LEXICOGRAPHY AND COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS: HEBREW METAPHORS FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Resumen

En 2000 las Sociedades Bíblicas Unidas lanzaron un nuevo proyecto: *A Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew* (de aquí en más *SDBH*). Este diccionario es, hasta cierto punto, comparable con el *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* de Louw y Nida, si bien su metodología es un tanto diferente. La obra de Louw y Nida está basada en el modelo semántico al que generalmente nos referimos como análisis componencial del lenguaje. Este nuevo diccionario se basa básicamente en perspectivas de la *lingüística cognitiva*. Como resultado de esto, la metodología subyacente está basada en una distinción entre los campos semánticos *léxicos* y *contextuales*. Este trabajo se concentra mayormente en la forma del *SDBH* de tratar las metáforas. En primer lugar se brindará una descripción de las metáforas y de otras extensiones del significado desde un punto de vista cognitivo. La segunda parte se ocupa de la perspectiva cognitiva en las metáforas del hebreo bíblico. Finalmente, se dan algunos ejemplos de la forma en que el *SDBH* procura tratar las metáforas.

Abstract

In 2000 the United Bible Societies have launched a new project: *A Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew* (henceforth *SDBH*). This dictionary is, to a certain extent, comparable to Louw and Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, even though the methodology is somewhat different. Louw and Nida's dictionary is based on the semantic model that is usually referred to as componential analysis of meaning. This new dictionary is primarily based on insights from *cognitive linguistics*. As a result of this, the methodology underlying *SDBH* is based on a distinction between *lexical* and *contextual* semantic domains. This paper will focus primarily on the way *SDBH* will handle metaphors. First a description will be given of metaphors and other figurative extensions of meaning from a cognitive point of view. The second part of this paper deals with the cognitive perspective on metaphors in biblical Hebrew. Finally, some examples are given of the way *SDBH* intends to handle metaphors.

1. INTRODUCTION

In November 2000, at the SBL Annual Meeting in Nashville, I gave a presentation on a new dictionary project that had just been started by the United Bible Societies. This new dictionary, of which I have the privilege to be the editor, carries the tentative name of *A Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew* (SDBH). We have chosen this name to underline the fact that this new dictionary is built on a solid semantic theoretical framework, which cannot always be said about some of the more traditional dictionaries.

Most readers have probably heard about Louw and Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, which was published by the United Bible

Societies more than twenty years ago.[1] This dictionary can be considered quite innovative in many ways. Our new Old Testament dictionary *(SDBH)* will be similar to Louw and Nida's lexicon in many ways, but, at the same time, it will be quite different.

In both dictionaries semantic domains play a crucial role. This is important because words do not have meaning in a vacuum. The meaning behind a word can only be fully understood when it is studied within its semantic domain. Louw and Nida, however, based their semantic framework on a theoretical model that is often referred to as *componential analysis of meaning*, which describes the meanings of words in terms of binary distinctive features. This theory got a lot of attention in the seventies and eighties of the previous century. Since that time, however, important new insights have appeared on the linguistic horizon. Scholars have become more aware of the cognitive reality behind a language, including the entire communication pattern in which language plays such a crucial role. New approaches such as Relevance Theory and Cognitive Linguistics can be of immense help to us in this process. In our linguistic analyses we should not be merely aiming towards descriptive systems that work, but for systems that are intuitively adequate, that represent as far as possible the ways of thinking of the speaker of the language, and do justice to his/her organization of experience, his/her system of beliefs, experience, and practices. We are not supposed to impose a system on a language. Instead of that we are to try to discover the semantic structure of the language. For that reason the semantic framework underlying *SDBH* will be not be based on componential analysis of meaning but rather on a number of important insights from Cognitive Linguistics.

Another way in which the two dictionaries mentioned above will differ has to do with the presentation of the data. The layout of Louw and Nida's lexicon is quite revolutionary in that it does not list its entries in alphabetical order but organizes them according to semantic domain. This method has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that one can easily see and compare different entries that belong to the same semantic domain. If one just wants to look up a particular word, however, one has to go to the index first. And there you may discover that the entry you are looking for has been "scattered" all over the dictionary.

SDBH, on the other hand, has an approach that appears to be more conservative: All entries are listed alphabetically. Since, however, dictionaries are much more accessible when published electronically, *SDBH* will be made available in an electronic format that will give the user access to the data in different ways. Those who want to look up a word in the traditional way can do so. On the other hand, those who want to study a particular semantic domain in its entirety can do so as well within a few mouse clicks.

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[1] Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2 vols.; Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1989).

2. The Semantic Framework of *SBDH*

I would like to explain the theoretical framework behind *SDBH* with reference to a number of typical *SDBH* entries. One example of such an entry can be seen below. It is part of the entry for חֶבֶל, "rope".

חֶבֶל

(1) noun, m | [1] חבל

   (a)   *Objects:* Cords

       = piece of stout cord; ◄ made by twisting together strands of hemp, sisal, flax, cotton, or similar material; ► used for climbing, keeping things together, measuring, drawing things to oneself, making traps, etc.; ≈ a rope tied around the head is a symbol of submission

           General cord (used to attach one object to another) (Jos 2:15; 2 Sam 17:13; Est 1:6; Jer 38:6, 11, 12, 13)

           Commerce rope (as trading article) (Ezek 27:24)

           Control; Hunting rope (used to pull down the tongue of an animal that has been caught) (Job 40:25)

           Control > Submission rope (normally used to tie someone else, here tied by people around their head, as a symbol of submission) (1 Kgs 20:31, 32)

           Control > Violence rope, trap > effort to attain power over someone else (Job 18:10; Ps 119:61; 140:6)

           Measure measuring rope, measuring line (2 Sam 8:2, 2, 2; Ps 16:6; 78:55; Am 7:17; Mic 2:5; Zech 2:5)

           Navigation cord (used to attach one object to another on a ship) > rigging (Isa 33:23)

           Tent > Secure (tent-) cord (that will not be torn apart) > living in security (Isa 33:20)

2.1. Semantic Classes

In the first place, חֶבֶל belongs to the semantic class of objects. According to Nida there are four universal semantic classes: *objects*, *events*, *abstracts*, and *relationals*.[2] Nida claims that these four semantic classes are found in all languages of which we have any knowledge, even though these *semantic* classes are not always tied to the same *grammatical* classes in every language. All other semantic categories are to be considered language-specific. They do not relate to universal categories but depend solely on the semantic structure of a particular language. I am not sure about that. In previous pub-

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[2]   Eugene A. Nida, *Towards a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 63.

lications I have argued that *objects* and *events*, and possibly *relationals* as well, are valid semantic classes for biblical Hebrew, but that *abstracts* are to be considered *events*. In other words, I doubt whether these four classes are really 100 percent universal at all.[3]

2.2. Semantic Domains

Much more important than the distinction between *objects*, *events*, and *relationals*, however, is the distinction between different *lexical semantic domains*. The subentry of חֶבֶל that was shown above belongs to the lexical semantic domain *Products* and to the subdomain *Cords*. An important difference between *SDBH* and the theoretical framework on which Louw's and Nida's lexicon was based is the distinction between two levels of semantic domains: *lexical* domains and *contextual* domains. This has everything to do with the difference in semantic theory that I mentioned earlier. I believe that using cognitive linguistics as a theoretical basis requires this double classification. Let me explain why. *Lexical* semantic domains correspond to what in cognitive linguistics is described as *cognitive categories*.

2.2.1. Categories in Cognitive Theory

There is nothing new about the term *categories*. Human beings have been thinking in terms of categories all along. And that has never been considered a problem. Most of our categorization happens automatically and unconsciously. We only become aware of this process in difficult cases. Without categories we cannot function as human beings at all. Eleanor Rosch was one of the first scholars to make categorization a subject for scholarly discussion.[4]

Categories are not universal. They depend on the system of experiences, beliefs, and practices of a particular social or ethnic group. The way a human being perceives the entities in the world around him/her plays an important role.

In the following I will present four basic concepts that somewhat summarize what cognitive linguistics teach about categories. Here I am heavily indebted to Ungerer and Schmid, who wrote an excellent introduction to Cognitive Linguistics.[5]

➀ In the first place, every category has a prototype. Human beings make a mental representation, a cognitive reference point for every category. One such category could be the one for "bird", which will probably be a relevant category for

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[3]   See here Reinier de Blois, "Towards a New Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew based on Semantic Domains" (Ph.D. diss.; Amsterdam Free University, 2000). Compare also Reinier de Blois, "Semantic Domains for Biblical Hebrew," in *Bible and Computer. The Stellenbosch AIBI-6 Conference: Proceedings of the Association internationale Bible et informatique* (ed. Johann Cook; Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2002), 209-30.

[4]   See, for example, Eleanor Rosch "Principles of Categorization," in *Cognition and Categorization* (ed. Eleanor Rosch and Barabara B. Lloyd; Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1978), 27-48.

[5]   See here Friedrich Ungerer and Hans-Jörg Schmid, *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (London-New York: Longman, 1996).

most people. The mere mention of this category enables the hearer to conjure up an image in his/her mind, depicting all relevant characteristics of birds. Most hearers may picture a creature with feathers, wings, etc. This mental image will probably differ from one language to another.

❷ Every category has good (typical) and bad (a-typical) members, including marginal examples whose category membership is doubtful. Many readers may agree with me that a "robin" is a typical example of the category "bird". Examples of a-typical members of this category may be "ostrich", "penguin", and "bat".

❸ Categories have *attributes* that provide information about categories. At first glance an *attribute* may seem similar to a *component of meaning*. There is an important difference, however. A component of meaning is a *distinctive* feature, whereas an *attribute* is not distinctive in nature. It is a cognitive feature, representing what a speaker of a language considers to be relevant information. The category "bird" may have the following attributes: (1) it has two wings, (2) it has two legs, (3) it can fly, (4) it has a beak, (5) feathers, and (6) it lays eggs. Typical members of a category have more attributes in common than less typical members.

❹ Finally, categories are not homogeneous. They have fuzzy boundaries. As a result of this a certain object may be a typical member of category A, but a less typical member of category B at the same time.

2.2.2. Categories in Biblical Hebrew: Methodology

I have tried to apply this approach to biblical Hebrew. Of course, there remains a problem: How can one determine what are valid cognitive categories in an ancient language? There are no informants that can be interviewed and there is only a limited corpus of data to rely on. As a result, there is a limit to what we can discover.

Because of these limitations, what kind of tools do we have available to help us determine what can be considered valid cognitive categories in biblical Hebrew?

As far as the semantic class of *objects* is concerned, a very important tool is the study of *generic terms*. This can help us discover the different categories and subcategories that appear to have been relevant for the speakers of biblical Hebrew. Genesis 1, for instance, gives us a lot of information about (sub)categories, e.g., about the earth (heaven, earth, region below the earth) and about plants (vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed). Important information concerning the traditional taxonomy of animals can be found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

A second powerful tool, which is especially helpful for the classification of *events* is the study of Hebrew poetry. The study of *parallelism* (both synonymic and antonymic), for example, yields a tremendous harvest of terms that belong to the same category.

The same can be said about *word pairs*. Terms such as חֶסֶד and אֱמֶת probably belong to the same category simply because of the fact that they are often used together.

Another helpful source of information is the study of metaphors. Understanding the way speakers of a language use words figuratively helps us to understand how their minds perceive the world around them and helps us to categorize that world.

In addition to this, a study of the wider context in which objects and events are used may provide other important information that helps us discover the range of cognitive categories that appear to have been of relevance to the speakers of biblical Hebrew.

2.2.3. Categories in Biblical Hebrew: Objects

My research of Hebrew objects led me to the conclusion that the following eight cognitive categories or lexical semantic domains seem to cover objects adequately:[6]

❶ *Animals:* All living creatures, with the exception of human beings

❷ *Deities:* All supernatural beings

❸ *Parts:* All objects that cannot exist in isolation but are an integral part of another object and therefore usually occur as part of an associative construction, or require a possessive pronoun

❹ *People:* All human beings

❺ *Plants:* All plants and trees

❻ *Products:* All inanimate objects, usually of a relatively small size, produced by People, Deities, Animals, or Plants.

❼ *Scenery:* All inanimate objects, with the exception of Plants, that usually cannot be moved, and are part of the scenery in which events in the Old Testament take place

❽ *Substances*—all inanimate objects, shaped in such a way that they usually cannot be counted but are to be measured instead, and from which other objects can be produced

These categories are still very generic and need to be divided into subcategories, which is a process of ongoing research.

2.2.4. Categories in Biblical Hebrew: Events

As far as events are concerned, I have come to the conclusion that there are four main categories of events or lexical semantic domains in biblical Hebrew:[7]

❶ *Description:* All events that describe the features of objects.

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[6]   de Blois, "Towards a New Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew," 28-39.

[7]   Ibid., 40-67.

❷ *Position:* All events that describe the relationship between objects and the environment in which they are located.

❸ *Connection*—all events that describe the relationship between objects that are attached to one or more other objects.

❹ *Perception*—all events that describe the relationship between objects and the mind of animate beings.

These four categories can be divided further into several subcategories, as will be discussed in the following.

2.2.5. Definitions

As already seen, one of the characteristics of categories in cognitive linguistics is the fact that each category has *attributes*. These are cognitive features that help characterize the different members of each category. In principle each category has a different set of attributes depending on the category. I have tried to do something similar for biblical Hebrew, though I have tried to keep them as generic as possible. As mentioned earlier we are dealing with an ancient language with a limited data corpus, and care must be taken not to impose anything on the language.

In the theoretical framework underlying *SDBH* two sets of attributes are being used, one for *objects* and one for *events*. These attributes are very important as they help to write valid definitions for each entry. That is quite necessary, as can be seen in some contemporary dictionaries. The following represents an example taken from the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.[8]

dog: a domesticated carnivorous mammal, *Canis familiaris*, usu. having a long snout and non-retractile claws, and occurring in many different breeds kept as pets or for work or sport

cat: a small soft-furred four-legged domesticated animal, *Felis catus*

If somebody who does not know English wants to find out the difference between a dog and a cat this dictionary will not be very helpful to him/her. Why? There is no doubt that dogs and cats belong to the same cognitive category. This category ought to have one single set of attributes, which should be reflected in the definition of the entry. The definitions quoted here, however, hardly show any structure at all:

- There is information about the snout and the claws of the dog; what about the cat?
- There is information about the skin of the cat; what about the dog?
- Dogs are said to be kept as pets or for work or sport; what about the cat?
- Cats have four legs; what about the dog?

Let me give you an example of how we are trying to deal with animals in *SDBH*. This particular category (or lexical semantic domain) has four attributes:

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8   J. B. Sykes, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

❶ *Description:* All relevant information concerning the outward appearance of the animal in question, including its behavior.

❷ *Source:* The subcategory to which this animal belongs. On the basis of texts like Genesis 1 and Leviticus 11 the following subcategories have been adopted:

- wild land animals
- domesticated land animals
- aquatic animals
- birds
- swarming[9] creatures with wings (e.g., *locusts*)
- swarming land creatures (e.g., *lizards*, *rats*, and *mice*)

❸ *Function:* The last two attributes cover the more anthropocentric qualities of animals, i.e., those that deal with the relation between animals and human beings. This particular slot deals with specific questions governing the role of animals (or parts of animals) within the life of every day, like: Is it a clean or an unclean animal? Is this type of animal used in sacrifice? If it is a domestic animal, what is it used for?

❹ *Connotation:* This slot deals with the more stereotypical qualities of a particular animal, as seen from the perspective of the Hebrew linguistic community. A fox, for instance, was regarded as a destructive animal. Wild pigs, on the other hand, were associated with paganism (e.g., Isa 65:4; 66:3, 17).

In *SDBH* definitions are structured accordingly, using a symbol or mnemonic to indicate each attribute. Two examples of definitions of animals from *SDBH* are given below:

חָנָב = type of migratory locust; consumes all vegetation; << swarming creature with wings; >> clean; ~ regarded as a small but destructive insect; its way of walking resembles that of an old man.[10]

חֲזִיר = ungulate bristly mammal of family Suidae; non-ruminant and omnivorous; << wild land animal; >> unclean; ~ regarded as an ugly, filthy, and destructive animal and often associated with pagan rituals.

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9   On the basis of Leviticus 11 we may conclude that the basic distinction between שֶׁרֶץ, "swarming creatures," and other animals is a valid one in biblical Hebrew. This term appears to cover those animals that occur in such a quantity that they are difficult to keep count of, and also those that are described in Genesis 1:24f as רֶמֶשׂ, "creeping things".

10   The symbols used in the examples below and in the different dictionary (sub)entries quoted in the article are the following: An equal sign (=) introduces information covered by the attribute *description* (see the top of this page). A left pointer (◄) introduces *source* information whereas a right pointer (►) denotes *function* information. A double tilde (≈) refers to the attribute connotation. The mnemonic ST stands for *Statant* and represents a semantic argument with a zero semantic function. The mnemonics AG, CA, and GO denote the respective semantic functions of *Agent*, *Causer* and *Goal*.

More details could be given, but we would like to restrict ourselves as much as possible to the data that can be considered relevant to the biblical text and that can be supported with biblical data.

Finally, the software we are using to display *SDBH* makes it easy to compare entries belonging to the same cognitive category or lexical semantic domain in *SDBH*. It only requires a search on the basis of lexical semantic domains. A list will appear showing all entries that match the search criteria.

2.3. Contextual Semantic Domains

The framework underlying *SDBH* is based on cognitive linguistics and therefore a distinction between two levels of semantic domains is being made. Up to this point lexical semantic domains which correspond to cognitive categories have been discussed. Categories, however, are always used in context. From a strictly linguistic point of view, *context* should be defined as that which precedes or follows an utterance. From a discourse point of view it is the situation in which an utterance is embedded.[11] From a cognitive perspective, however, context should be seen as a *mental* phenomenon.

Let us go back to the word חֶבֶל, "rope". If a native speaker of biblical Hebrew could be asked what a חֶבֶל is, he/she would probably be able to describe what, according to his/her worldview, the prototype of a "rope" would look like. That would probably not go much further than a description of what a simple rope looks like, what it is made of, and maybe a few examples of what it is used for.

In order to get the complete picture, however, we need to have more information. That information is supplied by the cognitive context, a mental image of a situation where we find a חֶבֶל interacting with other objects. In the biblical text we find many different cognitive contexts or frames that paint us different pictures of the object represented by the Hebrew word חֶבֶל:

- It can be an item for sale on the market
- It can be used by a person climbing down a wall
- It can be used to hang curtains in a palace hall
- It can be used to tear down a wall during a siege

Cognitive frames like this are represented in *SDBH* by what we have labeled as *contextual semantic domains*. And since cognitive frames are usually quite complex often more than one semantic domain is needed to describe it adequately. If we study the example of חֶבֶל, which we saw earlier, we can see the different cognitive frames in which this word is found, such as *Decoration*, *Hunting*, etc.

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[11] Ungerer and Schmid, *Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*, 45.

3. Metaphors and Mappings

3.1. Metaphors in Cognitive Linguistic Theory

Traditionally, metaphors and metonyms are called figures of speech. As such they are usually seen as highly marked expressions, used in highly specific contexts like rhetorical style and poetry. Of late, however, scholars have started to realize that these are phenomena that are not restricted to a certain limited number of contexts but rather pervade the entire language. Metaphorical expressions are found in languages over the world and often they do not happen as mere accidents, but reflect patterns of thinking. They reflect structural relationships that people perceive between the entities in the world around them.

In cognitive linguistics, patterns like this are called *thought mappings*. The word *mapping* is a mathematical term and can be defined as a correspondence between two sets that assigns to each element in the first a counterpart in the second.[12] In the context of cognitive linguistics we talk about mappings between different cognitive categories or cognitive contexts. A famous example is the mapping between TIME and SPACE. In English and many other languages, time is often expressed in terms of spatial relations. The following examples, borrowed from Fauconnier,[13] make this abundantly clear:

> ❶ to be *close to* Christmas
> ❷ to *reach* the end of the week
> ❸ to *go past* the deadline
> ❹ to work *from* nine *to* five, etc.

These are not accidents. Expressions like this reflect patterns of thinking.

Another interesting mapping is the one between TIME and MONEY. In modern Western culture the expression "time is money" is more than just a saying. It has affected the cognitive patterns. See, for instance, expressions like:

> ❶ You are *wasting* my time.
> ❷ Can you *give* me a few minutes?
> ❸ How do you *spend* your time?
> ❹ We are *running out of* time.
> ❺ Is that *worth* your while?

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[12] See Gilles Fauconnier, *Mappings in Thought and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

[13] Ibid., 26-27.

These examples, in which time is perceived as a precious commodity, were borrowed from Lakoff and Johnson.[14]

3.2. Metaphors in Biblical Hebrew

The Bible is full of patterns like this. In the Old Testament "anger" is often expressed in terminology that is borrowed from the cognitive context FIRE, e.g., "the anger of the LORD was kindled" (Exod 4:14). In other contexts we see mappings between the cognitive contexts of ANGER and FLUIDS, e.g. "the LORD poured out his anger on his people" (Ps 69:25; Jer 6:11).

It also appears that the speakers of biblical Hebrew perceived a semantic relation between the physical weight of an object and the experience of an event as difficult or troublesome. A stone may be heavy, but a famine or a plague may be considered "heavy" as well (Gen 12:10; 43:1). There seems to be a semantic link between heaviness and stubbornness as well. In the Bible we read repeatedly about heavy hearts (Exod 9:7) and heavy ears (Isa 59:1).

Some of these thought mappings have become an integral part of the semantic framework of the language whereas others are somewhat more "accidental". *SDBH* deals with both types albeit in a different way.

3.2.1. Structural Metaphors in Biblical Hebrew

We will deal with the more structural metaphors first. Let us look at Hebrew events for an example. I mentioned four categories for Hebrew events: *Description*, *Position*, *Connection*, and *Perception*. Within each of these four categories we can discern several metaphorical extensions of meaning that have become lexicalized. The following table demonstrates this and how regular these extensions of meaning are.

The first column shows the four main categories for Hebrew events. In the next columns we find examples of what can be considered the basic sense of events belonging to each of these four categories. Only one example per category has been given, but it is easy to find several more.

The third column goes one step further. The argument structure of the events listed here does not change, but the meaning does. Instead of events with a concrete, "physical" sense we find events with a "non-physical", more emotional sense. The last column shows events that no longer have an object as the main semantic argument, but rather another event. This can be considered a further metaphorical extension of meaning.

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[14] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 7-8.

Main category	Events with object as main argument	Events with object as main argument, with non-physical sense	Events with other event as main argument
Description	Attribute כבד, "to be heavy" (Prov 8:24)	Attitude כבד, "to be burdensome" (2 Sam 13:25)	Modification כבד, "to be intense" (Gen 12:10)
Position	Location עמד, "to stand" (Gen 41:1)	Existence עמד, "to stand firm" (Ps 130:3)	Occurrence עמד, "to endure" (Ezek 22:14)
Connection	Attachment דבק, "to stay close to" (Ruth 2:8)	Relation דבק, "to be faithful to" (2 Ki 18:6)	Involvement דבק, "to take part in" (Ps 101:3)
Perception	Sensation ראה, "to see" (Exod 12:13)	Cognition ראה, "to take heed" (1 Chron 28:10)	Sensation ראה, "to see" (Gen 21:16)

As a result of this the four main categories for events can be subdivided on the basis of patterns of lexicalized metaphorical extensions of meaning into 11 or 12 subcategories as shown in this table.

The following examples from *SDBH* show how this subdivision is used in a dictionary entry:

חזק

(1) verb | חָזַק adj | חֵזֵק noun, m | חֹזֶק noun, m | חָזְקָה noun, f | חֶזְקָה noun, f | יְחֶזְקֵאל,
חִזְקִי, חִזְקִיָּה ,חִזְקִיָּהוּ ,יְהִזְקִיָּה

   (a)   *Events:* Attribute, State/Process

       verb, qal; verb, hi; adj; noun = to have physical strength; ≈ often used to refer to political power as well

       References:

           Body to be, become physically strong > vital, healthy (Josh 14:11; 2 Sam 13:14; Isa 39:1; Ezek 30:21, 22; 34:16; Am 2:14)

           Body > Control to be strong, powerful (of a king) (2 Chron 12:1; 26:15, 16; Dan 11:2, 5, 5)

           Strength; Control; Warfare Politics to be strong, powerful (of a king at war with other kings) (2 Chron 8:3; 25:8; 26:8; 27:5; Dan 11:7)

           Strength; Groups; Warfare Politics to be strong, powerful (of a nation at war with other nations) (Deut 11:8; Josh 17:13; Jdg 1:28; 2 Sam 10:11, 11; 1 Kgs 16:22; 20:25; 1 Chron 19:12, 12; Ezra 9:12)

   (e)   *Events:* Attitude, State/Process

       verb, qal; adj = to be resolute, persistent, and emotionally strong; >> resulting in unwillingness to change the course of action that has been planned; ~ this attitude can be interpreted both in a positive and in a negative way; ST (parts:) people

           Will; Fear to be strong (sometimes: of hands or loins) > to not give in to fear (when facing a difficult task) (Deut 31:6, 7, 23; Josh 1:6, 7, 9, 18; 10:25; 23:6; Jdg 7:11; 2 Sam 2:7; 10:12; 13:28; 16:21; 1 Kgs 2:2; 1 Chron 19:13, etc.)

   (h)   *Events:* Modification, State/Process

       verb, qal; adj; noun = to happen or take place with intensity; ST events

           Intensity; Apparition; Providence to be strong (on someone; said of the hand of the Lord) (Isa 8:11; Ezek 3:14)

3.2.2. Other Metaphors in Biblical Hebrew

Let us turn now to the more "accidental" cases of metaphors. I will try to show that they are not always as accidental as they might seem. As we have seen earlier, every cognitive category or lexical semantic domain has a number of attributes and these different attributes ought to be reflected in the definition of an entry or subentry.

In addition, each event has an argument structure. Here we are not discussing *syntactic* arguments, such as *subject, object, adjunct,* etc., but rather *semantic* arguments, such as *statant, agent, causer,* etc. *SDBH* lists the arguments that each event requires, including the type of object or event that is found in each argument slot.

Many metaphors in biblical Hebrew can be explained as follows: The focus shifts to one particular attribute of a given object or event. As a result of that the lexical meaning changes and the object or event in focus shifts to another cognitive category and/or another cognitive context. I would like to label this as an *attribute shift*.

Alternatively, there can be a change in the argument structure of a particular event. The argument structure itself does not change, but the type of object or event that is found in one or more of the argument slots changes. For this type of metaphor I would like to use the term *argument shift*.

In certain cases, attribute shifts and argument shifts go hand in hand, as will be illustrated in the following examples.

Let us start with a case of attribute shift: חוֹמָה, "wall".

חוֹמָה

    noun, f

    (a)   *Objects:* Products/Scenery

        = structure surrounding a building, a collection of buildings, or a town; << made out of stone; >> provides protection; ~ associated with strength, safety, and the ability to resist attacks from outside

        Towns / House / Sanctuary wall (of a town, house, or temple) (Lev 25:29, 30, 31; Deut 3:5; 28:52; Josh 2:15, 15; 6:5, 20; 1 Sam 31:10, 12; 2 Sam 11:20, 21, 21, 24; 18:24, etc.)

The subentry of חוֹמָה displayed above represents what we could describe as its basic meaning. Its definition lists information regarding four attributes.

Description (=):	high structure surrounding a building, a collection of buildings, or a town
Source (<<):	made out of stone
Function (>>):	provides protection
Connotation (~):	associated with strength, safety, and the ability to resist attacks from outside

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    (c)   *Objects:* Scenery > Attribute, State/Process

        as (a), but with focus on the description: = enormous quantity of a certain substance rising up high into the air like a wall; ST substances: liquids

        Towns > Quantity; Liquids a wall (of water) (Exod 14:22, 29)

Subentry (c), which is shown above, is undoubtedly related to subentry (a), but a number of things have changed. There has been an attribute shift: "as (a), but with focus on the description." Here the focus is on the description in the definition of

subentry (a). It is the shape of the wall that is in focus here: "an enormous quantity of a certain substance rising up high into the air like a wall." This actually is a shift from an object to an event. A quantity is not an object; it is a state, which, according to the theoretical framework underlying *SDBH*, is a type of event. This event belongs to the category *Attribute*. Note that the term attribute can refer both to a category for events and to an element of a definition. The right wedge (>) is used to indicate a change in category. The changes can be seen at the contextual level as well: Towns > Quantity; Liquids.

(e)   *Objects:* Scenery > Attitude, Causative

as (a), but with focus on the function: = to cause other people to feel safe and well-protected; CA deities, people; ST people

Towns > Strength; Care wall > protector (1 Sam 25:16)

Towns > Strength; Care; Fire; Providence חוֹמַת אֵשׁ wall (of fire) > protector (said of God) (Zech 2:9)

The next subentry is subentry (e), which is displayed above. There is another attribute shift here, which puts the focus on the *function* of a wall: "a person who shares some of the characteristics of a wall, in, by his/her strength, providing safety and protection to others." Again, there are a number of shifts in context.

A number of examples of argument shift will now be discussed. A good entry to illustrate this is the verb שָׁפַךְ, "to pour".

שׁפך

verb | שָׁפְכָה ,שֶׁכֵך

(a) *Events:* Location, Causative

verb, qal; verb, ni to pour out a liquid or dry substance; CA people; ST substances

> **Liquids** to pour out (a liquids or dry substance) (Exod 4:9; Lev 14:41; Jdg 6:20)
>
> **Liquids; Animals; Food** to pour out (the blood of an animal before eating) (Lev 17:13; Deut 12:16, 24; 15:23)
>
> **Liquids; Animals; Sacrifice** to pour out (the blood of an animal as part of a sacrificial ritual) (Exod 29:12; Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34)
>
> **Liquids; Sacrifice** to pour out (water or wine as part of a religious ritual) (1 Sam 7:6; Isa 57:6)
>
> **Liquids; Siege** שׁפך סֹלְלָה to pour (sand for a) siege mound > to cast up a siege-ramp (2 Sam 20:15; 2 Kgs 19:32; Isa 37:33; Jer 6:6; Ezek 4:2; 17:17; 21:27; 26:8; Dan 11:15)

שׁפך is an event belonging to the lexical semantic domain of Location. It is a causative, requiring two semantic arguments, a *causer* (the object that causes the change in location) and a *statant* (the object that undergoes the change in location). The definition is quite simple and has only one relevant attribute: "to pour out a liquid or dry substance." The statant is the main argument in a state or process that usually has a zero semantic function; in this case it has to be an object belonging to the category *Substances*. The causer invariably is a human being. Both *qal* and *niphal* derivations are found with this lexical meaning. In addition, it is used in a number of different cognitive frames, the most prominent of which is *Liquids*. It is seemingly a relatively straightforward case.

(c) *Events*: Location, Causative > Cognition, Causative

verb, qal as (a), but extended to parts of self; literally: to pour out part of one's self before someone else; hence: = to communicate one's emotions to someone else; CA people; ST parts: people

> **Liquids > Heart; Communication; Devotion** / נֶפֶשׁ / לֵבָב / לֵב שׁפך (פְּנֵי נכֵשׁ) / לִפְנֵי) to pour out one's heart/self (before God) > to share one's emotions (with God) (1 Sam 1:15; Ps 62:9; Lam 2:19)
>
> **Liquids > Heart; Reflection** שׁפך נֶפֶשׁ (עַל) to pour out one's self (over oneself) > to reflect on (one's own) emotions (Ps 42:5)

However, this verb is used in the Old Testament in different creative ways. Subentry (c), which is displayed above, is a good example of an argument shift. There is a change in statant: Instead of a liquid, somebody decides to pour out his/her לֵב or נֶפֶשׁ, which apparently is possible too. This argument shifts results in two other shifts:

❶ A shift in lexical semantic domain: Location > Cognition

❷ A shift in contextual semantic domain: Liquids > Hearts; this latter contextual domain covers all contexts involving "the inner person"

(d)   *Events:* Location, Causative > Cognition, Causative

verb, qal as (a), but extended to events; literally: to pour out an attitude; hence: = to communicate one's attitude or emotion to someone else, either through words or through actions; CA deities, people; ST events

Liquids > Anger; Punish, Reward; Providence שָׁפַךְ זַעַם / חֵמָה (עַל/אֶל) חָרוֹן / עֶבְרָה to pour out (one's) anger > to show one's anger (by punishing people; said of God) (Ps 69:25; 79:6; Isa 42:25; Jer 6:11; 10:25; Lam 2:4; 4:11; Ezek 7:8; 9:8; 14:19; 20:8, 13, 21, 33, 34; 21:36…)

Liquids > Grief; Communication; Devotion שָׁפַךְ שִׂיחַ (לִפְנֵי) to pour out (one's) complaint (before God) > to tell (God) one's sorrow (Ps 102:1; 142:3)

Liquids > Status; Providence שָׁפַךְ בּוּז (עַל) to pour out contempt (over) > to show contempt (said of God) (Job 12:21; Ps 107:40)

Subentry (d) is a little different. In this case an event is poured out. The type of event in focus here is an attitude or emotion, such as anger, contempt, or grief. I believe the lexical semantic domain of this subentry is the same as the one found in the previous subentry. It is a case of cognition, a communication of an attitude or emotion even though the actual communication may take place through a number of actions.

(e)   *Events:* Location, Causative > Occurrence, Causative

verb, qal as (a), but extended to events; literally: to pour out an event; hence: = to cause someone else to undergo an event; CA people, deities; ST events

Liquids > Adultery; Adultery > Idolatry to pour out adultery (over someone else) > to lavish one's desire for adultery (on someone else) (Ezek 16:15; 23:8)

Liquids > Punish, Reward שָׁפַךְ רָעָה (עַל) to pour out misfortune (over someone) > to punish (someone) with misfortune (Jer 14:16)

Liquids > Compassion; Providence שָׁפַךְ רוּחַ חֵן וְתַחֲנוּנִים (עַל) to pour out a spirit of compassion (over someone) > to cause (someone) to experience an emotion of compassion (Zech 12:10)

Subentry (e), finally, is closely related to (d) though somewhat different. Again, what takes place is the pouring out of an event, though the lexical semantic domain here is *Occurrence*. Somebody causes someone else to undergo an event. I must admit though that some cases that are listed under (d) may have to be moved down to subentry (e) or vice versa.

חדד

    verb | חַד adj | חַדּוּד adj | חֲרַד, חָדִיד

(a)   *Events:* Attribute, State/Process

    adj = to have a thin cutting edge; >> in order to make it useful and effective as a tool; ~ often associated with violence and danger; ST products

        Crafts sharp (sword) (Ezek 5:1)

        Crafts > Communication; Success, Failure (a mouth like a) sharp (sword) > to be effective (of one's words) (Isa 49:2)

        Crafts > Communication; Violence (a mouth like a) sharp (sword) > to be violent (of one's words) (Ps 57:5)

        Crafts > Marriage; Wrong sharp (sword) > to be a dangerous influence (said of an adulteress) (Prov 5:4)

        House > Body; Animals חַדּוּדֵי חָרֶשׂ sharp (potsherds; part of description of body of animal) (Job 41:22)

The entry displayed above, lastly, is an example of a Hebrew event that shows a number of metaphorical extensions of meaning of both kinds: attribute shifts and argument shifts.

It is the verb חדד, "to be sharp", which belongs to the lexical semantic domain *Attribute*. Let us have a look at the definition that shows some of the attributes of this category of events:

    Description (=):   to have a thin cutting edge
    Function (>>):   in order to make it useful and effective as a tool
    Connotation (~):   often associated with violence and danger

---

(b)   *Events*: Attribute, Causative

    verb, hi; verb, ho (passive) = to cause an object to have a thin cutting edge; + with an iron tool; >> in order to make it useful and effective as a tool; ~ often associated with violence and danger; ST products; CA people

        Crafts to sharpen (Prov 27:17)

        Crafts > Violence to sharpen (a sword which symbolizes violence) (Ezek 21:14, 15, 16)

An event like this only requires one argument:

Statant (ST):   an object belonging to the category *Products*

Subentry (b) of חדד, which is presented above, is closely related. It actually is the causative of subentry (a). This definition shows the following attributes:

Description (=):   to cause an object to have a thin cutting edge
Instrument (+):   with an iron tool
Function (>>):   in order to make it useful and effective as a tool
Connotation (~):   often associated with violence and danger

(c)   *Events*: Attitude, State/Process

verb, qal as [a], but extended to animate objects and with focus on the connotation: = to be inclined to violent and dangerous activity, as dangerous as a sharp knife; ST animate creatures

    Violence fierce, dangerous (Hab 1:8)

This event requires two semantic arguments:

Statant (ST):   an object belonging to the category *Products*
Causer (CA):   an object belonging to the category *People*

Subentry (c) is a metaphoric extension of meaning of subentry (a). Here we find both an argument shift and an attribute shift. Instead of an inanimate *Product*, this event requires an animate object. More important here is the attribute shift. The focus is on the connotation of subentry (a), hence the definition: "to be inclined to violent and dangerous activity, as dangerous as a sharp knife." This subentry has a different lexical meaning and belongs to the category *Attitude*.

(d)   *Events*: Cognition, Causative

verb, hi as (b), but extended to people and with focus on the result: = to increase someone's ability to assess different situations and react in an effective way; CA people; ST parts: people

    Wisdom; Success, Failure חדד פָּנִים [gloss English] (Prov 27:17)

Subentry (d) is an extension of meaning of subentry (b). Again, we find both an argument shift and an attribute shift. Instead of an inanimate *Product*, this event requires a human being; to be precise: someone's face. In addition, there is an attribute shift. The focus is on the function of subentry (b). A knife is sharpened in order to increase its effectiveness. People's faces are sharpened in order to increase their ability to assess different situations and react in an effective way. This subentry belongs to the category *Cognition*.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to give the reader further information about the *Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew.* The main focus was on the role played by cognitive linguistics which has been a tremendous help in building a semantic framework that tries, as far as possible, to do justice to the system of experience, beliefs, and practices behind the Hebrew language. We are not using dictionaries to find mere translation equivalents. We are using dictionaries to understand what a given text tries to communicate. We are dealing with an ancient text here, and I realize that this is a dangerous undertaking. Yet the biblical Hebrew text does provide us with some tools to help us in this endeavor. One of these tools is the way in which this language handles metaphors. Understanding the different ways a language is used figuratively helps us to understand the world behind the language.