thesis: all subject-before-finite-verb clauses render the subject prominent by both emphasis and description.

Chapter 2: Traditional grammarians consider subject-before-finite-verb clauses as nominal clauses. They analyze the initial subject as the subject of the entire sentence and the following verb (the predicate) as a verbal clause:

Subject of predicate clause      Predicate of predicate clause (Verb)

Predicative of entire sentence (Verbal clause)       Subject of entire sentence

“(As for) Shechem my son, his soul longs for.” (Genesis 34:8)

Predicate (Verb, Subject implied)

Predicative (Verbal clause)       Subject of entire sentence

“(As for) Moses, he spoke.”
Chapter 3: In narrative statements, the subject is usually more described than emphasized (rarely, more emphasized than described), though both description and emphasis are always present. Subject-before-finite-verb clauses may begin, transition/resume, or end a narrative, or they may give general descriptive statements. Emphasis appears stronger than description in contrastive constructions, emphasis and description are more or less equal in contrastive constructions, emphasis appears stronger than description with addition of certain particles and/or independent pronouns, after certain introductory formulas, with multiple subjects with modification, and when they continue a narrative.

Chapter 4: In non-narrative statements, the subject is usually emphasized (very rarely, more described than emphasized), though again both description and emphasis are always present. Description is stronger when the speaker narrates a story.

Chapter 5: Modern attempts to redefine subject-before-finite-verb clauses, as Kautzsch, have confused the distinction between verbal and nominal clauses, which in turn, have perplexed many concerning the proper meaning of verbal and nominal clauses. Moreover, the traditional approach of subject-before-finite-verb clauses assumed a verb-subject for normal word order in Biblical Hebrew. Although Holmstedt has attempted to prove subject-verb as the “basic” word order in Biblical Hebrew, his argument has failed. Hebrew (and Arabic) is a verb-subject language. The traditional approach, therefore, represents the simplest, clearest, most accurate method for analyzing subject-before-finite-verb clauses.

The traditional approach represents the genuine Semitic approach to Hebrew clause structure. Arabs have spoken and written with subject-before-finite-verb clauses for millennia. Since classical Arabic narrative is so very close to Biblical Hebrew narrative, especially in clause structure, the experience and knowledge of the Arab grammarians concerning subject-before-finite-verb clauses furnish the foundation for true understanding. This traditional understanding of the subject-before-finite-verb clauses
also represents the wisdom of the ages, which still resonates in the soul of the modern Arab every time he speaks, writes, or thinks. Such wisdom has provided a satisfying analysis for reading subject-before-finite-verb clauses and for reading Biblical Hebrew narrative throughout the ages. And it still satisfies.

Finally, the interplay between verbal clauses and nominal clauses, including subject-before-finite-verb clauses, may be compared to the interplay between a play-by-play commentator and a color commentator in sports, especially in narrative statements.¹ The verbal clause supplies a play-by-play of narrative actions and events of the subject: (he) barks out signals . . . drops back . . . runs from sideline to sideline . . . avoids a tackle . . . throws the ball . . . celebrates the touchdown. The nominal clause, especially the subject-before-finite-verb clauses with its verb, furnishes color for the actions of the verbal clauses by describing the subject: the quarterback – he was feeling ill today, the quarterback – he could not see out of his left eye, the quarterback – he did not see his other receivers. Verbal clauses alone could relate Hebrew narrative just as a football game could simply be related by play-by-play comments. Of course, this would be, over time, a very flat narrative or a very flat relating of a football game. But verbal clauses, like a play-by-play of football, need color to spice them up, the juicy details that generate interest and understanding. Nominal clauses alone, on the other hand, could not relate a narrative just as a color commentary alone cannot relate a football game. We would know a lot about the subjects or players, but we would not know what they were doing in the narrative or in the game. For a good football game both play-by-play and color commentating must be present and understood; for good Hebrew narrative both verbal and nominal clauses must be present and understood.

¹For other analogies of verbal and nominal clauses, see pp. 24-26.
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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT-BEFORE-FINITE-VERB CLAUSES IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS BASED ON TRADITIONAL GRAMMARIANS

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This dissertation examines the function of subject-before-finite-verb clauses in the book of Genesis based on traditional understanding. Chapter 1 presents an introduction, thesis, and methodology of the project. The research of this dissertation, following the understanding of traditional grammarians concerning subject-before-finite-verb clauses, furnishes the following thesis: all subject-before-finite-verb clauses render the subject prominent by both emphasis and description.

Chapter 2 presents traditional grammarians’ view concerning verbal and nominal clauses, including subject-before-finite-verb clauses in particular. They analyze the initial subject as the subject of the entire sentence and the following verb (the predicate) as a verbal clause.

Chapter 3 explains that in narrative statements, the subject is usually more described than emphasized (rarely, more emphasized than described), though both description and emphasis are always present. Subject-before-finite-verb clauses may begin, transition/resume, or end a narrative, or they may give general descriptive statements. Emphasis appears stronger than description in some contrastive constructions, emphasis and description are more or less equal in other contrastive constructions, emphasis appears stronger than description with addition of certain particles and/or
independent pronouns, after certain introductory formulas, with multiple subjects with modification, and when they continue a narrative.

Chapter 4 offers the examination of subject-before-finite-verb clauses in non-narrative statements. The discussion in this chapter follows the same structure as Chapter Three. In non-narrative statements, the subject is usually emphasized (very rarely, more described than emphasized), though again both description and emphasis are always present. Description is stronger when the speaker narrates.

Chapter 5 discusses modern attempts to redefine subject-before-finite-verb clauses, as Kautzsch, have confused the distinction between verbal and nominal clauses, which in turn, have perplexed many concerning the proper meaning of verbal and nominal clauses. Moreover, the traditional approach of subject-before-finite-verb clauses assumed a verb-subject for normal word order in Biblical Hebrew. Although Holmstedt has attempted to prove subject-verb as the “basic” word order in Biblical Hebrew, his argument has failed. Hebrew (and Arabic) is a verb-subject language. The traditional approach, therefore, represents the simplest, clearest, most accurate method for analyzing subject-before-finite-verb clauses.
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