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citation for published version (APA)

Che, N. C. (2018). *Participants, Characters and Roles: A Text-Syntactic, Literary and Socioscientific Reading of Genesis 27-28*. [PhD-Thesis - Research and graduation internal, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam].

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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

PARTICIPANTS, CHARACTERS AND ROLES:

A Text-Syntactic, Literary and Socioscientific
Reading of Genesis 27–28

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor aan
de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof.dr. V. Subramaniam,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
van de Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid
op dinsdag 10 april 2018 om 11.45 uur
in de aula van de universiteit,
De Boelelaan 1105

door

Napoleon Chebineh Che

geboren te Bamenda, Kameroen

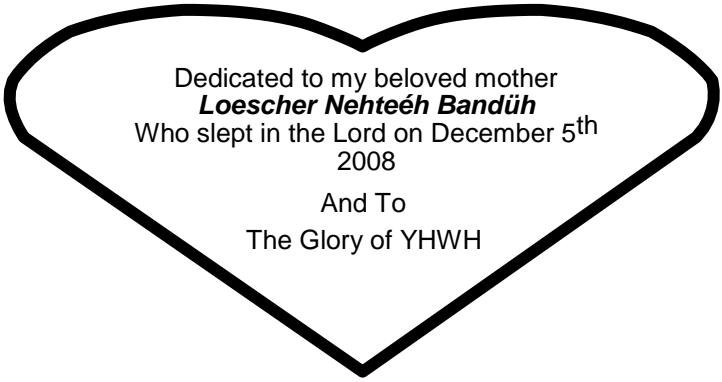
promotoren: prof.dr. W.T. van Peursen
prof.dr. L.J. de Vries

Participants, Characters and Roles:

A Text-Syntactic, Literary and Socioscientific
Reading of Genesis 27–28

Napoleon Chebineh Che

AllRush Print



Dedicated to my beloved mother
Loescher Nehteéh Bandüh
Who slept in the Lord on December 5th
2008

And To
The Glory of YHWH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No matter how long a journey is, there is often an end. When this journey concerns academia, what one calls an end is often the beginning of a new phase. This has been my experience for the past five years. Whenever I thought I was getting to the end of my academic journey, something new came in. This means the end of a PhD represents the beginning of another academic journey. Nevertheless, I could not have gone to this level without the input of an uncountable number of people. What each one did to me during my studies contributed enormously to my success. Although words can never be enough to appreciate human effort I will like to mention the contributions of some individuals in hope that my words will give them a taste of how much value they have been to my success.

The outcome of this project laid heavily on the patience and supervisory skills of Professor W.T van Peursen. His critique widened my thoughts and scope. His spirituality and scholarship gave me a solid base. I feel blessed to have been under his guardianship. Special thanks also go to Professor L.J de Vries, my second promotor, for his input and comments. Discussions with him shaped my sociocultural perspectives. Besides, members of the ETCBC also made their mark on my academic career. Dirk Bakker and Reinoud Oosting shared much with me in Leiden and continued in VU. Listening to the wisdom of Professor Eep Talstra has been helpful. Through his innovative works on Bible and computer, I have come to understand how scientific approaches strengthen one's faith in God. Constantijn was always there to help me retrieve data and to give explanations to the various codes. Discussions with Janet, Marianne, Femke, Martijn, Gino, Staci and Andreas always led me to sharpen my ideas. The atmosphere in the ETCBC is very rewarding and this dissertation reflects the cordial nature of its staff. Mirjam and Cynthia have never been tired to direct me to the right places or offer proposals as to my wellbeing in the institute. All I can say is thank you immensely.

The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) has born my absence for a decade as I pursue knowledge from one country of Europe to the next and I cannot but render my appreciations for this opportunity. Individuals within the church also stood by me to counsel and encourage me in my academic pursuit. Mention should be made of my former tutors the Rev. H. Klip, Rev. Dr. O. Boersma, Rev. Dr. J.N. Dah, Rev. Dr. J. M. Muyo and Rev. Dr. J. A. Ngwa for giving me the focus of my present research; and to Rev. Dr. Fai, Rev. Kang Denis, Rev. Mrs. Ndifon Solange, Ma Ngeh Beatrice and Ma Nwatu Ebai Martha for their support.

On the family level, a wide range of people in Cameroon, Europe and Canada have contributed to my success. The Seabrook tribe (Rev. Paul Seabrook, Rachel, Lydia, Matthew, Anna and Bethany) of St. Edmunds Anglican Church Taverham Norwich, UK deserve special thanks for housing me during my preliminary studies. Anna and Bethany sharpened my thoughts as twins and provided me with some basic points of reflection. You all have been awesome. Also, Margarate Snelling and the Chapelfield Methodist Church Norwich provided shelter to my family when I moved to Holland. Your love has been a driving force to my success. In Belgium, the Banyohs (Titus, Cassandra, Seraphine-Anti Coucou, Sam Levi and Mbong Julsanti), the Ndamnsas (Chipnje, Catherine and Lenyu), Agbors (Mirabelle, Mambeng and Harcourt), Ma Tele (Felicita Ngomanji), the Afesi (Colette, Leslie, Bradley, Brayden and Vicky), the Tebohs (Jessica, Fon, Suh, Shinyuy) Mrs Dina N.(Mama D), Miss Wirkom Mercy, as well as the entire Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Belgium (Antwerp, Ghent, Leuven and Brussels) provided an opportunity to continue the practice of my

ministry. The Mbapes (Apabeloi and Henrietta) and Ellen Thorstensen Brorson in Norway have always been with me to know about my progress and wellbeing. You are true friends and I am proud that God brought us together. The Centennial Presbyterian Church Calgary, Canada has also contributed greatly to my success. Members have never ceased to encourage me. Marvis Williams, Singhs (Tony and Val), Williams and Phipps (Sharon, Shakira and Lewis), Tigleys (Frank and Becky) Peters (Valsa and Joe), Priscilla T., Jean T. and Rev. Helen Smith have been awesome. Rev. Helen and Jean Tupper read through my scripts, adjusted my language and advised me to make some changes. Mention should also be made of the great contribution of the Bafut Manjong Cultural Association Calgary community for moral support. Of special interest is my brother Fusi Neba Gabga whose expertise in computer technology inspired me to understanding the Gephi 0.8.2 software. Thank you all for your support.

The burden of my absence has been on my family. The input of my sister-in-law (Sis. Antusia Neh) and Akwen Dorine has been immeasurable. My children felt safe in your care and this encouraged me to forge ahead. I can never really pay you for this great job. Pa Joseph Amuntung stepped in as dad to my children and has never failed to secure the best schools for them. We started as friends and now we are a family. Your Children in Europe and America have often called to know about my wellbeing. Thank you my dear brother and friend. I can only wish God to give us more time to celebrate his love in us. Mention should also be made of my siblings (Ndeghe Fuh, Ma Es Konzeh, Ngang Copperfield, and Uncle Saffa-Gabriel) for their moral and financial support. Lastly, I do not have the words to express my appreciations to my beloved wife (Marie Stella) and children (Afanwi, Songbezoh and Akongnwi) for bearing my absence during my period of studies. You all paid a great price to make me successful. I pray that God should continue to inspire us as we strive to serve Him.

God's Love endures forever (Psalms 136:1).

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Chapter One

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

Genesis 27–28 is part of the patriarchal narratives of Genesis 11–50 which present the stories of the forefathers of the Israelite peoples. These stories are imbued with emotions and apprehensions which threaten the future of the developing Israelite peoples. It begins with YHWH's promise of a great nation to Abraham in Genesis 12. This promise then undergoes several threats beginning with Sarah's barrenness (Genesis 16–18) and moves on to Abraham's lack of a legitimate heir (Genesis 20–21) and God's command to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22). When this promise is restored through Isaac's redemption, it continues to be threatened by the conflict in the choice of heir (Genesis 25–38), the conflict between Jacob's children (Genesis 29–50) and their enslavement in Egypt (Exodus 1). Among the patriarchal narratives, Genesis 27–28 occupies a central position. This centrality comes in the fact that the heir becomes the bearer of the Abrahamic promise. However, this comes at a price as seeming blackmail, deceit and manipulations are the prime routes to this achievement. Among other questions raised, readers often ask whether YHWH intended his promise to come true through these seemingly unorthodox or unconventional means. Theologically this question poses an enigma to the reader's understanding of the whole patriarchal promise. Nevertheless, this narrative poses less problem from the philological and exegetical perspectives, yet given its theological centrality to the reading and understanding of the patriarchal narratives, there is an enigma which, in my opinion, has not been given an adequate response.

This text of Genesis 27–28, which is the focus of this study, contains the famous story of Jacob and Esau and narrates how Jacob acquires his father's blessings which, according to interpreters, were destined for Esau. The enigma that surrounds this narrative is highlighted in the characters involved. There seems to be a division among the characters in which Rebekah and Jacob appear as schemers or manipulators while Isaac and Esau appear as their victims. Modern readers continue to wonder how the character of Rebekah and Jacob seems to have agreed with a God-given oracle in Gen 25:23. Also, at a certain point in the development of the story, God blesses Jacob while he is fleeing from his brother's wrath to his uncle in Paddan Aram. This adds to the problems of the narrative. Hence, Rebekah's and Jacob's characters and God's blessing of Jacob on his way to Paddan Aram constitute the enigma in this narrative which merit investigation.

We read about a seeming scheme or deceit (Genesis 27–28:9), the results of which seem to have been appropriated by God (Gen 28:10–22). This gives the reader the probability that God approves the apparent scheme and even wants it to be that way, although the setup of the narrative and the method of acquisition of Isaac's blessings run counter to modern and conventional values. Also, the ancient authors are silent about such practices which might be an indication of approval or disapproval. Nevertheless, there could be a higher probability that the authors were conversant with such practices and approved of the conventions; otherwise the authors would have mentioned their disapproval. Many questions remain unanswered especially why there are no clear indications in the text that the ancient authors condemned such approaches which in modern interpretations have often been condemned.

Biblical scholars continue to explain and interpret this story from varied methods, yet the enigma remains. This study does not claim that it can resolve this enigma

and therefore it is certain that the tension raised by the interaction of participants in this text will remain. However, as the topic shows, this study will attempt to combine three approaches in the study of this text with the aim of investigating how the interactions between the persons involved can help readers to a better understanding of this narrative. These approaches represent both the ahistorical¹ and historical-cultural² methods of reading with a focus on the following:

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------|
| • Text-Syntactic (Linguistic)–Participants. | } | Ahistorical |
| • Literary–Characters. | | |
| • Socioscientific–Roles. | } | Historical-cultural |

The basic assumption is that a proper application of these approaches can enlighten our understanding of Genesis 27–28.

1.2 MOTIVATIONS

The interest in any form of research is often born out of personal challenges which lead the researcher to raise questions for further inquiry and clarification. The inquiry engages various methods and approaches or even a combination of methods to get to the required results. Hence what one takes as personal challenges and questions soon get entangled into a complex system where various approaches are appropriated to explain the researcher's curiosity. This study was born out of such a simple curiosity which soon got enlarged as I engaged into the understanding of the persons in Genesis 27–28 and their actions. My upbringing as a Christian and as a theologian increased my motivation. Before I became a theologian, I read this narrative section and questioned how God could approve a scheme or bless one who, according to what I was told, stole blessings. At a later stage of my career, I also taught these same lessons to Sunday school children, pupils and students of religious studies who chose this option for the final public exams into high schools and universities in my country–Cameroon.³ Although I had received the same interpretation throughout, my doubts remained.⁴ When I became a theologian, the challenges increased especially as those

¹ My use of ahistorical refers to the reading approach which takes the text, as it is, in its final form. This approach does not consider the historical veracity or compositional and redactional undertones of the narrative. It assumes that the text in its final form contains all what is needed to understand it. The ahistorical approach, as applied in this study (Linguistic and literary), falls within the stream of the synchronic method of biblical interpretation. However, there is the application of computer operations to provide a better appreciation of the ahistorical approach which distinguishes this study from others. Thus, my preference for the term “ahistorical.”

² I use historical-cultural to refer to the application of social sciences to the understanding of practices that occur within Genesis 27–28 through the application of cross-cultural data analysis. The focus is the application of Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) archaeological discoveries and some African customs to the understanding of the text (Masoretic Text) as it is. Therefore, the text in its final form constitutes the basis of such a historical-cultural reading. In this respect, the historical-cultural approach also falls within the frame of the synchronic method which takes the final text as the starting point.

³ Cameroon (English-speaking) follows the British General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) system and students write the Cameroon G.C.E. Ordinary Level as a qualification to go into a high school and G.C.E. Advanced level to go into the university.

⁴ The basis of my question was the moral implication of God approving one who was presented as a schemer and the impact of such an understanding on Christian and moral values. One vivid way in which this was presented is that God was capable of “writing straight on crooked lines” with the likes of Jacob, Moses and King David as examples. This also became a famous question in the G.C.E. often

who followed such interpretations argued that “the end justifies the means.” I began by studying Rebekah’s character and questioned what she did as a mother and how this was understood. Unfortunately, Rebekah was condemned by most commentators. A few commentators gave her the benefit of doubt, yet accused her of forcing God’s will to be done. My understanding of this narrative and of Rebekah changed when I began to compare Rebekah with my mother. How Rebekah handled the conflict in her home and how my mother treated us when we had a conflict. One common approach to both is that Rebekah addressed her family and convinced them as individuals, the results being that if the individuals followed Rebekah’s counsel, she was unquestionably truthful. In the same light, my mother never brought two of her children together to resolve a conflict. She counselled each one separately and if the concerned stuck to the counsel, then the problem was resolved. However, the counsel was often perceived as conflicting if the concerned shared what my mother had told them as individuals. The easiest way to describe such conflicting ideas is to say that she lied. Otherwise each one remained satisfied and my mother had accomplished her task of keeping her family in peace. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the likelihood of uncovering her *modus operandi* was rare because she had the authority to instruct us and because we believed in her judgments. In Genesis 27–28, Rebekah applied a similar approach and succeeded because her family had no doubts about her counsel.⁵ A similar approach was to study the role of Isaac by comparing Isaac’s role to that of my father especially in the method of nominating the heir. The focus was on the criteria applied and the circumstances that influenced his choice. The difference is that Isaac had twins, otherwise both designated their heir based on their personal relationships to the potential heir who then assumes the role of the father and, in my family, is called as such even though my father is still alive. Another difference I observed is that while the role of Rebekah is regarded as a scheme (probably because the narrator has not spelt it out), that of my mother was understood as spelt out by customs with obedience to both parents as the most important criterion. Thus, I also questioned whether what we read as a scheme was not an acceptable norm in Rebekah’s custom. This means that the potential heir has certain obligations to fulfil and by his comportment, he can lose his heirship.

The second step to my inquiry came in 2008 when I had to lead a master class seminar on the reading of “points of view” with respect to Genesis 27. It was here that I realised the centrality of Rebekah’s *modus operandi*.⁶ After my degree, I had the desire to pursue studies at the research level with a focus on this narrative. While I searched for an avenue, I was also exposed to other approaches which have led to my better appreciation of this narrative section. A personal inquiry soon became

stated as follows: “God can write straight on crooked lines. Discuss!” Students would then spend three hours discussing Jacob, Moses and King David.

⁵ In Gen 27:42–44, Rebekah instructed Jacob to flee from Esau’s anger. Later in Gen 27:46, Rebekah convinces Isaac to send Jacob to Paddan Aram to get a wife from his kinsmen. It is important to note that Rebekah’s listeners (Jacob and Isaac) were unaware that Rebekah had spoken to each of them. Also, they did not know what she had told the other. She succeeded because none of her listeners doubted her counsel.

⁶ It is worth noting that I presented this paper on December 10th 2008, five days after my mother had died from a car accident. She was still in the mortuary and I had to travel home after this seminar for her burial. Within the last days when I worked on the paper, all her qualities as a mother seemed to have raised my motivation and given me a new way of appreciating Rebekah. In this seminar, I argued for a re-evaluation and re-reading of the roles of the characters and especially that of Rebekah. At the end of the seminar, my instructor mentioned that I had presented another way of appreciating the narrative which, although different, could be vital to the understanding of Rebekah’s *modus operandi*.

an interdisciplinary inquiry to this narrative with the linguistic understanding as the primary approach and the basis to the literary (qualitative and quantitative) and soci-scientific. The application of the roles of members of my family to the understanding of this narrative underscores the importance of reading scriptures in its context and how a biblical narrative can be read from various perspectives, also influenced by the context of the reader. However, since the establishment of the biblical context is uncertain, the use of cultures around where these stories developed can be a potential resource to the understanding of the nature and lives of the patriarchs. In addition, the interaction of some of the patriarchs with some non-western cultures with whom common customs are now identified can also enlighten our understanding of the nature of the patriarchal life and customs.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIM

Over the centuries, there has been a rapid evolution in the methods of reading and interpreting biblical texts. These methods, although valid, have often laid emphasis on various aspects of the text, applying different approaches which lead adherents to conclusions that continue to leave many unanswered questions to the readers of Genesis 27–28. The crucial nature of this text has attracted varying methods and hypotheses, yet there is no concurrence. As new methods develop, they express an increasing desire to adapt to a contextual reading of texts in a manner that reflects the worldview of its authors and at the same time meets the current needs of readers within various cultures. The question remains however, whether these methods are sufficient in themselves and whether they can meet the needs of those in cultures which hold different views on them and especially cultures which hold similar views to the cultures in which the biblical narratives originated and in which biblical research continues to take place. Since these methods continue to lay emphasis on particular aspects of texts and apply variant approaches, there is need for a combination of methods to decipher how compatible they are and whether they complement or contradict each other. If so, then, how the gaps between them can be bridged if there is any foreseen need for growth in the understanding of biblical texts.

These methods have been applied to Genesis 27–28, yet there is hardly a consensus between any two of them. The title of this dissertation betrays the emphasis of the various approaches to the study of this text. Thus, the need to combine methods or apply different methods to the same text to determine how they contribute to the various aspects of the narrative sets the problem that this dissertation investigates. The three chosen methods are current and do represent the recent approaches to biblical texts in the last three to four decades, yet they are grounded in the mainstream of biblical research methodology. I have noted already that this research is not an automated solution to the problems that come with the interpretation of this text, but an attempt to see how a combination of approaches can lead to a better understanding of such texts. With this understanding the research questions can be summarised thus:

- How do the literary and the grammatical structures of this text interact? Does the linguistic analysis confirm or contradict the literary analysis? Do they overrule each other, i.e. does the literary analysis overrule linguistic signs or vice versa?
- What is the relationship between literary characterisation and the grammatical participant reference? How do they enlighten the reading of the text?
- How can the literary analysis of the characters and the linguistic analysis of the participants contribute to the study of the 'roles' in the narrative?

- What can a better understanding of the 'roles' in the narrative contribute to our understanding about the social and cultural background in which these stories originated?
- How can the world view of some non-western cultures (Africa) contribute to the reading and understanding of this text?

The *raison d'être* of this research is to reassess, reevaluate and readdress the crucial questions raised by readers concerning Genesis chapters 27–28 with the help of a combination of three approaches to biblical interpretation viz:

- *Linguistic Text-syntactic Analysis*: Recent years have seen the development of a linguistic and text syntactic analytical methodology in the study of biblical narratives and texts. Accordingly, this has led to the construction or formulation of a model built upon insights from the grammar of a text and discourse analysis, and has been developed into computerised databases used for the systematic and computer-assisted linguistic analysis of biblical text. This model takes the text as the starting point of the study and works closely with the text syntax and grammar allowing their interaction in a way that favours the semantics of the text to grant readers as close as possible an idea of how the interaction between the various members of the clauses, sentences, paragraphs or episodes give an understanding of the narrative.
- *Literary Analysis*: The last decades of the twentieth century have seen a major shift in the methodology of reading and interpreting biblical texts with the coming of the literary approaches. These approaches which seek to tackle some seeming inconsistencies in biblical texts highlighted by the older methods consider the biblical texts as the finale and seek for explanations to any inconsistencies. Advocates to this methodology consider the biblical narratives as an expression of literary art and skilful compositions by authors and apply literary tools used for the interpretation of other kinds of writings to them. The results have obviously created an impact on the methods of reading biblical texts and narratives.
- *Socioscientific Analysis*: The growth of social sciences and particularly social anthropology has greatly affected the way that biblical narratives are read and interpreted. Sociocultural and anthropological studies have developed methods of textual studies and analysis in cultures that are completely different from the modern western culture thereby obliging the interpretation of the biblical text to take into consideration such insights. This cannot be avoided since nowadays; much academic biblical research takes place within these cultures. Again, such studies have presented insights to the analysis of texts that are more in conformity with present non-western cultures. This approach, in some respects, draws insights from the historical-critical approach⁷ which started reading the Bible in its Ancient Near Eastern context. It is to this effect that this study has incorporated this approach.

⁷ In fn 2 I have argued for the preference of the historical-cultural approach because its focus is not on the historical, redactional and compositional developments of the biblical text, but on the application of ANE sources and some African customs to a better appreciation of the biblical text. These sources and customs are used as information that gives an insight to the nature of life and customs of the patriarchs as narrated by the biblical text.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The compositional and developmental study of the book of Genesis reveals a complex history. The debate on the methods that scholars develop to interpret Genesis and the Old Testament continues with adherents getting more divided along the lines of their preferred methods. Among these methods are the literary criticism, form criticism, tradition-historical criticism, structural criticism, redaction criticism, rhetorical criticism and some interdisciplinary approaches developed with the help of social sciences like sociocultural and anthropological approaches. Nevertheless, scholars remain uncertain on the real definitions of these methods and what differentiates them from each other. The birth of the historical-critical method was thought to be a better approach because it enabled scholars to delve into the historical context in which the biblical texts originated and developed. This method sought to reconstruct the historical context of biblical narratives and to determine the changes that had affected their transmission (McKenzie and Haynes 1999:23). It used text criticism, source criticism, form criticism and redactional criticism, which focused on retrieving the original texts, identifying literary sources behind the texts, determining the oral traditions that resulted in these sources and the method of final composition of the narrative. This method probes *why*, *when*, *where*, *how* and *for whom* a text was written. Historical critics sought to establish whether events happened the way described by comparing biblical stories to other stories and legends of the same period (Gottwald 1985:10), discover authors, persons and places and tried to establish the original readers and aim of the stories. Through this, the historical-critical approach sought to uncover the original ideas hidden behind the compiled version of a text.

Of late, there seems to have been a great shift to emerging methods like the canonical criticism, new criticism (conf. Alter 1981, Berlin 1983 and Sternberg 1985), rhetorical criticism (conf. Jackson and Kessler 1974, Clines and Gunn 1982 and Best 1998), genre criticism, stylistic criticism (conf. Alonso-Schökel 1963, 1974, 1985, 1988a and b, Stek 1974, 1986 and Fokkelman 1975, 1981–1990), structuralism and semiotics, which seek to uncover the meaning of the text from the final form (Barton 1996). In these methods the text is the basis and starting point of interpretation. These methods are not totally independent and as the previous ones overlap in meaning and application. However, in their focus on the final form of the text, they differ from the previous approaches.

The synchronic method focuses on the final text as its starting point and employs linguistic/syntactic analysis and literary/rhetorical or stylistic analysis to understand it. Besides the semantic analysis of the text, the grammar and syntax of the text are very important. Among those who apply the synchronic method, some take a more literary stance (e.g. Fokkelman 1975, 1981–1990; Bar-Efrat 1979, Berlin 1983, 1985; Alter 1981, 1985, 1996; Sternberg 1985, Gunn and Fewell 1993, Waltke 1994 and Walsh 2001), while others take a more linguistic stance (e.g. Longacre 1979, 2003, Talstra 1971, 1996, de Regt 1999, van Peursen 2007, Runge 2007, Bakker 2011 and Oosting 2011). On the other hand, the historical-cultural approach builds upon social sciences which rely on sociology, anthropology and archaeology, to be able to understand the relationship between the patriarchal customs and practices as narrated in the Bible and some contemporary customs. In the historical-cultural approach, two methods of the application of socioscientific findings are identified. First there are scholars who apply scientific discoveries (like archaeological findings from the ANE) to discuss the historicity and dating of the patriarchs and the Patriarchal Age (e.g. Bright 1959, 1960; Albright 1962, Speiser 1964, Thompson 1974, van Seters

1974 and Selman 1980).⁸ Secondly, there are scholars who apply these findings as cross-cultural comparative data to the reading and understanding of the patriarchal narratives (e.g. Steinberg 1993 and Adamo 1998, 2001). While these scholars differ, they agree on the importance of the ANE data to the understanding of the patriarchal narratives. This forms an important basis to the historical-cultural approach.

Recently, attempts to use methods of biblical interpretation as complementary approaches have seen some scholars proposing the synchronic methods over the others. They argue, for example, that the historical-critical questions only come up after a synchronic reading of a text. When van Peursen and Bakker (2011:145–152) study Judges 4 and 5, for example, they realise that there are some inconsistencies in the number of tribes. Proponents of the synchronic–diachronic sequence will argue that it is only when a close reading of the text exposes such inconsistencies that historical-critical questions about both chapters or the events reported in them can be raised (Ibid., Talstra 1993 and de Jong 1992). The methodology adopted for this study is a combination of the ahistorical and historical-cultural approaches. Although both approaches fall under the broad stream of synchronic method, I will advocate for the precedence of the ahistorical approach over the historical-cultural approach. This is because the questions addressed by the historical-cultural approach have arisen from the ahistorical study of the text. For example: From a linguistic perspective, “Isaac his father” is a referencing device which can be used for various linguistic purposes (semantic, processing and pragmatic functions). Runge (2006, 2007) has argued that “Isaac his father” can cataphorically highlight a following event, mark the beginning of a (sub)paragraph, and define “point of view” or “centre of attention.” From a literary perspective, “Isaac his father” is a literary device (Wendy 2012) and Boase (2001) has argued that this literary device also defines Isaac’s role as “father.” From the linguistic and literary study of “Isaac his father”, the historical-cultural approach investigates the meaning of Isaac’s role as “father” by drawing upon cross-cultural data from the ANE and some African customs. The questions investigated by the historical-cultural approach for this example can be framed as follows:

- How was the role of “father” defined in the ANE?
- What were the responsibilities attached to the role?
- How was a “father” regarded and how does Isaac develop his role as “father” within the text?

The focus of this study is to determine how the ahistorical and historical-cultural approaches can complement each other and provide new insights to the reading and understanding of Genesis 27–28. Specifically, it will apply the linguistic text-syntactic (participants) and literary (characters) methods for the ahistorical reading and the socioscientific (roles) methods for the historical-cultural reading.

⁸ It is important to note here that Bright, Albright and Speiser used these ANE discoveries as “proof texts” to the historicity and dating of the patriarchs and the Patriarchal Age. Thompson, van Seters and Selman acknowledged the importance of the ANE discoveries to the understanding of the patriarchal culture and customs but rejected their application as “proof texts” to be applied in the discussion of the historicity of the patriarchs and to establish a Patriarchal Age. My focus will be on the importance of the ANE discoveries as cross-cultural comparative data which can help our understanding of the patriarchal customs and not as “proof texts.”

1.4.1. *Text-Syntactic Analysis: Participants*

Linguists continue to argue in favour of a linguistic approach as the primary start to the interpretation of every text. The focus is on the linguistic features that a narrator applies and the manner in which these features interact to make the narrative intelligible.⁹ There is an increasing interest in the methods of identification of the participants of a clause and how these methods divide a narrative in a manner which can help a reader to grasp its meaning. For a text to be meaningful there is often an interaction between constituents within the clauses and paragraphs. It is through this interaction of various constituents of a text that narratives are born. These constituents (in clauses and paragraphs) whose participation is presented in a narrative are known as 'Participants.' The study of participant referencing has been based on the works of pioneers like Fox (1983), who built upon Givón's topic-continuity measurement in his study of participant referencing in Genesis 1–30, in which Fox focused on the semantic perspective; and Longacre (1989, 2003) whose approach identified three basic functions of participant referencing (identify, rank and performing various operations). Others include Revell (1996) who focused on the patterns of designation of individuals, Andersen (1994) who focused on the emphatic effect of participants, Dooley and Levinsohn (2000) who approached participant reference from a cognitive linguistic perspective (with a focus on the reader), de Regt (1999) whose interest laid on the referencing devices and their rhetorical effects, and Runge (2007) who seeks to approach participant referencing from a comprehensive discourse-functional linguistic perspective. As will be further expounded in this study, a participant will be regarded as any *dramatis persona* that participates in a narrative.

When individuals feature in a narrative they are referred to, using nouns (proper, common or kinship), pronouns (independent or pronominal elements), NmCIs or verbal inflectional elements. This means that scholars are required to search for the ways in which the participants are referenced to provide a better understanding to narratives. This approach seeks to identify the participants and to determine the effect of the method of referencing on the cohesion of a text. Although this may sound simple, scholars often encounter difficulties due to some grammatical ambiguities or inconsistencies. When two participants of the same gender are involved within the same narrative unit, there is need to clearly demarcate their references to understand who is acting at each stage. Where a pronoun is used to refer to both actants, scholars turn to the broader understanding of the narrative for clarity. Also, when participants are already known, explicit references used to track and trace them may affect the cohesion of the narrative. Where participants occur, it would also be important to distinguish the nature of reference. Three types are often applied viz: activation,¹⁰ continuation,¹¹ or reactivation of participants.¹² The above description signifies that the analysis of syntactic relations between clause constituents is important for participant referencing

⁹For a development on the contribution of linguistics to Biblical Hebrew the following representative works are important: BDB (1907); Gesenius, Kautzsch and Cowley (1910); Saussure (1959); Andersen (1974); Waltke and O'Connor (1990); Talstra (1992); van der Merwe (1994, 1996a, b, 2003); Bodine (1995); Randall (1995); Dik (1997); van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze (1999); Ellingworth (2004) and Givón (2001).

¹⁰ The first mention or reference to a participant in a narrative or the establishing of a new referent in a narrative. This is often by use of a proper noun or a noun plus an extension.

¹¹ This describes the devices that the narrator applies to trace the activities of an already activated participant. These include verbal inflection and pronouns for the default and either a proper noun or proper noun plus extension for marked.

¹² Reactivation occurs when a participant is regarded as faded into a reader's long-term memory. Such a participant is often reactivated in almost the same manner as a new participant.

especially where there is ambiguity. Again, the evolution in the linguistic approach to biblical text has led to the development of computerised databases which enable interpreters to correlate participant referencing and text hierarchy. Thus, the participants tracking and tracing in this study will apply a computer-assisted analysis of the text hierarchy of Genesis 27–28, based on tools developed by the Eep Talstra Center for Bible and Computer (ETCBC) of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Of importance is the human-computer interactive nature of these tools. This means that the analysis is not computer automated but involves human intervention where possible.

1. *Description of the Eep Talstra Center for Bible and Computer Database*

The Eep Talstra Center for Bible and Computer (ETCBC) is a research institute of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. It succeeds the Werkgroep Informatica Vrije Universiteit (WIVU) whose focus has been the linguistic analysis of ancient texts. It is named after its founder Professor Eep Talstra who has been the main inspiration behind its creation and supervision from 1977 to 2012. Currently headed by Professor W.T. van Peursen (2012), the primary aim of the ETCBC has been to make a substantial contribution to the linguistic studies of both the Hebrew and Aramaic texts of the Old Testament with the aid of computer applications, and to create a database based on the Masoretic Text of the *Codex Leningradensis* (1009 CE) (Oosting 2011:16) as published in the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Elliger and Rudolph 1983). The ETCBC considers the Masoretic Text as the final form regardless of any seeming inconsistencies whether linguistic or literary and describes the various linguistic categories that make up a text (Ibid.).¹³ The central argument of the ETCBC database model is that all logical linguistic features should be identified and recorded before employing other forms of arguments to explain those features which are regarded as illogical (Ibid.). In the analysis of texts, the ETCBC follows a bottom-up approach which is made up of four levels as follows:

- *Word*: This level is concerned with the building up of words from morphemes (Bakker 2011:26). At this level all the morphological forms are described as well as the analysis of its linguistic functions and lexical information (part of speech) (van Peursen 2007:164–165 and Oosting 2011:17).
- *Phrase*: At this level, words are built-up into phrases (van Peursen 2007:165 and Bakker 2011:26). This level describes the delimitation of phrases, their internal relations and morphosyntactic analysis (van Peursen 2007:166).
- *Clause*: Phrases are combined at this level to form clauses and “each construction where predication takes place is considered a clause” (Ibid. 167). The analysis of clauses involves the differentiation of the syntactic functions of constituents of a clause (predicate, subject, and complement, adjunct) (Ibid.).
- *Text*: Clauses build up to form a text. The analysis of a text involves the analysis of clauses and their relations which leads to a hierarchy.

In the bottom-up approach the output obtained from a lower level analysis constitutes part of the analysis of the immediately following higher level (Bakker

¹³“The most important aspect of this linguistic analysis is the focus on syntax. Syntax is considered to be the framework of the text, receiving priority over semantics and literary or rhetorical analysis,” <http://www.godgeleerdheid.vu.nl/nl/onderzoek/instituten-en-centra/eep-talstra-centre-for-bible-and-computer/index.asp>.

2011:25). While this approach is computer automated, it provides for human intervention at each level with a possibility for the user to modify the computer-generated output (van Peursen 2007:170 and Bakker 2011:25). The analysis of internal clause structures and clause relations presents a text hierarchy where clauses are connected to higher level clauses based on parameters as “morphological correspondences and clause types” (van Peursen 2007:171). These parameters enable the computer to propose connections between clauses and indicate whether they are parallel or dependent (Ibid.). All analyses up to the clause level have been stored in a database for retrieval and application to textual analysis. Continuous development of the ETCBC database has led to the creation of the **S**ystem for **H**EBrews Text: **A**Nnotations for **Q**ueries and markup (SHEBANQ) which became open to the public in 2014. Through SHEBANQ researchers and students of the Old Testament can access the resources of ETCBC for linguistic studies as well as teaching and research. I have applied the human-computer interactive approach of the ETCBC database to concatenate the Masoretic Text of Genesis 27–28 based on the linguistic signals that cut across the chapter boundaries. An examination of Genesis 27–28 has been carried out with the analysis of participants and their referencing patterns, the effects of such patterns on the structure of the narrative with emphasis on (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs; and the internal cohesion of the clauses up to the connections in the text hierarchy.

2. Description of Clause Types

The text-syntactic approach relies on the syntactic relations between phrases and clause types. This (sub)paragraph describes the clause types that occur in Genesis 27–28. A total number of 32 clause types occur in Genesis 27–28. Out of this number, four occur mostly on the main narrative level, 23 in the discursive, and five occur in both the narrative and discursive levels. The description follows the ETCBC encoding for the various clause types.¹⁴

Clause Type	Description
WayX	Where X is an explicitly mentioned NP or IP as subject.
Way0	The 0 represents the absence of an explicitly mentioned NP or IP as subject. However, the subject is inflected in the verb.
WXQtI	Where X is an explicitly mentioned NP or IP as subject and comes between the conjunction ׀ and the QtI verb.
WXxQtI	Where X is an explicitly mentioned NP or IP as subject and x another intervening particle. The particles include: לֹא, כִּי, נָם and הִנֵּה (conf. Gen 28:16d).
WQtIX	The explicitly mentioned NP or IP as subject, in this case, comes after the WQtI.
WQtI0	The 0 indicates the absence of an explicit NP or IP as subject.
WxQtI	In this clause type, a particle comes between the conjunction ׀ and the QtI verb.
xQtI0	This clause type is preceded by a particle and has no explicitly mentioned NP or IP as subject. It occurs without the conjunction ׀.

¹⁴ Although the Way0 is a main narrative clause type, it is worth noting that it also features in some discursive portions of Genesis 27–28. This occurs when a narrative is embedded in a discursive (NQN).

xQtlX	A particle precedes the Qtl verb and an explicitly mentioned NP or IP subject follows the verb.
ZQtlX	Z, represents 0 and X represents an explicitly mentioned NP or IP as subject. The ZQtlX is a Qtl clause type which has no conjunction or particle preceding the verb, but has an explicit NP or IP as subject after the verb.
ZQtl0	The ZQtl0 clause type has no particle before the Qtl and has no NP or IP as subject.
WYqtlX	The explicitly mentioned NP or IP subject comes after the WYqtl.
WYqtl0	The 0 indicates the absence of an explicit NP or IP as subject in the WYqtl clause.
WXYqtl	The explicitly mentioned NP as subject comes between the conjunction 1 and the Yqtl verb.
WxYqtl0	The particle comes between the conjunction 1 and the Yqtl verb.
xYqtlX	A particle precedes the Yqtl verb and an NP follows the verb.
xYqtl0	A particle precedes the Yqtl verb but no NP follows the verb.
ZYqtlX	The Yqtl verb has neither conjunction nor particle, but has an explicit NP after it.
ZYqtl0	The Yqtl has nothing that precedes or follows it.
Wlm0	This is an imperative that is preceded by the conjunction 1 and has no NP after it.
Zlm0	This is an imperative that has neither conjunction nor particle that precedes it. No NP follows it too.
xlm0	This is an imperative which is preceded by a particle and has no NP that follows the imperative.
Voct	Vocative.
Ptcp	Participial Clause.
InfC	Infinitive Construct.
Ellp	Ellipses.
CPen	Casus Pendens.
Defc	Defective Clause.
Msyn	Macro-syntactic signal.
NmCl	Nominal Clause.
AjCl	Adjunct Clause.

In the discussions of the syntactic relations between clauses in §2.7.5, I will use the Qtl to represent all the Qatal forms, the Yqtl to represent all the Yiqtol forms and the Impv to represent all the imperatives. Nevertheless, I will also use the clause types as presented when their syntactic functions require clarification or where ever possible.

1.4.2. *Literary Analysis: Characters*

Culler defines literary theory as 'the systematic account of the nature of literature and of the methods of analysing it' (Culler 1997:1). This theory was born as a means to understand a narrative as intended by the writers by considering the writing as a literary unit. The difficulty faced by this theory is that each narrative is done within a context and the application of the rules might not meet its standards (Gunn and Fewell 1993:70). Using the text as a starting point, literary analysts have developed

various tools that can help readers analyse written texts.¹⁵ We have seen above that the grammatical and syntactic reading of a text forms the basis for an appropriate literary interpretation. This implies that participant referencing has both a structural and a literary effect on the understanding of a text. While the persons involved are known as “participants” from the philological and syntactic perspectives, they are known as “characters” from the literary perspective. As participant referencing affects the understanding of a text, the way characters are portrayed or characterised also influences the understanding of a narrative. This methodology which was developed in the early 1970s lays emphasis on the literary analysis of the biblical narratives as literary units or as legitimate literary entities regardless of the redactive or historical processes that led to the final composition. The foundation of this approach is the final text with an emphasis on the skills of the author in presenting the characters and their interaction in the narrative. The literary approach shifts the main question from *why* to *how*. How does this narrative make sense as it is? Known as *narratology*, this method is a study of narrative structure and the ways in which it affects readers’ perception. It applies modern literary techniques of other forms of literature to biblical narratives. Biblical literary critics have differentiated this method with the introduction of *narrative analogy* whose main tool is characterisation, the repetition of words, phrases or whole stories as hermeneutical keys which relate the narrative to the immediate and wider narrative structure of the Bible. It is framed within a set of literary techniques. Central to the literary approach is the means of depicting a character because it guides the readers to a particular point of view (POV). In the story of David and Bathsheba, for example, it makes a difference whether Bathsheba is called “the woman” (anonymous—which agrees with David’s point of view that she is not more than a woman), or “Uriah’s wife” (which expresses her relationship to David’s chief commander, thus depicting their intercourse as adultery). Also, in the story of Ruth, it makes a difference whether Ruth is addressed as a “Moabitess” (depicting her as a foreigner), or “daughter-in-law” (which expresses her relationship with Naomi). These methods of portrayal affect the structure of narratives. The development of the concentric (ABCB’A’) and symmetric (ABCC’B’A’) stylistic structural analysis (Fokkelman 1975, 1981–1990) has also contributed to the literary understanding of narratives. In addition, when characters interact with others, they form networks which define their sphere of influence. Franco Moretti has established that these relationships can be analysed and visualised by means of modern technology and computational network analysis. Applying this theory to a corpus of Shakespearean writings, Moretti has been able to determine the relationship between actants, based on the dialogues that take place between them.¹⁶ This method, which is quantitative analysis, presents another literary stylistic reading of narratives. I will incorporate Moretti’s network analytical approach to the study of Genesis 27–28. The results will be analysed and presented graphically (conf. §3.10 and Appendices 3A and 3C).

¹⁵ The history of literary criticism can be traced far beyond the 20th century. I do not intend to repeat the various views held by literary theorists but to restrict myself to the application of this theory to biblical narratives. Even in this domain, I will dwell with a few whose approach can contribute significantly to the aim of this study. For a comprehensive reading of the development of this theory, the following works are important: Forster (1927), Abbott (2002), Hühn et al. (2009), Wellek and Warren (1961), Greimas (1966), Richard (2013), Scholes and Kellogg (1975 [1966]), and Bal (1978, 2009).

¹⁶ Franco Moretti, “Network Theory,” paper presented at the November meeting of the project *New Approaches to European Women’s Writings*, see [http://www.womenwriters.nl/index.php/20 November 2009](http://www.womenwriters.nl/index.php/20%20November%2009)

1.4.3. *Socioscientific Analysis: Roles*

We have seen above that the persons involved in a narrative are known as participants and characters from the text-syntactic and literary perspectives respectively. From the sociocultural and anthropological perspective, these individuals assume cultural appellations that require them to fulfill certain “roles” within the society. In our chosen corpus, the prominent role of Rebekah as “mother” deserves further investigation. The same holds for Isaac’s role as “father” and that of Esau and Jacob as “sons.” The focus will be on how these individuals develop these roles within the narrative. The questions to be answered are how the roles of “mother” (motherhood), “father” (fatherhood) and “son” (sonship) develop within the story and the effects they have on the understanding of the story. This will lead to an incorporation of cross-cultural data from the ANE and some non-western (African) customs to enlighten our understanding of the roles of the individuals in this narrative section. The emphasis on the understanding of the customs and context implies a historical-cultural approach to this story. Recent archaeological discoveries have made the socioscientific (sociocultural and anthropological) reading of the Old Testament inevitable. While these methods are purely scientific, they do not claim to present conclusive analysis of the information uncovered due to various constraints.

Again, the pressure for the need to understand biblical stories from non-western cultures has added to the urgency of this method. Africans, for example, are becoming increasingly interested in the patriarchal narratives and the narratives of Kings and Chronicles because of practices such as the authority of the king, polygamy and other family practices which are similar to some African cultural values. Furthermore, discoveries from Nuzi, Mari, Alalakh and other Ancient Near Eastern cultures have strengthened the use of this approach in biblical interpretation. The cross-cultural comparative approach enables an appreciation of customs from the ANE and some African cultures as an approach to understand the behaviour of individuals in this narrative section and how this leads to the acquisition of the blessing and family inheritance. The basis is the study of the family as a social unit within which individuals develop their roles and fulfil the requirements that lead to the choice of successor as the one to foster the continuity of the patriarchal family and the one through whom the Abrahamic promise will be fulfilled. From the above methodology, the following considerations have been made:

- Although the ahistorical and historical-cultural approaches are compatible and complementary, I will give priority to the ahistorical approach. The ETCBC encoding has considered the Masoretic Text as the final form of this narrative as a linguistic and literary unit. In this study, I will use the same text.
- I will read this narrative section as part of the *Toledoth* of Isaac.
- I have also concatenated the narrative to form a single narrative unit by cutting across the Masoretic Text chapter boundaries based on the text-syntactic connections between Genesis 27 and 28.

1.5. APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGY TO GENESIS 27–28

Although many commentaries, monographs and articles have been written on Genesis, authors have often focused on single methods of reading. They therefore engage in either a historical-critical, or a linguistic, or a literary, or a socioscientific study of the narratives in Genesis. To distinguish my approach from the above-mentioned methods, I will combine the linguistic, the literary and the socioscientific approaches to the study of Genesis 27–28. From the text-syntactic perspective, the works of de Regt (1999), Runge (2007) and to a lesser extent Longacre (1979/2003)

will be given further consideration based upon their incorporation of major authors in this field. All these authors agree on the importance and primacy of the linguistic approach to biblical narratives, the classification of participants into major, minor and prop, the default/marked demarcation of referencing patterns and the processing and pragmatic effects of overencoding. However, Runge takes a step further to simplify the pragmatic functions (notably the Anchoring Relation) while Longacre applies sociolinguistics to establish the thematic nature of a participant (Longacre 2003:14ff). Runge (2007) also applies an activation model based on Dooley's and Levinsohn's (2000) activation scale to the study of participants in Genesis 27 from a discourse-functional perspective. Hence, his work has direct relevance to this study. De Regt (1999) on his part studies the distribution of referencing patterns in the Old Testament and their effects on the structure of narratives and presents important contributions which will be applied to this study too.

From the literary perspective, the works of Bar-Efrat (1979), Alter (1981), Berlin (1983), Sternberg (1985), Gunn and Fewell (1993), Walsh (2001) and Fokkelman (1985) will be given further consideration. Besides, there is the quantitative analytical approach of Franco Moretti (1999–2013). From the qualitative analytical approach, all the authors agree on the methods of character portrayal (direct and indirect) and the categorisation of the characters into round and flat characters. Nevertheless, Sternberg highlights the importance of epithets as a method of character portrayal and argues that "a nameless character is a faceless character" (Sternberg 1985:330). Berlin on her part distinguishes her approach by redefining and enlarging the category of characters to include *full-fledged*, *type* and *agent*. She also argues that epithet (naming), point of view, use of הנה, and the use of direct discourse and narration are methods of character portrayal. These developments present important resources to the understanding of Genesis 27–28. Fokkelman engages in a stylistic approach which presents symmetric (ABCC'B'A') and concentric (ABCB'A') tools to the understanding of narratives. He also applies this stylistic approach to the study of Genesis 27–28. Walsh on his part studies the stylistic structural devices and argues that some of these devices follow linguistic signals of the text. To differentiate these from other stylistic devices, Walsh argues that these are "text based" stylistic structural markers. Using the linguistic signals of the text, I will study the symmetric (ABCC'B'A') structure of Genesis 27–28 and compared it to Fokkelman's approach, as a means to investigate how both can contribute to a common structure which can facilitate the reading and understanding of Genesis 27–28. Another literary stylistic approach is Moretti's "network theory" which will be applied to the discursive sections Genesis 27–28. The objective will be to determine how the networks that characters create affect the understanding of Genesis 27–28.

From the socioscientific (sociocultural and anthropological) perspective, the works of Selman (1974, 1980), Steinberg (1993), Boase (2001) and Adamo (1998, 2001) will be given further consideration. Although all have a socioscientific approach, they represent different perspectives. One underlying agreement is that these authors acknowledge the importance of cross-cultural data to the understanding of this narrative section. Selman carries a comparative analysis between archaeological discoveries in the ANE and their effect on the understanding of the Old Testament and points out that these findings cannot be used as "proof texts" or historic evidence to the patriarchs. Steinberg studies the patriarchal narratives of Genesis 11–50 from a household economic perspective and establishes a triple *sine qua non* for becoming an heir. Adamo approaches the Old Testament from a non-western (African) perspective and claims that the similarities between some African cultural customs and the patriarchal

practices stem from an interaction between the Africans (Egypt) and the Israelites.¹⁷ The socioscientific perspective opens up for the incorporation of similar customs in the patriarchal narratives and some African cultural practices to the understanding of the notion of heirship, succession and the transfer of inheritance.

The complexity of Genesis 27–28 makes the choice of the approaches appropriate with the hope that this research will throw more light on the text's understanding. The challenge is to investigate the compatibility of the linguistic, literary and socioscientific approaches and how they can contribute to narrow the gap between approaches to biblical interpretation. Besides, this text is central to the understanding of the patriarchal narratives and the later history of Ancient Israel. This makes the contributions of the research important for further understanding and use of exegetical methods to biblical texts, in general, and particularly the patriarchal narratives of Genesis 12–50.

1.6. STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY

The overall structure of this study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter pays attention to introductory and methodological concerns. In this chapter, I have introduced the problem to be investigated and presented the approaches that I will apply to get to the required results. I have also defined the various aspects of these approaches. This chapter forms the basis for this research and a proper description of the methodology and the methodological considerations to be applied is important.

The next two chapters will focus on the ahistorical approach. Two aspects will be investigated: text-syntactic (participants) and literary (characters). Preference will be given to the text-syntactic through the study of the grammar and its functions to the understanding of the text while those of the literary perspective will explore how literary characterisation can contribute to the understanding of the text. In his study of Solomon's prayer, Talstra (1987:260) writes:

A linguistic, grammatical analysis of text tends to reduce any and every textual phenomenon to general grammatical rules and thereby to *minimalize* the compositional or theological contribution of an individual textual phenomenon to the structure of the text. In contrast, literary stylistic analysis describes all textual phenomena as resulting from the author's conscious action and as contributing to a unique structure of the particular literary composition of which it is part. The literary stylistic approach thus *maximalizes* the compositional or theological effect of all individual elements of a text.

Chapter two will be devoted to the linguistic text-syntactic analysis of Genesis 27–28 with syntax as the key to the understanding of the text. The focus will be on the participants and the referencing patterns applied by the narrator as well as the effects of methods of referencing on the structure of Genesis 27–28. To achieve this, I will set the ETCBC linguistic approach on the backdrop of other existing linguistic approaches

¹⁷ Historically and culturally, Egypt has often been part of the Ancient Near East. However, it is difficult to argue that Africa as a unit constitutes an entity that can be used for cross-cultural comparative data. This is because of the varied natures or the differences that exist in the various cultures. The customs that will form the basis for the cross-cultural comparative analysis of this study come from Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Swaziland. Even in this respect, I cannot claim that these customs can be harmonised.

(especially de Regt and Runge) to understand where they complement or contradict each other. The results will serve to highlight the contributions of the ETCBC database and encoding to the analysis of the participants in this narrative section. In the text-syntactic approach, the text is perceived as a sequence of related clauses with (sub)paragraphs embedded into others which build up to a text hierarchy. Each clause is related to another in the text hierarchy and connections are made following laid down parameters. Within this study, the parameters that shape the text-syntactic hierarchy include explicit mention of actant and role change (which marks paragraphs at various levels), tense shift, shift in Person, Number and Gender (PNG), macro-syntactic markers, grammatical clause types, morphological and lexical relations between clauses. To properly account for the complex scope of participants in Genesis 27–28, I will expand the categorisation of participants to include main, central, dominant and dominated; besides the usual major, minor and prop.

Chapter three focuses on the literary study of characters. This includes the way characters are portrayed and the stylistic literary reading of the narrative. In this chapter the main question that will be investigated is the relationship between character and characterisation, and participant referencing; and whether the literary and linguistic signals confirm or contradict each other. Also of importance is how the literary and syntactic structures of the text interact. The investigation in this chapter identifies some differences between these two ahistorical methods. However, it also highlights that the structural similarities are overwhelming and therefore set common grounds for complementary understanding and application of both methods. This is accomplished through the “text based” (sub)unit markers of the concentric and symmetric stylistic reading of narratives. There is also the quantitative analysis of networks created by the interactions between characters (character-system). These interactions are presented in graphical forms and the results of the analysis conform to those of the text-syntactic and literary approaches in the identification of the centrality of an actant or character in a character-system.

Chapter four focuses on the historical-cultural approach which is a socioscientific (sociocultural and anthropological) reading of Genesis 27–28. In this approach the Masoretic Text is taken as the final form.¹⁸ The center of the investigations is the roles of the characters in this narrative section and how they are developed within the narrative. Cross-cultural data from the ANE and some African customs are incorporated to gain an understanding of the customs and practices of the patriarchs. The assumption is that the archaeological findings originate from and around the areas where these narratives were written and that some African customs exhibit similar customs as portrayed in the patriarchal narratives. The investigations here begin with an understanding of the patriarchal family, its marriage, and succession and inheritance systems. From this understanding, criteria are set to evaluate the roles of characters and how the characters develop these roles within the narrative. Prominent are Isaac’s fatherhood, Rebekah’s motherhood, Esau’s and Jacob’s sonship and Jacob’s heirship. There is some emphasis laid on Rebekah’s motherhood because of her influence in the passing of the patriarchal blessings. In the discussion of roles, cross-cultural data is employed to enlighten the development and evaluation of each char-

¹⁸ This presents, in my opinion, one of the fundamental points of agreement between the ahistorical and the historical-cultural approaches that have been applied to this study. The historical, form and source critical encumbrances are not considered. This does not deny the significance of the other approaches to the study of Genesis 27–28, but assumes that the text as it is provides a coherent account and serves as an interpretative key.

acter. The questions investigated here are how the study of participants and characters contributes to the understanding of their roles and how the ANE sources as well as some African customs contribute to the understanding of these roles and the whole of Genesis 27–28. It is worthwhile to mention that the investigations have indicated that the narrator applies sociolinguistics.¹⁹ This implies that language develops from within a culture and that the narrator applies language to express the social customs, cultural and anthropological values of the characters. The meaning of a word then can give the reader an insight into the social customs, cultural values, and anthropological relationships of the characters in Genesis 27–28. An example is the narrator's use of 'Isaac his father' where a pronoun as 'he' will not create an ambiguity or 'Rebekah his mother' frequently in a narrative where she is the only female character. While this is seen as overencoding from the philological perspective, it presents literary devices from the literary view and defines a social hierarchy within a family from the sociocultural and anthropological perspectives. It also defines Isaac's role as "father" and Rebekah's role as "mother."

Chapter five presents a summary of the findings with respect to the questions raised at the beginning of the study. It also indicates the way in which these approaches can be used to enhance the understanding of this text and other biblical narratives.

1.7. TRANSLATION

The process of translation gives the researcher the opportunity to understand the grammar, syntax and semantics of a text, which is the springboard for a proper analysis. In this study, translation has been inevitable. I will use the *Codex Leningradensis* as the starting point for this study. Therefore, the translation is based on the Hebrew text of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Elliger and Rudolph 1983).

Cl#	Verse and Narrative Type	
1	§27:1a N	And it happened
2	b N	For Isaac was old
3	§ c N	And his eyes were dim
4	d N	From seeing
5	e N	And he called Esau his elder son
6	f N	And he said to him
7	g NQ	My son
8	§ h N	And he said to him
9	i NQ	Here I am

¹⁹ I define "sociolinguistics" as a study of the relationship between language and the society; and how the language can help a reader to uncover the social customs, cultural values and anthropological relationship of a people. It is important to mention that the relationship between participant reference and cultural practices are studied under the fields of anthropological linguistics (Conf. de Vries 2001:306-320, Geertz 1993 and Foley 1997). Although Geertz (1993) and Foley (1997) define this as purely anthropological linguistics, Foley (1997:3ff), acknowledges that anthropological linguistics functions within social lines. Thus, he defines anthropological linguistics as studying "the place of language in its wider social and cultural context...and sustaining social structures." This indicates the overlap of anthropological linguistics and sociolinguistics if these are defined as independent fields in linguistics and social sciences. Nevertheless, my preference for sociolinguistics is to define language in culture and society (broadly describing language and its relationship to society, social behaviour and culture), which in other words deals with the social life of language.

10	§ 2a N	And he said
11	b NQ	Behold! Please I am old
12	c NQ	And I do not know the day of my death
13	a NQ	And now
14	b NQ	Please, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow
15	c NQ	And go out to the field
16	d NQ	And hunt game for me
17	4a NQ	And prepare savoury food for me
18	b NQ	Just as I love
19	c NQ	And bring it to me
20	d NQ	That I may eat
21	e NQ	In order that my soul may bless you
22	f NQ	Before I die
23	5a N	And Rebekah was listening
24	b N	As Isaac spoke to Esau his son
25	§ c N	And Esau went to the field
26	d N	To hunt game
27	e N	To bring
28	§ 6a N	And Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son
29	b N	Saying
30	c NQ	Behold! I heard your father
31	d NQ	From speaking to Esau your brother
32	e NQ	Saying
33	7a NQQ	Bring to me game
34	b NQQ	And prepare savoury food for me
35	c NQQ	That I may eat
36	d NQQ	And I may bless you in the presence of YHWH before I die
37	8a NQ	And now
38	b NQ	My son
39	c NQ	Listen to my voice
40	d NQ	And to my command to you
41	9a NQ	Please go to the flock
42	b NQ	And bring to me (from there) two good kids (of goats)
43	c NQ	And I will prepare savoury food for your father
44	d NQ	Just as he loves
45	10a NQ	And (you) bring it to your father
46	b NQ	That he may eat
47	c NQ	In order that his soul may bless you before his death
48	§ 11a N	And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother
49	b NQ	Behold! Esau my brother is a hairy man
50	c NQ	And I am a smooth man
51	12a NQ	Perhaps my father will feel me
52	b NQ	And I shall be as a mockery in his eyes
53	c NQ	And I will bring a curse upon myself
54	d NQ	And not blessing
55	§ 13a N	And his mother said to him
56	b NQ	Upon me be your curse
57	c NQ	My son

58	d NQ	Just listen to my voice
59	f NQ	And go
60	g NQ	And bring (it) to me
61	§ 14a N	And he went
62	b N	And he took
63	c N	And he brought to his mother
64	§ d N	And his mother prepared savoury food
65	e N	Just as his father loves
66	15a N	And Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son
67	b N	Which she had (with her) in the house
68	c N	And she clothed Jacob her younger son (with them)
69	16 N	And she placed the skin of the kids (of the goats) on his hand and on the smooth parts of his necks
70	17a N	And she gave the savoury food and the bread
71	b N	Which she made
72	c N	In the hands of Jacob her son
73	§ 18a N	And he came to his father
74	b N	And he said
75	c NQ	My father
76	§ d N	And he said
77	e NQ	Here I am
78	f NQ	Who are you
79	g NQ	My son
80	§ 19a N	And Jacob said to his father
81	b NQ	I am Esau your firstborn
82	c NQ	I did
83	d NQ	Just as you told me
84	e NQ	Please, arise
85	f NQ	Sit
86	g NQ	And eat of my game
87	h NQ	In order that your soul may bless me
88	§ 20a N	And Isaac said to his son
89	b NQ	How come
90	c NQ	So quickly
91	d NQ	You found it
92	e NQ	My son
93	§ f N	And he said
94	g NQ	Because YHWH your God was with me
95	§ 21a N	And Isaac said to Jacob
96	b NQ	Please draw near
97	c NQ	That I may feel you
98	d NQ	My son
99	e NQ	Whether you are
100	f NQ	Esau my son
101	g NQ	Or not
102	§ 22a N	And Jacob drew near to Isaac his father
103	§ b N	And he felt him
104	c N	And he said
105	d NQ	The voice is the voice of Jacob

106	e NQ	But the hands are the hands of Esau
107	23a N	And he did not recognise him
108	b N	Because his hands are as hairy as the hands of Esau his brother
109	c N	And he blessed him
110	24a N	And he said
111	b NQ	Is it really you
112	c NQ	My son Esau?
113	§ d N	And he said
114	e NQ	I am
115	§ 25a N	And he said
116	b NQ	Draw near to me
117	c NQ	That I may eat the game of my son
118	d NQ	So that (to the end that) my soul may bless you
119	§ e N	And he drew near to him
120	§ f N	And he ate
121	§ g N	And he brought him wine
122	§ h N	And he drank
123	§ 26a N	And Isaac his father said to him
124	b NQ	Please draw near
125	c NQ	And kiss me
126	d NQ	My son
127	§ 27a N	And he drew near
128	§ b N	And he kissed him
129	c N	And he smelled the smell of his garments
130	d N	And he blessed him
131	e N	And he said
132	f NQ	See
133	g NQ	The smell of my son is like the smell of a field
134	h NQ	Which YHWH has blessed
135	28a NQ	May God give you the dew of the heavens and the fatness of the earth
136	b NQ	And plenty of grain and wine
137	29a NQ	Let people serve you
138	b NQ	And may nations bow to you
139	c NQ	May you be lord over your brothers
140	d NQ	And may the sons (children) of your mother bow to you
141	e NQ	Let those who curse you be cursed
142	f NQ	And let those who bless you be blessed
143	§ 30a N	And it happened
144	b N	As Isaac just finished
145	c N	To bless Jacob
146	d N	And it happened
147	e N	Just as Jacob departed from the presence of Isaac
148	§ f N	And Esau his brother returned from his hunting
149	§ 31a N	And he, (he) also prepared savoury food
150	b N	And he brought it to his father
151	c N	And he said to him
152	d NQ	Let him arise

153	e NQ	My father
154	f NQ	And eat from the game of his son
155	g NQ	In order that your soul may bless me
156	§ 32a N	And Isaac his father said to him
157	b NQ	Who are you
158	§ c N	And he said
159	d NQ	I am your son, your firstborn son Esau
160	§ 33a N	And Isaac trembled greatly and exceedingly
161	b N	And he said
162	c NQ	Who then is he
163	d NQ	(who) hunted game
164	e NQN	And brought it to me
165	f NQN	And I ate all
166	g NQ	Before you came
167	h NQN	And I have blessed him
168	i NQND	Even so he shall be blessed
169	§ 34a N	As Esau heard the words of his father
170	b N	He cried bitterly and exceedingly
171	c N	And he said to his father
172	d NQ	Bless me
173	e NQ	Even me
174	f NQ	My father
175	§ 35a N	And he said
176	b NQ	Your brother came in a guile
177	c NQN	And he has taken your blessing
178	§ 36a N	And he said
179	b NQ	Is his name not called Jacob
180	c NQN	And he has deceived me twice
181	d NQN	He took my birthright
182	e NQN	And behold, now he has taken my blessing
183	f N	And he said
184	g NQ	Is there no blessing left for me my father
185	§ 37a N	And Isaac answered
186	b N	And he said to Esau
187	c NQ	Behold I have made him lord over you
188	d NQ	And I have given all his brothers to him as his servants
189	e NQ	And I have sustained him with grain and wine
190	f NQ	And now
191	g NQ	What shall I do
192	h NQ	My son
193	§ 38a N	And Esau said to him
194	b NQ	Have you but one blessing
195	c NQ	Only to you
196	d NQ	My father
197	e NQ	Bless me
198	f NQ	Even me
199	g NQ	My father
200	§ h N	And Esau raised his voice
201	i N	And wept

202 § 39a N And Isaac his father answered
 203 b N And he said to him
 204 c NQ Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be
 205 d NQ And from the dew of heaven above
 206 40a NQ And you shall live by your sword
 207 b NQ And you shall serve your brother
 208 c NQ And it shall come to pass
 209 d NQ And you shall have dominion
 210 e NQ And you shall break his yoke from your neck
 211 § 41a N And Esau grudged Jacob his brother upon the blessing
 212 b N Which his father blessed him
 213 § c N And Esau said in his heart
 214 d NQ The days of my father's mourning are near
 215 e NQ And I will slay Jacob my brother
 216 42a N The words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah
 217 § b N And she sent
 218 c N And she called for Jacob her younger son
 219 d N And she said to him
 220 e NQ Behold Esau your brother seeks comfort (about) you
 221 f NQ To kill you
 222 43a NQ And now
 223 b NQ My son
 224 c NQ Listen to my voice
 225 d NQ And arise
 226 e NQ And flee to Laban my brother, to Paddan Aram
 227 44a NQ And dwell with him for a few days
 228 b NQ Until the fury of your brother subsides
 229 45a NQ Until the anger of your brother subsides
 230 b NQ And he forgets
 231 c NQ What you have done to him
 232 d NQ And I will send
 233 e NQ And fetch you from there
 234 f NQ Why should I be deprived of you both in one day
 235 § 46a N And Rebekah said to Isaac
 236 b NQ I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth
 237 c NQ If Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth such as these, from the daughters of this land
 238 d NQ What good shall my life be
 239 §28:1a N And Isaac called Jacob
 240 b N And he blessed him
 241 c N And he commanded him
 242 d N And he said to him
 243 e NQ Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan
 244 2a NQ Arise
 245 b NQ Go to Paddan Aram to the house of Bethu'el, the father of your mother
 246 c NQ And take a wife from the daughters of Laban the brother of your mother

247	3a NQ	And El Shaddai will bless you
248	b NQ	And make you fruitful
249	c NQ	And multiply you
250	d NQ	That you may become a great multitude
251	4a NQ	May he give to you and to your offspring the blessing of Abraham your father
252	b NQ	That you may possess the land of your sojournings
253	c NQ	Which God gave to Abraham
254	§ 5a N	And Isaac sent Jacob
255	§ b N	To Paddan Aram to Laban son of Bethu'el the Aramean brother of Rebekah mother of Jacob and Esau
256	§ 6a N	And Esau saw
257	b N	That Isaac blessed Jacob
258	c N	And sent him to Paddan Aram
259	d N	To take a wife from there
260	e N	As he blessed him
261	§ f N	And sent him forth
262	g N	Saying
263	h NQ	Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan
264	§ 7a N	And Jacob obeyed his father and mother
265	b N	And he went to Paddan Aram
266	§ 8a N	And Esau saw
267	b N	That the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac his father
268	§ 9a N	And Esau went to Ishma'el
269	b N	And he married Maha'lath the daughter of Ishma'el the son of Abraham the sister of Nabaioth, in addition to the wives he had.
270	§ 10a N	And Jacob set out from Beersheba
271	b N	And he went to Haran
272	11a N	And he came to a place
273	b N	And he spent the night there
274	c N	Because the sun had set
275	d N	And he took one of the stones from the place
276	e N	And he put it for his pillow
277	f N	And he lay down in that place
278	12a N	And he dreamt
279	b N	And behold a ladder set from the earth
280	c N	And its head reaching towards the heavens
281	d N	And behold the messengers of God ascending
282	e N	And descending on it
283	13a N	And behold YHWH stood above it
284	§ b N	And he said
285	c NQ	I am YHWH the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac
286	d NQ	The earth
287	e NQ	Upon which you lay
288	f NQ	I will give it to you
289	g NQ	And to your offspring
290	14a NQ	And your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth

291	b NQ	And you shall spread to the west, and to the east and to the north and to the south
292	c NQ	And all the families of the earth will be blessed in you and your offspring
293	15a NQ	And behold, I am with you
294	b NQ	And will keep you in all
295	c NQ	Which you go
296	d NQ	And I will bring you back to this land
297	e NQ	For I will not leave you
298	f NQ	Until I have done
299	g NQ	What I have promised
300	§ 16a N	And Jacob awoke from his sleep
301	b N	And he said
302	c NQ	Surely YHWH is in this place
303	d NQ	And I did not know
304	17a N	And he was afraid
305	b N	And he said
306	c NQ	How awful is this place
307	d NQ	This is none
308	e NQ	Than the house of God
309	f NQ	And this is the gate of Heaven
310	§ 18a N	And Jacob rose up early in the morning
311	b N	And he took the stone
312	c N	Which he placed under his head
313	d N	And he set it as a pillar
314	e N	And he poured oil upon its head
315	19a N	And he called the place Beth'el
316	b N	But the name of the city was first called Luz
317	§ 20a N	And Jacob vowed
318	b N	Saying
319	c NQ	If God will be with me
320	d NQ	And will bless me in this way
321	e NQ	Which I go
322	f NQ	And will give me bread
323	g NQ	To eat
324	h NQ	And garments
325	i NQ	To wear
326	21a NQ	And shall bring me safely to my father's house
327	b NQ	Then he shall be YHWH God to me
328	22a NQ	And this stone
329	b NQ	Which I have set as a pillar
330	c NQ	Shall be God's house
331	d NQ	And all
332	e NQ	That you shall give to me
333	f NQ	I will surely give a tenth to you

1.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have presented a general introduction to this research. Three approaches have been earmarked for this study. The following chapters will apply these approaches to the analysis of Genesis 27–28. It is important to mention that each chapter will have a section on methodological considerations. While chapter one has defined the general methodology, the various chapters present further considerations which mark this study different from other authors who have applied similar approaches. These distinctions then culminate in the elucidation of the compatibility of these approaches to biblical studies and the new insights this approach can offer to the understanding of Genesis 27–28.

Chapter Two

PARTICIPANTS: A LINGUISTIC TEXT-SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF GENESIS 27–28

2.1. PREAMBLE

In this chapter, I will study the participants involved in Genesis 27–28. The focus will be to identify the patterns applied by the narrator for referencing, tracing and tracking of these participants, and how the patterns affect the understanding of the narrative.

Two authors [Runge (2007) and de Regt (1991–1992, 1999)] will form the basis of this study based on the following: (a) both have allotted substantial space in the discussion of participant referencing; (b) both have studied the narrative section under investigation; (c) both have interacted with major works in the field of linguistics, especially on participant referencing; (d) Runge's studies present a discourse-functional linguistic perspective on participant referencing; and (e) de Regt applies a distributional approach to participant referencing. To come out with working definitions and a proper methodology to study the participants in Genesis 27–28, I will review the works of these authors and move on to apply Runge's approach²⁰ to Genesis 27–28 to lay grounds for a comparative study to the linguistic approach of the ETCBC.

The outcome will provide an understanding of the similarities and differences of both approaches and the reasons advanced; and will highlight the contributions of the ETCBC encoding to the study of participant referencing. Before I review these authors, I will present a brief overview of linguistic studies to participant reference in Biblical Hebrew (BH).

2.2. LINGUISTIC STUDIES TO PATTERNS OF PARTICIPANT REFERENCE

Participant referencing, tracking and tracing, gives readers the ability to uncover the methods used by narrators to refer to participants within narratives (Callow 1974:33). Regardless of the variations in the referencing patterns, studies have demonstrated that languages, including BH, possess patterns with which participants are activated throughout a narrative. These patterns give readers a method of understanding and a method of differentiating participants at each stage in a narrative. In BH much study has incorporated participant referencing. However, few authors have concentrated on the topic from a linguistic perspective. Fox (1983) had conducted a study of participant referencing in BH (Gen 1–30) with a focus on the semantic perspective. The results, although useful, were limited. Thus, his conclusions were very preliminary (Fox 1983:215–254).²¹ A broader study was later done by Longacre (1989=2003). In his study of the Joseph narratives (Genesis 37–48), Longacre established that there were patterns in BH in which the referencing system was a basic means of establishing coherence (Longacre 2003:18). He concluded by arguing that participants can be divided into major, minor and props (Ibid. 140), with each type having distinctive referencing patterns (Ibid. 139). Longacre proposed the following operations (Ibid. 141):

M: Introduction of participant, first **M**ention of X [i.e. activation];

²⁰ Van Peursen (2013) has applied Runge's approach to the study of participant reference in Genesis 38. This study will incorporate some of his findings.

²¹ Fox's study was the application of Givón's topic-continuity measurement. Fox concluded that specific methods of referencing in Biblical Hebrew (zero anaphora, clitic pronouns, independent pronouns and nouns) were often affected by syntactic features.

I: Integration into the story as central in a narrative ... or as thematic participant in a paragraph;
T: "Tracking, i.e. tracing references to participants through the text so as to keep track of who-does-what-to-whom;"
R: Reinstatement [i.e. reactivation];
C: Confrontation, as at the climax of a story, role change;
L: "Marking Locally contrastive status (accomplished by fronting a noun in the second sentence of an antithetical paragraph); fronting of a noun anywhere for local focus;"
E: "An intrusive narrator Evaluation."

Longacre argues from a cross-linguistic perspective that some patterns are applied pragmatically for peak-marking in narratives (Longacre 1985), which also constitute a shift in discourse including: (a) shift in tenses, aspect and person; (b) use and omission of discourse particles; (c) variation in length and complexity of sentence; (d) repetition; (e) rhythm of text; and (f) overspecification (Longacre 2003:18). One important contribution of Longacre is the identification of predictable patterns of participant referencing (unmarked and marked) and their effects in the segmentation and understanding of a narrative. Other scholars including Runge (2006, 2007) continue to follow Longacre's arguments in which they agree, disagree or agree with modifications.²²

2.2.1. L.J. de Regt (1991–1992, 1999)

De Regt's (1991–1992, 1999a, 1999b) aim is to study how participants are referenced in the Old Testament and to explain how translators can deal with the divergent methods of referencing. De Regt notes the differences in the methods of participant referencing in BH and other languages (Indo-European languages), and argues that normal patterns in BH are often challenging to readers and translators. He agrees with Longacre (1989, 2003) on the *normal patterns (usual or unmarked)* and the *abnormal patterns (unusual or marked)*, and argues that proper referencing in BH must reckon with the differences between 'usual patterns or unmarked conventions on the one hand and unusual or marked conventions on the other' (de Regt 1991–1992:154).²³ De Regt also argues for a cross-linguistic approach to participant referencing which takes into account the semantic (de Regt 1999a:13–48), processing (Idem 1991–1992:150–172, Idem 1999a:279, Idem 1999b:3, 13–16) and pragmatic effects (Idem 1999a:280, idem 1999b:55–94). He establishes the following for the usual or unmarked patterns:

- Explicit mention of proper name indicates paragraph boundaries (the beginning or end of a paragraph) (de Regt 1999a: 13–18).²⁴
- Major participants are referenced in the same way as other participants both in narratives and dialogues (Ibid. 18–31). Here de Regt disagrees with Longacre, who had argued that participants are referenced differently in narrative and discursive sections of a text (similarly van der Merwe 1994:34–35), and

²²Conf. Andersen (1994: 99–116), Revell (1996), de Regt (1999a:273–296), idem (1999b), Heimerdinger (1999) and Hauser (2000:319–322).

²³Also conf. van der Merwe (1994:34–36).

²⁴De Regt mentions Gen 28:10, 18, and Ruth 2:2 as examples of the start of paragraphs and Gen 2:3 and 11:32 for the end of paragraphs.

suggests that the allocation of another referencing pattern in dialogues is unnecessary (Ibid.18–31).²⁵ He maintains that the conventional referencing device for major and minor participants is a pronoun (Ibid. 18–26), and explicit proper names are applied to re-establish antecedents into central roles (Ibid.)²⁶ as well as enact a change in status of participants from one part of a story to another (Ibid. 26).²⁷

- Where there is ambiguity in a referent, de Regt argues that the context should be used to distinguish the devices applied (Ibid. 43–54).²⁸ He notices that this often occurs in dialogues and narratives where the same pronoun is used and especially where the participants are of the same gender. He builds upon Comrie’s idea of locality and globality (Comrie 1989:47–48, 51), and develops the concept of the ‘local and global’ reference device. He then concludes that the local device is restricted within a short portion while the global covers a larger portion (de Regt 1999b:43–54).

For the unusual or marked patterns, de Regt identifies the following:

- Initial underspecification or withholding of the explicit or full reference of a participant has a marked stylistic effect and includes two steps. Drawing from Carden (1982:380), he posits that in initial underspecification, an actant is raised or developed and then given a name at a later stage of the narrative. He considers this phenomenon as marked for cataphorical highlighting (Ibid. 73–74).²⁹ De Regt also enumerates other functions of this phenomenon which have either a poetic, rhetorical or literary effect on the text (Ibid. 74–79). Because this phenomenon is infrequent in texts, de Regt argues for its markedness. This argument can be represented graphically as follows:

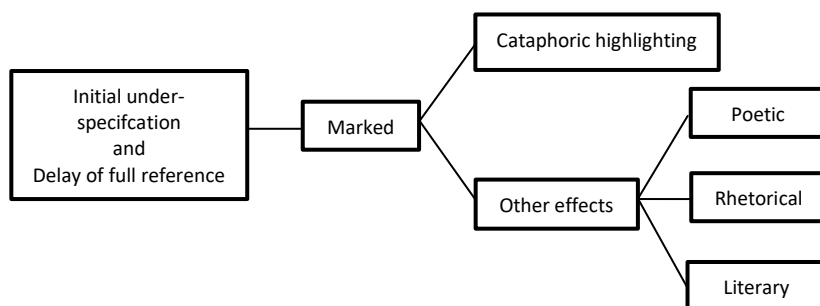


Figure 2.1 Summary of de Regt’s marked encoding

- Repetition of proper name referents for participants may occur for several reasons. De Regt draws from Nida (Nida et al. 1983:28, 129) and argues that repetition can either mark an emphasis or a climax (e.g. Gen 37:28) (de Regt 1999b:60–61),³⁰ indicating that the actions of the participant are either very important (Gen 46:30), surprising or unexpected (1Sam 17:27–32) (de Regt

²⁵ Conf. the dialogues in Gen 22:1e–2; 7d–7f, 11d–12a, 33:5c–8a and 37:13e–14a.

²⁶ De Regt presents the following examples: Judg 6:11–8:33, 13–16, Ruth 1:3–20, Ruth 3, 2Sam 13:1–22, 1Kgs 17–19 and 2Kgs 25:1.

²⁷ Also conf. Longacre (1989: 142–143). De Regt argues that the status of a participant fluctuates from minor to major or vice versa between paragraphs in the same narrative unit.

²⁸ Conf. Judg 15:19.

²⁹ Conf. Gen 18:1–13 and 32:25–31.

³⁰ Also conf. Longacre (1989: 30 and 41).

1999b:59-70).³¹ The above assertions can be represented graphically as follows:

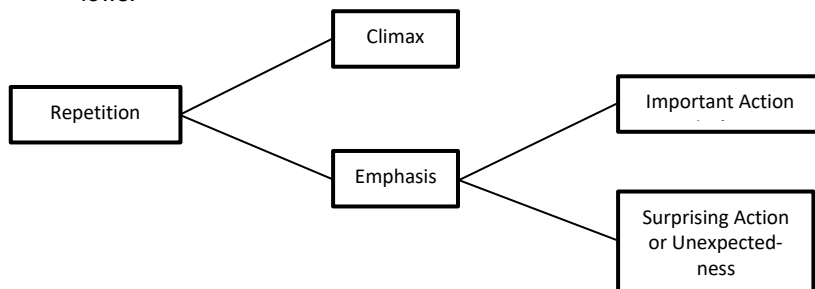


Figure 2.1 Summary of de Regt's Repetition

- De Regt also mentions that overspecification, in which superfluous pronouns occur together with verbs which already contain the pronominal referent of the participant (Gen 42:8) (de Regt 1999b:57–59), or where a NmCI is used as an extended description of a participant (Ex 14:8) (de Regt 1999b:69–71); might serve to highlight the importance of the following event.

De Regt's approach is distributional, and his aim has been to observe the distribution of participant referencing patterns in BH. Important to this approach is the identification of linguistic and literary signals in biblical narratives and the incorporation of the semantic, processing and pragmatic functions of participant referencing. De Regt's conclusions present useful insights to the study of participants referencing, which lay an appropriate foundation for further research. While I will build upon de Regt's conclusions, it is important to highlight where de Regt's approach differs from that applied in this study.

First, in de Regt's distributional approach, he studies the distribution of "explicit mention of name" in Gen 26:34–28:5 and observes that this referencing device either marks the beginning or the end of paragraphs. Although this device concurs with the linguistic signals of the text ("change in the set of actants, change in location and change in time"), its application raises a question on the meaning of a paragraph (de Regt 1999:119), which marks a significant difference between de Regt's approach and that applied in this study. It is important to note that there are other linguistic markers within paragraphs which often mark (sub)paragraphs embedded into others. These (sub)paragraphs can be identified by "a change in the subject marked either by a shift in the PNG of the verb or by a shift in the pattern of actors (where the object or complement of a preceding clause becomes the subject of the actual clause and vice versa)" (§2.3.4). These embedded (sub)paragraphs and their markers have not been identified or made visible in de Regt's structure of Gen 26:24–28:5. In addition, de Regt considers Gen 27:5a as the beginning of a new paragraph on grounds of change of locality. He assumes that this scene takes place in Rebekah's tent (de Regt 1999a:18). Although it is possible that Rebekah was listening from her tent, marking this as a new paragraph based on change of locality does not agree with the narrative syntax. I will argue that there is no movement involved in this case and that the verb applied does not indicate any movement or change of geographical location.

³¹ Elsewhere, Andersen has illustrated that the repetition of 'God' in Genesis 1–2 serves to indicate that the successive actions are distinct (Andersen 1994:107). This implies a variation other than that mentioned by de Regt.

Second, de Regt argues that all participants are referenced in the same way and their status can change from one paragraph to the other within the same narrative section. This implies that a major participant in one paragraph can be a minor participant in another and vice versa. De Regt applies this to Gen 25:29–34 where Esau sells his birthright to Jacob and concludes that Jacob is a major participant while Esau is a minor participant. This might be an indication that the three-fold classification of participants (major, minor and prop) identifies the most active participant in each paragraph as the major participants and thus, justifies de Regt's assertion. Nevertheless, it is my opinion that the activity of a participant in a (sub)paragraph is not a good criterion for defining a major participant. I will argue that this criterion renders the identification of major participants within narratives difficult since every participant is a potential major, minor or prop. To substantiate my arguments, I will propose a seven-fold classification of participants (§2.3.2) as an attempt to account for the complex nature of participants. In the situation of Jacob and Esau in Gen 25:29–34, I will argue that both participants are major (in accord with Longacre 1989),³² but Jacob plays a dominant role while Esau is dominated (conf. §2.3.2.6). Hence, Jacob is a major participant who dominates the actions in this (sub)paragraph and Esau is a major participant who is dominated by Jacob in this (sub)paragraph.

Third, de Regt applies the local and global device in situations where there seems to be an ambiguity in referencing patterns. He substantiates his arguments with many examples which include dialogues where participants of the same gender are referred to by the same pronoun. Although this device holds true for certain narratives, there seems to be a challenge to effectively apply it to others. I have already mentioned "a shift in the pattern of actors" as a (sub)paragraph marker and will use the example of Gen 27:1e–2a to illustrate this device in dialogues.

Gen 27:1e–2a

ויקרא את־עשו בנו הגדל	
"And he called Esau his elder son".....	1e
ויאמר אליו	
"And he said to him".....	1f
בני	
"My son".....	1g
ויאמר אליו	
"And he said to him".....	1h
הנני	
"Here am I".....	1i
ויאמר	
"And he said".....	2a

From Gen 27:1d, the subject of 1e and 1f represented by the pronoun "he" is Isaac and the object (complement) is Esau. In 1h, there is a change of actant. The subject of 1f (Isaac) becomes the object of 1h while the object of 1f (Esau) becomes the subject of 1h. This change is also observed in 2a where Isaac who was the object of 1h

³²It is important to note that Longacre's designation of major participant only highlights this point but he does not discuss it nor apply it to his studies. He only mentions that Potiphar's wife is the dominant participant in the encounter between Joseph and her but does not explain the implication of her dominance and its effect on participant referencing.

becomes the subject and Esau then becomes the object. These switches in the actants mark embedded (sub)paragraphs within the larger (sub)paragraph which begins from Gen 27:1a. The implication is that narratives have linguistic signals which serve to clarify seeming ambiguities where pronouns are used to refer to participants of same gender in a dialogue. Thus, the context (local or global), although an important device, might not resolve more complex ambiguities which linguistic signals might clarify.

Fourth, de Regt's application of *identification* and *activation* with respect to participant referencing-poses a challenge to readers. He posits that a participant remains ambiguous until it is fully identified by proper name (de Regt 1999:73). While proper name distinctively identifies a participant, I will argue that where a participant is activated by other linguistic devices before being identified by name, such a participant progresses from one category to another. An example might clarify this argument.

Gen 11:29

ויקח אברם ונחור להם נשים

"And Abram and Nahor took for themselves wives".....1

שם אשת-אברם שרי

"The name of Abram's wife (was) Sarai".....2

ושם אשת-נחור מלכה בת-הרן

"And the name of Nahor's wife (was) Milcah daughter of Haran".....3

Sarai and Milcah are already activated and given an identity (wives) in clause 1. The NmCIs in clauses 2 and 3 only serve to link them (Sarai and Milcah) to the identity, *wives*, in the first clause. As *wives*, Sarai and Milcah are already activated, introduced and identified. Assigning an NP for Sarai and Milcah serves the purpose of their progression from a lower category of participants to another.³³ They are *wives*, but they are also major participants. Thus, the narrator uses the NmCIs to ground Sarai and Milcah in the cognitive memory of the reader. Wherever Sarai is referenced (continuous or reactivation), the reader's cognitive memory will automatically anchor her to Abram. The NmCIs do not introduce, activate or identify. They are a continuity of the compound reference, *wives*, with an emphasis on their anchoring relations as Abram's wife and Nahor's wife. De Regt (1999b:295) also mentions Mephibosheth in 2 Sam 4:4 as an example of delayed identification and argues that this is one of the rare cases where this device is used to activate a minor participant. He also argues with respect to previously studied examples of delayed identification that: "... the *identification* was only delayed until the clause following the clause in which the participant was introduced. But some passages show an unusual pattern in that *full identification* of the participant is delayed further than one clause."³⁴ In a previous discussion of initial underspecification, de Regt (1999a:73) writes:

³³Berlin (1983:59–61) has argued that epithets are normally connected with minor characters while proper names are connected with major characters. She uses the example of Mahlon and Chilion (Ruth 1) to substantiate this. However, she has also argued for the progression and growth of characters with Ruth moving from Moabitess, daughter-in-law to wife. Here we have a progression of a character whose activation via an epithet is immediately followed by an anchoring relation with her name. While her progression makes a good argument, the general association of epithets to minor characters is untenable.

³⁴The italics are mine. De Regt (1999a:2) rightly builds on Wonderly's (1968:186) assertion on the continuous tracing of participants which "serve not only to avoid monotonous repetition of noun or noun phrase, but to make clear that the participant that is being mentioned is the same as the one previously

But the passages discussed in the present section illustrate an unusual pattern in that *the full identification* of the participant is delayed further than one clause and does not come at the beginning of a paragraph. The *full introduction* takes longer than the hearer might have expected.... Apart from the delayed identification of Mephibosheth in 2 Sam 4:4, these examples concern (at least temporarily) major participants.

I will further illustrate my argument by using Mephibosheth (2Sam 4:4) as an example.

וליהונתן בן־שאול	
“And to Jonathan son of Saul”.....	1
בן נכה רגליו	
“A son lame of his feet”.....	2
בן־חמש שנים היה	
“Son of five years he was”.....	3
בבא שמעה שאול ויהונתן מיזרעאל	
“When he came to hear of Saul and Jonathan from Jezreel”.....	4
ותשתאהו אמנתו	
“And she took him up his nurse”	5
ותנס	
“And she flee”.....	6
ויהי	
“And it was”	7
בחפזה לנוס	
“When she made haste to flee”.....	8
ויפל	
“And he fell”.....	9
ויפסח	
“And he became lame”.....	10
מפי־בשח	
“And his name Mephibosheth”.....	11

It takes 11 clauses (24 clause atoms) to know the participant as Mephibosheth (proper name). Before the proper name is mentioned, this participant has already been activated and identified as “Jonathan’s son and Saul’s grandson” (clause 1), who is “lame and five years old” (clause 2 and 3). The participant is then continued by verbal inflection (clauses 6, 11 and 12) and pronoun (clause 7). Clause 13 is an NmCl which serves to link Mephibosheth to the one who has been activated or identified as Jonathan’s

identified.” He also talks about the reidentification (“reidentify”) and reintroduction [(“re)introduced”] of a participant at the start of paragraphs (Ibid. 3 and 13). This use of “reidentify” and (“re)introduced” is synonymous to reactivation. When de Regt (1999a:32 and 39) discusses the usual pattern of activation, he also applies the words “introduced” and “reintroduced” in the same sense. However, he also mentions that “This kind of introduction delays the identification of the participant till the following clause” (Ibid. 33). In the previous uses, introduction is synonymous to identification (de Regt 1999b:2–3, 13 and 32), but this is not the case in the last use (Ibid. 33) –which is the same for the examples of initial underspecification (Ibid. 73–77).

son, Saul's grandson and a lame 5 year old boy. If de Regt's use of *identification* is equivalent to *naming*, then he is saying, in other words, that naming indicates a participant's progression from minor to major (conf. de Regt 1999a:32–33 and 1999b:295).³⁵ This agrees with my argument in the case of Sarai and Milcah as Abram's and Nahor's wives respectively. Mephibosheth is activated or introduced or identified as the son of Jonathan, and grandson of Saul. He is also identified as lame so that when his name is revealed, it only serves to anchor him to Jonathan (as his son), Saul (as his grandson) and at the same time indicates his progression from an unnamed participant (minor) to a named participant (major). The relexicalisation serves to continue an already activated or identified participant. I have also argued that the rise in prominence or progression from one category of participant to another does not fluctuate within paragraphs of the same narrative.³⁶ Thus Mephibosheth, in my opinion, rises to a major participant and maintains this status within the narrative not temporarily, but permanently. Important to this approach is that participant referencing patterns also highlight roles of participants. Sarai's and Milcah's roles are wives (explicit) and Abram's and Nahor's are husbands (implicit). In the same light, Mephibosheth's role is that of a son (with respect to Jonathan) and grandson (with respect to Saul), while Jonathan is father and Saul, grandfather (with respect to Mephibosheth).

2.2.2. S. Runge (2007)

Runge (2007) has observed that although participant referencing is very relevant, most scholars seem to touch upon it only as part of a larger study of discourse analysis, and only very few studies have been dedicated to it. Again, he observes that a few studies on participant referencing in BH have a linguistic approach. He moves on with the aim to develop a systematic approach to the study of participant referencing in which he critically reviews the major works (Runge 2007:61–89)³⁷ in this field to propose a comprehensive method of participant referencing in BH. He also reckons with the distinction between unmarked (default) and marked, and argues for a cross-linguistic approach which considers the semantic, processing and pragmatic effects of participant referencing. He explains his emphasis as a means to sort out the way the linguists, who have done some work on participants referencing, have applied the semantic, processing and pragmatic approaches to BH narratives. From a discourse-functional approach Runge (2007) argues that proper participant referencing in BH must reckon with the cognitive framework, the pragmatic functions and the linguistic functions (Runge 2007:26–55).³⁸ He substantiates his approach by pointing out the

³⁵ In this case, de Regt agrees with Berlin (1983:59–61) and Sternberg (1985:330) that a 'nameless character is a faceless character' and that naming indicates a growth in prominence (conf. §§3.2.3 and 3.2.4).

³⁶ De Regt's argument on Mephibosheth's reference as a minor participant illustrates the insufficiency of the three-fold classification of participants to account for the wide range of participants in BH.

³⁷ Among the major works are Berlin (1983), Fox (1983:215–254), Longacre (1989=2003), Andersen (1994:11–116), Revell (1996), de Regt (1999a, 1999b) and Heimerdinger (1999).

³⁸ He offers the following explanations to the various tools:

- Cognitive framework which defines the mental state and representation of the reader aiding in the introduction (identification) and activation (reactivation) of participants within a narrative.
- Pragmatic functions which consist of the articulation of sentences (predicate or topic and argumentative or presupposition) and pragmatic ordering of constituents (default or least marked).

inadequate incorporation of the cognitive framework and typological functions, inadequate explanations of unmarked referencing devices for various discourse contexts and the misunderstanding of the semantic and pragmatic meaning of the devices (Ibid. 61–62). Based on his theoretical framework, Runge proposes that “adhering to an asymmetrical view of markedness, respecting the cross-linguistic principles..., utilizing a proper cognitive framework (and) distinguishing semantic meaning from pragmatic effect; (and) affording poetics provisional deference” are indispensable for participant reference from a discourse-functional perspective (Ibid. 88). In four chapters, Runge demonstrates the efficacy of the discourse-functional approach in Genesis 12–25 and 27, outlining at each stage the importance of the semantic, processing and pragmatic functions (Ibid. 90–205). Central to Runge’s discourse-functional approach are the semantic, processing and pragmatic functions which deserve further analysis.

The *semantic function* aims to present and refer to participants in a way to avoid any ambiguity with other “*practically possible ones* (and to) identify the referents unambiguously” (Dooley and Levinsohn 2000:56).³⁹ When there are more participants who can potentially be identified with the same parameter, the referent becomes more elaborate to stay off any ambiguity. Thus, Dooley and Levinsohn (2000:57) have noted that “*the amount of coding material in a referring expression increases with the danger of ambiguity.*” In participant referencing, the semantic function helps readers to trace and track participants through clausal boundaries⁴⁰ to understand who is responsible for a specific action. After the first reference, a participant is often referred to anaphorically by pronouns. Dooley and Levinsohn argue that referencing patterns can be affected by the length of absence of a participant caused by *interference* from others, nature of semantic information available to the reader, or the availability of thematic information (Idem 1983:10-12). While the semantic function involves the unmarked patterns of referencing, it also deals with the introduction and reidentification of actants (activation and reactivation) and their continuous reference based on the readers’ cognitive ability.⁴¹ Runge (2007:50 and 90) adapts the default/marked (S1-S5 and N1-N5) approach used by Dooley and Levinsohn (2001)⁴² as the basis of his studies and applies it successfully to a wide range of texts in Genesis 12–25 and to the whole of Genesis 27.

When a reader reads a text, there is need to understand it. This is often done by incorporating, digesting or taking on board what is read into one’s memory. This process of incorporating the text into a reader’s mental representation defines the *processing function* (Runge 2007:40). Runge follows Givón’s discontinuity scale to argue that minimal encoding is default in processing narratives with continuity, and where discontinuities occur, there is need for ‘more encoding’ for clarity (Ibid). Also conf. Dooley and Levinsohn 2000:57). He also agrees with Dooley and Levinsohn (2000:57) that such discontinuities act as thematic boundaries (new development units) which aid readers to divide the narrative into smaller thematic units for easy comprehension

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- Linguistic functions which involve the semantic [(“identify the referents unambiguously, distinguishing them from other possible ones”). Also conf. Andrews (1985:62–154), Givón (1983a:3–41), idem (1983b:347–363) and Fox (1983:215–254)], processing (“overcome disruptions in the flow of information”) and discourse-pragmatic (“signal the activation status and prominence of the referents or actions they perform”).

³⁹ See Also Andrews (1985:66), Givón (1983a, 1983b) and Fox (1983).

⁴⁰ Conf. Foley and Van Valin Jr. (1984).

⁴¹ Conf. §2.5.1 for the definitions of activation, reactivation and continuation.

⁴² Conf. §2.5.1.3

(Runge 2007:40). Furthermore, Runge concurs that discourse presents a hierarchical nature,⁴³ and reckons that changes in place, time, participant and action signal discontinuity which may either be marked or default depending on the position of the disruption in the text (Ibid. 126). He presents a detail study with examples and concludes that NPs, *וַיְהִי* and relexicalisations signal new development units, while notable change of participant, geographical or temporary setting of participant signal thematic units (Ibid. 127–144). Again, according to Dooley and Levinsohn (2000:56) the *pragmatic function* ‘signals the activation status and prominence of the referents or the actions they perform.’ Runge (2001:55–59) builds upon this and argues that the variation in the encoding of participants depends on the type of participant (major, minor or props) and this determines the *kind, amount or strategy* of encoding. He also draws upon the works of Maibaum (1978), Perrin (1978), Toba (1978), Levinsohn (1978, 1994, 2000a), and Clark (2000) and posits that overencoding signals something *other than the semantic or processing purpose*, thus the pragmatic purpose (Ibid. 42–44). Runge applies this theory to some biblical texts and differentiates between *natural prominence* and *pragmatically marked prominence*.⁴⁴ He emphasises that natural prominence is conveyed by verb types, while pragmatically-marked prominence highlights or lays emphasis besides its thematic and cataphoric effects (Runge 2007:145–179). When he applies this to Genesis 27, he views all kinship terminology (Anchoring Relations) as pragmatically marked for prominence and possessing a thematic effect on the narrative. He demonstrates that thematic highlighting increases the prominence of crucial information by “*switching or supplementing referring expressions*”⁴⁵ to indicate either a change or update in role with the pragmatic effect of “*reorienting the participant to the discourse, indicating center of attention within the discourse or indicating the narrator’s point of view*” (Runge 2007:152–168). Runge follows on from pioneers like Givón (1983a, 2000b:4), Huang (2000:230), de Regt (1999b:60–62), Levinsohn (2000a:140ff) and Perrin (178:110–111) and concludes that overencoding is used to highlight a following speech or event (especially a climax) (Runge 2007:168–174).

Runge’s studies on participant reference presents a great resource to the linguistic approach. He has a succinct theoretical framework which he has followed successfully by applying it to a wide range of texts in Genesis 12–25 and 27. At each

⁴³ Conf. Chafe (1980, 1987), Prince (1980), Clancy (1980), Anderson et al. (1983), Givón (1984:245), Tomlin (1987), Fox (1987a, 1987b), Garrod et al. (1988), Gordon et al. (1993), Talstra (1997:94ff), Levinsohn (2000), Dooley and Levinsohn (2001). Runge presents the discourse hierarchy as follows:

- Clause: lowest level of building blocks.
- Development Unit: building blocks of Episodes comparable to Longacre’s ‘paragraph.’
- Episode: a portion of a thematic unit or the entire thematic unit.
- Thematic Unit: made up of many episodes.
- Discourse: made up of thematic units.

⁴⁴ “Natural prominence refers to the significance one discourse constituent has relative to comparable alternatives available in a given context;” while pragmatically marked prominence refers to “prominence which is pragmatically assigned to a constituent by the speaker/writer via some sort of marker, such as focus particles, discourse markers such as *hinneh*, or marked information structures” (Runge 2007:148). This agrees with my argument that at every crucial moment in the dialogues in Genesis 27, the participants are referenced by *WayX plus Extension*.

⁴⁵ “Switching referring expressions (is) substituting an alternative referring expression for a referent’s primary referring expression, (and) supplementing referring expressions (is) adding anchoring or other thematic information to the referring expression of an active or semi-active participant” (Runge 2007:152).

stage he has presented arguments with a clairvoyance of what his discourse-functional approach requires. He continuously advocates for a proper account of referencing devices as a basis for a proper linguistic approach to participant reference. He also follows the footsteps of other pioneers to make a demarcation between default and marked patterns of participant referencing and argues for a proper differentiation of the semantic, processing and pragmatic functions. Also, Runge's emphasis on the proper identification of the pragmatic functions of overencoding (especially Anchoring Relations) deserves a strong commendation.⁴⁶ His proper identification exposes the importance of prominence, thematic and cataphoric highlighting of participants. The aim of Runge's study has been to present a general approach to participants referencing based on Dooley's and Levinsohn's default/marked pattern as demonstrated in his arguments and conclusions. Although Runge's conclusions seem to prescribe a general pattern of participant referencing, his treatment of the subject at certain points deserves some comments which will distinguish my approach from his.

First, Runge lays a solid theoretical framework for participant reference but does not define what a participant is. It is only in his studies that one assumes his working definition as being limited to what Longacre (1989) calls "dramatis personae." While he argues for a comprehensive linguistic approach to participant reference, his theory only applies to the human actants that occur within a narrative. A question that may arise is how other inanimate participants are referenced or whether these have no roles in the understanding of narratives.

Second, Runge builds upon Dooley's and Levinsohn's (2000) theory and argues with respect to the semantic functions that the length of absence of a participant and potential interference of other participants affect the amount of encoding necessary for reactivation. The basic question here is on the definition of length of absence. How long should a participant be absent to require reactivation? Runge's (2007:176–205) application of length of absence to Genesis 27, presents a challenge to the reader to identify who among the participants is active, semi-active or inert.⁴⁷ I construe that Runge's approach is affected by the three-fold classification of participants and the changing nature of participants from one (sub)paragraph to another within the same narrative. I will argue for an expansion of types of participants (conf. §2.3).

Third, Runge acknowledges the fact that linguistic markers are bi-polar and that the use of one implies the absence of the other and vice versa (Runge 2007:20–26). In Runge's treatment of the semantic functions of participant referencing, he adapts a set of rules that define default encoding (S1/N1-S5/N5) and argues that any

⁴⁶ The articulation of the pragmatic functions of Anchoring Relation, in my opinion, presents one of Runge's greatest contribution in the linguistic approach to participant referencing.

⁴⁷Runge (2007:177) is not clear on the length of absence of participants in Genesis 27. Thus, he writes:

"Due to the mention of Isaac, Rebekah and Esau in the last verse before Gen 27, we construe all participants as clearly being semi-active with the possible exception of Jacob, who was last mentioned in 25:34. Although all are semi-active, consideration must be given to the most probable anchoring relation of each... therefore Jacob and Esau are likely viewed as '*Isaac's sons*,' and Rebekah as '*Isaac's wife*,' ..., we construe all four participants as active due to the fact that none have recently been explicitly anchored to one another."

He begins by arguing for the possible inactiveness of Jacob. But somehow, he creates an argument to make Jacob semi-active based on an anchoring relation. This, in my opinion, is not convincing. I believe Runge would have been justified if Jacob had a different referent or further overspecification other than being anchored to Rebekah.

encoding out of these rules is marked and adopted by the writer either for processing or for pragmatic reasons. An example is:

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־רִבְקָה אִמּוֹ
 "And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother"

Runge argues with respect to the point of view (POV) that the anchoring expression "his mother," designates the POV of the one to whom a participant is anchored, in this case Jacob. He builds upon Berlin's use of POV, and contends that the use of the anchoring expression exposes the identity of the central character rather than defining a cultural relation (Runge, 2007:78. Also conf. Berlin 1983:59ff). Furthermore, he establishes that the anchoring expression supplements and thematically gives prominence. While the anchoring participant's POV is important (explicitly), it is my opinion that the anchored participant's POV is also important (implicitly), and a proper understanding and designation of participants will require both views. Therefore, what does it mean to use *his mother* with respect to Jacob and Rebekah? When the narrator uses *his mother* to describe Rebekah's relation to Jacob, two POVs are portrayed as follows: (a) from Jacob's POV, Rebekah is a 'mother.' Jacob is referenced by the clitic personal pronoun which describes Rebekah's relationship to him. This is made explicit in the narrative; and (b) from Rebekah's POV, Jacob is a 'son.' Rebekah is referenced as 'mother of him' shown by the genitive of relation, where 'him' refers to Jacob. This is not explicitly mentioned in the narrative but has an implication on the understanding of the narrative. It is my opinion that the anchoring and the anchored participants present the bi-polar nature of anchoring expressions, and represent a comprehensive understanding of both the grammatical, syntactic, pragmatic and semantic relations between the members of a clause. Since these are important to the understanding of the whole narrative, emphasis on one may blur the other and thus affect the readers' understanding of the participants and their roles or even the entire narrative. In addition, the Anchoring Relation betrays a sociological hierarchy of "mother-son." Although Runge has identified it, he has not discussed it under the pragmatic functions. (Runge 2007:68).⁴⁸ Thus, besides its use to identify the center of attention, thematic highlighting and indication of prominence (salience), I will argue that the Anchoring Relation indicates a social hierarchy.

Fourth, when Runge applies the discourse-functional approach to Genesis 27, he argues that the discontinuity of Gen 27:5 marks this verse as off-line information (Runge 2007:180–181). He writes:

Based on observations from our corpus, the switch to Rebekah as agent is sufficiently discontinuous to be viewed as a distinct unit. Furthermore, the patients of the participial clause are both redundantly relexicalized. The statement could have easily been rendered, '*Now Rebekah was listening to his words...*' and the reader would have understood the words of Isaac to Esau were the intended anaphor. Instead, both Isaac (N3) and Esau (N1) are relexicalized, with Esau's reference being thematically marked by the

⁴⁸ While Runge has mentioned the prominence of the role of Isaac as '*father*' and Esau as '*brother*', he has not done so for Jacob and Rebekah and neither sees the roles of '*son*' and '*mother*' as equally salient. Throughout his discussion on this topic, he mentions Isaac's role as *father* three times and Esau's role as *brother* twice (Runge 2007:194–196).

addition of the appositive 'his son.' Such overencoding, in combination with the switch from Esau to Rebekah back to Esau, all contribute to the discontinuity of this clause within the overall flow of the narrative. Use of non-finite verbal form further marks v.5a as discontinuous with the flow of finite verbs, marking it as off-line information (Ibid.).⁴⁹

Runge treats Gen 27:5 alongside Gen 27:15, 26 and 30 as discontinuities for pragmatic reasons (Ibid. 181). He seems to base his argument on the hierarchical differentiation of clause types. In the treatment of clause types, Den Exter (1995:11, n 22 and 52) has argued that nominal and participial clauses often give background information. Exter bases his argument on Weinrich's tense theory and Schneider's clause type hierarchical distinction (Schneider 1974:48). He also builds upon Groß's (1980:131–145) circumstantial clause (as background clause) and concludes that this clause type precedes and follows the Wayyiqtol clause type. Based upon Exter's argument, Runge's off line assessment of this participial clause is plausible. Although this assessment of the participial clause as background clause type is valid on the narrative verb ranking level, Runge's reading of Gen 27:5 does not connect the participle to the following InfC which signifies an activity that occurs contemporaneously with the foreground action.

Gen 27:5a	ורבקה שמעת בדבר יצחק אל-עשו בנו "And Rebekah was listening as Isaac was talking to Esau his son"
Gen 27:5c	וילך עשו השדה "And Esau went to the field"

Runge's basis is the relexicalisation of Isaac and Esau after the participle. He therefore considers Gen 27:5a as a 'distinct development' (Runge 2007:180–181). As already mentioned, de Regt (1999a:18) treats this as a new paragraph on grounds of change of locality. I will argue from grammatical and syntactic perspectives that the deviation from the normal or default narrative pattern in this sense does not mark the beginning of a new paragraph but indicates simultaneity.⁵⁰ This implies that Rebekah's listening goes on at the same time with Isaac's instructions to Esau. The relexicalisation of Esau and Isaac in the later part of the clause shows that the actions are ongoing (at the same time) and important; and defines the function of the participle. This seems to be the only means with which the writer can indicate these simultaneous actions. It will be odd to assume that Rebekah only listened after Isaac had finished speaking to Esau and Esau had gone to the field. But how did Rebekah gather this information? Did Isaac inform her later? This is unlikely, and the text does not mention anything as such. The position of this clause presents the best option because it would have been

⁴⁹ Both Runge and de Regt consider Gen 27:5a as the beginning of a new paragraph. While Runge argues for a pragmatic reason, de Regt sees a change in geographical location.

⁵⁰ Muraoka has also noted this and argues: "An inf. cst (InfC) prefixed with the preposition Beth (ב) is best interpreted as a temporal adjunct rather than indicating the content of visual (ראה) or aural (שמע) perception: ... In all the relevant cases the action indicated by the inf. is contemporaneous with that indicated by the lead verb, which is the case in 1Sm 14.27, for J. was not there to hear when his father adjured the people, nor did J. get to hear that his father had" (J-M §125mc). This is also attested and discussed in Malessa (2003:145–149).

read differently if the narrator placed it after Esau had gone to the field. Runge's off-line interpretation of the participial clause in Gen 27:5a might suggest that Rebekah's listening occurs after Esau had gone to the field.⁵¹ It is only in this position that the clause can assume an off-line rendering. Understood in terms of simultaneity, I will disagree with Runge's assertion that the narrator applies a double switching where one would have been sufficient.

Fifth, when Runge applies his activation model to Genesis 27, he assumes that all four participants are active based on their Anchoring Relations to Isaac (Runge 2007: 177). He moves on to construe Rebekah's activation in Gen 27:5 as S4 (semi-active) because she is not mentioned in the preceding clause, and Jacob's activation as N4 (Gen 27:6), in the object position (Ibid. Also see the Hebrew Text in appendix 2 of Runge 2007: 218–220). I differ with Runge because Rebekah has been either in the active or semi-active states from Gen 25:19 and because her last appearance is in Gen 26:35 (22 *clause atoms apart*); while Jacob's last appearance is in Gen 25:34 (518 *clause atoms apart*). The implication of this is that Runge also construes Esau (Gen 26:34 and 27:1) in the same activation state (Ibid.). Although his argument can be feasible, its application to this text agrees more with the literary perspective rather than with text-syntactic analysis. This also demonstrates a shortcoming in the three-fold classification of participants, which Runge has followed. Considering the length of deactivation of Esau (from Gen 25:34–26:33; 135 *clause atoms apart*) and the intervening participants in Genesis 26, it would have been better to suppose that his relexicalisation in Gen 26:34b in a nominal circumstantial clause (NP+NmCI) indicates that he has moved into the inert (lapsed) state of the reader's long-term memory requiring a strong cognitive memory for reactivation. The same would hold for the reactivation of Jacob in Gen 27:6 (NP+extension). On Runge's activation scale this will be S5 and N5 for Esau and Jacob respectively. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Esau, Jacob and Isaac are considered as being in the same semi-active state after 22 *clause atoms* (Gen 26:1–33), 518 *clause atoms* (Gen 25:34a–27:6a) and 3 *clause atoms* (Gen 27:1b) respectively. This leads Runge to consider Esau and Jacob as minor participants because they are anchored to Isaac (major participant). In order to present a proper understanding of the referencing patterns that the narrator has applied to these participants, I will argue that all four (Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob) are major and in the active or semi-active states at the beginning of Genesis 27 and that they maintain this status throughout this narrative section. This is based on their occurrences in the preceding narrative sections (conf. §3.5). Although there are introductions of other intervening participants they do not assume roles that lead to the decay of Esau and Jacob into inactivity.

Sixth, the Anchoring Relation is central to Runge's approach and he argues that every anchoring expression signifies 'thematic highlighting' (Runge 2007:161–173,187–200). One of the major contributions is its use to trace the center of attention or the theme/topic. The theme in this narrative section is based on kinship nouns (father, mother, elder son, younger son, son or brother). While the theme highlights the topic, or focus of the narrative, it also highlights the social setting of the narrative. Evidence to this is the narrator's preference to kinship terms where minimal encoding is appropriate, e.g. Gen 27:13a.

⁵¹ He writes (2007:180): "The writer has placed the comment about Rebekah listening between the command and the report." I assume that if this is a comment, it is the writer's insertion, and has no effect on the understanding of the narrative. This is not the case here. If Gen 27:5a is taken off, the sense of the narrative will change and readers will never understand how Rebekah got the information to report to Jacob (conf. §2.7.2.3 for the syntactic remarks on this verse).

Seventh, when Runge studies the effect of participant referencing on the structure of a text, he acknowledges the hierarchical nature of a text and posits that a text observes the following hierarchy: “clause << development unit (DU) << episode << thematic unit << discourse” (Ibid. 127). With clauses as the lowest building blocks, development units make up an episode, episodes make up a thematic unit and thematic units make up a discourse (Ibid.). Runge makes a sharp demarcation between the various effects of participant referencing on the structure of a text, limiting it to the processing function (marked encoding) (Ibid. 121–144) while allotting the default encoding to the semantic function (Ibid. 90–120). One question of importance is whether the default pattern has no effect on the text structure. The implication is that Runge considers the start of every ‘new development unit’ as marked and that the beginning of every unit in the text hierarchy is marked. Contrary to Runge’s approach, de Regt has argued that usual (default encoding) forms appear at the beginning, middle or end of paragraphs or development units both at the macro-narrative and lower narrative levels (de Regt 1999 and Longacre 1989). Thus, the default encoding also represents a processing function. Furthermore, Runge applies Waltke’s structure, to define the linguistic pattern of a text.⁵² I do not advocate for the incompatibility of these approaches but give primacy to the linguistic over the literary. Runge argues that Waltke’s (2001:376–382) structure to Genesis 27 is based on the natural flow of the story line (Runge 2007:182), which, in my opinion, is more literary than linguistic. In the same light the marking of Runge’s DUs follow the same pattern, although his original aim is to study the text from a linguistic perspective. Runge, therefore, begins from the literary to the linguistic, which affects the syntactic relations of the text structure.

2.2.3. *Summary of de Regt’s and Runge’s Approaches*

Runge and de Regt have separate approaches to participant reference. While de Regt studies the distribution of referencing patterns, Runge endeavours to offer a systematic study from a discourse-functional perspective. Runge and de Regt agree on the demarcation between usual (unmarked/default) and unusual (marked) patterns of participant referencing. They also acknowledge the importance of the semantic, processing and pragmatic effects for proper participant referencing as well as the classification of participants and the referencing patterns that go with each type. Another point of agreement is the effect of referencing devices on the structure of a narrative. Runge expounds on the importance of Anchoring Relations and their various pragmatic uses. He builds on the theoretical framework of Dooley and Levinsohn (2000) and applies his arguments to a range of text in the Genesis narrative. Lacking in both Runge’s and de Regt’s studies of participant referencing is a clear account for the changing nature of participants from one paragraph to another within the same narrative section. Runge clearly demonstrates this when his approach does not define the activation status of participants at the beginning of Genesis 27. He, together with others, argues that the length of absence of a participant leads to a decay of the participant from active to semi-active and to inactivity. I have asked what length is needed for a participant to go into inactivity. De Regt on his part has argued that the status of a participant changes between major, minor and prop within the same narrative. He demonstrates with respect to Esau and Jacob in Gen 25:29–34 that Jacob is a major participant while Esau is minor. I will argue with respect to the patriarchal narratives

⁵² In the same vein, de Regt too adopts Kuhn’s 1994 literary structure to define the linguistic pattern of Genesis 27. Also conf. §2.7.6.2 for a comparative study of Runge’s and de Regt’s structures and a proposed structure developed from the ETCBC text hierarchy encoding.

that a major participant remains major regardless of the number of intervening participants. However, a minor participant or prop can progress from one narrative section and be a major participant in another narrative section. Runge's and de Regt's arguments, in my opinion, indicate that the current classification of participants cannot account for the large repertoire of participants in BH narratives. I have proposed an expansion of types of participants from the commonly held three-fold to seven-fold. Another problem highlighted by Runge and de Regt is the difficulty to mark the beginning of paragraphs as well as differentiate between clauses. They both argue for a linguistic basis but their use of the various structures of a narrative like clause, paragraph and development unit (or new development) is unclear. This affects their referencing patterns and structures. In the following section, I will classify participants and present working definitions which I will use for this study.

2.3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

2.3.1. *Participants*

A participant is 'any element of the clause that has a thematic role in (i.e. participates in) the actions or events of a discourse' (Walton 2007:17 n1)⁵³ or individuals, groups of things that are mentioned and that contribute to the construction of the storyline within a narrative. According to Longacre (1989:141–143), the participants within a narrative may either be human actors or other elements which include animate and inanimate objects or natural forces, locales and time intervals (See also Bakker 2011:182). In Walton's study of Qohelet, he uses the term, participant, to include moral and ethical qualities like 'wisdom' and 'folly' whose participation in wisdom literature is of vital importance (Walton 2007:17 n1).⁵⁴ Basically, clause constituents participate to make the clause intelligible. Thus, the primary meaning of a 'participant' should be any constituent or element that participates in the events of a narrative. Participation in itself demands action. The result is that other nomenclature such as 'actors' or 'actants' (Talstra 1993, 1996) have been applied as synonyms to participants. Unlike 'participant,' the use of 'actor' might be misleading if an actor is regarded as the participant performing at a particular point in the narrative-i.e. only as the subject of a clause.⁵⁵ An example may suffice to demonstrate this. Consider the clauses:

Peter approached *John* and gave him a *pencil*.

Peter is the 'participant' carrying out the actions and John is the recipient or beneficiary of Peter's actions. In the semantic domain, there is an interaction between *Peter*, *John* and the *pencil* that all form the 'set of actors' in the clauses. However, it might be misleading for a reader to think that only Peter is the 'actor', John a passive recipient and the pencil an 'object.' The term 'actant' was used by Tesnière (1959) to describe a linguistic view analogous to a theoretical semantic category. This was then borrowed by Greimas (1966) and used to develop the 'actantial model' based on Russian folktales (Propp 1928), where he used the term to refer to constituents at both the sentence

⁵³ Also conf. de Regt (1991–1992, 1999a, b).

⁵⁴ In the same light, Oosting's (2011) study of "Zion and Jerusalem" as participants in Isaiah 44–55 signify the broad meaning of "participant."

⁵⁵ Dirk Bakker prefers to use "discourse participant" which involves concrete animate or inanimate participants, and concrete or abstract concepts that are the subject or theme of a conversation (Bakker 2011:182).

and text levels.⁵⁶ Drawing from Greimas, Hebert (2011:51) concludes that an 'actant' may refer to animate elements, inanimate elements or concepts and can be single or collective. While the terms 'participant,' 'actor,' or 'actant,' are applied to all elements, concepts and events within a narrative, in this study, I will apply them to what Longacre (1989:141) refers to as 'dramatis personae.' Within a narrative, the *dramatis personae* are the human actors or actants whose actions and relations make the narrative intelligible. These *dramatis personae* are often designated in many different ways, but in accordance with acceptable conventions within a designated language. In BH, they are often designated by pronouns, nouns or noun phrases, and other elements that represent them within the narrative like verbal inflection.

2.3.2. *Types of Participants*

While participants can be animate or inanimate, concrete or abstract, they can also be (sub)divided into various categories depending on their roles within a narrative. Generally, scholars agree on a three-fold classification of participants (major, minor and props). Here I propose a seven-fold classification which will include: major, minor, prop, main, central, dominant and dominated. Below are the working definitions for each type of participant.

1. *Major Participant*

A major participant is an actant in a narrative who occupies a major role. This major role can include that of a helper, a protagonist or an antagonist (Longacre 1989:142ff). Major participants drive the narrative forward and may appear physically in all the paragraphs (Ibid.). Although a major participant may be physically absent in a paragraph, he or she remains present in the discussions, thoughts or ideas of the other participants involved. A major participant can also be defined as an actant who is always in the active or semi-active memory of the reader within a narrative section. The frequency of occurrence is an important factor to keep a participant in the short-term memory of a reader (Ibid.).⁵⁷ However, the imprecise nature of frequency and its varying application to the study of major participants makes its application unhelpful. It is to this effect that I argue that once activated, a major actant remains either in the active or semi-active states and does not decay into inactivity. This implies that major actants are essential to the understanding of a narrative because they are either physically or mentally present in every paragraph. In the story of Joseph, for example, he is a major participant (protagonist?) as well as his brothers (antagonists?) (Genesis 37–48). This holds true for Moses, YHWH and the Israelites (protagonists?), and Pharaoh and the Egyptians (antagonists?) in the story of the Exodus. Also in 1Samuel 17 David, together with the Israelites (protagonist?), are major participants as well as Goliath and the Philistines (antagonist?). Accordingly, in Gen 27–28, Rebekah and Jacob (protagonists?) and Isaac and Esau (antagonists?),⁵⁸ are major participants. Jacob is the central actant (conf. §2.3.2.5), but his success is born out of his interaction with Rebekah who stands as his counselor and initiates his discussions with Isaac. From a literary point of view, Rebekah stands as Jacob's helper (Greimas 1968:178, Fontanille 2003:121 and Hebert 2011:49), while from a syntactic perspective, she is

⁵⁶ Others who have developed and used the 'actantial' notion include: Souriau 1950, Fillmore 1968, Hendricks 1977, Nef 1979, Henault 1983, Simonsen 1984, Greimas 1987, Budniakiewicz 1992, Fontanille 2003 and Hébert 2007.

⁵⁷ The frequency of a major actant in a narrative has also been attested by Dooley and Levinsohn (2000:60) and Nozawa (2000:24).

⁵⁸ I have added question signs after protagonist and antagonist because of their ambiguous meanings.

just one of the major actants whose interaction with Jacob achieves the goal of the narrative.⁵⁹ Isaac and Esau are also major participants whose roles are distinct to those of Rebekah and Jacob. The major participants can be termed the life wire or backbone of any narrative. Nonetheless, their roles cannot constitute the whole narrative. Hence, the narrator depends on the other participants to make the narrative meaningful.

2. *Minor Participant*

As opposed to a major participant, the role of a minor participant is restricted within portions of a narrative (Longacre 1989:142ff). The sparse occurrence of minor actants within the paragraphs of a narrative section enables them to easily lapse into the long-term memory of the reader (Dooley and Levinsohn 2000:60). This does not undermine the roles of minor actants but highlight the fact that a major part of a narrative could still be understood without the roles of some of the minor actants. The minor participant's role within the narrative may depend on that of the major or may be to give the reader a better means to understand the role of the major participant (Longacre 1989:142ff). In other words, a minor participant can be defined as that 'participant who often fades out of the readers' memory or who is often forgotten when other participants are activated in a narrative.' YHWH can be seen as a minor participant within the story of Isaac's family because he appears only in two sections. The same holds true for Judith, Maha'lath and Basemath.⁶⁰ In the story of Joseph and his life in Egypt, the following participants can be said to be minor: Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39), the cup bearer and the baker (Genesis 40) and Joseph's steward (Genesis 41) (Longacre 1989:143). There is also mention of a certain man who directed Joseph to where his brothers were pasturing sheep in Gen 37:15–17, who is also a minor participant.

3. *Prop*

A prop is a minor participant whose role serves to introduce or link the reader into a new or wider concept of a narrative. Props can be human beings, animate or inanimate objects or natural forces. The introduction of props in a narrative is very subtle but their role is very crucial. One key role of props as minor actants is to provide a link between two major narrative units. In this case, a prop or minor actant in one narrative unit can assume the position of a major actant in another. In the story of Joseph, Longacre (1989:143) identifies Benjamin as a human prop who reincarnates the hatred of Joseph's brothers but at the same time shows that they are repentant. The reincarnation affects both Joseph and his family [Jacob—his father and his brothers (Genesis 42)]. Longacre also identifies Joseph's special cloak given by Jacob and the cloak left in the hands of Potiphar's wife as inanimate props (Ibid.). Also, Abraham stands as a human prop in the story of Isaac and his family, linking Isaac backward to the preceding narrative and forward to the following. Laban and Bethu'el are also human props which lay a wider proleptic context for the narrative. This goes the same

⁵⁹ According to Greimas' actantial model the helper is anyone who 'assists in achieving the desired junction between the subject and the object' (Greimas 1968:178). Rebekah creates avenues for Jacob to meet Isaac and thus fits the position of a helper who assists Jacob to become the person around whom the narrative revolves.

⁶⁰ Judith, Maha'lath and Basemath are examples of participants who do not carry out any active part in the *Toledoth* of Isaac but for the fact that their names are mentioned as Esau's wives. Their mention has an effect on the understanding of this narrative.

with Esau's hairy nature and name (Edom) which is a prop to the blessing encounter in Genesis 27 and his future as ancestors to the Edomites respectively.

4. Main Participant

The main participant is often a major participant on whose behalf a narrative is written or told. Depending on the nature and length of the narrative, this main participant might be absent within some narrative sections. While other major and minor participants are developed in the narrative, the main narrative line remains focused on the main participant until the end. The traditional *Toledoth* division of the patriarchal narratives might serve to clarify the position of a main participant. Following the *Toledoth* formulae (Longacre 1989), the story of the three patriarchs can be divided into the following sections:

- Gen 11:17–25:11: The narrative of Terah
- Gen 25:19–35:29: The narrative of Isaac
- Gen 37:02–50:21: The narrative of Jacob

From a text linguistic and discourse analytical perspective, the activation of Isaac and Jacob in Gen 25:19 and Gen 37:2 coincides with a new aspect of their activity signaling the prominence of the actants (Andersen 1994:243 and Revell 1996:61) whose story is subsequently told and at the same time segmenting the narrative from the preceding (Revell 1996:60ff). Although other participants appear within these narratives and may occupy central positions, Terah, Isaac and Jacob remain the main participants because it is their story that is being told in the narratives following their activation in the topic sentences. The narratives are about the lives of these patriarchs and their families. Accordingly, Isaac is the main participant in Genesis 25–28 with any other participant contributing to his story. Also, the *Toledoth* formula presents a traditional approach to the division of the patriarchal narratives. However, the referencing pattern of the main actants involved present linguistic features which serve to activate the actants and segment the narrative. There is also evidence from the grammar and syntax that the *Toledoth* formula serves to mark a shift from one main participant to the other. The reference to the main participant in the *Toledoth* formula is always by use of an NmCl. In Gen 25:19, Isaac is referred to by use of a NmCl:

25:19 ואלה תולדת יצחק בן־אברהם
“And these are the generations of *Isaac son of Abraham*”

While Andersen has argued that the *Toledoth* formula introduces prominence, Revell (1996:60–61) argues that besides other uses of nominals, its use to designate an actant often coincides with a new aspect of the actant's activity (either 'topic' or 'different phase of action').⁶¹ Although Isaac is already known from the previous narrative, Gen 25:19 marks a new or different phase of Isaac's activities. In this narrative section he assumes the status of a main actant.⁶²

⁶¹ Chapter 4 of Revell's book deals with the various uses of nominals in the designation of participants. In the same light, Roy L. Heller (2004:24) has argued that the use of the *Toledoth* formula with respect to the ancestors often introduces the one who is the subject of the subsequent story (Gen 6:9, 11:10, 11:27, 26:1–2).

⁶² The referencing pattern in Gen 25:19 is not used for any other participant in the narrative until Gen 36:1. Isaac is first activated as a complement of the topic clause and immediately followed by another clause where he becomes the subject. This is the same in Gen 36:1–2. Revell (1996:74–80) calls this

5. *Central Participant*

Besides the main actant, there is also the 'central actant.' Just like the main actant, a central actant is a major participant, but one whose role is thematic or central to the whole narrative. The 'central participant' is the one who becomes the center of attention (central) in the narrative or around whom the narrative revolves.⁶³ An example may help clarify this. Consider an army battalion at war front with a "General" in the monitoring and control unit. While there are Army Commanders at the war front with the rest of the troops, they listen to and follow the instructions of the "General" via the "Commanders." When they are successful, the General is credited as being central and key actor to the success achieved, not because he went to the war front, but because he played a strategic (central) role and because his plans and strategies have been primary to the victory. All involved in the war may be major participants: General, Commanders and fighters. But the central participant is the General. Revell (1996:23 n 15) uses the term 'thematic actor' to define a central actant and states that:

The thematic actor indicated by the narrator's focus is typically the character most frequently represented in a passage as subject of a clause and most commonly referred to by pronouns.

Accordingly, Longacre (1989:144) identifies Joseph as the central participant in the story of Jacob's family. This too can be said of Jacob in Genesis 27–28.

6. *Dominant and Dominated Participant*

Within each (sub)paragraph, there is always a dominant participant (the actant who carries out the actions-subject/speaker). The actant who is passive, (object, complement, addressee), is not necessarily minor and the speaker major. This means that in a (sub)paragraph where two major actants are involved, they maintain their status regardless of the roles they play. A *dominant participant* can be defined as a participant who plays a dominant role in a (sub)paragraph and the *dominated participant* then is the one who plays a less dominant role (passive) in the same (sub)paragraph of a narrative. While de Regt (1999a) has argued that a participant's status changes between 'major' and 'minor' within the scenes,⁶⁴ I will maintain that in a (sub)paragraph (of at least two actants) where an actant is active and another is passive, the active participant is the dominant participant and the passive participant is the dominated participants. E.g., in Gen 25:29–34, Jacob is the *dominant participant* and Esau is the *dominated participant* but both Jacob and Esau are major participants. On the other hand, I posit that a prop or minor participant can be a dominant participant in a scene. Longacre (1989:143) confirms this when he says that Potiphar's wife is the dominant participant in the scene involving her and Joseph—yet she is a minor participant. Nevertheless, Longacre does not identify the dominance of Potiphar's wife as representing another category of participants.

'compound designation' which can either serve to reintroduce or establish Isaac in this context or highlight his importance in the following narrative besides other functions of compound designations.

⁶³ Longacre (1989) also considers the central participant as the protagonist. However, I posit that more than one actant can be the protagonist of a narrative but among them is one who assumes the role of the central actant. In addition, the ambiguous nature of protagonist and/or antagonist makes its application as a rule to centrality difficult.

⁶⁴ Although I agree with Longacre (1989) on the "slate of participants in the whole story," I have argued against his principle of frequency as a determining factor for the activeness of a major participant.

2.3.3. *Clause*

A clause is made up of constituents which interact to define its intended meaning. Hence, van der Merwe et al. (1999:59) defines a clause as "... a meaningful series of words that has a subject and a predicate.' Accordingly, the ETCBC encoding considers a clause as any syntactic structure in which predication is found (van Peursen 2007: 279. see also Bakker 2011:177). The occurrence of predication in clauses in BH can take place in both verbal (finite verbs) and non-verbal clauses (nominal, elliptical, casus pendens and participial). Clause constituents accomplish syntactic functions of a subject, direct object or complement, adjective, modifier, adjunct etc.; and as the basic building blocks of a clause, they help the reader to see how a participant is referenced. For the ETCBC model, a clause forms the basic building block in a text hierarchy. It is this notion of a clause (and its encoding in the ETCBC database) that will be applied to the study of Genesis 27–28.

2.3.4. *Paragraph*

A narrative text is made up of various sections which are often interdependent. Also, each narrative section is part of a larger narrative linked to each other by inference. To understand the larger narrative, the reader is required to provide an internal textual division with cohesion to facilitate a clear understanding of the narrative story line. This division which is often termed paragraphing is an essential element in the understanding of the communication of the narrative story line. Furthermore, paragraphs are needed in a text for a proper identification of the actants involved (Talstra 1996:99). However, the foremost question is where a reader should begin or end a paragraph. This question is sustained by the disparity scholars hold on an acceptable definition of a paragraph. Some scholars define a paragraph with respect to theme and others lay emphasis on the context (Porter 1992:301ff). Again, some define a paragraph in terms of the unity of time, place and actors (Talstra 1996, De Regt 1999a and Runge 2007). Beekman and Callow (1974:267–267) define a paragraph based on the theme in each narrative section and argue that (Ibid 279):

The basic criterion is that a section, or paragraph, deals with one theme. If the theme changes, then a new unit has started. There are many types of details, grammatical and semantic, to be drawn on to reach a decision, but what gives a section or paragraph its overall coherence as a semantic unit is the fact that one subject matter is being dealt with.

In the same light, Larsen (1991c:48) states:

Although the basic criterion for establishing a paragraph is the semantic concept of a single theme, there are various grammatical features which may lend support to such boundaries (Also conf. Winedt 1999:89).

In Beekman's and Callow's, and Larsen's definitions, the underlying explanation of a paragraph is seen as a semantic unit within a narrative, albeit the authors give the possibility for the influence of other grammatical features on the demarcation of paragraphs in a text. Blass (1990: 81–83) on the other hand has argued that a paragraph boundary can be determined depending on the context of a narrative. She posits that the context (which includes culture of reader) alone can define the unit of a paragraph

(Ibid. 82). Thus, a single text can have multiple structures depending on who is reading the text, how the reader perceives the text, and how the culture of the reader perceives what is written in the text. The question here is whether a text can have a multi-layered structure or whether various structures can be imposed upon it. This discrepancy in definition which leads to a multiplication of reading and interpretation approaches to a single text highlights the vague nature of the term 'paragraph.' The definition of a 'paragraph,' in terms of 'a set of sentences,' does not help either. While some languages take a paragraph to mean a unit beyond a clause, other languages have phrases or clauses that are read as paragraphs. Therefore, there is no universally acceptable definition for a paragraph. In BH, the definition of a paragraph is as complex because it manifests all the phenomena mentioned in the preceding arguments. If a paragraph is defined with respect to a theme or context, then what does it constitute? Runge (2007:127) defines a paragraph as a 'development unit' which forms the 'building block of an episode,' and is made up of clauses. His preference for 'development unit,' to 'paragraph,' betrays this complexity in the definition of a paragraph in BH. However, his definition of 'clause,' 'development unit,'⁶⁵ and 'episode' are as elusive as 'paragraph' and lean more towards a semantic segmentation of a text than on the syntactic relations between the clauses. As a 'development unit,' a paragraph is marked by a shift in theme, content or context. Runge follows the convention of other linguists to provide the meaning of a paragraph and applies it to the Hebrew narrative in Genesis. Although his approach presents a great contribution to the reading of these narratives, there is evidence that his emphasis on context, content and theme rather than on syntactic relations have greatly affected the interpretation of his chosen corpus. Thus, a linguistic approach to paragraph division should dwell primarily on the syntactic relations that occur within a narrative unit.⁶⁶

Talstra (1997:99–100) has argued that the definition of a Hebrew paragraph in terms of communication coherence or coherence of the set of 'actants'⁶⁷ presents the goal of paragraphing and not the understanding of its linguistic features. He posits that the meaning of a paragraph should begin with the syntactic relations that occur between clause constituents in a narrative rather than on conclusions drawn from the content of the narrative (Ibid.). He moves on to establish an 'operational definition' by setting up linguistic markers to aid a computer indicate the beginning of new paragraphs in a narrative and concludes that a new paragraph can be indicated by "a. the presence or absence of directly observable markers in the text (and) b. the phenomenon of recursion in the applications of markers" (Ibid. 100). While the presence or absence of markers are indicated by explicit use of a noun as subject of a clause or a

⁶⁵There is some inconsistency in Runge's use of 'development unit' (DU) as an equivalent term to 'paragraph.' He constantly applies DU and 'New Development' interchangeably but nowhere does he make it explicit that both terms are either the same or distinct (Runge 2007:121, 128, 129, 131 and 132). It is therefore difficult to understand when a 'New Development' is equal to a DU and when it is not. He also considers direct speeches as 'New Developments' in a narrative (§3), but does not indicate whether these 'New Developments' are equal to DUs. This inconsistent use of terms might lead to the conclusion that every 'New Development' is a DU. However, such terms remain elusive and need syntactic evidence to make them useful to a narrative.

⁶⁶ Although other linguistic features affect paragraph division, I agree with Talstra (1997) that the syntactic features are primary because they serve to evade ambiguity in the identification of the actants.

⁶⁷ Accordingly, Lowery (1995:258) defines a paragraph as 'that group of clauses which have the same major participants.'

shift in the set of actants, recursion in these markers affect the sequence of the paragraphs with some embedded into others (Ibid 100ff).⁶⁸ The effect of this is a text hierarchy which defines the syntactic structure of a narrative text (Ibid.). Talstra's proposition indicates that the definitions of a paragraph based on the theme, content or context of a textual unit do not contribute to the understanding of the syntactic relations between the various units but lean towards the literary understanding which considers the genre, theme or context of a narrative as important markers. He builds upon Schneider's application of Weinrich's tense theory and argues that paragraphs can be marked by the following clause types at various levels of a text hierarchy (Ibid. 101):

- Wayyiqtol-X or W-X-Qatal, where X is a NPdet marking a subject;
- Wayyitol-0, i.e. a wayyiqtol clause introducing change of subject not marked by an NPdet, but marked:
 - i) Either by a shift in person-number-gender (PNG) of the verb...,
 - ii) Or by a shift in pattern of actors: Object or Complement of the previous clause becomes Subject of the actual clause...
- ויהי + reference of time or place...;
- ויהי + כ + InfC + NPdet (subject in the infinitive clause or in the following wayyiqtol clause);
- Casus pendens, with a new NPdet or a renominalisation of an actor...

This understanding of a paragraph has been applied to the CALAP and Turgama projects and has also been used in the development of the ETCBC database. Its focus on the explicit mention of NPs and shift in sets of actants indicates its usefulness in the study of participant referencing. Hence, in my analysis of participants in Genesis 27–28, I will apply this notion of paragraph and paragraph markers.

2.4. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I have made some methodological considerations that need to be clarified. Two approaches of participant referencing will form the core of this chapter. The first will be the linguistic approach that de Regt and Runge have applied to the study of participants and their effect on the understanding of Genesis 27–28, and the second will be based on the ETCBC model. While the first approach will focus on the works of de Regt (1991-1992, 1999) and Runge (2007) in general, I will lay emphasis on Runge's activation model of S1/N1–S5/N5 and will apply it to the study of this narrative section. This will lay groundwork for a comparative study and analysis between Runge's model and the ETCBC model. The comparative analysis of both approaches will enable me to understand where Runge's approach differs or agrees with the ETCBC model and will lead me to investigate the contribution of the ETCBC database encoding to participant referencing.

In addition, I will read the patriarchal narrative as a single unit for each patriarch. This approach has been prompted by the fact that participants found in Genesis 27–28 have been active in previous narrative sections. Also, considering the *Toledoth*

⁶⁸ Talstra (1997:100) acknowledges that direct speeches could be considered as embedded paragraphs but argues that 'from the perspective of a narrative text the direct speech section may not be a clear case of paragraph embedding since it can be analysed as a direct object to a verb of speaking verb.'

formulae as larger boundary markers, I will from the text hierarchical perspective consider Gen 25:19–35:29 as a single narrative unit (*Toledoth* of Isaac). Genesis 27–28 then becomes an embedded (sub)paragraph in the *Toledoth* of Isaac. In this light, paragraphs at the meta-narrative level will be those that either activate or reactivate the main participant who in this case is Isaac. This will affect the paragraphs and the structure of this narrative unit as encoded in the ETCBC database.⁶⁹ The reading of Genesis 27–28 as a single unit is an attempt to account for the cross-boundary text-syntactic structures. Van Peursen (2013:87ff) has also argued on the credibility of the approach which takes the *Toledoth* as major boundary markers. He builds upon Revell's (1996) introduction of great and well-known figures and posits (with respect to Genesis 37) that the untypical introduction of Joseph, Judah and Reuben is based on the readers' previous knowledge of these participants in the preceding narrative sections. To evade ambiguity in the use of the *Toledoth* formulae in the Genesis narrative (especially Noah's and Terah's *Toledoth*), van Peursen (2013:88–89) concludes that what is known about Noah's and Terah's family repeats itself after the *Toledoth* formulae as he writes:

One could challenge our use of the *Toledoth* argument because other *Toledoth* sections, too, contain certain references to participants that have been introduced before: Noah's *Toledoth* formula is given in Gen 6:9, but he has already been mentioned in Gen 5:29–32 and 6:8 (cf. Pirson 1999:110), and Terah's *Toledoth* formula is given in Gen 11:27, but he has already been mentioned in 11:24–26. In these two...most of the information given before the *Toledoth* formula...is repeated after it and one can, so to speak, start reading from the *Toledoth* formula onwards, without missing essential information.

Furthermore, when it comes to actantial analysis, only four will be considered—Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob, who are all major in either the active or semi-active states in Genesis 27–28, in agreement with Longacre (1989:142) or my argument of their occurrences in previous narrative sections. The other participants who play minor roles will only be mentioned if their activation affects the syntactic structure of this narrative section.

2.5. PATTERNS OF PARTICIPANT REFERENCING IN RUNGE'S MODEL

We have observed that changes in location, time and participant reference pattern affect the structure of a text, dividing it into paragraphs. I will begin this section by defining the general patterns of participant referencing and move on to apply it to our corpus based on Runge's (2006, 2007) and de Regt's (1999a, b) studies of participant reference. Two fundamental patterns of participant referencing are applied. These are the default (usual or unmarked) and the marked (unusual). Developed by Levisohn, Dooley and Bailey (Levisohn 1978, 1990, 1994, 2000a, 2000b and 2003; Dooley and Levisohn 2001 and Bailey and Levisohn 1992), these patterns which were first referred to as default/marked by Clark (2000) have been applied to the study of

⁶⁹ A description of the WIVU (now ETCBC) database is found in Van Peursen 2007—Chapter 7. Also conf. §1.4.1.

actants over a wide range of languages including Koine Greek and BH⁷⁰ to define the basic and alternate forms of referencing. Since our aim is not only to study patterns but also to understand how to follow and track the participants within the narrative, it will be important to discuss each participant's activation as a means to establish the participant into the mental capacity of the reader, trace and track further reference to active participants, and determine how the default and marked patterns affect the understanding of the narrative. In this section I will apply Runge's activation model. I will begin by presenting the examples he uses and discusses from Gen 27:1–28:5 (from the main work and the Hebrew text of appendix 2 of page 218–220) and highlight any functions that Runge has assigned to the devices. In addition, I will apply Runge's model to the ETCBC database's clause division to understand where both approaches complement each other. At the end, I will evaluate the importance of the application of this model to this narrative section.

2.5.1. *Participant Activation*

In many languages a participant is assigned a reference depending on whether it is its first appearance in a narrative or not. Also, the reference considers the function of the participant within the clause. If the participant is the subject, the first reference is often a direct reference (an explicit use of proper name or noun); otherwise, it is referred to indirectly (by use of pronoun). The direct reference of a participant depends on how much presence it has in a reader's short-term memory. Linguists generally agree that once a participant is activated, it remains active and can be referenced as continued and that as other new participants take over, the absence of the first can cause it to lapse into either the semi-active or inert state where more cognitive energy is required to re-introduce or reactivate the first participant to fit into the discourse again.⁷¹ From this argument, participant activation in the semantic domain can be determined by the following conditions: (a) if the participant has not been mentioned or implied earlier in a narrative, its activation type is introduction; (b) if the participant has been mentioned or implied earlier in a narrative, but the activation of other participants have been prominent for a following large portion of a narrative, then the activation type is reactivation or re-introduction; and (c) if the participant has been mentioned and continues to be mentioned (with or without the introduction or intervention of new participants) and when the last mention is within the same or preceding clause or paragraph, the activation type is continuation.

1. *Activation (Initial Introduction)*

The initial introduction is the means by which a new participant in a discourse can be identified and established. Participants are active when they are constantly within a narrative either participating or in the consciousness of both narrator and reader. The method of referencing of active participants in BH is often the use of pronouns [inflectional elements of the finite verb or pronouns in combination with non-

⁷⁰Conf. Levinsohn (1992–revised 2000a) for Koine Greek; Levinsohn (1994) and Dooley and Levinsohn (2001) for BH. Other Languages include: Inga (Quenchan) language of Colombia (Levinsohn 1978) and the Sio language of Papua New Guinea (Clark 2000, Givón 1983a, Tomlin 1987 and Levinsohn 2000a).

⁷¹I have presented a different view to this argument but have also mentioned this here as part of Runge's approach to be able to apply it to his model.

finite (e.g. participle) or non-verbal elements].⁷² According to Runge, activation establishes a '*primary referring expression* for a participant,' or creates a '*semantic connection* for newly activated participants and the discourse context by ... *anchoring relation*' (Runge 2007:91). Two methods are involved in the activation of new participants in a narrative. Activation of a participant can be done using two clauses in which the first establishes the existence of a participant which is then used in the second clause to formally introduce the participant in the narrative (Ibid. 92. Also, de Regt 1999b:32–34). For example:

Gen11:29

ויקח אברם ונחור להם נשים

"And Abram and Nahor took for themselves wives"

שם אשת־אברם שרי

"The name of Abram's wife was Sarai"

ושם אשת־נחור מלכה

"And the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah"

In the second method of initial activation, the participant can be introduced using the *referring expression* plus *anchoring relation*⁷³ in a comment statement (Runge 2007:91–92 and de Regt 1999b:34–41). For example:

Gen 11:27

תרח הוליד את־אברם את־נחור ואת־הרן

"And (sic) Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran"

והרן הוליד את־לוט

"And Haran became the father of Lot"

Abram is Terah's son while Lot is Terah's grandson or Haran's son or the nephew of Abram and Nahor (Runge 2007:93).

2. Reactivation of Already Mentioned Participant

As already mentioned, when a participant stays off stage for a long time, the participant can either become semi-active or inactive. In this respect, Runge (2007:27) writes:

The cognitive status of a participant undergoes a process of decay in the absence of a continued reference to it in the discourse, moving quickly to semi-active state, and eventually to an inactive state. The second state of decay, from semi-active to inactive, is much slower and is

⁷² The clitic or bound pronouns are the basic or minimal morphological forms available in BH for the referencing of active participants. Conf. Grice 1975:45–460, Givón 1983a:17–18, Gundel et al. 1993:278, Lambrecht 1994:96 and Huang 2000:220–221, for the same forms in other languages.

⁷³ Runge (2007:91–92) states that from a grammatical perspective, an *anchoring expression* links a participant to an indefinite NP, "either as an attributive modifier (e.g. '*his wife*'), as an appositive (e.g. '*Eli the priest*'), or in a construct relation (e.g. '*two sons of Eli*')," while from a typological perspective it is either 'generic geographical' or 'genealogical,' 'titular' or 'relational.' In this study, I have chosen to use Anchoring Relations with the meaning of *kinship relations* to give it a different status from Runge's argument.

generally directly proportional to the participant's salience and level of activity in the preceding discourse. Eventually, the participant is said to be 'inactive,' stored in the reader's long-term memory, and requiring more mental energy to reactivate than a semi-active participant.⁷⁴

The implication of being off stage is that the participants need to be reactivated or reintroduced into the narrative. Runge (2007:106) also argues that the default form of reactivation of participants who have lapsed after activation is by Proper Name plus Anchoring Relation as a means of avoiding ambiguity (Gen 25:15). This implies that reactivation depends on the amount of presence of a participant in the short-term memory of a reader and the number of intervening participants that have been introduced before. Reactivation therefore can be equal to initial activation if the already mentioned participant remains inert for long or fades out of the reader's cognitive short-term memory. From my approach I have argued that once activated, a participant remains active or semi-active, but never goes into inactivity. The overencoding of a participant after a period of physical absence in a narrative serves other purposes (segment, lay emphasis or highlight) not because of length of absence. Also, I have taken this view because the measurement of the length of absence is applied ambiguously.

3. *Continuation of Activated Participant*

When a participant is introduced in a narrative, there is need to continue to trace and track the participant in a way that clarifies the reader on who does what at each moment in the narrative. Once a participant is activated in a BH narrative, further reference to this participant is by personal pronouns, pronominal elements or verbal inflection. This further reference to keep on tracking and tracing the participant is known as continuation. Where there are deviations by the use of proper names, Runge argues that the use is marked. In the studies of the semantic functions of participant referencing, Runge adapts Dooley and Levinsohn's default/marked asymmetrical method of participant reference analysis as the basis for encoding (Ibid. 90. Also conf. Dooley and Levinsohn 2000:65–68), in order to determine the default referencing systems. This method identifies the context for each activated subject and non-subject and allocates symbols to them. These are then used to determine the default encoding with any deviations seen as marked. Below is a summary (Runge 2007:53 and 90):

Subject and Non-subject Contexts

➤ *Subject context*

- INT initial introduction of a brand new participant;
- S1 participant was the subject of the immediately preceding clause;
- S1+ participant was the subject of the immediately preceding clause, and at least one other subject participant is added in the present clause to create a compound subject;
- S2 participant was the addressee of a speech reported in the preceding clause;
- S3 participant was in non-subject role other than addressee in preceding clause;

⁷⁴Also conf. Bakker (2011: 182–185), especially (185).

- S4 participant is semi-active/accessible, context is other than those covered by S1-3;
- S5 participant is inactive, context is other than those covered by S1-S4.

➤ *Non-subject Context*

- INT initial introduction of a brand new participant;
- N1 participant was in same non-subject role in the preceding clause;
- N2 participant was the speaker in a speech reported in the preceding clause;
- N3 participant was in a role in the preceding clause other than N1-N2;
- N4 participant is semi-active/accessible, context is other than those covered by N1-N3;
- N5 participant is inactive, context is other than those covered by N1-N4.

After applying these to Gen 11:27–25:10, and 27:1–28:5, Runge (119–120) draws the following conclusions as default encoding values for the narrative contexts: (a) In the INT–participants are initially introduced and require lexical NP and Anchoring Relation; (b) In the S1/N1 and S2/N2 contexts–participants are active and therefore require simple subject agreement or minimal encoding (personal pronouns); (c) For S3/N3 and S4/N4 contexts–participants are semi-active and require lexical NP (proper name), for encoding; and (d) In S5/N5–participants have lapsed into inactivity and require both a lexical NP and an Anchoring Relation.

2.5.2. *Participant Activation in Gen 27:1–28:5*

If one considers the patriarchal narratives as one continuous narrative with different narrative units, then the larger context of Gen 27:1–28:22 includes Gen 12–50. This means that some or all the participants mentioned in Gen 27:1–28:22 might have appeared earlier at some point in the narrative or are new participants introduced in this narrative section. Runge (2007) and de Regt (1999a, b) argue that if the participants have appeared in any part of the narrative, their activation status will depend on how much prominence they have in the short-term memory of the reader. I will limit the discussions here to Runge's studies of Gen 27:1–28:5. The participants in this narrative section are those who, once activated, remain active within this whole narrative section. Depending on their amount of activity, a participant will either be termed 'major' or 'minor'. The consideration here is that the frequency of occurrence of a participant keeps it active in the short-term memory of the reader and requires little amount of cognitive effort for reactivation and thus less encoding. This does not minimise the occurrence of exceptions which might be pragmatically motivated. From Runge's approach, it seems plausible to present a general statement on participants' reactivation status thus: the amount of occurrences (activeness) of a participant within a narrative section is inversely proportional to its amount of encoding.

$$A_o \propto 1/r$$

Where A_o = Amount of occurrences of participant

r = amount of encoding (Reference pattern) of participant.

When the amount of occurrences of a participant (A_o) increases, less amount of encoding (Γ) is required to reactivate the participant. In a situation where the amount of occurrences (A_o) of a participant decreases, more encoding (r) is required to reactivate the participant. Based on the amount of occurrences, Runge (2007:117) begins his study of Gen 27:1–28:5 by considering the possibility that Isaac, Rebekah and Esau are semi-active prior to the beginning of Genesis 27, while Jacob is inert or lapsed. At a second thought, he construes all four to be active at the beginning of Genesis 27 on grounds of non-Anchoring Relations⁷⁵ and thus presents the default/marked patterns for continuing reference of participants in Gen 27:1–28:5 as shown in the following paragraphs.

2.5.3 Participant Continuous Referencing in Gen 27:1–28:5 (S1/N1–S5/N5 Contexts)

1. Continuous Referencing in Narrative Sections (S1, S1/N1 and N1)

When the subject and/or object of the following clause is the same as the subject and/or object of the preceding clause, reference is by pronoun (clitic or independent) and verbal inflection (zero anaphora). Reference to a participant by any other device e.g. Lexical NP+further extension or NmCl might either be marked or used by the narrator for other reasons. Runge has identified 49 clauses in Gen 27:1–28:5 in these contexts. Of the 49 clauses, there are 28 occurrences in the S1 context, 12 occurrences in the S1/N1 context, one occurrence in the S1/N2 context, six occurrences in the S1/N4 context and one occurrence in the N1 context.

1.1. Minimally Encoded S1 Context (Default)

The S1 context occurs when the subject of the preceding clause retains its position in the following clause. Of the 28 S1 occurrences, Runge identifies the following 22 occurrences with default (minimal) encoding.

- | | | |
|--------|---|---|
| 27:14b | ויקח | "And <u>he</u> (Jacob) took" |
| c | ויבא לאמו | "And <u>he</u> (Jacob) brought to his mother" |
| 15c | ותלבש את־יעקב בנה הקטן | "And <u>she</u> (Rebekah) clothed Jacob her younger son" |
| 16 | ואת ערת גדיי העזים הלב־שה על־ידיו ועל חלקת צואריו | "And <u>she</u> (Rebekah) put the skin of the kids of the goats upon his (Jacob) hands and upon the smooth part of his (Jacob) necks" |
| 17 | ותתן את־המ־שעמים ואת־הלחם אשר ע־שה ביד יעקב בנה | "And <u>she</u> (Rebekah) gave the savoury food and the bread which she (Rebekah) had prepared into the hands of Jacob her son" |

⁷⁵ He writes: 'Due to the mention of Isaac, Rebekah and Esau in the last verse before Gen 26, we construe all of the participants as clearly being semi-active with the possible exception of Jacob, who was last mentioned in 25:34. Although all are semi-active, consideration must be given to the most probable anchoring relation of each. In terms of salient anchoring relations, Isaac was the primary centre of attention in Genesis 26 based on his interaction with Abimelech. Therefore, Jacob and Esau are likely viewed as 'Isaac's sons', and Rebekah as 'Isaac's wife', as their most salient anchoring relation. At the beginning of Genesis 27, we construe all four participants as active due to the fact that none have recently been explicitly anchored to one another' (Runge 2007:117)

- 18b ויאמר
"And he (Jacob) said"
- 22c ויאמר
"And he (Isaac) said"
- 23a ולא הכירו כִּי־היו ידיו כִּידֵי עֲשׂוֹ אָחִיו שְׁעֶרֶת וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ
"And he (Isaac) did not recognise him (Jacob) because his (Jacob) hands were hairy as the hands of Esau his brother and he blessed him"
- 24a ויאמר
"And he (Isaac) said"
- 27b וישק־לוֹ
"And he (Isaac) kissed him (Jacob)"
- d ויברכהו
"And he (Isaac) blessed him (Jacob)"
- e ויאמר
"And he (Isaac) said"
- 31a ויעֲשֶׂה גַם־הוא מִטַּעֲמִים
"And he (Esau), also prepared savoury meal"
- b ויבא לֹאבִיו
"And he (Esau) came to his father"
- c ויאמר לֹאבִיו
"And he (Esau) said to his father"
- 33b ויאמר
"And he (Isaac) said" (Also Gen 27:24a)
- 34b ויצעק צַעֲקָה גְדֹלָה וּמְרָה עַד־מָאֹד
"And he cried exceedingly and bitterly"
- c ויאמר לֹאבִיו
"And he (Esau) said to his (Esau) father"
- 36f ויאמר
"And he (Esau) said"
- 37b ויאמר לַעֲשׂוֹ
"And he (Isaac) said to Esau"
- 39b ויאמר אֵלָיו
"And he (Isaac) said to him"
- 42d וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
"And she (Rebekah) said to him"

According to Runge's model, the default S1 context for continuous referencing of a participant is "the use of clitic pronouns with finite verbs, and the use of IPP with non-finite verbs" (Runge 2007:177). While the subjects of all the examples cited above conform to the minimal encoding, only Gen 27:14a, 18b, 22c, 24a, 27e, 33b and 36f conform to the S1 context. The occurrences of non-subjects in the remaining examples imply that they could be assigned to other contexts as defined by Runge (e.g. S1/N1) or new contexts not defined by Runge's categories. In addition, Gen 27:17 and 23a could be split up further into other clauses (according to the ETCBC database) which may not fit into the S1 context. Hence, 68 percent of the examples which Runge defines as the default S1 context can be assigned to other activation contexts in his model.

1.2. Overencoded S1 Context (Marked)

When the subject in this context is overencoded, it is marked for various purposes. Runge identifies three examples in this context as follows:

- 27:26a ויאמר אליו יצחק אביו
"And Isaac his father said to him"
38b וישא עשו קלו ויבך
"And Esau lifted his voice and wept"
41b ויאמר עשו
"And Esau said"

These three examples have S1 overencoded. One agrees with the context of Runge's scale (Gen 27:41b), one has a non-subject (Gen 27:26a) and one can be split into two clauses (Gen 27:38b). Thus Gen 27:26a and 38b can be given other contexts on Runge's activation model. Also, Runge has argued that when S1 is overencoded, it is marked for various reasons. He advances a reason for the processing purpose of Gen 27:26a which marks the beginning of a "Development Unit." He also argues that Gen 27:38b summarises the state of affairs while 27:41 highlights Esau's reaction when he realises that Isaac has no more blessing for him.

1.3. Minimally Encoded S1/N1 Context (Default)

In the S1/N1 context, both the subject and non-subject of a preceding clause retain their positions in the following clause. Runge mentions the following clauses as examples:

- 27:1c ויאמר אליו
"And he (Isaac) said to him (Esau)"
23a ולא הכירו כיהיו ידיו עשו אחיו שערות ויברכהו
"And he (Isaac) did not recognise him (Jacob) because his (Jacob) hands were hairy as the hands of Esau his brother and he blessed him"
27b וישקלו
"And he (Isaac) kissed him (Jacob)"
27c ויברכהו
"And he (Isaac) blessed him (Jacob)"
d ואמר
"And he (Isaac) said"
39b ויאמר אליו
"And he (Isaac) said to him (Esau)"
46a ויאמר לו
"And he (Isaac) said to him (Jacob)"
28:1b ויברך אתו
"And he (Isaac) blessed him (Jacob)"
1c ויצוהו
"And he (Isaac) commanded him (Jacob)"
1c ויאמר לו
"And he (Isaac) said to him (Jacob)"

There are 10 examples of the minimally encoded S1/N1 context. First, there is an overlap in the examples presented here with those of the minimally encoded S1 context. Second, there is still a mixture of contexts (e.g. 27d should be S1 while 23a can be split further). Although the majority of examples in this context (80%) agree with Runge's activation model, the discrepancies highlights challenges to this model.

1.4. Overencoded S1/N1 Context (Marked)

Runge mentions two examples (Gen 27:30a and 28:5a) where both the subject and non-subject are overencoded in the S1/N1 context. He construes that Gen 27:30a is marked for processing and signals the beginning of a "Development Unit." He does not discuss the function of Gen 28:5a. The examples are as follows:

- 27:30a ויהי כאשר כלה יצחק לברך את־יעקב
 "And it was as soon as Isaac finished to bless Jacob"
- 28:5a וישלח יצחק את־יעקב
 "And Isaac sent Jacob"

These examples agree with Runge's model although Gen 27:30a can be split further into three clauses. In Gen 27:5b, Runge also mentions one overencoded N1 occurrence which is an NP+Anchoring Relation.

- 27:5b אל־עשו בנו
 "To Esau his son"

1.5. Continuous Reference in the S1/N4 Context

The S1 context is used to reference a subject which retains its role from a preceding clause while the N4 is used for a non-subject (semi-active participant) which does not feature in the preceding clause. From Runge's activation scale, default for the N4 context is a Lexical NP. There are five clauses in this context as follows:

- 27:5a ויקרא את־עשו בנו הגדל
 "And he called Esau his elder son"
- 15a ותקח רבקה את־בגדי עשו בנה הגדל החמורת אשר אחה בבית
 "And Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son which she had in the house"
- 15b ותלבש את־יעקב בנה הקטן
 "And she clothed Jacob her younger son"
- 42c ותקרא ליעקב בנה הקטן
 "And she called Jacob her younger son"
- 46a ותאמר רבקה אל־יצחק
 "And Rebekah said to Isaac"

In Gen 27:5a, 15b and 42c, S1 is minimally encoded while N4 is overencoded by Lexical NP+Anchoring Relations. In Gen 27:15a, both subject and non-subject are overencoded while in Gen 27:46a, only the subject is overencoded.⁷⁶ Runge

⁷⁶ It is worth noting that Runge (2007:180 and n244. Also conf. §4.3.2) construes that relexicalisation of one participant after a quotative frame in the S1/N1 context counters the expectation of role change and the lexical NP is default in such contexts. He writes (Ibid. 100–101): "The default interpretation of minimal reference is switch of speaker and addressee following quotative frames. A full NP is usually

(2007:179) has argued that the overencoding in 27:15a marks the beginning of a “Development Unit,” while 27:46a “is used to create a new development,” (ibid. 182 n 245).⁷⁷ Runge gives no further explanations to the other overencoded N4 contexts.

1.6. Continuous Referencing in the S1/N2 Context

Runge identifies an S1/N2 context.

27:37b ויאמר אל-עשו

“And he (Isaac) said to Esau”

This context appears to be unusual with respect to Runge’s model as it is not covered by the scale. In the preceding clause, Isaac is the subject and there is no explicit mention of non-subject.

27:37a ויען יצחק

“And Isaac answered”

27:37b ויאמר אל-עשו

“And he (Isaac) said to Esau”

If Runge (2007) considers Esau as the implicit non-subject in the preceding clause, he should be in the N1 context and not the N2 context. I construe that Runge understands an answer in Gen 27:37a which is different from what follows after Gen 27:37b. Nevertheless, Esau should still be in the N1 context.

2. Continuous Referencing in Discursive Sections of a Narrative (S2, S2/N2 and N2)

In the discursive sections of a narrative, there is always a change of participants after the direct speeches. Where two participants are involved in a role change, the usual reference is by pronoun (clitic or independent) or verbal inflection (zero anaphora). The use of another reference device is marked and used by the narrator for various other reasons (Runge 2007:179ff). Runge identifies 25 clauses in Gen 27:1–28:5 which follow the S2/N2 pattern.

2.1. Minimally Encoded S2 Context (Default)

Of the 25 S2/N2 contexts, there are 12 S2 occurrences ⁷⁸ that Runge discusses. All the examples agree with Runge’s model. These are:

required to counter this expectation.” In Gen 27:46a, Rebekah’s relexicalisation assumes this function as S1 after a reported speech. In this case, Runge (2007:182) argues that the S1 context is overencoded and thus signals a “new development.” This presents a contradiction to the functions of the model and makes understanding difficult.

⁷⁷ This is one of the instances where Runge’s use of “new development, development unit or development” creates ambiguity.

⁷⁸ Runge (2007:177 n.238 and 179) also mentions that the S2 occurrences are S2/N2 contexts where the N2 context is elided. If the only context of minimal encoding occurs when the subject is inflected in the verb then Runge, in other words, means that there is no minimal encoded subject context without a non-subject context. Runge’s consideration may also imply that the S1 and S2 contexts do not exist at all and if they do exist, then their occurrences will be encoded by a lexical NP. This probably accounts for Runge’s treatment of Gen 27:37a (§2.5.3.1.1.6) as an S1/N2 context with an elided N2. He substantiates this further by highlighting other elided non-subjects in the N3 and N4 contexts.

- 27:1e ויאמר
 “And he (Isaac) said” (Also 27:20c, 25a and 34d)
- 14a וילך
 “And he (Jacob) went”
- 18d ויאמר
 “And he (Jacob) said” (Also 27:24c)
- 27a ויגש
 “And he (Jacob) drew near”
- 32c ויאמר
 “And he (Esau) said” (Also 27:36a)

2.2. Overencoded S2 Context (Marked)

Runge (2007:182) has identified two examples in the S2 context and has argued that both examples have a processing function and serve to mark new developments following a discursive. The examples are as follows:

- 27:33a ויחרד יצחק חדרה גדלה עד־מחר
 “And Isaac trembled exceedingly great”
- 37a ויען יצחק
 “And Isaac answered”

2.3. Minimally Encoded S2/N2 Context (Default)

Two examples of minimal encoding occur in the S2/N2 context and agree with Runge’s activation model. These are:

- 27:1d ויאמר אליו
 “And he (Esau) said to him (Isaac)”
- 25c ויגש־לו
 “And he (Jacob) drew near to him (Isaac)”

2.4. Overencoded S2/N2 Context (Marked)

Runge identifies 10 overencoded S2/N2 contexts. He posits that all the examples are marked for processing and each indicates the beginning of a new development. The examples are as follows:

- 27:11a ויאמר יעקב אל־רבקה אמו
 “And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother”
- 13a ותאמר לו אמו
 “And his mother said to him”
- 19a ויאמר יעקב אל־אביו
 “And Jacob said to his father”
- 20a ויאמר יצחק אל־בנו
 “And Isaac said to his son”
- 21a ויאמר יצחק אל־יעקב
 “And Isaac said to Jacob”
- 22a ויגש יעקב אל־יצחק אביו
 “And Jacob drew near to Isaac his father”
- 32a ויאמר לו יצחק אביו
 “And Isaac his father said to him”

- 34a כשמע עשו את־דברי אביו
 "When Esau heard the words of his father"
- 38a ויאמר עשו אל־אביו
 "And Esau said to his father"
- 41a וישטם עשו את־יעקב על־הברכה אשר ברכו אביו
 "And Esau grudged Jacob upon the blessing which his father blessed him"

It is important to note that the non-subject contexts of Gen 27:13a and 32a are minimally encoded. Runge (182–186) further assigns functions to the clauses as follows:

- Gen 27:11a—"is a characteristic of countering moves."
- Gen 27:19a—"cataphorically highlights Jacob's deceptive reply."
- Gen 27:20a—"countering move by Isaac."
- Gen 27:21a—"signals next salient development of (Isaac's) interview" and "cataphorically highlights the content of Isaac's speech."
- Gen 27:32a—"Isaac's discovery that he has been deceived."
- Gen 27:34a—"temporal PoD (Point of Departure)."
- Gen 27:38a—"countering move by Esau."
- Gen 27:41a—"highlights Esau's reaction."

From the functions that Runge assigns to the devices, one gets the impression that the content of the direct speech determines what function should be assigned to the referencing device which introduces the direct speech. The encodings of Gen 27:11a and 20a are different from that of Gen 27:38a, for example, but all are countering moves. The same situation occurs in Gen 27:19a (deception) and 27:32a (deception uncovered). Although the functions are important they are derived from the content of the direct speech. Here there is also the ambiguous use of PoD, new development and development unit.

2.5. Continuous Referencing in the S2/N4 Context

There is also a single occurrence of an S2/N4 context. Runge marks this in appendix 2 but does not discuss it in his main text.

- 28:1a ויקרא יצחק אל־יעקב
 "And Isaac called Jacob"

3. Continuous Referencing in a Narrative Involving Role Change (S3 Contexts)

In a narrative, the subject of a preceding clause can become the object or complement of the following clause and vice versa. Where this occurs, the participants are usually referenced by lexical NP. This may also occur when a semi-active participant in a previous section of a narrative is reactivated or reintroduced. When other referencing devices are applied, there is a pragmatic effect which serves to tighten the unity of the verses, unless the participants involved in the role changes are morphologically distinct (e.g. gender or number) or where the semantic context permits the reader to unambiguously discern the switches (Runge 2007:177–179). Otherwise, any other device used in this context indicates markedness (Ibid.). There are 12 clauses which fall under this referencing pattern.

3.1. Lexical NP Encoding for S3, N3 Contexts (Default)

The default encoding in the S3 context is a Lexical NP. Runge identifies the following default patterns.

- 27:5c וילך עשו השדה לצוד ציד להביא
"And Esau went to the field to hunt game and bring it"
30b ועשו אחיו בא מצידו
"And Esau his brother came from his hunting"
39a ויען יצחק אביו
"And Isaac his father answered"

Runge (2007:178) assumes that the above examples agree with the S3 default encoding whose function is to disambiguate. One notices that the last two examples in this context are encoded by Lexical NP+Anchoring Relations. If these contexts are S3, then they are marked.

3.2. Minimally Encoded S3 Context (Marked)

Runge also identifies six examples in the S3 context with minimal encoding. He argues that these minimal S3 uses help to tighten the narrative and often occur where there is no ambiguity. The examples include:

- 27:22b וימשהו
"And he (Isaac) felt him (Jacob)"
25c ויאכל
"And he (Isaac) ate"
d ויבא לו יין
"And he (Jacob) brought to him (Isaac) wine"
25e וישת
"And he (Isaac) drank"
27b וירח את-ריחה בגדיו
"And he (Isaac) smelled the smell of his garments"
42b ותשלח
"And she (Rebekah) sent"
28:5b וילך פדנה ארם
"And he (Jacob) went to Paddan Aram..."

Although all the examples above agree with Runge's model, 27:22b and 25d can be given another context.

3.3. Continuous Referencing in the S3/N4 and S4/N3 Contexts

These contexts have a single occurrence each and Runge has not discussed them in his work. These examples are:

- 27:5a ורבקה שמעת ברבר יצחק אל-עשו
"And Rebekah listening as Isaac was speaking to Esau"....S4/N3
27:6a ורבקה אמרה אל-יעקב בנה
"And Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son" (WXQatal)....S3/N4

2.5.4 Thematic Highlighting

Runge (2007:187) begins by defining the theme that is highlighted by the anchoring relations. He states:

Genesis 27:1 opens by removing all doubt about the center of reference by explicitly anchoring Esau to Isaac in vv. 1b and 5, as Isaac is giving him instructions to go out and hunt down a meal. The write/editor could have continued encoding the participants using only bare proper names, or alternatively anchored Isaac to Esau. However, the well-known themes of '*older vs. younger*' and '*favoritism*' will play out largely through the pragmatic use of referring expressions.⁷⁹

Runge construes that all anchoring relations serve to highlight *favoritism* and '*older-younger*' as the themes of Gen 27–28:5. While one can argue that the '*older-younger*' contrast is highlighted in the narrative, '*favoritism*' is not mentioned by the narrator. If there is any theme to be highlighted it should be that of the "blessing" which is strengthened by the narrator's distinction between Esau–*elder* and Jacob–*younger*. This is suggested in the first verses of Genesis 27. The following Anchoring Relation supports this:

Gen 27:1e ויקרא את-עשו בנו הגדל

"And he called Esau his son the elder"

Esau is mentioned as the firstborn or elder son in Gen 25:23. In his encounter with Jacob in Gen 25:29–34, he is said to have sold his birthright. This does not mean that he is not still elder. The narrator's use of the Anchoring Relation in the opening verse of the chapter can have two purposes: (a) Recapturing the birth state of the twins to remind readers that Esau is still the *elder*; and (b) Cataphorically highlight Gen 27:6a where Jacob is also called the *younger*, to set a contrast. Apart from this contrast, the "blessing" is also mentioned in Isaac's instructions to Esau (Gen 27:2–4).

2.5.5. Summary of the Application of Runge's Activation Model to Gen 27:1–28:5

This section presents a breakdown of Runge's application of the S1/N1–S5/N5 model to Gen 27:1–28:5. I have studied Runge's work by following how he applies his activation model to the text. Runge (2007:176–205) devotes chapter 7 of his work to detail application of the functions of various referencing patterns in accordance with his theoretical framework. His arguments are very strong and he presents useful results. However, his application of the model is overshadowed by some irregular examples which present a challenge. Notably is Runge's argument that the S1 and S2 contexts are S1/N1 and S2/N2 where N1 and N2 are elided (§2.5.3.2 n76). If the absence of a direct object or complement means that it can be assumed, then one

⁷⁹ *Italics* are mine. It is my opinion that the conflict is not about favouritism per se but about who should inherit the patriarchal blessing. Runge's choice is derived rather than coming from the text. The text begins with Isaac talking about passing on the patriarchal blessing to Esau. It is this blessing that brings about a conflict. It is certain that favouritism ensues. But making it the theme interprets the relations as forged. Of course, Esau and Jacob are Isaac's sons, and Esau is the elder. It is this *elder-younger* relation that the narrator exploits. The *elder-younger* relation goes with benefits and these benefits have flared a conflict whose results are favouritism. To question whether Esau or Jacob is qualified to get this blessing is beyond the scope of this chapter. This will be explored in Chapter 4 of this study.

may conclude that there is no subject context except where there is an object or complement. If this is what Runge means then his model does not serve its purpose. In addition, he is not consistent in the application of the scale. An example is his argument that Lexical NP for the S1 context after a quotative frame is default because it counters the expectation of a switch in roles of speaker and addressee in a preceding clause. He applies this argument to Gen 27:46a and at a later stage he argues that the same device in this same verse and in the same S1 context is marked. Also, I noticed that when Runge discusses the pragmatic functions of the quotative frames, he derives a function from the speeches to argue for its pragmatic use. Most of the examples that Runge mentions can be placed in alternative activation contexts on the S1/N1–S5/N5 model. Another major problem lies in the way Runge's clauses are divided. What Runge takes as a clause can be divided further into other clauses. Because of this shortcoming, Runge accounts for pronouns in the non-subject position and at other instances he does not. I have also mentioned that Runge has suggested a theme which is not highlighted in the text. This can probably be one major problem with Runge's functional approach—which as I have understood is based on the content. The participants' anchoring references are kinship nouns and I will later argue that the application of these anchoring expressions also serve to define social relations or the social organisation of the *Toledoth* of Isaac.

2.6. APPLICATION OF RUNGE'S ACTIVATION MODEL TO THE ETCBC ENCODED TEXT HIERARCHY OF GENESIS 27–28

In §2.5, I have presented a detailed study of Runge's activation model by applying it to Gen 27:1–28:5. To accomplish this I used examples from Runge's (2007:177) main text and from the Hebrew text (Ibid. 218–220) in his appendix. I also followed his arguments and applied his approach to the text by placing the clauses in the various contexts. Although the model is important, it poses some challenges in its application to texts. In this section, I will apply the same activation model to the text hierarchy of the ETCBC database encoding. The aim is to investigate how compatible Runge's approach is with the model of the ETCBC and where these approaches can inform each other. To accomplish this, the following will be considered: (a) When I apply Runge's approach, I will consider the ETCBC model's definition of a clause which is different from what Runge has used; (b) I will also differ with Runge in the way he has applied the S1 and S2 contexts with elided non-subjects; and (c) I will consider Genesis 27–28 as a single text and as part of Isaac's *Toledoth*.

In the *Toledoth* reading approach that I will apply, I argue that once a participant is activated, the participant remains in either the active or the semi-active state. When Esau and Jacob are born, they are activated in a progression which leads to their names. The only Anchoring Relation is the anchoring of Jacob to Esau. Otherwise all the participants have been activated as major and remain in this category throughout the *Toledoth* of Isaac. When Runge (2007:177) argues for "salient anchoring relations" I consider that he is applying a created function which is not coming from the narrative. None, except Rebekah, has been anchored to Isaac prior to Genesis 27. This does not make any of the participants inactive.

Since Runge's discourse-functional approach has presented some discrepancies, a better way will be to identify patterns or forms and use them to determine their functions. Following the *Toledoth* approach, there is no initial activation of any of the participants. They have all been activated in the previous sections and remain in the active or semi-active states. Although Jacob does not appear in the whole of Genesis 26 he is not absent and this does not lead to his decay into inactivity. As a major participant, he remains in the semi-active state. With these clarifications, I will now

apply Runge's S1/N1–S5/N5 activation model to Genesis 27–28 based on the concatenated text of the ETCBC database. In addition, I will dedicate a section on the Anchoring Relations and participant referencing because of its importance and contributions to the understanding of participants and POV.

2.6.1. Activation

Runge (2007:91) argues for a single and a two-step activation, based on proper names, epithets or Anchoring Relations. He identifies two tasks of such activations viz: “establishing a *primary referring expression*” which then “becomes the default expression when relexicalising a participant” and “creating a semantic *connection*...by establishing an *anchoring relation*” (Ibid.). In Genesis 27–28, all participants are already known from preceding narrative sections. Isaac is already known in Genesis 21 and Rebekah in Genesis 24. Both continue to be active until the beginning of Genesis 27. The overspecification used for Isaac and Rebekah in the *Toledoth* formula in Gen 25:19, in my opinion, is a good example of its pragmatic use for cataphoric highlighting (Runge 2006, 2007). There is a shift in attention from Terah to Isaac and the overencoding in the *Toledoth* formula captures this. What follows is Isaac's story. Thus, the *Toledoth* formula cataphorically highlights the following narrative as Isaac's *Toledoth*. Esau and Jacob are also known in Genesis 25 and remain active before Genesis 27. This means that all participants have already been activated in the previous narrative sections and that no initial activation occurs at the beginning of Genesis 27. While Runge (2006, 2007) acknowledges this, his arguments show that his theoretical framework does not account for these untypical introductions. Although none of the major participants is introduced, there are some minor participants who have been introduced following Runge's Anchoring Relations.

Gen 28:8b **כִּי רַעוּת בָּנוּת כְּנָעַן נִעְיִי יִצְחָק אָבִיו**

“For the daughters of Canaan were unpleasant in the eyes of Isaac his father”

There are two possible ways of reading this verse. If the daughters of Canaan are the same as Judith and Basemath in Gen 26:34, then there is no introduction here and the context is S4/N4. Otherwise this is the first appearance of these participants and will be considered as initial activation, which on Runge's scale is INT.

28:12d **וְהִנֵּה מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים עָלָיו**

“And behold the *messengers of God* upon it.”

13a **וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה נֹצֵב עָלָיו**

“And behold *Adonai* stood upon it”

The clauses above are also examples of initial activation. However, if God is equal to Adonai, the context of Gen 28:13a will be S3 because God is still the non-subject (complement) of the preceding clause (Gen 28:12e). The S3 context in this case will be justified on grounds that God appears in a non-subject role in Gen 28:12d and 12e.

2.6.2. Continuous Referencing of Participants

I will apply the S1/N1–S4/N4 model to the narrative of Genesis 27–28. To facilitate the understanding of the activation model, I will illustrate with examples in each context. I will attach a Hebrew text with the participants labelled in the various contexts in appendix 2B for further reference.

1. Continuous Referencing of Participants in the S1, S1/N1 and N1 Contexts

Continuous referencing in the S1, S1/N1 and N1 contexts is observed when narrative clauses occur in succession. Default encoding is pronoun or Way0. Any other pattern is marked. For example:

27:1b–f

- כִּי־זָקֵן יִצְחָק
 “For Isaac <Su> was old”.....(a)
 וַתִּכְהֶיךָ עֵינָיו
 “And his eyes <Su>(clitic pronoun) were dim”.....(b)
 מֵרֹאֵת
 “from seeing”.....(c)
 וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ הַגָּדֹל
 “And he <Su>(zero anaphora) called Esau his elder son
 <Ob>”.....(d)
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו
 “And he <Su>(zero anaphora) said to him <Co>(pronomi-
 nal)”.....(e)

In the clauses above, Isaac is the subject. He is referenced by an NP only in (a) and by either a clitic pronoun in (b) or by Way0 (zero anaphora) in (d, e).⁸⁰ It is also worth noting that Esau, who is the object in (d) appears in the same capacity—as complement in the following clause (e). Minimal reference (pronoun) is used as Esau’s continuous reference. Clause (e) also represents the S1/N1 (minimal) continuing reference pattern. Accordingly, de Regt (1999:13) has argued that the normal pattern for reference to a previously known participant in a narrative unit is by the use of pronouns with any deviation serving as reactivation.

1.1. Minimally Encoded S1 Context (Default)

In this context the subject is the same as that of the preceding clause and encoded minimally. Where a lexical NP or Anchoring Relation is used, it is marked for either processing or pragmatic reasons. There are 29 minimally encoded occurrences in our chosen narrative section as follows:

- 27:1c וַתִּכְהֶיךָ עֵינָיו
 “And his (Isaac) eyes were dim”
 14b וַיִּקַּח
 “And he (Jacob) took”
 15b אֲשֶׁר אֵתָּה בְּבֵית
 “Which she had in the house”
 17a וַתֵּתֵן אֶת־הַמִּשְׁעָמִים וְאֶת־הַלֶּחֶם
 “And she (Rebekah) gave the savoury meal and the bread”
 17b אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂתָה
 “Which she (Rebekah) had prepared”
 18b וַיֹּאמֶר
 “And he (Jacob) said” (Also Gen 28:16b)

⁸⁰ Other Wayyiqtol0 or zero anaphora references include: 27:14b, 14c, 14d, 15c, 16, 17a, 18b, 22c, 23a, 24a, 27b, d, e, 31b, c, 33b, 34b, c. Also, the following indicate other encodings (WayX) in the S1 context: 27:15a, 31a, 41c, 46a, 28:5a, 18a, 20a.

- 22c ויאמר
And he (Isaac) said" (Also Gen 27:24a, 27e, 33b)
- 31a ויאמר
"And he (Esau) said" (Also Gen 27:34b, 38i)
- 33f ואכל מכל
"And I ate from all"
- 28:7b וילך פדנה ארם
"And he (Jacob) went to Paddan Aram" (Also Gen 28:10b, 11a, 11b, 11e, 11f, 12a, 13b, 17a, 17b, 18b, 18e and 18f)

In addition, there are two occurrences in the S1 context with lexical NP as follows:

- 27:38h וישא עשו קלו
"And Esau raised his voice"
- 28:18a וישכם יעקב בבקר
"And Jacob arose in the morning"

1.2. Minimally Encoded S1/N1 Context (Default)

When the subject and non-subject of the preceding and following clauses are the same, the context is S1/N1. In the case where a lexical NP and/or Anchoring Relation are used for S1 and/or N1, it is marked for either processing or pragmatic functions. There are 15 S1/N1 contexts with minimal encoding as follows:

- 27:1h ויאמר אליו
"And he (Isaac) said to him (Esau)"
- 16 ואת ערת גריי העזים הלבשה על-ידי ועל חלקת צואריו
"And the skin of the kids of the goats she (Rebekah) put it upon his (Jacob) hands and upon the smooth of his (Jacob) necks".....(?)
- 22b וימשהו
"And he (Isaac) felt him (Jacob)"
- 23a ולא הכירו
"And he (Isaac) did not recognise him (Jacob)"⁸¹
- 27c וירח את-ריח בגדיו
"And he (Isaac) smelled the smell of his (Jacob) garment"
- 27d ויברכהו
"And he (Isaac) blessed him (Jacob)"
- 42d ותאמר אליו
"And she (Rebekah) said to him (Jacob)"
- 28:1b וברך אתו
"And he (Isaac) blessed him"
- 1c ויצוהו
"And he (Isaac) commanded him (Jacob)" (Also. Gen 28:6f).
- 1d ויאמר לו
"And he (Isaac) said to him (Jacob)"

⁸¹ This S1/N1 comes after a direct speech in which Isaac is the speaker and Jacob is the addressee. They retain positions in this clause and the narrator uses minimal encoding. Could this be an exception to Runge's assertion that a lexical NP is needed to counter the role change after a direct speech?

- 6c וישלח אתו
 "And he (Isaac) sent him (Jacob)"
- 18c אשר-שם מראשתיו
 "Which he (Jacob) put under his head"
- 18d וישם אתה מצבה
 "And he (Jacob) set it up as a pillar"

There are three occurrences of S1/N1 context with lexical NP or Anchoring Relation as follows:

- 27:31c ויאמר לאביו
 "And he (Jacob) said to his father (Isaac)"
- 28:5a וישלח יצחק את-יעקב
 "And Isaac sent Jacob"

1.3. Other S1 and N1 Contexts

There are other contexts of S1 and N1 which occur mostly with N4 and S4 respectively. The S1/N4 defines a context where the subject is the same for the preceding clause and/or direct speech and the non-subject does not appear in the preceding clause. Also, the non-subject does not appear as an addressee of a preceding direct speech. As mentioned in the preceding arguments, the default S1 encoding is minimal while that for N4 is lexical NP (Runge 2007:120). There are 11 occurrences of the S1/N4 contexts. In two of the 11 occurrences, both the subject and non-subject are minimally encoded. While minimal encoding is default for S1 (according to Runge's model), it is marked for N4.

- 27:33h ואברכהו
 "And I (Isaac) blessed him (Jacob)"
- 39b ויאמר אליו
 "And he (Esau) said to him (Isaac)"

In six of the remaining nine occurrences, S1 is default while N4 is lexical NP, Anchoring Relation or lexical NP+Anchoring Relation.

- 27:1e ויקרא את-עשו בנו הגדל
 "And he (Isaac) called Esau his elder son"
- 14c ויבא לאמו
 "And he (Jacob) brought to his mother"
- 15c ותלבש את-יעקב בנה הקטן
 "And she (Rebekah) clothed Jacob her younger son"
- 31b ויבא לאביו
 "And he (Esau) came to his father"
- 34c ויאמר לאביו
 "And he (Esau) said to his father"
- 37b ויאמר לעשו
 "And he (Isaac) said to Esau"

In one occurrence, S1 is overencoded (lexical NP+Anchoring Relation) while N4 is minimally encoded (pronoun). The overencoding of S1 is for processing or for pragmatic reasons.

27:26a וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יִצְחָק אָבִיו
 “And Isaac his father said to him (Jacob)”

In another one occurrence, S1 is minimally encoded while N4 is overencoded (lexical NP+Anchoring Relation). Here S1 is default and N4 is encoded for processing or for pragmatic reasons.

27:42c וַתִּקְרָא לִיעֲקֹב בְּנֵה הַקָּטָן
 “And she (Rebekah) said to Jacob her younger son”

In the last S1/N4 occurrence, both S1 and N4 are encoded with a lexical NP. While N4 is default, S1 is encoded for processing or pragmatic functions.

27:46a וַתֹּאמֶר רִבְקָה אֶל־יִצְחָק
 “And Rebekah said to Isaac”

In addition, there are three occurrences in the S4/N1 context, where the subject does not appear in the preceding clause while the non-subject appears in the same position as in the preceding clause.

27:33e וַיָּבֹא לוֹ
 “And he (Jacob) came to me (Isaac)”
 41b אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַכּוּ אָבִיו
 “Which his father (Isaac) blessed him (Jacob)”
 28:6e בִּבְרַכּוֹ אֹתוֹ
 “As he (Isaac) blessed him (Jacob)”

Besides the above occurrences, there is a single N1 occurrence.

28:6d לְקַח־לָּו מִשָּׁם אִשָּׁה
 “To take to himself a wife from there”

2. Continuous Referencing of Participants in the S2, S2/N2 and N2 Contexts

Default encoding for these contexts is minimal and indicates role change following a preceding direct speech. There are 26 occurrences in Genesis 27–28 with varying encoding patterns.

2.1. Minimally Encoded S2 Context (Default)

This context occurs when an addressee in a preceding discourse becomes the speaker in the following narrative clause. In Genesis 27–28, three S2 contexts are minimally encoded (Way0). These are:

27:2a וַיֹּאמֶר
 “And he (Isaac) said” (Also Gen 27:18d, 25a, 35a)
 14a וַיֵּלֶךְ
 “And he (Jacob) went” (Also Gen 27:20f, 24d, 27a)

32c ויאמר
 "And he (Esau) said"

In addition, three other occurrences in the S2 context are encoded by lexical NP and Runge (2007) has argued that this kind of overencoding has either processing or pragmatic functions. Nevertheless, I have argued that most of the pragmatic functions are derived from the following speeches.

27:33a ויחרד יצחק חדרה גדלה עד־מחר
 "And Isaac trembled tremendously"
 37a ויען יצחק
 "And Isaac answered"
 28:16a וייקץ יעקב משנתו
 "And Jacob arose from his sleep"

2.2. Encoding in the S2/N2 Context

The S2/N2 context occurs when there is a role change between the speaker and the addressee. Here the speaker in a preceding discourse becomes the addressee of the following discourse and vice versa. Where the dialogue is followed by a narrative clause, the speaker becomes the non-subject (object or complement) (Runge 2007:101). The default encoding in this context is minimal. Out of 11 occurrences, only two S2 and three N2 contexts are encoded minimally. The remaining nine (9) are either encoded with a lexical NP, or with an Anchoring Relation or with a lexical NP+Anchoring Relation.

In Gen 27:1h and 25e, S2/N2 is minimally encoded.

27:1h ויאמר אליו
 "And he (Esau) said to him (Isaac)"
 25e ויגש־לו
 "And he (Jacob) drew near to him (Isaac)"

Also in Gen 27:13a, S2 is encoded by an Anchoring Relation and N2 is minimally encoded.

27:13a ותאמר לו אמו
 "And his mother (Rebekah) said to him (Jacob)"

There are eight occurrences of S2/N2 where encoding is by a lexical NP or by a lexical NP+Anchoring Relation or by an Anchoring Relation. These are marked for either processing or for pragmatic functions. The eight occurrences include the following:

27:11a ויאמר יעקב אל־רבקה אמו
 "And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother"
 19a ויאמר יעקב אל־אביו
 "And Jacob said to his father"
 20a ויאמר יצחק אל־בנו
 "And Isaac said to his son"

- 21a ויאמר יצחק אל-יעקב
 "And Isaac said to Jacob"
- 22a ויגש יעקב אל-יצחק אביו
 "And Jacob drew near to Isaac his father"
- 32a ויאמר לו יצחק אביו
 "And Isaac his father said to him (Esau)"
- 34a כשמוע עשו את-דברי אביו
 "As soon as Esau heard the words of his father"
- 38a ויאמר עשו אל-אביו
 "And Esau said to his father"

2.3. Other S2 and N2 Contexts

As it is with S1 and N1, S2 and N2 also occur with N4 and S4 respectively. In the S2/N4 context, the subject is the addressee of a preceding direct discourse and the non-subject is neither the speaker nor features in any way in the preceding direct discourse. There are two occurrences where both subject and non-subject are encoded by a lexical NP. These are:

- 27:41a וישטם עשו את-יעקב על-הברכה
 "And Esau hated Jacob upon the blessing"

In the preceding direct speech, Isaac is the speaker while Esau is the addressee. There is a change in the subject and non-subject in the clause following the direct speech. The addressee becomes the subject. However, there is a new non-subject which does not feature in the preceding direct speech. This also applies to the second context of S2/N4.

- 28:1a ויקרא יצחק אל-יעקב
 "And Isaac called Jacob"

There is a single occurrence where the subject of a clause that occurs after a direct discourse is neither the addressee nor features in the direct speech while the non-subject is the speaker in the preceding direct speech (S4/N2 context).

- 27:33e ויעקבני זה פעמים
 "And he (Jacob) has deceived me (Esau) twice"

3. Continuous Referencing of Participants in the S3, S3/N3 and N3 Contexts

According to Runge (2007) the reference pattern for this context is a lexical NP. The S3/N3 context also defines a situation of role change following a clause in a narrative section (Runge 2007:120). Here the subject and non-subject of a preceding clause switch roles. A total of 16 clauses occur in this context.

3.1. Lexical NP Encoding in the S3 Context (Default)

There are six clauses in the S3 context. In two clauses S3 is encoded by a lexical NP and Anchoring Relation.

- 27:5c וילך עשו השדה
 "And Esau went to the field"
- 14d וחתש אמו
 "And his mother prepared"

3.2. Minimally Encoded S3 Context (Marked)

The default encoding for the S3 context is a lexical NP. Runge has argued that where minimal encoding is applied, it serves to speed up the narrative which is often slowed down by the application of lexical NP. There are four occurrences of minimal S3 encoding in Genesis 27–28.

- 27:25f ויאכל
“And he (Isaac) ate”
25h וישת
“And he (Isaac) drank”
36a ויאמר
“And he said”
42b ותשלח
“And she (Rebekah) sent”

3.3. Minimally Encoded S3/N3 Context (Marked)

There are two occurrences of the S3/N3 context. Here the subject and non-subject switch the roles they have in the preceding clause. S3 occupied the non-subject position in the preceding clause while N3 occupied the subject position.

- 36d לקחתי את־בכרתי לְקַח
“He (Jacob) took my (Esau) birthright”
36e לקחתי את־בכרתי
“And he (Jacob) took my (Esau) birthright”

3.4. Other S3 and N3 Contexts

As we have seen in the above contexts, S3 and N3 also occur with N4 and S4 and N5 respectively. In the S3/N4 context, the S3 appears as the non-subject of the preceding narrative clause while N4 does not feature in the preceding clause. There are three occurrences of the S3/N4 context. In these occurrences, S3 is default and N4 is encoded by an Anchoring Relation.

- 27:15c ותלבש את־יעקב בנה הקטן
“And she (Rebekah) clothed Jacob her younger son”
18a ויבא אל־אביו
“And he (Jacob) came to his father”
23b כִּי־היו ידיו כִּידֵי עֶשָׂו אֶחָיו שְׁעֵרַת
“For his (Jacob) hands were as hairy as the hands of Esau his brother”

In the S4/N3 context, S4 does not feature in the preceding narrative clause while N3 features as the subject of the preceding narrative clause. There are three occurrences of the S4/N3 context in our text in which both S4 and N3 are encoded minimally.

- 27:23c ויברכהו
“And he (Isaac) blessed him (Jacob)”
25g ויבא לוֹ יֵין
“And he (Jacob) brought to him (Isaac) wine”

27b וישק־לו

"And he (Isaac) kissed him (Jacob)"

In the S3/N5 context, S3 is default and the N5 is a reactivation of a participant.

28:5b וילך פדנה ארם אל־לבן בן־בתואל הארמי אחי רבקה אם יעקב ועשו

"And he went to Paddan Aram to Laban son of Bethu'el the Aramaean,
brother of Rebekah mother of Jacob and Esau"⁸²

4. Continuous Referencing of Participants in the S4, S4/N4, and N4 Contexts

This context defines the reactivation pattern of semi-active participants who are not part of the preceding narrative clause, with a lexical NP as the default encoding (Runge 2007:120). Thus any other form of encoding is for processing or pragmatic functions. There are 20 of such occurrences in Genesis 27–28 distributed over various S4 and N4 contexts.

4.1. Lexical NP Encoding for S4 Context (Default)

There are 11 occurrences in the S4 context. Six of the 11 occurrences are encoded by lexical NP.

27:1b כִּי־זָקֵן יִצְחָק

"For Isaac was old"

5a ורבקה שִׁמְעָה

"And Rebekah was listening"

30b כֹּאשֶׁר כָּלָה יִצְחָק

"As Isaac finished"

41c ויאמר עשו בלבו

"And Esau said in his heart"

28:6a וירא עשו

"And Esau saw" (Also Gen 28:8a)

10a ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע

"And Jacob set forth from Beersheba"

4.2. Overencoded S4 Context (Marked)

There are four occurrences which are encoded by an Anchoring Relation or by a lexical NP+Anchoring Relation.

27:1d ותכהין עיניו

"His (Isaac) eyes were dim"

14e כֹּאשֶׁר אָהֵב אָבִיו

"Just as his father loves"

30f ועשו אחיו בא מצידו

"And Esau his brother returned from his hunting"

⁸² This N5 encoding is very important. While it reactivates Laban as Rebekah's brother, it also highlights Jacob as the next patriarch. For the first and only time in this narrative, the narrator reverses the positions of Esau (as firstborn and elder) and Jacob (as the younger), in the statement—"Rebekah, mother of Jacob and Esau."

39a ויען יצחק אביו
 "And Isaac his father answered"

4.3. Minimally Encoded S4 Context (Marked)

In one S4 occurrence, the subject is minimally encoded.

28:11d ויקח מאבני המקום
 "And he (Jacob) took one of the stones of that place"

4.4. Encoding in the S4/N4 Context

In this context, both the subject and non-subject (semi-active participants) do not occur in the preceding narrative clause. There are seven occurrences of clauses in the S4/N4 context. In five of the seven occurrences, S4 is encoded by a lexical NP while N4 is encoded by a lexical NP or lexical NP+Anchoring Relation.

- 27:5b בדבר יצחק אל-עשו בנו
 "Isaac's instructions to Esau his son"
- 6a ורבקה אמרה אל-יעקב בנה
 "And Rebekah said to Jacob her son"
- 15a ותקח רבקה את-בגדי עשו בנה הגדל החמדת
 "And Rebekah took the best garment of Esau her elder son"
- 30e אך יצא יצא יעקב מאת פני יצחק אביו
 "As soon as Jacob departed from the presence of Isaac his father"
- 28:9a וילך עשו אל-ישמעאל
 "And Esau went to Ishma'el"

In another occurrence, S4 is encoded by an Anchoring Relation and N4 by a lexical NP+Anchoring Relation.

- 28:8b כי רעות בנות כנען בעיני יצחק אביו
 "For the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac his father"⁸³

In the last occurrence, S4 and N4 are encoded by a lexical NP (default).

- 28:6b כי-ברך יצחק את-יעקב
 "For Isaac had blessed Jacob"

Besides the above contexts, there are two N4 contexts encoded by a lexical NP (Gen 27:30c) and by a lexical NP+Anchoring Relation (Gen 27:17c).

- 27:17c ביד יעקב בנה
 "In the hands of her son"
- 27:30c לברך את-יעקב
 "To bless Jacob"

⁸³ already argued (conf. §2.6.1) that this context is only possible if the daughters of Canaan are a reference to Gen 26:34. Otherwise, daughters of Canaan will be initial activation.

4.5. Other S4 Context

There is a single occurrence of an S4/N2 context. In this context, both S4 and N2 are minimally encoded.

27:36c ויעקבני זה פעמים

“And he (Jacob) has deceived me (Esau) these two times”

5. Undefined Contexts

Two examples do not fit into any of the contexts of Runge’s activation model.

27: 42a ויגד לרבקה את־דברי עשו בנה הגדל

“And the words of Esau her elder son were reported to Rebekah”
(N4+N2?)

In Gen 27:42a, Esau’s words are told to Rebekah. This comes after Esau’s direct speech where he was the speaker. In this verse, Esau is in a non-subject (N2) role and Rebekah who had no role in the preceding clause also comes in as a non-subject (N4). However, Runge’s model does not provide for any N+ contexts.

Gen 28:7a וישמע יעקב אל־אביו ואל־אמו

“And Jacob obeyed his father and his mother” (N2+N4?)

In the clause preceding Gen 28:7a, Jacob is the addressee and Isaac is the speaker. When Jacob obeys Isaac, there is a switch in roles. Jacob becomes the subject (S2) and Isaac becomes the non-subject (N2). However, Rebekah who was not part of the preceding clause is also in the non-subject role (N4). Hence, the context S2/N2+N4?

2.6.3. Anchoring Relations and Participant Referencing in Genesis 27–28

1. Introductory Remarks

As mentioned earlier a participant is introduced when it enters a narrative for the first time. Following the *Toledoth* approach to the reading of this narrative section, we have construed that all the participants are active. Therefore, no new participants have been introduced in this narrative section. However, the importance of Runge’s Anchoring Relations and its use in participant referencing deserves further investigation. When an Anchoring Relation occurs in a narrative, the participant whose POV is explicitly expressed by the Anchoring Relation is the “anchoring participant” while that whose POV is implied is known as the “anchored participant”. Consider, for example, the Anchoring Relation “Isaac *his son*” with respect to Abraham. In this example, Abraham is the *anchoring participant* while Isaac is the *anchored participant*. This section will be dedicated to the study of Anchoring Relations and their contributions to the understanding of participants in Genesis 27–28.

2. Anchoring Relations

According to Runge (2007:63 and 117) Anchoring Relations are used to give a participant a place in a narrative. He also posits that anchoring expressions serve the purpose of identifying the central (main) participant and the center of attention (Ibid. 162–165). While in our approach, we do not have Anchoring Relations that introduce participants to give them a place because all participants are already active or semi-active, Anchoring Relations are used throughout this narrative section with

each participant anchored to the others within various paragraphs and (sub)paragraphs and also in discursive portions of this narrative. Another function of Anchoring Relations that Runge emphasises is their use in thematic and cataphoric highlighting. The following section will concentrate on the study of these functions of Anchoring Relations. I will consider the Anchoring Relations that appear at the narrative level. This does not mean that those in the discursive portions are not important. An important reason for my choice is that at the narrative level, these relations have been seen to affect the structure of the narrative.

2.1. *Anchoring of Isaac*

In Genesis 27–28, Isaac is anchored 16 times. In 10 of the Anchoring Relations, Isaac is encoded by an NP and in six he is encoded by an NP+Anchoring Relation. In six of the 10 NP encodings, Isaac is anchored to Esau and in four, he is anchored to Jacob. For the NP+Anchoring Relation, Isaac is anchored to Esau three times and also to Jacob, three times. He is not anchored to Rebekah anywhere in this narrative section. When Isaac is encoded by an Anchoring Relation, he is referred to as *אביו*—“his father” with reference to Esau⁸⁴ or Jacob⁸⁵ as the anchoring participant. When Isaac’s anchoring is overencoded, he is referred to as *יִצְחָק אביו*—“Isaac his father” (NP+Anchoring Relation), with the same implication for both Esau⁸⁶ and Jacob.⁸⁷ Isaac is anchored to Esau nine times as opposed to seven for Jacob.

2.2. *Anchoring of Rebekah*

Rebekah is anchored six times in this narrative section. In five out of six anchorings, she is anchored to Jacob, as opposed to once to Esau. Three of the Anchoring Relations (to Jacob) are encoded by an NP, one by an NP+Anchoring Relation and another by an NP+Cstr noun+NP+NP. In the three NP encodings Rebekah is anchored only to Jacob. In the two NP+Anchoring Relations, she is anchored to Jacob, and in the NP+Cstr noun+NP+NP, she is anchored to both Jacob and Esau. When Rebekah is encoded by an NP, she is referred to as *אמו*—“his mother,” referring to Jacob as the anchoring participant. When her Anchoring Relation is encoded by an NP+Anchoring Relation, she is referred to as—“Rebekah his mother” with Jacob⁸⁸ as the anchored participant. When NP+Cstr noun+NP+NP is used, Rebekah is referred to as *אם יעקב ועשו*—“Rebekah mother of Jacob and Esau;”⁸⁹ with Jacob and Esau as the anchoring participants. Here, she is “Rebekah mother of Jacob” and “Rebekah mother of Esau.” Rebekah is not anchored to Isaac anywhere in this narrative.

2.3. *Anchoring of Esau*

Esau has six occurrences as an anchored participant. He is anchored to all three participants equally—Isaac (twice), Rebekah (twice) and Jacob (twice). In all six occurrences, Esau is encoded by an NP+Anchoring Relation. When he is referenced either as *הנרל בנו*—“Esau his elder son”⁹⁰ (NP+Anchoring Relation), or *עשו בנו*—“Esau his son”⁹¹ (NP+Anchoring Relation), Isaac is the anchoring participant. When

⁸⁴ Gen 27:31c, 31c, 34a, 34c, 38a, 41b, and 28:7a

⁸⁵ Gen 27: 14e, 18a, 19a and 28:7a.

⁸⁶ Gen 27:32a, 39a and 28:8b.

⁸⁷ Gen 27:22a, 26a and 30e.

⁸⁸ Gen. 27:11a.

⁸⁹ Gen 28:5b.

⁹⁰ Gen 27:1e.

⁹¹ Gen 27:5c.

Rebekah is the anchoring participant, Esau is referenced by *עשו בנה הגדל*—"Esau her elder son"⁹² (NP+Anchoring Relation), and by *עשו אחיו*—"Esau his brother"⁹³ (NP+Anchoring Relation), when Jacob is the anchoring participant.

2.4. Anchoring of Jacob

Jacob has six occurrences as an anchored participant. He is anchored to Rebekah in five occurrences and to Isaac in one. In all his five anchored relations with Rebekah, Jacob is encoded by an NP+Anchoring Relation while in the single occurrence with Isaac, he is encoded by an Anchoring Relation. When the NP+Anchoring Relation is applied, Jacob is referred to as *בנה יעקב*—"Jacob her son"⁹⁴ or *יעקב בנה הקטן*—"Jacob her younger son,"⁹⁵ with Rebekah as the anchoring participant. When the Anchoring Relation is used, Jacob is referred to as *בני*—"his son,"⁹⁶ with Isaac as the anchoring participant.

All the participants are anchored to each other except for Isaac and Rebekah. Also in two separate instances, Isaac and Rebekah are anchored to Jacob (Gen 28:7a), and Jacob and Esau are anchored to Rebekah (Gen 28:5b). Isaac's anchor to Jacob in Gen 27:20a raises some concern. This is because it is uncertain whether Isaac is aware that Jacob is an impostor. Nevertheless, Isaac is still anchored to Jacob in this instance.

3. Anchoring Relations and Central/Main Participant

According to Runge (2007:42–43 and 164–165), one main function of the anchoring relation is its use to determine the central participant. He argues that the anchor is the central participant with the others playing secondary roles and that "the major participant in a discourse is usually also the center of reference to which others are related or 'anchored'" (Ibid. 43).⁹⁷ When Runge elaborates on this topic, he uses examples which indicate that centrality can shift from one paragraph to the other (Ibid. 164, and n 30 on page 42). In this sense, centrality and main have the same meaning. Following the definitions I have proposed to various types of participants and the expansion of the nomenclature for participant categorisation, I will argue that what Runge calls central/main is better considered a dominant participant. However, his assertion that all participants are linked to the central participant is important. I will apply the data collected to determine if this agrees with my assertion and definition of centrality. The data collected for Anchoring Relations is presented in Table 2.1. The data indicates the number of times that each participant is anchored to the other and the number of times that a participant acts as an anchor. From the data in Table 2.1, Isaac is anchored to Esau nine (9) times and seven (7) times to Jacob. Rebekah is anchored to Esau once, and to Jacob six (5) times; Jacob is anchored to Isaac once and to Rebekah five (5) times; and Esau is anchored to Isaac and Rebekah two (2) times each. Also, the data indicates that Isaac acts as an anchor three (3) times; Rebekah seven (7) times; Esau eleven (11) times; and Jacob, fourteen (14) times. This illustrates that Isaac has the highest number of Anchored Relationships (16), while Jacob

⁹² Gen 27:15a and 42a.

⁹³ Gen 27:23b and 30f.

⁹⁴ Gen 27:6a and 17c.

⁹⁵ Gen 27:15c and 42c.

⁹⁶ Gen 27:20a.

⁹⁷ Also conf. Revell (1996:176). It is important to mention that Runge's concept of centrality is different from mine. He considers the central participant as the main participant but I have argued that these are different participants.

has the least (five). On the other hand, Jacob acts as an anchor (14) highest while Isaac acts as an anchor least (three). According to the centrality rule, the participant who acts as an anchor to the others in the narrative is the central participant. Thus, the data identifies Jacob as the central participant– the ones around whom all other participants revolve (conf. §2.3.2.5). Note that this central participant is different from the main participant (conf. §2.3.2.4), who in this case is Isaac because it is his *Toledoth*.⁹⁸

Thus, the collected data agrees with my approach that Jacob is the central participant.

	Participants				# of times participant is anchored
	Isaac	Rebekah	Esau	Jacob	
Isaac		0	9	7	16
Rebekah	0		1	5	6
Esau	2	2		2	6
Jacob	1	5	0		6
# of times participant acts as anchor	3	7	11	14	

Table 2.1 Anchoring Relations of participants in Genesis 27–28

4. Anchoring Relations and Markedness

We have already noted that the marked patterns of participant referencing include: withholding or delaying a participant's identity, overspecification and repetition of NP for already known participants for various reasons. The significance of overspecification and repetition in our context is that if overspecification is constantly applied in situations where minimal referents are possible, then the narrator has a pragmatic reason for applying the referents in this manner. This can be considered as markedness. In linguistics, markedness generally possesses a pragmatic significance because of its thematic highlighting effect in a clause (Bakker 2011:181). Also, just as it is in other Semitic languages, in BH markedness can be indicated by placing clause constituents before the verb (Groß 1996:44f; 2001 and van der Merwe 1999:336–350),⁹⁹ although this pattern too is often used to either activate or reactivate a participant as the subject or focus of a narrative paragraph (Gen 27:6, 30).¹⁰⁰ In Genesis 27–28, the phenomenon of overspecification and repetition is observed. While the Wayyiqtol X ± Anchoring Relation and WXQatal patterns are regarded as default patterns and indicative of (sub)paragraphs, linguists have observed that they serve more than just segmenting a narrative into blocks (Conf. Revell 1996, de Regt 1999 and Runge 2007). Where overspecification or repetition occurs, they argue for processing or for pragmatic markedness for various reasons. Among the reasons are: countering moves, salience, cataphoric and thematic highlighting (de Regt 1999:57-72 and

⁹⁸Conf. van Peursen (2013:93) for an application of this approach to Genesis 37. He writes, 'we can distinguish between "central", "main" and "dominant" participants. Jacob is the main participant, because it is his story, his *Toledoth* and as long as he lives, the stories dealing with his family are his stories. Joseph is the central participant, in literary terms the "hero", to whom the other participants are anchored.'

⁹⁹ Also, conf. Bakker (2011:179–246) for a study of this phenomenon in Syriac.

¹⁰⁰ Conf. van der Merwe (1999: 348). However, Talstra has argued that this phenomenon is unmarked for a narrative context.

Runge 2007:179–205). The following clauses which fall under these categories are regarded as marked for various reasons:

Gen 27:11a וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־רִבְקָה אִמּוֹ
 “And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother”

In the whole narrative, Rebekah is the only female actant. Thus she can be referenced minimally without ambiguity. While we have considered the explicit reference to her in Gen 27:6a as her reactivation and shift of focus, an unanswered question is why the narrator has decided to continue to use NP+Anchoring Relation references for her.¹⁰¹ In Gen 27:11a, Rebekah is a complement with an NP+Anchoring Relation reference. From a pragmatic perspective, Runge (2007:182 and 187) has argued that this anchoring reference signifies countering moves and that such references indicate switches in the center of attention via the anchoring of participants and cataphoric highlighting (Ibid.188–205). De Regt (1999a:59–68) on the other hand regards overspecification as signaling the *general significance* of a following event. The significance of Jacob’s speech warrants a relexicalisation of both participants. Also, the narrator emphasises that Rebekah is *Jacob’s mother* and that Jacob speaks to her in this capacity (*her son*). The use of אִמּוֹ in Gen 27:13a, 14c and 14d is evidence of her significance.¹⁰² Although Runge’s assertions of countering moves, cataphoric highlighting and switches in center of attention are important, de Regt’s assertion of the *general significance* or *importance* of a following event is more applicable (Also conf. Revell 1996:58ff) and provides an opportunity for the linguists to be able to uncover such importance. Hence, I will argue that at every crucial moment of the narrative, overspecification occurs as a means of highlighting the crucial nature of the event that follows it. The following examples of overspecification indicate this phenomenon.¹⁰³

Gen 27:15a וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בְּגָדֵי עֶשָׂו בְּנֵה הַנָּדָל
 “And Rebekah took the garments of Esau her elder son”

When Jacob presents his view about the dangers of Rebekah’s plan, he indicates the difference between Esau and himself (Jacob-smooth and Esau-hairy). Runge (2007:201 and 202) has argued that this is a cataphoric reference to the section which

¹⁰¹ Longacre (1989:161) has explained that gender can ensure consistency in referencing where two participants are morphologically distinct. He writes: “Basic needs of participant identification and tracking are often fulfilled by the person-number-gender affixes on the verb. Thus, in a dialogue that involves a man and a woman... or in one that involves a man and a group of men..., distinctions of gender in the one case and number in the other fill the need for routine participant tracking in dialogue. Obviously, the areas of potential ambiguity are those in which the speaker and the addressee are of the same person-number-gender category.”

¹⁰² Runge acknowledges the thematic significance of the narrator’s use of “mother” for Rebekah (Runge 2007:182).

¹⁰³ This agrees with de Regt’s assertion. It is important to observe that the narrator applies different patterns for similar situations. Runge (2007:182–186) has assigned two patterns for the same function—“countering moves” (Gen 27:11a, 20a, and 38a). While the participants possibly counter situations in these verses, the narrator’s application of separate patterns more likely indicates the significance of the situation rather than that of the countering. At other points where the narrator has used this same device, no countering is involved (conf. Gen 27:22a, 46a and 28:1a), but the immediately following actions or events are crucial.

begins with this verse and includes the placing of animal skin on Jacob. The overspecification of Esau in this verse also signals his relationship to Rebekah as a *son* and at the same time indicates the *elder-younger* contrast between Esau and Jacob. It marks a crucial point¹⁰⁴ in the narrative showing how Rebekah responds to Jacob's view about her instructions in Gen 27:7–10.

Gen 27:19a וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אָבִיו
 “And Jacob said to his father”

The above verse presents another significant moment in the narrative. It would have been enough for the narrator to continue referencing Jacob minimally as well as his father. While Jacob is referred to using an NP, Isaac is referred to by an Anchoring Relation. Normally, Jacob would give a response different from that introduced by this verse. The overspecification indicates the significance of a response in which Jacob identifies himself as Esau. Also, the narrator's use of אָבִיו is significant as is the case with Rebekah (אִמּוֹ) in Gen 27:15a. The narrator shows that Jacob speaks to Isaac as *his father* thus implying his position as a *son*.

Gen 27:20a וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־בְּנוֹ
 “And Isaac said to his son”
 Gen 27:21a וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־יַעֲקֹב
 “And Isaac to Jacob”

The overspecification in the above clauses establishes Isaac's doubt and suspicion over Jacob as he poses himself before Isaac claiming to be Esau. While Isaac doubts the identity of Jacob, the narrator's use of '*his son*' reciprocates Jacob's use of '*father*.' The use of an NP for both participants in 27:21a serves to highlight Isaac's reaction to Jacob's claim of being Esau (Runge 2007:188). Overspecification is also used by narrators to create suspense and these clauses also highlight the suspense of the reader's waiting to see how Isaac will deal with Jacob (Ibid. 188).

Gen 27:22a וַיִּנָּשׂ יַעֲקֹב אֶל־יִצְחָק אָבִיו
 “And Jacob drew near to Isaac his father”
 Gen 27:26a וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יִצְחָק אָבִיו
 “And Isaac his father said to him”

In Gen 27:22a and 26a an NP+Anchoring Relation is used for Isaac while an NP and pronoun are used for Jacob. This overspecification and repetition introduces a crucial point in the dialogue between Isaac and Jacob, and exposes the tension in the filial relationship between the pair. The doubt raised in Gen 27:20a and 21a created suspense in the mind of the reader which is resolved here. This overspecification of the actants serve to introduce this resolution, although it is only when Isaac fails to discover Jacob's impersonation that the doubt is actually resolved. Isaac's role as '*father*' is highlighted by the Anchoring Relation (Runge 2007:194).

¹⁰⁴ Revell (1996:60, 62 and 103) applies this to the encounter between David and Goliath and argues that the narrator's overspecification of David in the dialogue marks a crucial point in David's career. Also, conf. de Regt (1999b:63ff) for the same application.

Gen 27:32a ויאמר לו יצחק אביו
 "And Isaac his father said to him"

In this verse only Isaac is overspecified by an NP+Anchoring Relation. This introduces Isaac's discovery that he has blessed someone other than Esau. The reaction to this follows in Gen 27:33a which shows Isaac trembling greatly:

Gen 27:37a ויחרד יצחק חרדה גדולה עד-מאד
 "And Isaac trembled greatly and exceedingly"
 ויען יצחק
 "And Isaac answered"
 Gen 27:37b ויאמר לעשו
 "And he said to Esau"

The use of an NP for Isaac and Esau in these clauses cannot be for disambiguation since the use of pronouns would have created no ambiguity. This repetition serves the pragmatic purpose of introducing Isaac's response to Esau's insistence on being blessed. It is a two-fold introduction to Isaac's response using two different verbs—*ענה* and *אמר*. Examining the syntax of the introduction of direct discourse in BH, Miller (1994:219-220, idem, 2004:321) found out that multiple-verb frames which introduce a direct discourse using *ענה* indicate salience. Regarding this verse she (Miller 1994:236, n48) writes:

... in Gen. 27:33–40, Esau discovers that his brother, Jacob, has deceived their father, Isaac, and acquired his blessing. Esau begs his father to bless him (Gen. 27:36b), but Isaac refuses (Gen. 27:37). The response is highly salient. Esau again begs his father to bless him (Gen. 27:38), and again Isaac refuses (Gen. 27:39–40), this time with finality. Again the response is highly salient.

In this narrative the verb *ענה* is used in a multiple-verb frame¹⁰⁵ and thus agrees with Miller's claim. This also agrees with Runge's (2007:202) assertion of salience.¹⁰⁶

Gen 27:46a ותאמר רבקה אל-יצחק
 "And Rebekah said to Isaac"

Jacob has usurped Esau's blessing and Esau has made plans to kill Jacob. While Rebekah has instructed Jacob to flee, she presents an alternate way out for Jacob through her speech to Isaac. Her reference in 27:46a by an NP serves to introduce this speech.

Gen 28:1a ויקרא יצחק אל-יעקב
 "And Isaac called Jacob"

¹⁰⁵ Conf. Gen 27:39. See other examples in Gen 24:50–51.

¹⁰⁶ Runge writes: "The content of Isaac's speech removes any doubt for Esau that everything of value has already been allocated to Jacob.... The two pragmatic means used to add prominence to the speech are indicative of its thematic salience to the overall narrative."

As a response to Rebekah's demand, Isaac summons Jacob. While the repetition of the NP for Isaac can be said to highlight the significance of the following action, Jacob's NP reference is a reactivation and serves for disambiguation because he doesn't appear in the preceding (sub)paragraph. Thus, the narrator's use of pronoun would have created some ambiguity.

Generally, overspecification marks significance and the narrator applies this device in diverse ways. If a single function is assigned to a pattern in one clause and another function to the same pattern in the next clause then this might create some confusion. The argument for the *general significance* of overspecification allows for a broader understanding of the use of this referencing device.¹⁰⁷

5. Anchoring Relations and Thematic Highlighting

Runge (2007:191–200) mentions that one of the major functions of Anchoring Relations is thematic highlighting through “supplementing of Referring Expressions” and “Switches in Referring Expressions.” Runge applies this to the study of Gen 27–28:5 and traces where this device highlights the theme of the narrative. From Runge's application, it is possible to argue that he develops a thematic structure for the narrative around epithets, which in this case are kinship nouns relating to a family.¹⁰⁸ He identifies the theme as “the younger supplanting the older as the son of blessing” (Ibid. 193).¹⁰⁹ It is worth noting that Runge identifies an important referencing device and its pragmatic function, and that his application of this function to Gen 27–28:5 meets the requirement of his approach. In this application, Runge identifies a constant theme which he traces to the end of the narrative. The only question rests with the theme that Runge has identified– “the younger supplanting the older as the son of blessing.” There is evidence from the narrative that the *younger–older* is one theme and *blessing* is another. It is my opinion that the narrator uses one as a platform to inform the reader how the other develops. The narrative begins with Isaac's instruction to Esau which, in my opinion, highlights the focus of the following narrative–blessing. The narrator applies conflict and contrast to provide a development of the acquisition of the blessing with the family as the social organisation within which this blessing is handed. Viewed from this perspective, *the blessing* forms an *over-arching theme* which runs through the patriarchal narratives of Genesis 12–50, and the relational anchoring expressions provide a setting for the execution of the blessing. Runge rightly identifies the narrator's salient use of Anchoring Relations to establish that the relational epithets provide a contrast between the potential beneficiaries of the blessing but the theme he chooses is not provided by the narrative itself. In Genesis 27–28, Anchoring Relations (often kinship nouns) have a high frequency and Runge

¹⁰⁷ Although this approach seems to give the linguist the liberty to decide how the narrator applies overspecification, it provides an opportunity for the linguist to be able to uncover all the forms that a narrator uses to mark important events. Runge's countering move function of overencoding is a good example where the same device is used by the narrator for different significant events. Since the method of overspecification too varies, it might be better to argue for a general significance.

¹⁰⁸ Runge (2007:199) states that “The relational anchoring expressions used for both supplementation and substitution... highlight thematically salient relations, ... The substitution of epithets for default referring expressions ... play a significant role in highlighting salient themes.”

¹⁰⁹ Runge (2007:193) writes: “Isaac was no less Esau's father in Gen 26:34–35, yet the writer ostensibly reiterates the relation due to its impending salience. Finally, specifying that Esau is ‘*the older*’ adds prominence to his relation to his twin brother. Esau's familial relations as ‘*brother*’ and ‘*son*’ are highlighted six times in the narrative proper of the pericope; half of them include the comparative modifier ‘*older*’. Such usage is completely consistent with the broader theme of the story, viz. the younger supplanting the older as the son of blessing.”

(2007:187–199) argues that these emphasise the roles of Isaac as *father*, Rebekah as *mother* and Jacob and Esau as *sons*, besides switches in centre of attention and point of view. He also argues that these highlight the theme. While I agree on the importance of the Anchoring Relations, I will maintain that they (the Anchoring Relations) are not the theme themselves, but highlight the development of the theme namely, “the transfer of the blessings.”

2.6.4. Summary of the Application of Runge’s Model to the Encoded ETCBC Text Hierarchy of Genesis 27–28

Runge has contributed greatly to the understanding of various functions of participant referencing. However, it is not as comprehensive as portrayed since it is not able to cover all participants in a narrative section. The studies above indicate that the default pattern for participant referencing, depending on the context, is as follows: (a) Pronouns- independent or clitic; (b) Verbal inflection- where there is a clear morphological distinction between participants (number or gender) or where the semantic context permits; and (c) Lexical NP, where disambiguation is required.¹¹⁰ When a lexical NP or Anchoring Relation is used, there is a pragmatically marked reason.¹¹¹ The exceptions indicated are those that appear in the S5/N5 context and initial activation. Runge talks (2007:125–132) of ‘development unit’ (DU) and ‘new development’ and while he defines his use of DU (§2.2.2), his application of ‘new development’ is unclear. He also acknowledges the recursive nature of paragraphs in a narrative where there is the recurrence of (sub)paragraphs (indicated by ‘new developments’ in a narrative section) within a larger paragraph (DU) and intends to make a difference between a recurrent (sub)paragraph and a paragraph. Nevertheless, I have already mentioned that Runge’s (as de Regt’s) use of the lexical NP reference as the beginning of a new paragraph stems from the literary and not linguistic conventions.¹¹² Hence while most of his arguments are linguistically based, his use of the structure based on the literary rather than linguistic conventions hamper his definition of the resources for participant referencing.

The focus of this section has been on the application of Runge’s approach of participant referencing to Genesis 27–28 based on the concatenated text hierarchy of the ETCBC and the *Toledoth* reading approach. When I applied the *Toledoth* approach, I found out that there is no initial activation of any of the participants because all appear in previous narrative sections. I also found out that a lot of similarities exist between these approaches. However, the discrepancies are very crucial.

First is initial activation of participants. Both approaches agree that overencoding of participants is default for initial activation and that there is no initial activation at the beginning of Genesis 27.

Second is continuous reference of participants. While both approaches agree that there is no initial activation, they differ on the continuing referencing pattern of the participants at the beginning of Genesis 27. Runge construes that Isaac is semi-active but he does not define Isaac’s continuation pattern in Gen 27:1b. When he places Isaac’s minimal encoding in the following clause (Gen 27:1c) in the S3 context, he does not consider that Isaac is the subject of the preceding clause referenced by a

¹¹⁰ Where Anchoring Relations are used, Runge construes a designation of the point of view of the anchoring participant for various purposes (salience, thematic or cataphoric highlighting).

¹¹¹ Conf. Runge (2007:179ff) (§7.3–7.5) for a detailed discussion of this.

¹¹² Just like Runge, de Regt almost considers every explicit mention of name as the beginning of a paragraph as indicated by the structure he applies. Gen 27:5a where Rebekah is mentioned in a participial clause presents an example of de Regt’s approach (Conf. de Regt 1999:17).

lexical NP. Following on, Runge (2001:177) assigns Rebekah and Esau the S4 contexts (semi-active) and Jacob is also placed in the same context (inactive). Runge requires more consistency to make his approach fruitful.

Third is the scope of Runge's activation scale. When he deals with the default S2/N2 context, he gives the impression that S2 does not exist with minimal encoding (Ibid.). Where there is no explicit object (pronoun or noun), he talks of an S2/N2 context with an elided N2 (Ibid.).¹¹³ Another implication might be that there is no subject context except in situations where an explicit direct object or complement is mentioned. Hence most of the examples I have for S1 and S2 contexts are S1/N1 and S2/N2 contexts for Runge. The result is that I have identified clauses from almost all the contexts while Runge has mostly discussed the S1/N1 and S2/N2 contexts.

Fourth is embedding. Runge's scale does not identify embedded narratives in discursives nor define how narratives embedded in discursives (NQN) should be considered. Also, he considers direct speeches as reported clauses and uses these as synonyms to each other (Runge 2007:53 and 90).

Fifth is the reoccurrence of a subject after a monologue. Runge's scale does not explain what will happen if a speaker in a direct speech does not have a direct addressee or if the speaker is also the addressee. In Gen 28:16–22, Jacob is involved in a series of monologues interspersed by narrative sections where he remains the subject and Runge's model does not provide for such monologues. Where does this fit on Runge's scale? Here Runge's S1/N1 context does not apply. When I read this section, I consider Jacob in an S1 context after his monologues. If this is the case then maybe the S1 context should be redefined or an addition be made to cover situations like that of Jacob.¹¹⁴

A sixth important observation is that Runge's model is not able to account for all the participants. In §2.6.2.5, I have mentioned two examples that do not find a context in Runge's model because the non-subjects occurred in different activation contexts. These examples have an N2 and N4 context occurring as the non-subject of the same clause. There are also some clauses which have no subjects and Runge's scale does not account for these.

Another problem noticed is the effect of participant referencing on the structure of a narrative. What Runge considers as a clause is further divided into clauses in the ETCBC encoding. The example of Gen 27:5a can illustrate this.

Gen 27:5a רבקה שמעת בדבר יצחק אל-עשו בנו

"And Rebekah (S4) was listening to the words of Isaac to Esau (N3) his son"

The ETCBC encoding splits this clause into two parts—(a) a Participial clause and (b) an InfC clause as follows:

Gen 27:5a רבקה שמעת

"And Rebekah was listening"

¹¹³ Runge (2007:177) writes: "In Context S2/N2 we regularly observe subjects minimally encoded using clitic pronouns, and the addressee either elided or pronominally encoded." Where the addressee is pronominally encoded I do agree that the context is S2/N2 but where the addressee is elided it should be an S2 context otherwise there is no subject context without an explicit non-subject.

¹¹⁴ Van Peursen (2013:90–91) also notices a similar situation when he finds out that Runge's S+ scale does not cover the activation types in Genesis 37 and concludes that "in concrete texts participant reference may be a more complex phenomenon than in a theoretical framework" (Ibid. 91).

Gen 27:5b בדבר יצחק אל-עשו בנו
"As Isaac was speaking to Esau his son"

The division of verses into (sub)verses continues to pose a serious problem among biblical scholars. This is because the rules are hard to define. Hence scholars become subjective in the way verses are (sub)divided.

The importance of Runge's Anchoring Relation is seen in the way he has applied it, especially with respect to the centre of attention, prominence, salience and cataphoric highlighting. He expands on the general notion of the *significance of overencoding* and *highlights specific pragmatic applications* of Anchoring Relations which contribute meaningfully to the understanding of the pragmatic effects of overencoding. He also applies overencoding for thematic highlighting, thus presenting essential resources for participant referencing. Although Runge's results bear on the understanding of the narrative, I have argued, with respect to the pragmatic effects of Anchoring Relations in Genesis 27:1–28:5, that the functions Runge assigns to this device are more content based and not linguistically based because he derives the functions from the following direct speech and uses them to define the preceding overspecification. I have also mentioned that this could probably be one shortcoming of the functional approach. The general significance of an event, signalled by an overspecification (as specified by de Regt) allows for a flexible application of this referencing device which the narrator applies. Arguing for a particular function for this device might result in some confusion most especially as the significant events are different within the same narrative unit, but signalled by almost the same amount of overspecification.

Over the years, the ETCBC has used the computer to facilitate the analysis of biblical texts. The result of this is the creation of a database which has been applied to some projects notably the CALAP/Turgama projects. The ETCBC encoding has analysed biblical texts and divided these texts into clauses. Although this is not an absolute solution, the analysis has contributed immensely to the linguistic study of BH texts. Its success in the analysis of BH and some other languages means that it can help us develop better segmenting resources in the studies of participant referencing and its segmentation effect on BH texts and also to be able to study the syntactic and semantic relations between the clauses. This approach which has been applied to the CALAP/Turgama project will constitute the next section of this study.

2.7. TEXT-SYNTACTIC STUDY OF PARTICIPANT REFERENCING IN GENESIS 27–28

2.7.1. *Introductory Remarks*

In the previous sections I have mentioned that one of the major problems encountered by Runge and de Regt is the proper application of the linguistic parameters to texts. It is understood that Runge and other scholars may have the intention to appropriately use or apply linguistic parameters to narratives, but the cumbersome nature of the application may lead to lapses. Considering that scholars have to go through large amount of clauses, the possibilities of leaving out much, mixing or skipping important parameters becomes inevitable. The use of a human-computer interactive method by the ETCBC to analyse texts has yielded fruits. In this section, I will apply the encoding of the ETCBC to study participant referencing in Genesis 27–28. I will begin with a description of the syntactic relations between clauses, as well as the clause type distribution in the text hierarchy (§2.7.2). A section will be dedicated to study the syntactic relations of Gen 27:5 to the preceding and following clauses. This is underscored by the disagreements presented by authors with respect to its function

in segmenting the text. Also, I will study the interclausal syntactic connections in the text hierarchy (§2.7.3) to determine its effect on continuity at the phrase and text levels, with the corresponding clause types at each level. In addition, I will study the clause types that mark (sub)paragraphs at the textual and meta narrative levels including embedded (sub)paragraphs (§2.7.4). This will lead me into an analysis of the communication levels [structure, (sub)paragraphs and text analysis] in the text. The purpose is to investigate the contributions that the ETCBC model has made to the understanding of narrative texts, participant referencing patterns and their structural effects in Genesis 27–28. In the text hierarchy of Genesis 27–28, all participants are dependent upon Isaac on grounds that the narrative is Isaac's *Toledoth*. Therefore, Isaac is the main participant and remains the only participant to feature in the highest (sub)paragraph level of the hierarchy.

2.7.2. Text Hierarchy: Proposed Text Hierarchy Argument and Description

This section describes the clause features and defines clausal syntactic connections of the ETCBC encoding. These features include: (a) Use of clause types and their interrelations—i.e. (PNG)— Person [1st (1), 2nd (2), or 3rd (3)], Number [singular (sg) or plural (pl) and Gender [masculine (M) or feminine (F)]; (b) Macro-syntactic markers (Msyn); (c) Ellipsis (Ellp); (d) Casus pendens (CPen); (e) Embedding; (f) Clause types (conf. §1.4.1.2); and (g) Discursives (Direct speech, direct speech in a direct speech). The distribution of these clauses occupies different levels in the text hierarchy. It is important to note that the concatenation of Genesis 27–28 as a single text has affected the levels of clausal distribution in the hierarchy; zero (0) being the highest level and 19 the lowest level (conf. §2.7.2.2).

1. Description of Text Hierarchy and Argument for Clause Relations

Cl # Argument for clause relations¹¹⁵

- 1 Way0 clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by the macro-syntactic marker—ויהי.
- 2 xQtIX clause connects to clause 1 by כי and agreement in PNG–3sgM. A new participant is identified (NP–יצחק).
- 3 WayX clause connects to clause 2. The text hierarchy marks this as the first clause of a (sub)paragraph because it considers that עיניי is a new participant. This clause connects to the preceding by the clitic pronoun of עיניי which is equal to the NP <Su> of clause 2.
- 4 InfC is dependent on the preceding clause and connects to it.
- 5 Way0 clause connects to clause 2 by agreement in PNG –3sgM. New participant identified in a non-subject position—הגדל את-עשו בנו "Esau his elder son."
- 6 Way0 clause connects to the preceding clause as identical clause type and by common syntactic features. The <Co> בנו of clause 6 = the <Ob><ap> הגדל את-עשו of clause 5.
- 7 This clause also introduces the following narrative quotation (NQ).

¹¹⁵ Clauses at the higher levels of the text hierarchy to which lower clauses are connected are known as "Mother Clauses" (MCL). "Daughter Clauses" (DCL) are the clauses at the lower levels of the hierarchy which connect to the clauses at the higher levels. The Daughter Clauses connect to the Mother Clauses. It is also important to note that a MCL can be a DCL to another clause at a higher level of the text hierarchy and a DCL can act as a MCL to a clause at the lower level of a text hierarchy.

- 8 Vocative–Narrative Quotation (NQ). Connects to the preceding clause.
- 9 Way0 clause connects to clause 6 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG. Both clauses have similar syntagms and same order. Clause 9 is also a formal and lexical parallel to clause 6. There is a switch in roles between subject and non-subject (complement).
- 10 NmCl (NQ) and connects to the preceding clause.
- 11 Way0 clause connects to clause 8 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG. Introduces the following NQ with a switch between subject and non-subject and begins a (sub)paragraph.
- 12 xQtI0 clause. First clause of NQ and connects to the preceding clause.
- 13 xQtI0 clause connects to the preceding as identical clause type.
- 14 Macro-syntactic marker connects to clause 11.
- 15 ZIm0 clause connects (subordinate) to the preceding clause.
- 16 WIm0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause. Parallel to clauses 17 and 19 as identical clause type and by common syntactic elements. These clauses connect to each other in coordination.
- 17 WIm0 clause connects to the preceding identical clause type and agreement in PNG –2sgM.
- 18 xQtI0 clause (relative clause אשר) connects to clause 17.
- 19 WIm0 clause connects to clause 17 as identical clause type, by agreements in PNG –2sgM, and by common syntactic elements. The complement of both clauses is identical–לי.
- 20 WYqtI0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause.
- 21 xYqtIX clause connects to clause 14 by common syntactic features. The suffixes of <Ob> <ap> וקשתך תליך כליך of clause 14 = the suffix of <PO> תברכך of clause 21.
- 22 xYqtI0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Su> נפשי is equivalent to the 1st person prefix of <Pr> אמות.
- 23 Participial clause connects (subordination) to clause 10. New participant identified by an NP–רבקה. However, this does not mark the beginning of a paragraph (conf. §2.7.2.3).
- 24 InfC clause connects to the preceding clause.
- 25 WayX clause connects to clause 10 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG –3sgM. First clause of (sub)paragraph marked by explicit mention of participant.
- 26 InfC clause connects to the preceding clause.
- 27 InfC clause connects to the preceding clause as identical clause type.
- 28 WXQtI connects to clause 25 (subordination). Begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change of actant and explicit use of NP.
- 29 InfC clause (adjunct) connects to the preceding clause and introduces the following NQ.
- 30 xQtI0 clause. First clause of NQ and connects to the preceding clause.
- 31 Participial clause (attributive) connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. Both clauses have the same 2nd person suffixes (same suffix for <Ob> את-אביך, clause 30 and <Co> <ap> אחיך, clause 31).
- 32 InfC clause (adjunct) connects to the preceding clause and introduces the following NQQ.
- 33 ZIm0 clause. First clause of NQQ (a Quotation in a Narrative Quotation) and connects to the preceding clause.

- 34 WIm0 clause connects to the preceding clause by PNG –2sgM.
- 35 WYqtl0 clause connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> לִי of clause 34 is the same as the 1st person prefix of <Pr> ואכלה of clause 35.
- 36 WYqtl0 clause connects to preceding clause as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG. It is the last clause of the NQQ.
- 37 Macro-syntactic marker resumes the NQ and connects to clause 30 as identical clause type.
- 38 Vocative connects to the preceding clause.
- 39 ZIm0 clause connects to the preceding clause (dependent clause) by common syntactic features. The suffix of בני of clause 38 = the suffix of <Co> בקלי of clause 39.
- 40 NmCl (Relative אשר) connects to preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> בקלי (clause 39) = the IPP <Su> אני of clause 40; and the suffix of <Ob> אחד of clause 40 is implied in the ZIm0 <Pr> שמוע of clause 39.
- 41 ZIm0 clause connects to clause 39 as identical clause type.
- 42 WIm0 clause (dependent) connects to clause 41 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG –2sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Co> אל-הצאן of clause 41 = the <Co> עוים טבים of clause 42.
- 43 WYqtl0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The <Ob> עוים טבים of clause 42 = the <Ob> מוטעמים of clause 43.
- 44 xQtI0 clause (relative כאשר) connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The <Co> לאביך of clause 43 is reflected in the 3sgM verb <Pr> אהב of clause 44.
- 45 WQtI0 clause connects to clause 42 by agreement in PNG –2sgM.
- 46 QtI0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause as identical clause type.
- 47 xYqtl0 (dependent) connects to clause 46 by agreement in PNG –3sgM.
- 48 WayX clause connects to clause 28 (subordinate) by common syntactic features. The <Su> יעקב of clause 48 = the <Co> אל-יעקב בנה of clause 28; and the <Su> רבקה of clause 28 = the <Co> אל-רבקה אמו of clause 48. This clause marks the start of a (sub)paragraph by a change of actant and explicit mention of name. In addition, it introduces the following NQ.
- 49 NmCl. First clause of NQ and connects to the preceding clause.
- 50 NmCl connects to the preceding clause as identical clause type and by common syntactic features. The word איש occurs in both clauses and the suffix of <Su><ap> אחי of clause 49 = the IPP אנכי of clause 50.
- 51 Connects to clause 49 by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Su><ap> אחי of clause 49 = the suffix of <Su>/<PO> אבי/ימשיני of clause 50.
- 52 WQtI0 clause (dependent) connects to preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Su> אבי of clause 51 = the suffixes of <Co> בעיני and <Pr> והייתי of clause 52.
- 53 WQtI0 clause connects to clause 52 as identical clause type and common syntactic features. The suffix of <Pr> והייתי of clause 52 = the suffixes of <Pr> והבאתי and <Co> עלי of clause 53.

- 54 Elliptical clause connects to clause 53 by the conjunction 1.
- 55 WayX clause resumes narrative and connects to clause 48 as identical clause type and by common syntactic features. The <Su> אָמַר of clause 55 = the <Co><ap> אָל-רַבִּקָּה אָמַר of clause 48; and the <Su> יַעֲקֹב of clause 48 = the <Co> לוֹ of clause 55. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in actant. There is no explicit mention of name. The NP–*his mother*, is used by narrator. This clause also introduces the following NQ.
- 56 NmCl connects to preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PC> עָלַי of clause 56 = the <Su> אָמַר of clause 55; and the suffix of <Su> קָלְלַתְךָ of clause 56 = the <Co> לוֹ of clause 55. This is the first clause of the NQ.
- 57 Vocative connects to the preceding clause.
- 58 xlm0 clause connects to clause 56 by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PC> עָלַי of clause 56 = the suffix of <Co> בְּקָלִי of clause 58.
- 59 Wlm0 clause (dependent) connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG –2sgM.
- 60 Zlm0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG –2sgM.
- 61 Way0 clause resumes narrative and connects to clause 55 by common syntactic features. The Way0 <Pr> וַיֵּלֶךְ (3sgM) of clause 61 refers to the לוֹ <Co> of clause 55. This clause is parallel to clauses 62–63 and connects to each other as identical clause types and by agreement in PNG –3sgM.
- 64 WayX clause connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The <Su> אָמַר of clause 64 = <Co> לְאָמַר of clause 63. This clause also begins a (sub)paragraph marked by change in actant.
- 65 xQtIX clause (relative באֲשֶׁר) connects to the preceding clause.
- 66 WayX clause connects to clause 28 by agreement in PNG–3sgF and by common syntactic features. The <Su> רַבִּקָּה of clause 28 = the <Su> רַבִּקָּה of clause 66. It begins a (sub)paragraph marked by explicit mention of participant.
- 67 NmCl (relative אֲשֶׁר) connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The <PC> אָתָּה of clause 67 = the <Su> רַבִּקָּה of clause 66.
- 68 Way0 clause connects to clause 66 by agreement in PNG –3sgF.
- 69 WxQtI clause (subordinate) connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgF and by common syntactic features. The suffixes of <Co> צוֹאֲרֵי of clause 69 = the <Ob><ap> הַקָּטָן בְּנֵה יַעֲקֹב of clause 68.
- 70 Way0 clause connects to clause 68 as an identical clause type and by in PNG –3sgF.
- 71 xQtI0 clause (relative אֲשֶׁר) connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG –3sgF.
- 72 Defective clause due to embedding and connects to clause 70.
- 73 Way0 clause connects to clause 70 as identical clause type. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in actant. It is parallel to clauses 74 and 76 and connects to each other as identical clause types and agreement in PNG –3sgM.
- 74 Way0 clause connects to the preceding clause and introduces the following NQ.
- 75 Vocative. First clause of NQ and connects to the preceding clause.

- 76 Way0 clause connects to clause 74 and introduces the following NQ. This clause also begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in actant.
- 77 NmCl (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 78 NmCl (dependent) connects to the preceding clause as identical clause type.
- 79 Vocative connects to the preceding clause.
- 80 WayX clause connects to clause 5 by agreement in PNG–3sgM. It begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in actant and explicit mention of name, and also introduces the following NQ. This connection is quite important to the narrative. The (sub)paragraph with Isaac and Jacob already began in clause 73 and it is only here that the narrator uses an NP for Jacob. The decision to connect clause 80 to clause 5 indicates that Jacob is responding to the assignment given to Esau by Isaac. Clauses 81–88 justify this assertion because Jacob claims to be Esau who has carried out Isaac's assignment. This connection also indicates that Isaac is the main participant all other participants fit within his narrative.
- 81 NmCl (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The <Su> אָנְכִי of clause 81 = the <Su> יַעֲקֹב of clause 80.
- 82 ZQtl0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Pr> עֲשִׂיתִי of clause 82 = the <Su> אָנְכִי of clause 81.
- 83 xQtl0 clause (subordinate כְּאֲשֶׁר) connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> אֲלִי of clause 83 = the suffix of <Pr> עֲשִׂיתִי of clause 82.
- 84 ZIm0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 85 ZIm0 clause connects to the preceding clause as an identical clause type and agreement in PNG–2sgM.
- 86 WIm0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG–2sgM.
- 87 xYqtlX clause (subordinate) connects to preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Pr> תְּבַרְכֵנִי of clause 87 = the suffix of <Co> מְצִירִי of clause 86; and the suffix of <Su> נִפְשְׁךָ of clause 87 is inflected in <Pr> וְאֵכְלָה of clause 86.
- 88 WayX clause connects to clause 80 as identical clause type, agreement in PNG–3sgM, and common syntactic features. The <Su> יַצְחָק of clause 88 = the <Co> אֲבִי of clause 80; and the <Co> בְּנוֹ of clause 88 = the <Su> יַעֲקֹב of clause 80. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph and also introduces the following NQ.
- 89 NmCl (interrogative and first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 90 ZQtl0 clause (dependent) connects to preceding clause.
- 91 InfC (subordinate) connects to the preceding clause.
- 92 Vocative connects to the preceding clause.
- 93 Way0 clause connects to clause 88 by agreement in PNG–3sgM and introduces the following NQ.
- 94 xQtlX clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 95 WayX clause connects to clause 88 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. Both clauses have the same <Su> יַצְחָק, and the <Co> יַעֲקֹב of clause 95 = the <Co> בְּנוֹ of clause 88. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in actant and explicit use of NP. It introduces the following NQ.

- 96 ZIm0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 97 WYqtl0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause by 1.
- 98 Vocative connects to the preceding clause.
- 99 NmCl (interrogative) connects to clause 96.
- 100 Elliptical clause connects to preceding clause.
- 101 Elliptical clause (negation) connects to clause 99 by אִם.
- 102 WayX clause connects to clause 95 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Su> יַעֲקֹב of clause 102 = the <Co> יַעֲקֹב of clause 95; and the <Co> יִצְחָק of clause 102 = the <Su> יִצְחָק of clause 95. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in actant and explicit use of NP.
- 103 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PO> וַיִּמְשְׁלוּ of clause 103 = the <Su> יַעֲקֹב of clause 102. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in the actant.
- 104 Way0 clause connects to clause 103 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. It also introduces the following NQ.
- 105 NmCl (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 106 NmCl (dependent) connects to the preceding clause by 1.
- 107 WxQtl clause connects to clause 104 by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 108 xQtlX clause (subordinate) connects to the preceding clause by כִּי and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PO> הִכִּירוּ of clause 107 = the suffixes of <Su> יָדִיו and <PC> אֶחָיו of clause 108.
- 109 Way0 clause connects to clause 107 by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PO> וַיְבַרְכֵהוּ of clause 109 = the suffix of <PO> הִכִּירוּ of clause 107.
- 110 Way0 clause connects to clause 104 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. Formal and lexical parallel to clause 104. Also introduces the following NQ.
- 111 NmCl (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 112 NmCl connects to the preceding clause.
- 113 Way0 clause connects to clause 110 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. Formal and lexical parallel to clause 110. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in the roles of actants (Way0) and introduces the following NQ.
- 114 NmCl (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 115 Way0 clause connects to clause 113 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG. Formal and lexical parallel to clause 113. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by role change and introduces the following NQ.
- 116 ZIm0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 117 WYqtl0 clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause.
- 118 xYqt clause (dependent) connects to the preceding clause by the conjunction לְמַעַן and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Pr> תְּבַרְכֶּךָ of clause 118 = the <Co> בְּנֵי of clause 117.
- 119 Way0 connects to clause 115 by identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by role change. It is parallel to clauses 120, 121 and 122 which are all (sub)paragraphs marked by changes in the roles of actants.

- 123 WayX clause connects to clause 102 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG-3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> אליו of clause 123 = the <Su> יעקב of clause 102; and the <Su><ap> יצחק אביו of clause 123 = the <Co><ap> אל-יצחק אביו of clause 102. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by change in actant and use of NP. This clause also introduces the following NQ. It is important to note that clause 123 is parallel to clauses 80, 88, 95 and 102. In these (sub)paragraphs, Jacob defends his sonship and claims that he is Esau. Hence, Isaac is convinced and he issues the patriarchal blessings.
- 124 ZIm0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 125 WIm0 clause (subordinate) connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG-2sgM.
- 126 Vocative connects to preceding clause.
- 127 Way0 clause connects to clause 123 by agreement in PNG-3sgM. Parallel and identical clause to clause 128. This clause marks the beginning of a (sub)paragraph by a change in roles.
- 128 Way0 clause marks the start of a (sub)paragraph by change in actant.
- 129 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG-3sgM.
- 130 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG-3sgM.
- 131 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG-3sgM. It also introduces the following NQ.
- 132 ZIm0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 133 NmCl connects to the preceding clause.
- 134 xQtIX clause (relative אשר) connects to the preceding clause.
- 135 WYqtIX clause connects to clause 133 by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> לך of clause 135 = the <Su> בני of clause 133.
- 136 Elliptical clause connects to the preceding clause.
- 137 ZYqtIX clause connects to clause 135 by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PO> יעבדוך of clause 137 = the <Co> לך of clause 135.
- 138 WYqtIX clause connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG-3plM and by common syntactic features. The <Co> לך of clause 138 = the suffix of <PO> יעבדוך of clause 137.
- 139 ZIm0 clause connects to clause 132 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG-2sgM.
- 140 WYqtIX clause connects to preceding clause by ו and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> לאחריך of clause 139 = the suffixes of <Su> בני אמן and <Co> לך of clause 140.
- 141 Participial clause (predicative) connects to clause 139 by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Su> ארריך of clause 141 = the <Co> לך of clause 139.
- 142 Participial clause (predicative) connects to the preceding clause by ו and by common syntactic features. The suffixes of <Su> ברוך and <PC> ומברכך of clause 142 = the suffix of <Su> ארריך of clause 141.
- 143 Way0 clause connects to clause 5 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG-3sgM. This clause marks the start of a (sub)paragraph by the time particle ויהי.

- 144 xQtIX clause (relative **כאשר**) connects to preceding clause.
- 145 InfC connects to the preceding clause.
- 146 Way0 clause connects to clause 143 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 147 xQtIX clause connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 148 WXQtI clause connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Su><ap> **עשו אחיו** of clause 148 = the <Su> **יעקב** of clause 147. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in actant and use of NP.
- 149 WayX clause connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Su> **הוא** of clause 149 = <Su><ap> **עשו אחיו** of clause 148. This marks the start of a (sub)paragraph indicated by the independent personal pronoun.
- 150 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM. Parallel to clause 151 as identical clause type. Both clauses have common syntactic features (the same <Co> **לאביו**). Clause 151 also introduces the following NQ.
- 152 ZYQtI0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 153 Vocative connects to the preceding clause.
- 154 WYQtI0 clause connects to clause 152 by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 155 xYQtIX clause (subordinate) connects to clause 154 by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> **בנו** of clause 154 = the suffix of <Pr> **תברכני** of clause 155.
- 156 WayX clause connects to clause 148 by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> **לו** of clause 156 = the <Su><ap> **עשו אחיו** of clause 148. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in the roles of actants and the use of an NP. It also introduces the following NQ.
- 157 NmCI (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 158 Way0 clause connects to clause 156 by agreement in PNG–3sgM. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in roles, and introduces the following NQ.
- 159 NmCI (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 160 WayX clause connects to clause 156 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG, and by common syntactic features. Both clauses have a common <Su> **יעהק**. Clause 160 begins a (sub)paragraph marked by explicit NP and change in actant.
- 161 Way0 connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and introduces following NQ.
- 162 NmCI (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 163 Participial clause (attributive) connects to the preceding.
- 164 Way0 clause (NQN) connects to the preceding clause.
- 165 Way0 clause connects to the preceding clause as identical clause type.
- 166 xYQtI0 clause (dependent) connects to clause 163 by <Cj> **בטרם**.
- 167 Way0 connects (NQN) to the preceding clause.
- 168 xYQtI0 connects to the preceding clause as an NQ.
- 169 InfC connects to the preceding clause. The preceding clause here is clause 161. Clauses 162–168 is a discursive and the InfC continues the narrative line. Thus, this clause is connected to clause 161. This marks the beginning

of a new (sub)paragraph indicated using NP and change in actant. The InfC is preceded by כִּי and followed by an explicit NP. The כ + InfC marks a definite time which segments the narrative.

- 170 Way0 connects to clause 169 by agreement in PNG–3sgM. This clause has a similar clause structure to clause 160.

וַיַּחֲרֹד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְּדֹלָה עַד־מְאֹד
 “And Isaac trembled greatly and exceedingly”
 וַיִּצְעַק צַעֲקָה גְּדֹלָה וּמְרָה עַד־מְאֹד
 “And he cried greatly and exceedingly”

- 171 Way0 clause connects to clause 161 as identical clause type, and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. It also introduces the following NQ.
- 172 ZIm0 clause connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PO> בְּרַכְנִי of clause 172 = the suffix of <Co> לְאִבִּי of clause 171.
- 173 NmCl (subordinate) connects to the preceding clause.
- 174 Vocative connects to the clause 172.
- 175 Way0 clause connects to clause 171 by clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in the roles of actants and introduces the following NQ.
- 176 ZQtIX clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 177 Way0 clause (NQ) connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 178 Way0 clause connects to clause 175 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. It marks the start of a (sub)paragraph by a change in the roles of actants, and also introduces the following NQ.
- 179 xQtI0 clause (NQ) connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 180 Way0 clause (NQ) connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 181 xQtI0 clause connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 182 WxQtI0 connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 183 Way0 clause connects to clause 178 as identical clause type.
- 184 xQtI0 clause (NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 185 WayX clause connects to clause 160 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. Both clauses have a common <Su> יִצְחָק. This clause marks a (sub)paragraph by a change in actant and use of an NP. When Jacob proved his sonship, Isaac responded by blessing him. The (sub)paragraph was linked to Isaac's instructions as evidence that Isaac was satisfied with his findings. Here this (sub)paragraph is linked to clause 160 where Isaac trembles as evidence that Esau's efforts are unable to secure the blessings. Hence, Isaac gives Esau his final verdict.
- 186 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and introduces the following NQ.
- 187 xQtI0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The <Co> לִי of clause 187 = the <Co> לְעֵשָׂו of clause 186.
- 188 WxQtI0 clause (subordinate) connects to the preceding clause by ו.
- 189 WxQtI0 clause connects to clause 187 by ו.

- 190 NmCl connects to clause 187 by 1.
- 191 xYqtl0 clause connects to preceding clause.
- 192 Vocative connects to the preceding clause.
- 193 WayX clause connects to clause 185 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Su> יצחק of clause 185 = the <Co> לאביו of clause 193. This clause marks a (sub)paragraph by a change in actant and explicit use of NP. It also introduces the following NQ.
- 194 Casus Pendens (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 195 NmCl (resumptive) connects to the preceding clause.
- 196 Vocative connects to the preceding clause.
- 197 Zlm0 (resumptive) connects to clause 194.
- 198 Elliptical clause connects to the preceding clause.
- 199 Vocative connects to the clause 197.
- 200 WayX clause connects to clause 193 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. Both clauses have the same <Su> עשו. This clause marks a (sub)paragraph by a change in actant and explicit use of NP.
- 201 Way0 clause (dependent) connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 202 WayX clause connects to clause 200 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Su><ap> יצחק אביו of clause 202 = the <Su> עשו of clause 200. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by change in actant and explicit use of NP.
- 203 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Su><ap> יצחק אביו of clause 202 = the suffix of <Co> אליו of clause 203. It also introduces the following NQ.
- 204 xYqtlX clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 205 Elliptical clause connects to the preceding clause in subordination.
- 206 WxYqtl0 clause connects to clause 204 by 1.
- 207 WxYqtl0 clause connects to preceding clause as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–2sgM.
- 208 Macro-syntactic marker connects to clause 206 by 1.
- 209 xYqtl0 clause (relative כאשר) connects to the preceding clause.
- 210 WQtl0 clause connects to clause 208 by 1.
- 211 WayX clause connects to clause 146 by agreement in PNG–3sgM. This is a new turn of events. The blessing has been issued to Jacob and Isaac has made it known to Esau. This (sub)paragraph introduces Esau's reactions as he sets new plans against Jacob. Its connection to the time particle in clause 146 supports this assertion. This clause marks the beginning of a new (sub)paragraph by change of actant and explicit use of NP.
- 212 xQtlX clause (relative אשר) connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PO> ברכו of clause 212 = the <Ob> את־יִעקב of clause 211; and the suffix of <Su> אביו of 212 = the <Su> of עשו clause 211.
- 213 WayX clause connects to clause 211 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. Both clauses have the same <Su> עשו. Clause 213 also marks a (sub)paragraph by explicit use of NP, and introduces the following NQ.

- 214 ZYqtlX clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
 215 WYqtl0 clause connects to preceding clause by 1.
 216 Way0 clause connects to clause 213 by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Su> עשו of clause 213 = <Ob><ap> עשו בנה הגרל of clause 216.
 217 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause as identical clause type. This clause marks a (sub)paragraph by a shift in PNG. It is also parallel to clause 218 and clause 219 and the clauses connect to each other as identical clause types and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. Clauses 218–219 are also linked by common syntactic features. The <Co><ap> בנה הקטן of clause 218 = suffix of <Co> אליו of clause 219. Clause 219 also introduces the following NQ.
 220 Participial clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
 221 InfC connects to the preceding clause.
 222 Macro-syntactic marker connects to clause 220.
 223 Vocative connects to the preceding clause.
 224 Zlm0 clause connects to clause 222.
 225 Wlm0 clause connects to preceding clause by 1 and by agreement in PNG–2sgM.
 226 Zlm0 connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–2sgM.
 227 WQtl0 clause connects to preceding clause by 1, by agreement in PNG–2sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> עמו of clause 227 = the <Co> אל לבן אחי of clause 226.
 228 xYqtlX clause (relative אשר) connects to the preceding clause.
 229 InfC connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The word אחיך occurs in the <Su> of both clauses–אחך אחיך for clause 229 and חמת אחיך for clause 228.
 230 WQtl0 clause connects to clause 229.
 231 xQtl0 clause (relative אשר) connects to the preceding clause.
 232 WQtl0 clause connects to clause 227 as identical clause type.
 233 WQtl0 clause connects to preceding clause as identical clause type.
 234 xYtl0 clause connects to clause 224 by the interrogative למה.
 235 WayX clause connects to clause 213 as identical clause type. This marks a (sub)paragraph by change in actant and explicit use of NP. It also introduces the following NQ.
 236 ZQtl0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
 237 Participial clause connects to the preceding clause by אם and by common syntactic features. The <Aj> חת מפני בנות חת of clause 236 = the <Co> מבנות-חת and <sp> הארץ of clause 237.
 238 NmCl connects to the preceding clause.
 239 WayX clause connects to clause 1 by agreement in PNG. This clause marks a (sub)paragraph by change in the set of actants and explicit use of NP. In the ETCBC encoding, this clause begins another narrative. This is because the coding follows the Masoretic Text chapter boundaries. Following the *To-ledoth* method of reading, it connects to clause 1 as a continuation of this narrative. Both clauses have a common subject “Isaac.” However, the subject of clause 1 is made explicit by the xQtlX of clause 2. After Isaac has initiated

- the sending of Esau to the field, he now initiates the sending of Jacob to Paddan Aram.
- 240 Way0 clause connects to clause 239 by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The subjects and objects are the same as those of clause 239.
- 241 Way0 clause connects to the preceding clause as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The subjects and non-subjects of both clauses are the same.
- 242 Way0 clause connects to the preceding clause as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The subjects and non-subjects of both clauses are the same. This clause also introduces the following NQ.
- 243 xYqtl0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 244 Zlm0 clause connects to the preceding by agreement in PNG–2sgM.
- 245 Zlm0 clause connects to the preceding as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–2sgM.
- 246 Wlm0 clause connects to preceding by agreement in PNG–2sgM, and by common syntactic features. There is the occurrence of אָנֵךְ in both clauses.
- 247 WXYqtl0 clause connects to clause 246 by common syntactic features. The suffix of אָנֵךְ of clause 246 = the suffix of אָתָּךְ <Ob> of clause 247.
- 248 WYqtl0 clause connects to preceding by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 249 WYqtl0 clause connects to the preceding as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 250 WQtl0 clause connects to clause 249 by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Pr> וְיִרְבֶּךָ of clause 249 is reflected in the imperative <Pr> וְהִיִּית of clause 250.
- 251 WYqtl0 clause connects to clause 249 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 252 InfC connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. Both clauses have common 2sgM suffixes (ךָ) referring to the same actant.
- 253 xQtl0 clause (relative אֲשֶׁר) connects to the preceding clause.
- 254 WayX clause connects to clause 239 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. These clauses have the same word order VSO and the same subject יִצְחָק <Su>. Also, the <Ob> אֲתִיעֶקֶב of clause 254 = the <Co> אֲלִיעֶקֶב of clause 239. Clause 254 marks the beginning of a (sub)paragraph by explicit use of NP.
- 255 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in actant.
- 256 WayX clause connects to clause 254 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by a change in actant and explicit use of NP.
- 257 XQtlX clause connects to preceding clause by כִּי and by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 258 WQtl0 clause connects to preceding clause by וְ, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Ob> אֲתִיעֶקֶב of clause 257 = the <Ob> אָתָּו of clause 258.
- 259 InfC connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Ob> אָתָּו of clause 258 = the <SC> לוֹ of clause 259.

- 260 InfC (adjunct) connects to clause 258 by agreement in PNG-3sgM, and by common syntactic features. Both clauses have the same <Ob> אָהוּ.
- 261 Connects to clause 258 by agreement in PNG-3sgM and by common syntactic features. The <Ob> אָהוּ of clause 258 = the suffix of <Co> עָלֵיו of clause 261.
- 262 InfC connects to the preceding clause and introduces the following NQ.
- 263 xYqtl0 clause (NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 264 WayX clause connects to clause 261 by agreement in PNG-3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> עָלֵיו of clause 261 = the <Su> יַעֲקֹב and the suffixes of <Co> אָהוּ/ אָבִיו of clause 264. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by change in actant and explicit use of NP.
- 265 Way0 clause connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG-3sgM.
- 266 WayX clause connects to clause 265 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG-3sgM. Clause 266 is a functional parallel to clause 256. Clause 256 introduces Esau's awareness that Jacob has obeyed Isaac while clause 266 introduces Esau's awareness that his father does not love Canaanite women. Both clauses also have the same syntagms. Clause 266 begins a (sub)paragraph marked by an explicit NP.
- 267 Adjunct clause connects to the preceding clause by כִּי.
- 268 WayX clause connects to clause 266 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG-3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Su> עָשָׂו of both clauses is the same. This clause begins a (sub)paragraph marked by an explicit NP.
- 269 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG-3sgM and by common syntactic features. The <Ob> <ap> בְּתִישְׁמַעֲאֵל of clause 269 connects to <Co> אֶל־יִשְׁמַעֲאֵל of clause 268.
- 270 WayX clause connects to clause 254 by clause type, by agreement in PNG-3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Ob> אֶת־יַעֲקֹב of clause 254 = the <Su> יַעֲקֹב of clause 270. This clause marks a (sub)paragraph by change in actant and explicit use of NP.
- 271 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG-3sgM. Parallel to clauses 272, 273, 275, 276, 277 and 278 connect to each other as identical clause types and by agreement in PNG-3sgM.
- 274 xQtlX clause connects to the preceding clause by כִּי and by agreement in PNG-3sgM.
- 279 Participial clause connects to the preceding clause by ו and by common syntactic features. Note the syntactic pattern ו <Cj> + הָנָה <lj>.
- 280 Participial clause connects to preceding clause as identical clause type.
- 281 Participial clause connects to clause 279 as identical clause type and by common syntactic pattern ו <Cj> + הָנָה <lj>.
- 282 Participial clause connects to preceding clause as identical clause type.
- 283 NmCl connects to clause 281 by common syntactic pattern ו <Cj> + הָנָה <lj>.
- 284 Way0 clause connects to preceding clause. It marks a (sub)paragraph by a shift in the pattern of PNG. It also introduces the following NQ.
- 285 NmCl (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 286 Casus pendens connects to the preceding clause.
- 287 Participial clause (relative אֲשֶׁר) connects to the preceding clause.
- 288 xYqtl0 clause (resumptive) connects to clause 286.
- 289 Elliptical clause connects to the preceding clause.

- 290 WQtIX clause connects to clause 288 by ו.
- 291 WQtI0 clause connects to the preceding clause by agreement in PNG–2sgM.
- 292 WQtIX clause connects to the preceding clause by ו and by agreement in PNG–2sgM.
- 293 NmCI connects to clause 285 as identical clause type and by syntactic features. Both clauses have a common subject. The <Su> אני of clause 285 = the <Su> אני of clause 293.
- 294 WQtI0 clause connects to the preceding clause by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PC> עמך of clause 293 = the suffix of <PO> ושמרתך of clause 294.
- 295 xYqtI0 clause (Attributive–אשר) connects to the preceding clause.
- 296 WQtI0 clause connects to clause 294 as identical clause type.
- 297 xYqtI0 clause connects to the preceding clause by כי.
- 298 xQtI0 clause connects to the preceding clause by the conjunction ו.
- 299 xQtI0 clause connects to the preceding clause as identical clause type.
- 300 WayX clause connects to clause 270 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. Both clauses have the same subject יעקב <Su>. Clause 300 marks a (sub)paragraph by explicit use of NP. This clause is parallel to clauses 310 and 317 and they connect to each other as identical clause types and by common syntactic features. All three clauses have a common subject (Jacob).
- 301 Way0 clause connects to clause 300 by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and introduces the following NQ.
- 302 NmCI (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 303 WXxQtI0 clause connects to preceding clause by ו. The X in this clause is an independent personal pronoun and the x is the negative particle לא.¹¹⁶
- 304 Way0 clause connects to clause 301 as identical clause type and agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 305 Way0 connects to clause 304 as identical clause type and by agreement in PNG–3sgM. It also introduces the following NQ.
- 306 Adjunct clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause.
- 307 NmCI connects to preceding clause.
- 308 Elliptical clause connects to the preceding clause by כי.
- 309 NmCI connects to clause 307 as identical clause type and by common syntactic features. Both have the same subject, זה <Su>.
- 310 Connects to clause 300 by clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. Both clauses have the same subject, יעקב <Su>. This clause also marks a (sub)paragraph by explicit use of NP.
- 311 Way0 clause connects to clause 310 by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 312 xQtI0 clause (relative אשר) connects to the preceding clause.
- 313 Way0 clause connects to 311 as identical clause types, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The <Ob> אתה-אבן of clause 311 = the <Ob> אתה of clause 313. Parallel to clause 314 and clause

¹¹⁶ Other examples of the same construction are found in Gen 21:26, 38:14, 23, 42:8, 11, 23, Ex 33:12, Lev 5:18, Num 5:13, 14, 27:3, Deut 3:4, Josh 8:14, 23:9, Judg 11:27, 39, 16:20, 20:34, 1Sam 13:11, Isa 50:5, Jer 8:20, 14:15, 17:16, 23:32, 50:24, Ezek 3:21, 13:7, 22, 22:24, Hos 2:10, 7:9, Micah 4:14, Ps 95:10, 119:87, Esther 4:11 and Neh 5:15.

- 315 and connect to each other as identical clause types and by agreement in PNG–3sgM.
- 316 NmCl connects to preceding clause by 1.
- 317 WayX clause connects to clause 310 as identical clause type, by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. These clauses have the same subject יעקב <Su>. Clause 317 marks a (sub)paragraph by explicit use of NP.
- 318 InfC introduces the following NQ.
- 319 xYqtI0 clause (first clause of NQ) connects to the preceding clause. This clause is the protasis of clause 327.
- 320 WQtI0 clause connects to preceding clause by agreement in PNG–3sgM, and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PO> ושמרני of clause 320 = the suffix of <PC> עמדי of clause 319.
- 321 Participial clause (Attributive) connects to preceding clause by relative clause marker אשר <Re>.
- 322 Connects to clause 320 by agreement in PNG–3sgM and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <PO> שמרני of clause 320 = the suffix of <Co> לי of clause 322.
- 323 InfC connects to the preceding clause.
- 324 Defective clause connects to clause 322 by 1.
- 325 InfC connects to the preceding clause.
- 326 WQtI0 clause connects to clause 322 as identical clause type and by common syntactic features. The suffix of <Co> לי of 322 = the suffix of <Pr> ושבתי of clause 326.
- 327 WQtIX clause connects to clause 319 by agreement in PNG–3sgM and by common syntactic features. The <Su> אלהים of clause 319 = the <Su> יהוה and the <Co> לאלהים of clause 327; and the suffix of <PC> עמדי of clause 319 = the suffix of <Sc> לי of clause 327. This clause is the apodosis of clause 319.
- 328 Defective clause connects to preceding clause by 1.
- 329 xQtI0 clause (relative אשר) connects to the preceding clause.
- 330 ZYqtI0 clause connects to clause 328.
- 331 Casus pendens connects to clause 328 as a dependent clause by 1.
- 332 xYqtI0 clause (relative אשר) connects to the preceding clause.
- 333 xYqtI0 clause (resumptive) connects to clause 330.

2. Clause Type Distribution in Text Hierarchy

Clause Type	Level of Clause in Text Hierarchy																			Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		19
WayX		1	3	7	8	1	1	7	1	1	1		1								32
Way0	1			18	3	9	10	4	11	3	6	3		1	1						70
WXQtI							1	1													2
WXxQtI						1															1
WQtIX						1						1				1					3
WQtI0							1	1	1		2	1	1	3	1	2	2		1		16
WxQtI0								1		1		1	2								5
xQtI0									2	4	1	2	2	2					1		16
xQtIX			1		3	2	1			1		1	1	1							11
ZQtIX										1											1
ZQtI0							1	2													3

The first part of Gen 27:5 presents one of the most prominent syntactic problems in this narrative. While some scholars consider Gen 27:5 as part of the previous section, others consider it as the beginning of a new section. These two views are represented in the KJV which holds the former and RSV which supports the latter. In his attempt to determine the structure of Genesis 27, de Regt argues that the reactivation of participants by name and change of place indicates the beginning of a new (sub)unit (de Regt 1999b:17–18). He then considers v5 as a new (sub)unit based on the reactivation of Rebekah by a lexical NP and change of location, which he considers to be a switch from Isaac's tent to Rebekah's. In his opinion, v5 represents Rebekah's perspective and thus should begin a new (sub)unit which continues until v17 (Ibid. 18 n24).¹²¹ De Regt presents linguistic arguments which mark Gen 27:5a as the beginning of a new (sub)unit. However, his arguments are affected by the following two points: First, his division based on change of location may indicate that Isaac's speaking and Rebekah's listening are two separate events. Thus, one would question how Rebekah could have heard a message after it was already spoken? Second, there is no verb in this clause that indicates movement as compared to Genesis 27:18 where **בא** indicates that Jacob switches location from Rebekah's location to Isaac's. A better rendering could be that Isaac's and Rebekah's tents were close so that Rebekah could overhear Isaac's instructions to Esau. Even in this situation, the speaking and the hearing are simultaneous.

Runge on his part has argued that Gen 27:5a constitutes a discontinuity in the flow of the narrative which would have been smooth in its absence. He concludes that Gen 27:5a–b provides off line information (Runge 2007:180–181). Dwelling on the constituents of this verse, Runge identifies that the discontinuity here is based on the use of a non-finite verb which provides background or offline information to the narrative and does not constitute a new (sub)unit in the narrative. However, Runge does not indicate the syntactic effect of such a rendering and how it can be understood. Also, he gives no explanation to the syntactic relation between this verse and the preceding and/or following clauses, but argues for a pragmatic insertion of this verse as the writer's method of shaping the flow of the narrative (Ibid. 181). Thus, his conclusion indicates that this verse is a narrative comment (adjunct clause) (Ibid. 180–181), which, in my opinion is unlikely, if one considers that the participle indicates a change of subject and provides background information which affects the immediately following section of the narrative. The difficulty involved here is the connection of the participial clause Gen 27:5a to the preceding narrative section (Gen 27:1a–4f). According to the ETCBC text hierarchy, Gen 27:5a connects to Gen 27:2a as a participial clause. Although Rebekah is reactivated by a lexical NP, the participle indicates that Gen 27:5a presents an act that went on at the same time with Isaac's instructions to Esau in Gen 27:2a–4f. A better approach will be to study how a participial clause is used in other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures and whether there are passages that apply the same clause type as in Gen 27:5a.

Andersen and Forbes (2002:23–42) found out that participles could assume different functions depending on the nature of their use. Thus, the meaning of a participle within a clause depends on its grammatical function. They concluded that a participle which is a predicate in a clause with an explicit subject would better be analysed as a verb, while that which has no verbal activity would best be analysed as a nominal participle (Ibid. 34). Holmstedt (2002:156) studied participles in Genesis and found out

¹²¹ This same idea seems to be supported by Waltke's division of the Genesis 27 (Waltke 2001:376–382), although its base is not the linguistic features within the text.

that 84 out of 141 of such predicative participles, exhibit the same pattern as in Gen 27:5, where the subject precedes the participle. He also found out that 78 of the 84 occurrences are found in the patriarchal narratives, with eight in Genesis 27–28.¹²² However, it is only in Gen 18:10 that an action similar to that of Gen 27:5 is presented with the use of the same participle. In Gen 18:10, Sarah is said to be *listening* in almost the same manner when the LORD was speaking to Abraham about the birth of an heir. It follows immediately after a direct speech in which the LORD is the speaker which is a similar state in Gen 27:5a.

Gen 18:10 ושרה שמעת האהל האתח

“And Sarah was *listening* (at) the door of the tent”

From a grammatical perspective, the participle is a predicate and Sarah is active in her *listening*. It would be convincing to argue that Sarah's *listening* goes on as the LORD is speaking, else she would not have heard and not laughed. From the grammar of Gen 27:5a, the participle שמעת is a Predicate Complement (an active participle) which presents Rebekah (Explicit Subject) carrying out the actions it describes- *listening*. The use of the participle in Gen 18:10 and 27:5 present a simultaneous action (Conf. Niccacci 1990:97). Thus, Isaac's speech to Esau and Rebekah's *listening* goes on simultaneously. Also, Muraoka has argued that any InfC preceded by ב indicates an action which is contemporaneous to that of the lead verb in a clause (J-M §125mc). The lead verb here is a participle and the following InfC refers to the act which is contemporaneous to that presented by the שמעת. While it can be argued that a predicative participial clause which discontinues the wayyiqtol narrative pattern can be a means to represent a simultaneous action, it can also be argued, as Muraoka has presented, that an InfC preceded by ב, often represents a contemporary action described by a lead verb. These two phenomena are combined in the first part of Gen 27:5. These arguments imply that the predicative participial clause (v5a) which is followed by an InfC, ברבר (v5b) does not present Rebekah's *listening insight* of Isaac's discourse but is a 'temporary adjunct' (Ibid.), whose action is contemporaneous to that described by the participle שמעת. Viewed from this perspective, Gen 27:5a links to Gen 27:2a as a daughter clause in a subordinate position. The interruption of the wayyiqtol series by שמעת ורבהקה, depicts Rebekah's act of listening as taking place simultaneously with Isaac's speaking (Ibid. Also conf. van der Merwe 1999:349). As far as the connection of this clause is concerned, Gen 27:5b is a dependent clause which serves as a temporary adjunct to the main clause in 27:5a. Syntactically, there are common clause constituents between this clause and the preceding section which knit them together. The unidentified subject and object of the speaking verb of line 10 are Isaac and Esau respectively. In the InfC clause, they assume the same roles as subject and complement. This creates a syntactic link between these clauses. Also, the following clause introduces Esau as the subject and only actor and narrates his going to the field, thus recapturing the narrative line using WayX. Hence, the explicit mention of Rebekah in the following clause (Gen 27:6a) indicates that Gen 27:5 does not begin

¹²² Gen 13:7; 14:12, 13, 18; 15:2, 3, 12; 18:1, 2, 8, 10, 16, 22; 19:1; 20:3,7; 23:10; 24:13(2x), 15, 21, 42, 43, 45, 62(2x), 63; 25:26, 28, 32; 26:8; 27:5, 29(2x), 42; 28:12(3x), 13; 29:6, 9; 30:36; 32:22, 32; 33:1, 13(2x); 34:19; 37:7, 9, 19, 25(2x); 38:13, 25; 39:3, 23(2x); 40:6, 17; 41:3, 5, 6, 19, 22, 23,29; 42:22, 38; 44:30; 45:12, 26; 48:1, 4, 21; 50:5, 24.

a new (sub)paragraph. Linking Gen 27:5a–b to 27:5c will imply that Esau's departure to the field is dependent (InfC clause) on Rebekah's listening.¹²³

2.7.3. Patterns of Interclausal Syntactic Connections and Continuity in Text Hierarchy

When one reads a text, one notices a connection between the clauses that maintain cohesion and the flow of the text. The CALAP/Turgama model¹²⁴ has demonstrated that Interclausal connection is derived from features within the grammar of the text which affects the syntactic connections between the clause syntagms. These syntagmatic features which determine the relationship between clauses and define their direction of connection to both the preceding and following clauses affect text continuity and structure. Studies in text grammar have illustrated that the linguistic parameters that affect the hierarchy and cohesion of a text include (Talstra 1996:88–89): (a) Grammatical clause types: WayX (Where X=NP or subject), Way0, WXQtI, WPPQtI, WXxQtI, WQtIX, WQtI0, WxQtI0, xQtIX, xQtI0, ZQtIX, ZQtI0, WYQtIX, WYQtI0, WXYqt, WxYqtI0, xYQtIX, xYQtI0, ZYQtIX, ZYQt0, WIm0, ZIm0, xIm0, NmCI (+/-W), InfC, Ptcp (+/-W). Of these grammatical clause types, the WYQtIX, WYQtI0, WXYqtI, WxYqtI0, xYQtIX, xYQtI0, ZYQtIX, ZYQtI0, WIm0, ZIm0 and xIm0, rarely occur in the narrative section but are often found in the discursive sections of a narrative; (b) Morphological relations between two clauses; (c) Lexical relations between two clauses; (d) Syntactic marking of paragraphs; and (e) Sets of actors, actants or participants in the text (identified either by verbal inflection, proper names, nouns or pronouns). In the following paragraph, I will examine various grammatical relations between clause types at the phrase and text level of this narrative section.

3.1. Linguistic Clause Type Patterns Observed in Genesis 27–28

1.1. Phrase-Level Clause Atoms

1. *Attributive Clauses*: Participial clauses often connect to the immediate preceding clause. When they occur in succession, they generally connect before connecting to any other clause.

Genesis 27			Genesis 28		
MCI	Connection	DCI	MCI	Connection	DCI
2a	←	5a	12d	←	12e
6b	←	6d	13d	←	13e
42d	←	42e	20d	←	20e
46b	←	46c			

Although participial clauses generally connect to the immediate preceding clause, it has been observed that two participial clauses which are preceded by particles and conjunctions of the same syntactic and lexical construction often connect to each other (Gen 28:12b, 12d). The participial clauses of Gen 27:12c and 12e connect to 12b and 12d by 1.

¹²³ Talstra has argued that this kind of connection can only be possible if both clauses "have identical clause- opening type ... (and) exhibit the same order of words/phrases...or clear lexical patterns" (Talstra 1997:95).

¹²⁴ For a detailed description of these models conf. van Peursen (2000:137–175) and Bakker (2011:23–26).

2. *אשר Clauses*: אשר clauses (Relative) generally connect to the immediate preceding clause.

Genesis 27			Genesis 28		
MCI	Connection	DCI	MCI	Connection	DCI
15a	←	15b	4b	←	4c
17a	←	17b	13d	←	13e
27g	←	27h	15b	←	15c
33c	←	33d	18b	←	18c
41a	←	41b	22a	←	22b
22d	←	22e			

3. *Infinitive Clauses*: Infinitive clauses connect to the immediate preceding clause.

Genesis 27			Genesis 28		
MCI	Connection	DCI	MCI	Connection	DCI
1c	←	1d	4a	←	4b
5d	←	5e	6c	←	6d
20b	←	20c	6f	←	6g
30b	←	30c	20a	←	20b
33i	←	34a	20f	←	20g
42e	←	42f	20h	←	20i
45a	←	45b			

Also, two infinitive clauses without a time particle connect before connecting to any other clause. When an infinitive clause with a time particle follows one without a time particle, it connects to the immediate clause preceding the infinitive, skipping that without the time particle, e.g. Gen 28:6c ← 6e.

4. *NmCIs*: NmCIs without particles generally connect to the immediate preceding clause.

Genesis 27			Genesis 28		
MCI	Connection	DCI	MCI	Connection	DCI
11a	←	11b	12e	←	13a
11b	←	11c	13b	←	13c
13a	←	13b	16b	←	16c
18c	←	18d	17c	←	17d
20a	←	20b	19a	←	19b
22a	←	22b			
22b	←	22c			
24a	←	24b			
24d	←	24e			
27f	←	27g			
32a	←	32b			
32b	←	32c			
33b	←	33c			
34d	←	34e			
38e	←	38f			

46c	←	46e
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5. *Adjunct Clauses*: These include adjunct clauses which are not participial, infinitival nor nominal. They generally connect to the immediately preceding clause.

Genesis 27			Genesis 28		
MCI	Connection	DCI	MCI	Connection	DCI
8b	←	8c	15e	←	15f
14d	←	14e	17b	←	17c
30a	←	30b			
40c	←	40d			
44a	←	44b			

1.2. Text Level Clause Types

Clauses of the same types generally provide a high degree of cohesion and continuity. In this way, it is important to link clauses of the same type together where possible. Although it is standard to connect two analogous clauses, other combinations of clause types are often observed. There are numerous clause type connections at the text level (both in the narrative and discursive portions). In this section examples will be limited to clause types at the narrative level of the text of Genesis 27–28.

1. WayX Clauses Connect to Each Other

Genesis 27			Genesis 28		
MCI	Connection	DCI	MCI	Connection	DCI
11a	←	13a	1a	←	5a
19a	←	20a	5a	←	5c
20a	←	21a	5c	←	8a
21a	←	22a	8a	←	9a
22a	←	26a	5a	←	10a
32a	←	33a	10a	←	16a
33a	←	37a	16a	←	18a
37a	←	38a	18a	←	20a
38a	←	38h			
38h	←	39a			
41a	←	41c			
41c	←	46a			

2. WayX Clauses Connect to Way0 Clauses

Genesis 27			Genesis 28		
MCI	Connection	DCI	MCI	Connection	DCI
2a	←	5c	6f	←	7a
14c	←	14d			
1e	←	19a			
30d	←	41a			
1e	←	28:1a			

3. Way0 Clauses Connect to Each Other

Genesis 27			Genesis 27		
MCI	Connection	DCI	MCI	Connection	DCI
1e	←	1f	31b	←	31c
1f	←	1h	33b	←	34c
1h	←	2a	35c	←	35a
14a	←	14b	35a	←	36a
14b	←	14c	36a	←	36f
15c	←	17a	42a	←	42b
17a	←	18a	42b	←	42c
18a	←	18b	42c	←	42d
18b	←	18d	Genesis 28		
22b	←	22c	1b	←	1c
22c	←	24a	1c	←	1d
24a	←	24d	10b	←	11a
24d	←	25a	11a	←	11b
25a	←	25e	11b	←	11d
25e	←	25f	11d	←	11e
25f	←	24g	11e	←	11f
25g	←	25h	11f	←	12a
27a	←	27b	16b	←	17a
27b	←	27c	17a	←	17b
27c	←	27d	18b	←	18d
1e	←	30a	18d	←	18e
30a	←	30d	18e	←	19a

4. Way0 Clauses Connect to WayX Clauses

Genesis 27			Genesis 28		
MCI	Connection	DCI	MCI	Connection	DCI
13a	←	14a	1a	←	1b
15a	←	15c	5a	←	5b
20a	←	20f	7a	←	7b
22a	←	22b	9a	←	9b
31a	←	31b	10a	←	10b
32a	←	32c	16a	←	16b
33a	←	33b	18a	←	18b
37a	←	37b			
38h	←	38i			
39a	←	39b			
41c	←	42a			

5. *WXQtl Clauses Connect to WayX Clauses*¹²⁵

Gen 27:5c ← 6a

6. *Way0 Clauses Connect to WxQtl Clauses*¹²⁶

Gen 27:22c ← 23a
23a ← 23c
Gen 28:6b ← 6f

7. *WxQtl Clauses Connects to Way0 Clauses*

Gen 27:15c ← 16

8. *WxQtl Clauses Connect to xQtl0 Clauses*

Gen 27:36d ← 36e

9. *Way0 Clauses Connect to xQtlX Clauses*

Gen 27:1b ← 1e

10. *xQtlX Clauses Connect to Way0 Clauses*

Gen 27:1a ← 1b
Gen 28:11b ← 11c

11. *xQtl0 Clauses Connect to Way0 Clauses*

Gen 27:17b ← 17a
Gen 27:36c ← 36c

12. *Way0 Clauses Connect to ZQtlX Clauses*

Gen 27:35b ← 35c

13. *xQtlX Clauses Connect to WxQtl Clauses*

Gen 27:23a ← 23b

14. *xQtlX Clauses Connect to WayX Clauses*

Gen 27:14b ← 14b

¹²⁵ It is important to note the difference that exists between WXQatal clause and the WxQatal Clause types. Where X is used, it represents a subject while x represents any other intervening element other than a subject, between the 1 and verb which is not the subject. This could be a particle or combination of particles. In the case of xQatal, x could also be other forms of conjunctions (כי not ו), or relative pronouns (כאשר, אשר).

¹²⁶ The Way0 clause types in this narrative section connect with the WxQtl and ZQtl clauses when a narrative is embedded in a discursive (NQN).

41a ← 41b
Gen 28:6a ← 6b

15. WayX Clauses Connect to xQtIX Clauses

Gen 27:1b ← 1c

16. WXxQtI Clauses Connects to NmCI

Gen 28:16c ← 16d

3.2. Paragraph Markers in Narrative

2.1. Clause Types and Paragraph Marking

Paragraph demarcation in narrative plays both a thematic and a syntactic role in its reading and understanding. The use of established sets of linguistic markers can enable computer operations to propose these demarcations and research with the computer has shown that these markers are either direct or indirect, or even generated by other phenomena within the narrative (Talstra 1996:99ff).¹²⁷ Where direct markers apply, there is an explicit NP which is absent in the indirect markers (Ibid.). Another phenomenon of the indirect marker is a shift in the set of actors (Ibid.). In Genesis 27–28, the following clause types mark the start of paragraphs.

2.1.1. WayyiqtoIX

27 :1c	ותכהין עיניו	וַיֹּאמֶר... יִצְחָק אָבִיו
	"And they were dim eyes of him"	"And he said Isaac his father"
5c	וילך עשו	וַיִּחְרַד יִצְחָק
	"And he went Esau"	"And he trembled Isaac"
11a	וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב	וַיַּעַן יִצְחָק
	"And he said Jacob"	"And he answered Isaac"
13a	וַתֹּאמֶר... אִמּוֹ	וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂו
	"And she said...his mother"	"And he said Jacob"
14d	וַתַּעַשׂ אִמּוֹ	וַיִּשָּׂא עֲשׂו
	"And she made...his mother"	"And he raised Esau"
19a	וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב	וַיַּעַן יִצְחָק אָבִיו
	"And he said Jacob"	"And he answered Isaac his father"

¹²⁷ Talstra identifies paragraph markers at 4 different levels as follows (Talstra 1997:102–103):

- Clause level markers: WayX, Way0, W-X-Qtl, Wayhi+time/place clause, Wayhi+ki+infC+NPdet, Casus Pendens+New NPdet.
- Equal text level: Identical clause types (WayX or W-X-Qtl), Equal sets of actants (role change can take place).
- Paragraph Embedding: WayX, W-X-Qtl (X=new or identical to clause constituent in the preceding paragraph), Way0 (Subject lexically or grammatically identical to an actor in preceding paragraph).
- Paragraph internal cohesion:
 - Continuation of verbal tense in main clause.
 - Continuation of person, number and gender of verb.
 - Lexical repetition of clause constituents.
 - Pronominal reference to clause constituents.

20a	וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק "And he said Isaac"	41a	וַיִּשְׁטֹם עֵשָׂו "And he hated Esau"
21a	וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק "And he said Isaac"	41c	וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו "And he said Esau"
22a	וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב "And he drew near Jacob"	46a	וַתֹּאמֶר רִבְקָה "And she said Rebekah"
26a	וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אָבִיו "And he said Isaac his father"		
28:1a	וַיִּקְרָא יִצְחָק "And he called Isaac"	9a	וַיֵּלֶךְ עֵשָׂו "And he went Esau"
5a	וַיִּשְׁלַח יִצְחָק "And he sent Isaac"	10a	וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב "And he went forth Jacob"
6a	וַיֵּרָא עֵשָׂו "And he saw Esau"	16a	וַיִּיקֶץ יַעֲקֹב "And he awoke Jacob"
7a	וַיִּשְׁמַע יַעֲקֹב "And he listened Jacob"	18a	וַיִּשְׁכַּם יַעֲקֹב "And he arose Jacob"
8a	וַיֵּרָא עֵשָׂו "And he saw Esau"	20a	וַיִּדָּר יַעֲקֹב "And he vowed Jacob"

2.1.2. Wayyiqto/0

It is worth noting that the Way0 clause type introduces a change of subject by a shift of verbal agreement in PNG, or by a shift in the pattern of participants. Where the latter is involved, the participants change roles and the subject of the preceding clause becomes object or complement of the actual clause or vice versa.

- 27:18a וַיָּבֹא
"And he came"—change of subject: Rebekah <Su> to Jacob <Su>.
- 18d וַיֹּאמֶר
"And he said"—role change: Jacob from <Su> to <Co> and Isaac from <Co> to <Su>.
- 22b וַיִּמְשְׁדוּ
"And he felt him"—role change: Jacob from <Su> to <Co> and Isaac from <Co> to <Su>.
- 24d וַיֹּאמֶר
"And he said"—role change: Isaac from <Su> to <Co> and Jacob from <Co> to <Su>.
- 25a וַיֹּאמֶר
"And he said"—role change: Jacob from <Su> to <Co> and Isaac from <Co> to <Su>.
- 25e וַיִּגַּשׁ
"And he drew near"—role change: Isaac from <Su> to <Co> and Jacob from <Co> to <Su>.
- 25f וַיֹּאכַל
"And he ate"—role change: Jacob <Su> to Isaac <Su>.
- 25g וַיָּבֹא
"And he brought"—role change: Isaac from <Su> to <Co> and Jacob becomes <Su>.

- 25h וישת
 “And he drank—role change: Jacob <Su> to Isaac <Su>.
- 27a ויגש
 “And he drew near”—role change: Isaac <Su> to Jacob <Su>.
- 27b וישק-לו
 “And he kissed him”—role change: Jacob <Su> to Isaac <Su>.
- 32c ויאמר
 “And he said”—role change: Isaac <Su> to Esau <Su>.
- 35a ויאמר
 “And he said”—role change: Esau <Su> to Isaac <Su>.
- 36a ויאמר
 “And he said”—role change: Isaac <Su> to Esau <Su>
- 42b ותשלח
 “And she sent”—change of subject: Esau <Su> to Rebekah <Su>.
- 28:5b וילך
 “And he went”—change of subject: Isaac <Su> to Jacob <Su>.
- 13b ויאמר
 “And he said”—change of subject: Jacob <Su> to יהוה <Su>.

2.1.3. *WXQatal*

Recent studies have drifted away from the idea of the *WXQatal* clause type as background clause.¹²⁸ Longacre had already noted that although *Wayyiqtol* forms the basic narrative clause type, a perfect may also appear within the narrative and where this appears, it is used to encode ‘a preparatory or resultant action’ (Longacre 1992:177–189; esp. 178–179). Following on from here, Talstra has conducted studies on the function of *WXQatal* in a narrative and has argued that *Wayyiqtol* clauses depend upon the *WXQatal* clauses which function either to indicate a change of actant or to re-introduce an actant (Talstra 1995:166–180, esp. 166–174). Also, he mentions that when *WXQatal* clauses function as background clauses, they occur in a (sub)paragraph (Ibid.). Further inquiry to the functions of *WXQatal* clause brought Talstra to the notion that this clause type has a structuring effect (marks a change of actant), and also marks the start of a (sub)paragraph to the *Wayyiqtol* clause types when it occurs together with an NP(determinate) (Ibid. 175–180). Talstra also lays emphasis on the relative nature of the terms “foreground and background” used to differentiate this narrative clause type from the *Wayyiqtol* type (Ibid.). He demonstrates that the *WXQatal* can function on the main story line (foreground) as well as provide background information, with a structuring effect on the whole narrative, appearing either at the beginning of a paragraph in the presence of an NP or of a (sub)paragraph without an NP. Thus *WXQatal* (where X is NP) begins a (sub)paragraph in a narrative. This holds for Gen 27:6a and 27:30f which indicates a change of actant (reintroducing Rebekah and Esau) and marking the start of (sub)paragraphs.

- 27:6a ורבקה אמרה
 “And Rebekah said”
- 30f ועשו אחיו בא
 “And Esau his brother returned”

¹²⁸ Conf. Niccacci (1991:166 and 174).

2.1.4. כ+InfC+NP

We have seen from §2.3.4 that when כ occurs with an InfC, it defines a definite time and also marks the beginning of a (sub)paragraph. In Gen 27:34a, כ occurs with שמע (InfC) and is followed by an NPdet.

כשמע עשו את־דברי אביו

"When Esau heard the words of his father"

2.2. Paragraphs at Meta Narrative Level

Paragraphs at the meta narrative level are those which are on level Zero or close to level Zero in the text hierarchy. These paragraphs also provide an outer frame to a narrative. At this level almost the same clause types are used in communication and the introduction of new participants. This implies that the clause types possible for this level are WayX and WXQtI, where X is subject and refers to the new participant. There is an exception with macro-syntactic markers such as ויהי as will be discussed in the following paragraph. The ETCBC text hierarchy places the following clauses at the meta narrative level (0): Gen 27:1a, 41a and Gen 28:1a, 5a, 10a, 16a, 18a, and 20a. A common feature is that all the clauses introduce the major participants except Rebekah. In the modified text hierarchy, the narrative forms a single large paragraph with all the others embedded. Here, only Isaac appears at the meta narrative level (0), introduced by an ויהי + כי. I have argued that Isaac as the main participant should uniquely appear on this level while the other participants fall within the narrative substratum. The meta narrative paragraph opening clause is a Way0 clause. This clause has an unspecified subject but marks the beginning of this narrative section. Den Exter Blokland (1995: 262) has studied the behaviour of such clauses in 1 and 2 Kings and has argued that these types of clauses can only be defined to have unspecified subjects syntactically if the surrounding context does not provide an explicit subject to it. He identifies the ויהי clause as one of those which share the subject of the following clause when in concord with the following verb (Ibid. 271–272). He outlines the nature of such verb-only clauses as mostly intransitive which may or may not require the following to be a wayyiqtol clause (Ibid. 272). One important feature which he points out is that when such verb-only clauses appear at the meta narrative level and are followed by a clause with an explicit subject, the syntactic effect is an indication of a change of subject (Ibid. 271). Anneli (1986:193–209 esp.198) has also argued that the pattern of a ויהי (wayyiqtol 0) clause followed by a כי circumstantial clause (conditional, temporal or causal) is prominent in the Pentateuch. As a causal circumstantial clause, כי presents the 'cause, reason, motivation and explanation' of the preceding clause (Ibid. 202). At the meta narrative level ויהי, as a macro-syntactic marker, has a structuring function. If this is followed by a כי clause of explanation with an explicit subject, whose verb is in accord with the ויהי (PNG), then syntactically they share the subject and this subject is new. In accord with this, Gen 27:1a shares the same explicit subject with Gen 27:1b (Isaac).

27:1a ויהי Way0

"And it was"

1b כי זקן יצחק xQtIX

"For he was old Isaac"

2.2.1. Paragraph Embedding

Paragraphs within a text appear at various levels and according to a text hierarchy. Since (sub)paragraphs do not appear linearly but recursively, there are (sub)paragraphs which appear within (sub)paragraphs. This is the result of the relations between clause types and their syntactic features shown in the syntactic hierarchy. The effect is the syntactic division of a narrative text into paragraphs and (sub)paragraphs. Often the main narrative line creates (sub)paragraphs at higher levels with some embedded into others. Studies have shown that the serial recurrence of (sub)paragraph markers create embedding of lower level (sub)paragraphs into higher level (sub)paragraphs (Talstra1996:101). Talstra has also argued that this phenomenon which he calls “gapping” occurs when higher level (sub)paragraphs are split into smaller sections (Ibid.). He continues that this occurrence is caused by two factors (Ibid.): (a) the embedding of a narrative (sub)paragraph into other narrative (sub)paragraphs or (b) the embedding of a direct speeches into narrative sections. Nevertheless, Talstra has also argued that since the direct speech sections can be regarded as objects of the speaking verbs, this may obscure their embedded nature which is clearly visible in the narrative section (Ibid.). As already mentioned, the text hierarchy under study presents a single narrative with a large (sub)paragraph within which are embedded other (sub)paragraphs. The table below contains all the embedded (sub)paragraphs in Genesis 27–28 without the direct speech portions.

Verse	line	Paragraph (§)	Clause type
27:1a	0	1	Way0
1c	3	11	WayX
1h	8	1	Way0
2a	10	1	Way0
5c	25	15	WayX
6a	28	151	WXQtI
11a	48	1512	WayX
13a	55	15122	WayX
14a	61	151222	Way0
14d	64	151222	WayX
15a	66	1513	WayX
18a	73	15131	Way0
18d	76	15132	Way0
19a	80	16	WayX
20a	88	17	WayX
20f	93	171	Way0
21a	95	18	WayX
22a	102	19	WayX
22b	103	191	Way0
24d	113	1913	Way0
25a	115	1914	Way0
25e	119	1915	Way0
25f	120	1916	Way0
25g	121	1917	Way0
25h	122	1918	Way0
26a	123	110	WayX
27a	127	1102	Way0
27b	128	1103	Way0
30a	143	111	Way0
30f	148	1111	WXQtI
31a	149	11111	WayX
32a	156	11112	WayX
32c	158	111122	Way0
33a	160	11113	WayX
34a	169	111132	InfC
35a	175	111134	Way0
36a	178	111135	Way0
37a	185	11114	WayX
38a	193	11115	WayX
38h	200	11116	WayX
39a	202	11117	WayX

41a	211	1112	WayX
41c	213	1113	WayX
42b	217	11132	Way0
46a	235	11133	WayX
28:1a	239	112	WayX
5a	254	1122	WayX
5b	255	11221	Way0
6a	256	11222	WayX
6f	261	11221	Way0
7a	264	112222	WayX
8a	266	11223	WayX
9a	268	11224	WayX
10a	270	1123	WayX
13b	284	11231	Way0
16a	300	113	WayX
18a	310	114	WayX
20a	317	115	WayX

Table 2.3 Embedded (sub)paragraphs of Genesis 27–28 without the direct speech sections

The clauses in Table 2.3 begin new (sub)paragraphs which are embedded into the higher level narrative. The numbering of the (sub)paragraphs indicates that the narrative is a single (sub)paragraph. The beginning of the narrative is on line 0 which marks the main paragraph §1 within which all others are embedded. As a single (sub)paragraph, §11 (Gen 27:1c) would mean that it is the first (sub)paragraph to be embedded within the larger §1. Gen 27:1h and 2a resume the narrative of §1 after embedded discursive portions. On the higher narrative level, the narrative is continued by embedded (sub)paragraphs §§15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114 and 115. There are other (sub)paragraphs embedded into these (sub)paragraphs at lower narrative levels. Also, there are discursive portions which are embedded as independent (sub)paragraphs. For a proper understanding of (sub)paragraphs embedding, I will use one (sub)paragraph on the higher level to illustrate how embedding is achieved.

From the text hierarchy, §15 has seven embedded (sub)paragraphs which occupy 62 clauses in the text hierarchy (clauses 26–86). This single embedded (sub)paragraph contains a single (sub)paragraph embedded into it (§151). However, §151 has other (sub)paragraphs embedded into it too and this continues where applicable. As mentioned already, these embedded (sub)paragraphs include discursive sections. At the end, the (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs assume a tree-like shape as illustrate in Fig 2.3 below. The direction of embedding of (sub)paragraphs and discursive into higher (sub)paragraphs is bottom-up. Upper (sub)paragraphs appear close to the higher narrative level while lower (sub)paragraphs are deeply embedded into the narrative substratum. At the lowest level of Fig 2.3, there are five (sub)paragraphs (§§151221, 151222, 151223, 151311 and 151321). These (sub)paragraphs are embedded into three other (sub)paragraphs at a higher level as follows:

- §§151221, 151222 and 151223 are embedded into §15122.
- §151311 is embedded into §15131.
- §151321 is embedded into §15132.

At this level, there are also five (sub)paragraphs which are embedded into other (sub)paragraphs at the higher level. In addition to §§15122, 15131 and 15132, there are two more (sub)paragraphs (§§15111 and 15121). These (sub)paragraphs are embedded into the higher level (sub)paragraphs as follows:

- §15111 is embedded into §1511.

- §§15121 and 15122 are embedded into §1512.
- §§15131 and 15132 are embedded into §1513.

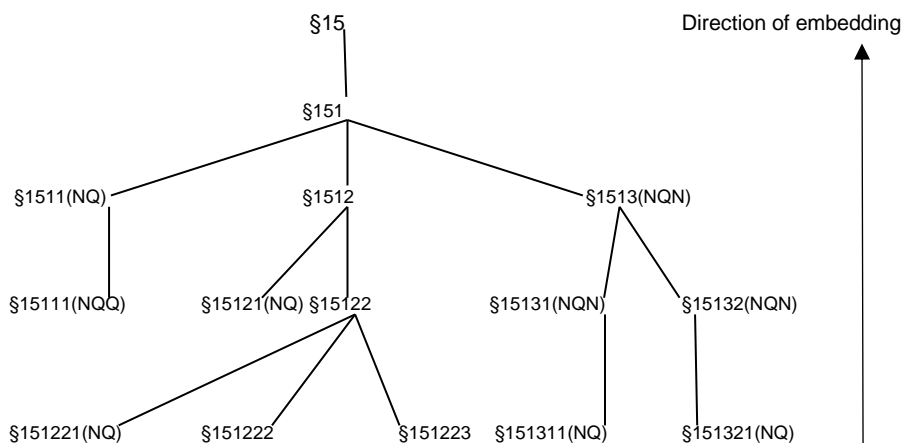


Figure 2.3 illustrating (sub)paragraph embedding in §15 of Genesis 27–28

This higher level narrows down to three (sub)paragraphs. These three (sub)paragraphs are also embedded into another higher level (sub)paragraph (§151), which is also an embedded (sub)paragraph of §15. In this (sub)paragraph, §15 represents the highest level. When §15 becomes part of the narrative, it is also embedded into another higher level (sub)paragraph. This (sub)paragraph embedding can continue across Masoretic Text chapter boundaries to whole biblical books. It is also important to note that the clause types change as the (sub)paragraphs appear at a higher level or lower levels of the narrative. Where the embedding is marked by a WayX clause, it either indicates a new subject or one which is identical to a clause constituent in the preceding (sub)paragraph either as a subject, (27:14, 21, 31, 39, 41, 46), object (27:5) or complement (27:5, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42 and 46). The same principle holds for an embedded (sub)paragraph marked by a WXQtI clause type (27: 6, 30). In the embedded (sub)paragraphs marked by Way0 clause types, the subject possesses a lexical or grammatical identity (PNG) to a participant in the preceding clauses or (sub)paragraph, regardless of whether the participant is an object or a complement.

3.3 Communication Level Analysis in Genesis 27–28

In linguistics, a text is often regarded as a life entity with a linguistic form of interaction taking place between members of a clause and between various clauses. This interaction is made intelligible by the syntax of the clauses. As such a text could be compared to a human being with various parts whose communication is enabled by motor neurons. In Genesis 27–28, the clauses and their constituents represent the various parts of the text while the syntactic relations form the motor neurons via which the communication is made possible. The analysis of the communication level of a text takes into consideration all linguistic parameter which include: clause type, verbal tense shift, and occurrence of linguistic signs—macro-syntactic markers, pronouns and agreement in PNG. As it is with the rest of Genesis, chapters 27–28 can best be described as a narrative text, although direct speeches are embedded within the narrative sections. In the discursive sections two speakers are involved with one playing

the role of the speaker while the other acts as an addressee. We have seen that WayX, Way0 and WXQtI constitute the narrative clause type at the meta-narrative level while the main clause type in the discursive section is the WYQtI. An application of a variety of clause types within the same narrative section means that when a change in domain occurs within the narrative, the following is observed: (a) Change in verbal form, either from Yiqtol/ Qatal to Wayyiqtol/ WXQatal or vice versa; which signifies a change in communication level either from narrative to direct speech or vice versa. (b) Change in person or actant; which indicates either an introduction of a new actor or the reactivation of an already known actor designated by an explicit NP or by other syntactic signs- PNG.

In this analysis, I have considered that the narrative begins with the reactivation of Isaac as the main actor. This maintains the structure of the narrative and signifies that the narrative is about Isaac. All other actors fall within Isaac's realm as the main actor. However, it is the interactions between these actors that give the narrative its intended meaning. As the narrative unfolds, there are shifts between various participants. In this narrative section, the set of actors changes from Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau, to Jacob and YHWH. Although Jacob is the only participant who features with YHWH (new actor) from Gen 28:10ff, his actions and those of YHWH still fall under Isaac's jurisdiction as main actor until he exits in Gen 35:29. Thus Gen 28:10 begins an embedded (sub)paragraph within Isaac's story which covers Gen 25:19–35:29.¹²⁹ With both Genesis 27 and 28 combined into a single narrative, the structure derived from the text hierarchy is shown in Table 2.4. It is important to mention that the structure lays emphasis on paragraph and (sub)paragraph markers, and does not represent the level of paragraphs in the text hierarchy. However, I have indented embedded (sub)paragraphs to make them visible. I will place the structure side by side that of Runge and de Regt for a comparison and highlight the differences and similarities. This will clarify the arguments put forward by the ETCBC model.

3.1. Structure of Genesis 27–28

The structure presented in Table 2.4 below illustrates the embedding of (sub)paragraphs into others on the narrative level in the text hierarchy. The direct speech portions have not been included. Embedded (sub)paragraphs are indented to the right of the table.

Verse	Line#	(Sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs
1a	0	§ Beginning of narrative— sub-paragraph
1c	3	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
1h	8	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
2a	10	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
5c	25	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
6a	28	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
11a	47	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
13a	54	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
14a	60	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
14d	63	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
18a	72	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
18d	75	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
19a	79	§ Embedded sub-paragraph
20a	87	§ Embedded sub-paragraph

¹²⁹ This demarcation is also observed in the MT although I have based my arguments on common linguistic markers.

20f	92	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
21a	94	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
22a	101	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
22b	102	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
24d	112	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
25a	114	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
25e	118	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
25f	119	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
25g	120	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
25h	121	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
26a	122	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
27a	126	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
27b	127	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
30a	142	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
30f	147	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
31a	149	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
32a	155	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
32c	157	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
33a	159	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
34a	169	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
35a	174	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
36a	177	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
37a	184	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
38a	192	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
38h	199	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
39a	201	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
41a	210	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
41c	212	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
42b	216	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
46a	233	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
28:1a	237	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
5a	252	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
5b	253	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
6a	254	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
6f	259	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
7a	262	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
8a	264	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
9a	266	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
10a	268	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
13b	282	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
16a	298	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
18a	308	§	Embedded sub-paragraph
20a	315	§	Embedded sub-paragraph

Table 2.4 Structure of Genesis 27–28

When Runge applies his theories to Gen 27:1–28:5, he adopts Waltke's (Waltke 2001:376–382) structure as his primary structure (Runge 2007:179-186 and 218) based on his use of development unit as a structural or segmenting device in the narrative. At the end of his study, he presents the Hebrew Text of Gen 27:1–28:5 in appendix 2 whose structure seems a bit different from his basic structure. The two structures can be summarized as shown in the table:

Basic structure used in the study of Genesis 27	Structure of Gen 27:1–28:5 (Appendix 2 with DUs division)
27:1–4	27:1–12
27:5–17	27:13–25
27:18–29	27:26–29
27:30–40	27:30–32
27:41–46	27:33–38
	27:39–40
	27:41
	27:42–45
	27:46–28:5

Table 2.5 Runge's structures of Genesis 27 and Gen 27:1–28:5

If we consider Runge's notion of 'development unit' as Longacre's paragraph, then the structure in appendix 2 has considered the recursive nature of paragraphs embedded into other paragraphs. Nevertheless, these structures remain different because they possess different structural boundaries. Here, I will consider the structure he uses in his arguments in the processing of the narrative as his main structure which coincides to that applied by De Regt (1999a:18) in his study of Gen 26:34–28:22 to compare it with my proposed structure of this narrative section.

Runge's structure	De Regt's structure	My proposed structure indicating (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs		
27:1–4	27:1–4	27:1a–5c		
		§1c		
		§1h		
		§2a		
27:5–17	27:5–17	§5c		
		27:6a–18g		
		§6a–10c		
		§9a–12d		
		§13a–13f		
		§14a–14c		
		§14d–17c		
27:18–29	27:18–29	§18a–18b		
		§18d–18g		
		27:19a–29f		
		§19a–19h		
		§20a–20g		
		§20f		
		§21a–21g		
		§22a–25h		
			§22b–24c	
			§24d–24e	
			§25a–25d	
			§25e	
			§25f	
			§25g	
			§25h	
		§26a–29f		
			§26a–26d	

			§27a	
			§27b–29f	
27:30–40	27:30–40	27:30a–46d		
		§30a–30e		
		§30f		
		§30g–31f		
			§31a	
		§32a–32b		
		§32c–32d		
		§33a–33i		
		§34a–34f		
		§35a–35c		
		§36a–36g		
		§37a–37h		
		§38a–38g		
		§38h–38i		
		§39a–40e		
27:41–46	27:41	§41a–41b		
	27:42–45	§41c–42a		
		§42b–45f		
	27:46	§46a–46d		
	28:1–5	28:1a–22f		
		§1a–9b		
			§1a–4c	
			§5a–9b	
				§5a–5b
	28:6–9			§6a–6e
				§6f–6g
				§7a–7b
				§8a–8b
				§9a–9b
		§10a–22f		
			§10a–15g	
				§10a–3a
				§13b15g
			§16a–17f	
			§18a–19b	
			§20a–22f	

Table 2.6 Comparing structures of Genesis 27–28

My proposed structure (Table 2.5) displays the major (sub)paragraphs and the embedded (sub)paragraphs. While the structures have different major structural boundaries, there is agreement in some internal boundaries. De Regt's and Runge's structures look similar, albeit de Regt further splits vv41–46 into three sections. Both base their division either on a shift in place (location), change in time (or period), change in participant (either activation or reactivation) or action (de Regt1999a:17 and Runge 2007:125–129), which agree with my proposed structure. However, the changes in sets of participants seem to influence de Regt's and Runge's division so much that both begin a higher major (sub)paragraph (Gen 27:5–17) with a participial clause. This principle does not allow them to highlight other embedded (sub)paragraphs. If one considers that de Regt and Runge do not deal only with the (sub)paragraphs at the

higher level with the change in set of actants and location as the basic structuring devices of the narrative, the three structures will look as shown in Table 2.7 below. Runge's and de Regt's outer structural boundaries agree in most parts. The difference is observed in "ה" (Gen 27:41–46). Runge takes this as a single (sub)paragraph with Rebekah and Jacob as the focal actants. De Regt splits "ה" into three (sub)paragraphs as follows: "ה" (Gen 27:41) with Esau as the actant; "ו" (Gen 27:42–45) with Rebekah and Jacob as the set actants; and "ז" (Gen 27:46) with Rebekah and Isaac as the set of actants.

Structure label	Runge's Structure	Actors (All structures)	De Regt's structure	Place (de Regt)	My proposed structure
א	27:1–4	Isaac/Esau	27:1–4	Isaac's tent	27:1–5
ב	27:5–17	Rebekah/Jacob	27:5–17	Rebekah's tent	27:6–18
ג	27:18–29	Isaac/Jacob	27:18–29	Isaac's tent	27:19–30
ד	27:30–40	Isaac/Esau	27:30–40	Isaac's tent	27:31–41
ה	27:41–46	Esau	27:41	Camp	
ו		Rebekah/Jacob	27:42–45	Rebekah's tent	27:42–45
ז		Rebekah/Isaac	27:46	Isaac's tent	27:46
ח		Isaac/Jacob	28:1–5	Isaac's tent	28:1–5
ט		Esau	28:6–9	Camp	28:6–9
י					28:10–22

Table 2.7 Comparing Runge's and de Regt's structure and my proposed structure

Table 2.7 indicates that there is no agreement between my proposed outer structure and those of Runge and de Regt. However, there is an agreement in the sets of actants in some sections (א–ד). De Regt's structure agrees with my proposed structures in ו–ט as follows:

- "ו" (Gen 27:42–45), with Rebekah and Jacob as the set of actants.
- "ז" (Gen 27:46), with Rebekah and Isaac as the set of actants.
- "ח" (Gen 28:1–5), with Isaac and Jacob as the set of actants.
- "ט" (Gen 28:6–9), with Esau as the actant.

Generally, there is an agreement on the sets of actants in all the sections (א–י), albeit my proposed internal structure splits some actants to other (sub)boundaries. It is also important to note that de Regt moves on to define the locations where these conversations take place or where the sets of participants meet. Here he applies two linguistic devices (change in actant or set of actants and change in location) to mark the (sub)paragraphs. Although these devices can occur at the same time to mark (sub)paragraphs, two major questions arise from de Regt's application of change of location: (1) what is a tent; and (2) what is a camp? I presume that de Regt considers a situation where Rebekah and Isaac have separate tents. If this is the situation, then these tents are not far from each other to permit Rebekah's eavesdropping of the conversation between Isaac and Esau. The possibility of separate tents is further strengthened by the following clauses:

Gen 27:10a **והבאת לאביך**

“And bring (take) it to your father”

Gen 27:18a **ויבא אל-אביו**

“And he came to his father”

Gen 27:30e **אך יצא יצא יעקב מאת פני יצחק אביו**

“As soon as Jacob departed from the presence of Isaac his father”

Despite the possibility of separate tents for Isaac and Rebekah, the changes in location which are indicated by the above examples are not indicated in the text but implied from the verbs used. The following clauses in the text which de Regt has not identified as paragraph markers, indicate explicit change of location.

27:5c **וילך עשו השדה**

“And Esau went to the field”

27:30f **ועשו אחיו בא מצידו**

“And Esau his brother came in from his hunting”

28:5b **וילך פדנה ארם אל-לבן בן-בתואל הארמי אחי רבקה אם יעקב ועשו**

“And he went to Paddan Aram to Laban, the son of Bethu'el, the Aramaean, brother of Rebekah, mother of Jacob and Esau”

When it comes to Esau's location, de Regt talks of a camp. The use of camp here is ambiguous because a camp does not clearly define a location. This gives another structure of the tents from those of Isaac and Rebekah. In this case, I assume that de Regt considers that Esau and Jacob have separate tents or they together with the cattle and servants (Genesis 26) of Isaac and Rebekah have constituted a huge camp of many tents. If this assumption is valid, it would be better to argue that Esau's location is his tent and not the camp. Despite this, there are no linguistic markers that support this assertion as it is the case with Isaac and Rebekah, and the narrator is also silent about this. The observations made for the differences in structure might come from Runge's and de Regt's use of some literary devices which make it difficult to identify linguistic markers of (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs.

3.2. Paragraph Analysis

The narrative begins with a Way0 clause (§1), whose subject (Isaac) is then identified in the following clause. This Way0 clause is of the highest narrative level. The paragraph is thus a major demarcation between this whole narrative section and the previous. The next clause WayX begins the gap (§11) in this high level narrative paragraph with an embedded (sub)paragraph whose relation with the preceding is the clitic personal pronoun referring to Isaac (עיניי). Clause 5 resumes the narrative line of §1 and reactivates a new participant (Esau) as the object of a Way0 clause. This is followed by clauses 8, 10, and 24 which are (sub)paragraphs, interspersed by direct speeches—as embedded (sub)paragraphs (§§12, 13 and 14). Rebekah is also introduced in §1 by use of a participial clause (clause 23). Clause 25 begins §15 (WayX) which indicates a change of subject from Isaac to Esau. This is interrupted by another switch from Esau to Rebekah §151 (WXQtI) and the reactivation of Jacob (complement). This (sub)paragraph continues in discursive portions (NQ—§1511 and NQQ—§15111) until another switch is indicated in clause 48, [the beginning of another (sub)paragraph §1512]. In §1512, Jacob and Rebekah switch functions (note explicit mention of name) and Jacob becomes the subject while Rebekah becomes the complement. Three other switches are observed as embedded (sub)paragraphs of §1512.

The first switch occurs in clause 55 (§15122) where Rebekah is subject and Jacob non-subject. The next two switches are also embedded (sub)paragraphs of §15122. In clause 61 (§151222), there is change of roles and Jacob is the subject while in clause 64 (§151223), Rebekah is the subject. The gap created by these embedded (sub)paragraphs are discursive portions (§§ 15121 and 151221). Clause 66 begins a NQN as §1513—an embedded (sub)paragraph of §151. The NQN, has two embedded (sub)paragraphs (§§15131 and 151312), besides two embedded NQNs (§§151311 and 151321). The embedded (sub)paragraphs, §§15131 and 151312, mark a switch in participants at the NQN level.

Clause 80 (§16) resumes the main narrative line (§1) by a WayX clause with the explicit mention of the participants by name and indicates a switch in roles. Here, Jacob is the subject while Isaac is the complement. This clause connects to clause 5 which is the main narrative and an important note is that it stands in parallel to §§17, 18, 19 and 110. §16 is followed by an embedded NQ (§161) and NQQ (§1611), before another change of roles is observed between the participants (clause 88, §17—Jacob is subject and Isaac is complement). Another (sub)paragraph (clause 93, §171) is embedded in §17 alongside NQs (§171). §§18 and 19 present a double switch in roles of participants by WayX clauses which are separated by an NQ (§181). The first switch brings Isaac to the subject and Jacob is the complement (§18) while the second switch reinstates Jacob as the subject, with Isaac as the complement (§19). §19 continues the narrative up until clause 122, within which are seven embedded (sub)paragraphs. The seven embedded (sub)paragraphs present switches between Jacob and Isaac by Way0 clause types as follows:

§191: Isaac is subject and Jacob is predicate object.

§1913: Jacob is subject.

§1914: Isaac is subject.

§1915: Jacob is subject and Isaac is complement.

§1916: Isaac is subject.

§1917: Jacob is subject and Isaac is complement.

§1918: Isaac is subject.

There are narrative portions and embedded discursive portions (NQ—§§1911, 1912, 19131 and 19141) between these (sub)paragraphs. §110 resumes the narrative at the same level with §19 and contains two embedded (sub)paragraphs (clause 127—§1102 and clause 128—§1103) with a double switch between Isaac and Jacob. First is a switch from Jacob to Isaac and then back to Jacob besides an embedded NQ (§1101 and 11031). The Way0 (ויהי) of clause143 (§111) resumes the narrative of §1. Just like its mother clause, the subject appears in the following clause (Isaac) with Jacob as the object. These roles are switched with the occurrence of a parallel Way0 (ויהי) within the same (sub)paragraph. Clause 148 presents a shift in the narrative with the introduction of §1111 (WXQtI) which indicates a change of subject. The subject in the immediately preceding clause is Jacob and in this (sub)paragraph, Esau is reactivated as the subject. This embedded (sub)paragraph is interrupted by the introduction of another embedding into it (§11111). However, Esau is still the main subject. Clause 156 (§11112) resumes §1111 (WayX) with a change of roles. In the preceding (sub)paragraph, Isaac is reactivated as the complement often appearing as a clitic personal pronoun. This (sub)paragraph switches his role to the subject while Esau is the complement. An embedded (sub)paragraph at a lower level in this (sub)paragraph switches the roles of the participants by a Way0 [§111122 (clause 158)].

The WayX of clause 160 resumes §1111 as a second embedded (sub)paragraph (§11113) in which Isaac becomes the subject once more. This (sub)paragraph and its discursive portions (§111131) end in clause 168. The InfC clause indicates a change in the roles of Isaac and Esau in an embedded (sub)paragraph. The next two Way0 clauses (clauses 175 and 178) mark other embedded (sub)paragraphs (§§111134 and 111135) at lower levels and continue the switches in the roles of Esau and Isaac. Clause 185 resumes the narrative at a higher level and connects to clause 160. This clause marks the start of another (sub)paragraph (§11114) and lies parallel to §11115 (clause 193), §11116 (clause 200) and §11117 (clause 202). All these (sub)paragraphs reactivate the participants by WayX clauses. Isaac, as the subject of §11114 switches position with Esau in §11115 and becomes the complement while Esau is the subject. Esau maintains his position as subject in §11116, but returns to the non-subject position in §11117. The following discursives are embedded into this narrative portion: NQ–§111111 (clauses 152–155), NQ–§111121 (clause 157), NQ–§111122 (clause 159), §111131 (clauses 162–163 and 166), §111133 (clauses 172–174), §111134 (clause 175), §111135 (clause 179 and 184), §111141 (clauses 187–192), §111151 (clauses 194–199) and §111171 (clauses 204–210); NQN–§111131 (clauses 164–165 and 167) and §111135 (clauses 180–182); and NQNN–§111131 (clause 168). Another (sub)paragraph which resumes the narrative and connects to the ויהי clause of 27:30 indicates that the subject of the narrative changes from Isaac to Esau (clause 211). This (sub)paragraph §1112, begins with a WayX with explicit mention of both subject (Esau) and object (Jacob). The next embedded (sub)paragraph is at the same narrative level with §1112. It begins with a WayX and retains Esau as the subject talking in his heart (§1113). At a lower level, another embedded (sub)paragraph (§11132), marks a change of participant and roles. Rebekah comes in as the subject while Jacob is reactivated as the complement. In the preceding clause, Rebekah is the complement while ‘the words of Esau’ take the object position. The subject in this clause seems obscured but the following clause indicates a change of roles with Rebekah assuming the subject position. The next (sub)paragraph (§11133) is of a higher narrative level. It begins with a WayX. While Rebekah remains the subject, Isaac is reactivated as the object. In this narrative section, there are three embedded NQs [§11131 (clause 214 and 215), §111321 (clauses 220–234) and §111331 (clauses 236–238)].

The first (sub)paragraph (§112–clause 239) of chapter 28 continues the narrative at a higher level by connecting to 27:1a, and thus resumes the narrative of §1. It begins with a WayX and makes explicit mention of both subject (Isaac) and complement (Jacob). This (sub)paragraph sets a frame to all other (sub)paragraphs that follow and occupies the highest level in the hierarchy in this narrative section. §112 has 12 embedded (sub)paragraphs, five of which are of the same text level (and therefore parallel) and 7 are embedded in the hierarchy’s substratum. Also, there are five embedded NQs in this (sub)paragraph.¹³⁰ §1122 (clause 254) which is the first embedded (sub)paragraph at the narrative level also begins with a WayX. There is no change of roles observed and the set of participants is the same. However, the next clause §11221 (clause 255) marks a shift (Way0) with Jacob as the subject. The (sub)paragraph §1122 is parallel to §1122, 113, 114 and 115. In §11222 (clause 256) there is the reactivation of Esau (WayX) as the subject, while the object is an xQtIX clause (clause 257) in which Isaac is the subject and Jacob is the object. §11223 (clause 261) brings Isaac as the subject and Jacob as the complement. In §112222 (WayX),

¹³⁰ The following NQs are embedded in §122: §1121 (clauses 241–251), §11232 (clauses 283–297), §1131 (clause 300 and 301), §1132 (clauses 304–307) and §1151 (clauses 317–331).

a lower level (sub)paragraph in this (sub)paragraph, the subject changes to Jacob while the complement is Isaac and Rebekah. §112223 and §112224 are parallel to §11222. They all have Esau as their subject but the objects are different. In §112223, the object is an adjectival clause with a composite subject, 'the daughters of Canaan,' and Isaac is complement. In §112224, Ishma'el is introduced as a complement. The WayX clause (§1123) returns Jacob to the subject position. This embedded (sub)paragraph has another embedded (sub)paragraph (§11231) which indicates a switch in roles. Here, YHWH is the subject and Jacob is the addressee. The last (sub)paragraph of the hierarchy indicates that there is a change of location. The change of location also affects the sets of actants and the nature of the narrative. Up to this point, the narrative has been dialogic with different sets of actants interacting. In the following (sub)paragraph, the narrative will assume a monologue besides the introduction of YHWH as a new actant, who is activated in this narrative by an NmCl (clause 283).

Gen 28:13a וַהֲנֵה יְהוָה נֹצֵב אֵלַי

"And behold! the LORD standing upon it"

The rest of the (sub)paragraphs §§113, 114, and 115, are of equal text level and begin each with a WayX. In all the (sub)paragraphs, Jacob is the subject. There is a change in the set of actants, but Jacob remains the dominant actant in all the (sub)paragraphs because he is identified explicitly by proper name at the beginning of each (sub)paragraph.

3.4. Text Analysis of Genesis 27–28

4.1. Gen 27:1a–5c

This section is a dialogue between Isaac and Esau and introduces Rebekah as a listener to the conversation. The speaker is Isaac while the addressee is Esau. The main line of communication is structured by Wayyiqtol (N), interspersed by direct speeches (NQ). The initial communication begins with וַיְהִי, followed by an xQtIX clause which serves to reactivate Isaac as the main subject and his age as the underlying impasse. This line of communication is interrupted by a dependent clause which introduces Isaac's blindness, and is recaptured again in Isaac's instructions to Esau to prepare for his final blessing. The Way0 clauses in the dialogue indicate a switch in actors either from Isaac to Esau or vice versa. Besides his name, Esau is also reactivated by the kinship term 'elder son'—Anchoring Relation. In the NQ section, there is a change in verbal form from the Way to QtI, Impv and Yqtl. The occurrence of xQtI clause type in both the narrative section and the direct speech is of importance. All the xQtI clauses are preceded by particles and Niccacci (1991:30, 35–37) has mentioned that this is a 'retrospective' Qatal which denotes "the motive or preceding circumstance." As such Qatal gives information recuperated to ensure that the reader understands the following information (Ibid. 36). Thus, it gives background information which is useful to the understanding of the narrative. The antecedent information here is Isaac's age (Gen 27:1b and 2b) and proximity to his death (Gen 27:2c). The NQ contains macro-syntactic markers, (הַנְּהִינָא...וַעֲתָה). These macro-syntactic markers indicate a demarcation and relationship between the preceding (הַנְּהִינָא) and following (וַעֲתָה) part of the direct speech (Niccacci 1990: 96, Schneider §54 and Talstra I, 172–174). Isaac presents his age and inability to know the day of his death as 'prior event' using הַנְּהִינָא to solicit Esau's attention (Waltke and O'Connor 1990:579 and J-M § 105c–d) and then switches to the instructions by use of the 'temporary deictic' particle

ועתה which presents a logical force to the shift (Waltke and O'Connor 1990:658, 663, 667 and J-M §93g). To this Waltke and O'Connor (1990:667) argue that: '(t)he logical force of ועתה is usually confined to the combination...introducing a shift in argumentative tack with a continuity in subject and reference.' Accordingly, while הנה-נא functions to introduce a situation or circumstance (past or present) which is important for the ongoing communication, ועתה presents a logical switch to the result of the situation posed by הנה-נא. The macro-syntactic markers define the relationship between the two parts of the NQ, the communication link between the narrative section and the NQ by the recapping of the narrative section in the clause preceded by הנה-נא. The communication line is continued after the direct speech by a participial clause which denotes a contemporaneous and simultaneous situation where Rebekah is introduced as listening to the instructions that Isaac gives to Esau. Apart from the constant change in the roles of the actors, two major linguistic changes occur. There is shift in the verbal communication form from 3sgM to 1sg between the narrative section and the NQ section. Also, within the NQ section, there is this constant shift from 1sg (Qtl or Yqtl) to 2sg (Impv) or vice versa. The 1sg (Qtl) is used after the first macro-syntactic sign הנה, the 2sg (Impv) after the second macro syntactic sign ועתה, while the 1sg or 3sg (Yqtl) comes in the final or purpose clause. Gen 27:5c (§15), recaptures the narrative communication line with a WayX clause type which shows Esau's departure to the field. A switch in actant is observed here as Esau switches from object/complement to subject.

4.2. Gen 27:6a–18g

This section begins with WXQtl clause type which introduces the dialogue between Rebekah and Jacob. The WXQtl reactivates a set of new actants in the narrative and begins a (sub)paragraph. Although Rebekah has already been mentioned in the participial clause, she is neither the subject nor object of the preceding section. Here she assumes the position of the subject with a new actant–Jacob, as the complement. Their reactivation is by explicit use of NP with Rebekah as the speaker and Jacob as the addressee. As it is in the preceding section, the Wayyiqtol clauses which intersperse the direct speeches at each moment indicate a change in the roles of Rebekah and Jacob. The dialogue opens with an NQ in which Rebekah instructs Jacob on the acquisition of Isaac's blessing. The macro-syntactic markers הנה...ועתה, play the same role as in Gen 27:2b and 2d. Within this NQ section, the הנה clause introduces another direct speech (an embedded direct speech or direct speech in an NQ) which is a recap of Isaac's instructions to Esau. Thus, the xQtl too has a retrospective role as that in Gen 27:1b, 2b and 2c. The embedded direct speech's main communication level is made up of Impv + Impv + Yqtl0 + Yqtl0 indicating the futuristic nature of the speech. The temporal deictic particle ועתה which switches the argument of the NQ is followed by a series of volitives. Its appearance in this NQ can be construed as a logical switch owing to the nature of the situation presented by the הנה clause. Just as it is in Isaac's direct speech, Rebekah's speech also involves constant clause type switches. It begins with the 1sg (Qtl) after הנה, changes to the 2sg (Impv) in the first part of the NQQ, and back to 1sg (Yqtl) in the final clause of the NQQ. After the second macro-syntactic sign ועתה, the clause type switches again to 2sg (Impv). The final section of the NQ show switches between the Qtl and Yqtl clause types.

Gen 27:11a is a (sub)paragraph which resumes the communication level of the dialogue linking with the WXQatal clause of Gen 27:05c as its mother clause. It

introduces a change in roles between Rebekah and Jacob. As the subject, Jacob presents the differences between himself and Esau as an argument against Rebekah's instructions. The communication line in Jacob's response is made up of two NmCIs, followed by a Yqtl and two WQtl clauses. The NmCI introduces the differences between Jacob and Esau. It also introduces Jacob's fear of a possible curse if Isaac uncovers his identity. Another change in the roles of actants is introduced by the (sub)paragraph of Gen 27:13a. The communication level is WayX, but X is a kinship noun (mother) referring to the Rebekah, and Jacob is the complement shown in the IPP. It introduces another NQ whose communication level is NmCI+Voc+Impv+Impv+Impv. This NQ counters Jacob's position and obliges him to carry out Rebekah's instructions shown by the imperatives. Jacob's response to Rebekah's obligation resumes the narrative communication line at a higher level with a succession of three Way0 clauses. The introduction of another (sub)paragraph (Gen 27:14d) describes Rebekah's preparation of the meal and signals a change of subject from Jacob to Rebekah by a shift in clause type from Way0 to WayX. Gen 27:15 introduces another level of communication. It is a narrative section in a discursive section. Thus, there is a combination of both narrative and discursive clause types and switches within the communication line. At the communication level, there are two actors (Rebekah and Jacob), with Rebekah being the subject. Up to Gen 27:17c, Rebekah disguises Jacob to pose like Esau by clothing him with Esau's garment. The communication begins with a WayX and switches to an NmCI, a Way0, a WxQtl, a Way0, an xQtl and ends in a defective clause. The xQtl clause is an embedded attributive אשר clause which connects to the preceding. Gen 27:18a indicates a switch in verbal form from 3sgF to 3sgM, thus marking the beginning of a new (sub)paragraph. This (sub)paragraph switches back to Jacob as the subject, and Isaac comes in as the complement.

Until now, we have encountered two sets of actors (Isaac–Esau and Rebekah–Jacob). This (sub)paragraph introduces another set of actors (Jacob–Isaac). Although they are known from the previous (sub)paragraph, this is the first time they meet each other in the narrative. Jacob begins the dialogue with a vocative (NQ) and the Way0 of Gen 27:18d switches the role of the actors to retain Isaac as the subject. In three verbless clauses (NQ), Isaac seeks to identify Jacob. The NQN ends the embedded paragraph and its (sub)paragraphs which began in Gen 27:6a.

4.3. Gen 27:19a–29f

This section resumes the narrative of §1, after the interruption of the embedded (sub)paragraphs. It is a dialogue marked by a constant change in the roles of actants at each stage. While each switch in the dialogue is indicated by either a WayX or Way0, the NQ is dominated by the Yqtl and Impv clause types. On the actual communication level, two actors are involved–Isaac and Jacob. This section can be further divided into the following (sub)sections:

4.3.1. Gen 27:19a–19h

This (sub)paragraph resumes the narrative by linking to the main (sub)paragraph as a dependent (sub)paragraph (Gen 27:1e). Two major linguistic changes occur at the beginning of this section: (1) Jacob is reactivated as subject at the higher narrative level and (2) the link of this section to clause 5 as mother clause presents Jacob in response to Isaac's command to Esau in Gen 27:1e. In an NQ Jacob presents himself to Isaac as Esau, and uses three imperatives and a Yqtl to invite Isaac to receive the meal he commanded in Gen 27:1–4f. Two of the imperatives are of the lengthened form (אכלה and שבה) and קום has the particle נא added to it. Although

imperatives generally express a command, studies have shown that the long imperatives have a basic meaning in which a speaker entreats the addressee to perform an action in the speaker's favour (Fassberg 1994:11–35, idem 1999:7–11, Joosten 1999:423–426 and Shulman 1996:66–67)¹³¹ or bearing politeness (Jenni 2002:3–16). Here the imperatives are regarded as entreaty with respect to Jacob's approach to Isaac. Jacob requests Isaac to arise, sit and eat, and bless him, signified by the particle **נָא**. The encounter that builds up to this point indicates that Jacob should be courteous and polite to win Isaac's favour. Thus, Shulman supports this when he argues that when a speaker applies **נָא**, there is need for the speaker to be loyal, respectful or express courteousness and politeness (Shulman 1996:85ff and Dobson 2005:122). The communication line switches from 2sgM (Impv) in the command to 3sgM (xYqtl) in the purpose clause.

4.3.2. Gen 27:20a–20g

Like the previous section, this is the second part of the dialogue in which Isaac questions how Jacob finds the game so quickly. As a (sub)paragraph, it begins with a change in the roles of the actors and Isaac becomes the speaker (subject) while Jacob is the addressee (complement). The communication line is a NmCl+Qtl+InfC (adjunct)+Voc. The emphasis is on the Qtl which seeks to understand the exceptional success of Jacob's (Esau's) hunt. Although the nominal in Gen 27:20b has **זֶה** as the subject, it has been argued that such an addition of **זֶה** to an interrogative clause does not necessarily change the meaning of the clause (J-M §143g). The second part of this section presents another switch of the actants' roles by a Way0 clause which introduces Jacob's response to Isaac's question in the first part. In this NQ, **יְהוּדָה יְהוּדָה** is introduced as the subject of the success by an xQtl verb type preceded by **כִּי**.

¹³¹Shulman studied 116 uses of the lengthened imperatives and found that its basic meaning is underlined by entreaty in two ways: (a) acts for, to, with or toward an addressee, and (b) acts in favour of an addressee. Following his findings, he wrote: "in 61 occurrences ... the long imperative is followed by a preposition with the first person suffix... and in another 51 occurrences... such preposition and a pronoun is implied by the context.... In these 112 cases (97%) the speaker is requesting that an action be done for him, to him, with him, or towards him. In the remaining 4 occurrences (3%), the long imperative is not followed by a preposition with a first person suffix, nor is one implied, but a close examination of these 4 contexts shows that the speaker is requesting the addressee to act for his personal benefit, as a favour to him, although the action is not directed to him." Shulman draws the following conclusion: "The long imperative form is used where the speaker requests an action directed to him, an action done for him/to him/ towards him/ with him etc. In most cases the long form of imperative is used to suggest an action as a personal favour to the speaker as well as towards the speaker. However, there are cases where the long form denotes only an action towards the speaker, and others where it denotes only an action for the benefit of the speaker" (Shulman 1996:66–67). Paul Eickman in "The Long Imperative in Biblical Hebrew," followed on and presented his findings on the use of the lengthened imperative in the following three point: (1) "In prose the speaker invites someone to join him in some action, employing the cohortative after the long imperative;" (2) In prose, a word designating the speaker or something or someone belonging to the speaker may be the direct object of the lengthened imperative itself;" and (3) "In poetry, a large majority of long imperatives follow the prose usage described in (1) and especially (2)." (Ibid. 5) Paul Eickman gives the following examples from Genesis: Gen 11:3, 4, 7; 15:9; 19:32; 21:23; 25:31, 33; 27:3, 4, 7, 19, 21, 25, 26; 29:15, 19, 21; 30:1, 26, 27, 28; 31:44; 32:30; 37:13, 16; 38:16; 39:7, 12; 42:37; 43:38; 45:9 and 47:15, 31. Paul Eickman, "The Long Imperative in Biblical Hebrew," <http://www.wlsessays.net/files/EickmannImperative.pdf>, 1–36.

4.3.3. Gen 27:21a–21g

This (sub)paragraph introduces another change in roles with Isaac returning as the speaker. Using two volitives and four verbless clauses, Isaac invites Jacob to have a feel of him as a means to identify him (if he is Esau). The application of the lengthened imperative **גִּשְׁה** plus the particle **נָא**, indicates that Isaac should take precautions after expressing doubts on the fast catch of the game. This fits most especially because the end is the blessing, thus Isaac should approach the situation with care and caution. He therefore politely invites Jacob to feel him and to decipher if he is Esau. The use of **זֶה** here is enclitic, and used in this manner, it is closely connected in pronunciation with the preceding word **הָאֵתָה** and not having an independent accent or phonological status (J-M §143a–b).¹³² Literally, the clause **זֶה הָאֵתָה** would be translated–“Are you here (this one)” (J-M §143a). **ה** is basically used to introduce a question whose response is uncertain (although there are exceptions) (GKC §150da). Its use in Gen 27:21 indicates that Isaac is uncertain about the identity of the one posing as Esau. The two elliptical clauses are dependent on the interrogative NmCl and their understanding can only be derived in this relation. But the sequence **וְהָאֵתָה...וְהָאֵתָה** presents disjunctive questions which syntactically signal some notion of disbelief on the part of Isaac.

4.3.4. Gen 27:22a–25h

This (sub)paragraph is of the same level as the preceding and is marked by a change in the roles of Isaac and Jacob. Jacob returns as the subject and Isaac becomes the complement. The (sub)paragraph contains seven embedded (sub)paragraphs which either describe a new event or indicate a switch in actants. The NQ section is dominated by verbless clauses while the narrative section presents a mixture of clause types: WayX+Way0+xQtl+WxQtl. Isaac feels Jacob but does not recognise him because of his hairy hands. Thus, he requests for the meal. The narrator applies four successive Way0s (Gen 27:25e–h) to presents Isaac’s eating of the meal he had requested for.

4.3.5. Gen 27:26a–29f

This (sub)paragraph ends the first major section of the narrative. Roles are also exchanged and Jacob becomes the addressee. Two lower level (sub)paragraphs are within this (sub)paragraph. In the first part, Isaac uses the lengthened imperatives to invite Jacob to kiss him. The communication link is Impv [l_j] (**נָא**)+(**גִּשְׁה**)+Impv (**שִׁקֵּה**). The Way0s of Gen 27:27a and 27c signal a switch in the roles of the actors. Jacob is the subject of Gen 27:27a and there is a switch to Isaac as the subject in Gen 27:27c. The NQ portion presents a combination of narrative discourse clause types. Isaac applies the Impv+WYqtl+Yqtl+xQtl+PtcP+NmCl, to convey the blessing to Jacob.

4.4. Gen 27:30a–46d

Although this section constitutes another large (sub)paragraph with intervening and embedded (sub)paragraphs, it is dependent upon §1 as the main line of the narrative. At the communication level four actors are involved: Isaac, Jacob, Esau and Rebekah. This narrative section is a combination of monologues and dialogues. The (sub)paragraph begins with a Way0 clause which connects to Gen 27:1e as a dependent clause. Two **וַיְהִי** clauses introduce Jacob’s departure from Isaac after the blessing.

¹³² J-M also argue that this demonstrative either have an anaphoric or cataphoric referent to something physical or mental.

Syntactically, they connect to each other by clause type and common syntactic features—Isaac is the subject in the first ויהי clause and Jacob is the object. In the second these roles are switched and Isaac becomes the complement while Jacob becomes the subject. This section also contains a dialogue between Esau and Isaac and at each turn of the conversation, there is a switch in the roles of the actants indicated by a WayX or Way0. The dialogue between Esau and Isaac ends in Gen 27:40e.

4.4.1. Gen 27:30a–32d

Esau is the subject and Isaac is the object (complement). In Gen 27:30f, a WXQtI clause is applied to introduce Esau's (Explicit NP) return from the field, followed by a succession of three Wayyiqtol clauses. Esau prepares his game and approaches Isaac. The next embedded (sub)paragraph introduces Esau's presence before Isaac and Esau's NQ. The line of verbal communication at the narrative level is WXQtI+WayX+Way0+Way0. The WXQtI indicates a change in actant, while the WayX indicates the beginning of an embedded (sub)paragraph which ends in v.32d. Two switches in the roles of the actors in Gen 27:32a and 32c mark the beginning of (sub)paragraphs. The communication link of the first NQ section Gen 27:31d–g is made of Yqtl clauses of different forms and verbless clauses (Yqtl+Voct +WYqtl +xYqtl). Esau is the speaker and Isaac the addressee and the NQ requires Isaac to rise and eat Esau's food. יקם an *Ayin-waw* verb, together with ויאכל and תברכני expresses Esau's wish, command or desire to Isaac. The importance of יקם is that it has a distinct jussive form which might give the reader an insight into Esau's aspiration. Its translation is "Let him arise." The WayX (Gen 27:32a) resumes the narrative and indicates a change in the roles of the actants. Isaac switches to the subject and Esau becomes the complement. Isaac questions the identity of Esau with a NmCI and Esau's response is introduced by a Way0.

4.4.2. Gen 27:33a–34f

Gen 27:33a–34f continues the dialogue between Esau and Isaac with a change in the roles of the actants. Isaac returns as the subject while Esau is the complement. The communication line continues with a Way0 which introduces the NQ. The line of communication in the NQ is NmCI+Ptcp+xYqtl+xYqtl and provides information on the blessing that has already been passed on to Jacob. In between the NQ there are embedded Way0 clauses [embedded narratives (NQN)] which describe Isaac's actions before the blessing of Jacob. Two Way0 clauses further describe Esau's reaction to Isaac's speech which terminates in another NQ. A continuous shift from 1sg, to 2sgM and 3sgM signals the presence of a third participant made referent by the independent pronoun subject of the NmCI—הוא (Gen 27:33c). גם lays emphasis on the importance of the blessing handed to Jacob. As in Gen 27:34e and 38g, גם has a persuasive or compelling force.¹³³

4.4.3. Gen 27:35a–38g

This section continues the dialogues from the preceding, and contains two lower level (sub)paragraphs. The (sub)paragraphs begin with Way0 indicating a change in the roles of the actants, (Esau>>Isaac and Isaac >> Esau respectively). The first NQ section contains embedded narratives and the verbal mood is 3sgM, except

¹³³ The meaning of גם relies upon its position within a narrative. For further discussion on גם conf. van der Merwe (1990), idem (1993a: 181–199), idem (1993b:27–44), idem (2009: 313–332) and Lyavdansky (2004:231–250).

27:36h which is 2sgM. Gen 27:36b begins with a ה–interrogative which is resumed by a Way0 in Gen 27:36d. The communication link in the narrative section is Way0 while the NQ section is made up of Qatl (0Qtl, WxQtl, xQtl). Gen 27:37a resumes at a higher narrative level and connects to Gen 27:33a (WayX). Two linguistic changes worth noting here are the change in roles of actants and the shift in PNG from 3sgM in the narrative to the 1sg in the NQ. The communication link in the NQ is xQtl + WxQtl + WxQtl+WxYqtl+Voct. The speaker is Isaac while the addressee is Esau. Isaac uses the above clause types to reiterate the irrevocable nature of the blessing handed to Jacob. Gen 27:38a is parallel to Gen 27:37a as a similar clause type–WayX. Here, Esau returns to the subject and Isaac becomes the complement. Esau's NQ begins with a ה–interrogative which is resumed by the subject of a NmCl and an Impv (2sgM). The communication link of this NQ is CPen+NmCl+Voc+ Impv+NmCl+Voct. Only one verbal clause is used by Esau.

CPen	[<Fr> ברכה אחת [<Qu> ה]
NmCl (Resumptive)	[<PC> לך] [<Su> הוא]

The casus pendens and the subject of the NmCl have generated some debate. The question is whether the resumptive subject is הוא or לך. This difficulty has led to the following translations:

“Have you but one blessing,...?” (RSV).
 “Is that (namely the blessing of Jacob) the only blessing [that] you have?”¹³⁴
 “Do you have only one blessing,...?” (NIV).

Andersen treats this as an independent interrogative verbless clause with ברכה אחת as the noun subject, הוא as the resumptive pronoun subject and לך as predicate (Andersen 1970:106, #533). According to Joosten, לך should be the subject (Joosten 1991:207–221; esp. 216). He argues that the clause has two constituents ברכה אחת and לך, and that לך is known from the context while ברכה אחת adds new information. He agrees with Groß whose argument is based on the rarity of the casus pendens of an indefinite subject in BH (Groß 130, n 117 as in Joosten 1991:207–221, n 35). The problem with the syntax seems to lie with the designation of the enclitic personal pronoun either as subject or predicate and how it functions in clauses.

When van Peursen studies the functions of enclitic personal pronouns in NmCls in Syriac, he considers three main approaches to the functions of this particle presented by Khan (1988), who argues that the particle designates a logical relationship between a subject and a predicate; Goldenberg (1983) who sees the particle as a ‘lesser subject’ or ‘resumptive pronoun,’ and Muraoka (1985 and 1999) who argues for an emphatic function of the particle (van Peursen 2006:157–173). He builds on J.W. Dyk’s (1994)¹³⁵ assertion of a historical ‘unmarking’ of the markedness of such

¹³⁴ Conf. Speiser (1964: 207) and Westermann (1981:528).

¹³⁵ She writes: “a copular construction with a pronoun can originate historically from a marked topic – comment (or theme–predication) construction, with pausal intonation, the topic being the element in initial position and the comment being the clause consisting of the pronominal subject and the predi-

constructions in Old Testament Hebrew and concludes on the possibility that the enclitic personal pronoun serves to emphasise (in terms of highlighting or giving prominence or clarifying) the preceding element (Ibid. 162–163). Following on from Dyk's argument, *הוא לך* is the theme and *ברכה אחת* is the predication. This implies that the *לך* serves to highlight the *ברכה אחת*. This agrees with the ETCBC encoding which designates *ברכה אחת* as the theme and *הוא לך* as the predication. Thus, the clause can be translated literally as: "Is it one blessing it is to you?" In proper translation, the rendering of the NIV is acceptable: "Do you have only one blessing?"

4.4.4. Gen 27:38h-40e

Unlike the previous section, this section consists of two (sub)paragraphs of equal narrative level. It resumes the narrative line of the preceding section. Clause 200 connects to Gen 27:38a by WayX. Esau remains the subject as in the preceding (sub)paragraph. Together with a Way0, this (sub)paragraph continues Esau's reaction to Isaac's speech in Gen 27:37c–g. Isaac's response introduces the following (sub)paragraph with a WayX, which ends in an NQ containing the blessings pronounced on Esau. Here Isaac is the subject and Esau is the object. Isaac's address is dominated by the Yqtl clause type, with the occurrence of the WQtls. The NQ has a fluctuation in the verb clause type with switches between 3sgM, 2sgM and back to 3sgM.

4.4.5. Gen 27:41a–46d

The content of this section is Esau's plan to kill Jacob and Rebekah's instructions to Jacob to flee to Paddan Aram. Esau continues to be the subject but the object (complement) changes from Isaac to Jacob. Two (sub)paragraphs define the structure of this section. However, there are other intervening (sub)paragraphs. The first (sub)paragraph resumes the narrative with a WayX and connects to clause 146 (Gen 27:30d). While Esau is the subject, Jacob is reactivated as the object. This (sub)paragraph is interrupted by an intervening equal level (sub)paragraph which introduces Esau's monologue in which he plans to slay Jacob. The communication link of the monologue is Yqtl + WYqtl, thus indicating a future plan. This is closely followed by a Way0 clause with Rebekah as the complement while Esau's words are the object. Syntactically, the Way0 clause *ויגיד* poses a problem. It is a dependent clause and its main clause indicates that Esau's NQ is a monologue–*בלבו*. Read in the active form, it would mean that "someone told," or "it was told," in the impersonal passive form. However, the question is the relationship between the monologue and the verb. If someone announced Esau's words to Rebekah then Esau's NQ wasn't a monologue.¹³⁶

The narrative continues with a lower level (sub)paragraph (clause 217). This (sub)paragraph (clause 217) connects to clause 216 by a Way0 which indicates a change in subject from Esau to Rebekah. Here Rebekah remains as the subject and Jacob returns as the complement. The NQ that follows contains Rebekah's address to Jacob to flee to Paddan Aram. The communication link in the NQ is a combination of verbless clauses, participial clause, Impvs, Yqtls and WQtls. Two macro-syntactic particles structure the NQ. As in Gen 27:2–3 and 6–10, the first macro-syntactic sign,

cate NP (...) As marked forms were also used to express meanings which are in themselves not pragmatically marked but which could be more clearly conveyed by the marked form (...), a gradual 'unmarking' of the marked form occurred" (J.W. Dyk as in van Peursen 2006:163).

¹³⁶ Conf. GKC§121a and J-M§128b.

הנה, introduces the problem while the second ועתה presents a logical switch to the requirements and also connects both parts of the NQ. Here, הנה is followed by a Ptcp+InfC while ועתה is followed by volitives (Impv+xYqtl+WQtl) and an InfC. In this NQ, a constant shift in number and gender is observed. 2sgM presents the command to Jacob, 3sgF refers to Esau's anger, and the 1sg refers to Rebekah. In the last part of this narrative section, a WayX introduces another (sub)paragraph which resumes the narrative at a higher level connecting to Gen 27:41c as a dependent (sub)paragraph. Rebekah remains the subject while Isaac returns as the complement. Jacob is the content of Rebekah's NQ and the line of communication is Qtl+Ptcp+NmCl.

4.5. Gen 28:1–22

4.5.1. Gen 28:1a–9b

This narrative section is a dependent section of the main narrative line. It resumes the narrative by a WayX and connects to clause 1 (Gen 27:1a). The content is Isaac's sending of Jacob to go and get a wife from Paddan Aram. After sending Esau to go and hunt game to receive the blessings, Isaac now blesses, charges and sends Jacob to Laban's house to go and get a wife. Our reading approach marks Genesis 28 as a second part of the narrative. It is plausible from this approach to argue that the first part (Genesis 27) focuses on Esau. It begins with Isaac calling and instructing Esau. In Genesis 28, the focus shifts to Jacob. Isaac also calls Jacob and instructs him. Both Esau and Jacob receive calls from Isaac which are all related to the sustenance of Isaac's *Toledoth*. Syntactically, clauses 1 and 239 have a common subject even though the subject of clause 1 is made explicit only in clause 2. Clause 239 connects to clause 1 by agreement in PNG–3sgM.

At the communication level, four actors are involved with switches in roles. There are five (sub)paragraphs embedded in this narrative section at the higher level and three embedded (sub)paragraphs at the lower narrative level. Syntactically, it presents a combination of both narrative and direct speeches as shown in the following (sub)sections.

1. Gen 28:1a–4c

The content of this (sub)paragraph is Isaac's blessing and instructions to Jacob. Three linguistic markers help define the syntactic relations between this (sub)paragraph and the preceding section. Firstly, there is a change in the roles and set of actors. In the preceding paragraph, the actors are Rebekah and Isaac as subject and object (complement) respectively. Here, Jacob is reactivated as a complement, while Isaac becomes the subject. Secondly, there is a switch in the clause types from the narrative to the discursive section (Way to Impv+Yiqtol+Qatal). The communication line in the narrative portion of this (sub)paragraph is WayX+Way0+ Way0+Way0. The WayX begins the (sub)paragraph while the Way0 clauses are dependent clauses of the WayX clause. Isaac maintains his role as the subject while Jacob remains as the object (complement) in these clauses. In the NQ, the dominant clause type is the Yiqtol followed by the Imperative. The discourse is introduced by an xYqtl followed by three Impvs which present the command and by an WXYqtl + WYqtl + WYqtl + WQtl + WYqtl + InfC + xQtl which present the blessing and wishes of Isaac upon Jacob. In the blessing section the name used for God is **אל** **שרי**, which is its only appearance in the whole of this narrative. In Gen 27:7d, 20g, 27h, 28:4c, 12d, 13c, 16d, 17e, 20c, 21b and 22c, other names or combination of names are used to designate God. Thirdly, the opening clause of this (sub)paragraph is connected to Gen 27:1a (clause 1) by agreement in PNG–3sgM. The unidentified subject of the Way0 clause of Gen 27:1a comes in the

following clause (relative clause) (Gen 27:1b) as an NP (Isaac). This subject is reactivated in Gen 28:1a by NP (Isaac) in the same role. The application of the same subject indicates a strong syntactic and semantic relation between these two clauses. In addition, clause 1 is a time clause which occupies level 0 of the text hierarchy and functions to introduce both the sending of Esau and Jacob, besides marking Isaac's prominence as the main participant.

2. Gen 28:5a–9b

This (sub)paragraph contains others (sub)paragraphs at lower levels in the narrative communication line. No role change is observed between the actors and Isaac remains the subject while Jacob is the object. It is dominantly a narrative section with a single direct speech clause (xYqtl). Thus, the dominant clause type is Wayyiqtol. It begins with a WayX clause which connects to clause 241 (Gen 28:1a) recapturing the narrative line after the direct speech section of Gen 28:1e–4c. This is followed by a Way0 clause (dependent clause) which describes Jacob's obedience and movement to Paddan Aram. The next WayX clause is a (sub)paragraph which is dependent on the WayX of clause 256. This clause introduces Esau's reaction to Jacob's obedience. Thus, the WayX reactivates Esau as the subject. The object of this clause is an xQtl clause in which Isaac is the subject and Jacob is the object. The following clause (WQtl) introduces a recapitulation of Isaac's blessing and command to Jacob in the previous section. In clause 261, a Way0 returns Isaac as the subject and Jacob as the complement. The communication line here is WQtl+InfC+InfC+Way0+InfC+xYqtl. This (sub)paragraph ends in an NQ which is a lexical parallel to Gen 28:1e.

The next (sub)paragraph (clause 264) resumes the narrative at a lower level by a WayX clause in which there is a change in roles of actors and reactivation of other actors. Jacob becomes the subject and Isaac and Rebekah are the complement. Rebekah is reactivated by a noun (אִמִּי). Another (sub)paragraph (clause 266–WayX) continues the narrative line at a higher communicative level and connects to Gen 28:6a as a parallel clause (clause 256–formal, lexical and syntactic parallel). Esau returns as the subject and the object is a dependent clause (an adjectival clause). The subject of the dependent clause is בְּנֵי בְנוֹת כְּנָעַן while its complement is בְּעֵינֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו. The following clause (WayX) at the same narrative level introduces another (sub)paragraph (268) and Esau remains the subject while Ishma'el is introduced as the complement. It ends in a Way0 clause whose unidentified subject is Esau and the object in Maha'lath. Thus, two new actors are introduced at the close of this narrative portion as complements. One important note in this (sub)paragraph is that Esau's reaction to Jacob's obedience raises a possibility that the blessing could be revoked by proper marriage. Nevertheless, the narrator does not make this explicit.

4.5.2. Gen 28:10a–22f

The second part of Genesis 28 contains five (sub)paragraphs. Although this division coincides with the division in the MT, it is worth noting that there are linguistic features that justify it. Among them, two markers are important. Firstly, there is a shift in the set of actors. In the preceding section, the set of actors have been Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau. Each paragraph or (sub)paragraph of the preceding section has had a combination of one or more of these actors. In this section, there is an introduction of a set of actors who did not participate in the previous section. YHWH comes into the narrative as a new actor and participates with Jacob. Secondly, there is a change in the roles of actors. In the immediately preceding section, Esau has been the subject. Here there is a shift from Esau as subject to Jacob as subject. Thirdly, there is a change in geographical location. The previous narrative section takes place

in Beersheba and the following section introduces a change in geographical location indicated by Jacob's movement from Beersheba towards Haran (Gen 28:10a–b). The same goes with his vision in Beth'el (Gen 28:12a–22f).

1. Gen 28:10a–15f

The content of this portion is Jacob's movement towards Haran and his vision. Jacob is the main subject. This (sub)paragraph contains both a narrative section and an NQ section. The narrative section is made up of Wayyiqtol clauses, xQtI and verbless clauses; while the NQ is made up of Qatal and Yiqtol clauses of various forms. There is a change in actors, (Isaac to Jacob) with explicit NP identification and also change of location. At the communication level, two actors are involved—Jacob and YHWH. Jacob is prominent in this narrative part while YHWH is only in the discursive section. The communication line in the narrative part begins with a WayX clause followed by Way0 clauses in succession and a series of verbless clauses. This describes Jacob's departure and vision in Beth'el. Five verbless clauses present the vividness of Jacob's dream (Gen 28:12b–13a); three (Gen 28:12b, d, and 13a) of which are functional and lexical parallels with the same word order (<Ij>+<Su>+<PC>). They all begin with וַהֲנֶה. We have seen that וַהֲנֶה functions as a macro-syntactic particle which calls one's attention to a following discourse and that together with וַעֲתָה they present the structure of an argument. The application of וַהֲנֶה in this narrative portion is best seen as a means to call the readers' attention to the content of the dream.

In the NQ section, there is a verbal tense shift from Wayyiqtol to WQtI, YqtI and xQtI clauses. The NQ section begins with an NmCI followed by a casus pendens which is resumed by an xYqtI, after a participial clause (attributive) interruption. These clauses serve to introduce YHWH and the land he is about to give to Jacob and his descendants. YHWH introduces himself as: אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֲבִיךָ וְאֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק – “God of Abraham your father and of Isaac,” thus marking a shift in subject from Jacob to יְהוָה using a Way0 [clause 284–embedded (sub)paragraph]. This is the first time God uses this formula to introduce himself. In Gen 26:24, YHWH introduces himself to Isaac as the “God of Abraham your father” and here, he introduces himself to Jacob as “God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac.” In the later part of the life of the Israelites, YHWH will introduce himself in a three-fold formula: “the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.” The next three clauses have WQtI+WQtI+WQtI and focus on the future increase of Jacob's descendants as occupants of the land. The NmCI headed by וַהֲנֶה is a logical switch in the discourse. It switches the argument from YHWH's introduction and description of land and its future occupants, to YHWH's promise of unceasing protection of Jacob and assurance of the fulfilment of his promise. On the communication level of the NQ, there is a constant switch from 1sg to 2sgM and 3sgM or 3pl. While YHWH is the speaker and Jacob the addressee, the content concerns YHWH, Jacob, land and Jacob's descendants.

2. Gen 28:16a–17f

This (sub)paragraph contains Jacob's immediate reaction after the vision and resumes the narrative after YHWH's NQ. As the addressee, YHWH was the unidentified subject of the NQ in the previous section. The subject of this narrative section is Jacob and the narrative presents the first of two monologues of Jacob. He is the only actor in this section. The communication link in the narrative section is WayX+Way0+Way0+Way0, and that of the NQ is dominated by verbless clauses. The first two Wayyiqtols introduce the first part of Jacob's monologue and the second two Way0

introduce the second part of Jacob's monologue. Using a NmCl+WXxQtl (Gen 28:16c–d), Jacob expresses surprise of being in the presence of YHWH. **אֵין יֵשׁ יְהוָה** “Surely YHWH is in this place”—an asseverative (conf. J-M §164) clause which affirms the presence of YHWH and exposes Jacob's ignorance indicated by the WXxQtl clause. Jacob further applies an AjCl+NmCl+Ellp+NmCl (Gen 28:17c–f) to express the awesomeness of the place proclaiming it as “the gate of heaven.”

3. Gen 28:18a–19b

The content of this (sub)paragraph is Jacob's action at the dawn of the day. The subject here is still Jacob, but an important linguistic marker is observed. There is a change in time indicated by **בִּבְקֹר**. Using a succession of Wayyiqtol clauses, this (sub)paragraph describes Jacob setting up a memorial stone and renaming of the place. This part is purely narrative in nature and the use of an xQtl and NmCl serve to provide the reader with already known information and background information respectively.

4. Gen 28:20a–22f

The content of this (sub)paragraph is Jacob's vow. Jacob remains the subject and the vow is introduced as the object. The WayX introduces the vow which follows as a monologue with a switch from the narrative to NQ. The NQ is made up of a combination of Yqtl, WQtl and verbless clauses. The vow is presented in two parts: Gen 28:20c–21a and 21b–22f expressing the protasis and apodosis respectively. The protasis contains five conditions headed by the particle **אִם**. The communicative link, xYqtl+WQtl+WQtl+Defc+WQtl, presents the five conditions: YHWH's presence, protection, providence, safe return and possession. The apodosis presents Jacob's vow of reciprocity. Introduced by a **ו**, the apodosis presents Jacob's promise of continuous allegiance to YHWH. The communication link is WQtl+xQtl+0Yqtl+CPen+ xYqtl+xYqtl. Jacob promises to pay allegiance to YHWH, give a tenth of all he has and honour the stone as a memorial to YHWH.

3.5. Summary of Communication Level Analysis

When I began this section, I mentioned the importance of the interaction between constituents of a narrative text to its understanding. I then moved on to extract a proposed structure of Genesis 27–28 from the concatenated text hierarchy. I placed this structure side-by-side that of Runge and de Regt and found out that although their approach is linguistic, their structures lack the identification of (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs. Where the texts agree at a higher level of the narrative, some discrepancy still existed (e.g. marking Gen 27:5a as the start of a paragraph). The difference is that both Runge and de Regt applied some linguistic parameters (change in sets of actants and locale) at the detriment of others. This then affected their (sub)paragraph marking. I moved on to (sub)paragraph analysis and I have described the communication links between the (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs. Based on the structure, I have analysed the communication links between clauses in various (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs. Its rewards are that the linguistic and syntactic relations between clauses, embedded (sub)paragraphs and (sub)paragraphs have been analysed with the aid of the ETCBC text encoding system for a better understanding of the interaction between participants and their effects on the structure of this narrative (conf. appendices 2B and 2C).

2.8. CONTRIBUTION OF THE ETCBC MODEL TO PARTICIPANT REFERENCING

In the study of participant reference in Genesis 27–28, I have applied a combination of approaches with the ETCBC model as one of them. This model which applies a human-computer interaction to the linguistic analysis of narrative texts has proven to be very useful. As a human-computer interactive approach, there is room for adjustments and improvement of data and encoding. To determine its efficacy, I have set it against other linguistic approaches to the same text. While all the approaches are linguistically based, the ETCBC model has proven to have an edge over the others. The following are an indicative list of the importance and contributions of the ETCBC model to participant analysis.

2.8.1. *Clear Marking of Narrative Structure*

The first contribution of the ETCBC model is its support in the understanding of the structure of a narrative. Although the linguistic parameters which are developed for text segmentation have been applied by Runge and de Regt, I have observed that there is still a difficulty in actually determining the boundaries of narratives. Runge's application of narratives structures often overlap and it is difficult to understand the differences between these structures. At certain instances, Runge uses DUs and at others he prefers the term 'new development' for the same narrative structure. This has created a difficulty in the understanding of the way Runge has defined the building blocks of a narrative. Runge's use of development unit (as Longacre's paragraph) follows from his clause principle and depends more on the content of the text than on its text syntactic features and relations. In his studies therefore, Runge divides a narrative into blocks based on themes and observes actantial switches as signalling new developments or development units with less application of linguistic segmenting devices. This has also affected the overall structure of the text. De Regt, on his part, adopted Waltke's literary structure and used it for linguistic studies. Although most of the markers agree with the linguistic devices, some follow literary conventions. An example is the use of "change of location" where the text does not indicate them. The ETCBC model has helped to identify all the linguistic (sub)paragraph markers and presented them in a text hierarchy with (sub)paragraphs embedded into others. This minimises ambiguity of linguistic segmenting devices (see Appendix 2).

2.8.2. *Lowest Building Block of a Narrative*

The second contribution of the ETCBC model is its ability to construct a narrative from various building blocks (word >> phrase >> clause >> text) (Conf. §1.4.1.1). The ETCBC model considers a word as the lowest building block. A combination of words makes a phrase; a combination of phrases makes up a clause (defined as a "construction in which predication occurs") and a combination of clauses make up a text (Conf. §1.4.1.1). The lowest building block in Runge's model is a clause. Also, his division of clauses is different from that of the ETCBC, and what he considers as a clause can be further divided into other clauses. The question of the structural markers of a narrative is also reflected here. Runge's approach indicates that he relies more on the content. Contrary to this approach, the ETCBC encoding determines the structure of a text by an interaction of the text syntactic features from the lowest level of a text to the highest level. The result is a text hierarchy where (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs are syntactically connected to each other and occur in a recursive manner (conf. Appendix 2B).

2.8.3. *Visual Presentation of Recursive Nature of (Sub)paragraphs*

(Sub)paragraph markers at each level of the text hierarchy of the ETCBC approach follow the same pattern and the structure of the text is not linear but contains recurrent (sub)paragraphs embedded into other higher (sub)paragraphs. The ETCBC encoding presents the text hierarchy with recurrent (sub)paragraph in a visual format which increases the researcher's understanding of the level of the (sub)paragraph in the narrative's substratum (conf. Appendix 2B). Due to the possibility of human intervention, the ETCBC approach allows the linguist to make proposals where possible and necessary. The presentation of the abstracted structure of Genesis 27–28 from its text hierarchy is evidence to the human-computer interactive nature of the ETCBC model. Runge acknowledges the recurrence of (sub)paragraphs but has not presented any discussion on the embedding of (sub)paragraphs in his approach to participant's studies. Compared to the ETCBC encoding, there are some deficiencies which may affect the interpretation of narratives especially if the narrative is read linearly. The visual presentation of the ETCBC text hierarchy provides aid to linguists to see the recursive nature of (sub)paragraphs and to differentiate between (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs at various levels of the narrative. This adds credence to the contributions of the ETCBC linguistic approach to text analysis.

2.8.4. *Ability to Determine Syntactic Relations between Clauses*

The syntactic relations between phrases and clauses form the basic principle to the ETCBC approach. To underscore this, proponents have argued that "(t)he most important aspect of this linguistic analysis is the focus on syntax. Syntax is considered to be the framework of the text, receiving priority over semantics and literary or rhetorical analysis" (conf. van Peursen 2007, Bakker 2011, Oosting 2011). I have mentioned that researchers can be keen in pointing out the syntactic relations between clause constituents. However, when the data is large, there are bound to be errors. The ETCBC approach has illustrated that a human-computer interaction can minimize these errors. One important note in the syntactic relations determined by this model is that the relations are both vertical and horizontal. Horizontally, clause constituents connect. Vertically the same holds, as clauses connect to each other based on common syntactic features (conf. §2.7.2.1). This continues to (sub)paragraphs at higher levels of the texts and to large textual units.

2.8.5. *The Meaning of a Linguistic (Sub)paragraph*

In linguistics, the (sub)paragraph marking clause types are WayX, WXQtI or Way0, where X defines an explicitly mentioned actant and Way0 signifies a change of actant (subject). Where a change of subject occurs, a (sub)paragraph begins. This means that single clauses make up (sub)paragraphs based on the changes observed in the subjects. De Regt and Runge face some difficulties in the observation of these markers. De Regt (1999a:13–18), for example, argues that explicit use of name also marks the end of a (sub)paragraph which in the ETCBC encoding marks another (sub)paragraph which is often embedded. Runge, on his part, observes the WayX marker in Gen 27:13, 26, 33, 39, 41, 42 and 46, but does not observe Way0 and WXQtI clauses as (sub)paragraph markers. The ETCBC encoding is able to identify formal patterns applied by the narrator to mark (sub)paragraphs.

2.8.6. *The Advantage of the Form to Function Approach*

Runge uses a model adopted from Dooley and Levinsohn (2000) for his participant analysis and defines it as "discourse-functional perspective." At the end of his

study he presents conclusions from a functional perspective. When this model is applied to the ETCBC text hierarchy encoding, there are crucial differences based on the complexity of participants. Runge's approach (discourse-functional) might imply that he has a function and then tries to get a pattern that fits his function. This is what happens when he discusses pragmatic functions of overspecification for cataphorical highlighting in Genesis 27–28:5. I have argued that the pragmatic functions have been derived from the content of the following discursive. I have also argued that an identification of the forms and their distribution (de Regt 1999) can help the reader to better appreciate the functions of a referencing device, especially in cases where the narrator applies the same amount of overspecification to highlight separate events. This is in line with the ETCBC approach which identifies all the forms from which the functions are then derived. These formal patterns have been put together to develop the ETCBC database.

2.9. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have studied participants and the various ways in which they are referenced in Genesis 27–28. I began by surveying major works on this topic and focused on de Regt's (1991–1992, 1999) and Runge's (2006, 2007) works. I pondered on the difficulty observed by both authors to describe the changes in the referencing patterns of participants within (sub)paragraphs of the same narrative unit. This includes the nature in which participants have been classified as major, minor and prop. To give an explanation that could be acceptable, I proposed a reclassification of participants from a three-fold to a seven-fold. Runge's contribution of Anchoring Relations has been very important to the understanding of the activation of participants and I have made use of his findings. In my definition of participant, I have taken into consideration both animate and inanimate actors which covers a wider scope to include *wisdom* as in wisdom literature. I also demarcated between *central* participant and *main* participant— the *main* participant being the one about whom a story is written while the *central* the one around whom a narrative revolves. Besides I also added the dominant and dominated participants, thus arguing for a seven-fold classification to include: major, minor, prop, central, main, dominant and dominated.

After proposing a working definition for participants (limiting it to the *dramatis personae*), I developed a methodological approach to the study of participants in Genesis 27–28. The main consideration of the methodology is the *Toledoth* reading approach which has enabled me to read the narrative as a single unit. As a means to give credibility to the *Toledoth* reading approach I have carried out an analysis of the way Runge has applied his activation model to Gen 27:1–28:5 and later applied it to the concatenated ETCBC text hierarchy. I found out that fruitful results could be reached if the model is applied properly, albeit it is insufficient to describe all categories of referencing patterns. Also, Runge's application of his model faced some difficulties, especially as he assumes that there are no S1 and S2 contexts. I have mentioned that the way Runge derives his pragmatic functions is not very convincing because he summarises the content of a direct speech and applies it as a function to its quotative frame. However, I noted the importance of Anchoring Relations to the understanding of narratives, its application to centrality and its ability to highlight the sociolinguistic dimensions of Genesis 27–28.

Next, I studied the text hierarchy, its syntactic relations and effects on participant referencing. This took me through the analysis of the text hierarchy and structure, (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs analysis, text analysis and communication links both at the (sub)paragraph and at the text level. From a text-syntactic

perspective I explained how daughter clauses relate to mother clauses, how the coherence and cohesion is achieved within the text, how (sub)paragraphs are embedded into others, and how the patterns of participant reference segment the narrative. In summary, the emphasis of the linguistic approach of ETCBC is on the identification of forms, their distribution (conf. de Regt 1999) and the way the narrator applies the forms or patterns to participants. The contributions of the ETCBC approach have been outlined and it is important to mention that this approach adds clarity to some ambiguities by identifying forms within a text to aid linguists have a proper understanding of patterns used by a narrator to refer to participants. As a human-computer interactive approach, the linguist also has a role to instruct the computer to observe the linguistic conventions. The concatenation of Genesis 27–28 is evidence to a linguist's input and although different from the texts in the ETCBC database there is certainty that the ETCBC database is an important resource to the linguists.

It is important to note that the differences in the approaches of Runge, de Regt and the ETCBC are based on separate considerations, the most important being the understanding of a clause, paragraph, POD and development unit; and their boundaries. There is also a difference in the linguistic devices that mark these structures. What Runge and de Regt consider as a clause and paragraph often have many clauses and embedded (sub)paragraphs respectively in the ETCBC approach. It is worth noting that all acknowledge the recursive nature of these structures in narratives. Thus, the ETCBC encoding built upon such knowledge to develop a database which can improve the linguistic studies of narratives. When it comes to Runge's application of the S1/N1–S5/N5 model, the nature of understanding of clauses affects his interpretation. I chose to apply this to the study of Genesis 27–28 to highlight how the differences in the definition of basic linguistic structures can produce different results. Nevertheless, my focus on the ETCBC model has been to enable the reader to understand how the human-computer interaction can provide alternate resources and improvements to linguistic studies with the syntactic relations (from a "word" to the "text") as its basis.

The intention of this chapter was to study participants referencing in Genesis 27–28 from a text-syntactic perspective based on the ETCBC database encoding. For comparative purposes, I applied already existing methods (Runge and de Regt) which led me to come up the following new arguments:

- To be able to account for the various refencing devices, the classification of participants should be seven-fold (main, central, major, minor, prop, dominant and dominated).
- Length of absence is not a good criterion to determine the activation status of participants because it cannot be properly measured.
- Once a major participant is activated it remains in either the active or semi-active state and does not decay (especially in the patriarchal narratives).
- A minor participant in one narrative section can become a major participant in another narrative. Once the minor participant progresses to a major, it maintains its status.
- The *Toledoth* reading presents an appropriate method to linguistic studies of the patriarchal narratives.
- The ETCBC approach builds on already existing linguistic approaches and helps to provide clarity to some difficulties faced. Thus complementing them.

In the following chapter, I will investigate how the ETCBC database encoding, the *Toledoth* reading model can complement the literary and stylistic approaches to narratives.

Chapter Three

CHARACTERS: LITERARY STUDY OF CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION IN GENESIS 27–28

3.1. PREAMBLE

The focus of Chapter Two has been on the linguistic studies of participants. From a literary perspective, the participants are known as characters and in this chapter, the focus will be on the literary devices used by the writer to portray the individuals in Genesis 27–28. The study of such portrayals will take into consideration the views of the narrator, the views of the characters about others and how the characters portray themselves through dialogues or monologues. Three aspects of the literary approaches will be discussed which represent the qualitative [(a) and (b)] and quantitative [(c)] analysis of narratives:

- (a) character and characterisation,
- (b) character and literary structure, and
- (c) character-systems (network theory).

I will begin by discussing the notion of character and characterisation in narrative theory. This will lead me to review some major studies already done in this field and to develop a methodology for this chapter. The focus will be to determine how the linguistic participant referencing devices can complement the literary portrayal of characters and how the linguistic marking of (sub)paragraphs can complement literary and stylistic structures of narratives.

3.2. CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION IN NARRATIVE THEORY

The word *character* can refer to what Propp calls the *dramatis personae* (Propp 2013:21)¹³⁷ within a narrative unit or the qualities or the “personality traits” (Chatman 1978) (physical, emotional, mental and moral) that distinguish one person from another within a narrative unit. As *dramatis personae*, *characters* are *actants* or *actors* (subjects, objects, helpers, antagonists, protagonists, senders and receivers), who bring to light the narrator’s ideas by doing what the narrator wants them to do in a narrative. From a linguistic perspective, these “*dramatis personae*” are participants and studies have shown that the methods used to identify participants affect the understanding of a narrative. Character as *personality traits* refers to the behaviour of the *dramatis personae* in the narrative. Personality traits are unique for each *actant* and the devices employed by a narrator to portray the uniqueness of each *actant* within a narrative unit are known as *characterisation*. In this study the word *character* refers to the *dramatis personae* in a narrative and *characterisation* refers to the methods used to portray the *personality traits* of the *dramatis personae*.

Several types of characters have been identified in biblical narratives and studies indicate that the means of depicting a character is very important and guides the readers to a particular POV. E.g., in the story of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob, it makes a difference if the narrator calls Jacob *her son* (depicting Rebekah’s POV) or *his younger son* (depicting Isaac’s POV). Also, in the book of Ruth, it makes a difference whether Ruth is called *daughter-in-law* or *Moabitess* (conf. Berlin 1983) and in the story of David and Bathsheba, it makes a difference whether Bathsheba is called *the woman* or *Uriah’s wife*. When characters interact with each other, they also help

¹³⁷ See also Miscall (1998) and Scholes and Kellogg (1975 [1966]).

in depicting themselves or other characters. The way they depict each other affects the readers' understanding of the narrative. The interrelation between characters enables them to form networks which define the scope of influence of characters and guides the readers to determine the most central character. This chapter intends to investigate how the methods used by the narrator to depict characters in Genesis 27–28 can contribute to a better understanding of the text. To be able to achieve proper results, I will begin by studying some authors (Bar Efrat, Alter, Berlin, Sternberg and Gunn and Fewell) who have dealt with this topic from a qualitative analytical perspective. In addition, I will also discuss Franco Moretti's network theory (quantitative analytical perspective) to literary studies. This will lead me to develop a methodology of understanding the characters and their methods of depiction in Genesis 27–28.¹³⁸

3.2.1. S. Bar-Efrat (1979)

The primary focus of Bar-Efrat is to highlight the importance of the literary approach and to guide readers to read the biblical narrative as a literary work of art based on tools already in use for other forms of literature (Bar-Efrat 1979:7). He devotes Chapter 2 to the study of character and argues that the method of characterisation determines the value of the narrative to the reader (Ibid. 4). In his study, Bar-Efrat mentions two major methods of depicting biblical characters: Direct shaping and indirect shaping of characters (Ibid. 48). He subdivides *direct characterisation* into two categories (outward appearance and inner personality) and *indirect characterisation* into three categories (speech, actions and minor characters).

When Bar-Efrat studies direct characterisation, he defines *outward appearance* to include all the external appearances of a character which 'serves solely as a means of advancing the plot or explaining its course' [e.g. Esau is hairy and Jacob is smooth (Gen 27:11)].¹³⁹ He explains that this physical appearance (complexion, countenance and clothes) might not be useful for the plot in all instances (Ibid. 53). He divides *inner personality* into two subsections referring to personality traits (known as *direct characterisation* and designating an individual's entire personality) and the mental state of the character (Ibid.). He then elucidates that direct characterisation can be done by the narrator, by God or by another character (Ibid. 54).¹⁴⁰ Bar-Efrat moves on to indirect characterisation and defines *speech* as an expression of traits, a reflection of an opinion, a witness to a character's thought or an expression of mood, interest, wisdom, status, social standing, mental and emotional states of characters (Ibid. 64–67).¹⁴¹ *Action* as a second method of indirect characterisation serves to expose a character's deeds (Ibid. 77) and gives meaning to a narrative. *Minor characters*

¹³⁸ Also conf. Allan (1990:51–61), Marguerat and Bourquin (1999:58–72), Tolmie (1999) and Resseguie (2005).

¹³⁹ Other examples include: Saul (1Sam 9:2 and 10:23), Bathsheba (2Sam 11:2), Abishag (1Kgs 1:4), Absalom (2Sam 14:25), and Mephibosheth (2Sam 19:26).

¹⁴⁰ Among the many examples are Noah who is characterised as "a righteous man, blameless in his generation" (Gen 6:9) and the men of Sodom depicted as "wicked, great sinners against the Lord" (Gen 13:13). Others include: Sons of Eli (1Sam 2:12), Nabal (1Sam 25:3) and Obadiah (1Kgs 18:3). Examples of characterisation by God include Gen 7:1 where God characterises Noah as righteous and Gen 22:21 where God depicts Abraham as one who fears God. Bar-Efrat also questions the objectivity of the depiction of a character from the words of another. He concludes that it is unlikely that characterisation from another character can meet the narrator's objective. Rather this kind of characterisation often expresses the speaker's state of mind and emotions although a narrator can also put words in a character's mind to characterise another (Bar-Efrat 1979:54).

¹⁴¹ This section of Bar-Efrat's work contains many biblical examples of character portrayal by speech.

(the third method of characterisation) serve in the background to drive the storyline (e.g. messengers and unknown persons serve as links) (Ibid. 86).

Bar-Efrat studies two major divisions of methods of characterisation with five subdivisions. When he defines these methods he clearly identifies difficulties at each stage. One important contribution is his extensive use of biblical examples to back up his arguments. However, the division has too much overlap and puts him in a problematic position. Bar-Efrat has also recognised how prominent characters are characterised but has found difficulty in explaining the depiction of others.¹⁴² This has prompted him to develop his minor character division, thus giving one the impression that all who are depicted using any other methods are major characters. He also talks about the principal/subsidiary and main characters which have no bearing on the previous arguments and does not define how these apply to characterisation. Again, Bar-Efrat does not explain why characters change behaviour and traits within the same narrative unit. He questions where he should place Abigail and Uriah in his division of characterisation because of their changing behaviour and advocates that the roles they play in relation to the others are of primary importance (Ibid. 86–87). In addition, Bar-Efrat does not classify the characters. When he talks of principal/subsidiary, main and minor, he does not define them.

3.2.2. R. Alter (1981)

As one of the pioneers of the literary approach, Alter aims to elucidate the uniqueness of the Bible's narrative art by applying literary tools (Alter 1981: ix). When Alter deals with methods of depicting characters in biblical narratives he writes (Alter 1981:116–117):

Character can be revealed through the report of actions,... appearance, gestures, postures, costumes;... one character's comments on another;... direct speech by character;... inward speech,... or statements by narrator about the attitudes and intentions of personages, which may come either as flat assertion or motivated explanations.

Alter focuses on the notion of humanity in biblical literature¹⁴³ and proposes three groups of characters with equivalent methods used in depicting them "in ascending order of explicitness and certainty, for conveying information about motives, the attitudes, and the moral nature of characters" (Ibid. 116). At the *Lower Level Scale (The realm of inference)* (Ibid. 117) characters are depicted through actions or external appearances but since these actions or appearances do not give a clear intention of the character, the reader is left to infer a meaning. At the *Middle Level Scale* which is '*the weighing of claims ... and relative certainty*' (Ibid.), characters are depicted through 'direct speech (made) either by a character himself or by others about him' (Ibid.). Alter argues that there is certainty of the character's intentions, but with unclear motives which require the reader to weigh the claims (Ibid.). At the *Top Level Scale (certainty)*, characters are portrayed by the narrator. The narrator provides readers with the characters' feelings, intentions and desires in unambiguous and categorical proclamations

¹⁴² Bar-Efrat is not able to place Abigail and Uriah within his methods, yet there are traits they portray or methods that the narrator has used to characterise them (Bar-Efrat 1979:87).

¹⁴³ Alter writes: "Since art does not develop in a vacuum, literary techniques must be associated with the conception of human nature implicitly in biblical monotheism: ... created ... by God ... abandoned to his own freedom, made in God's likeness" (Alter 1981:115).

which provide certainty of any traits exhibited by the characters (Ibid.). Applying this to 1Samuel 18, Alter argues that the means to characterise David are at the *Lower* and *Medium Scales*, those used for Saul are at the *Top Level Scale* and those for Michal are at the *Middle Level Scale* (Ibid. 117–130).¹⁴⁴

Alter makes an important contribution to our understanding of the various ways which biblical narrators apply to depict characters. His study is extensive and has numerous examples in which he applies his three-fold division of depicting characters. A shortcoming to Alter's method is that he finds it difficult to account for the changing traits of characters within the narrative. This is because he sees characters in relation to their roles determined by the immediate context (Ibid. 126–127). Also, he does not present a systematic classification of characters.

3.2.3. A. Berlin (1983)

Berlin's main aim is to describe in a systematic way the literary devices that make up a narrative discourse. She bases her studies on previous work done in this field and expounds on devices that can help readers understand the text as it is. Thus, the text becomes the starting point for her. Within her study, Berlin discusses methods used by narrators to depict characters and their effects on the understanding of the biblical narrative. Berlin begins Chapter 2 by alluding to the primitive notion of character in literature and argues that this generalised notion does not fit with biblical narratives (Berlin 1983:23). She posits that the biblical narrative contains a variety of characters which require a variety of methods of characterisation (Ibid.). Building upon Forster's two-fold classification of *round* and *flat* characters, Berlin proposes a third (*functionary* - *agent*) and argues that the two-fold classification falls short because it does not clearly represent the enormous collection of characters found in Biblical narratives (Ibid.).¹⁴⁵ According to Berlin, three classes of characters exist: "*full-fledged character* (round), *type* (flat), and *agent* (functionary)" (Ibid.). She defines a *full-fledged* character as one with a complex personality (multi-complex traits and appear like "real people") (Ibid.) whose range of traits provide surplus information to the reader than required for the plot (Ibid. 32). She also defines the *type* as simple (possessing a single, limited or "stereotyped range of traits") (Ibid. 32) and the *agent* as a functionary character "about whom nothing is known except what is necessary for the plot" (Ibid.). Berlin then elucidates that characters can change within the various classes from one episode to another of the same narrative. Therefore, a *full-fledged character* can change to a *type* and/or an *agent* within the same narrative section. Applying her arguments to the women in David's story (1Samuel 18–20, 2Samuel 11 and 1Kings 1–2), Berlin concludes as follows: Michal and Bathsheba are *full-fledged characters* in 1Kings 1–2; but in 2Samuel 11–12 Bathsheba is an *agent*, just as Abishag is in 1Kings 1–2 and Abigail and her husband (Nabal) are *types* in 1Samuel 25 (Ibid. 13–33). Berlin moves on to explain the various methods through which characters are depicted within a narrative. In line with Alter and Bar-Efrat, she argues that character is a reconstruction from the information provided to the reader by either the narrator or the character concerned or by other characters within the narrative (Ibid. 34). She thus reckons with

¹⁴⁴ Alter argues that in the narrative of 1Samuel 18, readers know about David's battles and what others feel about him. However, nowhere does David show any feelings nor reveal his intentions and feelings (Alter 1981:119–120). This is contrary to Saul whose feelings towards David are given by the narrator as well as himself (1Sam 18:17ff).

¹⁴⁵ Quoting M.H. Abrams, she writes "Almost all dramas and narratives properly enough, have some characters that serve as mere functionaries and are not characterised at all" (M.H. Abrams, as in Berlin 1983: 23).

description, inner life, speech and actions, contrast and POV¹⁴⁶ as the methods of characterisation.

Berlin explains that *Description* could be physical (distinctive features e.g. hairy, strong, beautiful, lame or weak), status (king, servant, widow, messenger), profession (prophet or prostitute), or "gentilic (Hittite or Amalekite)," and provides much information about a character (Ibid. 34–37). She also argues that *Inner life* gives readers the ability to know a character's thoughts, emotions, feelings and perception (physical or mental) (Ibid. 37–38). On *speech and actions*, Berlin posits that speech may tell a reader what a character is about to do and actions without words can also play the same role with a combination needed at times for proper characterisation (Ibid. 39). Berlin subdivides *contrast* into three areas to express contrast between characters, with a character's earlier actions or with an expected norm (Ibid. 40–41). She adds that characters are also depicted through a narrator's description or from what other characters say. Since the reader cannot evaluate the veracity of the description, the reader can depict a character from the perspective of the narrator and the other characters. Berlin calls this "*point of view*." She draws from pioneers like Chatman and Uspensky and argues that this perspective from which a story is written influences the readers' ability to understand characters (Ibid. 43). Dwelling on Uspensky's "phraseological level" of POV, Berlin identifies linguistic features that indicate the POV being expressed (Ibid. 47). Berlin goes further to make a distinction between the narrator's POV and the character's POV and demonstrates that naming and synonyms, inner life, direct and indirect discourse, use of circumstantial clauses, and visual markers (such as הנה) depict a character's POV (Ibid. 60–73).¹⁴⁷

Berlin presents a systematic approach to the study of methods used to depict characters and classifies the characters into three types. She acknowledges earlier work done and then proceeds to offer further comments (Ibid. 23–42). An important contribution of Berlin is the shift from a two-fold to a three-fold classification of characters. The development of *agent* as a character class helps to clarify the ambiguous nature of some characters (Ibid.). While she agrees that characters can change from one scene to the next within the same narrative unit, she clearly elucidates that some characters who do not fit in the *round* and *flat* have functionary values (*agent*) (Ibid.). Regarding characterisation, Berlin reckons with both the direct and indirect methods

¹⁴⁶ Berlin devotes a single chapter to the study of point of view.

¹⁴⁷ The examples Berlin (1983) uses are the stories of Joseph and his brothers, Eli and the Ark, David and Bathsheba, Amnon and Tamar, and the Book of Ruth. Her study of the book of Ruth (using *naming* and הנה as markers of point of view) presents a very useful contribution to the understanding of the story. First Berlin argues that the naming of a character defines whose point of view is in perspective (Ibid. 60). She posits, for example, that it makes a difference whether Tamar is called by name, *brother's wife*, *the woman* or *prostitute* (Genesis 38) and concludes that each name defines the point of view of the one using it (Ibid.). Secondly, Berlin discusses inner life as defining the point of view of a character and argues that this inner life "lets the reader know how the character perceives the event of the story, how he is affected, and how he is likely to react" (Ibid. 61). Examples of expressing inner life are narrated summaries of what a character thinks, using verbs of perception, words and actions of a character, interior monologue and a selection of what to include or omit in a narrative (Ibid.). Thirdly, Berlin argues that הנה (Ibid. 62) and circumstantial clauses distinguish the perception of a character and that of the narrator. Fourthly, Berlin uses discourse and narration to determine the interaction between a character's and narrator's points of view (Ibid. 64). If a direct discourse reveals thoughts, plans, opinions, attitudes and feelings of a character, it is possible to understand how this interacts with the narrator's point of view (Ibid.). Berlin concludes the studies of point of view by arguing that repetition is used to combine points of view to make a narrative intelligible (Ibid. 73).

and considers *contrast* as a method of characterisation (Ibid.). Furthermore, her treatment of *point of view* offers the perspective from which a narrative is written, with linguistic markers to help readers understand the narrative and the characterisation of the characters. This stands out as one of the most important contributions of Berlin to this approach of biblical interpretation.¹⁴⁸ Berlin has extensively applied her arguments to various biblical narratives. However, she leaves room for further questioning. When Berlin classifies Michal and Bathsheba as *full-fledged* characters she does not only reckon with their multi-complex personalities, but also sees them as possessing masculine traits, creative, innovative, daring, aggressive, and involved in some physical actions (Ibid. 23–25). Thus, one will question whether these are determining factors for being *full-fledged* with respect to female characters. Also, Berlin does not tell readers how God fits into her three-fold classification. Applying Berlin's classification to some passages in Genesis, Amit raises the same question. She writes: "I cannot help wondering where in this classification the figure of God belongs, since God appears in most biblical narratives?" (Amit 2001:73). She thus argues that God is not a developing character but *flat*, which corresponds to Berlin's *type* (Ibid. 32).

3.2.4. M. Sternberg (1985)

In his book "*The Poetics of Biblical Narratives*," Sternberg seeks to study the scriptures from a historical "reconstruction that delimits what the writer could have meant against the background of the linguistic knowledge that, even in artful manipulation, he must have taken for granted" (Sternberg 1985:13–14). He seeks to focus on the text itself "as a pattern of meaning and effect" (Ibid. 15).¹⁴⁹ He devotes two chapters on the methods used to depict characters within biblical narratives (Ibid. 321–364) and reckons with a two-fold method (direct and indirect). For Sternberg, *direct characterisation* includes use of epithet, naming and narrator's comment. Sternberg argues that *epithet* is the best method of depicting characters because it "is the most explicit and authoritative model of portrayal, (which) might counterbalance all the restrictions put together" (Ibid. 325). He follows Trollope's "straightforward storytelling"¹⁵⁰ and models, to contrast between the introduction of *dramatis personae* in novels and in biblical narratives and argues that the first known impression of a biblical character is often different from the last because any early characterisation has no

¹⁴⁸ This has also been the opinion of Runge (2007:61–64) and Yamasaki (2007:118–126).

¹⁴⁹ Sternberg, however, acknowledges that this reader-oriented approach is not seen in isolation of other methods of reading, especially the historical critical approach. He maintains the primacy of the literary approach and argues that "the analysis of discourse presupposes, among other things, a reconstruction of various sources—the Bible's language system, cultural milieu, theology, dating, development within the canon, origins, and trans-missional fortunes," which provide parameters of reading based on context (Sternberg 1985:15–16). Elsewhere, he maintains the primacy of the literary approach by quoting from Moulton who says: "Historic and literary study are equal in importance; but for the priority in order of time the literary treatment has the first claim. The reason for this is that the starting point of historic analysis must be that very existing text, which is the sole concern of the morphological study. The historic inquirer will no doubt add to his examination of the text light drawn from other sources; he may be led in his investigation to alter or rearrange the text; but he will admit that the most important single element on which he has to work is the text as it has come down to us. But if the foundation principle of literary study be true, this existing text cannot be truly interpreted until it has been read in the light of its exact literary structure" (Moulton 1970:VIII–IX).

¹⁵⁰ Trollope's model "Introduces the *dramatis personae* as psychological, moral, social, and physical existents with...emphasis on features...to realize character for us in the strongest terms" (Sternberg 1985:326).

bearing on the reading of a character (Ibid. 325–326). He then moves on to use 1 Samuel 16–18 to demonstrate that epithet has five knit attributes as follows (Ibid. 326):

- Physical ('a man of good presence').
- Social ('a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite').
- Singular or concretizing ('skillful in playing or ... name').
- Moral and ideological ('the Lord is with him').
- Psychological in a wide sense ('able indeed, a man of war, wise counsel').

The second of Sternberg's direct method of character portrayal is *naming*. As Sternberg puts it, name identifies and "confers being (and) status" (Ibid. 330). He argues that a "nameless character is a faceless character" and thus correlates naming to a character's growth to prominence (Ibid.). The third is the narrator's comment which like the epithet, is an explicit way of depicting a character. Sternberg maintains that both the descriptions of a character by the narrator and another character (which may include complexion, statue, profession, position, clothes or other distinct physical features) remain under the control of the narrator. He also emphasises that this method provides less physical reality because biblical figures are neither portrayed by psychological nor by physical details (Ibid. 326–328). Sternberg moves on to the *indirect characterisation* which is embodied in *speech* and *action*, and explains that this method portrays traits beyond those specified by the epithets and gives access to the depth of personality (Ibid. 343). He uses the *law of metonymic inference* to demonstrate movement from surfaces to character portrayal and posits that indirect characterisation has a proleptic function from character to action and back to character (Ibid. 346).

Sternberg has an extensive treatment of character. He sees the use of epithet as an important method of characterisation with five interlocking features (Ibid. 326). He also argues that characterisation in this sense has both prolepsis (forward-looking) and analepsis (flashback) effects in a narrative (Ibid. 328–341). Another important method for Sternberg is naming which may indicate a character's rise in prominence (Ibid. 330). One thing lacking in Sternberg's work is a systematic presentation of methods of characterisation and classification of characters. At times his arguments are unclear and one can hardly find any difference between his methods. He devotes separate chapters to direct and indirect characterisations and begins direct characterisation by presenting three varieties.¹⁵¹ However, when he develops his arguments, it becomes difficult to understand which category he is referring to. The same goes for the classification of characters. When he talks of *round* and *flat* characters, he does not give a clear definition of each nor present their *modus operandi*. Again, Sternberg dwells only on two character types, but argues that the biblical character is complex and this presents a difficulty to recognise a *type* in the classification of characters (Ibid. 347).

3.2.5. D.M. Gunn and D.N. Fewell (1993)

Gunn and Fewell start by recognising the difficulties involved in the reading of stories which developed from a culture different from the western culture (Gunn and

¹⁵¹ He writes: "direct characterisation falls into three varieties. One affords an early and complete but stylized insight into a simple and simplified character. Another consists in a partial revelation of a complex and otherwise opaque character. The third is the depiction of externals, for which the transparent and the intricate are equally eligible" (Sternberg 1985:328).

Fewell 1993:46). They move on to build upon Alter's notion of depicting character as a starting point (Ibid. 51). They too distinguish the direct and indirect methods of characterisation. Within their study, they subdivide direct characterisation into *description by narrator* and *evaluation*; and indirect characterisation into *speech, context and contrast*; *response and reliability*; and *contradiction, point of view and irony* (Ibid. 46–75). When they define these methods, they argue that the narrator's *descriptions* can include appearance, profession or social standing and use of name (which reflects a character's profession – *Esau was a hunter*, or social status – *Ruth the Moabitess*) (Ibid. 57–58). They also explain that the description of physical appearance is rare in biblical literature (Ibid.). When the narrator depicts a character through *evaluation* Gunn and Fewell posit that it can take the form of an encouragement or judgement expressed directly by the narrator or indirectly by another character (Ibid. 59–60). For *indirect characterisation*, Gunn and Fewell elucidate that the speeches of characters, the situation that prompts the speeches and the circumstance in which they are made serve as an indirect means of depicting characters (Ibid. 64). When characters speak of themselves and others, they give information that can be used to depict them or those they speak about (Ibid.). Under *response and reliability*, Gunn and Fewell question the authenticity of such information since it conveys very little about the context, self-interests, POVs and prejudices of both the character who depicts and the one who is depicted.¹⁵² On the last method of indirect characterisation; *contradiction, point of view and irony*; Gunn and Fewell present two types of contradictions (when a character contradicts an earlier speech or when a character contradicts a narrator) (Ibid. 71–75).¹⁵³ If both narrator and character make contradictory statements of the same situation, Gunn and Fewell call a notice of different POVs or irony (Ibid. 71–72). After defining the various methods of characterisation, Gunn and Fewell continue with character classification. They agree with Forster's two-class division of *flat* and *round* characters as the two main types (Ibid. 71). They define *flat* character as having few and predictable personality traits or qualities, which may be conventional or superficial (as agent messenger), but vital within the narrative (Ibid. 75).¹⁵⁴ On the contrary a *round* character portrays multi-complex traits (which might seem contradictory) and possess the ability 'to grow, to develop, to change their minds, to surprise the reader as well as other characters in the story' (Ibid.). For them, the *flat* character covers an *agent* as in Berlin's work.

Unlike the other writers, Gunn and Fewell present a broader spectrum of characterisation. They account for the changes in dramatis personae within various

¹⁵² Gunn and Fewell (1993) give various examples which include: "Public and private speeches and speeches in threatening situations." They write with respect to David: "David's public speeches expressing concern for the welfare of the house of Saul are suspicious. While his past friendship with Jonathan might make him sentimental about his friend's family, David's ambition should warn the reader against taking his public rhetoric of concern simply at face value.... When he asks, 'Is there still anyone left in the house of Saul, that I may deal loyally (kindly) with him for Jonathan's sake?' (2Sam 9:1) we might wonder if he is truly interested in dealing loyally or if he wants to unearth any potential contenders to the throne" (Ibid. 69).

¹⁵³ See Genesis 38 as an example where Judah sends Tamar back to her father's house for fear that he too might die. Gunn and Fewell posit that the contradiction between the narrator's view of God being responsible for the death of Judah's sons and Judah sending Tamar to her father lest he too dies is indicative that Judah is "ready to blame the woman rather than see any fault in his sons" (Gunn and Fewell 1993:72).

¹⁵⁴ They take God as an example who is a *flat* character in many narratives, often defined by a single trait, but participating decisively in the narrative.

parts of a narrative and also question the reliability of depiction by *speeches* and *actions* from the characters (Ibid. 69). They also account for changes in personality traits within the same narrative section and acknowledge the classification of characters into *flat* and *round*. A shortcoming in their study of character classification is the decision to combine the functions of *agents* with *flat* characters. While they may be able to articulate when a *flat* character functions as an *agent*, studies have shown that not all *flat* characters are *agents* and vice versa (conf. Berlin 1983).

3.2.6. F. Moretti (1999–2013)

The “Network Theory” is based on the quantitative analysis of literary works which began in the 1850s, with some activity in the 1930s and 1980s (Hoover 2008:1). It involves the numerical analysis of literary texts via the use of mathematical measurements, classification and analysis to improve upon methodologies (Ibid.). The main method of quantification is *counting*—with the choice of what to count left at the discretion of the quantitative analyst (Ibid.). Therefore, when literary works are quantified, frequencies of letters, words, syntactic categories (noun, verb, infinitive, and conjunction), syntactic patterns, semantic patterns, clauses, phrases and sequences are possible elements to be considered (Ibid.). Building upon works on quantitative studies of literature, Moretti¹⁵⁵ developed a network theory for the analysis of plots. He writes (2012:2):

This is a theory that studies connections within large groups of objects: the objects can be just about anything—bank, neurons, film actors, research papers, friends...—and are usually called nodes or vertices; their connections are usually called edges; and the analysis of how vertices are linked by edges has revealed many unexpected features of large systems. The most famous one being the so-called “small-world” property, or “six degrees of separation”.

¹⁵⁵ For a detailed study of this theory conf. Moretti (1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2005, 2012 and 2013).

Moretti’s approach has been used in the analysis of characters in plays and novel. Also conf. Amelia and Marazzato (2014:71–79) and Amelia (2014:20–25).

When Elson (2012) applies this theory in ‘literary social networks,’ he argues that a proper analysis should consider the following:

- *Character identification*—which involves the various ways a narrator refers to a character (names, proper nouns, pronouns or a combination). He refers to this as “Named Entity Recognition” (NER—from Doddington et al., 2004). In Elson’s example he states that a Named Entity—e.g. *Ebenezer Scrooge*, can also be referred to as *Ebenezer*, *Mr Scrooge*, *Scrooge*, *Mr Ebenezer Scrooge*; or by use of pronouns (Elson 2012:16–20).
- *Quoted Speech Attribution*—which involves an appropriation of the syntactic and semantic understanding of direct and indirect speeches to attribute the correct speech to the correct character (Ibid. 20).
- *Conversational Networks Construction*—which brings out the conversation in the narrative to form networks between the characters involved and describe the literary social networks between characters (Ibid. 27–29).

Elson’s studies acknowledge the primacy of the linguistic approach to the network theory. However, there is a shortcoming in that this approach focuses on occurrence and does not consider the pragmatic functions as well as the literary artistry involved in a narrator’s application of various references for the same character.

This network theory measures the distances between characters to determine how the interactions between the characters define each character's sphere of influence. The network is made of vertices and edges. The edges represent the connections (the characters' interactions) between the characters and the vertices represent the characters (Ibid. 3). A connection is only possible if the characters involved express themselves through words (Ibid.).¹⁵⁶ Writing earlier on the network theory, James Stiller, Daniel Nettle and Robin I.M. Dunbar had the same argument for establishing a link between two characters in a network and said (2003:399):

The network structure calculations were obtained by treating each speaking character as a vertex, and deeming two characters to be linked if there was at least one time slice of the play in which both were present (that is, if two characters spoke to each other or were in each other's presence, then they have a link).

In the same light, Alberich, Miro-Julia and Rossello (2002) argue that "two characters are linked when they jointly appear in a significant way in the same comic book." When Moretti studies links between characters he differs with methods which consider connections based on the speaking parts of characters or appearances of characters and argues for a consideration of explicit connections—"an interaction (which) is a speech act" (Ibid.). Moretti also adds the importance of weight and direction to establish hierarchy in the character network. Thus, he argues (2011, n 4):

The reason weight and direction are particularly important in literary networks is that, whereas the systems studied by network theory have easily thousands or millions of vertices, whose relevance can be directly expressed in the number of connections, plots have usually no more than a few dozens characters; as a consequence, the mere existence of a connection is seldom sufficient to establish a hierarchy, and must be integrated with other measurements.

When characters are linked to each other, a mesh is formed which can be used to measure the distances between the characters. Moretti builds upon Alex Wolosch's (2003) concept of *characters-spaces* to develop a *character-system* which is then used to measure the distances between the characters (Ibid.). According to Wolosch, the character-system is achieved by redefining "literary characterisation in terms of (a) distributional matrix: how the apportioning of attention to any specific individuals is intertwined with the narrative's continual apportioning of space within the same fictive universe" (Wolosch 2003:13). The method of measuring the distances between characters is known as "operationalizing" (Moretti 2013) and Moretti explains that this concept goes beyond the frequency of words to the counting of all words between characters in a dialogue. This then defines the *character-space* (Moretti 2013:104–105), which is:

¹⁵⁶ If two characters are involved in a dialogue, a connection takes effect. However, if only one character speaks and does not receive a response, a connection is still effected.

the amount of narrative space allocated to a particular character ... the space of the character within the narrative structure ... the space that he or she occupies within the narrative totality ... the narrative's continual apportioning to different characters who jostle for limited space within the narrative totality (Wolosch 2003:13–14).

Moretti adopts “the number of words allocated to a particular character” and argues that counting the words spoken by each character helps the analyst to determine the amount of textual space that a character occupies (Moretti 2013:105). These numeric figures are then represented in a visual and graphical system and analysed.¹⁵⁷ Moretti has applied this method to a wide range of literature and drama by Shakespeare. His results have been used to determine the centrality of a character to a narrative, important relations, the amount of distance that separates characters and their importance to narrative. He ascribes the following importance for the network theory:

- “Network theory,...has taught us to measure the links a character has with the rest of the character-system...and the weight of those links – the number of words exchanged between any two characters – as well as their direction – who is speaking to whom” (Ibid. 106).¹⁵⁸
- Network theory provides a graphical visualization and presentation of the interactions between all characters in a narrative (see also Sparavigna and Marazzato 2014:679).
- Measurement provides a quantitative investigation into points of contact between characters and uses character-space to actualise this interaction in the real world (Ibid. 107–108).

The measurement of the distances between characters, the ability to determine centrality and main characters will be applied to the study of characters in Genesis 27–28.

3.2.7. *Evaluation of Literary Approaches*

The authors discussed above represent the *qualitative* (Bar-Efrat, Alter, Berlin, Sternberg, and Gunn and Fewell) and *quantitative* (Franco Moretti) streams of literary analysis. Those for qualitative analysis have presented various methods used by biblical narrators to depict characters. They all agree on the literary approach to biblical narratives based on the text in its final form and the need to understand the various methods used by narrators to depict characters.

Bar-Efrat (1979) faces difficulties in applying the direct and indirect methods of characterisation. He does not clearly describe why character traits change within the same narrative section, and does not classify the characters.

Alter (1981) presents a three-level method and recognises that his approach cannot be used to depict all characters. He also faces difficulties in describing the changes in character traits within the same narrative and does not offer a clear classification of characters.

¹⁵⁷ For an application of this method to literary works conf. Sparavigna (2013) and Sparavigna and Roberto (2014)

¹⁵⁸ Also conf. Kuhn (1961). “The function of measurement in modern physical science,” in Kuhn (1977:180, 183, 188 and 197–198).

Berlin (1983) presents both direct and indirect methods of depicting characters in which she accounts for changes in character traits within the same narrative. She builds upon Forster's two-fold character classification and argues for a third class (functionary character). She talks of *full-fledged*, *type* and *agent* as character types and elucidates how these classes cover all character categories in a narrative. In her methods of characterisation, Berlin adds POV.

Sternberg's (1985) emphasis is on epithet and naming. He points out the sparseness of the use of epithets, but argues for its proleptic (forward looking) and analeptic (flashback) effects within a narrative. He also argues that naming gives a face and gives a character the possibility of growth. He maintains Forster's *round* and *flat* character classes.

Writing a decade after Berlin, Gunn and Fewell follow Berlin's methods of characterisation. However, they maintain Forster's two-fold classification of *round* and *flat* characters and argue that the *flat* character covers Berlin's *type* and *agent*. They emphasise that God is a *type* character¹⁵⁹ but face a challenge to clearly make a difference between *type* and *agent* as separate character types.

Among the differences between the various authors (except Moretti), Berlin's approach seems to form a bridge. They all agree on direct and indirect characterisation methods and the overlap of these tools. While Bar-Efrat and Alter do not classify the characters, Berlin, Sternberg and Gunn and Fewell agree on the two classes developed by Forster – *round* and *flat*. The difference is that Berlin develops a third class to account for the change and growth of a character and the change of a character's traits within the same narrative unit. She argues that within the *flat* characters, there are some who are more *functionary* and names them *agent*. Thus, her *full-fledged* character is the same as *round* and her *type* is the same as *flat*.

One option of depicting characters which is conspicuously absent in all the studies is how a character is continuously portrayed within a narrative section. Runge had earlier noted this in the work of Berlin. However, he had a linguistic approach of default/marked identification of participants using Berlin's arguments rather than a literary approach to a narrative (Runge 2007:63–64). While there is need for activation, reactivation and continuous identification of participants, Runge does not explain how the literary analyst unconsciously applies linguistics to enlighten the reading and interpretation of narratives. Also, he does not outline the parameters used by the literary analyst to activate, reactivate and continue a character. Considering that Berlin's approach is not based on a linguistic study, highlighting her use of grammatical markers, in my opinion, can build a bridge between the linguists and the literary analyst. We know characters after their initial introduction and what they do from the way they are depicted. Following the way the narrator depicts the characters, we can classify them and also explain their contribution to the narrative. But how do we relate a trait to a character, and how do we know that it refers to the same character especially in a situation where no names are mentioned? An example may suffice:

For Isaac was *old*.....01
 And *his* eyes were *dim from seeing (blind)*.....02
 And *he* called *Esau his elder son*.....03

Clause 01 introduces Isaac by name and depicts him as *old*. In clause 02 Isaac is portrayed as *blind*. We know that clause 02 refers to Isaac from the pronoun *his* (3sgM). In clause 03, Isaac calls Esau. His name is not mentioned but the agreement

¹⁵⁹ Amit (2001:69–92) has also followed Berlin's methods closely.

in PNG continues to tell us that Isaac is the one talking. Clause 03 introduces Esau by name and portrays him as *Isaac's elder son*. He is anchored to Isaac as *son of him* (genitive). The use of pronouns helps readers to relate Isaac to his portraits of old age and blindness; and Esau as Isaac's son. Also, the adjective *elder* helps the reader to relate Esau to his portrait as an *elder son*.¹⁶⁰ This example might not be intelligible without the use of pronouns and no literary sense would be drawn. Using names, it may read thus:

For Isaac was old.....01
 And Isaac's eyes were *dim from seeing (blind)*.....02
 And Isaac called *Esau Isaac's elder son*.....03

There is monotony in the use of the name *Isaac*, thus rendering understanding difficult. To make better sense out of it, pronouns of several types are used in place of some of the nouns. The question remains why literary analysts do not see pronouns or zero anaphora as a method of depicting a character after initial characterisation.¹⁶¹ In addition, Berlin and Sternberg have recognised naming and the use of epithets as important means of character portrayal. When Sternberg studies naming and the use of epithets, he dwells on their importance in giving essence to a character and in providing analeptic (flashback) or proleptic (forward looking) effects within the narrative unit. Berlin on her part studies names to define the POV from which a narrative is written. Nevertheless, both Berlin and Sternberg have not indicated the effect of naming or use of epithet on the structure of a narrative unit.

Furthermore, several ways are used to introduce characters into a narrative. One of those identified by Revell (1996) and Runge (2007) is a two-step introduction which gives information about a character before identifying the character by name. In the book of Ruth, Ruth is first characterised as a *Moabite wife* before her name is mentioned (Ruth 1:4). Later she is characterised as a *daughter-in-law* (Ruth 1:6). The narrative then continues to portray her as *Ruth the Moabitess, the Moabitess or daughter-in-law*. Berlin (1983:87–89) has identified a progression in Ruth's portrayal which defines the POV of the speaker. One question of concern is how a reader can differentiate these appellations when only one is applied. What I mean can be put thus: Once a character is depicted and named, the narrator's use of *name* or *character trait* becomes a literary device applied by the narrator towards the same character.¹⁶² I will illustrate this by using the same example as above.

¹⁶⁰ The nouns or pronouns are independent or expressed in the genitive. In Hebrew narratives, the pronouns could be clitic-affixes or inflections. In the first example which applies pronouns, the noun *Isaac* is inflected by zero anaphora in the verb "to call."

¹⁶¹ Linguists have already argued that pronouns account for the most common way of identifying *dramatis personae* within a narrative. It is unlikely that literary critics can use just the direct and indirect methods to portray characters. While this is useful, there is need to clarify how a character's portrayal is sustained and how a reader can be sure that it is the same character acting, especially where names or other nouns are absent and only pronouns are used. Sternberg has acknowledged the interdependence of biblical interpretation and argues that a literary analyst must consult a linguist or become a linguist to be able to understand the words and syntax of utterances within a text or narrative unit (Sternberg 1985:11).

¹⁶² As the only *Moabitess* in the book of Ruth who follows Naomi, any depiction clearly reflects Ruth's other traits. When she is called Ruth, *her Moabitess origin and daughter-in-law affiliation* all come to play. This might explain why Boaz's servant does not bother to call her by name but "*the Moabitess who came back from Moab with Naomi*" (Ruth 2:6).

For Isaac was <u>old</u>	01
And <u>his</u> eyes were <u>dim from seeing (blind)</u>	02
And <u>he</u> called <u>Esau his elder son</u>	03

Isaac's old age and blindness are his unique characteristics. The narrator presents these traits at the beginning of this narrative (sub)unit and can continue to use these traits instead of Isaac's proper name. In as much as calling Isaac an old blind man can depict the POV of the speaker, the use of *Isaac* combines with the use of these traits are literary devices which help the reader's understanding of the narrative. Thus, when the narrator uses *Isaac*, the reader is bound to recall his old age and blindness. Another example from this narrative (sub)unit is the narrator's use of *Isaac* and *Isaac his father*. I will construe that *Isaac* portrays a weak and egocentric person and *Isaac his father* presents a dual nature of Isaac as follows: (a) *Isaac* is an embodiment of the egocentric and appetite driven old blind man; and (b) *His father* is a flashback to Abraham as the custodian of the patriarchal blessing. Used in this way, the proper name *Isaac* functions as a method of portrayal (literary device) and a method of identification (linguistic device - participant reference). In the same light, *Ruth*, *Ruth the Moabitess*, *Moabitess and daughter-in-law* serve both linguistic and literary purposes beyond the POV limit. Thus, when a character is portrayed by a particular trait, the narrator's further use of either the character's name or the character's unique traits refer to the character in the reader's mind— *Ruth* = *Ruth the Moabitess* = *Moabitess* = *daughter-in-law*; *Isaac* = *old blind man* = *appetite driven man* and *Esau* = *elder son* = *hairy man* = *hunter*.¹⁶³

Another dimension that literary analysts have often neglected but which is always a starting point to any literary study is the way character portrayal affects the structure of a narrative. A general observation indicates that literary analysts hardly agree on the structure of the same narrative (sub)unit. This is influenced by the way the analysts view the characters and how they are portrayed. The development of the concentric (ABCB'A') and symmetric (ABCC'B'A') reading of narratives by Fokkelman has helped to expose this weakness. While literary scholars agree on this stylistic approach, they are yet to agree on how the structures which reflect each other in a reverse pattern are to be determined, and how the centre of a narrative (sub)unit is identified. In the study of Genesis 38, for example, it will make a difference whether the literary analyst considers it as part of the *Toledoth* of Jacob with a focus on the threat to the patriarchal promise or whether the focus is on Judah's harlotry with Tamar (conf. Fokkelman 1996).

One of Sternberg's contribution is his argument for the precedence of linguistics in literary analysis which is an indication of the linguistic dimensions of literary

¹⁶³ Sternberg has argued with respect to biblical characterisation that "the presence or absence of an early character-sketch does not make a crucial difference to the reading of a character ...," because of the often striking differences between the first and last notions created by the character (Sternberg 1985:325). Berlin on her part sees a progression of character from the first introduction to the character's final portrayal (Berlin 1983:87–88). When Ruth is introduced, she is called a Moabite wife. This progresses through other portrayals of Ruth, Ruth the Moabitess, daughter-in-law, foreigner, maid-servant, and daughter and finally she becomes the wife of Boaz (Ibid.). Thus, Berlin writes: "by the end of the story, Ruth has gone from Moabite/foreign/'girl' to 'the wife who enters your house' (Ruth 4:11). The term used by the people of the town overcomes the terms of the narrator, Ruth, and Boaz as Ruth becomes Boaz's wife" (Ibid. 88). Thus, Sternberg does not advocate for a progression of characterisation from initial to final portrayal of characters in biblical narratives which, in my opinion, has an impact on the reading process not only as traits but as literary devices applied by the narrator to help the reader's understanding of the narrative.

devices. When Walsh (2001) studies literary structural markers, he also argues for the primacy of linguistics. At the end of his studies, he presents structural markers which agree to a greater extent with those proposed by the linguistic approach in Chapter 2. The main question is how character portrayal can enable literary analysts to determine the same concentric structure for Genesis 27–28 and how the linguistic approach of the ETCBC can enable a better understanding of the concentric and symmetric structures of narratives. Based on Walsh's studies, I will investigate how character portrayal in Genesis 27–28 affects the structure of this narrative (sub)unit (conf. §3.2.8).

Franco Moretti represents the stylistic literary approach to texts based on a quantitative analysis of the characters and their relations. In the study of Genesis 27–28, I will apply Moretti's approach to determine how this can help in the understanding of this narrative. The aim will be to determine how the characters' sphere of influence helps in the transfer of the blessing. I will apply the tools of network theory and measure the distances and relationships between the characters. Next, I will use the process of elimination to determine the effects it has on the character matrix and at each stage I will determine the one around whom the structure revolves (central character). The first part will apply the tools based on Moretti's arguments and the second part will take into consideration other measuring indices applied in the Gephi 0.8.2 visualization software. For a proper understanding, I will first start with the explicit relations based on the dialogues and later analyse the data and present it graphically. From the data and graphs, I will determine how this network theory has helped in the understanding of Genesis 27–28. In the following section, I will concentrate on the effects of characterisation on literary structures.

3.3. CHARACTERISATION AND LITERARY STRUCTURE

There is hardly a consensus on the literary division of any narrative text. This is because each scholar reads a text from a distinct perspective (with a focus on how characters are portrayed) which is reflected in the way the narrative is segmented. Also, scholars are not agreed on the definition of segments like paragraphs, sentences, clauses, scenes or episodes, and the devices that mark their beginning and end. The different literary structures¹⁶⁴ for narrative text largely depend on the source theory of the historical-critical approach which assigns different layers to the narratives. In Genesis 27–28 for example, the following sources are assigned: Gen 27:1–45 (J), Gen 27:46–28:9 (P) and Gen 28:10–22 (E/P).¹⁶⁵ In addition, there is also the highly admired structural approach in the literary analysis of narratives which is based on the repetition of structures in a symmetrical manner. Generally, advocates of this method argue that biblical narrative structures present various forms of symmetry with the most common being the concentric model of ABCB'A'.¹⁶⁶ The concentric model applies segmenting devices (both text based and stylistic) which cut across the layers and chapter divisions to provide a stylistic study of narratives as single units. An important contribution of this approach is that it attempts to reflect the way characters are portrayed in the narrative, albeit the structural markers vary for each scholar. However, attempts to harmonise the structural markers of narratives have been continuous. A common argument to literary approaches is the importance and priority of linguistics to the literary analysis of biblical texts (Sternberg 1985, Dorsey 1999 and

¹⁶⁴ Examples include: Wenham (1994), Teugels (1994), Fokkelman (1975), de Regt (1999), Dorsey (1999), Walsh (2001) and Fishbane (1975).

¹⁶⁵ Speiser (1979:142–145).

¹⁶⁶ Fokkelman (1975), Fishbane (1975), Dorsey (1999) and Walsh (2001).

Walsh 2001). Two literary approaches produce two different structural effects on a narrative with an emphasis on linguistics as a common basis. This underscores the importance of the linguistic approach whose advocates argue that the text provides segmenting devices which can be used to determine its structure¹⁶⁷ Based on the linguistic approach, the ETCBC has identified and applied text based segmenting devices to develop a linguistic text hierarchical structure to biblical narratives (conf. Chapter 2 and Talstra 1996).

Genesis 27–28 presents one of those narrative sections that exhibit authors' structural difference. In §3.5, I will investigate how the linguistic approach can inform our understanding of narrative structures and how the complex interaction of the linguistic approach and its text hierarchy can inform our understanding of concentric or symmetric literary structure of Genesis 27–28. The basis of this study is the text hierarchical structure of the ETCBC database and the focus will be on how the segmenting devices of the ABCB'A' and those of ETCBC can interact to provide a unified structure for Genesis 27–28.¹⁶⁸ To achieve this, I will proceed to study the text based structural markers that literary analysts have identified as a basis to this investigation.

3.3.1. *Text Based Structural Markers of Literary Narratives*

Two works are important to the study of text based structural marker to literary narrative. These are Dorsey's (1999) "*The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*," and Walsh's (2001) "*Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narratives*." However, I will rely mostly on Walsh for the following two reasons: (a) he offers a comprehensive study of various structural devices and various forms of symmetry and applies these devices to a wide variety of biblical passages and (b) he has identified and classified these structural markers with a clear demarcation between stylistic markers, on the one hand, and text based markers, on the other. In his study of literary structures, Dorsey (1999) gives two reasons why literary structures for biblical texts are often difficult to understand: the absence of visual graphics and the estranged techniques applied by the authors (Ibid. 15–17). He argues that attention be given to verbal structures and the author's techniques—symmetry, parallelism and repetition as linguists already did (Ibid.). He also goes on to trace the art of segmenting biblical texts and identifies various techniques that can be used to spot structural markers in Hebrew narratives (Ibid. 17–44). He establishes a list of markers of literary units or (sub)units in a narrative (Ibid. 21–23) and implores literary analysts to pay attention to these (Ibid. 16). Underlying Dorsey's arguments is the primacy and importance of the linguistic approach to a successful literary analysis. But when he identifies the markers, there seems to be some ambiguity. First, he talks of beginning markers and end markers (Ibid.) implying that there are different indicators which mark where a (sub)unit begins and ends. Secondly, he talks about segmentation based on length of (sub)units with an emphasis on a seven-part concentric structure (Ibid. 25). When he applies these

¹⁶⁷ Interestingly, Jonathan Terino has argued for a linguistic reading of the "Jacob Narrative" and in his study, he has applied the symmetrical concentric and chiasmic structural patterns of ABCDC'B'A' to selected sections. Although he claims semantic and lexical relations, there is evidence that he relies more on literary structures with a historical critical basis than linguistics. His application of episodes, scene, stage and other literary devices blur his argument for a linguistic approach. Even when he comes out with a structure, the semantic and lexical relations acclaimed are often derived from literary stylistic studies (Terino 1988:45–62).

¹⁶⁸ Generally literary scholars see Genesis 27–28 as part of a larger narrative and often call it the Jacob cycle or the stories of Jacob which cover Genesis 25–36. Among these scholars are Gammie (1979:117–134), Fokkema (1975), Jonathan Terino (1988), Fishbane (1975), Wenham (1994) and Walsh (2001).

to literary texts, there is evidence that more stylistic markers are in view than text based markers.

On his part, Walsh (2001) studies literary structures and argues that literary narratives exhibit various kinds of structures which can either be symmetrical or asymmetrical. He moves on to identify the following: reverse symmetry, forward symmetry, alternating repetition, partial symmetry, multiple symmetry and asymmetry¹⁶⁹ Of importance to this study is reverse symmetry and asymmetry.

Dealing with reverse symmetry, Walsh highlights two types, *concentric* (Ibid. 15–26) and *chiastic* (Ibid. 26–34), which describe the symmetrical patterns with elements appearing in reverse order about a single central structure (concentric – ABCB'A') on the one hand, or a doubled centered structure (chiastic – ABCC'B'A') on the other (Ibid. 13).¹⁷⁰ He also argues that asymmetry can occur within a symmetrical narrative pattern as a forceful stylistic device (Ibid. 101).¹⁷¹ Based on the primary tool of repetition,¹⁷² Walsh posits that the repeated elements can range from phonemes to larger narrative sections such as “words or forms that are aurally or orthographically similar, including paronomasias, conceptually significant words and less common words as conjunctions and prepositions” (Ibid. 9). He concludes by arguing that the effect of the “thematic or conceptual repetition becomes more decisive” on the larger narrative level with “themes as the principal organizing device,” influenced by lengths of (sub)units as a strength to such repetition and interpretation (Ibid. 10–11). Following on from his arguments, Walsh presents the following unit and (sub)unit markers for literary narratives:

- *Character (main) change*: Three changes in character occur and mark (sub)unit boundaries at various levels of a narrative (Ibid. 120–121, 124–131 and 140–143).
 - Departure of character and introduction of another – *scenic marker*.
 - Change in narrative voice (e.g. narrator, character A, character B), noticed when one character stops speaking and another resume, or when a character's speech is resumed by a narrative section – *internal or (sub)unit marker*.
 - Shift in focus between characters – *internal or (sub)unit marker*.
- *Change in setting*: Two changes (*place* and *time*) by character which serves to mark either scenic or (sub)unit boundaries (Ibid. 122, 135–140 and 161–166).
 - *Place*: “explicit notice of movement (i.e. departure or arrival for one or more characters), or shifts without any such explicit signals” (Ibid. 122). This marks scenic boundaries in two ways:
 - Change of geographical location – *scenic or (sub)unit marker*.

¹⁶⁹ These are treated in the first six chapters of Walsh (2001:7–118).

¹⁷⁰ In this study I will use *concentric* for a structure with a single centre and *symmetric* for a double centre.

¹⁷¹ Walsh makes a difference between the absence of symmetry and asymmetry and argues that “both a symmetrically patterned context and (an) anomaly of a deviation must be evident for an asymmetry to have an impact on a reader” (e.g. AB+CDD'C'B'A' or ABCDD'C'B'+A' – where the + indicates an anomaly) (Walsh 2001:101).

¹⁷² For a detailed study on repetition, see Alter (1981), Bar-Efrat (1989), Berlin (1983), Sternberg (1985) and Licht (1978).

- Segmenting device where no change of geographical location is involved – *scenic or (sub)unit marker*
 - *Time*: Indicated using the verb “*to be-wayyeh*” plus a verbless clause at the beginning of an action to provide background information (Ibid. 122 and 159) – *scenic marker or (sub)unit marker*.
- *Narrative verb*:¹⁷³ Two narrative verbs are attested to function as (sub)unit markers. A change from one to the other marks a unit or (sub)unit (Ibid. 122 and 155–159).
 - *Wayyiqtol* as an action verb (main narrative verb).
 - *Qatal* as an alternative action and narrative verb.
- *Conjunctions*: Stylistic and linguistic elements that join (sub)units into larger units, or connect chapters and books (Ibid. 175–190). Two types are identified:
 - Thread: connective structure that integrates a complete literary unit.
 - Link: connective structure that integrates only part of a literary unit.

The first three (sub)unit markers are text based while the last is more of a stylistic nature. The text based markers agree with those proposed by the ETCBC database for the linguistic segmentation of biblical texts. Although both Walsh (2001) and Dorsey (1999) argue for the precedence of linguistic markers, Walsh’s presentation of the markers is free of ambiguity when compared to Dorsey’s (1999:17–44). In the study of the structure of Genesis 27–28 I will apply Walsh’s text based (sub)unit markers.

In the preceding sections, I have discussed characterisation and narrative theory, network theory, and characterisation and literary structures, to lay ground work for their application the Genesis 27–28. To achieve this goal, there is need to define some methodological considerations. This constitutes the content of the next section.

3.4. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Two major methodological considerations will be used. The first is the application of the methods of characterisation discussed (qualitative analysis) above and the second will be based on literary quantitative analysis of Moretti’s network theory.

The qualitative literary analysts (§§3.2–3.3) place emphasis on methods of characterisation. To understand a narrative, the reader applies more than one or a combination of methods of characterisations. As seen above, Berlin’s method resonates as the most viable, although it does not cover all aspects of character and characterisation. To meet the aim of this section, I will build upon Berlin’s studies while at the same time complementing them with other methods described by the other authors. For example, Sternberg dwells on epithet and naming and their analeptic and proleptic effects on a narrative while Berlin discusses naming and POV. Berlin further extends the classes of characters to *full-fledged*, *type* and *agent*. Applying the methods discussed, I will decipher the way characters are portrayed and sustained in Genesis 27–28. Naming is an important method to determine a character’s POV as well as the other methods of character portrayal. I will build upon Berlin’s *point of view* to determine how the appellation of a character by another or by the narrator affects the reader’s perception and understanding. An example with respect to Genesis 27–28 can be presented in the following question: Does it make a difference if Isaac addresses Jacob only as *Esau’s brother* and not as *his son*?

¹⁷³ Walsh (2001) studies this as part of change in setting. I have chosen to separate it because of its importance to narratives.

I will begin by studying the various methods used to portray the characters in this narrative section. This will guide me in the classification of the characters. I will move on to apply Berlin's *point of view* with an incorporation of Sternberg's epithet (forward looking and flashback). Next will be a discussion on the effects of names and epithet on the structure and understanding of the narrative. At each stage of the narrative, it will be important to determine whether there are certain patterns that the narrator applies, and whether reasons can be advanced for such patterns. I have already pointed out that literary analysts use linguistic markers but do not view them as such, e.g., pronouns, epithets or verbal inflections. Without these, the narrative might not be intelligible. Just as with the linguistic approach, I argue that when a character is first introduced or activated, continuation can be by pronoun. Where it is done by name or epithet, it has a literary bearing on the narrative. Another important literary consideration for the study of this narrative section is the prior knowledge of some of the characters from previous narrative sections.¹⁷⁴ Characterisation in Genesis 27–28 will seem invalid until one understands the development of these characters from previous narrative sections. Three reasons account for this: (a) these characters have been fully developed from previous narrative sections; (b) the development and understanding of these characters form a formidable foundation in the reader's understanding of their portrayal in Genesis 27–28; and (c) Genesis 27–28 seems to continue with the same theme – blessing; which has also been part of the previous narrative sections, thus there is continuity with the previous section. The knowledge that the reader brings from previous narrative sections informs the way characters are perceived. In cooperation with other texts where the same characters are found, the reader then understands how they are characterised in Genesis 27–28. I will study these texts as co-texts¹⁷⁵ to the understanding of Genesis 27–28. My approach is to read Genesis 27–28 as the *Toledoth* of Isaac. Also, the understanding of character portrayal and its effect on the structure of Genesis 27–28 is very important. I have already mentioned the discrepancy in structures and the attempt to determine acceptable structural markers for both linguists and literary analysts. To understand the effect of character portrayal on the structure of Genesis 27–28, I will study the concentric (ABCB'A') and symmetric (ABCC'B'A') structures created by some scholars¹⁷⁶ for this narrative (sub)unit in both its immediate and wider narrative context. I will move on to analyse the various structures based on the text based (sub)unit markers proposed by Walsh (2001) and will use the text hierarchy generated from the ETCBC database to inform the understanding and reading of the concentric (ABCB'A') or symmetric (ABCC'B'A') structure of Genesis 27–28. The importance of the ETCBC text hierarchical structure will be to indicate the level of each (sub)unit marker in the narrative substratum. I will

¹⁷⁴ In the same light, when I approach the text from a linguistic perspective, I consider the *Toledoth* formulae as major divisions of the narrative and as formal introductions of the patriarchs. I view participants within Isaac's *Toledoth* active because they are all fully developed. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that this approach places this in the mind of the reader before the reader can get to Genesis 27–28. The reader then brings this knowledge into the understanding of characters in Genesis 27–28.

¹⁷⁵ I have borrowed this term from Teugels (1994:89-104). By co-text, I am trying to define those passages that contain information that will inform the reader of ways in which the characters in Genesis 27–28 have been viewed and characterised in passages before Genesis 27–28. These passages may include portions of Genesis 21, 22, 24, 25 and 26 and lay grounds for expectations about the characters that the reader brings to Genesis 27–28. The information that the reader gets from these texts defines the reader's perception and understanding of the characterisation of the characters in Genesis 27–28.

¹⁷⁶ These include: Fokkelman (1975), Fishbane (1975), Gammie (1979), Rensburg (1986), Wenham (1994), Hamilton (1995), Dorsey (1999), Walsh (2001) and Waltke (2007).

also apply the same approach to Genesis 37 and 38 to test the efficacy of my approach. From the above arguments I will determine where the linguistic and literary approaches can converge for a better understanding and the interpretation of texts.

The second methodological consideration will be the network theory of Franco Moretti. I have already mentioned the importance of this theory to determine a character's sphere of influence. I will apply it to study the network between characters and measure the distances between them. Next, I will present the data in graphical form. This will guide in the analysis of the interactions between the characters and how the characters' spheres of influence can inform our understanding of Genesis 27–28. The focus will be to determine the central character which, according to Moretti, minimises the distances between all characters in the network. Since the characters in Genesis 27–28 interact with each other in diverse ways, I will move further from Moretti to consider three types of character networks (complete networks, incomplete networks and dialogue networks), and will argue that anyone considered the central character should be able to maintain its positions in the various networks. Also, I will make a difference between the central character and main, and will argue that the main character is the character with the highest number of words and should maintain its position in all the networks. Furthermore, I will engage in a process of elimination of characters, in all the networks, to determine its effect on the central and main characters. Based on the same arguments, the central and main characters should maintain their positions in every network except where they are eliminated. Another point of difference with Moretti will be my consideration of monologues as responses to prompts from other characters. When all the distances are measured, the central character will be the one with the highest occurrences as central character, and the main character will be the one with the highest occurrences as main character.

The questions to be investigated by this theory includes how the interactions between characters, the sphere of influence of characters and the networks they form (with respect to position, power, authority and centrality) affect the understanding of this narrative sub(unit) and its implications on the possession and sustenance of the Abrahamic promise.

With the above methodological considerations, I will study the way characters in Genesis 27–28 are characterised with the aid of knowledge from previous narrative sections.

3.5. CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISATION IN GENESIS

As mentioned in §3.4, all the characters in Genesis 27–28 have appeared in prior narratives. An understanding of how they have been depicted helps the reader to use this knowledge to understand the characterisation of these characters in Genesis 27–28. What I intend to do in this section is to use the knowledge of characters in Genesis 21–26 to help in the proper understanding of the methods of characterisation of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob. I will begin with Genesis 21–26 and then move on with the characterisation of these same characters in Genesis 27–28.

3.5.1. *Characterisation of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob in Genesis 21–26*

The distribution of these characters in Genesis 21–26 is as follows: Isaac (Gen 21:1–8, 22:1–19, 24:1–66, 25:19–34 and 26:1–35); Rebekah (Gen 22:20–24, 24:15–66, 25:19–34 and 26:1–35); Esau (Gen 25:19–34 and 26:34–35); and Jacob (Gen 25:19–34).

1. *Isaac* (Gen 21:1–8, 22:1–19, 24:1–66, 25:19–34 and 26:1–35)

Isaac comes into the Genesis narrative with the announcement of his birth to Sarah and Abraham via divine intervention (Gen 21:1–8). In Gen 22:1–19, Isaac faces death as God asks Abraham to sacrifice his only son. Isaac only speaks out once when he questions his father on the sacrificial lamb, to which his father responds by imploring God's providence. In Gen 24:1–66, Abraham sends his servant to go and get a wife for Isaac from his kinsmen and after getting married to Rebekah, Isaac appears in Gen 25:19–34 imploring God to intervene in the barrenness of Rebekah. Twins (Jacob and Esau) are born to Isaac and he loves one (Esau) because he eats from his hunt. Just as was the case with Abraham, Isaac finds himself with Abimelech and reports that Rebekah is his sister for fear he might be killed since Rebekah is very beautiful (Gen 26:1–35). In all his appearances, Isaac remains passive and almost inactive. After he is named – Isaac (Gen 21:3) his continuous portrayal by the narrator is either *Isaac* or *your son*. When Abraham sends his servants to go and get a wife for Isaac, he uses Isaac's name (Gen 24:4). The narrator uses the same method (Gen 24:66 and throughout Gen 26:1–35) and the servant also portrays Isaac as *my master* (Gen 24:62). Apart from these, Isaac is continuously being portrayed as *my son* or *your son*, *son of my/ your master*. Isaac is also characterised as rich (Gen 24:36). He speaks only three times; when he questions the whereabouts of the sacrificial animal (Gen 22:7), when he calls Rebekah *his sister* (Gen 26:6) and when he responds to Abimelech (Gen 26:9). However, the narrator shows that in Genesis 26, Isaac has command and control over his servants and makes decisions to name wells in the same way Abraham did. With the absence of any form of decisive talking or dialogue where Isaac could express himself, the reader knows only the way the narrator has portrayed Isaac.

2. *Rebekah* (Gen 22:20–24, 24:15–66, 25:19–34 and 26:1–35)

Rebekah's introduction comes in Gen 22:23 as a descendant of Nahor and daughter of Bethu'el. In Genesis 24 Rebekah is presented as Isaac's wife. In this narrative, she is seen as active and involved in issues that concern her. Rebekah comes into Gen 24:15 as one already of marriageable age (Jeansonne 1989:33) and as a divine response to Abraham's chief servant's prayer for a wife for Isaac. The narrator depicts her by name, and gives an extended description which only serves to present her lineage.¹⁷⁷ The narrator further characterises Rebekah as beautiful¹⁷⁸ and a virgin. Besides the narrator's description, Rebekah's words and actions provide a method of characterisation. When she provides water to the people and their animals, she shows empathy, kindness and generosity (Gen 24:18). She might also be seen as independent and decisive (Gen 24:19, 28 and 58).¹⁷⁹ She is active and speaks for herself, thus

¹⁷⁷ Rebekah is already portrayed in the genealogy of Nahor in Gen 22:20. The method of portrayal here serves as a flashback to remind the reader that the character is the same person in Gen 22:20 and thus of the descent of Abraham. Rebekah confirms this in Gen 22:24 and the narrator later applies the same method in Gen 25:20. Some traditional Jewish commentators like Ibn Ezra also argue in favour of this. Conf. Ibn Ezra's *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, Gen 22:23.

¹⁷⁸ This portrayal also appears in Gen 26:7.

¹⁷⁹ Rebekah decides to draw water for the animals on her own accord and she also does the same to inform her mother's household about her suitors.

participating in everything that concerns her future (24:58, 64–65).¹⁸⁰ The whole narrative portrays Rebekah as the perfect wife for Isaac who has been chosen by God.¹⁸¹ Rebekah features again in Gen 25:20 as Isaac's barren wife and only conceives after Isaac prays to God. She decides to consult an oracle because of the conflict of the children in her womb. When the children are born, Rebekah is said to love Jacob. Later in Genesis 26, Rebekah is portrayed as beautiful, wife, sister and name (by narrator); sister (by Isaac) and name, wife and sister (by Abimelech). From Rebekah's portraits in the narratives before Genesis 27–28, she has been shown to be very active, kind-hearted, hospitable and decisive.¹⁸² Contrary to Isaac, the reader is able to know both what the narrator says and what Rebekah says about herself. Also, the reader infers from Rebekah's actions to determine what she is able to do.

3. *Esau* (Gen 25:19–34 and 26:34–35)

Esau features first in his birth with Jacob and as a response to Isaac's prayer. When they are born, Esau opens his mother's womb. The narrator portrays him as hairy, a skilful hunter and man of the field; as Isaac's favourite son and as one who has despised his birthright. When he sells his birthright for red soup, the narrator portrays him as Edom. When Esau speaks and acts, he shows himself as hungry and as one who does not see the importance of his birthright. In Gen 26:34–35, the narrator informs us of the contention between Esau's Hittite wives and Esau's parents. From Esau's actions, the reader might see him as careless, one who thinks only in terms of the present, of no foresight or one who loves food.¹⁸³

4. *Jacob* (Gen 25:19–34)

Jacob comes into the Genesis narrative as Esau's twin brother. When they are born, Jacob arrives after Esau and the narrator portrays him as Esau's brother (*his brother*), quiet, dwelling in the tents, and as Rebekah's favourite. When Jacob speaks for himself, he asks for Esau's birthright in return for red soup. From Jacob's actions, the reader might depict him as someone who has foresight and acts with the future in mind or probably as an opportunist.¹⁸⁴

The portrayal of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob in Genesis 21–26 provides fore knowledge important to the understanding of their portrayal in Genesis 27–28. With this fore knowledge, I will study the portrayal of these characters in Genesis 27–28.

¹⁸⁰ Rebekah decides to follow Abraham's servants after her mother and brother have given consent, although they might have wished her to stay longer. By deciding to follow her suitors, she takes active part in building her future. When she returns to her future husband, she does not wait to let anyone instruct her on what to do. She jumps down from the camel when she sees Isaac from afar and approaches him. Thus, participating in shaping the kind of life she wants to live with her new husband—participatory or consultative.

¹⁸¹ Evidence to this is the servant's prayer, Rebekah's actions and subsequently the response of her family in Gen 24:12–58.

¹⁸² Davidson adds that Rebekah is "a compelling person of her own right," which suggests her prominence in the history of Israel (Davidson 2002:173). Also conf. Jeansonne (1990:53ff).

¹⁸³ He sells his birthright for the present and does not reflect on what this means for the future. He also marries Hittites probably against his parents' wish and his wives make life unbearable for his parents.

¹⁸⁴ It is plausible to argue that Jacob is well informed on the importance of the birthrights or that he just uses Esau's hunger to trick him. The narrative leaves the decision to the reader.

3.5.2. Characterisation of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob in Genesis 27–28

The content of Genesis 27–28 talks about Isaac's family. Isaac is said to be blind and then decides to bless Esau his elder son before his death. As he instructs Esau to get game and prepare food for him, Rebekah overhears and later convinces Jacob to comply with her own plans. She disguises Jacob as Esau and he poses before his father and is blessed. When Esau finds out, he plans to kill Jacob after his father's death. Rebekah sets up another plan which causes Isaac to bless Jacob and send him away. While on his way, Jacob has a vision in which God promises to bless him and protect him from any harm.

The characters in this narrative are characterised by a combination of both direct and indirect methods. While the narrator depicts characters, they characterise themselves through dialogues or monologues. This appears at times as descriptions, exposure of inner feelings or actions; or comparison and contrast. An important observation is that these characters are tightly knit together with each one's actions betraying or strengthening one another's actions. Thus, characterising them has posed a difficulty because of the multi-complex personality traits presented by each character.

Although various methods are used to depict the characters, their actions are sustained by nouns, pronouns or verbal inflections. There should be a reason why the narrator names a character in one section and uses a noun to refer to the same character in another section of the same narrative. For example: Isaac is named from the onset of the narrative, but within it, he is also called *his father*. At other instances, the narrator uses a combination of name and *his father*. The recurrent nature of this pattern besides others might serve a multiple function in the reading and understanding of the narrative. For the reader to understand a literary piece, all these are important. I will seek to determine the methods of characterisation of each character beginning from the narrator's portrayal to what the characters say about themselves and each other.

1. Characterisation of Isaac

The narrator applies both direct and indirect characterisation for Isaac. When the narrator applies the direct method, he uses Isaac's name, describes Isaac's physical situation or evaluates his thought. Besides, Isaac interacts with the other characters and this gives the reader further understanding of his portraits. For the indirect method, the narrator shows Isaac engaged in dialogues and direct speeches.

Voice	Title/Epithets	Distribution	Occurrences
Narrator	Isaac	27:1, 5, 20, 21, 30, 33, 37, 46, 28:1, 5, 6	11
	Isaac his father	27:22, 26, 30, 32, 39, 28:8	6
	His father	27:14, 18, 19, 31, 31, 34, 34, 38, 41, 28:7	10
Rebekah	Your father	27:6, 9, 10	3
Esau	My father	27:31, 34, 38, 38, 41	5
Jacob	My father	27:11, 18, 28:21	3
God	Isaac	28:13	1

Table 3.1a Distribution of Titles/ Epithets for Isaac

Isaac	Isaac his father	His father	Your father	My father
11	6	10	3	8

Table 3.1b Total Occurrences of Titles and Epithets for Isaac

1.1. Direct Characterisation

Throughout Genesis 27–28, Isaac is depicted in the following ways: by name 17 times—six of which go together with *father* (*his father*). The narrator also uses *his father* independently 10 times. The narrator introduces Isaac by name and talks about his old age and vision impediment (Gen 27:1). When Isaac commands Esau, verbal inflection is enough to relate him to his traits throughout the dialogue. The narrator switches again to Isaac's name when he indicates that Rebekah is eavesdropping on Isaac's conversation with Esau. Isaac returns again to the narrative in Gen 27:18 as *his father*, in the dialogue with Jacob prior to his blessing and again in Gen 27:19 as the narrator introduces Jacob's response to Isaac's question on his identity. The dialogue continues until Gen 27:30 with the narrator depicting Isaac by name or a combination of name and *his father*. Isaac is further portrayed by name twice when he questions the rapid catch of game and when he feels Jacob as assurance that he is dealing with Esau (Gen 27:20, 21). Twice, Isaac asks Jacob to draw near to him for a feel (touch) (Gen 27:22) and a kiss (Gen 27:26). When this happens (Gen 27:22), the narrator uses *Isaac his father*.¹⁸⁵ This applies again in Gen 27:30. In the rest of the dialogue, verbal inflection is enough to continuously relate Isaac to his traits. When Esau presents himself before Isaac, the narrator depicts Isaac as *his father*. Isaac's dialogue with Esau continues up to Gen 27:40 and he is portrayed as *Isaac his father* (Gen 27:32 and Gen 27:39). Also, when Isaac responds to Esau's demand for a blessing and subsequently offers him a lesser blessing, he is depicted as *Isaac his father* (see also Gen 28:8 when Esau struggles to salvage his situation by marrying Ishmael's daughter, Maha'lath).¹⁸⁶ The narrator applies *his father* to depict Isaac when Esau reacts to Isaac's verdict concerning Jacob's blessing and pleads desperately for his share of the blessing. In the rest of the narrative, Isaac is portrayed by name when Rebekah seeks his blessing to permit Jacob to go to Paddan Aram (Gen 27:40); when Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him off (Gen 28:1, 5) and when Esau understands that Jacob has been commissioned to get married from his mother's family (Gen 28:6). The last mention of Isaac by the narrator is when Jacob obeys Isaac's instructions. Within the narrative section as is the case with the dialogues, the narrator applies verbal inflection to relate Isaac to his characteristics.

Apart from the use of name and other nouns, the narrator also describes Isaac's inner feelings. Isaac is shown to have lost some senses¹⁸⁷ like sight, touch

¹⁸⁵ A literary narrative pattern is noticed here. When this pattern appears in Gen 27:23, the narrator comments: "*and he blessed him.*" So too the pattern in Gen 27:26 is followed by the same statement: "*and he blessed him.*" This pattern precedes Jacob leaving the blessing scene as Esau returns from his hunting.

¹⁸⁶ Following on from Esau's direct speech: "Let my father arise and eat of the game of his son in order that his soul may bless me," the use of *Isaac his father* indicates tension and gives Isaac the feeling that something is not right with the blessing he has just given out to Jacob/Esau. Gen 27:30 also involves the blessing. Since Isaac has blessed Jacob instead of Esau, he then offers a lesser blessing to Esau. The atmosphere obviously is tense. Likewise, Esau's reaction to Jacob's second blessing is to marry from within Abraham's family. This has been seen as an attempt to gain his parent's favour and secure some blessings (conf. Fokkelman 1985).

¹⁸⁷ When he questions the identity of Jacob and fails to identify him after touching and smelling him, he portrays himself as one who has lost some senses and is frustrated with himself. He asks: "Who are you my son?" (Gen 27:18). "How is it that you found it so quickly my son?" (Gen 27:20). "Draw near, that I may feel you my son; if you are Esau my son or not?" (Gen 27:21–22). Hence, he concludes in frustration: "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen 27:22). In another attempt he asks for a kiss: "Draw near and kiss me my son" (Gen 27:26). This does not help either because Jacob has put on Esau's garments (Gen 27:27).

and hearing, and his knowledge is waning. The narrator also describes him as one who is indecisive, lacks will power, and feels panic and tension when he discovers that he has performed his rite on the wrong person. From Gen 27:46, the narrator's portrayal of Isaac might be four-fold:¹⁸⁸ (a) Isaac is weak and easily manipulated; (b) Isaac is dependent upon Rebekah for prompts; (c) Isaac later understands that the blessing is to be free from personal want and decides to cooperate with Rebekah; and (d) Isaac has recovered from the blessing conflict and becomes cooperative with Rebekah. The narrator has left this open, but prior knowledge of Isaac will lead the reader to such conclusions.

1.2. Indirect Characterisation

Isaac's interactions with other characters and his actions help in his characterisation. In his direct speech to Esau, Isaac confirms his old age and blindness but adds the fear of death as he does not know when it will happen. As he also ties the blessing command to game, Isaac portrays himself as one who loves food. This interest in food is tied to the nourishment of his soul. Rebekah repeats Isaac's interest in food and fear of death in her plan with Jacob and she prepares two kids in the place of game to satisfy Isaac's appetite. It is only after eating and drinking that Isaac blesses Jacob. When Esau comes in from the field, he prepares his game and presents it to Isaac for the blessing. Isaac then realises that he has already handed the blessing to Jacob.¹⁸⁹ Within the dialogues, Isaac presents himself as one who is disappointed especially when he discovers the ruse of the blessing. Important to the characterisation of Isaac is the way other characters portray him. Rebekah calls Isaac *your father* (Gen 27:6, 9 and 10); Jacob, *my father* (Gen 27:12 and 18) and Esau – *my father* [Gen 27:31, 34, 28 (two times) and 41].¹⁹⁰ From Isaac's characterisation he can be described as discriminatory. He loves Esau and nowhere is it said that he loves Jacob. Although he asks Jacob to draw near so he can feel and also kiss him, no affection is involved because it is a measure to figure out whether the one who stands before him is his beloved son Esau. Nowhere does he wilfully call Jacob his son as he does to Esau. He calls Jacob *son* because he has confidence that he is addressing Esau. He prefers to use *your brother* to depict Jacob.

The difficulty with which Isaac has been evaluated defines his multi-complex personality and actions. At times he presents himself as responsible for his actions and at others he seems ignorant. Scholars are divided on his character and questions continue to be asked concerning his dependence or independence, sanity and insanity, blindness and sight; as well as his level of appetite. Although fully developed, Isaac continues to show multiple traits which make it difficult to easily understand him. I construe that Isaac exhibits a triple personality¹⁹¹ and the writer presents him in this manner. When the narrator portrays him by name, three explanations can be given:

¹⁸⁸ From prior knowledge of Rebekah, many will easily accept the first two views. However, there is evidence that the last two are plausible. I will discuss this in another section which will try to define why the narrator chooses to use a name or a name plus an epithet where a pronoun can identify the character.

¹⁸⁹ Isaac is generally characterised as a man who is so consumed by his love for food that nothing goes well without the satisfaction of his appetite. It is argued that his character and the transfer of blessing clearly show what he sees as important.

¹⁹⁰ Esau uses the appellation *my father* more and this is indicative of his desperate attempt to secure some blessing from Isaac.

¹⁹¹ Isaac

- The appetite driven man
- The man caught in his own dilemma
- The Patriarch and custodian of the patriarchal blessing

(a) he is an individual who is interested only in what satisfies his appetite (Gen 27:1–40);¹⁹² (b) he is head of the immediate family (Gen 27:1–30) who continues to seek the satisfaction of his appetite;¹⁹³ or (c) he is Isaac – patriarch and custodian of the patriarchal blessings (Gen 27:26–28.9). I also construe that when the narrator portrays Isaac as *his father* or *Isaac his father*, two explanations are in view as follows: (a) *his father* is an analeptic reference to Abraham. Abraham is father and custodian of the patriarchal blessing and the recipient of the patriarchal blessing obtains the benefits God has promised to Abraham; and (b) *Isaac his father* presents the man caught in his own dilemma, especially when the issue of identity and proper recipient of the blessing are concerned. These five points will be elaborated in a later section on the effect of the narrator's techniques on the literary understanding of the text. Following this complex personality, I construe Isaac as a *full-fledged character*.

2. Characterisation of Rebekah

The characterisation of Rebekah follows the same methods as those used for Isaac. While the narrator uses her name or other traits of Rebekah to portray her (especially in her dialogues and interaction with the other characters), it is important to note that none of the characters in the narrative (except the narrator) describe Rebekah. All that is known of Rebekah is from what she says and what the narrator says about her.

Voice	Title/Epithets	Distribution	Occurrences
Narrator	Rebekah	27:5, 6, 15, 42, 46	5
	Rebekah his mother	27:11	1
	His mother	27:13, 14, 15	3
Isaac	Your mother	27:29	1

Table 3.2 Distribution of Titles/ Epithets for Rebekah

2.1. Direct Characterisation

Rebekah enters this narrative section in Gen 27:5 where the narrator depicts her by name and adds that she is listening to Isaac's instructions to Esau. As the narrative evolves, the narrator uses three methods to portray her: *Rebekah* [Gen 27:5, 6, 15, 42 and 46 (5 times)], *his mother* [Gen 27:13, 14, 14 and 28:7 (4 times)] and *Rebekah his mother* (Gen 27:11). When Rebekah presents a counter plan for Isaac's instructions to Jacob, the narrator uses her name to introduce the dialogue (Gen 27:6). This method is used again when she devises a solution to Jacob's physical difference with Esau (Gen 27:15), when she gets knowledge of Esau's plan to kill Jacob (Gen 27:42), and when she counters by convincing Isaac to send Jacob to Paddan Aram (Gen 27:46). In Rebekah's dialogue with Jacob, the narrator also uses *his mother* [when she accepts to take the curse in case the plan fails (Gen 27:13), when she is actively preparing the kids for Jacob (Gen 27:14 - twice), and when Jacob obeys her and Isaac

¹⁹² Isaac wants to bless and at the same time he wants to nourish his soul to satisfaction [See *ואכלה...בעבור יברכני נפשך* (Gen 27:4) and *ואכלה...בעבור יברכני נפשך* (Gen 27:19) and *ואכלה...בעבור יברכני נפשך* (Gen 27:31)]. When Rebekah repeats Isaac's instructions, she omits soul and adds *יהיה* [See *ואכלה... יהיה* (Gen 27:7)]. This in my opinion justifies Isaac's interest in food, and why two kids assume the taste of game in his mouth.

¹⁹³ Isaac is earlier characterised in Gen 25:28 as one who loves Esau because of his love for food. This theme continues throughout his life. His request to pass the patriarchal blessings is tied to good food (Gen 27:3–4). Although he requests game, any good food satisfies his appetite. Two lambs prepared by Rebekah taste like game for Isaac (Gen 27:14–27). Thus, he is satisfied and blesses Jacob.

and leaves for Paddan Aram (Gen 28:7)]. The narrator uses *Rebekah his mother* when Jacob presents the physical difference between Esau and himself and argues that he might be cursed if Isaac discovers the ruse (Gen 27:11). Besides these portraits the narrator uses verbal inflections to continuously relate Rebekah to her characteristics.

2.2. Indirect Characterisation

Rebekah's interactions with other characters and her actions present an indirect method of characterisation. Her use of the suffixes [*my* (Gen 27:8, 13 and 43), *me* or *to me* (Gen 27:9, 13-twice, and 46)] and independent pronouns (Gen 27:8) in direct speeches portray her independent and creative nature with respect to other characters. The context of all this is when she issues her commands to Jacob, counters Jacob's objection to her instructions, and convinces Isaac to dispatch Jacob to Paddan Aram. Little information about Rebekah is available from her or other characters but the narrator has portrayed her as one who is actively involved in everything around her. Thus, her actions speak for her. Rebekah's person has also given clues to other methods of characterisation. When she interacts with Jacob, she constantly asks for obedience. Hence, she has authority over Jacob. She prepares a plan which works out smoothly as she constantly monitors all other characters involved. When any obstruction is identified, Rebekah immediately devises a way out. She is therefore creative and innovative and keeps everyone under her control. Thus, she could also be portrayed as follows:

Rebekah is foresighted: When Rebekah presents her case to Jacob to secure his cooperation, she makes it urgent and adds that the blessing will take place in the presence of God.

Rebekah is affectionate: Although she is said to have loved Jacob, the narrator does not tell the reader that her love for Jacob has a motive as with the case of Isaac (Gen 25:28). Thus, she works for the interest of the family. She does not call Esau her son. However, the narrator addresses Esau with respect to Rebekah as *her elder son*,¹⁹⁴ thus acknowledging her affection as *his mother*. Rebekah's portrayal of Isaac as *father* might also indicate her affection for Isaac and her wish to let Jacob see Isaac as his father.

Rebekah is active and decisive: Rebekah is actively involved in everything that happens around her. She listens to Isaac's proposal and prepares a counter plan. She knows Esau's intention and also prepares a counter plan. These counter plans underscore her decisive nature—a woman of decision.

Rebekah is independent and uncompromising: Rebekah's independence is underscored by the fact that none of the characters (except Isaac when he is pronouncing the blessing on Jacob), depict her. She acts for herself and positions her actions in such a way that she gets her required outcome. She does not compromise when it comes to the execution of her plans. Thus, she commands Jacob's obedience and secures Isaac's conviction.

Rebekah is creative and innovative: Rebekah devises a plan and monitors it to its final execution. As the plan unfolds, she identifies all obstacles and rectifies them.

¹⁹⁴ When Berlin studies *points of view*, she talks about linguistic features which can help the reader identify whose point of view is envisaged (narrator or character) (Berlin 1983:56–57). Yamasaki argues with respect to Uspensky's phraseological level that the narrator executes the point of view of the characters by "adopting distinctive speech characteristics of characters into narratorial speech" (Yamasaki 2007:121). Applied here, the narrator speaks for Rebekah to present the way she views Esau. Thus, to Rebekah, Esau is *her elder son*.

She is able to disguise Jacob to appear as Esau by using kids' skin and Esau's garments.

Rebekah is a manager and a mother: Rebekah manages her home well and keeps control of all circumstances. She is so witty that she prevents any disastrous outcome. Also, Rebekah's motherhood is seen both in her affection and in the way she understands the temperaments of both her husband and children. She could persuade all in the best interest of the family, command her son's unflinching obedience and secure her husband's unwavering support. As a mother, Rebekah stands out as a matriarch of exceptional duty who bears the burden to ensure the blessing is passed onto Jacob.¹⁹⁵

From the previous knowledge of Rebekah in Genesis 24 and 25, her characterisation by most commentators often carries a negative undertone. This is due to the complexity of her actions. She neither speaks of herself nor of her personal interests but acts quite decisively. When she speaks, the family interest and Jacob's is in view. When the narrator identifies Rebekah by name, she is: (a) actively listening or getting knowledge about the blessing or its obstruction; or (b) presenting a counter plan in accordance with the knowledge acquired. When the narrator portrays her as *his mother*, she is issuing a command that requires immediate obedience. In the context of the dialogue, this also shows her actively supporting Jacob to prepare the blessing meal. Just as with Isaac, *Rebekah his mother* has a dual effect: (a) it is used in a context where the identity of the recipient of the blessing is at stake; or (b) it presents Rebekah as a Matriarch or Ancestor (Turner 1985:42–50). Following her full development and multiple personality traits, Rebekah is a *full-fledged character*.

3. Characterisation of Jacob

The narrator uses a combination of methods to characterise Jacob. Just as it is with the other characters, Jacob is portrayed by use of both direct and indirect methods. He says very little about himself and his actions portray him more.

Voice	Title/Epithets	Distribution	Occurrences
Narrator	Jacob	27:11, 21, 22, 30, 41, 28:1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 18, 20	13
	Jacob her son	27:6, 17	2
	Jacob her younger son	27:15, 42	2
	His son	27:20	1
Isaac	My son	27:18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28	8
	Your brother	27:29, 35	2
Esau	Jacob	27:36	1
	My brother	27:41	1
Jacob	Your firstborn son	27:19	1
	Esau	27:19	1
Rebekah	My Son	27:7, 13, 43, 46	4

Table 3.3a Distribution of Titles/ Epithets for Jacob

¹⁹⁵ Turner prefers the word Ancestor and argues that Rebekah be regarded as an Ancestor on equal terms with Abraham because she and not her husband received the Abrahamic promise (Gen 24:60) (Turner 1985:44–50).

Jacob	Jacob her son	Jacob her younger son	His son	My son	Your brother	My brother	Your firstborn son	Esau
14	2	2	1	12	2	1	1	1

Table 3.3b Total occurrences of Title and Epithet for Jacob

3.1. Direct Characterisation

In the direct method of characterisation, the narrator portrays Jacob as follows: *Name* (Jacob),¹⁹⁶ *Jacob her son* (Gen 27:6 and 17), *Jacob her younger son* (Gen 27:15 and 42) or *his son* (Gen 27:20). Jacob enters the narrative in Gen 27:6 when Rebekah summons him to tell him about Isaac's words and to present her counter plan. Here he is depicted as *Jacob her son*.¹⁹⁷ This method is used again in Gen 27:17 to portray Jacob as the one who has the food that Rebekah has prepared. It is Rebekah's son who is going before Isaac with the meal as Esau is still doing his hunt. This may serve to remind the reader that the one present before Isaac is an impostor. When Jacob attempts to counter Rebekah's plan, the narrator uses his name. Within the dialogue with Rebekah, the narrator uses verbal inflections to relate Jacob to his traits. In Gen 27:15 the narrator portrays Jacob as *Jacob her younger son* (when Rebekah decides to clothe him with Esau's garment and the kid's skin) and thus sets a contrast with *Esau her elder son*. This same appellation in Gen 27:42 sets a contrast between Esau and Jacob (when Rebekah invites *Jacob her younger son* to bid him to flee from Esau's anger). When Jacob goes into Isaac's presence, the narrator portrays him by name and once as *his son* (when Isaac questions the fast catch of the game) (Gen 27:19–20). The narrator also uses Jacob's name when Isaac asks to feel him (Gen 27:21); when he draws near for Isaac to feel him (Gen 27:22); when he departs from Isaac's presence (Gen 27:30) and before the arrival of Esau (Gen 27:30); when Esau expresses hatred for Jacob (Gen 27:41); when Isaac blesses him the second time (Gen 28:1); when Isaac sends him to Paddan Aram (Gen 28:5); when Esau reacts to Isaac's second blessing (Gen 28:6); when Jacob obeys his father and mother (Gen 28:7); when Jacob wakes from his dream at Beth'el (Gen 28:16) and sets a monument (Gen 28:18); and when the narrator introduces Jacob's last monologue (Gen 28:20). In the direct method of characterising Jacob, the narrator has applied mostly name and contrast. The narrator uses *Jacob her son* and *Jacob her younger son* as a contrast to *Esau her son* and *Esau her elder son*. The use of *his son* in Gen 27:20 introduces Isaac's doubt and he sets to investigate the son who poses before him.

3.2. Indirect Characterisation

Jacob interacts with the other characters and presents himself and his feelings in direct speeches or in monologues. Jacob talks very little about himself apart from contrasting himself with Esau as being smooth (Gen 27:11) and his fear of being a mocker in the eyes of Isaac (Gen 27:12). When he comes before Isaac, he claims to be Esau. In the first instance, he says: *I am Esau your firstborn* (Gen 27:19) and in the second instance he uses the independent personal pronoun אֲנִי to confirm that he is Esau (Gen 27:24). In his dialogue with Isaac, Isaac portrays him as *my son* – seven times and as *your brother* once/twice and *Jacob* once. Within the seven occurrences of *my son* used by Isaac, three are applied to unveil the identity of the one standing

¹⁹⁶ This has 14 occurrences in the whole narrative Gen 27:11, 21, 22, 30- twice, 41; 28:1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 18 and 20.

¹⁹⁷ This characterisation presents symmetry and contrasts Isaac's appellation of Esau as his son (Gen 27:5).

before him (Gen 27:18, 20, 21) and he uses four in confidence that the one standing before him is Esau (Gen 27:25, 26, 27, 28). The same applies when Isaac uses *your brother* (Gen 27:29). If one considers Isaac's confidence in his choice, then *your brother* in the dialogue with Jacob depicts Jacob. However, if we consider Jacob as an impostor i.e. Esau, then *your brother* depicts Esau. This is contrary to Isaac's use of *your brother* in Gen 27:35 after he realises that he has blessed the wrong person. Throughout her dialogue with Jacob, Rebekah portrays him as *my son*. The context is that of a command that requires obedience. When she plans Jacob's escape, she uses Jacob's name. This plan portrays Jacob as one who would seek proper marriage in contrast to Esau who is already in marriage to Canaanites. The use of *my son* – *her son* – *his son* strengthens the conflict within the family, while *elder son* (Gen 27:1) reminds readers of Esau's position from Genesis 25. The same goes with *younger son*. Esau depicts Jacob once when he is disgruntled about the blessing (Gen 27:36). The method set a play of words on the name *Jacob* and the verb *to deceive*. By this Esau portrays *Jacob* as a *deceiver* (27.36). At another instance, Esau uses *my brother* when he plans to kill Jacob during the funeral of Isaac (Gen 27:41). When Jacob encounters God on his way to Paddan Aram, he portrays himself as a fugitive, one desperate for protection, one who has repented or a manipulator (Gen 28:20–22).

I pointed out earlier that Jacob speaks little about himself but acts. From this narrative section, Jacob's actions portray him as one who either cooperates wilfully or is under duress to fulfill Rebekah's plans. His meticulous execution however might portray him as one who could stand for himself and his actions. Thus, he is active and smart to understand the advantage of having the blessing. He has foresight and appreciates the importance of becoming an heir. Negatively, he might be seen as an impostor who presents himself before Isaac claiming to be Esau. While he fears being discovered, all attempts made by Isaac fail. He can also be seen as one who genuinely wants to repent or manipulate God by making a deal in his vow. Jacob presents a multi-complex personality and changes within the dialogue. Thus, Jacob is a *full-fledged character*.

4. Characterisation of Esau

The methods used to characterise Esau are the same as those for Isaac, Rebekah, and Jacob. The direct method is used by both characters and narrator and the indirect method comes in Esau's interaction with other characters and direct speeches.

Voice	Title/Epithets	Distribution	Occurrences
Narrator	Esau	27:31, 34, 37, 38, 41, 28:8, 9	7
	Esau his son	27:5	1
	Esau her elder son	27:15, 42	2
	Esau his elder son	27:1	1
	Esau his brother	27:23, 30	2
Isaac	My son	27:1, 37	2
	My son Esau	27:21, 24	2
	Esau	27:22	1
Jacob	Esau my brother	27:11	1
Esau	Your son	27:32	1
	Your firstborn	27:32	1
	His son	27:31	1
Rebekah	Your brother	27:15, 44	2
	Esau your brother	27:6, 42	2

Table 3.4a Distribution of Titles/ Epithets for Esau

Esau	Esau his son	Esau her elder son	Esau his elder son	My son	My son Esau	Esau my brother	Esau your brother	Your firstborn	His son
9	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1

Table 3.4b Total occurrences of Titles/ Epithets for Esau

4.1. Direct Characterisation

In the direct method the narrator portrays Esau in five separate ways: *Esau* (nine times), *Esau his elder son*,¹⁹⁸ and *Esau her elder son*, *Esau his son* and *Esau his brother*. Esau is introduced in the narrative as *Esau his elder son* (Gen 27:1) when Isaac invites him to listen to the command to go to the field and get game. The narrator then uses *Esau his son* to introduce Rebekah's eavesdropping (Gen 27:5). As mentioned already this method sets a contrast between Esau as Isaac's son and Jacob as Rebekah's son.¹⁹⁹ Close to this is the narrator's use of *Esau her elder son* (twice) when Rebekah disguises Jacob (Gen 27:15) and when she gets word of Esau's plot to kill Jacob (Gen 27:42). Because both (Jacob and Esau) are involved, this method helps to differentiate them. The narrator then uses *Esau his brother*, to emphasise Esau's hairy nature as a decisive difference that convinces Isaac to bless Jacob (Gen 27:23) and to introduce Esau's return from the field (Gen 27:30). When Esau interacts with Isaac, the narrator constantly applies his name (Gen 27:31, 34, and 38). This also applies when Esau plans to kill Jacob (Gen 27:41), reacts to Isaac's second blessing to Jacob (Gen 28:6) and attempts to salvage his situation in the marriage to Ishmael's daughter (Gen 28:8, 9). The frequent use of name is a differential method to impinge on the mind of the reader that Esau is in view, not Jacob. In another method, the narrator expresses Esau's inner feeling and thought when he reports that Esau cries bitterly (Gen 27:38) and when he exposes Esau's plan to kill Jacob (Gen 27:41).

4.2. Indirect Characterisation

It is said nowhere in the narrative that Esau interacts with Rebekah or Jacob. Thus, what is known of him is from his dialogue with Isaac and his direct speeches. When Isaac commands Esau to prepare a blessing meal (Gen 27:1) and later issues a lesser blessing (Gen 27:37), he portrays Esau as *my son*. This method is used again as Isaac struggles to confirm Jacob's identity (Gen 27:22 and 23). Isaac uses *Esau* after he feels Jacob's hairy hands and expresses his doubt (Gen 27:22–23). Although Rebekah does not interact with Esau, she portrays him in two ways: *Esau your brother* when she reports Isaac's plan to Jacob and Esau's murder plan to Jacob (Gen 27:6 and 42); and *your brother* when she advises Jacob to flee from Esau's anger (Gen 27:44 and 45). Jacob's characterisation of Esau presents a physical difference between them [*Esau is a hairy man* (Gen 27:11)]. This has been discussed under the characterisation of Jacob. When Esau comes into the presence of Isaac, he depicts himself as *his son* as he implores Isaac to rise and eat of his game (Gen 27:31). In response to Isaac's question – Who are you? Esau says: *I am your son, your firstborn* (Gen 27:32) in almost the same manner as Jacob had done in Gen 27:19.

¹⁹⁸ The narrator reminds readers at the onset that Esau is already designated as beloved firstborn in Genesis 25.

¹⁹⁹ This may also form an *inclusio* of Isaac's interaction with his son before he departs to the field. The same pattern can be observed in Rebekah's dialogue with Jacob. When she interacts with Jacob and prepares the meal, the narrator begins and ends with Jacob her son [*Jacob her son* (Gen 27:6) ... *Jacob her son* (Gen 27:17)].

Esau too presents a multi-complex personality. Just like Jacob, he obeys Isaac's command to hunt his game. He knows his place as firstborn and when he portrays Jacob as one who deceived him twice, he enables the reader to read analeptically and confirm that he had sold his birthright. On these grounds, he can be characterised as carefree. He looks desperate to gain Isaac's favour as he pleads and cries and then marries Ishma'el's daughter. From his internal thoughts as reported by the narrator and Rebekah, Esau can be portrayed as one who plans to commit murder or one who is angry to the point where he plans to kill Jacob. He speaks and acts for himself. He is independent as he makes decisions without being prompted. From his inner thoughts and direct speeches, he portrays himself as one who has given up the inheritance and now is trying to convince Isaac to hand something to him. Hence, he is a *full-fledged character*.

3.5.5. Characterisation of Other Characters in Genesis 27–28

Apart from the four characters treated above, there are others who play very minor roles. The first is God who is mentioned in the direct speeches of Rebekah, Isaac and Jacob. In Gen 28:12–22, God emerges in Jacob's vision on his way to Padan Aram. Mention is also made of Laban who is called Rebekah's brother; daughters of Canaan, Ishma'el, Maha'lath, Nabaioth and Abraham. Nothing is known of these characters in this narrative section, but they are important in that they provide a basis for understanding the narrative. The mention of Abraham in the blessing functions as an analepsis to relate Jacob to the Abrahamic covenant and at the same time validates him as the rightful heir to the Abrahamic promise. The Canaanite daughters help readers understand one of the most important prerequisites for being an heir to the patriarchal promise—maintaining the patriarchal lineage. Maha'lath and Ishma'el (together with the Canaanite daughters) could also be an analeptic reading to the rejection of Ishma'el as heir to the Abrahamic promise and highlight one of the reasons why Esau could not be a rightful heir. Laban mentioned here will be a character in the next section of this narrative. Thus, his mention serves as a forward reading of the narrative. All these characters (except God who is a flat character) have functionary values and serve as *agents*.

3.5.6. Evaluation of Characters

All the characters exhibit multi-complex patterns of behaviour and it seems hard to tie down a particular character to a single pattern. This multi-complex pattern of traits is also shown in the way the narrator characterises them. When Isaac is being evaluated, many look upon him as a weak blind old man who falls victim to his shrewd wife and cunning son.²⁰⁰ Also, Isaac's blessing has received mixed reactions from various commentators. While Isaac is old, blind and weak the question remains how

²⁰⁰ Among the proponents of this view are Matalon (2008:244–250). Matalon agrees with Feldman to suggest that the love relationship between Isaac and Rebekah could have been that of dependence (Gen 24:67). One reason he advances is that Isaac could not take a concubine like Abraham before him and Jacob after him because of this dependent relationship. In the same light, he surmises that Isaac too had the same relationship with Esau (dependent for nourishment and sustenance). He then concludes that Rebekah knew all in the tent and decided to trick Jacob into deceiving a blind father Isaac and thus questions the moral of such an action (Ibid. 244–247). Goodnick (1995:222–228) calls Rebekah's and Jacob's actions an embarrassment and shame. Others who question the moral value of Rebekah's and Jacob's actions include: Skinner 1912:368ff), Fokkelman (1975:101), Robert (1979:136–138) and Wenham (1994:215).

his taste for good food never fades.²⁰¹ Drawing from Isaac's unfailing appetite, Sylva has argued that Isaac's actions determine what is so important to him (food)²⁰² and supports her argument with the number of occurrences of the word *food* within the narrative (Sylva 2008:270–271). Besides, she has pointed out that Isaac's love for food limits his affection and when he addresses Jacob as his son, he is convinced that he is talking to Esau (Ibid. 271–272).²⁰³ From the text itself, Isaac presents clues as to where his interest is. Earlier he shows his love for Esau because of his good food (Genesis 25). In this narrative, he still indicates that he is interested in food before the blessing can be handed.²⁰⁴ Whether this is a ritual or sacrificial meal is not mentioned in the text.²⁰⁵ Focusing on the text, Sylva (2008:271) rightly sees Isaac as:

A man whose blessing is contingent upon the satisfaction of his tastes (27.3–4) (and) is led astray by this sensory focus of his life not only in how he treats his sons but also in his ability to discriminate between them. He lets the smell of the food of the earth on Jacob's clothes override the sound of his son's voice in determining this son's identity (27.27b). The olfactory organ is, of course, intimately bound up with taste. Isaac lives from his tongue and from his nose.

Rebekah has received the most controversial evaluation of all the characters in this narrative.²⁰⁶ On the one hand, she is denigrated with descriptions of her including schemer, manipulator, deceiver, Machiavellian mother, ambitious, shrewd, heartless, and of despicable moral standards. On the other hand, she is admired and praised. The text leaves readers to decide on how to evaluate Rebekah's actions and all the negative evaluation comes when the moral value of the narrative is put into question. Apart from that, Rebekah is lauded for her creativity and independence, as well as her foresightedness and interactive nature with all characters in the narrative. It is her resilience and confidence that successfully shifts the boundaries to give room for Jacob to acquire the blessing. Drawing from her active involvement in other biblical narrative sections preceding this, Rebekah is seen as a woman who is active and gets involved in everything that concerns her and speaks for herself (Gen 24:45–58); a

²⁰¹ Hamilton argues in the same manner and says that Isaac's eyesight and memory fails but his appetite does not (Hamilton 1995:213).

²⁰² The root *אכל* "to eat" appears 9 times in this narrative section and *מטעמים* "savory food" appears six times.

²⁰³ Sylva contrasts Isaac to Jacob's future blessing of Joseph's sons where he blesses both and not one.

²⁰⁴ Isaac's inability to differentiate between lamb and game is an indication that he loves good food regardless of what it is. If he is particular about his choices, he should be able to spot that he eats something other than game. The only reason that can be raised against such an argument is to provide evidence that his sense of taste has failed him too. That being the case, then Isaac will be regarded as having lost all his senses and not being able to be accountable for his actions.

²⁰⁵ Contra Hamilton (1995) and Soggin (1997:357) who argue that such ceremonies required a sacrificial meal.

²⁰⁶ There are those whose assessment is positive: Von Rad (1961:275), Calvin (1965:48–88), Turner (1985:42–50), Jeansonne (1989:33–52), Sarna (1989:192), Adrien (1993) in Athalya (ed.) (1993: 287–288), Turner (2000:115–124), Brodie (2001:312), Westermann (2004:193), Ruppert (2005:151), Sylva (2008:267–278) and Zucker (2011:46–86). Negative assessment is done by Driver (1904:225), Alter (1978:361), Niditch (1992:19), Wenham (1994:208–10), John (2000:248), Reiss (2000:1219), Turner (2000:122), James (2001:18–19) and Ephraim (2003:301–321). Ephraim argues that Rebekah is guilty of lies telling but is exonerated in the rabbinical tradition.

woman who is determined (Gen 25:22–23), has clairvoyance and a compelling personality.²⁰⁷ This ties with her creativity and active involvement in this narrative as she seeks the help of Jacob to accomplish her aim (Gen 27:6–17 and 40–46).

When commentators evaluate Esau, they place him in the same situation as Isaac with Jacob as his victimiser. A close reading of the text highlights a few points that can be used to evaluate Esau as well as Jacob. When Esau talks about Jacob's deceit in Gen 27:36, he mentions two prominent issues: birthright and blessing, which are supposed to be part of the inheritance of the firstborn. In Gen 25:29–34, Esau agrees to sell his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of red soup. When the narrator comments, he portrays Esau as one whose interest is present satisfaction without a reflection on the future effect of his actions.²⁰⁸ The selling of his birthright also indicates that he is not ready for the blessing and the demands that accompany it. Esau presents himself as a carefree man who does not value his future. Hence the family's future is not his prime motive. Just as Isaac, Esau had fallen prey to food and given up his birthright. Therefore, his interest could also be food. Again, when Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him to go and find a wife from his kinsmen, Esau decides to get married to Ishma'el's daughter. This indicates that his marriage to the Hittite women mentioned in Gen 26:34 has an effect on his candidature as heir. From Abraham's stern warning and instructions to his chief servant on securing a proper marriage for Isaac, one can infer that Esau's decision to marry Hittites already places him out of the way to be a bearer of the patriarchal blessing.²⁰⁹

The evaluation of Jacob by commentators follows the trend of Rebekah. Where Rebekah is condemned, so is Jacob. He has been characterised as a trickster and deceiver, unscrupulous (Gichaara 1999:122) or an opportunist (Guenther 2005:387–407). The base of such an argument comes from outside the narrative and assumed from his bargain to gain Esau's birthright for a bowl of soup as well as his vow to God. He is also said to have connived with Rebekah to deceive his blind father. The narrative also presents Jacob as one who is under the command of his mother and as one who obeys. When Rebekah talks to Jacob, she commands and gives no room for objection. Even when Jacob tries to counter, she reiterates her force and asks for obedience. Rebekah's authority over Jacob is shown by her constant use of imperatives which follow almost the same pattern: "Listen to my voice, to that which I command you..., go, bring to me...bring to your father" (Gen 27:8–10); "Just listen to my voice and go, bring to me" (Gen 27:13) and "listen to my voice and arise" (Gen 27:42). Jacob's obedience forms one of the central qualities that lead him to gain the patriarchal blessing. He is shown to be obedient to both parents, while Esau is never shown to have interacted with or obeyed Rebekah. Despite Rebekah's command, it would be wrong to see Jacob as one who acted only out of impulsiveness. His creative depiction of his physical difference from his brother creates the avenue for Rebekah to improvise. Nowhere is it shown that Rebekah instructs him on what to say when he comes to Isaac. Jacob is quite aware that claiming to be Esau and firstborn will earn him the blessings and his composure surely carries traits of Esau—thus confusing Isaac. When Sylva evaluates Jacob, she focuses on the love and affection that Jacob

²⁰⁷ Conf. Turner (1985:42–50) and Davidson (2000:169–178, especially 173–178).

²⁰⁸ Elazar describes Esau as 'a headstrong person who acts impulsively, without sufficient thought... (which) forever rules out Esau as the bearer of Patriarchal continuity' (Daniel 1989:300). See also Sarna (1989:189), Mathews (1985:190) and Hamilton (1995:210).

²⁰⁹ Steinberg argues that birthright, proper marriage and family blessing are the *sine qua non* for becoming a bearer of the patriarchal blessing (conf. Steinberg 1993 and Guenther 2005:387–407, especially 388–390).

shows to his children in his life (Gen 37:3, 42:36 and 43:14a) and how this love is manifested in the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48:20) (Sylva 2008:271–272). She uses this to set a contrast between Isaac and Jacob who were both old and blind, and had the duty to transfer the blessing. She then argues that Isaac’s blessing “consigns one son to lordship and the others to servitude (27.29b, 40), (and) Jacob’s blessing creates two unified peoples, each blessed with greatness (48.19)” (Ibid. 272). In this respect, Sylva portrays Jacob as one with affection. In Genesis 27–28, Jacob interacts with both Isaac and Rebekah and also obeys them (Gen 27:6–17, 42–45 and 28:7). I construe that this obedience is an expression of his affection and love for both Isaac and Rebekah.²¹⁰

In this section, I have studied the ways characters have been characterised by the narrator, other characters, and by themselves. Berlin has argued that these methods of portrayal define the POV of the various characters (Berlin 1983:43–82), which in Runge’s opinion is often defined by an anchoring expression applied to identify full-fledged participants (Runge 2007:62). In the following section, I will study POV of the various characters which will guide me in defining who among these characters is the main or central.

3.6. CHARACTERISATION AND CHARACTER’S POINT OF VIEW IN GENESIS 27–28

According to Berlin, these various perspectives from which a character is depicted define various POVs (Berlin 1983:43–82). When Berlin studies point of view, she presents six textual features which may indicate characters’ point of view viz: naming, inner life, the term הנה, circumstantial clauses, direct discourse and narration and the use of alternate expressions (Ibid.). Following on from Berlin, Runge has argued that POV is often defined by an anchoring expression used to activate or reactivate a participant (Runge 2007:62). He then construes that a *full-fledged* participant can be identified by how much others are anchored to him or her in the narrative (Ibid. 64). Berlin’s notion of point of view affects the understanding of the narrative. In this section, I intend to apply Berlin’s approach to Genesis 27–28 with a limit to naming, use of הנה and discourse and narration.

3.6.1. Naming

All characters in this narrative section are named. From this method of portrayal, only the narrator, Isaac and Esau, as well as God use a proper name to refer to other characters. God refers to Isaac by name when he promises protection and inheritance to Jacob in the vision in Gen 28:12ff (Gen 28:13). Besides names, the narrator also refers to the characters using epithets or names plus epithets. When characters refer to each other or themselves, they often use epithets.

1. Isaac

Isaac’s proper name is used by the narrator throughout the narrative. But when Isaac is mentioned with reference to Jacob or Esau in the blessing encounters, he is referred to either as *his father* or *Isaac his father*; reflecting Jacob’s or Esau’s POV.²¹¹ When other characters talk of Isaac, they use *your father* or *my father*. Rebekah refers to Isaac thrice as *your father* in her counter instructions to Jacob about

²¹⁰ I have also argued in §3.5.2.4 that this narrative section does not indicate that Esau interacts with Rebekah or obeys her.

²¹¹ There are 16 of both occurrences: 6 for *Isaac his father* (Gen 27:22, 26, 30, 32, 39, and 28:8) and 10 for *his father* (Gen 27:14, 18, 19, 31, 31, 34, 34, 38, 41 and 28:7).

the blessing of Esau (Gen 27:6, 9 and 10). This reflects Jacob's POV. When Jacob tries to refute Rebekah's plan, he refers to Isaac as *my father* (Gen 27:11). He does the same when he presents himself as a contender for the blessing (Gen 27:18) and reacts to God's promise in the Bethel vision (Gen 28:21). In every use, Jacob's perspective is portrayed. Esau also uses *my father* five times to refer to Isaac—when he presents himself and his blessing meal (Gen 27:31), pleads desperately for Isaac to bless him (Gen 27:34, 38—twice), and meditates internally to kill Jacob (Gen 27:41). This shows Esau's POV. I have already discussed the implication of Isaac's reference. He is mostly referenced in relation to his role as a member of the family which goes beyond his immediate family. Otherwise, Isaac is an individual and stands independently as one responsible for his actions and as such he is important to the whole narrative section. The way Isaac is named draws attention to his status as *main character* and validates the importance of the *father-son* relationship in the preservation and fulfillment of the patriarchal promise.

2. Rebekah

Besides the use of proper name to designate Rebekah, the narrator also uses epithets or a combination of proper name and epithet in relation to Jacob or Esau or both. The narrator uses *his mother* (Gen 27:13, 14—twice, 28:7), *Rebekah his mother* (Gen 27:11) or *Rebekah mother of* (Gen 28:5) in relation to Jacob and *Rebekah mother of...* (Gen 28:7) in relation to Esau. Each use portrays either Jacob's or Esau's POV. Among the characters, only Isaac portrays Rebekah by use of an epithet, *your mother*—3 times (in relation to Jacob and Esau). Just like Isaac, Rebekah is mostly mentioned in relation to her role as a member of the family which as I have argued goes beyond the immediate. Albeit, Rebekah stands as an individual shown using a proper name to portray her. This equally underscores the importance of the role of the *mother-son* relationship in the preservation and fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. I drew attention under footnote 195 that Turner thinks that Rebekah should be placed on an equal level as an ancestor with Abraham. Teugels adds that it is Rebekah who was given a promise reminiscent of that given to Abraham and not Isaac. What she does not mention is that the Abrahamic promise was given by God as an assurance of God's relation and faithfulness to Abraham and Abraham's generations and a parting blessing was given to Rebekah by her family (mother and brother).²¹² This however, does not undermine the *mother-son* relationship in the preservation and fulfillment of the patriarchal promise. Rebekah's portrayal in this narrative section emphasises this point.

3. Jacob

The narrator uses Jacob's name and applies other methods when Jacob is portrayed with respect to others. In relation to Isaac, Jacob is *his son* (Gen 27:20). However, I have argued that the narrator's use of *his son* for Jacob is to highlight the

²¹² God's promise to Abraham is part of God's covenant and comes with an assurance of fulfilment. This is different from a family blessing. Rebekah's family could have wished her everything with respect to the Abrahamic covenant in hope that she will be the one through whom God will fulfil his promise to Abraham. There is no assurance that the family blessings will be fulfilled thus the conditional word "may" precedes every clause (Gen 24:60). Contrary to family blessings, all the Abrahamic blessings meet God's approval in which God promises to ensure its fulfilment. Thus, God uses the first person pronoun "I" (conf. Gen 12: 1–4, 28:13–16). Nevertheless, the *mother-son* relationship is important to the Abrahamic covenant and it is difficult to argue that the gift of sons to Rebekah does not fulfil both the family blessing and the Abrahamic covenant. The bearer of the promise will be a son whose birth will involve *father-mother*.

fact that Isaac doubts his identity. The same goes with Isaac's use of *my son* in Gen 27:18 and seven other instances. Within these, Isaac is trying to determine the one who is standing before him. It is only in the blessing that Isaac shows his conviction that he is dealing with Esau. Thus, Isaac's use of *my son* in the blessing and the suffix *you* are meant for Esau; otherwise, Jacob is *your brother*, (portraying Esau's POV). Nevertheless, Isaac's use of *my son* indicates his POV. When the narrator presents Jacob in relation to Rebekah, he uses *Jacob her son* (Gen 27:6 and 17) or *Jacob her younger son* (Gen 27:15 and 42). These set a contrast with Esau as Rebekah's *elder son* (Rebekah's POV). The same effect is seen in Rebekah's use of *my son* with respect to Jacob (Rebekah's POV) (Gen 27:10, 13, 43 and 46). Esau uses Jacob's name when he complains that Jacob has deceived him twice (Gen 27:36), thus expressing his POV.²¹³ At another instance, Esau expresses his POV by using *my brother* (Gen 27:41) to refer to Jacob when he plans to kill Jacob.²¹⁴ When Jacob speaks of himself, he uses a *smooth man* and later as *Esau your firstborn* to express his POV.²¹⁵ When God speaks to Jacob he uses pronouns (both independent and clitic) to refer to him. God begins by introducing himself as the "Lord God of Abraham *your father* and of Isaac" and continues to use *you, to you, in you, with you, your descendants, and your seed* as referents to Jacob. This portrays God's perspective with respect to Jacob. From God's POV, Abraham is Jacob's father—the one who's blessing Jacob will inherit.²¹⁶

In most parts, Jacob has been portrayed in relation to his family. However, when he speaks of himself Jacob portrays his character and inner traits. Nevertheless, his role as son is important and goes beyond that of the immediate family. God addresses him as *son of Abraham* (implicitly), thus underscoring his relation with the patriarch as *father*. Following on from God's address Jacob then becomes the *son of*

²¹³ This reminds the reader of the birthright encounter in Gen 25:29–34, who sees the same root for the name Jacob and the verb "to deceive." Gen 27:36 is an analeptic reading of Gen 25:29–34. Here Esau sells his *bekhorah* for a bowl of lentil soup. Esau's flashback in this blessing encounter compels the reader to agree with his predicament and characterisation of Jacob following the play of words on Jacob's name. For Esau, Jacob is a deceiver and the *bekhorah* and *berakhah* encounters justify his assertion. Some commentators draw the analysis beyond the *bekhorah* encounter to the birth of the twins (conf. Gammie 1979:124–125 and Wenham 1994:211). They argue that Jacob holds Esau's heel during their birth and therefore supplants him. In the same way Esau's reaction and play on words has been seen by many as a prolepsis to Laban's deceit of Jacob (Fokkelman 1985:126–130 and Wenham 1994:236) and the deceit by Jacob's children when they tell Jacob that Joseph has been devoured by a wild animal (Ibid. 356).

²¹⁴ Prior to this, the narrator shows Esau meditating in his heart. This characterises Esau as a murderer who is ready even to take the life of *his brother*. Another example of this is the way Cain addresses Abel before murdering him (Gen 4:8–10).

²¹⁵ The 'smooth skin' sets a contrast between him and Esau while the second places him in Esau's position. Jacob tells Rebekah that his smooth skin is enough for Isaac to differentiate him from Esau with an impending curse as his reward (Gen 27:11). He later claims to be Esau because he considers his smooth skin threat already overcome and Isaac would not discover him because of the kid's skin that Rebekah has placed on his neck and arms. Although Isaac differentiates his voice, the kid's skin helps Jacob pull off the blessing. The trait of smooth skin and the cover up with the kid's skin proleptically highlights Isaac's attempt to spot Jacob by touch. Besides the use of proper nouns and epithets, I have argued that the continuous reference of characters is by pronoun and verbal inflection. The use of pronouns to continuously refer to Jacob play a vital role in this study. Both Isaac and Rebekah use pronouns to refer to Jacob especially in their direct speeches.

²¹⁶ This mention of Abraham has a flashback effect on the reader and moves Jacob beyond the immediate family to place him on the same plane with his ancestor. God's use of pronouns transfers Abraham's privileges in Gen 12:2–3 to Jacob.

the promise to continue with the custody of the patriarchal covenant. Otherwise, Jacob is an individual who is responsible for his deeds. However, his relations of *son–father*, *son–Abraham*, *son–mother*, *brother*, underscore the importance of the family in the continuity of the Abrahamic covenant.

4. Esau

Just as it is with the other characters, the narrator depicts Esau by name and epithet or a combination of both. In relation to Isaac and Rebekah, the narrator applies *Esau his son*, *Esau his elder son* and *Esau her elder son*. These set a contrast between Esau and Jacob and represent Isaac's and Rebekah's POVs. Furthermore, the narrator applies *Esau his brother* in relation to Jacob. Both instances are crucial to the narrative because Isaac, on the one hand, blesses Jacob after confirming his hairy hands as Esau's, *his brother* (Gen 27:22–23), and on the other hand, the narrator presents an apprehensive situation '*and as soon as Jacob departed from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother returned from his hunting.*' The POVs portrayed here is Jacob's. In the dialogues Isaac portrays Esau as *my son* or *Esau my son*. The former is applied when Isaac tries to determine the identity of Jacob by asking him to draw near for a touch and the latter when Isaac touches the hairy hands but perceives another voice. Isaac's POVs is portrayed here. Rebekah also depicts Esau as *Esau your brother* or *your brother* in her dialogues with Jacob (in counter plans to both Isaac's plan to bless Esau and Esau's plans to murder Jacob) (Gen 27:6, 42 and 44, 45), thus portraying Jacob's POV. Jacob applies *Esau my brother* and characterises him as *a hairy man* (as he presents his physical difference as an obstacle to Rebekah's plan) (Gen 27:11). Here, Jacob's POV is expressed.²¹⁷ Esau portrays himself twice as *his son* and *Esau, your son, your firstborn*, expressing Isaac's POV.²¹⁸ From Esau's point of view, he is Isaac's *son* and *firstborn*.

The portraits of Esau fall in the same line of family relations. However, the narrator portrays Esau as one who is independent and responsible, able to take control of his actions and thinks for himself. As is the case with Jacob, Esau's portraits lay emphasis on the *son–father*, *son–mother* and *brother* relations as indispensable to the Abrahamic covenant.

There are obviously reasons why the narrator or characters use several ways to portray each other. While it can be explained easily within some narratives, this is not the case with Genesis 27–28. To properly evaluate characters' POVs I will propose that both the explicit and implicit meanings be considered. It is also important to consider that when Berlin studies POV on the phraseological level, she does not uncover the fact that the narrator picks up the characters' ideas and expresses them within the

²¹⁷ Jacob's characterisation of Esau as *hairy man* has been regarded from various perspectives because it leads to Rebekah setting up a proper plan for Jacob's acquisition of the blessings. In this light some scholars argue that Jacob wilfully brings out their difference to solicit Rebekah's solution beforehand. Others view Jacob as countering Rebekah's plan but this effort cannot be sustained because Rebekah calls for unflinching loyalty. The narrator leaves this open. What is important here is that Jacob expresses his POV about Esau. This has also been read as an analepsis to refer to Gen 25:25 and as a prolepsis to highlight Gen 27:23. Furthermore Wenham sees the prolepsis of this characterisation of Esau playing a reverse role in Gen 37:31–33. He argues that Jacob disguises in kids' skin and deceives Isaac in Gen 27:23 and his sons use a kid to deceive him of Joseph's death (Wenham 1995:356).

²¹⁸ He places himself as Isaac's son and in confidence invites Isaac to eat his meal to bless him. Esau's portrait of himself suggests that he knows there is no other son to Isaac besides him and thus echoes the parental preferential treatment when he presents his meal to Isaac. When his identity is questioned he responds in the same way as Jacob had done. However, he lays more emphasis on the *sonship* – *I am Esau your son* ..., thus reiterating his unbreakable relation to Isaac.

narrative. Thus, the way the narrator portrays characters in this narrative section reflects what the characters or other characters have in mind. Yamasaki (2007:121) already noticed this and argues with respect to Uspensky's phraseological level as follows:

On this level, she (Berlin) writes: "This refers to the linguistic features in the discourse that indicate whose point of view is being expressed", and later she cites Uspensky's Phraseological level "specific features in the Hebrew text that indicate the point of view of the narrator or of the characters". These two quotes indicate that Berlin misses the point that Uspensky's phraseological plane pertains to shifts in point of view executed by the narrator adopting distinctive speech characteristics of character into narratorial speech.

I argue that while the shift in POV of one character is explicit on this level, there is an implicit effect which serves as an undertone in the readers' understanding of the narrative. When a reader approaches a text of this magnitude, these undertones or implicit meanings affect the reader's interpretation. Why would a narrator portray Esau in relation to Rebekah as *Esau her elder son* but Rebekah herself would use *your brother* rather than *my son* for Esau? Why would Isaac depict Jacob as *your brother* when he discovers the ruse? Why would Rebekah use *your brother* with respect to Esau when she sends Jacob off to Paddan Aram? As already proposed, a proper approach will be to consider both the explicit and implicit POVs.

3.6.2. Explicit and Implicit Point of View

Isaac

Identifier	Title/epithet	POV expressed	Explicit POV	Implicit POV	References
Narrator	Isaac his father	Jacob	Isaac is father	Jacob is son	27:22, 26, 30
		Esau	Isaac is father	Esau is son	27:32, 39, 28:8
	His father	Jacob	Isaac is father	Jacob is son	27:14, 18, 19, 31, 28:7
		Esau	Isaac is father	Esau is son	27:31, 34, 34, 38, 41
Rebekah	Your father	Jacob	Isaac is father	Jacob is son	27:6,9,10
Esau	My father	Esau	Isaac is father	Esau is son	27:31, 34, 38, 38, 41
Jacob	My father	Jacob	Isaac is father	Jacob is son	27:11, 18, 28:21

Rebekah

Identifier	Title/epithet	POV expressed	Explicit POV	Implicit POV	References
Narrator	Rebekah his mother	Jacob	Rebekah is mother	Jacob is son	27:11
	His mother	Jacob	Rebekah is mother	Jacob is son	27:13, 14, 14, 28:7
	Rebekah mother of...	Jacob	Rebekah is mother	Jacob is son	28:5
		Esau	Rebekah is mother	Esau is son	28:5

Isaac	Your mother	Faux Esau	Rebekah is mother	Jacob is son	27:29
		Jacob	Rebekah is mother	Jacob is son	28:22

Jacob

Identifier	Title/epithet	POV expressed	Explicit POV	Implicit POV	References
Narrator	Jacob her son	Rebekah	Rebekah is mother	Jacob is son	27:6,17
	Jacob her younger son	Rebekah	Rebekah is mother	Jacob is younger son	27:15,42
	His son	Isaac	Isaac is father	Jacob is son	27:20
Isaac	My son	Faux Esau	Isaac is father	Jacob is son	27:18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28
	Your brother	Faux Esau	Isaac is father	Jacob is son	27:9
		Jacob	Isaac is father	Jacob is son	27:35
Rebekah	My son	Jacob	Rebekah is mother	Jacob is son	27:7, 13, 43, 46
Esau	My brother	Esau	Esau is son	Jacob is son	27:41
	Jacob	Esau	Jacob is a deceiver	Esau is deceived	27:36
God	Abraham your father	Jacob	Abraham is Jacob's father	Jacob is son (Abraham's)	28:13

Esau

Identifier	Title/epithet	POV expressed	Explicit POV	Implicit POV	References
Narrator	Esau his son	Isaac	Isaac is father	Esau is son	27:5
	Esau his elder son	Isaac	Isaac is father	Esau is elder son	27:1
	Esau her elder son	Rebekah	Rebekah is mother	Esau is elder son	27:15, 42
	Esau his brother	Jacob	Jacob is son	Esau is son	27:23, 30
Isaac	My son	Isaac	Isaac is father	Esau is son	27:1, 37
	My son Esau	Isaac	Isaac is father	Esau is son	27:21, 24
	Esau	Isaac	Isaac is father	Esau is son	27:22
Rebekah	Your brother	Jacob	Jacob is son	Esau is son	27:44, 44
	Esau your brother	Jacob	Jacob is son	Esau is son	
Jacob	Esau my brother	Jacob	Jacob is son	Esau is son	27:11
Esau	His son	Isaac	Isaac is father	Esau is son	27:31
	I am your son, your firstborn Esau	Isaac	Esau is firstborn son	Isaac is father	27:32

Table 3.5 Implicit and Explicit point of View of Genesis 27–28

The use of epithets in this narrative section underscores the fact that this narrative is centered on family relations.²¹⁹ From the tables above, the use of *my son*, *her son*, *his son* serves as a comparison and contrast between Jacob and Esau. Also, where this applies the narrator or characters involved want to remind readers of the ensuing conflict. From the implicit POVs, the conflict is that of *sonship*, thus taking the readers analeptically to the parental preferential treatment.²²⁰ Albeit, the *sonship* in contest here is analeptically confirmed as the 'son of promise' (Gen 18:10), who is to inherit the Abrahamic covenant. Implicitly, Jacob and Esau are sons from the narrator's POV as well as Isaac's and Rebekah's, and the question of inheritance is at the core of the varying POVs. Thus, Isaac's use of *your brother* to designate Jacob does not cancel Jacob's *sonship* but highlights the fact that Isaac considers Jacob as a *son* with no filial attachment on grounds that he is unable to provide him game (a reflection of parental preferential treatment). Also, the use of *your brother* to designate Jacob after the blessing could be a way to remind Esau that they (Jacob and Esau) are of the same essence and keeping the family bond is important. However, Rebekah maintains her filial relations with both sons following the way they are anchored to her. If this is the case, then Isaac's use of *your brother* in Gen 27:35 ties with Rebekah's use of *your brother* to designate Esau twice before Jacob's departure to Paddan Aram. Here therefore the narrator highlights Rebekah's purposeful use of *your brother*. Although Esau plans to kill Jacob, Rebekah makes Jacob understand that the plan is based on Esau's anger. She thus assures Jacob that Esau's anger will cease and Jacob will return home still as a son. This future reunion that Rebekah highlights does not take place in this narrative section, nor does it take place in Rebekah's life.

3.6.3. *The Use of הנה*

The particle *הנה* has allomorphs (e.g. הִנֵּן) which often appear indiscriminately within a narrative unit. The allomorphs function in the same way as *הנה*. *הנה* "calls for attention in a situation either for vividness or for its logical connection with some other event"²²¹ (Waltke and O'Connor 1990:627), "calls attention to a certain statement as a whole or a single word out of a statement"²²² (Ibid. 300, see also Muraoka 1985:137–140), "draws attention to what one is to say and ... the attention of the hearer ... through anticipation, ..." (J-M §105c), or "emphasizes immediacy, the here-and-nowness of a situation" (Lamdin 1971:168–171, Muraoka 1985:138–140 and Waltke and O'Connor 1990:675–676). Besides, Waltke and O'Connor argue that it can be used "as a *bridge* to introduce with emotion a noun clause or perception, either after a verb of perception or after a new situation of perception is described"²²³ (Waltke and O'Connor 1990:676), or it can serve to "introduce a *fact* upon which a following statement or command is based" (Ibid.).²²⁴ It can also be used to report surprise especially when used with verbs of motion (Andersen 1980:95).²²⁵ This particle undergoes inflection

²¹⁹ It is important to note here that the family is a social unit and these appellations expose the hierarchy in the family relations of *father-mother-son*. This is the focus of chapter 4.

²²⁰ I hesitate to agree with those who compare this conflict to the conflict between Isaac and Ishma'el because Ishma'el (Genesis 21) is neither designated as the child of promise nor is he a fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham. Here we have two sons who are both worthy to be sons of the promise and whose birth comes as an extension of God's promise to Abraham.

²²¹ Gen 6:17, Ex 7:15 and 8:16, 1Sam 3:11 and 2Kgs 7:2.

²²² Gen 20:3, Ex 9:17–18 and 2Kgs 7:2.

²²³ 1Sam 30:3, 1Kgs 3:21 and 10:7.

²²⁴ Judg 3:25; 1Kgs 3:21, 10:7, 1Sam 30:3 and Jer 26:14.

²²⁵ Gen 25:24.

with pronoun suffixes and by this “realizes the subject of the sentence” (Ibid. 94). It may be used before nouns or verbal clauses (Gen 28:15), or may take the subject of a noun clause (GKC §147b). Although it still requires a subject before a predicate when it is used with a noun clause, it is frequently used alone with the pronoun suffixes in the form *הנני* as a response to an address (Ibid.), thus predicating “present and local existence” (Andersen 1980:94).²²⁶ “In its syntax, *הן* introducing a NmCl does not appear to be different from *הנה*” (Michel 2004:117 and J-M §154c). It also emphasises an assertion (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:676 and J-M §164a). Muraoka states that there is an element of newness, importance or surprise in the use of *הנה* which can be supported by its “origin as a demonstrative or deictic element” (Muraoka 1985:138). *הנה* also appear together with *נא* as *הנה-נא* in a context where the volitional verb forms are absent (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:579). Joüon and Muraoka (§105c) argue that in this combination, the *הנה* “draws attention to what one is going to say, and *נא* begs the hearer to pay attention to the thing announced by *הנה* and (through anticipation) to look favourably upon the request that follows....” This combination is often used in narration to “attract attention to what is perceived by a speaker, narrator or character” (Ibid. §105d). The attraction is always something new, important and surprising. In this case *הנה* almost always comes before the clause and is often reinforced by *נא* (Ibid.). When *הנה* is combined with *ועתה*, there is a swing in argument, which makes the speaker’s *point of view* distinct from what precedes it. *עתה* is a temporary adverb with a static form and used in a “situation of speaking” (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:658). As a “stative temporary deictic” it translates the English “Now” (Ibid.). When used, *עתה* either lays emphasis or presents a logical switch, which commentators and translators often merge in time words (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:663,667 and J-M§93g). The form *ועתה* has been found to present a logical force which indicates a shift or swing in an argument. In accordance with this, Waltke and O’Connor (1990:667) write:

The logical force of *עתה* is usually confined to the combination *ועתה*, introducing a shift in argumentative tack with a continuity in subject and reference.

From the combination *הנה...ועתה* one may argue that while the *הנה* draws the attention of the listener, *ועתה* introduces a switch from the reported speech to the speaker’s perception. Berlin picks up on this perspective of *הנה* and argues that the *bridge* in perception indicates a shift in POV on the narrative level. Thus, she posits that *הנה* is an indicator of *point of view* which has often been omitted or not mentioned by scholars (Berlin 1983:62 and 91). In Genesis 27–28, there are 10 occurrences of *הנה*—three of which are used on the narrative level and seven in dialogues and monologues. Of the seven occurrences in the discursive section, four are used in combination with *ועתה* in the form *הנה...ועתה* or *עתה הנה*. I construe that these occurrences coincide with the following meanings: (a) Call attention (Gen 27:11, 37); (b) Reinforce affirmation (Gen 28:15. Emphasis with no switch in perspective or logical argument); (c) Surprise and unexpectedness (Gen 28:12–13. Change in perspective expressing *point of view*); and (d) Logical and emphatic (Gen 27:2–3, 6–9, 36 and 42–43. Shift in arguments and/or change in perspective on the discursive level expressing *point of view*).

²²⁶ Gen 27:1 and 18.

1. Call Attention

In Gen 27:11 and 37, the speakers seek the attention of their addressees. Berlin calls this the “attention-getter” which “helps the hearer to zero in on a particular person or event” with “Look!” as the best translation (Berlin 1983:91). Jacob calls Rebekah’s attention by the use of הֵן—an allomorph of הִנֵּה. When Jacob presents the physical difference between Esau and himself (as an objection to Rebekah’s plan) he says: “*Look, my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man*” (Gen 27:11). Also, in Gen 27:37, Isaac tells Esau: “*Look, I have made him lord over you and all his brothers I have given to him as his servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What can I do, my son?*” Isaac has already blessed Jacob. Facing pressure from Esau he is forced to recount the wordings of the blessing. Thus, he uses הֵן to call Esau’s attention to this.

2. Affirmation Reinforcement

In Gen 28:15, God speaks to Jacob in the vision at Bethel. After God introduces himself and recounts the Abrahamic promise, God reinforces or affirms the covenant with Jacob by promising him protection, possession and providence. God’s affirmation is signalled using וְהִנֵּה. The emphasis here is reinforcement with no switch in perspective or logical argument.

3. Surprise or Unexpectedness

Three occurrences of הִנֵּה in Genesis 27–28 indicate surprise and define the characters’ perspectives. In Jacob’s dream at Bethel, the narrator introduces three clauses with וְהִנֵּה. He writes: “*And he dreamt, and behold a ladder on the earth and its head touching the heavens, and behold messengers of God ascending and descending in it, and behold the Lord stood upon it*” (Gen 28:12–13). One use of וְהִנֵּה is to indicate surprise and Andersen argues that this is more visible when וְהִנֵּה is used along with motion verbs (Andersen 1985:94–95. Also conf. Muraoka 1985:138). Berlin notes this in her study of Ruth 4:1 and argues that what is important is “the suddenness in the presentation of information to the reader or a character... (and) has nothing to do with the time lapse between events” (Berlin 1983:92–93). However, she also argues that וְהִנֵּה can occur without a verb and functions to switch *points of view* between the narrator and the character (Ibid. 62). A quick succession of events is also identified in these verses, with no time lapse. Here too, the use of וְהִנֵּה underpins the surprising, abrupt and unexpected way in which Jacob sees events in the vision. Thus, the triple use of וְהִנֵּה serves to indicate the suddenness of events in Jacob’s perception and conveys Jacob’s POV.

4. Logical Switch and Emphasis

I have argued that when הִנֵּה is combined with וְעַתָּה, in the form הִנֵּה...וְעַתָּה or עַתָּה, וְהִנֵּה there is a swing in argument, thus representing the speaker’s POV distinct from what precedes it—be it a reported speech or a recapitulation of what is known in the narrative or a past event. Three occurrences are found in Genesis 27. In the *first* instance Isaac instructs Esau to bring him game so that he can eat in return for the blessing and says: “*Look, (וְהִנֵּה) I am old and my eyes are weak from seeing*” (Gen 27:2). Isaac attaches the particle נָא which helps to seek a favourable response from Esau. Thus, the הִנֵּה draws Esau’s attention and the נָא pleads for his favourable response. This is closely followed by “*and now (וְעַתָּה), take, please, all your bows and*

quiver" (Gen 27:3). *וַעֲתָה* represents a shift in argument and perspective from Isaac's situation of blindness and old age (which according to the narrative is known to the reader), to what Isaac perceives (*something new and unknown to Esau*, a command to go hunt). In the *second* use, Rebekah reports the conversation between Isaac and Esau to Jacob saying: "Look, *וְהִנֵּה* I heard your father telling your brother Esau (Gen 27:6–7), and now *וַעֲתָה*, my son, listen to my voice; to that which I command you" (Gen 27:8). As it is with the case of Isaac, *וְהִנֵּה* calls Jacob's attention to Isaac's plan to hand the blessing to Esau and *וַעֲתָה* introduces Rebekah's perspective of what she wants Jacob to do (a command that requires obedience). Isaac's perspective is already known to the reader. What is new here is Rebekah's perception which is introduced by *וַעֲתָה*. The *third* use comes in the form *וְהִנֵּה עָתָה* in Gen 27:36 – "*Is he not called Jacob? For he has deceived me this second time? He took my birthright and behold (וְהִנֵּה) now (עָתָה) he has taken my blessing.*" Esau begins with a recapitulation of what had happened in another narrative section and combines *behold* and *now*. It is difficult to justify a logical switch here since the information that follows *עָתָה* is also known to the reader. However, I posit that this combination functions in the same way as the others. Having recalled the previous deceit of Jacob, Esau presents his perception about the blessing (which is not known to the reader). For the first time Esau expresses his opinion on the blessing—*my blessing*. The shift in perspective is seen in his claim of the blessing (*בְּרִכְתִּי—my blessing*). This is Esau's perspective when it dawns on him that Jacob has usurped the blessing. He has nothing to think about except that Jacob has deceived him. He lays emphasis on Jacob's double deceit—birthrights and blessing. Thus, the *play on words* and the meaning of Jacob's name combine with *וְהִנֵּה* to express Esau's POV with respect to the blessing. The *fourth* use comes in Gen 27:42–43 where Rebekah reports Esau's plan to murder Jacob. She says: "*Behold (וְהִנֵּה), Esau you brother consoles himself...and now (וַעֲתָה), listen to my voice.*" Rebekah applies the same approach as she does when she reports Isaac's plans. She uses *וְהִנֵּה* to recapitulate Esau's plan and *וַעֲתָה* to introduce new information which is the plan to see Jacob's escape. There is a logical swing from the information already known to that which Rebekah presents. Thus, her POV is conveyed.

Berlin concentrates on the narrative level and treats *וְהִנֵּה* as if its use as a *marker of PV* goes solely in line with its grammatical indicator of surprise and suddenness (Berlin 1983:62–63, 92). When she talks about the discursive level, she does not identify the impact of other markers of POV or particles that cause a shift in argument or perspective. This takes place especially where there is a direct speech involved in the discourse—direct speech in a direct speech. In this narrative section *וַעֲתָה* has been identified as one of the particles that cause a shift in argument and I have construed that when used together with *וְהִנֵּה*, it introduces new information not yet known to the reader, thus giving the perspective of the character to the event in question. This is the case in Gen 27:2–3 and 6–8. Also, Esau's combination, *וְהִנֵּה עָתָה*, probably suggests that the birthright loss is not as important to him as the blessing. His argument swings to the direction of the blessing—*לִקְחֵה עָתָה וְהִנֵּה עָתָה*. Therefore, besides the use of *וְהִנֵּה* as a marker of POV on the narrative level, its use together with *וַעֲתָה* at the discursive level indicates a logical swing in argument and expresses the perception of the speaker. Its logical use marks a shift in POV.

3.6.4. Direct Discourse and Narration

A narrative contains both the narrative section and the discursive section. However, the discursive section could have an embedded narrative or an embedded discourse. Berlin studies how the narrative sections interact with the discursive sections to indicate switches in POV between the narrator and the characters. An important contribution of POV is its use to identify full-fledged characters, based on the way other characters are anchored to them (Berlin 1983:43ff). Adopting this position, Runge has argued, for example, that the anchoring expression "*Abraham's son*" grounds Isaac to the narrative (Runge 2005:63), in the same way as "*his brothers*" used with respect to Joseph does in Genesis 37 (Berlin 1983:48ff). Thus, *Abraham's POV* as well as *Joseph's* is conveyed by both anchoring expressions. Genesis 27–28 contains both the narrative and discursive sections and it has been found that within the discursive sections other discourses or narratives are embedded. Berlin argues that in an interaction between a narrative and a discursive, the narrator either affirms or adopts the POV of the character. As earlier mentioned, direct speeches help the reader to know what a character thinks, how a character feels and what the character plans. Thus, what is important to this study is how switches in POV give the reader an understanding of what a character thinks or feels or plans or what a character's opinion is. Applying this to Genesis 27–28, one will notice many switches between the characters and the narrator.

At the onset of the narrative, Esau is anchored to Isaac as *Esau his elder son*. Esau remains anchored to Isaac in the direct speech where Isaac commissions him to go hunt game and prepare a savoury meal (Gen 27:1–5). Rebekah is introduced in Gen 27:5 but this does not cause a shift because the narrator is giving information which takes place simultaneously with Isaac's commission to Esau. Esau remains anchored to Isaac as he goes to the field. Thus Gen 27:1–5 conveys Isaac's POV. The narrative now switches to introduce Rebekah and Jacob. Jacob is anchored to Rebekah as *Jacob her son* until Gen 27:11, where there is a shift in perspective. When Rebekah commands Jacob to take a counter plan, she uses a direct speech in which is embedded a quotation. The quotation gives Rebekah's opinion on what the conversation between Isaac and Esau is all about and the direct speech sets her counter plan. Note that Rebekah adds '*in the presence of the Lord*' (Gen 27:7). The shift in Gen 27:11 anchors Rebekah to Jacob as *Rebekah his mother* until Gen 27:15. Prior to this, Jacob engages in a direct speech which expresses his opinion and feeling about Rebekah's plan by highlighting the physical difference between Esau and himself in two NmCIs. Here Esau is anchored to Jacob as *Esau my brother hairy man*. Rebekah remains anchored to Jacob as *his mother* as she reinforces her plan and commands Jacob's obedience, thus conveying Jacob's POV. In a narrative within a narrative discourse, there is a switch back to Rebekah with Esau and Jacob anchored to her as *her elder son* and *her younger son* respectively. Here the narrator presents Rebekah's actions as a counter to Jacob's question in Gen 27:11. Rebekah's POV is upheld until Gen 27:17.

Gen 27:18 puts Jacob as the focus, with Isaac anchored to him as *his father*. Isaac remains anchored to Jacob as Jacob introduces himself and invites him to eat the meal. In Gen 27:20 there is a shift in POV from Jacob to Isaac. Isaac becomes the referential point and Jacob is anchored to him as *his son*. The next switch is in Gen 27:22 and Jacob returns as the anchoring point with Isaac being the anchored character. The narrator's circumstantial clause in Gen 27:27 maintains Jacob's POV. This POV is maintained throughout the rest of the dialogue and the blessing until Esau's return from the field (Gen 27:30). Isaac remains anchored as *Jacob's father* and Esau returns from the field anchored as *Jacob's brother*. The next shift in POV (Gen 27:31)

presents Esau preparing his game. Isaac is anchored to Esau as *his father*. Esau remains as the point of focus for the whole dialogue between him and Isaac. Isaac remains anchored to Esau as *his father* and Jacob anchored to Esau as *his brother* (Gen 27:41). Both Esau and the narrator apply various clause types to maintain Esau's POV. Esau depicts himself in a NmCl as firstborn, Isaac panics and recalls the irreversibility of the blessing and Esau weeps and meditates in his heart to kill *his brother*. Esau's POV has been upheld since Gen 27:30. At this point, there is a switch again to Rebekah (she gets information and invites Jacob to reveal a counter plan to Esau's murder plot). Both Esau and Jacob are anchored to Rebekah as *her elder and younger sons* respectively. Thus, Rebekah's POV is portrayed.

At the beginning of Genesis 28, there is another shift in focus to Isaac's POV. Isaac is the initiator and the narrative continues to convey his POV. In Gen 28:6–9, the narrator conveys Esau's POV with respect to the second blessing and Jacob's obedience to Isaac and Rebekah with a double switch. First is Esau's POV on the second blessing, a shift to Jacob to present his obedience (Gen 28:7). Here Isaac and Rebekah are anchored to Jacob. The next shift goes back to Esau as he marries an Ishmaelite. From Gen 28:10, the narrative continues with Jacob's POV to the end. I already discussed the use of הנה in Gen 28:12–15. Gen 28:16–17 is an interior monologue made by Jacob to exclaim and affirm the presence of God in the place where he laid. He continues with the same kind of monologue in Gen 28:20–22 as he recounts God's promise of protection, possession and providence. Meanwhile, the narrator shows Jacob's actions in Gen 28:18 as a response to his perception about the dream and what God has promised.

Genesis 27–28 is mostly made of dialogues. Within these are frequent switches between characters and narrative comments. Some of the direct speeches have narratives embedded in them while others have other direct speeches embedded in them. Another point to note is that not all switches in character or between characters can be regarded as shifts in POV. The unanswered question is: where is the narrator's POV visible apart from narrative comments? Even here, the question remains whether the narrator is actually portraying his/her POV or reinforcing or affirming a character's POV. An example is Gen 27:23

ולא הכירו

"And he did not recognise him"

כִּי־הָיוּ יָדָיו כִּדְי עֵשָׂו אָחִיו שְׁעָרָת

"For his hands were as hairy as the hands of Esau his brother"

וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ

"And he blessed him"

Here the narrator picks up on Isaac's POV and affirms that Isaac is deceived because Jacob has hairy hands which look like those of Esau. When it comes to the narrative sections, I agree with Yamasaki that the narrator adopts the character's POV on the narrative level and presents it as if it is the narrator speaking.

3.6.5. Summary of Characterisation and Character's Point of View

In the study of POV, I followed Berlin's approach with a focus on naming, the use of הנה and direct discourse and narration techniques. At the beginning, I wondered for example why Esau would call Jacob by name when they are in a blessing clash and call him *my brother* when he plans to kill him. This is in relation to Berlin's notion of naming which in Ruth and some other narratives influences the reader's perspective. She argues that it makes a difference whether Ruth is called the Moabitess,

daughter-in-law, my daughter, wife of Machlon or by name, and demonstrates in her studies on Ruth that Ruth's naming provides a progression from a foreigner to a wife who becomes part of the line of King David (Berlin 1983:59–60 and 87–91). After studying *naming* in Genesis 27–28, I have found out that all epithets are family-centered. Isaac and Rebekah are *father* and *mother* respectively, while Jacob and Esau are *sons*. The appellations *his son*, *her son*, *your brother*, and *my brother* are literary tools applied by the narrator to reinforce the conflict and parental preferential treatment that is introduced after their birth. Also, I have highlighted other reasons for the use of names by the narrator which include among others, analeptic and proleptic reading and also for structural purposes.

Applying Berlin's use of הנה as a marker of POV, I found out that three of the 10 uses followed her argument. However, I also proposed that the use of the logical particle עתה after הנה provides a switch in argument and thus a switch in POV. Four examples of the use of עתה after הנה as markers of POV have been identified in Genesis 27–28. Under *direct discourse and narration*, most of the switches of characters coincided with shifts in POV. At the end I still questioned how the narrator's POV can be separated from the characters' if one considers that whatever the narrator says is an affirmation of a character's POV. When Yamasaki studies Uspensky's phraseological level, she argues that the narrator adopts the character's perception and presents it in the narrative (Yamasaki 2007:121). Based upon this I argue that the narrator's POV in a narrative is hard to find, at least in this narrative section. The study of the way in which narrative discourse affects the reading of the text has been found not only to be useful for determining the POV but also for structuring of narratives. Thus, Berlin writes with respect to direct discourse (1985:64):

Direct discourse, besides adding to the scenic nature of the narrative, is the most dramatic way of conveying... characters' point of view.

This implies that the interaction between narrator and characters also has a structural effect on the narrative, besides the other methods of characterisation. Furthermore, characterisation affects the reader's understanding of the narrative and this will be the focus of the following section.

3.7. THE EFFECT OF THE METHOD OF CHARACTERISATION ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF NARRATIVES

In chapter 2, overspecification or redundancy has been identified as one of the techniques used to activate, reactivate or trace participants. When de Regt reads this text, he argues from a linguistic perspective that the overspecification by use of name and other epithets or a redundant extension is the narrator's way to indicate tension or apprehension (de Regt 1999b:57–59, 1999b:69–71). He also demonstrates that overspecification marks the importance of the information that follows, be it a climax or emphasis, surprise or unexpectedness, suspense or even apprehension (Ibid.). Runge follows on and indicates that some forms of redundancy, especially within the narrative section of Genesis 27, is the narrator's technique to cataphorically highlight the importance of the speech that follows (Runge 2007:151 and 200). While this has a linguistic implication, it also has a literary inference. Hence, Wenger indicates the literary effect of overspecification as she writes (2012:179):

sometimes when the referent of a verb is obvious, the author nevertheless goes to the trouble of referring to

the participant with a full noun phrase – sometimes a complex one – repeating information the reader already knows. In English, this sort of over-specification sounds clunky and inept. In Hebrew, however, it is a subtle literary technique, similar to the techniques moviemakers use when they zoom in for a moment on some seemingly incidental detail which is in fact very important to the story line.²²⁷

There is no doubt that the narrative in Genesis 27–28 is marked by tensions and emotions with each character not actually sure of the outcome of any plans. While this is true for all characters, it is mostly true for Rebekah and Jacob. No reader will deny that Rebekah is emotionally unstable before, during and after her plans with Jacob. While Jacob goes away, she remains uncertain of what will become of her beloved. In the same light, the narrator has presented Isaac's and Esau's apprehension by saying that Isaac trembles and Esau cries and plans to kill Jacob. In addition, I will argue that overspecification or redundancy is also the narrator's technique to break a narrative into smaller units to aid readers to be able to process it easily. Thus, redundancy has a structuring effect. In this section, I will study how this narrative technique helps a reader process, follow and understand the traits of a character within various sections as well as the whole narrative.²²⁸ It is also worth noting that redundancy in this narrative section often coincides with the POV of the character. When the narrator portrays Isaac by name,²²⁹ *his father*,²³⁰ or *Isaac his father*,²³¹ I construe that Isaac is not only father but custodian of the patriarchal blessing.²³² The pattern is applied as follows:

²²⁷ Wenger applies this to Laban in Genesis 25–31, the use of Hivites (Joshua 9), Caleb (Josh 14:6–14), Heber (Josh 4:17–22), Ruth (1:22, 2:2, 21, 4:5 and 10), Amnon (2Samuel 13) and Elijah (1Kings 18), and argues that the redundant information “is deliberately reintroduced to shape the reader's attitude and/or expectations concerning the character(s) involved” (Wenger 2012:179–184, especially 181).

²²⁸ At the beginning, it is important to mention that I am not interested in the various ways that literary analysts name various structures. This is because the use of words such as sentence, paragraph, scene and/or episode is elusive. From the literary perspective, there is no clear definition of the beginning and end of these structures. Definitions tend to follow the way the literary analyst wants to read the text. In this section, I will follow the definition of clause and paragraph from a linguistic perspective and from the perspective of ETCBC. My reason is to determine how the ETCBC database encoding can help literary analysts have a unified way of structuring a narrative section.

²²⁹ Gen 27:1, 5, 20, 30, 33, 37, 46, 28:1, 5 and 6.

²³⁰ Gen 27:18, 19, 31 (twice), and 34 (twice), 38, 41 and 28:7.

²³¹ Gen 27:22, 26, 30, 32 and 39.

²³² In chapter 2, I argue that the division of the patriarchal narratives is better understood in accordance with the *Toledoth* formulae. Gen 25:19 therefore introduces the story of Isaac as a continuation of that of Abraham. Isaac continues to be an individual even after the birth of Jacob and Esau, and shows this in his love for Esau, based on his appetite for game. Until Genesis 27, his role as head of family has not been seen. One may argue that Genesis 26 sets him within the ranks of his father as dispenser of the covenant blessing. The difference between Abraham (Genesis 20) and Isaac is that when Abraham fears to declare Sarah as his wife, she is childless. Isaac has twins with Rebekah, yet he still says the same because fear that he will be killed. He is still an individual and has yet to take his place as head of the family. The only mention of him after the birth of the twins is that he loves Esau because he is a hunter and man of the field; and because he eats Esau's game (Gen 25:28). When he tries to execute his role, it becomes difficult to differentiate between his personal actions or preferences and his actions as custodian of the patriarchal blessing. He is Isaac, yet he has the role to pass the mantle to the one who deserves it. The announcement of the blessing to Esau is tied to Isaac's appetite, yet this is a transfer of the patriarchal blessing. Isaac must make a difference between what the covenant wants and what he

- *Use of name portrays Isaac as head of immediate family:*

- First, when Isaac commands Esau to hunt and prepare game in exchange for his blessing, he expresses his egocentrism and love for food. This ties in with his love for Esau in Gen 25:28 which is based on food (Gen 27:1).
- Second, when Rebekah eavesdrops, the same method is applied. This is a simultaneous act and Isaac is seen as the same egocentric person.
- Third, when Isaac reacts to Jacob's request to eat and bless him (Gen 27:20–21), the focus is still Isaac and food. Isaac questions the fast catch and tries to identify the one presenting the meal thus underscoring its importance to him.

Gen 27:20 מה-זה מהררת למצא בני

“Why this, have found so quickly my son?”

Gen 27:21 גשה-נא ואמשך בני האתה זה בני עשו אמ-לא

“Draw near, let me feel you my son if you are Esau my son or not”

- *Use of name portrays Isaac as custodian of the patriarchal blessing:*

The return of Isaac in Gen 27:46 after the blessing fiasco does not seem to be the same Isaac prior to the blessing. He is shown cooperating with Rebekah to foster a proper handling of the patriarchal blessing. The narrative does not condemn the attitude of Rebekah and Jacob, and the unrequested second blessing that Isaac gives to Jacob probably means that his mentality towards the blessing has changed. It is probable that after the blessing conflict, Isaac comes to understand that the patriarchal blessing is not based on personal likings. He thus agrees with Rebekah about Jacob's marriage to his kinsmen and voluntarily offers a second blessing before Jacob's departure to Paddan Aram (Gen 28:1 and 5). I construe here that Isaac acts as a custodian of the patriarchal blessings. Evidence is that the second blessing echoes the Abrahamic promise of Genesis 12 and here the narrator uses Isaac's name.

- *Use of his father portrays Isaac as custodian of the blessing*

The narrator portrays Isaac as *his father* only within the context of the blessing. I construe here that this method has an analeptic function and ties with the way the other characters use the appellation for Isaac. Both Jacob and Esau know that the blessing at stake is patriarchal and the recipient will be endowed with the promise of their ancestor and forefather Abraham along with all the benefits. Two applications are observed:

- First, the narrator uses *his father* when Jacob and Esau present themselves as candidates for the blessing.

likes. The narrator grapples with the dual nature of Isaac. He is Isaac and the one to dispense the patriarchal blessing; and the only way to make readers understand is to try to highlight where Isaac's personal liking overshadows his role as custodian of the patriarchal blessing and vice versa. When he overcomes the differences in himself, the narrator uses the name this time to represent “Isaac” who now understands that he is the custodian of blessing whose dispensation is not based on personal greed and satisfaction (Gen 27:46, 28:1, 6 and 7).

Gen 27:18	ויבא אל-אביו "And he (Jacob) came to <i>his father</i> "
Gen 27:19	ויאמר יעקב אל-אביו "And Jacob said to <i>his father</i> ."
Gen 27:31	ויבא לאביו "And he (Esau) came to <i>his father</i> ."
Gen 27:31	ויאמר לאביו "And he (Esau) said to <i>his father</i> "
Gen 27:34	ויאמר לאביו "And he (Esau) said to <i>his father</i> "
Gen 27:38	ויאמר עשו אל-אביו "And Esau said to <i>his father</i> "

- Second, the narrator uses *his father* when he presents Jacob's or Esau's reaction to the words of Isaac after the blessing.

Gen 27:34	כשמע עשו את-דברי אביו "When Esau heard the words of <i>his father</i> "
Gen 27:41	וישטם עשו את-יעקב על-הברכה אשר ברכו אביו "And Esau hated Jacob upon the blessing which <i>his</i> (Esau) <i>father</i> blessed him (Jacob)"
Gen 28: 7	וישמע יעקב אל-אביו ואל-אמו "And Jacob obeyed <i>his father</i> and his mother" ²³³

- *Use of Isaac his father* portrays Isaac as custodian of the patriarchal blessing: While the narrator's use of name presents two distinct types of Isaac (pre-blessing and post- blessing Isaac); the use of *Isaac his father* presents two natures of Isaac in conflict. This method is used five times. At every instance, Isaac is caught in a dilemma as he doubts the recipient and is convinced by all the evidence.²³⁴ When the narrator uses the epithet *father* to depict Isaac as custodian of the patriarchal blessing, Isaac is battling within himself to make sure that he hands the blessing to Esau. At the same time the one who presents himself as Esau is Jacob. Isaac senses a *faux Esau*²³⁵ but all his investigative techniques prove the contrary.²³⁶ The following instances are noted:

²³³ The context of Gen 28:7 is Jacob's departure to Paddan Aram after Isaac's second blessing.

²³⁴ Isaac is self-centred and driven by love for game. At the same time, he understands that the blessing is a transfer of the patriarchal promise.

²³⁵ I have borrowed this term from Zucker (2011:47). He uses it to depict Jacob when he presents himself in place of Esau. However, he argues that Jacob's parents made a trick and put him in darkness so that he might feel that he was stealing the blessing. I disagree with this opinion and use *faux Esau* to identify all the instances where Isaac portrays Jacob as *my son* with the conviction that he is talking to Esau (Gen 27:25, 26, 27, 28).

²³⁶ While Isaac does not call Jacob *son* consciously, he uses this epithet to depict him more than he uses it for Esau. *Esau* is Isaac's choice – *his son*, but *Jacob/Esau* is *his firstborn son*. Reading from a Jewish perspective, Cohen draws from Fokkelman to argue that Jacob and Esau are two attitudes of the same person. He explains that Jacob described as *יחיד*, is a greater whole with Esau *ויחיד* and that Jacob's blessing encounter with Isaac is a manifestation of a strange nature not known to Isaac. Thus, Isaac

Gen 27:22	ויגש יעקב אל-יצחק אביו "And Jacob drew near to Isaac his father"
Gen 27:26	ויאמר אליו יצחק אביו "And Isaac his father said to him (Jacob)"
Gen 27:30	ויהי אך יצא יעקב מאת פני יצחק אביו "When Jacob had just departed from the presence of Isaac his father"
Gen 27:32	ויאמר לו יצחק אביו "And Isaac his father said to him (Esau)"
Gen 27:39	ויען יצחק אביו "And Isaac his father answered him (Esau)"

In Gen 27:22, 26 and 30, Jacob/Esau is being addressed while in Gen 27:32 and 39, Esau is the addressee. When Isaac thinks that he has accomplished his mission as יצחק אביו "Isaac his father" to bless עשו בכרך "Esau your firstborn," he is reminded of his role again as יצחק אביו "Isaac his father," with the return of the same בן בכרך עשו "your son, your firstborn Esau," that he just finished to bless. Thus, he is gripped by great fear because he has handed the patriarchal blessing to Jacob. Pressure from Esau then leads יצחק אביו "Isaac his father" (Gen 27:39) to present him with a token which reinforces the protection of the patriarchal blessing already issued to Jacob. Apart from the above parameters, the narrator's comments about Isaac also give an insight to his traits. In Gen 27:23, the narrator portrays Isaac as one who has been deceived by Jacob.

Gen 27:23	ולא הכירו כיהיו ידיו עשו אחיו שערת "And he did not recognise him because his hands were as hairy as the hands of Esau his brother"
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The narrator applies the same technique to identify Rebekah with similar literary effects. Rebekah is identified within the context of the blessing by name and at every instance her actions affect the course of the blessing.

- *When the narrator uses Rebekah's name*, Rebekah is actively acquiring information to later devise a means to secure the blessing for Jacob. She is portrayed by the narrator as one who is out to protect Jacob's claim to the blessing. She often gets information and sets out a plan that will safeguard the blessings from being handed to Esau. This also creates a symmetry which reinforces the dysfunctional nature of the family. There are two sides of equals: Isaac–Esau and Rebekah–Jacob. After introducing Isaac and his plan, there is need to introduce Rebekah with a counter plan, thus intensifying the crises within the family. In Gen 27:5, she is actively eavesdropping on Isaac's plans with Esau. When Esau departs, she creates a plan to acquire the blessings for Jacob. Following Jacob's complaint in Gen 27:12, Rebekah devises another plan to clothe Jacob with the skin of the lambs and also put Esau's best garments upon him.

knows that it is Jacob standing before him but his attitude is strange (conf. Norman 1983:331–342, especially 335–339). Although this argument cannot be sustained, it is indicative of the dual or multi-complex natures of characters in this narrative section which is very important to the understanding of their acts and motives.

- When the narrator uses *his mother*, Rebekah is active in preparation towards Isaac's demands for the blessing, expressing her willingness to bear any consequences and requiring Jacob's unquestionable obedience. In Gen 27:13, Rebekah accepts to bear any curse that might come as a consequence of her plan and requires Jacob's unquestionable obedience. In Gen 27:14 she secures Jacob's obedience and prepares the lambs to meet Isaac's taste for game and in Gen 28:7 she, together with Isaac, secures Jacob's obedience and Jacob sets out to Paddan Aram.²³⁷
- The narrator uses *Rebekah his mother* once. Here Jacob raises the question of the physical difference between his brother and himself; and also expresses fear of an impending curse (another type of blessing) if the plan fails. This portrays Rebekah as a woman of insight and determination. She is *Rebekah—a mother and a matriarch*.²³⁸

The narrator's method of characterising Jacob and Esau also has literary effects on the understanding of the narrative. Apart from the names, which are constantly used in the narrative to keep the character in the reader's memory at each instance, other methods serve mostly to provide contrast between Jacob and Esau.

First is *Esau his elder son* (Gen 27:1): This reminds the reader of the words of the oracle in Gen 25:23, the birth order of the twins, and sets the stage in the mind of the reader that Esau is the rightful owner of the blessing as the elder son.

Second is the use of *Esau his son* (Gen 27:5) and *Jacob her son* (Gen 27:6, 17): There is a contrast here based on the parents' love for each son (Genesis 25). This introduces the conflict in the narrative by emphasising the parental preferential treatment of Jacob and Esau. It is the first time that these children will present the meaning of their differences and the context is that of the blessing. Esau will be fulfilling his distinction as a *man of the field* (rough and hairy) while Jacob will be fulfilling his as a *man of the tents* (smooth). This conflict is reinforced using *my son* or *your brother* by both parents.

Third is the use of *Esau her elder son* and *Jacob her younger son* (Gen 27:15, 42): This appears in the narrative twice as a contrast between Esau and Jacob (both acknowledged by Rebekah as her sons). However, at each appearance, Rebekah is

²³⁷ Two issues are important here: First, there is Esau's threat to kill Jacob during the funeral of Isaac. Second, Jacob has to manage the patriarchal promise within the chosen lineage. Both ways, the blessing is at stake and securing Jacob's obedience maintains the proper lineage to the blessing and this solves both issues. This is still the creativity of Rebekah.

²³⁸ Like Sarah before her, Rebekah has to secure the blessing to the rightful heir. While Isaac's dispensation of the blessing is based on love for food, no reason is mentioned of Rebekah's love for Jacob. Also, the fact that Esau does not use the epithet "mother" for Rebekah is evidence that he relies on his game bait to secure the blessing from Isaac. I use *Matriarch* not as an undertone to patriarch but assume the meaning of Turner when she argues that Rebekah is qualified to be an ancestor on an equal plane with Abraham. She argues with respect to the Genesis narrative that "the narrator invites us to consider Rebekah as the hero who follows Abraham, a hero who carves her own substantial niche in the narrative flow. By analysing the final form of the Genesis narrative, we can examine Rebekah's contribution and contrast it to that of her husband. Because of this study we may be encouraged to lay aside our exclusive designation of the *patriarchal* narratives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and more appropriately refer to them as the stories of the ancestors" (Turner 1985:42). Teugels picks this up in the study of Genesis 24 and argues that "God's promise to Abraham that he would bless his descendants *is not repeated to Isaac himself but to Rebekah* (Gen 24:60)" (conf. Teugels 1994:89–104, especially 102). Although I assume the meaning of matriarch used by Turner and Teugels for Rebekah, I contest Teugels' placement of Rebekah on equal level with Abraham based on Gen 24:60.

manoeuvring *her elder son* in favour of *her younger son*. In Gen 27:15, Rebekah uses the best garments of *her elder son* to clothe *her younger son*—a step which serves as the conclusive evidence to prove that Esau is the *man of the field*. In Gen 27:42, Rebekah manoeuvres the plans of *her elder son* to set up the flight of *her younger son* to safety. This pays off as Jacob secures the blessing by fulfilling marriage within the lineage as a *sine qua non* for his final acquisition of the Abrahamic promise.

As it is with Isaac and Rebekah, the narrator uses name, epithet or name plus epithet for Jacob and Esau. As twins, there exists a contrast between them which strengthens the narrator's aim. Their physical differences as well as behavioural differences further give the narrator the opportunity to contrast their actions. This is further enforced by the way Isaac and Rebekah view each of the twins. From the start, the narrator uses Jacob's name 17 times, four of which go together with an epithet. He also uses Esau's name 12 times, five of which go together with an epithet. Twice Jacob is portrayed as Rebekah's son and two further times as Rebekah's younger son. Esau is portrayed as Rebekah's elder son (twice), as Isaac's elder son (once), as Isaac's son (once) and as Jacob's brother (once). The *elder-younger* portrayal gives the narrator the opportunity to compare the twins. While Esau is Isaac's son (elder), Jacob is Rebekah's son (younger) and Esau is Rebekah's elder son. Thus, the conflict is more between Rebekah's sons than between Isaac's son and Rebekah's son.²³⁹ Another epithet which reinforces the conflict between Jacob and Esau is their parents' use of *my son*. Isaac uses *my son* exclusively for Esau. However, he also uses it for Jacob thinking that he is talking to Esau. Isaac trembles when he realises that Jacob has presented himself to him as Esau. This is evidence that Isaac reserved the use of *my son* for Esau. Otherwise, he uses *your brother* to refer to Jacob. The same goes for Rebekah. She uses *my son* exclusively for Jacob and depicts Esau as *your brother*. Both Jacob and Esau claim that they are *Esau your firstborn*, and Jacob makes a contrast between Esau and himself by reminding Rebekah of their physical differences. Both cooperate with their parents (Esau obeys Isaac while Jacob obeys Rebekah). The difference comes when Jacob presents himself as Esau and receives the blessing and also when Esau plans to kill Jacob. Jacob becomes the *son of promise* by the reception of the blessing and accepts to keep the purity of the patriarchal lineage by going to get a wife from Paddan Aram. Esau on his part decides to marry from the line of Ishma'el. It is Jacob who receives YHWH's approval in a vision on his way to Paddan Aram in which God promises him the prosperity and protection of Abraham his ancestor. The reader easily sees Jacob as an impostor who with Rebekah schemes against Isaac and Esau. He is often said to have deceived his blind father to take the blessing meant for his brother. Because of this, Jacob has often been condemned alongside Rebekah. Whatever the situation, he cooperates with his mother and obeys her commands in the same way as Esau obeys Isaac's commands. Jacob also cooperates with Isaac and goes to Paddan Aram to marry a wife from the patriarchal lineage.

3.8. THE EFFECT OF CHARACTERISATION ON THE LITERARY STRUCTURE OF GENESIS 27–28

In §3.3 we learnt that the method of character portrayal affects the literary structure of narratives. We also saw that literary analysts argue for the importance of

²³⁹ This may imply that Rebekah has a good knowledge of the behaviour of both sons and she has an influence on the choice of the bearer of the patriarchal promise. This is an important motherhood quality.

linguistics and linguistic markers to the understanding of the literary structures of narratives. When Walsh (2001) and Dorsey (1999) study literary structures they present three arguments which are important to this investigation. First, there is the argument of the phonemic and aural approach to repetition as structural devices; and second the balancing of (sub)units to produce the impact of repetition. A third point is the limit of the structural effect of syntactic relations to the narrative verbal change. The third point forms the basis of the text-syntactic hierarchy and it will be important to investigate how an interaction of these, alongside literary analysis, can enhance the structuring of Genesis 27–28. I will begin by presenting some literary structural studies for this narrative section and will move on to compare these structures. I will then use the text based markers to develop a structure for Genesis 27–28 in accord with the text hierarchy of the ETCBC encoding. The aim is to investigate how the linguistic approach of the ETCBC can better inform the concentric (ABCB'A') or symmetric (ABCC'B'A') structures of Genesis 27–28.

3.8.1. J.P. Fokkelman (1975), *Gen 27:1–28:5 and 28:10–22 on the Theme: Blessing*

Fokkelman reads Genesis 27–28 as two separate narratives.²⁴⁰ He considers it as an ongoing narrative from Gen 25:19 and argues that the theme of blessing runs through Gen 27:1–28:5. Although he sees this same theme in Gen 28:10–22, Fokkelman studies this as a separate narrative section (Ibid. 46–81) which can only fit to provide a rounded off narrative with Gen 27:1–28:5 on a hermeneutical basis (Ibid. 122). Interestingly, he omits Gen 28:6–9 although he mentions that Esau is given attention in four verses and talks of his attempt to nullify the blessing by marrying the daughter of Ishmael (Ibid. 46, 101).²⁴¹ Fokkelman considers the symmetric structure and comes out with the following divisions as representing scenes (Ibid. 98):

27: 1– 5	A Isaac + son of the <i>brkh/bkrh</i> (= Esau)
6 –17	B Rebekah sends Jacob on stage
18 – 29	C Jacob appears before Isaac, receives blessing
30 – 40	C' Esau appears before Isaac, receives anti-blessing
41 – 45	B' Rebekah sends Jacob from stage
46 – 28:1-5	A' Isaac + son of the <i>brkh/bkrh</i> (= Jacob)
28:6 – 9	<i>Esau marries Ishmael's daughter to nullify</i> (Omitted!)
28:10 – 22	Jacob at Bethel

²⁴⁰ Waltke (2007) has 4 partial scenes which agree with the outline of ABC and C'. However, he does not study the rest of the narrative in the same way. What he presents is as follows:

- Partial Scene 1: Isaac and Esau	27:1–5
- Partial Scene 2: Rebekah and Jacob	27:6–17
- Partial Scene 3: Isaac and Jacob	27:18–29
- Partial Scene 4: Isaac and Esau	27:30–40

Although the scenes correspond to those of Fokkelman, it is unlikely that they will be placed in the same order or follows the same symmetric placements. This is because Waltke adds Gen 26:34–35. If one considers this as an introduction, then Waltke and Fokkelman will agree in their symmetric placement and functions. However, Waltke does not specify this although his label of Gen 27:1–5 talks of scene 1. Waltke also considers Gen 28:10–22 as a separate section. While he follows the symmetric structural pattern, he does not offer a systematic study to any section to this effect. He has the same outer division with Esau's marriages (Gen 26:34 and 28:9) as inclusio (Waltke 2007:340 – 344). Also conf. Syren (1993:94–95).

²⁴¹ He does not mention how these four verses fit within the overall structure. Even in his studies, he does not deal with these verses apart from what is mentioned above. Hence, I assume that he omits them completely.

In the narrative structure of Gen 27:1–28:5, Fokkelman argues that Gen 27:36 is a climax for two reasons (Ibid. 99–100): (a) the chiasmic relation between *berakhah* and *bekhorah* which “display maximum alliteration” as they rhyme with *birkhati* and *bekhorati* respectively; and (b) Esau’s bitter exclamation which echoes the meaning of Jacob’s name. This structure carries a double centre because of the blessings of both Jacob and Esau (C–C’) surrounded by the actions of Rebekah (B–B’) and within the outer circle Isaac’s sending away of Esau to the field and subsequent sending of Jacob to Paddan Aram (A–A’) (Ibid. 101). From the structure Fokkelman comes out with the following scenes and characters (Ibid. 102):

Scene	A	B	C	C'	B'	A'
Parents	Isaac	Rebekah	Isaac	Isaac	Rebekah	Isaac
Sons	Esau	Jacob	Jacob	Esau	Jacob	Jacob

3.8.2. V.P. Hamilton (1995), Gen 27:1–45 and 27:46–28:22 on the Theme: Blessing

Following the same blessing theme, Hamilton in his commentary provides a different structure for Genesis 27–28.²⁴² He shortens the first part to Gen 27:45 and follows on with Gen 27:46–28:22 as a separate section of the narrative. Thus, his two-part structure can be presented as follows (Ibid. 211–249):

- a) Gen 27:1–45
 - 27:1–5a Isaac prepares to bless Esau
 - 5b–17 Rebekah incites Jacob to deceive Isaac
 - 18–29 Jacob deceives Isaac
 - 30–40 Esau seeks his father’s blessing
 - 41–45 Rebekah urges Jacob to flee
- b) 27:46–28:22
 - 27:46–28:9 Departed Jacob and deviant Esau
 - 28:10–22 Jacob meets God at Bethel

Putting this in a symmetric structure will look as follows:

Gen 27:1–45

- 27:1–5a **A** Isaac prepares to bless Esau
- 5b–17 **B** Rebekah incites Jacob to deceive Isaac
- 18–29 **C** Jacob deceives Isaac
- 30–40 **C'** Esau seeks his father’s blessing
- 41–45 **B'** Rebekah urges Jacob to flee
- 27:46–28:9 **A'** Departed Jacob and deviant Esau
- 28:10–22 Jacob meets God at Bethel

Hamilton divides Gen 27:5 into a and b and considers 5b to begin a new section on the grounds of Esau’s departure to the field. Thus Gen 27:5b begins a new (sub)unit of the narrative. His division, although different from Fokkelman’s, closely follows that provided by the source critics who consider the narrative as composed from separate sources J, P and E. Hamilton’s structure is derived from his study and it is important to note that he does not present the ABCB’A’ structure for this narrative section. Arranged in the symmetric pattern, it is seen to closely agree with Fokkelman’s structure.

²⁴² Hamilton’s commentary follows a historical-critical approach to the study of this narrative unit. My inclusion of Hamilton’s structure here is for comparative purposes.

3.8.3. G. Wenham (1994), *Gen 26:34–28:9 on the Theme: Blessing*

On the backdrop of Gen 25:19–34, Wenham reads Gen 27:1–28:9 as a single narrative unit with Esau's marriages forming an *inclusio*.²⁴³ He provides two reasons for this structure (Ibid. 202): (a) the verb יָדָהּ marks a new development in Gen 26:34; and (b) Esau's marriages which open and close this narrative section (Gen 26:34 and 28:9). He further subdivides the narrative section into the following (sub)units (Ibid. 202):

- a) 26:34–28:9
 - 26:34–35 Esau marries Hittites
 - 27:1–5 Isaac instructs Esau to prepare to be blessed
 - 6–17 Rebekah instructs Jacob to acquire blessing
 - 18–29 Isaac blesses Jacob
 - 30–40 Esau appeals to Isaac for blessing
 - 41–28:5 Rebekah thwarts Esau's revenge; Jacob sent to Paddan Aram
 - 6–9 Esau marries Ishmael's daughter
- b) 28:10–22
 - 10–15 Jacob's experience at Bethel
 - 16–17 Jacob's first reaction
 - 18–22 Jacob's vow

In a concentric structure one will have the following outline for Wenham:

- 26:34–35 **A** Esau marries Hittites
 - 27:1–5 **B** Isaac instructs Esau to prepare to be blessed
 - 6–17 **C** Rebekah instructs Jacob to acquire blessing
 - 18–29 **D** Isaac blesses Jacob
 - 30–40 **C'** Esau appeals to Isaac for blessing
 - 41–28:5 **B'** Rebekah thwarts Esau's revenge; Jacob sent to Paddan Aram
 - 6–9 **A'** Esau marries Ishmael's daughter
- c) 28:10–22
 - 10–15 **A** Jacob's experience at Bethel
 - 16–17 **B** Jacob's first reaction
 - 18–22 **A'** Jacob's vow

Wenham acknowledges the fact that Gen 27:41–28:5 is often split following a change of actors, but argues that the (sub)unit as it is talks about Rebekah's scheme (Ibid. 203). He views Gen 28:10–22 as a separate unit but further divides it into three (sub)units with a connection to both the previous and following narrative sections. Thus, in his structure, Esau's marriages form the outer circle (A–A'), Isaac sends Esau to go to the field while Rebekah sends Jacob to Paddan Aram (B–B'), Rebekah prepares Jacob for blessing while Esau seeks for blessing (C–C') and Isaac's blessing of

²⁴³ Also see Waltke (2007:340). Smith (2001:130–134) has the same outer boundaries (Esau's marriages) as Wenham but his internal division is completely different. His approach is to reinstate Isaac's centrality to Genesis 27 and the blessing scene becomes the turning point of the narrative (E, Gen 27:26–29), followed by deception enacted and discovered (D, Gen 27:18–25 and D', Gen 27:30–40), Rebekah's involvement (C, Gen 27:5–17 and C', Gen 27:42–46), Isaac's call to Esau and Jacob (B, Gen 27:1–4 and B', Gen 28:1–7) and Esau's marriages as the outmost concentric frame (A, Gen 26:34–35 and A', Gen 28:8–9).

Jacob (D) is the central point. In the second part of the structure, Jacob's experience at Bethel and his vow (A–A') form an outer circle around his first reaction (B).

3.8.4. Evaluation of Literary Structures of Genesis 27–28

In recent times, the ABCB'A' pattern has dominated literary analysis of biblical narratives. Among all adherents to this approach, few have actually devoted their findings to large narrative sections in detail. Fokkelman stands out as one who has devoted this approach to the study of a whole book in the Hebrew Bible.²⁴⁴ Regarding Genesis 27–28, he still stands as one who has carried out detailed study and analysis, showing how the various parts relate and how the centre of such a structure is affected. Hence, Fokkelman's structures will constitute a major base for the study of the concentric or symmetric structure of Genesis 27–28.

1. Comparing structures

	Fokkelman		Hamilton		Wenham	
A	27:1–5	Isaac/Esau	27:1–5a ^d	Isaac/Esau	26:34–35	Esau
B	27:6–17	Rebekah/Jacob	27:5a–17 ^d	Esau/Rebekah/Jacob	27:1–5	Isaac/Esau
C	27:18–29 ^a	Isaac/Jacob	27:18–29 ^{ad}	Isaac/Jacob	27:6–17	Rebekah/Jacob
D					27:18–29	Isaac/Jacob
C'	27:30–40 ^{ab}	Isaac/Esau	27:30–40 ^{abd}	Isaac/Esau	27:30–40 ^b	Isaac/Esau
B'	27:41–45 ^a	Rebekah/Jacob	27:41–45 ^{ad}	Rebekah/Jacob	27:41–28:5	Rebekah/Isaac/Jacob
A'	27:46–28:5	Rebekah/Isaac/Jacob	27:46–28.9 ^d	Rebekah/Isaac/Jacob/Esau	28:6–9	Jacob/Esau
	28:6–9 ^c	Omitted				
A	10–15 ^d	Jacob			28:10–15	Jacob
B	16–19 ^d	Jacob			28:16–17	Jacob
A'	20–22 ^d	Jacob			28:18–22	Jacob
			28:10–22	Jacob		

Table 3.6a Comparing Structures of Genesis 27–28

Key to table

a–agree in (sub)unit division and function within narrative

b–agrees in (sub)unit division but differ in function within narrative

c–omitted in the overall structure

d–derived structure (by me) from author

From Table 3.5a, three different structures for the same narrative section are presented by three authors. The only common agreement is on the boundaries of the (sub)unit C'. Nevertheless, Wenham has another function assigned to this (sub)unit within the first part of the narrative. There is more agreement between Fokkelman and Hamilton on B–B' and C–C'. Besides these common portions on the structures, the authors largely disagree with each other. The various structures probably point to the interest of the authors or to what each author sees as the main theme or motif of the narrative. When this narrative section is studied as part of the Jacob cycle/story²⁴⁵ or as part of the larger patriarchal narrative section, the discrepancies are even more.

²⁴⁴ Conf. Fokkelman's four volumes: 1981, 1986, 1990 and 1993. Some others who have used this approach in studying narratives include Hong (2007) and Spoelstra (2013).

²⁴⁵ Here I prefer to call the narrative section of Gen 25:19–35:29 as the *Toledoth* of Isaac or Isaac's Story.

Below is a compilation from some literary stylistic authors who study Genesis 27–28 as part of a larger narrative section of the patriarchal narratives.

Author	Symmetrical reference	Symmetrical relation	Symmetrical labels
Wenham (1994:313)	26:34–28:9 32:4–33:20 28:10–22 32:2–3(1–2)	C C' D D'	<i>Jacob cheats Esau of his blessing</i> Jacob returns Esau's blessing <i>Jacob meets God at Bethel</i> Jacob meets angels at Mahanaim
Dorsey (1999:57–58)	21:8–19 27:1–28:4	a a'	Yahweh's choice of the younger <i>Yahweh's choice of the younger</i>
	28:5 37:1 28:6–9 36:1–43 28:10–22 35:1–29	a a' b b' c c'	<i>Jacob's exile begins</i> <i>Jacob's exile ends</i> <i>Esau's family</i> Esau's family <i>Stop at Bethel</i> Stop at Bethel
		Dorsey studies this under a separate narrative section (28:5–37:1)	
Fishbane (1975:20)	27:1–28:9	C	deception: <u>berakhah</u> stolen; fear of Esau; flight from land
	33:1–20	C'	deception planned; fear of Esau; <u>berakhah</u> – gift returned; return to land
	28:10–22	D	evening encounter with the divine beings at sacred site, near border; <u>berakhah</u>
	32:1–31	D'	evening encounter with the divine beings at sacred site, near border; <u>berakhah</u>
Gammie (1979:121–122)	27:1–46	D	Beginnings of fraternal strife in C is-Jordan (Jacob vs. Esau settler-farmer vs. hunter) / Isaac blesses Jacob not Esau
	33:1–17	D'	Conclusion of fraternal strife in Transjordan (Jacob vs. Esau: herder vs. herder) / Jacob blesses Esau
	28:1–22	E	Departure of Jacob alone to northeast with theophany enroute at Bethel
	32:4–33	E'	Return from the northeast with theophany enroute at Penuel/Change of name to Israel
Walsh (2001:31)	25:19–28:9	A	<i>Jacob cheats Esau of his birthright and flees from him</i>
	33:1–35:29	A'	Jacob returns and is reconciled with Esau
	28:10–22	B	<i>Jacob encounters God at Bethel</i>
	32:1–32	B'	Jacob encounters God at Jabbok
		Here, Walsh considers this as part of the larger narrative section of Gen 25:19–35:26	
Walsh (2001:32)	27:1–46	E	<i>Blessing (<u>brkh</u>) taken from Esau</i>
	33:1–20	E'	Blessing –gift (<u>brkh</u>) returned to Esau
	28:1–22	F	<i>Jacob flees Esau, encounters God on his journey</i>
	32:1–32	F'	Jacob returns to Esau, encounters God on his journey
		This applies when Walsh consider another larger narrative section of Gen 25:12–35:26	

Rensburg (1986:59–62)	27:1–28.9 33:1–20 28:10–22 32:1–32	D D' C C'	<i>Jacob fears Esau and flees</i> Jacob returns and fears Esau <i>Messengers</i> Messengers
Waltke (2007:313)	27:1–28.9 33:1–20 28:10–22 32:1–32	C C' D D'	<i>Jacob fears Esau and flees land</i> Jacob returns to land and is reconciled to Esau <i>Heavenly messengers</i> Heavenly messengers

Table 3.6b Comparing Symmetric Structures of Genesis 27–28

Although the narrative segments and structures are different, one point that the ABCB'A' pattern indicates is that a narrative has different levels designated by the concentric or symmetric features. These features could also include asymmetry and multiple symmetric patterns. In addition, the characters and their actions at each level of the symmetry determine how the narrative is understood by the reader. I posit from this pattern that the outmost level of the ABCB'A' determines how a narrative begins and how the denouement is reached. This being the case, the outmost level (A–A') of the narrative begins and ends with the *main character*.²⁴⁶ As the narrative moves on to other levels, many other internal structures are built from the interactions of characters, and as characters are introduced and taken off the narrative. This implies that within a narrative (sub)unit, there are other (sub)units that are embedded. Thus, the ABCB'A' arrangement does not indicate that these (sub)units are to be read linearly or as if they all occur at the meta narrative level. The (sub)units and their recurrent equivalents can appear at any level of the narrative either as (sub)units or embedded (sub)units. The literary stylists therefore use the ABCB'A' as an interpretive structure which does not necessarily define the hierarchy of a text.

At the start of this study, I proposed to read Genesis 27–28 as part of the *Toledoth* of Isaac. Considering that this narrative section forms part of this *Toledoth* which begins and ends with Isaac, I propose the following concentric structure for the whole of Isaac's *Toledoth*.

- 25:19–34 **A** Isaac and his family (wife bears children)
26:1–35 **B** Isaac and foreigners (Isaac and Abimelech in Egypt)
27–28 **C** Family conflict: Jacob takes blessing and is sent away from Esau
29–31 **D** Jacob and his family (wives bear children)
32–33 **C** Family conflict resolved: Jacob return/reconciles with Esau
34:1–35.15 **B'** Jacob and foreigners (Jacob and Hamor)
35:16–29 **A'** Isaac and his family (Jacob return to Isaac with large family and Isaac dies)

In this proposed structure, A–A' forms the outmost boundary and determines the reading of the story as Isaac's *Toledoth*. He begins and ends this story as the main character. The first paragraph opens with Isaac's introduction (Gen 25:19) and the last opens with Isaac's death (Gen 35:28). B–B' indicates both Isaac and Jacob facing difficulties with foreigners while C–C' shows how the family had their conflict and resolved it. The centre D is Jacob's development and growth including his experience with God and change of name. I construe that it is only after this development that Jacob decides to return to his brother to reconcile and thereafter to his father. It has also been argued that the ABCB'A' pattern can be applied at any level of a text, from

²⁴⁶ This does not mean that other characters cannot be present at this level. While other characters are present at the outer level, their actions centre on the *main character*. Also, the occurrence of another character is possible only when the main character is absent in the narrative (sub)unit (§3.9.3.2).

a single verse to a larger narrative section. When smaller (sub)units of a text in the *Toledoth* of Isaac are considered, I construe that A–A' for example, may either be at the same level of the narrative text hierarchy or at different levels. This will be applied to Genesis 27–28. If Isaac as main character is absent, the character who is the focus of the (sub)unit occupies A–A'.

It has been established that the segmenting technique used by a narrator affects the readers' understanding. The differences observed in the structure of Genesis 27–28 make an investigation into the following questions inevitable: (a) What criterion is used by literary analysts to determine the division of (sub)units within a narrative? (b) What determines the start of a narrative (sub)unit within a larger narrative section? (c) How is the theme of a narrative (sub)unit or section determined? (d) Are there rules that can possibly guide literary analysts to be able to determine the boundaries of a narrative (sub)unit?

3.8.5. *The Problem of Criteria in Determining the Literary Boundaries of a Narrative (Sub)unit*

On the criteria for marking unit and (sub)unit boundaries, Walsh (2001:119) writes:

The most obvious way in which a narrative is divided into (sub)units is by a shift in one primary constituent of scenic unity: participants, spatial context, or temporal framework. If the shift is prominent it needs no other textual indicators to establish a break. Nevertheless, shift of place, time, and character are often accompanied by identifiable textual markers that, simply by being unnecessary, serve to underscore the unit boundary.

Walsh analyses boundary markers and their affects the structures of narratives and reckons with both linguistic and stylistic indicators. Earlier, Dorsey made a list of 36 (sub)unit markers and discriminated between those that indicate the beginning and end of (sub)units (Dorsey 1999:22-23).²⁴⁷ In addition, he identified 14 techniques applied in the Hebrew Bible to “create complete self-contained literary packages” alongside six techniques to identify literary (sub)units (Ibid. 23-25).²⁴⁸ Furthermore, he identified three levels of a narrative which he used to demarcate the number of (sub)units in a biblical text (Ibid. 25).²⁴⁹ The markers listed by both Walsh (2001) and Dorsey

²⁴⁷ The list of markers of the beginning of a (sub)unit include the *Toledoth* formula, changes in character, time, place and verbal tense, mood or person. The markers that end a (sub)unit include concluding formula, summary, and resolution of tension or last part of *inclusio* or chiasmus. For a detailed list of these markers see Dorsey (1999:22–23). He also includes markers in poetry which do not fall within the scope of this study.

²⁴⁸ Dorsey labels the 14 techniques as “techniques for creating internal cohesion,” and these techniques include: Sameness of time, place, participants, grammatical/syntactic forms, *inclusio*, chiasmus, key-words and pattern of repetitions. For the six identifiers of literary units he includes “objective markers,” “external cues and internal cohesion,” “multiple indicators,” “bracketing,” “perceptibility to ancient audience” and “compatibility in overall context” (Dorsey 1999: 23–24).

²⁴⁹ Three levels of the Hebrew Bible narrative and their equivalent unit lengths can be summarised as follows:

- Primary level - 15–20 pages of text in BHS. E.g. Genesis 1–11.
- Secondary level - size of an average chapter, 1–2 pages of the Hebrew text (five minutes reading).

(1999) contain literary, stylistic and linguistic identifiers. However, there continues to be a discrepancy in the way these markers are applied to determine the literary structures of texts. One reason could be the elusiveness or fluidity in the definition of some of the literary and stylistic markers like *inclusio*, chiasmus, summary, conclusion, resolution or threads and links. Although these constitute very important tools in reading and interpretation, they are not text based, but an appropriation of the analyst into the text. A proper way to determine the (sub)units can be to follow the textual indicators which are acclaimed by both linguists and literary analysts as indispensable. This being the case, the literary analysts will be tied to (sub)unit markers within the text and thus minimise the differences in the literary structures of biblical narratives. One important advantage to this approach of text based structural markers is that it gives the literary analyst a linguistic base for his/her stylistic interpretation. Literary studies acclaim the importance of linguistics in the analysis of narratives because the literary analyst should understand the syntactic, grammatical as well as semantic functions of words for proper interpretation. Thus, Sternberg has argued that a literary analyst either requires the services of a linguist or should become a linguist to be able to accomplish any interpretation (Sternberg 1985:11). When Walsh (2001:9) reckons with grammatical and syntactic elements within a text, he sees the importance of linguistics. Also, when Fokkelman studies Genesis 37 and 38, and makes an analysis of the syntactic, semantic and grammatical functions of Joseph in Gen 39:1 (Fokkelman 1996:152), he underlines the importance of linguistics to literary analysis. In the following section, I will use the text based (sub)unit markers to develop a unified structure for Genesis 27–28 with the ETCBC text hierarchy encoding as its basis.

3.9. LITERARY STRUCTURES BASED ON STRUCTURAL MARKERS AND THE ETCBC TEXT HIERARCHY ENCODING

The ETCBC database presents a computer linguistic approach to the study of texts. It follows all the (sub)unit markers outlined by Walsh (2001) with the following exceptions: (a) Stylistic indicators are not considered since they are not text based. (b) The database considers the explicit mention of a character, where a pronoun can suffice, as a marker of a (sub)unit. It is important to note here that although Walsh does not mention this, there is evidence that this is considered in literary analysis as a narrative device and (sub)unit marker.²⁵⁰ For better comparison, I will place this structure besides that of Fokkelman so that the points of agreement and differences can be identified. I will begin with Genesis 27–28 and move on to determine the efficacy of this approach in the study of Gen. 37:2–19 and Genesis 38. The aim is to see how the linguistic approach of the ETCBC and the literary approaches can better enhance the structuring of biblical narratives.

3.9.1. *Proposed Structure of Genesis 27–28 (ABCC'B'A')*

This structure follows a modified schema of the ETCBC database on the assumption that Genesis 27–28 be read as the *Toledoth* of Isaac. For effective analysis, I will present three formats of the same structure with some (sub)units considered as embedded. The first format (Fig. 3.1a) places the (sub)units in *linear form*, with an insertion of ABCC'B'A' to indicate their symmetrical occurrence. This is to enable a comparison with Fokkelman's structure. The second format (Fig. 3.1b) places the

• Tertiary level - single sentence or poetic verse to several paragraphs or poetic stanzas.

He reckons with a sevenfold structuring of units in the Old Testament (Dorsey 1999:25).

²⁵⁰ Conf. Wengert (2012:179–184).

(sub)units in a symmetric pattern and the third format (Fig. 3.1c) presents the structure following the text hierarchy of the ETCBC encoding.

1. Linear Presentation of Symmetric Structure

	Fokkelman			My proposed structure	
A	27:1–5	Isaac/ Esau	A	27:1–5	27:1a - (sub)unit –Begins 27:1c - Embedded (sub)unit 27:1h - Embedded (sub)unit 27:2a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:5c - Embedded (sub)unit Isaac instructs Esau on blessing
B	27:6–17	Re- bekah/ Jacob	B	27:6–17	27:6a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:11a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:14a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:14d - Embedded (sub)unit Rebekah con- vinces Jacob
C	27:18–29	Isaac/ Jacob	C	27:18–29	27:18a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:18d - Embedded (sub)unit 27:19a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:20a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:20f - Embedded (sub)unit 27:21a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:22a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:22b - Embedded (sub)unit 27:24d - Embedded (sub)unit 27:25a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:25e - Embedded (sub)unit 27:25f - Embedded (sub)unit 27:25g - Embedded (sub)unit 27:25h - Embedded (sub)unit 27:26a - Embedded (sub)unit 26:27a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:27b - Embedded (sub)unit Jacob takes blessings
C'	27:30–40	Isaac/ Esau	C'	27:30–40	27:30a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:30f - Embedded (sub)unit 27:31a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:32a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:32c - Embedded (sub)unit 27:33a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:34a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:35a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:36a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:37a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:38a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:38h - Embedded (sub)unit 27:39a - Embedded (sub)unit Esau seeks blessings
B'	27:41–45	Re- bekah/ Jacob	B'	27:41–46	27:41a - Embedded (sub)unit 27:41c - Embedded (sub)unit 27:42b - Embedded (sub)unit 27:46a - Embedded (sub)unit Rebekah convinces Isaac
A'	28:1–22	Re- bekah/ Isaac/ Jacob	A'	28:1–22	28:1a - Embedded (sub)unit 28:5a - Embedded (sub)unit 28:5b - Embedded (sub)unit 28:6a - Embedded (sub)unit 28:7a - Embedded (sub)unit 28:8a - Embedded (sub)unit 28:9a - Embedded (sub)unit 28:10a - Embedded (sub)unit 28:13b - Embedded (sub)unit 28:16a - Embedded (sub)unit 28:18a - Embedded (sub)unit 28:20a - Embedded (sub)unit Isaac sends Jacob to get a wife Isaac sends Jacob to get a wife continues

Table 3.7a ABCC'B'A' Structure of Genesis 27–28 presented in linear form

2. Symmetric Structure

27:1–5

A Isaac sends Esau to hunt ((sub)unit starts)

27:1c - Embedded (sub)unit
27:1h - Embedded (sub)unit
27:2a - Embedded (sub)unit
27:5c - Embedded (sub)unit

27:6–17

B Rebekah convinces Jacob

27:6a - Embedded (sub)unit

27:11a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:14a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:14d - Embedded (sub)unit

27:18–29

C Jacob takes Blessing

27:18a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:18d - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:19a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:20a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:20f - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:21a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:22a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:22b - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:24d - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:25a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:25e - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:25f - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:25g - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:25h - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:26a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:27a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:27b - Embedded (sub)unit

27:30–40

C' Esau seeks blessing

27:30a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:30f - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:31a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:32a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:32c - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:33a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:34a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:35a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:36a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:37a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:38a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:38h - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:39a - Embedded (sub)unit

27:41–46

B' Rebekah convinces Isaac

27:41a - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:41c - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:42b - Embedded (sub)unit
 27:46a - Embedded (sub)unit

28:1–22

A' Isaac sends Jacob to get a wife

28:1a - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:5a - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:5b - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:6a - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:6f - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:7a - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:8a - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:9a - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:10a - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:13b - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:16a - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:18a - Embedded (sub)unit
 28:20a - Embedded (sub)unit

Table 3.7b The symmetric structure (ABCC' B' A') of Genesis 27–28

3. Symmetric Structure Based on the ETCBC Text Hierarchy Encoding

Narrative level		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1a	A	§	Beginning of narrative (sub)unit												
1c						§	Embedded (sub)unit								
1h							§	Embedded (sub)unit							
2a							§	Embedded (sub)unit							
5c								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
6a	B								§	Embedded (sub)unit					

9a						§ Embedded (sub)unit
10a						§ Embedded (sub)unit
13b						§ Embedded (sub)unit
16a						§ Embedded (sub)unit
18a						§ Embedded (sub)unit
20a						§ Embedded (sub)unit

Table 3.7c The ABCC'B'A' structure of Genesis 27–28 based on the text hierarchy of ETCBC database
Key to Table 3.7c (See Appendix 3c).

3.9.2. Explanation of the ABCC'B'A' Structure of Genesis 27–28

I have applied the (sub)unit markers to propose a literary symmetric structure (ABCC'B'A') for Genesis 27–28. The most used marker is *change in character and set of characters*. All (sub)units have dialogues with a maximum of one person speaking at each moment. Two characters are found in most of the (sub)units. Where there are more than two characters, a maximum of two speak. The symmetric structure has the blessing of Jacob and Esau's discovery that the blessing has been issued in C–C'. Rebekah's influence on Jacob and Isaac occupy the next symmetry, B–B' and Isaac's interaction with Esau and Jacob form the outmost symmetry, A–A'. These symmetries can be explained as follows:

A–A' –*Centre on main character*: This narrative (sub)unit begins and ends with Isaac as the main character. He occupies the highest level (*outmost symmetry*) of the narrative and other characters are dependent on him.

B–B' –*Rebekah setting up counter plans*: Rebekah convinces Jacob in B and repeats this to Isaac and Jacob in B'. She commands obedience from Jacob in both cases. However, I prefer *convince* because she does the same to Isaac. She does not command Isaac. But they all agree to her plans. Thus, they are convinced—even if it comes by commands. Rebekah's plans occupy the inner symmetrical circle. This position puts her between her sons and her husband which connects with all three characters at both ends. First, she eavesdrops on Isaac and Esau and relates a counter plan to Jacob (B). Secondly, she has information of Esau's plot to kill Jacob and relates a counter plan to both Jacob and Isaac (B').

C–C' –*Jacob, Esau and the blessing*: The struggle between Jacob and Esau to claim the blessing from Isaac occupies the innermost symmetry. Jacob acquires the blessing (C) and Esau finds out that Jacob has taken the blessing (C'). What happens here is built up from A and B, and resolved in B' and A'.

1. Assumptions for Reading the ABCC'B'A' Structure

The symmetric (sub)units are very conspicuous and can easily create a reading method in the reader's mind. One of the common errors is for the reader to consider the symmetric structure linearly with all (sub)units at the highest level of the text hierarchy (level 0). The reason for this is that the structure as it is does not indicate the level of the (sub)units within the narrative substratum. To avoid this, I have proposed the following:

- (Sub)units labeled ABCC'B'A' can occur at any level of the narrative text hierarchy. Advocates to this pattern acknowledge the recursive nature of (sub)units and concur that some (sub)units appear as embedded (sub)units. The only downside to this pattern has been the difficulty to determine the occurrences of these (sub)units following linguistic parameters.

- Other concentric and/or symmetric structures can also occur within symmetric structures.²⁵¹
- (Sub)units and embedded (sub)units do not show their various levels in the narrative substratum.
- Embedded (sub)units contain details which serve to shape the reader's understanding of what happens at the upper level of a narrative. The captions I have given to the concentric and/ or symmetric labels may help to elucidate this point.
- The concentric and/or symmetric arrangement of (sub)units builds up to a central (sub)unit or central (sub)units which represent the turning point in the whole narrative. These central (sub)units may contain the climax of the narrative.
- The titles of concentric and/or symmetric (sub)units must agree with the whole narrative section. This point probably needs further clarification. In this study, I have advocated to read Genesis 27–28 as part of Isaac's *Toledoth*. Labels to each narrative (sub)unit should agree with the reading of these chapters as part of the *Toledoth* of Isaac.²⁵²
- Content of concentric and/or symmetric (sub)units should mirror each other in a reverse pattern.
- The climax is one of many turning points in the narrative which has the ability to initiate a denouement.
- Concentric and/or symmetric (sub)units should agree with the linguistic rules for marking (sub)units. The way in which a character is identified should play a decisive role.²⁵³
- A–A' in every narrative (sub)unit begins and ends with the character (main) that is the focus of the (sub)unit.²⁵⁴

2. Concentric/Symmetric (Sub)unit Boundary Markers

Walsh (2001) has outlined several (sub)unit markers based on changes in the syntax, grammar and semantics of the text. Together with these markers, I have incorporated tools from the ETCBC database and come out with the following list of (sub)unit markers:

- Explicit mention of Character as subject of a clause in the narrative level.
- *Change of character*

²⁵¹ Fokkelman (1975:104) demonstrates this with Gen 27:34–39.

²⁵² My critique of Fokkelman's structure to Genesis 38 presents a better example.

²⁵³ I have argued that literary analysts have not been able to explain how the actions of a character are sustained by a reader within a narrative. Also, from a linguistic perspective, I have explained that once a participant is activated, continuous reference is by pronouns (independent, clitic or verbal inflection). When concentric/symmetric (sub)units are marked, literary analysts should determine whether a pronoun used (especially verbal inflection) refers to an already mentioned participant in a preceding clause or whether it indicates a change of participant. Where the former applies it is inappropriate to mark it as the beginning of a concentric/symmetric (sub)unit since it does not agree with the rules of marking (sub)units.

²⁵⁴ In the *Toledoth* of Isaac, A–A' contains Isaac who is the main character. If the main character is absent in the narrative (sub)unit, the dominant character should be the subject of A–A'. In Gen 37:2–36, Jacob (main character) is the subject of A–A'. In Genesis 38, Jacob as main character of his *Toledoth* is absent. This (sub)unit is focused on Judah as part of Jacob's *Toledoth*. The focus on Judah who is the subject of A–A' makes this narrative an embedded (sub)unit within the larger *Toledoth* of Jacob.

- Change of explicitly mentioned character as subject on the narrative level.
- Shift in subject by a shift of verbal agreement in PNG.
- Shift in technique of identifying character.
- Shift in the pattern of participants indicated by role change, noticed especially in dialogues.
- Change in set of characters
- Change in narrative tense *WayX* to *WXQt* or vice versa.
- Change in setting–time or *wayyehi* clause.
- Change in location–place.
 - Movement within the same locality
 - Change in geographical location.
- The *Toledoth* formulae–תולדות ואלה: This is especially true for the *Toledoth* of Terah, Isaac and Jacob as major divisions within the patriarchal narratives.

2.1. Reading Genesis 27–28 according to the Proposed ABCC'B'A' Pattern

1. A– Gen 27:1–5: *Isaac Sends Esau to Get Game*

This begins with Isaac who invites and sends Esau to go and hunt game to prepare the blessing meal. Two characters are present in this (sub)unit– Isaac and Esau. Rebekah is introduced in 27:5a, but this does not affect the structure of the narrative because her actions are described as taking place simultaneously with Isaac's instructions to Esau. Three (sub)units which include switches between Isaac and Esau in the dialogue are embedded in "A". In the last switch, Esau goes to the field to hunt. What is central is that Isaac sends Esau to the field to go and hunt game for the blessing meal and Esau obeys.

2. B– Gen 27:6–17: *Rebekah Convinces Jacob to Take the Blessing*

This (sub)unit begins with a *change in character and set of characters*²⁵⁵ from Isaac and Esau to Rebekah and Jacob. There is also a change in narrative verb from *Wayyiqtol* to *Qatal*. Rebekah convinces Jacob to follow her counter plan to Isaac's instructions. In her dialogue with Jacob, there are four switches marking the starts of (sub)units. Rebekah's actions are described as well as those of Jacob. The main issue is that Rebekah convinces Jacob.

3. C– Gen 27:18–29: *Jacob Takes the Blessing*

This (sub)unit features Isaac and Jacob. The beginning is marked by a *change in character and set of characters* and verbal agreement in PNG. Convinced by Rebekah, Jacob approaches Isaac for the blessing. A lot of details occur in this (sub)unit which records 17 switches in characters marking embedded (sub)units. Isaac shows panic and suspicion and when he is convinced, he blesses Jacob. The manner through which Jacob acquires this blessing is explained in the embedded (sub)units. There is a possible change of setting, *locale*, denoted by the verb ויבא "he came." De Regt has argued that there was movement from Rebekah's tent to Isaac's tent (de Regt 1999:17-18). Although there is evidence of movement indicated by the

²⁵⁵ A change in character generally marks the beginning of a (sub)unit which might not necessarily mark the concentric and/or symmetric (sub)unit. When the change involves a set of character (especially in Genesis 27–28), it marks a symmetric (sub)unit. This holds the same for Genesis 37 and 38. Thus I have chosen to indicate both when they mark a symmetric (sub)unit because they are separate markers which have the possibility of occurring together.

verb, change of locale here might not necessarily be geographical but movement from one place to the next within the same tent or close tents. At the end of this (sub)unit, the most crucial point is that Jacob has been blessed.

4. C'– Gen 27:30–40: *Esau Finds Out that Jacob has Taken the Blessing*

In a dramatic and tense manner, the narrator tells us of a near miss for Esau to see Jacob when he is returning from the field. A double temporary time clause is used to mark the beginning of this (sub)unit (Gen 27:30a and 30d). There is also a change in narrative verb from *Wayyiqtol* to *Qatal*. The double *Wayyehi* cataphorically highlights Esau's return from the field which becomes evident in Gen 27:30f. Also, there is a change of setting, *locale*, indicated by Esau's coming in from his hunt. The change of locale is a change in geographical location. This symmetric (sub)unit narrates how Esau too prepares food and seeks his father's blessing. He soon discovers that Jacob has already taken the blessing. Ten switches in character are observed here and all mark embedded (sub)units. There is apprehension and confusion which leads to a turning point indicating the climax (Gen 27:34). Beekman, Callow, and Kopesec (1981:138–139) state that:

Climax is generally associated with the buildup in tension in plot narratives. Frequently, the tension begins with a statement of the problem which then becomes more entangled and involved as complications to that problem are introduced. The climax would occur at the point where the tension is the greatest and the release of that tension begins – i.e., at a turning point.... This surface-structure phenomenon is referred to as the...peak" (Also conf. Longacre 1976:217–218).

Dorsey argues that the climax could be at the central unit of the symmetric structure (Dorsey 1999:40). This gives the possibility that the climax can also be in another unit which is not the central unit. What is crucial is that a climax must initiate a denouement. In the study of Genesis 27–28, Fokkerman takes Gen 27:36 as *one of the climaxes* of the narrative and argues that Esau's speech about the name of Jacob constitutes a high point of tension. There is enough evidence to take Gen 27:36 as a turning point especially in Esau's equation of Jacob's name to deceit. If Fokkerman looks at deceit or deception as the core of this narrative then Gen 27:36 provides an absolute argument for a stylistic reading of Jacob and deceit as a play on words by Esau to reveal Jacob's essence and character (Fokkerman 1975:99–100). Fokkerman also argues that Gen 27:28–29 is *the climax* of the narrative because of the irrevocable nature of the blessing (Ibid. 99). The blessing itself does not constitute a tension enough to force a resolution. It is only when Esau finds out or when Isaac tells Esau that the blessing is irrevocable, "...and he shall be blessed" (Gen 27:34), that Esau acts to initiate a denouement through his loud cry. This is the peak of Esau's frustration expressed in a loud cry, as he struggles to comprehend the fact that he has lost the blessing. If the climax comes with Esau's discovery of the lost blessing, it is probable that Gen 27:33–36 forms the most important turning point, with Gen 27:34a as *the climax*. There can be other turning points which serve to hold the apprehension of the narrative and serve to advance the plot up to the climax. Therefore, a climax is one of many turning points which can initiate a denouement. In the text hierarchy of the ETCBC there are four turning points (Gen 27:14d, 24d–25h, 34a and 28:7a) marked by the utmost right position in Fig. 3.1c. Rebekah's preparation of food is shown on the text hierarchy as an important turning point. While it is a turning point, it does not

initiate a denouement but prepares the reader to focus on a future resolution. Crucial to this (sub)unit is that Esau finds out that Jacob has taken the blessing which is irreversible.

5. **B'**—Gen 27:41–46: *Rebekah Convinces Jacob and Isaac*

This (sub)unit is marked by a *change in character and set of characters*. Rebekah gets word of Esau's plan to kill Jacob and convinces Jacob to flee. She later convinces Isaac to send Jacob to his kinsmen for a wife. This is the only (sub)unit with all four characters mentioned. However, Rebekah dominates the (sub)unit as she gets Esau's plans and convinces both Isaac and Jacob by presenting a counter plan. Apart from the narrator who presents Esau's monologue, Rebekah is the only one who speaks in this (sub)unit. There are two switches from Esau to Rebekah with four embedded (sub)units. Of the four (sub)unit markers, v46 does not indicate a change in character but marks a new (sub)unit through the explicit mention of Rebekah as subject. This adds "*the explicit use of name of a character as subject*" to Walsh's list of (sub)unit markers. Also, what is important is that Rebekah convinces Jacob and Isaac to listen to her.

6. **A'**— Gen 28:1–22: *Isaac sends Jacob to Get a Wife*

This (sub)unit is often divided into other (sub)units. I take it as a single (sub)unit because all the embedded (sub)units are prompted by Isaac's decision to send Jacob to go and get a wife. It is marked by a change in *character and set of characters*. Isaac, Jacob, Esau and God are involved.²⁵⁶ Convinced by Rebekah, Isaac invites Jacob, blesses him and sends him to his kinsmen to get a wife. Esau reacts by marrying the daughter of Ishma'el.²⁵⁷ Also, when Jacob obeys his parents and leaves, he meets God in a vision at Bethel, who promises him protection and providence. There are switches in characters in this narrative (sub)unit. These switches together with the explicit use of Jacob segment this (sub)unit into others. However, the segmentation does not alter the sending of Jacob by Isaac. Thus, what is important is that Isaac sends Jacob to go and get a wife. It is only after the sending that Esau and God react. In my opinion, this is a proper denouement for this narrative (sub)unit beginning from Gen 27:1 because the blessing has been passed unto the next patriarch who now sets out to begin an independent life. The large nature of this (sub)unit serves to indicate that proportion is not a good criterion to mark symmetric or concentric (sub)units.

In this section, I have illustrated how text based markers can improve the stylistic structure of Genesis 27–28. In the following section, I will apply these text based markers to the structures of Genesis 37 and 38.

²⁵⁶ God comes into the narrative from Jacob's perspective. God speaks to Jacob in a vision and thus remains dependent upon Jacob.

²⁵⁷ Little is often said about Esau's reaction except that, by marrying Ishma'el's daughter, he makes an attempt to amend his marital situation. There is every reason to evaluate Esau in this way. Nevertheless, this reaction, in my opinion, highlights a possibility that the blessing could be reversed. Otherwise what is the need for Esau to try to amend his marital situation? My argument for the reversible nature of the blessing ties with the fact that Isaac approves Rebekah's choice without objection which indicates that Rebekah's intervention was probably an acceptable practice.

3.9.3. Applying the Text Based (Sub)unit Markers to the Symmetric/Concentric Structures of Narratives in the Toledoth of Jacob (Genesis 37 and 38)

My choice of Genesis 37 and 38 is based on the following: (a) both texts have few dialogues and more narrative,²⁵⁸ and (b) Fokkelman and Wenham have done studies on the symmetric structures of both texts. In this section, I intend to find out how a narrative with fewer dialogues can also be structured symmetrically. First, I will apply the text based markers to develop symmetric structures t Genesis 37 and 38. Second I will compare the structures with already existing symmetric structures [Genesis 37 (Wenham 1994) and Genesis 38 (Fokkelman 1996)] based on the same conventions and parameters used in Genesis 27–28. Within the comparism, I will discuss and advance reasons for the differences and similarities, and how the text based markers have improved the reading and understanding of these texts.

1. Symmetric Structure of Genesis 37:2–36

	Wenham (1994:344 and 349)		My Proposed Structure	
A	2–14	Joseph sent to find brothers	2–12	Jacob and his family – loves Joseph
B	15–17	Joseph at Schechem	13–17e	Jacob sends Joseph to his brothers
C	18–20	Brothers' plot	17f–32	Joseph and his brothers
D	21–22	Reuben's intervention		
D'	22–23	Joseph sold		
C'	29–30	Reuben returns		
B'	31–33	Coat brought to Joseph	33	Jacob receives Joseph – bloody coat
A'	34–35	Jacob's mourning	34–35	Jacob and his family – mourns for Joseph

Table 3.8a Symmetric Structures of Genesis 37:2–35

1.1. Concentric Structure based on the ETCBC Text Hierarchy Encoding

Narrative level		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Gen 37	Label														
2a	A	Jacob and his family – loves Joseph													
2e					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
3a					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
4a					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
5a					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
5c						§	Embedded (sub)unit								
6a						§	Embedded (sub)unit								
8a						§	Embedded (sub)unit								
9a						§	Embedded (sub)unit								
10b							§	Embedded (sub)unit							
11a							§	Embedded (sub)unit							
11b								§	Embedded (sub)unit						

²⁵⁸ One may argue that Genesis 27–28 is full of dialogues which makes it easy for the switches in character or set of characters and the end of a dialogue to be identified.

12a	B								§	Jacob sends Joseph to his brothers
13a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
13e									§	Embedded (sub)unit
14a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
14f									§	Embedded (sub)unit
15a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
15c									§	Embedded (sub)unit
17a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
17f	C								§	Joseph and his brothers
18a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
21a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
22a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
23a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
26a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
28a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
28f									§	Embedded (sub)unit
29a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
33a	B'								§	Jacob receives Joseph's coat
34a	A'								§	Jacob and family: Mourns Joseph
35a									§	Embedded (sub)unit
35h									§	Embedded (sub)unit
36a									§	Embedded (sub)unit

Table 3.8b Comparing Structures of Genesis 37:2–35

Key to Table 3.8b (See Appendix 3C).

1.2. Comparing Wenham's Symmetric Structure to my Concentric Structures of Gen 37:2–36

In Wenham's (1994) structure, the focus is on Joseph. Although he is the central character in the *Toledoth* of Jacob, the story is not about him. It is the story of Jacob and his family, with Joseph as one of his sons (favourite). While the titles of the (sub)units correlate, the outmost symmetry B–B', C–C' and D–D' do not correlate. It is my opinion that the brothers' plot and Reuben's return (C–C') do not link. The same goes for Reuben's intervention and the selling of Joseph (D–D'). While these details are fitting in this narrative (sub)unit, I construe that this narrative is about Jacob and his family (Also conf. van Peursen 2013:81–93 especially 93). As the main character, Jacob should be the focus and should occupy the outmost circle with everyone dependent upon him. The narrative begins with him and his family (A), and ends with him and his family (A'). In "A," Joseph's dreams and his preferential treatment from Jacob prompt hatred from his brothers. "A'" is the result of this hatred. This time, Jacob mourns for his beloved Joseph. In "B," Jacob sends Joseph to his brothers and Joseph returns in the bloody coat (B'). "C" is Joseph's interaction with his brothers. Here his brothers plan to kill him. Reuben and Judah intervene and Joseph is finally sold to the Midianites. Fokkelman (1996:162) has illustrated that Genesis 37:2–36 can be studied in further details and has developed symmetric structures for Gen 37:18–33 and 34–

35 (Ibid. 166) with a focus on violence and deception (Ibid. 160).²⁵⁹ However, his focus on violence and deception does not consider the narrative as part of Jacob's *Toledoth*. Although the central unit is "C," it is important to note that the climax is on B'. When Jacob receives Joseph's bloody coat, he is made to understand that Joseph is dead. Death is irreversible and Jacob can do nothing except for the family to mourn. The actions of Joseph's brothers in the field (Gen 37:17f–32) obviously mark an important turning point to the understanding of the narrative. Nevertheless, does not initiate a denouement, but leads to the climax in Gen 37:33. A point of similarity is that all the (sub)unit markers in Wenham's structure are text based and indicate switches between characters. However, three major differences are observed as follows:

- The (sub)units have different boundaries (except for A').
- Wenham has a symmetric structure (ABCDD'C'B'A') with eight (sub)units while that derived from the ETCBC text hierarchy is concentric (ABCB'A') with five (sub)units.
- The outmost (sub)units (A-A') identify the story as that of Jacob who is the main character, with Joseph as the central character.

2. Symmetric Structure of Genesis 38

	Fokkelman (1996)		Wenham (1994:363)		My Proposed Structure	
A	1–5	Judah marries outside the tribe > his wife bears three sons	1–5	Judah marries Shuah's daughter	1–5	Judah marries Shuah's daughter
B	6–11	a-Death rampant: two sons are killed b-Judah's speech to Tamar: Shelah is alive Tamar put on a side track	6–11	Tamar marries Judah's sons	6–10	Judah's sons marry Tamar
C	12–13	Feast after mourning: Judah goes to Timnah with friend	12–19	Tamar traps Judah	11–12	Tamar puts on widow's garment
D	14	Tamar takes off her widow's dress, puts on veil				
E	15	Judah spots whore (he thinks), sexual appetite				
X		Central dialogue: six speeches on whore's reward and pledge (speakers: he-she-he/she-he-she)				
E'	18e, f, g	Intercourse >Tamar conceives				
D'	19	Tamar takes off veil, puts on widow's dress				
C'	20–23	Judah sends Hirah after prostitute, searches in vain, brings back report	20–23	Judah looks for Tamar	13–14	Tamar takes widow's garment off
B'	24–26	a- Death threat: Tamar to be killed by fire b- Judah recognizes she is right, he mentions Shelah	24–26	Tamar vindicated	15–23	Judah takes Tamar for Harlot
A'	27–30	Life prevails: Tamar bears twins (in a very Jacobean delivery)	27–30	Birth of sons	24–30	Judah marries Tamar

Table 3.9a Symmetric Structures of Genesis 38

²⁵⁹ In van Peursen's critique of Fokkelman, he mentions that Gen 37:9 cannot represent the start of a new unit because "he" in v.9 marks continuity (van Peursen 2013:97). The text indicates that there is a switch between participants in Gen 37:8 to Gen 37:9. In Gen 37:8d, the subject is plural referring to Joseph's brothers in Gen 37:8a. Gen 37:9a shows a change in subject from Joseph's brothers to Joseph (singular) and thus marks the start of a (sub)unit.

2.1. Symmetric Structure of Genesis 38 Based on the ETCBC Text Hierarchy Encoding

Narrative level		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Gen 38															
1a	A	§ Judah marries Shuah's daughter's daughter													
1b			§	Embedded (sub)unit											
2a			§	Embedded (sub)unit											
3a							§	Embedded (sub)unit							
6a	B		§	Judah's sons marry Tamar: Embedded (sub)unit											
7a			§	Embedded (sub)unit											
7b			§	Embedded (sub)unit											
8a			§	Embedded (sub)unit											
9a			§	Embedded (sub)unit											
10b						§	Embedded (sub)unit								
11a	C		§	Tamar puts on widow's veil: Embedded (sub)unit											
11f			§		Embedded (sub)unit										
12a			§	Embedded (sub)unit											
12b			§	Embedded (sub)unit											
12c				§	Embedded (sub)unit										
12d					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
13a							§	Embedded (sub)unit							
14a	C'							§	Tamar takes off widow's veil: Embedded (sub)unit						
15a	B'				§	Tamar becomes Judah's harlot: Embedded (sub)unit									
16g								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
17a								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
17c								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
18a								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
18d								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
18i								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
20a					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
20c					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
21d								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
22d								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
23a					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
24a	A'				§		Judah marries Tamar: Embedded (sub)unit								
24f					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
25b								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
26a					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
27a					§	Embedded (sub)unit									
28d								§	Embedded (sub)unit						
29a							§	Embedded (sub)unit							
29d											§	Embedded (sub)unit			

Table 39b Symmetric Structures of Genesis 38

Key to Table 3.9b (See Appendix 3C).

2.2. Comparing Fokkelman's Concentric Structure to My Symmetric Structure of Genesis 38

I have presented three different structures for Genesis 38 and the focus of each structure betrays the author's interest. Fokkelman's (1996) and Wenham's (1994) focus is on Tamar's harlotry (X – central dialogue and C–C' respectively). The outmost symmetry of both structures (A–A') talks about Judah's marriage to Shuah's daughter (Gen 38:1–5) and Tamar's giving birth to twins. I construe that although Fokkelman and Wenham provide literary structures which bring out the details of this narrative unit, their focus does not agree within the context of Jacob's *Toledoth*. If this narrative section is regarded as an isolated piece of writing, then their analysis is superb. As part of Jacob's *Toledoth*, I will argue that it presents a threat to heirship and continuity of the patriarchal covenant. For a better understanding, I have chosen to make an analysis of Fokkelman's detailed structure as a backdrop to my proposed structure. A reading of this narrative (sub)unit of Genesis 38 as part of Jacob's *Toledoth* shows that Judah and Tamar are *full-fledged* characters who dominate all others. However, Judah is the *dominant character* and this section is focused on him and his family. It is my opinion that Fokkelman's A–A' do not agree. How does Judah's marriage to Shuah's daughter (Gen 38:1–5) and Tamar's birth of twins correlate? Fokkelman probably focuses on one wife bearing children who die and the other bearing children who live. He does not talk of Judah's marriage to Tamar probably to maintain his argument of children born out of harlotry or an unacceptable union. This focus raises the question why one of such unions brings forth children who die and the other children who live? If Shuah's daughter is a Canaanite, Tamar is a prostitute. It is my opinion that the focus is on Judah's marriage to Shuah's daughter (foreigner) (Gen 38:1–5) and his marriage to Tamar (Gen 38:24–30) as a threat and restoration of the family lineage.

The (sub)units B–B' are linked by death. However, the deaths in B are the results of Judah's profane union with Shuah's daughter while the threat in B' serves as an opportunity to restore kinship. In B, Er and Onan are the products of a profane marriage and this profanity is exhibited within this narrative (sub)unit (Gen 38:6–10). They both marry Tamar, who is presumed to be from the patriarchal lineage,²⁶⁰ but none has a child with her. I assume that a child born to Er or Onan would have been

²⁶⁰ It is important to note that there is no biblical evidence that Tamar is of the patriarchal lineage. Nevertheless, I will construe that membership into the patriarchal lineage could be obtained by accepting the patriarchal customs and YHWH (§4.6.4.3). In the same light, two Ribbinic interpretation of עֵינִים indicate that Tamar showed exemplary hospitality and gave convincing responses to Judah at the gate. Kadari writes: "When Judah asked to consort with her, he inquired: 'Perhaps you are a Gentile?' She replied: 'I am a convert'. When he asked her: 'Perhaps you are a married woman?' she answered: 'I am unmarried'. He asked: 'Perhaps your father received the money of betrothal for you [and you are already a married woman, without your knowledge]?' She rejoined: 'I am an orphan'. He further probed: 'Perhaps you are [menstrually] impure?' She answered: 'I am pure' (BT *Sotah* 10a). This midrash presents Judah as meticulous in his observance of the laws regarding married women and *niddah*, even with a prostitute by the roadside. Tamar is portrayed as a woman who meets all the requirements of *halakhah*: she is a convert, both unmarried and not betrothed, and also pure. In a similar interpretive direction, the midrash relates that, at first, Judah did not pay any attention to Tamar, thinking her to be a harlot. When he passed by her, however, and saw that she covered her face, he realized that she was not a strumpet, because such women do not veil their faces, and then he turned aside to her" (Gen. *Rabbah* 85:8) (Kadari 2009).

considered illegitimate to carry on the patriarchal mantle.²⁶¹ Death consumes any of Judah's sons who tries to bring forth such a child. At the other end of the symmetry (B'), Tamar receives death threats and Judah proposes that Tamar be burnt for being pregnant with an illegitimate child. Things change when Tamar presents evidence that the child is legitimate and her life is then spared. In C–C' Hiram is the link (36). Otherwise the connection between a feast after mourning and going after a prostitute is mismatch. Hiram only serves to advance the plot as an agent. A focus on him here leads the reader away from the entire (sub)unit. D–D' presents an appropriate match with Tamar as the focus. She takes off her widow's dress and puts on a veil (D) and does the reverse in D'. The symmetric structure does not tell the reader that Tamar goes into widowhood but reinforces Tamar's role as a harlot. She takes off her widow's garment and veils herself as a whore for Judah to spot her. After her illicit or harlotry sexual relations with Judah, she puts off her veil and becomes a widow once more. Tamar is totally presented as a whore who is vindicated. E–E' presents Judah as the focus and leads to the central speech.²⁶² Judah is the dominant character and this narrative (sub)unit is about him and his family. However, Fokkelman makes the dialogue with the whore the central point of his symmetric structure beginning from Gen 38:16. This, in my opinion, is another mismatch. Gen 38:16 does not begin with a (sub)unit marker because Judah is still the subject. This marks a major deviation between my approach and Fokkelman's approach. I begin by identifying linguistic segmenting devices from the text (text based markers) and move on to determine the symmetric and concentric structures, but Fokkelman seems to begin by searching for concentric and symmetric patterns and then moves on to adapt a text structure to fit with his pattern. Fokkelman thus applies a stylistic approach to his structure which does not go in line with the text based segmenting devices I have applied to Genesis 27–28.

When Fokkelman studies Genesis 38, he brings in a lot of details into the structure which lead to some discrepancies (e.g., A–A' and C–C'). He also studies this (sub)unit as an independent piece of writing which marks another major difference between my approach and his. As a family story Judah and Tamar continue to show how the continuity of the patriarchal promise is under threat. To substantiate this, it will be important to recall from the preceding chapters that Joseph, whom Jacob had foreseen as heir, had been sold and presumed dead by his father. Reuben who is the most senior and could be the heir also defiled his father's bed by sleeping with Bilhah (Gen 35:22 and 40:4). Next to the heirship could have been Simeon and Levi respectively, but they too committed a massacre and looted Shechem after the rape of Dinah (Gen 34:25). With Joseph dead and the others disqualified, Judah stands as the next person. Yet the promise still comes under threat when Judah marries Shuah's daughter, a Canaanite. It is my opinion that Genesis 38 presents another threat to the patriarchal family and how it is restored. Judah marries Shuah's daughter and the children born of her get married inside the patriarchal lineage. When they die, the threat is still looming because of Judah's promise of Shelah to Tamar. When Judah marries Tamar, the lineage is restored and the threat to the patriarchal promise is evaded. Er's/Onan's

²⁶¹ The story of Hagar and Abraham (Genesis 16ff) can serve as another example of how a child born out of the patriarchal lineage is regarded as illegitimate with respect to the inheritance of the patriarchal promise.

²⁶² Fokkelman argues that DEXE'D' form the central part of this narrative (sub)unit. However, his focus on speeches indicates that he wants to expose Judah's weakness and Tamar's harlotry as unacceptable.

death and Tamar's /Judah's widowhood²⁶³ are all means by which the narrator shows the threat and restoration of the patriarchal promise. The proposed structure agrees with Fokkelman in that Gen 38:14–18 forms the centre of this narrative (sub)unit. However, I argue that this does not constitute the climax. Tamar takes off her widow's garment and the tension is maintained within the sexual encounter and the search for the harlot, until she is reported pregnant to Judah. When she shows evidence that Judah is the author of the pregnancy, no other climax could be reached. Judah only has to concede and marry her. The climax, in my opinion, is when at the face of death, Tamar produces evidence that forces Judah's concession. Judah's concession forces a denouement and he marries Tamar. This climax is in A' (Gen 38:25b). Just as it is with Genesis 37, there is no agreement in the (sub)unit boundaries as well as the text based markers. In addition, Fokkelman has an 11-part concentric structure while my structure is symmetric with six (sub)unit. The text hierarchy indicates that there are embedded (sub)units.

After studying Genesis 27–28, 37:2–36 and 38, one major variance occurs which marks my approach completely different from Fokkelman's approach. Fokkelman begins by identifying concentric and symmetric patterns and he moves on to adapt the text to fit with the pattern. I first begin by segmenting the text, based on linguistic markers, and then move on to the narrative structures to identify the concentric or symmetric patterns based on the linguistic segmenting devices.

3.9.4. *Summary of Concentric/Symmetric Structural (Sub)unit Markers*

My intention to study the literary structures of Genesis 37:2–36 and 38 has been to test the consistency of the concentric/symmetric (sub)unit markers which I applied to the study of Genesis 27–28 to other patriarchal narratives. From these studies, it is easier to agree on the markers of (sub)units, than it is to agree on markers of concentric/symmetric (sub)units. The challenge to this remains the approach of every reader to a narrative. Two different perspectives have presented three separate structures with little correlation. Where the structures agree on the boundaries, they differ on the focus. When Fokkelman studies Genesis 27–28, he comes out with a similar structure as that which I have. It is therefore easy from this similarity to argue that Fokkelman also considers text based markers in the study of Genesis 27. However, his arguments betray his approach because they do not correlate with his structure. His focus is on deceit which might be an indication that that he does not consciously apply the text based markers but follows the occurrence of characters in pairs within each (sub)unit. Also, when he discusses the details of the structure, any word is enough to mark a (sub)unit (conf. Fokkelman 1975:104, the structure of Gen 27:34–39. See Also the structure of Gen 25:29–34, pg. 95). With these challenges I will conclude that symmetric/concentric (sub)unit markers follow the same indicators of linguistic (sub)unit markers of the ETCBC database as follows:

- Change in character(s) and/or set of characters.
- Explicit use of characters' names as subject.
- Change in setting.
 - Time – marked by *ויהי*.
 - Place – marked by movement.

²⁶³ It is important to note that Tamar puts on her widow's garment and remains in her father's house. When Shuah's daughter dies, Judah finishes his mourning period which could also involve putting on and off his widower's garment. By taking off his widower's garment, Judah gives Tamar the opportunity to take hers off.

- within the same locality (action verbs—come, go or bring).
- change of geographical location (marked by action verbs—come or go).
- Change in the narrative tense – Wayiqtol to WXQatal or vice versa.
- The *Toledoth* formulae—וַאלֹהֵי יוֹלְדֹת.

3.9.5. Summary on the Literary Stylistic Structure of Genesis 27–28

I began this section by asking how character portrayal affects narrative structure and moved on to question why different authors have different structures for this narrative section. I also questioned why there is a lot of discrepancy in the literary stylistic and linguistic approach to the structures of narratives. Based on my assumption that the stories of the patriarchs should be read as the *Toledoth* of each patriarch, I sought to inquire how both the linguistic and literary approaches could enlighten the reading and understanding of Genesis 27–28.²⁶⁴ I moved on to study the parameters applied by literary stylists (especially of the ABCB'A' concentric/symmetric approach) to the structure of this narrative section and compared them with the linguistic devices applied by the ETCBC database encoding. To achieve this, I presented and compared structures of Genesis 27–28 from three authors. Central to the comparison of structural devices of the stylistic approach has been Walsh's (2001) markers of units and (sub)units within a narrative. Walsh makes a clear distinction between (sub)unit markers based on the text and those applied to accomplish the stylistic approach. These text based markers agree with the linguistic markers used to determine the structures of texts in the database of the ETCBC. Also, Walsh acknowledges that other (sub)units could be found in (sub)units, thus agreeing with the recursive nature of (sub)paragraphs already in use by the ETCBC database. These points of agreement between Walsh and the ETCBC laid grounds for further study on the structure of narratives. It is important to note that Walsh's approach does not agree with all the devices used by the database of the ETCBC. His stylistic approach to the structures of narratives, like those of other literary stylists, has been unable to account for the various levels of (sub)units within a narrative substratum. This led him to present the structures of narratives as if all the (sub)units appeared on the same level in the text hierarchy.²⁶⁵ Another difficulty presented by the stylistic approach is how the concentric (sub)units of ABCB'A' structure are determined. The base of my study has been Fokkelman's works because of his extensive application of this stylistic approach to single chapters and whole books of the Hebrew Scriptures. He has also applied this approach to Genesis 27–28 and Genesis 37 and 38. Following Walsh's text based (sub)unit markers and the linguistic approach of the ETCBC, I developed a symmetric structure for Genesis 27–28 and arrived at the following conclusions:

- (Sub)units labeled ABCB'A' can occur at any level in the narrative substratum.
- Symmetric structures can be embedded within others.
- (Sub)units and embedded (sub)units of the ABCB'A' pattern do not account for their levels in the narrative substratum.

²⁶⁴ My primary argument has been the assertion by most literary analysts that a fruitful analysis of any text requires a linguistic understanding.

²⁶⁵ Most literary stylists have the same approach as Walsh. This is where the ETCBC database has contributed tremendously to the understanding of hierarchical structures of biblical narratives. A detailed analysis and explanation of the devices have been studied in §2.7.

- (Sub)units labeled ABCB'A' should be governed by text based (sub)unit markers.
- Symmetric (sub)unit boundaries should be governed by text based (sub)unit markers.
- Labels of symmetric (sub)units should agree with the whole narrative section, especially the patriarchal narratives.²⁶⁶
- Content of symmetric (sub)units should mirror each other in a reverse pattern.
- A–A' in every narrative (sub)unit should begin and end with the character (main) that is the focus of the (sub)unit.

The study of characters up to this point has focused on the methods of portrayal and its effect on the understanding of Genesis 27–28. Furthermore, studies have established that when characters interact with each other, they form networks which define their spheres of influence. In the following section, I will apply Moretti's network theory to determine how networks are formed and the effects of these character networks on the understanding of Genesis 27–28.

3.10. APPLICATION OF NETWORK THEORY TO GENESIS 27–28

According to Moretti's theory, when characters interact with each other they form networks which define their spheres of influence. The links between characters are created when characters speak. In Genesis 27–28, we have dialogues between Isaac and Esau (Gen 27:1–5) Rebekah and Jacob (Gen 27:6–17), Isaac and Jacob (Gen 27:18–30a), and Isaac and Esau (Gen 27:30b–40). Besides these, Rebekah speaks to Isaac and Jacob who only act without responding (Gen 27:42–46), Isaac speaks to Jacob who only follows the instructions and does not speak (Gen 28:1–5), and God speaks to Jacob who reacts by speaking to himself (Gen 28:12–15). In the last section too, Jacob speaks to himself (Gen 28:18–22). These sections form explicit links in the network to create a *character-system*. From this *character-system* the *character-space* can be measured by counting the number of words (distance between characters) spoken by each character. In the character-system, characters are called *nodes or vertices* and the connections are called *links or edges*. A proper representation of the edges is weighted by the number of words exchanged between characters and the central character of the network is then determined by considering the average weighted values of all the edges (Moretti 2011, 2013). When Moretti applies this theory to Shakespearean drama, he focuses only on the complete character-system. I will begin by applying Moretti's approach to the text of Genesis 27–28 and will move on to apply the process of elimination the in network system to determine the central and main characters. Based on my assumptions (§3.4) I will include monologues consider monologues as links in the character systems. In addition, I will apply the Gephi 0.8.2 visualization software to all the networks and matrices created and from the results, I will determine the central (one with the highest occurrence as central character in all matrices) and main (one with the highest occurrence as main character in all matrices) characters. The purpose will be to investigate how the central and main characters will be affected and whether the results will agree with the other literary methods.

²⁶⁶ Although this assumption works with the *Toledoth* formulae, I have not applied it to other narratives. This is beyond the scope of this paper and presents opportunities for further research.

3.10.1. *Character-System, Character-Space and Centrality*

Moretti develops this theory and sets it against others which consider only the links and nodes. One of his main arguments is that the approaches do not account properly for the values of the dialogues. A character who speaks a single word is given the same link value as one who speaks a thousand words (Moretti 2011). To add value to the links, Moretti underscores the importance of weighting and direction as a means to preserve hierarchy in the character network (Ibid.). Moretti also argues that measuring the distance between characters can help the reader to determine the position of characters within a character-system which is then applied to determine the centrality of characters and their spheres of influence with respect to power and authority (Moretti 2013). In this section, I have used the number of words as the weighted degree for each character in the character-system created by the interactions between the characters in Genesis 27–28. First, I will apply the network theory to this character-system and use the graph visualization software (Gephi 0.8.2) to generate a weighted and directed character-system (Appendices 3A and 3C). Second, I will use the data generated by Gephi 0.8.2 to analyse the character-systems and compare the centrality output results with Moretti's average distance. Third, I will apply the same procedures to the text with an out link from Jacob to God. Within each approach, the data generated will represent the following character-systems (network matrices) of Genesis 27–28:

- *Complete character-system*: This is the character-system as defined by Moretti's theory where a link is created between two characters if there is a speaking act involved.
- *Complete dialogues*: This is an extraction of a network of complete dialogues in the character-system. By complete dialogues, I am referring to situations where both speaker and addressee utter at least a single word to each other. In Gen 27:1–5, for example, Esau utters only one word and then sets off to obey Isaac's instructions. This meets the requirement of a complete dialogue.
- *Incomplete dialogues*: This is an extraction of a network of incomplete dialogues (an address which does not receive a response from the addressee). When Rebekah asks Jacob to flee to Paddan Aram and later speaks to Isaac of the need for Jacob to marry within the family lineage (Gen 27:42–46), she does not receive a response from any of them. Also, when Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him away (Gen 28:1–5), Jacob only obeys without response. I consider these as incomplete dialogues.

In the analysis, I will use the process of elimination to determine how the absence of one character shapes the position of others. The data generated for each network matrix will be used to define centrality of characters in Genesis 27–28. While the character that minimises the distances in average number of words is the central character, I will argue that the main character speaks the highest number of words is. The final count of centrality and main will be determined by the number of occurrences of each character as central or main in each network matrix.

1. *Character-System and the Interactions between Characters*

The data in Table 3.10 is a representation of the links (edges) of each character in Figure 3.6 (conf. Appendix 3A for Figs. 3.1–3.30 and all graphs). The data tells the reader that Isaac and Jacob have three characters connected to them, Rebekah has two, Esau has one, and God has one. The links indicate the importance of Isaac and Jacob to the network. This agrees with Moretti who argues that "the number of links

tells us how connected a character is (which) is often correlated with proximity to power” (Moretti 2013:109).

Character (Node/vertex)	Number of links (Edges)
Isaac	3
Rebekah	2
Jacob	3
Esau	1
God	1

Table 3.10 Number of links (edges) per character

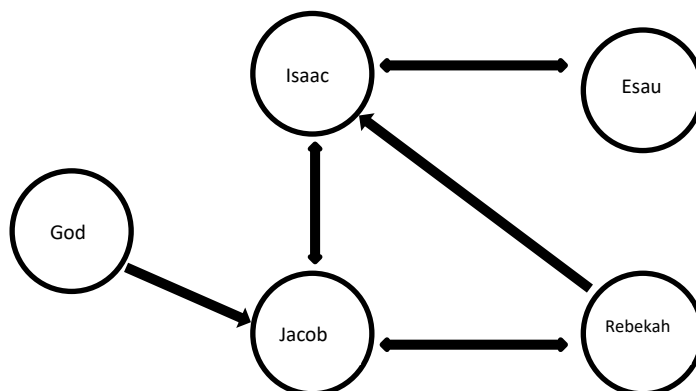


Fig 3.0 Network with non-weighted direction

When Jacob is eliminated from the network (Fig. 3.1), God also goes off because Jacob is God's only connection to the network. In this case, Isaac becomes the main node because Rebekah and Esau will be linked to him. When Isaac is taken off (Fig. 3.2), Esau's link to the network is severed because Isaac is Esau's connection to the whole network. Eliminating Esau (Fig. 3.3) from the network has no significant effect because no other character is dependent upon him. The same goes when God is eliminated (Fig. 3.5). When Rebekah is eliminated (Fig. 3.4), two links are affected because they are connected to her. However, the network remains stable because the characters that are linked to Rebekah have a direct link between themselves. As far as the directions are concerned (Fig. 3.0), the network tells the reader that there is no complete dialogue between Rebekah and Isaac, and God and Jacob. The single direction arrows indicate that Rebekah and God do not receive verbal responses from Isaac and Jacob when they speak to them. That Isaac and Jacob are not directly linked to God and Rebekah (i.e. because the communication is unidirectional, no complete dialogue takes place) indicates that God and Rebekah have established firm connections with them and that God and Rebekah are strongly connected to Isaac and Jacob respectively. Alternately, the double directional arrows between Isaac and Esau, Isaac and Jacob, and Rebekah and Jacob indicate that these pairs have complete conversations with each other. It is also important to note that not all characters have direct links to each other. Newman has argued that characters can be linked to each other through another character in the network and calls this “clustering” (Newman 2003:183). Thus, he writes:

if vertex A is connected to vertex B and vertex B is connected to vertex C, then there is a heightened probability that vertex A will be connected to vertex C.

In the same light, Alberich, Miro-Julia and Rosselló (2002:9) argue that:

In most social networks, two nodes that are linked to a third one have a higher probability to be linked between them: two acquaintances of a given person probably know each other.

In an undirected network of this character-system (Fig. 3.6), there are many possibilities of clustering. However, the node that stands between the shortest paths becomes the clustering node. In Fig. 3.6, Isaac is linked to Rebekah and vice versa. If this link is broken, they are still linked to each other via Jacob. In this case, Jacob becomes the clustering node. Rebekah and God, and Isaac and God are linked through Jacob as the only shortest possible path. God and Esau, and Rebekah and Esau are linked through Isaac and Jacob as the shortest possible path. In the directed network (Fig. 3.0) Esau does not have a direct link with God, Jacob and Rebekah. The same goes for the pairs God–Isaac, Isaac–Rebekah and God–Rebekah. It is also important to note here that none of the characters can be linked to God because of his unidirectional discourse. He speaks to Jacob and Jacob does not reply. The same goes for Rebekah and Isaac. Although Rebekah can link directly with Isaac, Isaac needs Jacob as a clustering node to be linked back to Rebekah. Based on the principle of clustering, eight routes (Table 3.6) are possible to link characters to others. Out of the eight possible clustering routes in the network, Isaac and Jacob act as clustering nodes five times each. Both act as clustering nodes in two instances and as individual in the remaining four. This underscores the importance of Isaac and Jacob to this character-system. Isaac is a clustering node to Esau's interaction with all characters in the network. Also, Jacob is very important to God's interaction with all other characters in the network.

Thus far, I have dealt with the network without weighing the values of the links and two characters (Isaac and Jacob) stand out as important nodes to the survival of the network. However, the importance of the network theory is to determine the sphere of influence of each node which is directly proportional to its proximity to power. This is achieved by measuring the distances between characters.

Character Links	Clustering Nodes	Average Clustering
Esau and Rebekah	Isaac and Jacob	1.5
Rebekah and Esau	Isaac	1
Isaac and Rebekah	Jacob	1
Jacob and Esau	Isaac	1
Esau and Jacob	Isaac	1
God and Rebekah	Jacob	1.5
God and Isaac	Jacob	1
God and Esau	Jacob and Isaac	1.5
Average Clustering		1.1

Table 3.11 Possible clustering routes in the non-weighted/ directed network

Alberich, Miro-Julia and Rosselló (2002) define the distance between two nodes as;

the length (number of links) of the shortest possible path connecting them, i.e., the least number of links we have to traverse in order to move from one node to the other within the network.

Following on, they proposed that “the character that minimizes the sum of the distances from it to all other nodes in the component” is central to the network (Ibid.). Applying this to the network under study, the average distance will be 2.0 degrees (for an undirected and non-weighted network), and 3.2 degrees (for a directed and non-weighted network). The results show that the same character occupies the central position of the network when direction is omitted or accounted for. In both cases, Rebekah minimises the distances 2.0 degrees and 3.2 degrees. In the next section I will apply Moretti’s distance measurement to the character-system of Genesis 27–28.

2. Distance Measurement between Characters

2.1. Complete Network

The complete network matrix combines all spoken words between characters. When analysts apply the network theory they argue that characters are linked if any words are exchanged between them (conf. Moretti 2011:3 and Stiller, Nettle and Dunbar 2003:399). This also includes situations where a character speaks to another but does not receive a response. This section takes into consideration all words spoken by the characters. In the non-weighted format, the network matrix is the same as that of Figs. 3.7 and 3.8. Also, the number of links to each character and the effect of eliminating some characters have the same network effects as those of Figs. 3.11–3.9. Here I will analyse the network based on the weighted values of the edges as shown on the weighted diagram in Fig. 3.8.

Character	Weighted Degree	Percentage	Degree
Isaac	194	45	3
Rebekah	110	26	2
Jacob	40	9	3
Esau	39	9	1
God	47	11	1
Total # of words	430		
Av. Weighted degree	86	20	2

Table 3.12a Number of spoken words, percentage and degree

Character Eliminated	Weighted Degree	Av. Wt. Degree	Central Character	Degree	%	Main Character	Degree	%
God	383	95.75	Rebekah	110	29	Isaac	194	51
Isaac	161	53.67	God	47	29	Rebekah	95	59
Jacob	144	48	Esau	39	28	Isaac	83	61
Esau	308	77	God	47	15	Isaac/Rebekah	111/110	36
Rebekah	301	75.25	God	47	16	Isaac		37

3.12b Number of spoken words when characters are eliminated, main/central characters, percentage and degree

The Tables (3.12a and b) and graphs (Fig. 3.8 and Graph 1) present collected data and information on the character-system of Genesis 27–28. The results indicate that Isaac speaks more than all the characters (194 words – 45%) followed by Rebekah (110 words–26%), God (47 words–11%), Jacob (40 words–9%) and Esau (39 words–9%). The data also gives us another dimension of the network. The sizes of the arrows (Fig. 3.8) represent the number of words that each character speaks as they interact

with each other. Fig. 3.7 and 3.8 show that Isaac speaks more to Jacob and Esau than both speak to him. Also, Rebekah speaks more to Jacob than she receives from him. God speaks to Jacob but does not receive any response, so there is no return arrow head. Rebekah also speaks to Isaac and does not receive a response. The character-system shows that Isaac and Jacob have equal links of five each (Fig. 3.7), but the weighted values of the edges specify that Isaac speaks more than Jacob. Rebekah has three links and the sizes of the arrows (Fig. 3.8) point out that she too speaks more than Jacob who has five links. God has one link whose size designates that he speaks more than Jacob and Esau. With five links, Jacob speaks almost the same words as Esau. Thus the sizes of his arrows are split between Isaac and Rebekah representing a weighted value of 21 (to Isaac) and 19 (to Rebekah) (Fig. 3.7).

Moretti has argued that the volume of words brings meaning into a play and indicates how much meaning the character who has the highest number of words brings to the narrative (Moretti 2013:5). In the text under study, Isaac has 45 percent of the words and represents the character who brings meaning to this narrative. I have defined the various categories of character in §2.3.2 and applying the definitions here might clarify some ambiguity. I have argued that the main character speaks most words while the central character minimises the distances between all other characters. However, it is important to note that when the character-system size reduces, a single character can play both roles. Where this occurs and only two characters are in the network, I will talk of *dominant* and *dominated* because such relations present obvious results (conf. § 2.3.2.6).

Accordingly, Isaac with 45 percent of spoken words distinguishes himself as the *main character*. In the same light, the average distance in words is 86 (20%). Following Moretti's argument Rebekah is the *central character* in this character-system. It is important to note here that Moretti follows the convention of other literary theorists to apply the term *central* with the same meaning as *main* and does not differentiate them in his analysis.

The data in Table 3.12b is generated when characters are eliminated. The graphical representation of this data is found in Figures 3.9–3.13. The data indicates that God moves to the center of the character-system when Rebekah (Fig. 3.9), Isaac (Fig. 3.10) and Esau (Fig. 3.11) are eliminated; and Rebekah, Isaac and Rebekah/Isaac become main characters. When Jacob (Fig. 3.12) is eliminated, Esau moves to the center and Isaac becomes the main character. When God (Fig. 3.13) is eliminated, Rebekah comes to the center with Isaac as the main character. It is also important to note that Esau is the central character when Jacob is eliminated but God is the central character when Esau is eliminated. There is also the appearance of Isaac and Rebekah as main character when Esau is eliminated,²⁶⁷ with God as the central character. In all, Isaac appears as main character (five times) throughout except when he is eliminated in the character-system. Rebekah appears as main character two times and as central character two times. God is central character three times, Esau once and Jacob zero. This leaves room for further questioning and reflection.

2.2. Complete Dialogues

When complete dialogues are considered, there is a change in the character-system. The character-system is reduced to four nodes as shown in Figure 3.16 and the data in Tables 3.13a and b. The character-system (Fig. 3.16) shows that God is not involved in any complete dialogue. Thus, God is missing from the network matrix.

²⁶⁷ It is my opinion that the margin of one word does not clearly distinguish Isaac as main character. Thus, both Isaac and Rebekah will feature here as main character.

Also, there is no direct link between the pairs Rebekah–Isaac, Rebekah–Esau and Jacob–Esau. Isaac and Jacob act as clustering nodes to Rebekah–Esau, Isaac–Rebekah and Jacob–Esau, with an average clustering of 1.2. Isaac and Jacob have two links each and connect the pairs Isaac–Esau and Rebekah–Jacob. Thus, if Isaac or Jacob is eliminated, the network matrix reduces to two nodes. This is where I talk of a dominant and dominated characters. But if Rebekah (Fig. 3.14) or Esau (Fig. 3.15) is eliminated, there are three nodes left.

Character	Weighted Degree	Percentage	Non-Weighted Degree
Isaac	154	53	2
Rebekah	57	20	1
Jacob	40	14	2
Esau	39	14	1
#of words	290		
Av.Wt. Deg.	58	20	1.5

Table 3.13a Character, weighted degree and Non-weighted degree

Character eliminated	Weighted Degree	Av.Wt. Degree	Central character	Degree	%	Main Character	Degree	%
Isaac	76	38	Rebekah dominates with 95 (75%) leaving Jacob with 19 (25%)					
Jacob	122	61	Isaac dominates with 83 (68%) leaving Esau with 39(32%)					
Esau	168	56	Rebekah	57	34	Isaac	71	42
Rebekah	214	71.33	Esau	39	18	Isaac	154	72

Table 3.13b Character Elimination, Weighted degree, Av. Weighted degree, Main and Central characters

The data in Table 3.13a shows that Isaac speaks 154 (53%) words (more than half of all spoken words in the dialogues). Rebekah has 57 (20%) words and Esau and Jacob have 39 (14%) and 40 (14%) words respectively. The average weighted degree stands at 58 (20%) words. With 53% of words, Isaac is the *main character* and with 20% of words, Rebekah is the *central character*. The data in Table 3.13b presents the central and main characters when others are eliminated in the character-system. When this happens Isaac remains the *main character* and Rebekah and Esau are *central characters* at different instances. The elimination of Isaac and Jacob leaves two nodes at each instance with Rebekah and Isaac playing the dominant roles as central and main characters. When Jacob is eliminated, Isaac and Esau are the two existing nodes. Also when Isaac is eliminated, Rebekah and Jacob remain the two existing nodes. When Rebekah is eliminated Esau occupies the central position. Jacob does not feature as a central or main character even with the elimination of Esau. Thus when complete dialogues are analysed, Rebekah occupies the central position twice and Esau once. Isaac remains the main character with three occurrences. It would be easy to assume that Jacob should be the central character when Esau is eliminated, but the character-system presents data which is contrary.

2.3. Incomplete Dialogues

Four characters are involved in the incomplete dialogues character-system (Fig. 3.17). Jacob has the highest number of links (three) followed by Rebekah and Isaac with two each and God with one. The direction of speaking shows that Jacob is addressed by all characters. Also Isaac is addressed by Rebekah. God and Rebekah are not addressed by any of the characters and their speaking may indicate their dominance over those they address. If this be the case, then all characters are firmly connected to Jacob and Rebekah is firmly connected to Isaac. Thus God is strongly

connected to Jacob, Rebekah is strongly connected to Isaac and Jacob, and Isaac is strongly connected to Jacob.

Character	Weighted Degree	Percentage
Isaac	40	29
Rebekah	53	39
Jacob	00	00
Esau	47	34
Total number of words	140	
Av. # of words	35	25

Table 3.14a Character, Number of words and percentage

In Table 3.14a Rebekah speaks the highest number of words. Rebekah speaks 38 words to Jacob and 15 to Isaac. Isaac speaks 40 words to Jacob and God also speaks 47 words to Jacob. This implies that Jacob does not speak to anyone but receives 125 words. Thus, Jacob receives the highest number of words. However, the directions of the arrows indicate that Jacob is the receptive centre of all spoken words and finally receives all the 140 words spoken in this character-system. Rebekah speaks to Isaac who in turn speaks to Jacob. This portrays Isaac as an in-between character. Rebekah also speaks to Jacob and God speaks to Jacob. This agrees with the sequence of the narrative in Genesis 27–28.²⁶⁸ With the highest number of words spoken, Rebekah 53 (39%) is the *main character*. Also, Isaac with 40 (29%) is the *central character*. If Rebekah, Isaac and God are eliminated (Table 3.14b) there remains a network in each situation with at least three nodes. But the elimination of Jacob has a great effect on this network. This leaves only Rebekah and Isaac where she dominates the conversation because Isaac does not speak. Furthermore, the elimination of Jacob takes God off the character-system. The data (Table 3.14b) specifies that Isaac plays the central role when Rebekah and God are eliminated, and Rebekah plays the central role when Isaac is eliminated. During this process of elimination, only Rebekah (twice) and God (once) appear as main characters. The data indicates the importance of Jacob to this character-system because his elimination affects all the other nodes.

Character Eliminated	Weighted Degree	Av.Wt. Degree	Central Character	Degree	%	Main Character	Degree	%
God	99	33	Isaac	40	40	Rebekah	53	54
Isaac	85	28.33	Rebekah	45	45	God	47	55
Jacob	15	7.5	Rebekah dominates because Isaac does not speak					
Rebekah	87	29	Isaac	40	46	God	47	54

Table 3.14b Character Elimination, Weighted degree, Av.Wt. Degree, Main and Central characters

This character-system gives the reader information which is not easily retrieved from the other approaches. Up to this point, Rebekah has occurred more as central character while Isaac has often been the main character. In this character-system, they are on a par occurring as central character and for the first time, Isaac has no occurrence as main character. Rebekah's occurrence as main character when God is eliminated confirms her strong connections with both Isaac and Jacob. This probably points to her importance in the transfer of the blessings. In the same light, God and Isaac too have strong connections with Jacob which could also mark their

²⁶⁸ According to Gen 27:42–28:5, Rebekah speaks to Jacob (Gen 27:42–45) and instructs him to flee from Esau's anger. She later speaks to Isaac (Gen 27:46) to solicit Jacob's movement to Paddan Aram. In Gen 28:1–5, Isaac repeats Rebekah's (Gen 27:46) plea to Jacob. It is logical from the direction of speaking in this network matrix to say that Jacob only listens and receives all the words spoken. Whatever happens after the listening is not indicated in the network links.

importance in the transfer of the blessings. The total occurrences of characters as central or main and their interactions with each other in the character-systems of Genesis 27–28 is presented in the following Tables (3.15a–c).

Occurrences		
Character	Central	Main
Isaac	3	8
Rebekah	5	3
Jacob	0	0
Esau	2	0
God	3	2

Table 3.15a. Occurrences as central or main character

Character	Explicit words spoken	Explicit words received	Difference	% listened	Ratio
Isaac	194	75	+119	39	13:1
Rebekah	110	19	+91	17	6:1
Jacob	40	127	-87	283	1:3
Esau	39	83	-44	113	1:2
God	47	0	+47	00	infinity

Table 3.15b. Words spoken and words received

Characters	# of links (words)	Characters	# of links (words)
Isaac to Esau	83	Esau to Isaac	39
Isaac to Jacob	111	Jacob to Isaac	21
Rebekah to Jacob	95	Jacob to Rebekah	19
Rebekah to Isaac	15	Isaac to Rebekah	0
God to Jacob	47	Jacob to God	0

Table 3.15c. Weighted values of links and interactions in the character-system

The data in the tables (Tables 3.15a–c) above presents useful information on the networks formed by the characters in Genesis 27–28. Table 3.15a contains the occurrences of characters either as *central* or *main*. I have not included character-systems with only two nodes as complete networks because of the obvious nature of the relations. In Table 3.15a, Isaac has the highest occurrence (eight) as *main character* and Rebekah has the highest occurrence (five) as *central character*. Rebekah also occurs as main character in three instances. God occurs as central character three times and as main character twice. Esau has two occurrences as central character and Jacob has none. The data also tells us that Esau and Jacob do not occur as main characters in any of the character-systems. Esau occupies the *central* position twice [when Jacob is eliminated (Table 3.12b) and when Rebekah is eliminated (Table 3.13b)]. But when Esau and Isaac are eliminated, Jacob does not occur as central character. Instead, God and Rebekah occupy the centre of the character-systems. This is important because it can help inform readers of the relationships that exist between the characters. From the data collected in Table 3.15a Isaac is the *main character* with eight occurrences and Rebekah is the *central character* with five occurrences.

Rebekah's centrality is based on the total number of occurrence as central character. However, the ratio is just 38% of all occurrences which raises some questions on the efficacy of this approach. Table 3.15b presents the ratio of words spoken and listened to. God's value cannot be computed because he has 100 percent speaking and zero percent listening. Isaac speaks highest among the other characters and listens least and Jacob and Esau speak less and listen more. However, Jacob speaks least and listens most. How does Jacob's ratio of speaking and listening affect centrality? The weighted values of links in Table 3.15c (also Fig. 3.8) tell us that Isaac speaks more to Jacob than Esau and Jacob speak more to Isaac than Rebekah. It also shows that Rebekah dominates Isaac and Isaac does not speak to Rebekah at

all. The same goes with God and Jacob as Jacob does not speak to God. The number of words indicates that more words are spoken to Esau and Jacob, fewer words to Isaac and Rebekah, and none to God. God therefore establishes the strongest connection in the whole character-system with an infinity ratio of speaking to listening. Isaac speaking is equal to Jacob's listening (45%–42%) and Rebekah's speaking is equal to Isaac and Esau's listening (26%–27/25%). Hence, how does this shape the characters in the network? Who shapes who and what is the outcome?

3.10.2. *Summary of the Application of Moretti's Network Theory Model*

When Moretti presents the findings of this theory, he constantly highlights that it is not meant to identify or present contradictions with other approaches, but to give another dimension to the reading of texts. He goes on to underscore the importance of the central character in every character-system as a contribution to the understanding of texts. I have applied Moretti's network theory to Genesis 27–28 and have created data and used it to generate a weighted and directed character-system. I started with the whole character-system and continued by dealing with complete and incomplete dialogues. At each stage, I used the process of elimination of characters and measured the distances between those in the network to get the *central characters*. Based on Moretti's argument that the volume of words brings meaning to a network, I differentiated between a *main* and *central character* in each character-system. At the end I have compiled a table of occurrences, weighted values and ratio of explicit words spoken and received. It is important to note that Moretti (together with other network analysts) sees the *main* and *central character* as the same person, although he talks of a "*protagonist*" and a central character (Moretti 2013:7).

The collected data presents another way of studying Genesis 27–28 and it is important to mention that it brings to light issues that have not been noticed in other literary approaches. Does the number of words spoken by Isaac to Jacob (111), for example, tell us about the relationship between Isaac and Jacob? What does Esau's occurrence as *central character* (when Jacob and Rebekah are eliminated) tell us? What about Jacob's absence as *central character*? What does Isaac's and Rebekah's occurrence as *main character* tell us (Table 3.12b)? What is the implication of Isaac as *central character* in Table 3.14b? What does Rebekah's occurrence (five) as *central character* tell us? Again, what does Rebekah's occurrence as *main character* bring to the text? What does the ratio of spoken words and received words tell us? How does interaction in the network shape characters? Who shapes who and at what cost? These questions may not have obvious answers but give another way of understanding the interaction of characters in the narrative. According to Moretti's theory, Rebekah has been identified as the *central character* and Isaac has been identified as the *main character*. Rebekah maintains her centrality in 38 percent of all the three character-systems except when she is eliminated. Isaac does the same as main character in 61 percent of the network except in the incomplete dialogues where he switches positions with Rebekah and becomes central character. From Moretti's theory, the following conclusions can be made with respect to Genesis 27–28:

- The data confirms Rebekah as the *central character*. The data presents her as a counterpart to Isaac. She occupies central positions in most of the network matrices (five occurrences) and appears as *main character* in three occurrences. When Esau is eliminated Rebekah and Isaac occupy the *main character* position. Rebekah also equalises the division and strengthens the parental preferential treatment.

- Isaac's position is indispensable as the *main character*. It is his story and the data from the various network matrices confirm this (eight occurrences). The data also indicates that Isaac speaks more to Jacob than to Esau and Esau becomes *central character* when Rebekah is eliminated. This might be an indication of Isaac preferential treatment and love for Esau.
- Jacob forms an important node in the network because of his link to Isaac, Rebekah and God. If the link between him and Isaac is severed, the network indicates that he remains connected to Isaac via Rebekah and vice versa. Also, the data indicates that he listens more to Isaac than any other character. Overall Jacob has the highest listening ratio which might indicate his connectedness to nodes of influence and subsequent prominence. However, the data puts him at the fringes of the network although he has more connections than Rebekah and Esau.

Moretti's theory has to a great extent contributed to the literary understanding of this narrative section. As a literary stylistic approach, it has given a new perspective to the reading of Genesis 27–28. However, his over-reliance on number of words and number of links to determine the central character in a network limits the understanding of centrality in Genesis 27–28. There is the issue of nomenclature and Moretti (together with other network analysts) has not been able to make a difference between a central and main character and dominant character. I argue that there is need to make a difference between these characters in every literary character-system because not every character who minimises distances between others in average words occupies the centre of the network (central character) due to the localised effects of centrality measurement. Jacob's position could highlight the localised nature of degree centrality. Jacob who has more weighted links than Esau is placed at the fringes of the narrative. This may signify two things: (a) *Number of weighted links and amount of clustering has no effect on centrality measurement*. Jacob is the central clustering node in the directed network and his position should make him more central than Esau. The data shows the contrary and Jacob's zero occurrence as central character, in my opinion, plays against Moretti's centrality theory. (b) *Jacob has no identity of his own and acts only on impulses or instructions from Isaac and Rebekah*. If this is so then it vindicates Jacob from any of his actions. However, this is not the case and I have argued that Jacob is a full-fledged character who is independent and accountable for his actions (see §3.5.2.3). Moretti has mentioned that number of links and words define the distance to power (Moretti 2013:108–109) where links indicate nearness and words indicate farness (Ibid.). He uses the example of Phaedre and Theseus to present how number of words and links can be used to differentiate between a protagonist and a central character (more *words* = protagonist and more *links* = central character) (Ibid.). He concludes that a protagonist is important but not necessarily tied to centrality (Ibid. 7–9). Moretti gives examples of plays where a single character has the greatest number of links and words (e.g. Macbeth) and his conclusion gives the possibility that there are exceptions to centrality where a protagonist is not necessarily the central character (Ibid. 8). Elsewhere, Moretti argues that the main function of a protagonist is to bring stability to a network which is necessary but not identical for centrality (Moretti 2011:5). Moretti raises two critical issues. First, he argues that a central character is not necessarily a protagonist. Thus, he departs from other analysts who see the protagonist as the one who minimises the distances between other characters in a network (Moretti 2011:4). Second, Moretti identifies the importance of a protagonist as one who brings stability to a network and gives exceptions where this is applicable.

However, he does not give a clear classification nor make a difference between protagonists who are not central characters and the central characters who are not protagonists.

It is important to mention that Moretti's use of the word "protagonist" is ambiguous. At one moment he ties a protagonist to centrality and at another he does not. He talks of two criteria of protagonism (number of links and number of words) (Moretti 2013:5 and 2013:108–109) and talks of two criteria for centrality with the same meaning (Moretti 2013:5 and 2013:109). This is an example of problems with nomenclature. I argue that the word "protagonist," as "antagonist," is misleading and easily divides a narrative or play between two characters. There can be more than one protagonist or antagonist in a narrative or play and it is not clear from Moretti's arguments how a protagonist fits in the central role in a play or how a protagonist does not.²⁶⁹ In Chapter two, I have argued that protagonists, antagonists and helpers are all regarded as major characters among which one assumes the position of a main character. Berlin (1983) uses "full-fledged" character to describe both protagonists and antagonists because of their complex traits. It is my opinion that the words "protagonist and antagonist" are imbued with ambiguity because they prejudge a character rather than portray a character. In this study, I have classified the characters and argued that there is a difference between *main* and *central* characters with respect to the patriarchal narratives and that *words* are only a single approach to determine the main and/or central character of a network.²⁷⁰ Elsewhere, I have defined a central character as the one around whom a narrative revolves. How does this approach affect the understanding of centrality? In addition, I have argued that there can be many protagonists or leading characters in a play, but the central character is the one around whom the whole story revolves. This character, although connected to the major and influential nodes in a network, might not necessarily be projected in average number of words. Furthermore, one of the measures of centrality is a character's prominence and connectedness to nodes of influence or those close to power. This is because a node that is connected brings stability to the network. Here again, number of words cannot be the major criterion. Wasserman and Faust (1994:202–205) have argued that a popular actor commands centrality because everyone wants to be connected to the actor. This popular actor may receive many links and words but will say very little. Yet this actor has access and control of information because of its interaction with many actors in the network. Wasserman and Faust add that the notion of degree as a parameter for centrality serves only the local surrounding of a node (Ibid. 173). Thus, it is ineffective in itself to determine the centrality of a character.

Following on, it is plausible to construe that the less a character speaks the closer the character is to power or centre of authority which also has an influence on

²⁶⁹ It is also important to mention here that a reader who applies the words 'antagonist' and 'protagonist' to the sets of actants in Genesis 27–28 will be caught in a dilemma because of the complex nature of the narrative and the characters. Isaac and Esau can either be labelled antagonists or protagonists and this depends on a reader's perspective. If the reader reads the narrative from Isaac's and Esau's perspectives, they will be the protagonists while Rebekah and Jacob will be the antagonists. However, if the reader grapples with the idea that Rebekah's actions are a fulfilment of God's oracle (Gen 25:23), then Rebekah and Jacob will be the protagonists while Isaac and Esau will be the antagonists. This is evidence that these words stigmatise and label characters before the reader even gets to understand their actions.

²⁷⁰ The central character is not necessarily the one who minimises distance in average number of words. In social network theory, the central node is also that which is connected to strategic nodes or nodes of influence or prominence. While the distance between nodes is important, proximity to prominence and power is also important.

centrality. This is because the speaker (who in these terms is considered as the centre of influence or authority) establishes strong links with the addressee with no opposition. However, this can only take effect if the position of the character in focus is able to control the flow of information within the network as with Jacob. Table 3.15c, in my opinion, presents the prominence of characters in Genesis 27–28 which can be placed in the following descending hierarchal order (in percentage of words received).

• Jacob	62%
• Esau	25%
• Isaac	9%
• Rebekah	4%
• God	0%

Moretti lays much emphasis on the average distance and links as the most important parameter to centrality in a network. While these are primary, there are other indices (e.g. betweenness and closeness centralities) which affect the centrality of a node in a network. These have been applied to social networks and I argue that their application to literary quantitative analysis might shed more light to the understanding of characters. In the next section (§3.11) I will use the indices developed and applied in the analysis and visualization of social network in Gephi 0.8.2 to further determine the central character in the network of Genesis 27–28.

3.11. APPLICATION OF MORETTI'S NETWORK THEORY USING GEPHI 0.8.2

The primary aim of the network theory is to determine the amount of space occupied by characters, their interactions, spheres of influence of characters, and importance to centrality within a social network. In the social network theory centrality is viewed in terms of distance or frequency. The complexity of defining centrality has led to the development of various indices (Freeman 1977, 1978, 1979. See also Bonacich 1987, Wasserman and Faust 1994, Borgatti 2003, Borgatti et al. 2006 and Opsahl et al. 2010). Among the many indices for centrality measurement, four have been used in the Gephi 0.8.2 software. I have used the data in Table 3.14c as input to Gephi 0.8.2 and the Tables 3.19–3.53 (appendix 3c) present the output data generated for the various network matrices. Besides the four indices that define centrality, there are others which help the analyst to understand the position of a node with respect to power and general interconnectedness in the network. Based on the generated output data, I will define these indices and apply them to the network to determine the central character. At the end of the analysis I will plot a graph of character and centrality indices.

3.11.1. *Gephi 0.8.2 Indices*

The following indices are important in the analysis of the character-systems of Genesis 27–28 (summary is found in Table 3.37):

1. *Degree Centrality*

Degree Centrality measures the centrality of a character in terms of the number of other characters that are linked to it (Opsahl et al. 2010 and Nieminen 1974:333). According to Wasserman and Faust (1994:173–174 and 178–179), a central actor is one whose position ensures active involvement which includes receiving and sending. In non-directed networks, this corresponds to the number of adjacent vertices and often indicates where an action takes place (Ibid. 179). Thus, a character with a high degree either has direct or indirect contacts with many other actors and

acts as an information channel to others in the network albeit its centrality is localised (Ibid. 179–180). In a directional network (weighted or non-weighted) there is a differentiation between in-degree and out-degree (Ibid. Also, see Opsahl et al. 2010 and Giovanni et al. 2012:325–326). For weighted networks, the degree centrality is the sum of the weights (Opsahl et al. 2010 and Xi-Nian et al. 2011:3). Applying this to literary analysis, Moretti argues for an average sum of the distances between characters in the network (Moretti 2012). This agrees with the average weighted degree generated for this network. According to the data generated for the networks, Jacob (14) has the highest occurrences of degree centrality in non-weighted networks of Genesis 27–28. This is followed by Isaac (10), Rebekah and Esau (one), and God (zero). Thus, Jacob fulfils the degree centrality measure for non-weighted networks. When average weighted degrees are computed, Rebekah (eight) is central because of her high occurrence followed by Isaac and Jacob with three occurrences each and God with one occurrence. If the sum of the weights is considered, Jacob will have eight occurrences, followed by Isaac (seven), Rebekah (two), and Esau and God (one each). Here we have two different characters at the centre of the network from three separate approaches to the same index. Jacob is confirmed for a non-weighted network and a weighted network whose degree centrality is based on the sum of the weights of the links connected to a node. For the average weighted value approach, Rebekah fulfils the requirement for degree centrality. Opsahl has argued that this discrepancy occurs because degree centrality is a local measure and concentrates around characters that might not have the possibility to easily get and disseminate information in a network (Opsahl et al. 2010. See also Brass 1984 and Borgatti 2005). Hence, degree centrality is insufficient to determine the centrality of a character in a network.

2. Closeness Centrality

The Closeness Centrality index measures the closeness of a node to others in a network (Sabidussi 1966:583 and Andrea et al. 2010). A character is considered important if it can be as close as possible to all others (Wasserman and Faust 1994:183–186). This is because a character who is close to all others in a network can act as a channel of information and communication. Closeness therefore is the shortest path between two nodes in a network (Newman 2001, Dijkstra 1959, Giovanna and Laudanna 2012). The higher the closeness centrality value, the closer a character is to all others in a network. When I applied the closeness centrality index to the network in Genesis 27–28, the output data indicates that Isaac (12 occurrences) is closer to the characters in the network than Rebekah and Jacob (10 occurrences each), Esau (two occurrences) and God (one occurrence). These occurrences are computed from all the networks including the elimination of characters. Isaac therefore meets the values for closeness centrality. However, the value for Rebekah and Jacob might also indicate their importance in the dissemination of information in the network.

3. Betweenness Centrality

When a character's position in a network requires information to pass through it to others, the character is in a *between* position. As a cut point in the network, this character has control over information that goes to others in the network (Wasserman and Faust 1994:188–190). The number of times that a character intercepts the path of others defines its betweenness. Betweenness specifies the number of times that a character intercepts the shortest path of others (Conf. Newman 2005). A character who occupies a between position has been observed to be able to control information flow or exchange of resources (Ibid. and Freeman 1979:223). Data collected for betweenness centralities in the Tables 3.20–3.37 shows that Isaac functions between

characters nine times and Jacob seven times. The other characters are not shown to have interrupted the path of information in the network. Thus, Isaac meets the criteria for betweenness centrality.

4. Eigenvector Centrality

The Eigenvector Centrality index measures the interconnectedness of a node with respect to power and influence (Bonacich and Lloyd 2001, Andrea et al. 2010 and Xi-Nian 2011). This index considers aspects of centrality that affect the whole network. A high eigenvalue for a node therefore defines its centrality. The data collected for the network in Genesis 27–28 shows that Isaac has a high eigenvector value occurrence of 11, followed by Jacob with 10 occurrences. Rebekah and Esau have two occurrences each and God does not have a high eigenvector value in any of the networks. Thus, Isaac fulfils the eigenvector centrality measure.

In addition to the four main indices, Gephi 0.8.2 applies the eccentricity index which defines the distance between a node and all other nodes in a network. The general observation of eccentricity in the data shows that it is inversely proportional to closeness. High eccentricity denotes that the node is less close. Thus, the lower the eccentricity value, the closer is the focal node to all other nodes in the network. Isaac and Jacob are the nodes with the highest eccentricity occurrence of 11 and 12 respectively. Rebekah has an occurrence of seven, Esau has two and God has one. Hence, Jacob is the node that minimises the distances to all other nodes. Gephi 0.8.2 also ranks nodes according to importance within the network and indicates which nodes are strongly connected to the network. The importance of nodes is measured using the HITS (Hypertext Induced Topic Search) algorithm (Michele Benzi et al., 2013). HITS identifies two types of important nodes (authority and hub) in a network with respect to power (Ibid.). A hub is a node which is linked to many important nodes and an authority is the node which is considered important (Ibid.). The data indicates that Jacob and Isaac are nodes of authority with an occurrence of 10 each. However, Isaac acts as a hub 11 times while Jacob acts as a hub five times. This means that Isaac is the centre of authority in this network. In the same light, Rebekah has an authority value of one but acts as a hub six times; God has an authority value of zero and acts as a hub three time and Esau with one authority value acts as a hub two times. All the nodes are connected to other important nodes which have a high value of authority. In this network, Isaac has a high connection to important nodes (11) and a high authority value (10). While Isaac and Jacob share the same authority value, Isaac becomes the centre of power because of his high connectivity (11) to other nodes. Also, the authority values may indicate the importance of the characters to the understanding of this narrative. Could God's authority value (0) and hub value (3) be an indication that this network can be understood in God's absence? If this is the case then how does this affect the understanding of Genesis 27–28? While this is significant, its discussion is beyond the scope of this research. Of importance is the analysis of the data collected which puts Jacob closer to authority and power than Esau. When it comes to strongly connected nodes, Vaziran et al., (2004) argue that such a node will have no incoming link. They define a strongly connected network as one which has a *source* (a node without an incoming edge) and a *sink* (a node without an outgoing edge) and argue that connected components can be reduced into mega-nodes by combining all connected components into one to appreciate the graphical effect of the strongly connected components. I applied this to the character-system of Genesis 27–28 and found out that Isaac, Esau, Rebekah and Jacob could merge into a mega-node because there are traceable paths that link them. When this happens, God is the source node that is linked to the mega-node (sink) made up of the other four characters in the

network. With no incoming edge, God as the source node establishes a strong link to the mega-node (sink). According to Wasserman and Faust (1994), the mega-node complies and thus is close to the centre of power. The data indicates that God stands out as the node with the strongest connectivity with an occurrence of nine and Rebekah follows with two occurrences. Although these values do not define centrality they indicate that the strongly connected node is influential in the network and being connected to the influential node can affect centrality.

3.11.2. Summary of Moretti's Centrality Measurement Using Gephi 0.8.2

The centrality indices applied by the Gephi 0.8.2 software present some variation to the central character in Genesis 27–28. For degree centrality, two characters are mentioned depending on whether the value is weighted or non-weighted and whether the degree centrality is the average or just the sum of all weighted links. This index identifies Jacob and Rebekah as central characters. Isaac has the closest distance to all other characters. He also stands as an in-between to other characters, interconnects to characters and possesses a high authority value. Jacob has the shortest path between him and all the furthest characters in the network. However, he closely follows

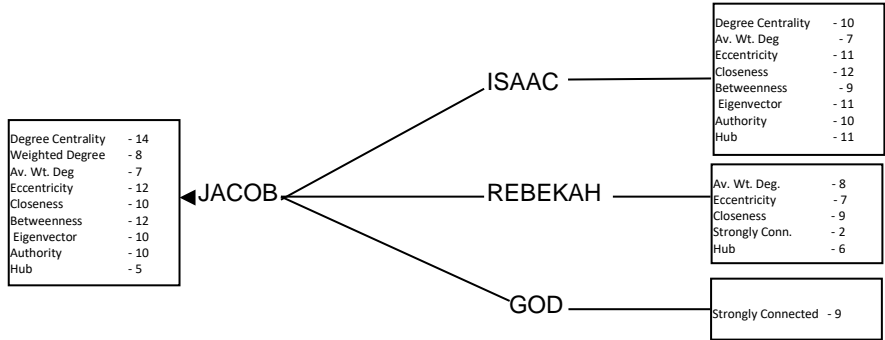


Fig. 3.19 Jacob's interconnectedness with important characters

Isaac in all other centrality indices. Rebekah too follows Isaac closely on closeness centrality and God has the strongest connection in the network. When all the centrality occurrences for each character are added up, Jacob has the highest occurrences of 86, followed by Isaac with 84, Rebekah 38, God 16 and Esau 13. The data clearly indicates that Isaac (84) and Jacob (86) are two important nodes in the network. It also indicates that Rebekah (38) is an important node which stands between Isaac and Jacob. Also, the data shows that God's connection with Jacob (nine) and Rebekah's connection with Jacob and Isaac (two) form the strongest links in the network. Jacob's connections with the other nodes can be represented as shown in Fig 3.23. Jacob connects directly with all the important characters in the network. He has a stable position and his direct connection with Isaac, Rebekah and God strengthens his stability. Thus, it is plausible from the data to conclude that Jacob is the central character in the network based on his connection with God, Isaac and Rebekah.

The Gephi 0.8.2 software applies many indices to measure the centrality of characters in this network. These indices take into consideration a combination of parameters which include frequency, distance, proximity to power and authority, betweenness of communication links or prominence of nodes. It is important to note that the central character is different from that in Moretti's approach. Thus, we have two approaches for centrality and two central characters for the same character network.

However, the development of other indices of centrality has been set on the backdrop of the locality of degree centrality and Wasserman and Faust (1994) have argued that degree centrality is an ineffective index to determine the centrality of a network. In addition, the Gephi 0.8.2 software has incorporated degree centrality as one of the indices. Thus, it is plausible to argue that since Gephi 0.8.2 has incorporated Moretti's approach besides other indices, its results to centrality are a better representation. The central character to this network therefore is Jacob. To test the credibility of the output of Gephi 0.8.2, I have chosen to apply the same approach to the character-system where monologues (soliloquys) are accounted for. This is because monologues are prompted by other characters and thus should form part of the network (Conf. Appendix 3B). This constitutes the following section.

3.12. CHARACTER-SYSTEM OF GENESIS 27–28: ALL SPOKEN WORDS

In this section, I have considered all words spoken by each character. If the words are prompted by a situation created by another character, I consider them as a response. Two of such instances occur in Genesis 27–28.

Character	# of Words	%	Non-weighted Degree
Isaac	194	39.5	5
Rebekah	110	22.4	3
Jacob	94	19.1	6
Esau	46	09.4	2
God	47	09.6	2
Average weighted	98.2	20.0	3.6

Table 3.16a. Character, Number of words, non-weighted degree and percentage

When Isaac tells Esau that he has no blessings reserved for him, Esau reacts and narrates that Jacob has cheated him twice. Since the reaction is prompted by Isaac's words, I consider Esau's words as directed to Isaac. The same goes for Jacob and his dream in Bethel. His reaction is a direct response to God's promise in the vision. This creates a link between Jacob and God (See Fig. 3.24). The word distribution for this character-system is shown in Table 3.16a. The major difference here is that Jacob's and Esau's words have increased. Jacob has an out-degree link to God of 54 words (which indicates that he speaks to God more than anyone else in the network) and Esau's reaction to Isaac's response on the blessing increases his number of words from 39 to 46. There is also a change in the non-weighted degree. Jacob has six links and God has two as opposed to five and one (Fig. 3.24). In the non-weighted and directed network, God can be linked to other characters in the network with Jacob and Isaac as the clustering nodes. The average clustering remains the same but Jacob stands out as the most important node because he acts as a clustering node 11 times and Isaac seven times. According to the data, Isaac still speaks more than everyone. When the average weighted degree is calculated Jacob becomes the central character with 94 words and Isaac the main character with 194 words. When characters are eliminated, there is also a difference in the data (Table 3.16b).

Character Eliminated	Weighted Degree	Av. Wt. Degree	Central Character	Character Degree	Main Character	Character Degree
Rebekah	362	90.5	Jacob	76	Isaac	194
Isaac	215	71.667	Jacob	73	Rebekah	95
Esau	362	90.5	Jacob	94	Isaac	111
Jacob	144	48.0	Esau	46	Isaac	83
God	390	97.5	Rebekah	110	Isaac	194

Table 3.16b Character Elimination, Weighted degree, Av. Weighted degree, Main and Central characters

The first noticeable difference is that when Jacob is eliminated, Esau becomes the central character and when Esau is eliminated Jacob becomes the central character. Otherwise, Jacob remains the central character (Tables 3.15a and b) except when God is eliminated.²⁷¹ Also, Isaac remains the main character throughout except where he is eliminated. The elimination of God brings Rebekah to the centre of the network, albeit Isaac remains as the main character. When Jacob is eliminated, the output data is the same as that of Fig. 3.12. When God is eliminated the average weighted degree is 97.5 words. In this case, Rebekah becomes the central character with 110 words and Isaac remains the main character with 194 words. Rebekah (95) becomes the main character and Jacob (73) the central character when Isaac is eliminated. Esau is eliminated when Isaac is eliminated because Isaac is his only link to the network matrix. The same happens when Jacob is eliminated (God too is eliminated) and Esau (46) becomes the central character with Isaac (83) as the main character. Interestingly, Rebekah's elimination leaves Jacob (75) as the central character and Isaac (194) as the main character.

3.12.1. Complete Dialogues

The character-system for complete dialogues is different (Fig. 3.25). All characters are present in the network with the introduction of a link between Jacob and God.

Character	# of Words	Percentage	Degree
Rebekah	95	20	2
Isaac	194	41	4
Jacob	94	20	6
Esau	46	10	2
God	47	10	2
Average	95.2		3.2

Table 3.17a Character, Number of Words, Percentage and Degree

The only link that goes off is that which connects Rebekah to Isaac. In the complete dialogues character-system, Isaac still speaks the highest number of words (194). This makes him the main character. The average weighted degree is 95.2. With 94 degrees

Character Eliminated	Weighted Degree	Av. Wt. Degree	Central Character	Character Degree	Main Character	Character Degree
Rebekah	362	72.4	Jacob	76	Isaac	194
Isaac	215	60.667	Jacob	73	Rebekah	95
Esau	347	86.75	Jacob	94	Isaac	111
Jacob	Isaac dominates Esau					
God	375	93.75	Rebekah	95	Isaac	194

Table 3.17b Character Elimination, Weighted degree, Av. Wt. degree, Main and Central characters

Jacob becomes the centre of the network. Jacob's centrality is underscored by the number of nodes that are linked to him. Eliminating Jacob takes away Rebekah and God and only Isaac and Esau remain. When God is eliminated (Fig. 3.23), there is also a swing towards Rebekah as the central character. When Esau is eliminated (Fig. 3.28), Jacob remains as the central character and Isaac also remains as the main character. Otherwise, Jacob is the central character in the complete dialogue character-system with four occurrences and Isaac is the main character with four occurrences although Rebekah occupies the central position once, when God is eliminated and appear as main character when Isaac is eliminated.

²⁷¹ I have already mentioned that Rebekah is indispensable in the handing over of the family and patriarchal blessings. Her centrality when God is eliminated in the character-system also highlights her indispensability.

3.12.2. *Incomplete Dialogues*

Character	# of Words	Percentage	Degree
Rebekah	53	57	2
Isaac	40	43	2
Jacob	0	0	2
Average		31	2

Table 3.18 Character, Number of words, Percentage and Degree

The character-system for incomplete dialogues is made up of three nodes (Fig. 3.30). While all characters have two links each, the direction of communication shows that Rebekah speaks to Isaac and Jacob; and Isaac speaks to Jacob. Jacob does not speak in this character-system but receives 78 words directly. The data specifies that Rebekah who has the highest number of words (53) is identified as the main character. Isaac has 40 words and is identified as the central character. If any of the characters are eliminated, two nodes are left and the same effect is seen in the network. Jacob is at the receiving end while Rebekah is strongly connected to Isaac and Jacob, and Isaac strongly connected to Jacob.

3.12.3. *Summary of Network Theory with all Spoken Words*

In this section I considered all words spoken by each character and moved on to apply Moretti's theory of distance measurement to identify the central character. The outcome for central and main characters differs from that of the network proposed by Moretti. The table below presents a summary.

Character	Number of occurrences as Central Character	Number of occurrences as Main Character	Non-weighted Degrees
Isaac	1	5	5
Rebekah	2	2	2
Jacob	9	0	9
Esau	1	0	0
God	0	0	2

Table 3.19 Character, Number of occurrences as Main or Central character and Weighted degree

The data summary indicates that Jacob has the highest occurrences as central character and Isaac has the highest occurrences as the main character. Isaac maintained his position as main character in all the character-systems except in two instances (when he is eliminated and in the indirect dialogues). Rebekah also features as main character three times; and God, Jacob and Esau do not feature as main characters. In the same light, Isaac, Rebekah and Esau feature as central character once and God has no occurrence. When it comes to the non-weighted degrees or edges, Jacob has the highest nodes (nine) connected to him in all character-systems, followed by Isaac (five), Rebekah (two) and God (two). I also noted Jacob's importance as a clustering node with 11 occurrences. All these statistics underscore Jacob as an important node in the character-system. The data specifies that Jacob is the central character while Isaac is the main character and this correlates with data generated with the aid of the Gephi 0.8.2 where Jacob has a high centrality occurrence of 74 followed by Isaac with 46 occurrences (see Table 3.38–3.53 for the output data and 3.54 for centrality distribution). The data indicates that Jacob meets the highest score in the various centrality indices. Isaac is main character because he has the highest occurrence (71%) as main character. Rebekah's appearance as central character (twice) when God is eliminated is of significance. How does this affect Jacob's centrality? When God is eliminated, the network is split into two with Isaac and Esau on one side, and Rebekah and Jacob on the other side. I have observed that Rebekah forms a strong

link with Isaac as a dominant character and her central occurrences when God is eliminated may serve to highlight her importance in the family and her significant role when it comes to choosing an heir. This may be a hint that the proposed heir should have connections with both Isaac and Rebekah. In addition, it may also indicate Rebekah's influence over Isaac which plays to Jacob's favour and thus reinforces Jacob's centrality and chances of being the heir. The character-systems of Fig. 3.21–3.30 underscore this. Nonetheless, Jacob has a centrality occurrence of 75% and qualifies as the central character. Therefore, when all words uttered by characters are considered, and when monologues (soliloquys) are accounted for, there results differ from Moretti's approach because the data has a broader representation of the text.²⁷²

3.13. SUMMARY OF THE APPLICATION OF NETWORK THEORY TO GENESIS 27–28

I began this section by applying Moretti's network theory to the character-system of Genesis 27–28. I counted the words allocated to each character and considered them as the weighted values of the edges. I then measured the distances between the characters in the network to determine the central character. The data showed that Rebekah was at the centre of this character-system. I used the same data as input to Gephi 0.8.2 and generated a network which reflects the weights and directions of the edges. Due to the ambiguity in the use of main and central characters, I moved on to test the measurement of centrality in modified character-systems by eliminating characters and identifying the central node in the extracted character-systems. At the end, I compiled the number of times that characters occupied the centre of the various character-systems. In addition, I observed that Moretti dwells more on degree centrality as key to determine the central character with the average number of words as his base. Although he represents a move away from approaches that give all edges the same value or determine the central character from the sum of weighted values (Opsahl 2010), there are many determinants of centrality which average weighted degree cannot capture. I built upon Wasserman's and Faust's (1994) notion of a node's position, connection to nodes of influence, closeness to nodes of influence and ability to cluster, and argued that distance is insufficient to determine a character's centrality and sphere of influence. I reckoned with other indices that network analysts have applied in the study of social networks and opted to apply those used in the Gephi 0.8.2 visualization software. Besides degree centrality, Gephi 0.8.2 applies closeness centrality, betweenness centrality and eigenvector centrality. I included other indices which indicate the rank of a node based on its connectivity and generated output data for these indices. After analysing the data, I found out that Jacob is the central character because of his connections with God, Isaac and Rebekah, albeit, the data obtained (Fig. 3.19) required a further analysis to be able to support this claim. Thus, two different approaches produced two distinct results. The first, based exclusively on degree centrality (average weighted degree) and the second incorporating other centrality indices. Nevertheless, the second integrated the first and added other centrality indices which could not be captured by average weighted degree. A tally of the data and its analysis, in the second approach, identifies Jacob as the central node. I moved on to the third stage to repeat both operations with a modified character-system in which I accounted for all spoken words (including monologues). I construed

²⁷² When I applied this approach to the analysis of Macbeth and Hamlet, the results also differ with those of Moretti who considers Macbeth and Hamlet as main/central characters in the stories. In my analysis, Malcolm and Macbeth are the central and main characters in Macbeth, while Getrude and Prince Hamlet are the central and main characters in Hamlet.

that characters respond to situations created by others even if they are not talking directly to those who have prompted their reaction because those that prompt the reaction are often in view and thus create a link between the speaker and them. If characters soliloquise, I consider that they are responding to prompts. Therefore, I included a link between God and Jacob and argued that Jacob's soliloquising is a reaction to God's promise in the vision. With this modification I followed the same procedures. First, I considered Moretti's average weighted distances and secondly, I generated data via Gephi 0.8.2 (See Tables 3.45–3.54). After analysing the data, I obtained the same results for both approaches. Both presented clear results as opposed to the previous character-systems. One element of importance is that Jacob maintains his centrality in almost all the character-systems generated for this network and Isaac also remains as main character throughout. This is also confirmed by the data generated for this network by the Gephi 0.8.2 visualization software.

The main purpose of any network theory is to determine hierarchy among characters with respect to position and power and I have already mentioned that Moretti's reliance on distance measurement via average weighted degree falls short of defining the central node or character in a network in these terms. He argues that links bring a character closer to power while words take a character away from power. By implication, a central character is not one who talks but one who is linked to those around or in power. This remains implicit and Moretti does not expand on it nor explore it. According to Wassermann and Faust (1994), closeness to power and connection to nodes of influence are important aspects of centrality. A retrospective reading of the character-system of Genesis 27–28 indicates that authority is centered on Isaac. Both Esau and Jacob are connected to him. However, Esau is a lone node but Jacob is connected to two others. It is important to note that Jacob's two nodes play a key role on Isaac. First none of the characters can reach God. Secondly Rebekah can reach Isaac but Isaac can only reach Rebekah via Jacob. The unidirectional connection of Rebekah, in my opinion, increases Jacob's centrality potentials since she can influence the one around whom power is centered. Also, Jacob's position between Isaac and Rebekah puts him in control of information between them. Isaac's position indicates that power is centered on the main character. Moretti talks about clustering and acknowledges that the clustering node connects nodes in a network which do not have direct links between them. If a node can cluster, then it controls information and communication flow which is essential for centrality. An example may explain the importance of clustering to centrality. Let us consider the housing market, for example, with the house owner, on one side and broker on the other. The broker is the central figure between the owner, buyer and bank. He communicates with the owner, modifies the amount to get his commission, presents it to the bank for interests and communicates the final purchasing figures to the buyer. The broker is close to all involved in the housing market and acts as an in-between or middle person in a way that the buyer may never meet the seller but all arrangements will go well. What the buyer pays is what the broker says. The broker can decide to modify the information in any way. Hence the broker's centrality is defined not only in terms of his links to the stakeholders of the housing market, but also in terms of his closeness to every stakeholder, his ability to control information, his ability to effectively act as in-between (mediator) and his ability to connect one stakeholder to the other.

In the network under study, Isaac and Jacob form important nodes. The directions indicate that Isaac, Esau and God can talk to Rebekah only through Jacob. Thus, Jacob is the link between Isaac and Esau, Rebekah and God. Although Isaac can cluster other characters to Esau, Jacob has a higher ability to cluster characters than Isaac. At first sight, the position of broker may seem to fit Rebekah more than

Jacob but when the communication links are considered, Jacob is identified. The system indicates that communication between Isaac and Rebekah is incomplete. Although Rebekah communicates with Jacob and Isaac, Isaac can only respond through Jacob. She collects information, manipulates it and presents it to both characters from her perspective but never receives a response which affects her ability to act as in-between and/or control information. In Gen 27:6–17, Rebekah prepares Jacob to come before Isaac with the blessing meal and in Gen 27:18–30, Jacob appears before Isaac. Apart from a repeat of words in Gen 27:11 and 22, these texts are different. First Rebekah does not instruct Jacob on what to tell Isaac in case other things come up. Jacob proves a mastery of the situation and explores a closeness vocabulary: “I am your firstborn son” and “the Lord your God was with me.” Secondly, Jacob does not report back to Rebekah. Wassermann and Faust (1994) argue that a prominent actor often receives many links and information but does not respond. Therefore, Jacob’s silence contributes to his centrality. Jacob can link all nodes even if the links between him and Isaac, for example, are severed. But this is not true for Isaac. Isaac can only get to Rebekah through Jacob. The same goes for Esau. Thus, Jacob’s position is very strategic. The degree centrality index applied by Moretti is not able to capture this concept. I also mentioned the difficulties faced in identifying the central character from the data collected via Moretti’s approach. All except Jacob occupied the central position at least twice. Rebekah is then identified as central character because she has the highest occurrences as central character. The output of all centrality indices used in the Gephi 0.8.2 software shows different results. Jacob meets the requirement of central character because he meets the highest score of all the centrality indices. When I considered all spoken words, I had equivalent results. The major difference is that when all spoken words are accounted for, Jacob is central character in almost every character-system. Rebekah is central character twice when God is eliminated, Esau once when Jacob is eliminated, and Isaac once when incomplete dialogues are studied. From the data, it is easy to identify Jacob as the central character. All the arguments above reiterate the insufficiency of average weighted degree to capture the full concept of centrality and the need for Moretti to incorporate other indices to his approach. From these arguments, I have concluded that Jacob is the central character in Genesis 27–28 and not Rebekah.

The application of Moretti’s approach to Genesis 27–28 may seem to have some lapses. However, its contribution to the understanding of this text has been enormous. The following may account for some of the differences. First there are many unanswered questions as to how Moretti will account for the words in this text. Secondly, it is important to reiterate the fact that Moretti specifies that this theory is functional in plays and that he applies it successfully to Shakespeare’s writings, although I have argued against his ambiguous application of terminology (especially protagonist and antagonist, central and main characters). The fact that Genesis 27–28 does not fall under drama might account for some differences in the results. Thirdly, only the discursive sections of Genesis 27–28 have been considered. This means that part of the text has not been captured because it is narrative. However, when I applied the same procedures to a modified character-system the results agree with my literary approach which identifies Jacob as the central character and Isaac as main character in this narrative (sub)unit. An important contribution of Moretti is the weighting of links and direction of communication which has been indispensable for the relations and interactions of characters in the network. Also, Moretti’s differentiation between the protagonist and the central character is important to analysis of literary works even though he does not indicate when a protagonist can be a central character and when

it cannot, or when a protagonist is main character. However, there is need to incorporate other centrality indices which Moretti has not defined but which influence how centrality of any social network is determined. Among these are closeness centrality, betweenness centrality and eigenvector centrality. These indices have been developed to capture the essence of a text which only degree centrality cannot unveil.

3.14. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter has been to study Genesis 27–28 from a literary perspective. I started by summarising the application and influence of the literary theory to biblical studies. I studied the works of some advocates to this theory with a focus on how a character is depicted and classified. Two major streams of direct and indirect characterisation formed the basis of all the authors. When it came to the classification of characters, there was a discrepancy between two-fold (round and flat) and three-fold (full-fledged, type and agent) categories. The development of the three-fold category was a response to the inability of the two-fold category to account for the changes in characters' behaviour within the same narrative section. Berlin's three-fold categorisation of characters stood out and she also developed other literary devices that affected readers' understanding of narratives (POV). Based on these distinctions, I questioned how readers continue to relate characters to their traits after their initial introduction and especially where no names are used by the narrator. One other issue that was unclear in the treatment of characters was the confusion in nomenclature. Does Berlin equate her category of full-fledged, type and agent to major, minor and props respectively? How does this fit with the expansion of categorisation to include main, dominant or central characters? I noticed that the terms *main character* and *central character* were used in an ambiguous manner (Berlin 1983 and Moretti 2011). While all can be full-fledged characters, the main character is the one about whom a story is written and the central character is the one around whom a story revolves.²⁷³ I adopted Berlin's three-fold categorisation and developed a methodology of reading this narrative section. I applied the literary approaches to the study of characters in Genesis 27–28 and the ways in which characterisation affects the understanding of this narrative (sub)unit. I argued that names and epithets have proleptic and analeptic connotations besides their use as literary devices by the narrator. The results can be summarised thus:

- Use of name for Isaac has a double implication:
 - Isaac is head of immediate family—an egocentric man who is driven by his love for food (Gen 27:1 and 20–21).
 - Isaac is custodian of patriarchal blessing (Gen 27:46 and 28:1, 5).
- Use of *his father* denotes Isaac as a custodian of patriarchal blessing and is applied by the narrator in the context of the blessing (Gen 27:18, 19, 31, 34, 38, 41).

²⁷³ When Berlin studies characters in Ruth she notes that Naomi is the central character because 'all characters stand in relation to her' (Berlin 1983:83). When I studied participant reference in chapter two, I noticed that there is a difference between the one about whom a story is written and the one around whom the story revolves. I named the former *main participant* and the latter *central participant*. Berlin's designation of Naomi as central puts her as the heroine of the story which in my argument would be the *main character* because the story is her story. The heroine of the story is Ruth (also central character).

- Use of *Isaac his father* denotes Isaac as custodian of blessing with two conflicting natures – Isaac as an egocentric man and Isaac as custodian of the blessing battling within one man (Gen 27:22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32 and 39).
- Use of name for Rebekah shows her as one out to secure (by active participation) blessing for Jacob her son (Gen 27:5, 12).
- Use of *his mother* shows Rebekah exercising her motherhood (Gen 27:13, 14 and 28:7).
- Use of *Rebekah his mother* portrays Rebekah as matriarch (Gen 27:11).
- Use of *Esau his son/her son, Jacob his son/her son* sets a contrast and reinforces parental preferential treatments which was already highlighted in Gen 25:23. The sonship here also reads analeptically to the son of promise.

Although character portrayal is a literary device, I observed that it has an effect on the structure of the text and led to the development of different structures for the same narrative (sub)unit (each reflecting its author's perspective). Also, the prominence of the ABCB'A' pattern continues to pose a challenge to other ahistorical approaches. The main question here has been on the differences that exist between this stylistic approach, other literary approaches, and the linguistic approach. If the literary stylists use linguistics for interpretation, why would both approaches present varying structural effects to the same text? I investigated how compatible these approaches can be and how each can inform the other. Based on devices developed by Walsh (a representative of the stylistic approach), the approach of Fokkelman (a strong advocate to this stylistic approach) and the devices developed by the ETCBC for the segmentation and reading of biblical narratives, I developed some conventions and applied them to Genesis 27–28, 37 and 38. I noticed that Fokkelman's detail analysis of narratives overlooked some text based (sub)unit markers and quite often he used conjunctions to mark (sub)units. To avoid this, I began by identifying (sub)unit markers from the text and moved on to determine how the markers could guide the reader to recognise the symmetric or concentric patterns. Nevertheless, I found out that there is far greater structural agreement than disagreement between the text based markers proposed by Walsh (2001) and the linguistic approach of the ETCBC database encoding.

First, there is the presentation of the symmetric or concentric structure which leads the reader to a central point. The stylistic approach often defines the central point as a turning point, which could also be the climax. Fokkelman identified one of such turning points (Gen 27:36) and called it a climax (Fokkelman 1985:99) indicating that there were other turning points within this narrative (sub)unit. I built upon this argument and defined a climax as that turning point which can force a denouement.²⁷⁴ The ETCBC text hierarchical schema makes the multiple turning points in a narrative visible, one of which is the climax—the turning point which forces a denouement.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ I have already argued that the blessing of Jacob does not force a denouement because Isaac is unaware of the counter plans. Even when he suspects that something is not right, his test proves the contrary. When he blesses Jacob, he is convinced he has blessed Esau. This is a turning point but it does not force a denouement. The denouement is forced when Esau weeps after Isaac makes him understand that the blessing is already taken and pronounces its irreversibility. I call this the climax because it is here that Esau concedes. His cry signifies the end point of his pursuit of the blessing. He could push and ask for other another blessing. However, he already knows that he has lost it.

²⁷⁵ When I applied this to Gen 37:2–36 and Genesis 38, I found out that the climax can occur in any of the symmetrical (sub)units (see Gen 37:35a and 38:25b). What is important therefore is that this climax should be able to force a denouement to the narrative.

Thus the database of the ETCBC can enable literary stylists to identify the various turning points in a narrative and precisely where the climax occurs. This in my opinion will strengthen stylistic interpretation of biblical narratives and narrow the gap between linguistic and literary stylistic interpretations.

Second, there are markers of symmetric or concentric (sub)units and embedded (sub)units. The stylistic approach of Fokkelman does not concur with the literary text based markers that Walsh has identified. When I reviewed the literary approaches of various authors, I argued that none of the authors mentioned how readers could match characters to their actions after their introduction (especially where no name is used). In the linguistic approach, this can be done by use of pronouns (continuation). Since Fokkelman's stylistic approach does not discuss this parameter, his symmetric and concentric boundaries tend to divide the actions of a single character between two symmetric (sub)units. Considering the importance of linguistics to this approach, the database has provided the appropriate (sub)unit markers which can improve the stylistic reading. I found out that it is easier to apply these devices to Genesis 27–28 (made up of dialogues with a maximum of two characters in each dialogue) than to Genesis 37 and 38 (made up of a narrative). My approach to these narrative sections as part of a larger *Toledoth* proved fruitful and led me to be able to determine the boundary markers with a focus on the whole *Toledoth* of Isaac (for Genesis 27–28) and Jacob (for Genesis 37 and 38). The challenge that remains is whether this can be effective for other narratives in the Hebrew Scriptures.²⁷⁶

Third, there is the arrangement of the symmetric (sub)units. Fokkelman's arrangement of the symmetric (sub)units appear as if they are on the same narrative level. This can create confusion in the minds of readers especially when it comes to determining the categories of the characters or where the most important actions take place. In the text hierarchy, what is at the upper level of the narrative is only understood from the details in the substratum. Besides, it marks clearly the embedded (sub)units and it is my opinion that the database responds to the difficulty faced by literary stylists to identify these embedded (sub)units.

Fourth, there is the approach to the narrative (sub)unit and the focus of the literary stylist. Fokkelman shows elegance in the way he studies narrative structures and how this leads to a better interpretation. However, I have argued that he studies these narratives as isolated (sub)units. With this approach, his focus does not often follow the larger narrative (especially the patriarchal narratives). I have demonstrated how considering this narrative section and Genesis 37 and 38 as part of a larger *Toledoth* of Isaac and Jacob can improve the structuring and interpretation of these texts. I achieved this by reading across the Masoretic Text chapter boundaries with the owners of the *Toledoth* designated the only main characters. This is still to be tested with other *Toledoth* narrative (sub)units, thus presenting an avenue for further investigations.

Another literary stylistic approach which I applied is Franco Moretti's network theory which studies characters and their sphere of influence in Genesis 27–28. I drew the character-systems, analysed the links, measured the distances and presented the data both in graphical and tabular forms. Also, I used the data to identify both the main and central characters and found out that this theory could be useful to increase the understanding of this narrative section as follows:

- It makes the importance of every character visible.

²⁷⁶ This is beyond the scope of this work but presents opportunities for further investigations on how the ETCBC database can enlighten the ABCB 'A' stylistic approach to other biblical narratives.

- It increases the understanding of the relationships between characters.
- It increases readers' understanding of the conflict in Genesis 27–28.
- It captures Rebekah's indispensability.
- It helps to provide an explanation why Jacob inherited the Abrahamic covenant and Isaac's blessing and reinforces Jacob's centrality.
- It provides a graphical presentation of the characters' interactions in Genesis 27–28.

Within the study of the network theory, I pointed out the ambiguity in the use of “protagonist” and “antagonist” with respect to characters and argued that other unambiguous terminology be applied (e.g. full-fledged character) with a classification which includes main or central characters. I found out that Moretti's use of central and protagonist or main needed further clarification. Furthermore, I argued that all words spoken by characters be accounted for since the speaking is often prompted by a situation or someone. I used Gephi 0.8.2 to generate weighted and directed graphs and charts for the network and also applied other centrality indices that Moretti has not included in his network analysis theory. The results of the network theory agreed with my definition of main (Isaac) and central (Jacob) character. Although I have modified Moretti's theory in many instances and used other centrality indices, Moretti's network theory remains a vital approach to the study of literary texts and its contribution to my understanding and the study of Genesis 27–28 has been enormous. It is therefore probable to conclude from the literary perspective that Isaac is the main character because it is his *Toledoth* and because he is the dispenser of the blessing while Jacob is the central character (hero) and equitable heir.

This chapter has demonstrated that ahistorical approaches can work to inform each other. The focus has been on the text itself as the starting point. Moretti's quantitative analysis has been applied as part of a stylistic reading of the discursive sections of Genesis 27–28. I have also ignored some stylistic devices²⁷⁷ of (sub)unit markers and advocated for the text based devices as a bridge between adherents of the ABCB'A' stylistic and the ETCBC linguistic approaches. Although differences and difficulties abound, the points of agreement are an important starting point. Of foremost importance is the agreement between the stylistic approach and the database of the ETCBC especially on markers of narrative (sub)units. This provides avenues for further studies on the compatibility of ahistorical approaches for a better understanding of biblical narratives probably with the inclusion of non-text based devices. The compatibility of the non-text based (sub)unit structural markers also provides a probable avenue for further research.

²⁷⁷ The stylists use conjunctions of various types to link narratives and Walsh has identified *links* and *threads* (Walsh 2001:175–190). It will be important to study how compatible these can be with the linguistic approach of the ETCBC.

Chapter Four

ROLES: SOCIOSCIENTIFIC STUDY OF GENESIS 27–28

4.1. PREAMBLE

In the last two sections, I have studied the individuals present in Genesis 27–28 as participants and characters; representing the linguistic and literary perspectives respectively. These individuals perform roles which enable readers to either identify them or characterise them. This chapter is dedicated to the study of the roles that each character performs. This approach is underscored by the narrator's constant use of sociocultural and anthropological language towards individuals in situations where pronouns or their names could convey the same meaning. The reference "Isaac his father," for example, is overencoded from a linguistic perspective with various functions; and also represents a literary device, from the literary perspective. The language and literature of a people develops within a society with sociocultural and anthropological interactions based on kinship. The word "father," identifies Isaac as a member of a kin with his role as a "father." Cross-culturally, Isaac as "father" is bound by societal norms or customs of his kinship and what he does as "father," as it is the case in our text, should conform to the norms of the patriarchal culture. The aim of this chapter is to uncover how each character develops his/her role in Genesis 27–28.

4.2. SOCIOSCIENTIFIC STUDIES OF GENESIS 27–28

No text originates in isolation, and no text is read in isolation. That would imply that Biblical texts are not just related to the socio-cultural world of their origin, but also to the socio-cultural worlds of their first readers (Alfredo 2010:64 and 2013:81).

The above quotation presents in summary form the importance of the socio-scientific (sociocultural and anthropological) dimensions of biblical interpretation. Rogerson (1978:1) has argued that the application of social sciences in the study of Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) is as old as the beginning of Old Testament biblical interpretation itself.²⁷⁸ There is evidence that early interpreters usually made socio-scientific assumptions and conclusions without properly understanding the implications on the interpretation of narratives. Again, the last two centuries have seen an increase in interaction between social sciences (sociology, anthropology, archaeology, ethnology) and Old Testament scholarship where both have used each other to compare cultural findings which exhibit similarities (Carroll 2000:13 and Fiensy 1997:43).²⁷⁹ A reawakening of this approach is illustrated in the way in which modern Old Testament scholars have increased their interest in socio-scientific approaches and acknowledged the solid primacy of the works of some of the pioneers like J.B. du Halde (1735), J.D. Michealis (1762 and 1763), Niebuhr (1772), E.F.K. Rosenmüller (1789), D.G. Hogarth (1905), W.R. Smith (1951), and T. Hansen (1964). By the early

²⁷⁸ Rogerson (1978:1) posits that the Old Testament is a major source for the study of both the Ancient Hebrews and Jews (language, history, law and society), and that Old Testament studies have often incorporated other fields of social sciences. He continues that it was not until the second half of the 18th century that anthropological observations were incorporated into Old Testament studies (especially the customs of the patriarchs), and moves on to trace the evolution and impact of anthropology on Old Testament studies (Ibid. 2–21).

²⁷⁹ Fiensy (1997:43–53) and Carroll (2000:13–23).

1970s, the use of social sciences like sociology and anthropology in the study of Old Testament built upon the sociocultural and anthropological insights already found in the works of Old Testament scholars like W.R. Smith, Julius Wellhausen, Johannes Pedersen, H. Wheeler Robinson, S. H. Hooke, Shirley Case Jackson, Albrecht Alt, William Foxwell Albright and Martin Noth.²⁸⁰ In the interactions between the social sciences and Old Testament studies, biblical scholars apply socioscientific theories (sociological and anthropological theories) and data (archaeological findings) to understand the development of biblical cultures while the social scientists apply the Old Testament as a source to the understanding of some ancient and primitive cultures (Fiensy 1997:43). This approach to the study of the Old Testament has generated many fruits as well as created differences in methods of reading and interpretation. The challenges posed are ongoing on various fronts. There is the rapid growth and use of computer technology in the analysis of biblical texts and sociocultural and anthropological data (digital analysis); there is an increase in archaeological and historical research in areas where the biblical stories took place; there is a rapid development of communities and a mixture of cultures due to globalisation and there is an increase in the use of some non-western cultures (notably African) in the interpretation of the Old Testament.²⁸¹ Each of these challenges lays emphasis on a particular method of reading and it is increasingly certain that none can be used in isolation. Carroll (2000:13–21) has argued that although social sciences has “a wide range of theories and models,” it enriches biblical studies and calls for an interdisciplinary approach to the scriptures if the theories and data are regarded as suggestions not as absolute proofs (Ibid. 15).

From a historical perspective, the patriarchal narrative is the history of the development of a people (their religion, their society, their culture and their values). No other history can be told of the Hebrew people without the patriarchal narratives of Genesis 11–50. These narratives represent the early beginnings of the Hebrews and individuals within the narratives are figures in the past who shaped the lives of the Hebrews and later that of the Ancient Israelites. To this effect, historians have focused on an investigation of the historical lives of these patriarchs and their importance to the Ancient Israelites, albeit a majority of scholars do not accept the historicity of the patriarchs. With the help of archaeology, historians try to date events and trace the paths of individuals mentioned in the narratives and their historical importance to the development of the Israelite peoples.

From a sociocultural and anthropological perspective, the patriarchal narrative presents the social life, social structures, social organisations and culture of the Israelites. Biblical scholars study the way of life of the patriarchs as a way to understand the lives of the ancient Israelites and later the development of the Israelite people from their ancestors. Again, archaeological data has been collected and analysed and through this, biblical scholarship has tried to understand the way of life of the patriarchs and their culture. Although there is much and rising interest (especially in cross-cultural biblical studies) in the understanding of the patriarchs, scholars are not

²⁸⁰This rise in interest was looked upon as a radical break with past scholarship. However, Whitelam (1998:35) has argued that this rise “was heir to (a)... long tradition rather than a radical break.” The following are a representative bibliography on the application of social sciences to Old Testament studies: Speiser (1964), Selman (1974, 1980), Gottwald (1979, 1985, 1993a), Rogerson (1977, 1978, 1990, 1995a, 1995b), Wilson (1984), Clement (1989), Mayes (1989), Mathews and Benjamin (1993), Steinberg (1993), Overholt (1996), Adamo (1996), Githuku (1999), Gichaara (1999), Muutuki (1999), Masenya (1999), Katho (1999), Shisanya (1999), Alfredo (2010), Lambek (2011), Olejede (2011).

²⁸¹ Adamo (1998, 2011).

near an agreement neither from the historical nor from the socioscientific approaches. The boundaries between these approaches are so fluid (especially with the patriarchal narratives) that understanding one entails incorporating the other. Thus, the historical and socioscientific study of the patriarchs is embedded in each other.

My approach will be distinguished by its application of literary-critical and sociolinguistic methods as well as comparative data from kinship studies in the Ancient Near East and some non-western developing (African) cultures. This approach whose basis is sociocultural anthropology will incorporate methods of traditional Hebrew Bible scholarship by critically analysing and appropriating approaches that seek to uncover how the roles of each individual in this narrative section is developed from within the narrative and how these roles can give us a glimpse to the meaning of belonging to a kinship in the patriarchal times. Secondly this approach will also aim at bridging the gap between the linguistic and literary readings of this narrative section. I start from the assumption that this narrative section is a linguistic and literary unity and that the rise of socioscientific approaches calls for a rereading of these narratives incorporating cross-cultural comparative data collected in cultural settings that reflect the patriarchal situation and especially where biblical research continues to take place. Although this data may be late or anachronistic in nature, it remains vital because of its influence on modern Old Testament scholarship.²⁸² Thus I will not focus on the arguments posed by scholarship with respect to the source or redaction criticisms that build up to the final form of this narrative section nor in the dispute surrounding the nature of cross-cultural comparative data. This does not undermine, by any means, the importance of the approaches and their arguments. Nonetheless, it is important to note that cross-cultural comparative data is already applied in Old Testament and with the fast changes taking place in biblical scholarship there is a need to explore and incorporate this data into Old Testament scholarship not as "proof texts" nor authoritative sources that confirm or reject certain practices in the patriarchal narratives, but as data that can give us an understanding of the nature of the patriarchal society.

Current scholarship on the use of socioscientific approaches to the study of the patriarchal narratives can be grouped into the following three:

- Those who use the cross-cultural data in the ANE as proof to the veracity of the patriarchal narratives [conf. M.J. Selman (1976, 1980), Alan R. Millard (1980), John J. Brimson (1980)].
- Those who argue that these data are late and incoherent, and cannot be used as proof to the dating of the patriarchs (Thompson 1974 and Van Seters 1975), and
- Those who apply the data as an aperture to the understanding of the narratives through cross-cultural data comparison and comparative literary critical analysis without emphasis to the historicity of the patriarchs (Adamo 1998 and Steinberg 1995).

²⁸² The use of cross-cultural data to read this narrative section takes a different approach because its intention is not to prove the historicity of the patriarchs. This data gives us an understanding of the nature of life in the ANE whose cultural setting presents similarities to that from which these narratives developed. Also, social scientists have uncovered similarities between some non-western customs which are similar to those of the patriarchs and of the setting of the patriarchs. These are resources that can aid the biblical scholar to understand the nature of the lives of the patriarchs. While this data will be used comparatively, the focus will be to investigate how the individuals develop their roles from within this narrative section and the larger patriarchal narratives.

I will proceed by reviewing some works to this respect to enlighten the proposed method of reading this narrative section. In spite of the many written works on the socioscientific interpretation of the Old Testament, I have chosen to use the works of Selman (1974 and 1980), Steinberg (1993), Boase (2001) and Adamo (1998, 2011) as a base to this chapter for the following reasons: (a) Selman presents a critical and comprehensive analysis on current scholarship with respect to the application of social customs to the studies of the patriarchal narratives and presents useful conclusions; (b) Steinberg has studied the patriarchal narratives by incorporating socioscientific approaches; (c) Boase has studied the role of Isaac in the patriarchal narratives from the synchronic and diachronic perspectives;²⁸³ and (d) Adamo has also applied the socioscientific approach to the study of the Old Testament from an African perspective and presents useful results with respect to the customs of the patriarchs.²⁸⁴

After reviewing the works of the above authors, I will move on to develop a working methodology that will meet up with my approach. It is important to note that the study of roles is tied to the social organisation of the family and the customs that pertain to it. In this narrative, the development of roles converges in the choice of the right heir. Thus, questions will include: (a) how does Isaac develop his role as father and what are the implications towards the choice of heir?; (b) how does Rebekah develop her role as mother and what are the implications towards the choice of heir?; and (c) how do Esau and Jacob develop their roles as sons and what are the implications with respect to becoming the family heir? A proper response to the above questions will require an understanding of the family organisation, the roles of each member, and the requirements for being an heir. While the primary focus is Genesis 27–28, I will draw arguments from other sections of the patriarchal narratives and, where possible, the whole of the Old Testament, to reinforce the points advanced. The following section is a review of the above-mentioned works.

4.2.1. *M.J. Selman (1976, 1980)*

In 1976, Selman published an article in the *Tyndale Bulletin* titled “The Social Environment of the Patriarchs,” in which he studied some texts from ANE archaeological discoveries with respect to the dating of the Patriarchal Age. In 1980, Selman wrote another publication titled “Comparative Customs and the Patriarchal Age,” whose aim was to determine the relevance of the ANE discoveries to the study of the patriarchs. He drew upon his first article and expounded on the topic from a more comparative perspective and integrated various arguments from scholars. This paragraph will be based on the 1980 publication with arguments also drawn from the 1976 publication where possible. Selman (1980:93) begins by tracing the genesis of what he calls ‘the new understanding’ of the Patriarchal Age. He then quickly moves on to trace variations in the consensus of applying social customs from the ANE archaeological discoveries to the study of the patriarchal narratives as a method to establish

²⁸³ Boase applies the terms synchronic and diachronic. But I prefer “ahistorical and historical-cultural” because it provides for the incorporation of the social customs, cultural values and family relation; and for a cross-cultural comparative data analysis from both the ANE and some African cultures to understand Isaac’s role in Genesis 27–28. Boase studies the methods that the narrator applies to characterise Isaac (ahistorical) and also how compilers combined both Abrahamic and Isaac traditions from various sources by comparing the narratives of Isaac and Abraham. In the historical-cultural approach, my focus shifts from redaction to cross-cultural comparative data analysis of the material to enlighten the understanding of Isaac’s role and how Isaac develops his role as “father” in Genesis 27–28.

²⁸⁴ Adamo is a Nigerian Theologian who is specialised in African biblical studies. He has written many books and articles on Africa and African presence in the Old Testament. The works reviewed in this study are those that have a contribution to the patriarchal narratives.

a period or date for it (Ibid. 93–99, also 1976:114–116). He dwells on the works of G.E. Wright (1960), J. Bright (1959, 1960 and 1972), W.F. Albright (1961, 1963), C.H. Gordon (1935, 1937, 1940, 1953, 1954) and E.A. Speiser (1955, 1964 and 1967); and argues that the manner in which these scholars apply the social customs to validate a setting for the patriarchs is imbued with a lot of shortcomings because of the difficulties faced in the chronological dating of the social customs (Ibid.). Selman ascertains that there are some scholars who see the social customs of the ANE as a great pool of knowledge that can shed light on the understanding of the patriarchal narrative, but not to be used to determine a patriarchal period (Ibid. 100–101). This is the case with De Vaux (1946, 1948 and 1971), Mulo Weir (1967/68), Noth (1957, 1959) and Von Rad (1972). Selman (1980:101–109) continues with those who completely reject the manner in which social customs are applied to the study of the patriarchs and devotes a long section to discuss the various arguments that scholars offer on this topic. *Interesting is that every scholar (but for a few) who is a fierce opponent to this approach to the patriarchal narrative finally consents to the importance of the social customs to the understanding of the patriarchal narratives.* Selman mentions the opposition of van Seters (1975)²⁸⁵ and J.T. Thompson (1974)²⁸⁶ whose publications carried the weight of the discussion. He argues that while van Seters rejects the application of social customs to set the patriarchal period in the second millennium, he embarks on applying the same tools to search for a possible first millennium setting for Abraham (Ibid. 103).²⁸⁷ Thompson on his part considers the venture to determine the historicity of the

²⁸⁵ Van Seters (1975) divides his study into two parts– the first dealing with the historical and archaeology evidence for the patriarchal age (7–122. Also conf. Pardee 1979:147), and the second dealing with his literary-critical approach (125–308. Also conf. Pardee 1979:147); with the last chapter serving as a conclusion (309–312). When van Seters deals with the historical evidence, he rejects the reconstruction of the movement of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans to coincide with the Ur III period or the use of the Aramaean nomads as well as later Israelite settlement as evidence to the lives of the patriarchs. (1975:13–38). He also rejects the common occurrences of the use of names (39–64) and the application of social customs (Ibid. 65–122) to determine a patriarchal age. This leads him to conclude that there is no convincing evidence that the patriarchs lived in the second millennium (Ibid. 120–122). In the second part van Seters argues that any literary-critical approach should give preference to form–structure–source criticism in that order and utterly reject oral tradition (Ibid. 125–166. Also conf. Pardee 1979:147 and Neff 1977:94). He moves on to adopt Alex Orlik’s epic laws (Ibid. 160. Also conf. Pardee 1979:147 and Neff 1977:94) and applies them to the study of Abraham (Ibid. 168–308). His conviction is that the various stages of the Abrahamic stories were interconnected with the latter dependent upon the former (Ibid. 164. Also conf. Neff 1977:94).

²⁸⁶ Thompson (1974) sets his aim at the beginning which is to analyse both archaeological and textual data that has been used as proof of the historicity of the patriarchal narratives (Ibid. 6). In the first nine chapters, Thompson analyses the historical arguments that have been put forward (movements, use of names, archaeological data and social customs) (Ibid. 1–195. Also conf. Pardee 1977:222 and Neff 1977:90–91) and concludes that although these have nothing on the dating and setting of the patriarchal age, they have “much to offer to an understanding of the culture of the ancient Near East, of which the Bible and the patriarchal narratives form a part” (Ibid. 195 and 323. Also conf. Pardee 1977:223). In the last three chapters, Thompson carries out a detailed analysis of many parallel texts, discusses connections between the patriarchal narratives with other nomadic groups like the Aramaeans and concludes by dismissing any possible relations between the texts and these groups (Ibid. 196–330. Also conf. Pardee 1977:223 and Neff 1977:91–92).

²⁸⁷ When J. T. Thompson reviews van Seters, he has this to say: “The recent attempt of John Van Seters to set the Abraham stories of Genesis in the mid–first millennium B.C. and to establish an exilic or early post-exilic date for the ‘Yahwist’ is unsuccessful. His objections to an early second millennium background of the narratives are correct, but unconvincingly argued. His claims to relate Genesis to extra-biblical materials of the late Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods are as inadequate as those which

patriarchs useless because he views the narratives as 'a collection of literary traditions' (Ibid. 103.).

In the next section Selman argues that the problem raised by van Seters and Thompson is that of methodology of the application of the ANE archaeological material. He moves on to demonstrate how Thompson defeats his premise when he sees the historical and archaeological evidence (not the literary) as the foundation for assessing the historicity of the patriarchs—thus accepting the validity of both approaches (Ibid. 104). He also indicates that the approach to the patriarchal narratives has more than just the historical and archaeological implications and argues that any fruitful study should be able to bring in the literary as well as theological perspective (Ibid. 105). Selman goes on to elaborate on the various approaches and their adherents and presents a series of parallel texts from ANE and the patriarchal narratives, pointing out the difficulties in applying these customs to set a date for the patriarchs for both the first and second millennia; and at the same time laying emphasis on the importance of such findings to biblical scholarship (Ibid. 105–128). He concludes by advocating for a proper application of approaches to create a better understanding of the patriarchs because the collected data and arguments can neither set a date for the patriarchs nor prove their 'nonhistorical character' (Ibid. 128).

Selman acknowledges the importance of the ANE archaeological discoveries and their influence on current Old Testament scholarship. In accord with this, he does not take sides but calls for a comprehensive approach as an opening to further studies and understanding of the patriarchal narratives. The importance of Selman's study is his argument for the incorporation of ANE archaeological data to the understanding of Old Testament narratives. He argues that ANE data can neither be used as "proof texts" nor be used to determine the patriarchal age. However, he underscores its importance to the understanding of the patriarchal customs.

4.2.2. *N. Steinberg (1993)*

Steinberg begins her book by setting out the aim which is to establish "heirship and inheritance of property" in Genesis, with a focus on the options available in the absence of biological children (Ibid. 5) and on the perspective of the individuals within a kinship (Ibid. 5–6). Steinberg posits that marriage among the patriarchs is a means to establish heirship and assumes that the patriarchal narratives provide enough evidence which serves as a testimony to the sociological function of marriage.²⁸⁸ She moves on to define her anthropological theory by underscoring the importance of social organisation with respect to inheritance—a pattern commonly found in the Genesis narratives (Ibid. 9–10).²⁸⁹ She argues with respect to Esau and Jacob that both qualify to be heir because both parents are from the patriarchal lineage which agrees with her kinship social organisational model. She also applies anthropological

have been presented by others for earlier periods. Van Seters does not establish the criteria for distinguishing oral from written traditions, and his attempt to establish a relative chronology for the Genesis narratives and to offer firm critical grounds for a new division of sources lacks any sound methodological basis" (Thompson 1978:76).

²⁸⁸ Steinberg argues that "throughout the ancient Near East, marriage functions to establish inheritance of land, but only patrilineal collateral marriages within the line of Terah establishes the right to claim the land of Israel" (Steinberg 1993:5).

²⁸⁹ The social structure, she argues "emphasizes repletion of social relations within a particular situation, without concern for individual choice, (and) the organizational level concerns itself with individual decisions made in adapting to external circumstances. The study of social organization recognizes individual flexibility in decision making, while, at the same time, it abstracts a 'pattern-sequence,' which reflects the implication of recurring individual choice" (Ibid. 9–10).

and cross-cultural data to buttress her point and intimates that endogamy represents the type of context which lays emphasis on inheritance with the aim of preserving inheritance within the lineage or kinship boundaries (Ibid. 11–12). Steinberg progresses to the economic value of marriage based on the socio-anthropological analysis of inheritance, family and the individual as one who fosters the family and posits that what a member does affects the whole family (Ibid. 18). This 'household economic approach' regulates the behaviour of family members with respect to societal norms on inheritance and being an heir is a consequence of one's behaviour vis-à-vis the family (Ibid. 17–20).²⁹⁰ Steinberg defines her methodology as literary-critical with a focus on the text "in the light of data from comparative kinship studies" and moves on to apply it to the patriarchal narratives of Genesis 12–50.²⁹¹ This leads her to set the following three criteria for an heir (Ibid. 99–100): (a) correct marriage, (b) possession of birthright, and (c) possession of blessing. Steinberg makes an exception for Joseph's marriage (due to his being in exile) and argues that inheritance at that level assumes a horizontal and not a vertical application with multiple heirs (Ibid. 130–131). When she concludes she reiterates the importance of her approach as an alternate approach to interpreting the stories without paying much attention to the sociohistorical setting of the narratives (Ibid. 142–143). Steinberg's approach differs from the proof text method which existed before it. She has not engaged in the arguments on whether the cross-cultural data can be used for dating. She assumes their importance and applies it to the reading of the patriarchal narratives.

4.2.3. E. Boase (2001)

The aim of Boase is to study the role and function of Isaac in the Genesis narratives from the synchronic and diachronic perspectives. She is inspired by the seemingly trivial personality accorded to Isaac in these narratives (Ibid. 312). Boase begins by pointing out that Isaac has a very limited space allotted to him in the patriarchal narratives and seeks to address the role of Isaac with a focus on the means by which the narrator has characterised him (Ibid.).

From the synchronic perspective, Boase discusses both the direct and indirect characterisation of Isaac in Genesis and argues that Isaac is bound to his filial relationships.²⁹² Boase identifies two important roles of Isaac viz: *Isaac as son* and *Isaac as father*. When Boase discusses Isaac's sonship, she collects data within Genesis to elucidate on the inferiority or passivity of *Isaac as son*²⁹³ (Ibid. 314–320) and

²⁹⁰ "Inheritance decisions condition interpersonal relationships within the family as well as the configuration of the household. Factors to consider in these household dynamics include the stage in the development of the family when the inheritance is passed from one generation to the next..." (Ibid. 29).

²⁹¹ Based on her literary approach, Steinberg considers the genealogies of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as boundary markers with the other genealogies (Shem, Ishma'el and Esau) serving as their prologues (Ibid. 45) in a single 'uninterrupted' narrative (Ibid. 34). Thus, the narrative forms a literary unity. Also, she supports her comparative approach arguing thus: "When comparing the biblical material with cross-cultural data on family life in preindustrial, non-Western societies, there appear to be similarities at particular stages in family evolution" (Ibid. 35).

²⁹² She writes (2001:314): "Isaac is a figure whose existence is bound by his relationship to the promises, and his role as the one through whom the promises would pass from the first to the third generation. Isaac enters the narrative as a fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham of a son and exits as having blessed Jacob, the one who inherits the promises.... Isaac is defined by his family relationships, first as a son (chapters xxi–xxv), then as father (xxvii 1–xxviii 9)."

²⁹³ Boase (2001:314) mentions 37 uses of epithets for Isaac against 15 uses of his name. She further uses Isaac's passivity in Genesis 22 and 24 as compared to Rebekah's activity in Genesis 24 to conclude

argues that "Isaac exists as the representation of God's faithfulness to Abraham" (Ibid. 314), and only becomes heir because Sarah intervenes (Ibid. 315). Boase also discusses Isaac's role as father²⁹⁴ and argues that, although Isaac initiates the actions to bless, it is Rebekah who bears the responsibility for an appropriate choice. She concludes the synchronic approach by arguing that "Isaac's primary role in the narrative then is as the one through whom the promises would pass" (Ibid. 322). Boase moves on to discuss the diachronic perspective of the role of Isaac with a focus on Genesis 27 and the traditions about Isaac. She identifies the sources of the Isaac traditions from a historical-critical perspective²⁹⁵ and mentions scholars' discrepancy on the relationship between the Isaac and Abrahamic traditions (Ibid. 322).²⁹⁶ Boase engages into a comparative study of both the material of the Abrahamic and Isaac tradition and argues that there are indications that the latter depended on the former because all of the Abrahamic tradition (Genesis 21) is found in the Isaac tradition (Genesis 26). Nevertheless, the Isaac tradition has extended material which is not present in the Abrahamic tradition (Ibid. 323–328).²⁹⁷ She also highlights where the Abrahamic tradition depended on the Isaac tradition (Ibid. 328–333)²⁹⁸ and concludes that these patriarchs had distinct traditions which were probably unified over time. Boase concludes her studies by summarising Isaac's role from both the synchronic²⁹⁹ and diachronic perspectives and posits that both the literary characterisation and redactional development present Isaac as a shadowy figure in the Genesis narratives

that Isaac has a symbolic status in Genesis 22 (Ibid. 316) and in Genesis 24 he is portrayed as a passive recipient of a wife with Abraham's actions as the focus of family continuity (Ibid. 317).

²⁹⁴ "As father, Isaac extends the blessing into the next generation, and in doing so identifies the son through whom the promises would continue" (Boase 2001:320).

²⁹⁵ The historical-critical approach generally argues that Genesis 27 belongs to the J source. Genesis 27:1–16 (except 15), 26–31 and Gen 26:15, 17–25 and 32–34 are identified as belonging to the J source (conf. Speiser 1969: 203, Noth 1981:104, Campbell and O'Brien 1993:108–110 and Carr 1996:153). Westermann (1985:423) argues that the stories of Isaac in Gen 25:19–28 should be connected to Gen 27:1–45 as a single unit and that Gen 26:34–35 and Gen 27:46–28:6 should form another unit (Westermann 1985: 429, 431 and 444–449. Also see Westermann 1976:76–77 and Walton 2003:101–102 and 111).

²⁹⁶ Boase (2001:322) mentions two extremes—the first which argues that Isaac's Tradition predates Abraham's and the second which argues that if any of Isaac's Tradition does not predate Abraham's then it does not belong to the Isaac Tradition.

²⁹⁷ Boase writes (2001:324): "Indications of the dependence of xxvi 1–16 on the previous episodes include a number of details. A famine report in xxvi 1 echoes xxii 10, and is overtly linked with the words 'besides the famine in the day's (sic) of Abraham'... suggesting a late redaction. Deception occurs in all three episodes, although their wording differs.... a pre-meditated act by Abram.... (which) disappears in xxvi 1–16, ... Chapter xxvi both modifies xii 10–20 and mirrors chapter xx."

²⁹⁸ Notably are the acknowledgement of God by Abimelech (Gen 16:12–14 and 20:22–24) and Abimelech returning to the land (Gen 21:32) which are less clear in the Abrahamic Tradition when compared to Isaac's (Boase 2001: 328–329). There is also the oath and agreement where Isaac is portrayed as powerful while Abraham is passive and "the covenants which are tied to the wife /sister episodes" which Boase sees as another indication of the dependence of the Abraham Tradition upon Isaac Tradition (Ibid. 329–330).

²⁹⁹ Boase's (2001:333–334) conclusion is thus: "The synchronic reading suggests that the subordination lies in Isaac's character portrayal. He is defined by his filial relationships, ... As father, Isaac's role is to hand the blessing (and hence the promises) on to the next generation.... The diachronic reading traced something of the redactional history of the Isaac material in chapter xxvi, suggesting that traditions had transferred from Abraham to Isaac, but also from Isaac to Abraham. This suggests that at one time Isaac was less subordinate than as now presented. He had traditions associated with him alone, his actions were not solely adopted from Abraham.

(Ibid. 334). Boase studies Isaac's role in the patriarchal narratives with a focus on his shadowy status. Her findings present important and useful conclusions which will be incorporated into this study.

4.2.4. D.T. Adamo (1998, 2001)

D. T. Adamo represents a reawakening of biblical interpretation from an African perspective using biblical linguistics, and the application of socioscientific approaches. His research focus is on Africa and Africans in the Old Testament and their influence on the socioeconomic, political, and religio-cultural perspectives of Ancient Israel. Two of his works—*Africa and Africans in the Old Testament* (1998), and "African Influence on Ancient Israel" (2001), are of great importance to this study. Adamo (1998:1) begins his book by presenting his aim which is to investigate the involvement of Africans and their contributions to the life of Ancient Israel. He sets his aim on the backdrop of the often neglected (either wilfully or by error) Africans who had been instrumental in the development of the Old Testament. In his own words, Adamo says this is an attempt to "'de-Africanize' or reduce Africa in the Bible" (Ibid. 2–4. Also conf. Adamo 2006:3 and 2011:139). Adamo continues his introduction by building on the ideas of African–American scholars, while advocating for an authentic African biblical scholarship (Ibid. 6). In the larger portion of his work, Adamo engages in the study of Africa and Africans in the Old Testament and how they are referred to by the biblical authors. He devotes a chapter on the designation of Africa and Africans in the Ancient Near East and through the study of words like Cush, Egypt and Ethiopia, Adamo concludes that these words should be translated 'Africa or African' (Ibid. 14–37). He continues the study of these words via an exegetical study of all passages where they occur. He defines his methodology as literary analysis and source approaches and applies it to every text; by studying words in their historical contexts, before applying literary analysis. In his approach he interacts with both biblical and extra-biblical material to buttress his points and argues for the case of Africa in the Old Testament.³⁰⁰ Adamo maintains his argument for the translation of Cush and Cushite to 'Africa and Africans.' Furthermore, he intimates that Africa and Africans interacted with the Israelites in every sphere of their lives, be it socioeconomically, religio-culturally, politically or militarily and concludes that the importance of Africa and Africans to the lives of Ancient Israelites presents the probability that Africans had an influence on the Ancient Near Eastern and Israelite culture (Ibid. 86–169).

Adamo has presented an interesting approach to the study of the Old Testament. He argues on the primacy of the Bible and uses the presence of the patriarchs in Egypt to argue for Egypt's importance to the Old Testament salvation history (2011:144).³⁰¹ In the same light he argues that the Ancient Israelites' desire to have a

³⁰⁰ Adamo follows the same approach in his 2011 article on "Africa and Africans in the Old Testament Salvation Scheme."

³⁰¹ It is important to note that Adamo is not the only African scholar who is engaged in this approach. As early as 1972, E. Mveng in *L'Afrique Noire et La Bible* had advocated for the place of Africa in the Old Testament with reference to Cush and Cushite. In the Jerusalem conference on *Black African and the Bible*, Mveng responded to the welcome address of Werblowsky thus: "Nous sommes venus de loin, du fond de l'Afrique, et vous pouvez lire nos noms sur nos visages... Nous sommes le peuple des croyants d'Afrique, le peuple de la Bible, celui là donc parle le prophète Isaïe et qui par-delà les fleuves de Kush apportera à Yahvé son offrande sur le Mont Sion, Là où est adoré son Nom... Nous sommes venus apprendre l'Écriture Sainte, le message de la Bible, qui est notre message, parce que nous sommes le peuple de la Bible, parce-que l'Afrique est la Terre de la Bible et que le second fleuve du Paradis s'appelle Géon et qu'il entoure le pays de Kush, c'est-à-dire l'Afrique Noire. Depuis la Genèse, l'Afrique et les Africains noirs sont présent dans la Bible; le message de la Bible est notre message et le Peuple de la

king (1Sam 8:5) cannot be unconnected with their 430 years stay in Egypt (2001). He then applies socioscientific approaches to draw a relationship between the African political³⁰² and cultural³⁰³ heritage and that of the ANE. Thus, he is confident that Africa had an influence on the Ancient Israelites because of the similarities between their cultures and social customs. Marta L. Høyland (2001:49) has also mentioned that one of the strongest contributions of Adamo is his evidence of African influence on the formation of Israelite culture. In addition, Adamo provides another approach to the reading and understanding of the Old Testament as a whole and particularly the patriarchal narratives. The main question here lies in the African influence of the formation of the customs of the patriarchs as a basis to the understanding of the patriarchal narratives. This is yet a different approach compared to that of Selman, Boase and Steinberg in which Adamo connects Africa to the ANE and Ancient Israel before arguing for a cross-cultural comparative approach to the reading of the Old Testament.

4.2.5. *Evaluation of the Socioscientific Studies of Genesis 27–28*

I have studied four authors with three different approaches to the socioscientific study of the patriarchal narratives and the great strength of each author is seen in the way the authors' arguments are presented and how each arrives at a conclusion. Selman's approach is a comparative one in which he discusses scholars for and against the application of ANE archaeological documents and customs to the study of the patriarchal narrative. Steinberg engages cross-cultural data as part of her literary-critical and socio-anthropological approach assuming its validity to the study of the patriarchal narratives from a 'household economic perspective.' Again, Boase's focus is on Isaac's role in the patriarchal narrative. One of the roles that Boase studies is

Bible est notre Peuple. Nous aussi, nous sommes les héritiers de la Bible est responsables de son message hier, aujourd'hui et demain. Nous sommes venus apprendre à déchiffrer ce message qui est notre message comme il est le vôtre" (10–11). Also, conf. Lokel (2006:71) and Lavik (2001:47).

Also, worth noting are Daniel N. Wambudha's (2001) application of similarities in Biblical Hebrew customs and the Nga customs of the Plateau State of Nigeria and Victor Zinkurature whose focus is on the "morphological and syntactic correspondences between Hebrew and the Bantu Languages" (2001:218–226).

In 1972, the Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu published an article "Some African insights and the Old Testament," where he argues that Africa has direct access to the understanding of the Old Testament concept of polygamy more than a western person. He wrote (1972:19): "the Biblical world view in many ways is far congenial for the African than a western man—the African is much more on the wave length of the Bible than the western man was originally."

Later, in 1989, Pamela S. Mann (1989:11–26) conducted a similar study in the Lutheran Church in Cameroon and found out that the similarities were striking. She concluded by advocating that the Old Testament be used as guideline for those living in polygamous homes in Cameroon.

³⁰² Adamo argues that Jeroboam sought refuge in Egypt and got married to an Egyptian princess Ano as a diplomatic act (2001).

³⁰³ Concerning religio-culture, Adamo writes: "The truth is that Africa is more likely to be the source of ancient Israelite creation myths as a result of Israel's long-standing contact with Africa.... They lived there for 430 years, and during this time they not only came in contact with African myths of creation, they also learned them and participated in the ritual recitation of the myths" (2001). Isaac Erlich (1964:98) had said earlier in his article "Relations Between Hebrew Bible and Africa," that "There are a large number of parallels between African and ancient West Asian ritual practices as well as other evidence of relationship and, taken together, the body of examples constitute a strong evidence that either transfer of ideas from one area to another took place, or as Jensen suggests, similarities are due to a single ancient sub-culture underlying part of the cultures of both Africa and western Asia." Also conf. Nchinda Gideon (2009).

Isaac's role as father. Adamo's approach differs from that of Selman, Boase and Steinberg because he studies the Old Testament with the claim that Africa and Africans have the same cultural values like those of the ANE and subsequently the patriarchs. With these approaches, it will be important to make some critical remarks which will guide my methodology. Selman's (1976, 1980) comparative studies are important to the application of social customs to the understanding of the patriarchal narratives. He has exercised his knowhow to engage the most important scholars in this field integrated by his critical analysis of each scholar. He presents the scholars and their adherents together to give an easy understanding to their arguments. When he studies the various approaches, he deals with the arguments in four groups viz: (a) those who advocate for the use of either cross-cultural and historical, or literary approaches;³⁰⁴ (b) those who advocate for the integration of all approaches in (a);³⁰⁵ (c) those who advocate that the Bible has enough evidence to help understand these narratives without external evidence;³⁰⁶ and (d) those who advocate for the incorporation of the theological dimension.³⁰⁷ One important trend that runs through all the arguments put forward by various scholars is the acknowledgement of the importance of cross-cultural comparative data which has a role to play not in the dating of the patriarchs but in the understanding of the background to the narratives. Even van Seters and Thompson who are generally sceptical concede to this. Surely the major problem lies in the way these sources are used. However, the importance of ANE and the archaeological discoveries to the understanding of the patriarchs cannot be overemphasised. A second key point is Selman's accentuation on the application of all approaches to create an edifice for understanding the patriarchs. In other words, Selman calls for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the patriarchs. The downside of his argument is that he does not lay emphasis on the importance of the biblical text nor argue that all the external material should be subjected to the development of such similarities from the biblical text. Hence, he regards the Bible as one of the sources and thus places all

³⁰⁴ The first group depends on the works of van Seters and Thompson who both have a general negative assessment to the way the ANE archaeological discoveries and social customs are applied to the study of Old Testament. J.M. Miller followed on from Van Seters with the aim of defending the validity of the form critical approach although they all accept that the founders of this approach destroyed the historical value of the patriarchal narrative (Selman 1980: 103–104). Selman points out that form criticism also depended heavily on external material (Ibid. 108).

³⁰⁵ J.T. Luke places himself in the second group and advocates that these narratives have an Ancient Near Eastern literary setting and are historical in nature (Selman 1980: 104–105). Thus, any separation would harm the understanding of the narratives. To this, Selman writes: 'Literary study of the patriarchal narratives certainly indicates their historiographical interests, and some of these historical factors can now be tested by cuneiform and other archaeological material, such as has been recognized by some of the form critics.'

³⁰⁶ Talmon and Warner advocate for the priority of internal biblical evidence from two different perspectives. Talmon argues that the context of the Bible should be given first place, followed by the historical setting of such findings (Selman 1980:105–106). Warner, on his part, sees extra-biblical material as secondary and argues that 'to determine any major part of the period's profile from sources which do not mention the patriarchs is nonsense' (Ibid. 106).

³⁰⁷ In one instance Selman (1980:107) writes: "Once again, the either/or approach, whether emphasizing internal or external sources, exhibits a tendency to lead into what too often turns out to be a *cul-de-sac*, but the controlled use of both groups of material opens up a more profitable route towards the interpretation of the patriarchs." Earlier, he argues for the literary, historical, archaeological and theological approaches in a balanced manner (Ibid. 105).

the approaches on the same platform.³⁰⁸ Nonetheless, I agree that parallel customs can be used to enlighten the study of the patriarchs not as “proof texts”, but as comparative customs. What I mean here is that the scholars should be able to see the way that any parallel custom is developed in a biblical narrative thus giving the text a first place. Van Seters and Thompson reject, for example, a parallel on the sale of birthright on grounds of the outcome and the identity of the firstborn. They conclude that the Nuzi tablet JEN240 cannot be used for interpreting Esau’s actions (Thompson 1974:280–285 and van Seters 1975:93). If this is used as a “proof text,” then there exists a difficulty. However, this text indicates the culture of selling inheritance which is connected to the birthright. A better approach will be to acknowledge the sale of inheritance and see how this custom develops in the Jacob–Esau narrative. We cannot deny that such information is vital because at least it tells interpreters that the sale of inheritance was possible and duly practiced. When the Bible is the interpretative key, it can concur either totally or with modifications to the parallel information. This way, we will understand the patriarchs better.

Steinberg (1993) on her part presents a formidable orientation to the application of socioscientific approaches to the study of the patriarchal narratives. She sets an approach and meticulously abides by it to the end. With the “household” economic perspective, Steinberg demonstrates how a kinship passes inheritance from one generation to the next. She clearly defines the boundaries of the narratives and argues that the whole patriarchal narrative be read as a unity, with the *Toledoth*³⁰⁹ of Terah, Isaac and Jacob representing shifts in generations.³¹⁰ While Steinberg’s socioscientific approach has opened several avenues to ponder upon, there remains a lot to be considered. Primary is the sources of her cross-cultural data. Although Steinberg has argued that her approach does not reckon with the sociohistorical background of the cross-cultural data, it would have been important to mention the type of data and the sources. Secondly, she does not clearly differentiate between the implication of a firstborn and what it entails, and what the birthright entails. She assumes, in the case of Esau and Jacob—who are twins, that Esau is the firstborn, but does not mention how this comes about. The third issue is the way Steinberg applies comparative data to the text. She has argued for the primacy of the text but the fact that she does not let the reader understand how each of her criteria is developed from within the text leaves one with some questions. Despite these factors, Steinberg’s study is a great resource and her approach presents a leeway to others who want to apply social sciences to the understanding of the patriarchal narratives. In the study of Genesis 27–28, I will apply cross-cultural comparative data to aid in the interpretation. While I will incorporate Steinberg’s criteria for being an heir, I will distinguish my approach by

³⁰⁸ Selman (1980:107) writes: “one must admit that some external data has been used in an unsuitable manner. Some supposed parallels have fitted awkwardly with the biblical text, and on some occasions have been imposed hastily and uncritically on their cuneiform contexts.... Even in the case of parallels which still stand, however, it is important to remember that no complete picture of a custom is found in the patriarchal narratives, and that while it is natural to want to supply gaps, it is essential for the end results to conform to the biblical context and not to do violence to it.” Selman’s insistence on the incomplete nature of the narrative and on conformity to the context and not the text is an indication that he considers the text as one source among many other sources. My approach considers the narrative as complete and seeks to investigate how similar customs attested in Genesis 27–28 develop from within the narrative. This approach makes the text the final measure of any of such similarities.

³⁰⁹ *Toledoth* is my rendering of what Steinberg calls genealogy and I talk of Terah’s *Toledoth* while Steinberg talks of Abraham’s *Toledoth*.

³¹⁰ I came to the same conclusion and applied it to the literary and linguistic reading to Genesis 27–28 (conf. chapters 2 and 3).

studying how the role of each member of the family is developed from within the narrative. If Rebekah is a “mother” and Jacob is a “son,” for example, how is Rebekah’s motherhood developed within the narrative? Also, how is Jacob’s sonship developed? This approach is justified by the fact that no one is born an heir—as Steinberg rightly acknowledges. Thus, heirship should develop from within the narrative and not from cross-cultural comparative data or customs.

Boase (2001) also presents an important study on Isaac’s role from both the synchronic and the diachronic perspectives. She studies Isaac’s characterisation and places it in line with the amount of space the narrator has allotted to Isaac in the patriarchal narratives, as well as scholars’ arguments on the dependence of Isaac’s Tradition on Abraham’s and concludes that both perspectives present Isaac as a shadow. When Boase evaluates Isaac’s role as father, she mentions that Isaac’s choice of heir is contrary to the reader’s knowledge from Gen 25:23 and that Rebekah is the stronger character who bears this responsibility (Boase 2001:321). While it can be agreed that Rebekah is strong, Gen 25:23 does not tell the reader that Jacob will be heir. It describes a relationship of servitude between two lads which, in my opinion, has nothing to do with heirship. Boase’s argument of Isaac’s ignorance of God’s oracle to Rebekah (Ibid.) falls in the same line. The issue of birthright comes up in Gen 25:29–34 and it is here that the reader gets an idea of a conflict on who wants to be heir. The narrative does not tell readers that this sale of birthright was accomplished or that Jacob and Rebekah acted on these terms. Again, Boase focuses on Isaac’s shadowy status and dwells on his filial relationships as *father* and does not mention those of Rebekah as *mother*. She rightly acknowledges that this is a family relation, but her discussion of Isaac and Rebekah portrays individuals. Isaac is a father and Rebekah is a mother, especially in a social setting where these two roles are complementary and where accomplishments are reckoned on its effect on everyone, not just the individual. In this respect, Rebekah’s strong character is complementary and does not expose Isaac’s shadowy status with respect to Rebekah’s. Nevertheless, Boase has identified an important element which strengthens Isaac’s role as father—“Isaac extends the blessing into the next generation and in doing so identifies the son through whom the promise would continue” (Ibid. 320). As a counterpart, Rebekah’s motherhood role complements the success of the passing of the blessing.

Adamo (1998, 2001) lays a claim on a biblical focus and the primacy of scriptures as he applies socioscientific approaches to the study of scriptures from an African perspective. While he presents a mastery of his approach, there is evidence that at certain points his application of socioscientific sources outweighs his biblical evidence. When he talks about Jeroboam’s refuge in Egypt, for instance, he gives no backing to it. The same goes with Jeroboam’s marriage to the Egyptian princess. In this respect, Adamo’s approach is similar to the way that ANE material had been applied earlier as “proof text.” Important to this study is the connection he makes between the African interaction to the Ancient Israelites and the African influence in the formation of the ANE culture and customs. He argues, with respect to Abraham, that he lived in Egypt as well as Jacob, and probably learned the Egyptian way of life. To be fair with the assessment, this could be both ways. Either Africa learnt from the Israelites or they learnt from Africa. Either ways, the similarity between the social and cultural customs remains and presents cross-cultural data that can be used to complement the understanding of the socioscientific approach to the patriarchs. While I will make use of Adamo’s data, my focus will be on how the roles defined by parallel customs developed within the biblical narrative.

4.3. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

With the above assessment, it is important to define some methodological considerations to the socioscientific reading of Genesis 27–28. Just as it is with the previous chapters, I intend to continue studying this narrative as part of the *Toledoth* of Isaac. The aim is to study the roles of the individuals that make part of this narrative. In Chapters 2 and 3, I have focused on the methods of identifying participants and methods of characterisation and their effect on the understanding on Genesis 27–28. I have argued that the use of sociological or kinship language like *my father, his father, his mother, your brother, my son, her elder/younger son* underscore the importance of the sociological hierarchy portrayed by redundancy and Anchoring Relations. A proper reading of the Anchoring Relations in this narrative requires an understanding of their sociocultural and anthropological implications. We have seen that Runge's Anchoring Relations have two implications. First, they are expressions of the points of view of the anchoring participants and methods of character portrayal. Second, they are literary device. But it is important to note that both lay emphasis on sociocultural implications of this narrative device. When I study POV, I lay emphasis on the *father-mother-son-brother* relationship as a basis for the continuity of the Abrahamic blessing. The importance of sociolinguistics and the sociocultural implications of *father-mother-son-brother* can be properly understood in the roles played by each character or participant. An example may help to clarify this further. In Genesis 27–28, Isaac is identified or portrayed as *Isaac his father*, with respect to Esau and Jacob. In the same light, Rebekah is identified and portrayed as *Rebekah his mother*, with respect to Jacob, while both Jacob and Esau are identified and portrayed as *her younger son* and *her elder son* respectively. These Anchoring Relations each have a bi-polar effect within the narrative with explicit and implicit implications. When Isaac, for example, is addressed as *Isaac his father* with respect to Jacob and Esau, *Isaac's role as father* is explicitly mentioned on the one hand, while on the other, *Esau's and Jacob's roles as sons* are implicitly mentioned. Two roles of *father* and *sons* affect the perception of the readers. The same goes with *Rebekah's role as mother*. These roles are properly understood within the family of Isaac where Isaac is father, Rebekah is mother, and Esau and Jacob are sons. Therefore, as a complementary approach to the linguistic and literary reading of Genesis 27–28, I will focus on the socioscientific (sociocultural and anthropological) perspective. This approach focuses on three dimensions:

First is the social organisation. Individuals in this narrative section form a social unit in which each member contributes to its existence. This social unit is the "family." The sociological approach will seek to address what constitutes a patriarchal family and how membership of this family was obtained and maintained.

Second is the cultural organisation. As members of a patriarchal family, individuals within this narrative section are bound to social customs. The cultural organisation will highlight the social customs that bound each member to the family.

Third is the anthropological. Families belong to a kinship. How does Isaac's family fit within the patriarchal kinship and what are the rules that bind members of a kinship? How is the kinship fostered and continued? How are kinship values handed over from one generation to the other? Together with these three approaches, I will engage in sociolinguistic and literary discussions which will enable me to draw upon cross-cultural comparative data to inform my understanding of the patriarchs. As mentioned earlier, the patriarchal narratives remain the primary source with any cross-cultural data serving for comparative purposes for a better understanding. This cross-cultural data will come from ANE archaeological discoveries and some non-western (African) cultural practices. Thus, in addition to intertextual study these will serve to enlighten some of the customs and practices. This approach is justified because it falls

within the larger frame of the application of social sciences to the study of scriptures. It is distinguished by the fact that the linguistic implications will be taken into consideration and also because the focus will be on how each role is developed within the narratives. It is important to note that I do not claim that I can address all sociocultural and anthropological issues that concern Genesis 27–28. To meet the goal of this research, I will focus on the following: (a) the family and roles of its members; (b) marriage and kinship; (c) firstborn and firstborn rights; and (d) inheritance and heirship.

4.4. SOCIOCULTURAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE PATRIARCHS

4.4.1. *The Patriarchal Family*

I have argued that when the narrator of Genesis 27–28 uses kinship language where a proper name or pronoun can suffice, the narrator defines a social hierarchy. This hierarchy is evident within the relationships of the individuals in this narrative as a family. To understand the implications of such language, it is inevitable to understand what a patriarchal family constituted.

Social scientists see a family as a social group whose basic characteristics are common residential area, reproduction and economic cooperation. Thus, a family has been defined sociologically as “a group of interacting persons who recognize a relationship with each other, based on a common parentage, marriage and/or adoption.”³¹¹ Such a family consists of a married couple, their children (married and unmarried), their grandchildren and servants. As a basic unit of a society (nuclear family, also called elementary family or simple), it is “a group of people who are united by ties of partnership and parenthood and consisting of a pair of adults and their socially recognized children.”³¹² This narrows down to a couple, their unmarried children (adopted or biological) and probably their servants (Steinberg 1993:20, Laslett 1972:29 and King and Stager 2001:36).³¹³ Beyond the nuclear family, social scientists have identified the extended or joint family which consists of a group living together with a unilineal descent (either through the male or female head of the family) (Steinberg 1993:20 and King and Stager 2001:36). The content of the extended family could range from a relative added to the nuclear family to grandparents, uncles, aunts and their families (Otieno 2014).³¹⁴ Besides an extended family, Steinberg (1993:21) argues for a *multiple-family household* system where more than ‘one conjugal pair’ linked by descent or marriage reside together.³¹⁵ The South African Green Papers (2011) also mention

³¹¹ Green Paper 2011. Green Papers are draft documents on a policy that a Government envisages to introduce. These draft documents are often sent to all stakeholders to generate a debate concerning the policy to be introduced.

³¹² “Nuclear family”. *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015. Accessed on Web. 27 Jan. 2015.

³¹³ Steinberg (1993:20) notes that this term also applies to a “‘widowed person’ with an offspring.”

³¹⁴ Otieno (2014) states that “In a typical Luo family in Kenya the traditional extended family refers to kinship network of social and economical ties composed of the nuclear family (parent and children) plus uncles, aunts and their families and grandparents both paternal and maternal. It is important to note that Laslett (1972:29) and Steinberg (1993:20) limit an extended family to a single conjugal pair which is not the case with Otieno. Also conf. Matthews 2003:2 for another concept of extended family—wives and children, mother, unmarried sisters and minor children of the deceased father.

³¹⁵ Steinberg (1993:21) uses the Jacob–Laban situation as an example of a *multiple-family* as well as Naomi, Elimelek, their sons and their wives. However, it is interesting that she mentions Isaac’s family as a *nuclear family* and when she deals with the Rebekah cycle, she does not mention that Isaac’s family situation had changed to a *multiple-family* system because Esau was already married and living with his parents prior to Genesis 27. If one takes Otieno’s (2014) definition of the Kenyan extended family, then

that scholars often use the words *household* and *family* as synonyms thus leading to a misunderstanding of the meaning of a family. It argues that a family is governed by descent or adoption while a household is defined by "individuals living in the same dwelling... (who) may or may not have the same familial ties, but will still share a living space, food and other essentials critical for human survival." There is also evidence that the day-to-day use of the word *family* can designate all the forms described above ranging from a simple family to whole villages.³¹⁶

The difficulty to have a unique definition for a family reflects its contextual nature and the fluidity of family type boundaries. What is regarded as a *nuclear family* by socioscientists may be precise but the principles might not fit every situation. The same fluidity in family boundaries has been observed in the Hebrew terminology which defines a family unit—**בֵּית אָב**. Although N.P. Lemche (1985:245–290) posits that the **בֵּית אָב** is the nucleus of the Hebrew society, there is evidence that **בֵּית אָב** was also used to designate an extended or multiple families, and later the Ancient Israelite peoples. It could refer to the simple family, an extended family (Steinberg 1993:21) or an ancestral house—up to the third generation (King and Stager 2001:36–40).³¹⁷ Due to the fluidity of **בֵּית אָב**, Steinberg (1993:23) maintains that the meaning of a simple family should be assumed when **בֵּית אָב** occurs in the patriarchal narrative because it confers both residential and lineage rights. As the nucleus of the Hebrew society, **בֵּית אָב** plays a significant role in an individual's identity. However, to argue that **בֵּית אָב** refers only to the nuclear family does not capture the meaning of the ancestral stories. Steinberg has given two examples which she sees as ambiguous—Gen 50:8 and Gen 28:21. The context of Gen 50:8, talks of everyone being part of the **בֵּית אָב** except the children and animals. It describes the house of Jacob that went to bury him. The exception does not mean that the children are not part of the **בֵּית אָב**, but rather indicates their inability to travel such a distance for Jacob's burial. Again, it will be uncalled for to carry cattle when one is going for a funeral. The use of **בֵּית אָב** in this context therefore includes everyone. Again, in Gen 28:21, Jacob talks of **בֵּית אָבִי** "the house of my father" which is an indication that **בֵּית אָב** is used of a lineage. Jacob just had a vision where YHWH bestowed upon him the blessings of his father—*Abraham your father*, whose lineage Isaac continued and whose blessings Jacob has been promised. YHWH identifies Jacob as an heir to Abraham, thus Jacob's reaction should be interpreted in YHWH's terms. He is not just Isaac's son but the bearer of the Abrahamic blessing. While I will assume that **בֵּית אָב** is the *simple family*, it is important to note that it is the bearer of

it fits with Steinberg's definition of a multiple-family, albeit they are understood differently in accordance with the kinship customs.

³¹⁶ When Mbaku (2005:139) defines a Cameroonian family, he writes: "While in Western society, the family usually consists of a mother, father and children, membership in the unit as understood by Cameroonians may include an entire village...related by blood, marriage, and adoption."

In the same light, King and Stager (2001) have mentioned that the modern Arab tribes hold this same concept of a family which will mean 'ancestral household.' He explains that the **בֵּית אָב** "consists of the father, mother, and the unwed children as well as the wedded sons and their wives and children, unwed parental aunts, and sometimes even unwed parental uncles... Large as it may be, this unit tends to occupy one dwelling or a compound of dwellings built close together or often attached to one another." Also conf. Lutfiyya (1966:141–142).

Also, when Ollenu (1966:73) studies the family in Ghana, he has three types with the sub-family as the nuclear, the immediate family which also includes grandparents, and the extended which includes two or three generations back.

³¹⁷ Conf. Gottwald (1979:247–248, 285–292, 301–320)

the *בֵּית אָב* (ancestral lineage) within whose bounds the heirship is conferred—i.e. the simple family is the torch bearer of the lineage and it is in the simple family that the heirship of the lineage is conferred. The importance of a family is that it bears testimony to an individual's day-to-day life and defines who a person is vis-à-vis the society (conf. Meyers 1988:38 who says that a “family is the organizing feature”).³¹⁸ Steinberg (1993:22) has also mentioned that the family is the social organisation in which heirship is confirmed and the unit of lineage continuity. I will assume that prior to Genesis 27–28 Isaac's family fits with the extended family as indicated by Mbaku (2005) and Otieno (2014). Three reasons account for this: (a) Esau was already married and his wives were a menace to Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 26:34–35); (b) Jacob's mother's brother (also known as “uncle”) remained an extension of this family since his introduction in Genesis 24;³¹⁹ and (c) The family bond is not bound by geographical location but by lineage or common ancestor where blood ties (a strong kinship network) (Billingsley 1992 and Hill 1997) supersede location.³²⁰ However, Esau's wives play no active role within the narrative although their presence is of value. Also, Laban only features in the words of the narrator and individuals in this narrative section. Thus, the members whose role will be important to this study are Isaac—as father; Rebekah—as mother; and Esau and Jacob—as sons. Also, as a social organisation, Isaac's family is part of a kinship with customs and values that define an individual's behaviour. It will be important to understand the kinship values and custom that bound members together to understand the role of each member in this narrative section. In the following paragraph, I will explore how kinship functions and the values that define members of a kinship.

4.4.2. *Patriarchal Kinship, Descent and Marriage Structures*

Social scientists have admitted that the variation and complexity of kinship systems and their practices, make the study of kinship difficult. In this light Barnes (1971: xxi and 1980:297) has argued that:

the study of kinship...has reached a level of a sophistication that makes it, more than any other branch of the discipline impenetrable to the specialist in some other branch of social science as much as to a layman.

This difficulty is also attested by Kuper (2003) when he traces the challenges anthropologists have faced in the field of kinship studies.

Nevertheless, it has been established that kinship systems also provide a solid foundation for the social organisation of a community, with the family as the basic unit. Harvey (1985:13) argues that kinship presents a medium for the viewing and interpretation of social relations. He writes.

Kinship is the mechanism which regulates social relationships between people and almost all of the concepts pertaining to and connected to human relationships can be

³¹⁸ In this light, Kwesi Dickson (1984:170) observed similarities between the African cultures and that of the Ancient Israelites and wrote that the African culture “witnesses to a person's life (as) being closely bound up with that of the group—the social group was a most important factor.”

³¹⁹ The fact that Laban continues to feature as a member in these narratives indicates that the families maintain a close relationship with each other regardless of distance or geographical location.

³²⁰ Also conf. Chavis (2004:35).

understood and interpreted through the kinship system
(Also conf. Kuper 1992, 1996).

As an important mechanism, kinship therefore regulates the whole life of an individual. Besides the relations between kinship, the lineage or descent is also important because it is through this descent that an individual claims and lives his/her kinship values.³²¹ Studies have shown that individuals in a unilineal lineage have a common group identity (Murdock 1949:60–61) with an easily traced ancestor and that the co-operation in a unilineal descent is often centered around defence of 'property or person' (Alvard 2002:132. Also conf. Sahlins 1961). Thus Steinberg (1993) aligns with these when she argues for the economic benefits of the patriarchal unilineal system.

Marriage, just as it is in other cultures, forms the central custom of the patriarchal kinship system. Marriage is central because it determines, besides other customs, the preservation of the patriarchal lineage and property. As a patriarchal system, the lineage is traced through the father. The study of marriage among the ancient Israelite patriarchal system of Genesis has presented different results. Some have argued that marriage was a method of forming alliances (Donaldson 1981, Prewitt 1981 and Oden 1983, 1987) while others have argued that it was a means of establishing and preserving the purity of the lineage and inheritance (Steinberg 1993).³²² While I do not intend to go into the debate of the discrepancies between anthropologists on this issue, it is important to note that the patriarchal system does not exhibit an alliance system because the marriage system is endogamous—within the same lineage. Alliance systems will be practiced where individuals want to create a large social system through the practice of marriage between different lineage group—exogamous marriages. In this study I will align with Steinberg's assertion of the preservation of the kinship and all that comes with it as the essence of marriage.

The Genesis narratives are patriarchal and descent is traced through the male. When Steinberg (1993:7–11) studies the patriarchal narratives of Genesis, she establishes the importance of '*the correct mother*,' as one of the sine qua non for being an heir. This highlights the possibility of a matrilineal descent which some source critics had already pointed out. In this context it is necessary to understand that the *correct mother* in the Genesis narratives was also a member of the same lineage with the father. Both Sarah and Abraham were the descendants of Terah as well as Rebekah and Isaac and Jacob and his wives.³²³ This means that the patriarchal marriage system was endogamous where members were expected to get married to a member of

³²¹ Descent is of two groups: Unilineal and Cognatic. The unilineal trace descent either through the mother (matrilineal) or through the father (patrilineal) and the cognatic trace descent through both. The boundaries are very fluid so much so that in certain unilineal descent groups, traces of cognatic descent can be found and vice versa.

³²² It is important to note that this division is based on the works of Levi-Straus (1949)—for alliance and Fortes (1953) — for descent. Matthews (2003:16) argues that cross-cultural data from Ancient Mesopotamia shows evidence of both practices. He writes: "the object of marriage, beyond the economic considerations of the families who had arranged it, was to produce children who would inherit the parents' property, care for them as they aged, and continue to make offerings necessary to the ancestor cult." Nevertheless, I agree with Steinberg because of the endogamous nature of the patriarchal marriages.

³²³ Abraham calls Sarah his half-sister (niece) and Isaac does the same to Rebekah. This practice of niece marriages may seem weird to the modern customs but it was an acceptable norm. Scholars question how these marriages are possible and some conclude that the relations were forged by the redactors with the addition of names (e.g. Bethu'el) to foster an understanding of the narratives. Whatever the arguments, my point of departure is the text as it is with any other external source serving as a means to understand the patriarchal relations. There is a possibility that Abraham and Nahor got married to

the lineage (Meade 1998:13 and Gruber 1995:647). The function of such a marriage among others was to preserve the proper handling of family resources and to make sure that the purity of the lineage was preserved. Since descent was determined through the male, it was important for every male to marry within the lineage to qualify as an heir. Thus, the transmissions of rights of inheritance were bound to marriage. It is also important to mention at this stage that whether the descent is patrilineal or matrilineal, heirship would still be reserved for the male. In the case of the patriarch, if descent was through the women, family property would still be catered for by sons and not daughters. The only difference here is that it becomes unclear whether this inheritance will remain within the lineage or be taken by another lineage.³²⁴ Also, as members of a family, an individual was bound by social customs. Besides the *correct mother*, there is also the *correct wife*. The legislation also stated that family lineage had to be handed to the *firstborn son* (eldest son), who had some privileges including the father's blessings, the father's authority and a larger portion of the family property (King and Stager 2001:47). Steinberg (1993:17–18) argues that her approach (house economic approach) determines what comportment members had to put on to meet these demands. With the addition of the notion of firstborn (accompanied by the father's blessings), one can deduce that "correct mother," "firstborn son," "correct wife," "possession of the father's blessing," and "large portion of family property," are the criteria for becoming an heir of the patriarchal lineage. The "father's blessing" and "large property" will be a consequence of being a "firstborn son," while being a "firstborn son," will be a consequence of having the "correct mother." This means that once a son was the firstborn (eldest— in a case where daughters were born before a son) of a wife from the lineage, he had the privilege to acquire his father's blessing and obtain a larger portion of property in consequence. The criterion of having a *correct wife* (just as it is with the case of the *correct mother*), means that some sons could be disqualified. There is the example of Hagar and Ishma'el (Genesis 21). Although Ishma'el was not disqualified on the criterion of the *correct wife*, the maidservant identity (Egyptian female slave) of Hagar (not the *correct wife*) played against Ishma'el. Sarah, as the *correct mother*, took advantage of Hagar's servant and foreign status and turned the situation in favour of Isaac who later got the *correct wife* and became the heir to the patriarchal blessing.³²⁵ An interesting question that arises from this situation is what would have happened if Abraham did not have a child from the *correct mother*—Sarah. This question opens to a situation which the narrative does not discuss. Nevertheless, the answer is obvious since Sarah had a son for Abraham who got married to a *correct wife*. In the *Toledoth* (Genesis 27–28) of Isaac, one is confronted with a different situation. Isaac is blessed with twins—with Esau as *firstborn son*. At the same time, Esau hasn't the *correct wives*, yet Isaac decides to bless him.

their kinswomen (Steinberg 1993:14). Isaac's and Jacob's later marriages are also evidence to this practice. Meade (1998:13–15) adds that the "real wife" should possess the following qualities:

- Bear children, not adopt.
- Bear a son in order to fulfil her crucial requirement in inheritance.
- Come from the patrilineage.
- Support favourite son at the detriment of the other.

³²⁴ I have decided to mention this because scholars have laid much emphasis on the sons being heir to a patrilineal descent but nothing is mentioned that sons are still the centre of a matrilineal descent. This may give the assumption that heirship in a matrilineal descent would be through daughters which is not the case.

³²⁵ 'But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son (*the son of that female slave*) will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac'" (Gen 21:9–10).

Only Rebekah's intervention shifts the blessing to Jacob who later has the *correct wife* and consequently assumes the *firstborn son* status to maintain the lineage. Does this mean that the *correct mother* has an influence over who the *firstborn son–correct son* (and consequently the right heir) should be?³²⁶ The father's blessings, authority and the larger portion of family property were called the firstborn rights accorded to a firstborn son. Here we have a practice which seems to have contradicted this rule. If the *correct mother*, as in the case of Sarah and Rebekah, can influence the choice of the *firstborn* then what is the meaning of a *firstborn* and the rights that go with it? In the following paragraph, I will explore the meaning of firstborn and firstborn rights. Since the information within the patriarchal narratives is limited, I will draw upon material from the ANE to discuss the implication of being a firstborn.

4.5. FIRSTBORN (בכר), FIRSTBORN RIGHTS (משפט בכרה), AND THE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF HEIRS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND ANCIENT ISRAEL

The geographical area defined by the Ancient Near East (ANE) has undergone a long review over time with various political maps and boundaries (Westbrook 2003:3). Nevertheless, all agree that Ancient Israel was part of the ANE. For the purpose of this research, the ANE will be used to designate the geographical area which includes: Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria-Palestine and Egypt (Ibid.). This designation covers the Fertile Crescent where the patriarchal narratives in Genesis, and specifically Genesis 27–28 are said to have originated. Thus, this is an important reason why practices in the cultures that make up the ANE can inform our understanding of the pericope under investigation. The focus of this section is to investigate how the concept of *firstborn* and *firstborn rights* was understood in some ANE cultures; how this affected heirship and the distribution of inheritance; and how this can lead to a better appreciation of the same concept in the Hebrew Scriptures. The area most important for such an investigation is Mesopotamia (Sumer, Babylon and Assyria) and Egypt. I will begin by studying the concept of *firstborn* and *firstborn rights* in the ANE and then move on to its usage in the scriptures. From this, I will carry out some comparative analysis which will guide the readers' understanding of this concept and its biblical application.

4.5.1. *Firstborn, Firstborn Rights and Preferential Inheritance Distribution in the ANE*

Three sources are important to our understanding of this concept in the various cultures of the ANE. These sources which come from the 3rd to the 1st millennium are mostly archaeological documents and include laws and contracts on issues concerning firstborn and firstborn rights; heirship and the distribution of inheritance. For a better understanding I will outline the various sources as found in the three millennia and move on to make comparative analysis on the similarities and differences observed with respect to firstborn, firstborn rights, heirship, and inheritance distribution.

³²⁶ Steinberg (1993:7–11) touches on the importance of the correct mother and her influence on the patriarch. However, she does not underscore the point that the correct mother has an influence over who the firstborn should be. This is probably due to her understanding of the firstborn which means first son from correct mother. When it comes to the situation of Esau, she capitalises on Esau's wrong marriage choice to make her point on Rebekah's economic interest stronger. My approach presupposes that the correct mother in this case has a role to play in the decision of the firstborn as it is with Rebekah to maintain the purity of the lineage and safeguard family property. While there is an economic interest, there is also that of the preservation of family purity.

1. Sources

The ANE has many documents that discuss family relations. These documents include laws, contracts and letters recovered through archaeological excavations in various cities and settlements. In some of these documents, the issue of firstborn, firstborn rights and heir; and inheritance division are discussed or mentioned, covering practices from various historical periods (3rd to 1st millennia BCE) of the development of the ANE. These sources also highlight the uniqueness of these practices in each setting although the common underlying motive [transfer and distribution of family inheritance to the deserved heir(s)] remains the same. While there was no universally acceptable rule to designate heirs, nominate firstborns and distribute inheritance in the ANE, there seemed to have been a common approach which gave them some preferential treatment. The focus in this section will be to discuss some of the documents, especially laws and contracts that highlight the preferential treatment of the firstborn sons or heirs with regards to the distribution of family inheritance.

1.1. *Laws on Inheritance and the Preferential Treatment of the Firstborn Sons*

Laws on inheritance were meant to protect all who were qualified to be heir (legitimate sons, daughters and wives; and brothers) when it came to the distribution of family inheritance. While all these laws are important to the understanding of inheritance in the ANE, the primary attention will be on laws about the inheritance of legitimate sons (biological and adopted), and others will be mentioned where it contributes to the understanding of the inheritance of the sons. These laws are legal codes that governed the various aspects of life in different ANE cultural communities. The earliest codes from the 3rd millennium contain no specifications on the issue of firstborn with respect to heirship and inheritance. Nevertheless, latter laws from the 2nd to the 1st millennium have portions that guide the designation of firstborn, the designation and treatment of heirs and the distribution of inheritance. For each law code, I will mention only the portions that are relevant to the topic under investigation. I will adopt Roth's (1995) transliteration and translation where possible. The laws include the following:³²⁷

- Sumerian
 - Laws of Lipit-Ishtar (LL), (ca. 1930 BCE)
 - The Sumerian Law Exercise Tablet (SLET), (ca. 1800 BCE)
 - The Sumerian Law Handbook of Forms (SLHF), (ca. 1700 BCE)
- Babylonian
 - Laws of Hammurabi (LH), (ca. 1750 BCE)
 - Neo-Babylonian Laws (NBL), (ca. 700 BCE)
- Assyrian
 - Middle Assyrian law (MAL), (ca. 1076 BCE)

The law codes indicate that there was no common way of designating an heir or distributing inheritance. However, they generally agree that heirs were sons (natural or adopted), daughters, brothers or wives of a deceased. Basically, the natural sons had to be born from a legitimate marriage (Westbrook 2003:57, MAL A §§26 and 29) and were given preference over other sons. Even when the sons were legitimate, LL §26, LH §170 and NBL §15 indicate that the sons of the first-ranking wife were regarded as the primary heirs in the case of two or more wives. Adopted sons (SLHF iv25–28,

³²⁷ For a detailed historical development of these laws confer Westbrook 2003, COS I-III and Roth (1995).

LH §191), adopted sons of slave-wives (LH §170), sons of concubines (MAL A §41, B §1 and O §3) or prostitutes (LL §27) could also be heirs where no legitimate sons were born (Also conf. Westbrook 2003:57). LL §§b and 22 mentions that daughters could be made heirs in the absence of sons, while MAL A §§25 and 26 talks of situations where brothers of a deceased or his wife could be heirs.

The laws of Sumer and Babylon generally agreed that inheritance had to be shared equally among the sons of the deceased. An exception in Babylon occurs where an adopted son (who is designated heir) is disinherited at the birth of a biological son. Here LH §191 mentions that the disinherited son is given one-third (1/3) share of the inheritance while the biological son takes two-thirds (2/3). Where a man had two wives, NBL §15 states that the sons of the first-ranking wife took two-thirds (2/3) of the inheritance while the sons of the second wife had one-third (1/3). This represents a shift from LH §167 which talks of equal distribution of inheritance to the children of both wives. In addition, gifts could be given to a favourite heir (often the son of a first-ranking wife) by a father while he was still alive which did not count as part of his share in the remaining inheritance (LH §§165 and 170). In Assyria, the oldest son enjoyed a double share of landed property and had the choice to select one share of personnel and equipment, while a second share was awarded through lots (MAL B §1 and O §3. Also conf. Westbrook 2003:57–58). While there was no common ground on the designation of heir or distribution of inheritance, there seem to have been an agreement that favourite or eldest sons (adopted or biological) were given preference over others. They were either given gifts besides their share of inheritance or had a greater share of the inheritance.

1.2. *Contracts on Inheritance and the Preferential Treatment of Firstborn Sons*

Contracts are another important source of information on how the ANE handled issues related to firstborns, heirs and inheritance division. These contracts were legal agreements between the parties involved and often carried witnesses, fines or other forms of penalties in case a party involved failed to meet the obligations contracted. Important to this study are contracts which exhibit actual division of property and those that deal with adoption in which the adopted sons were designated as heirs. The focus will be on the preferential treatment of the heir and/or firstborn son in inheritance division.

1. *Contracts on the Actual Division of Inheritance and the Preferential Treatment of Firstborn Sons*

Westbrook (2003) has argued that inheritance in the ANE had a common principle which was executed differently in the various regions and cities. The same held in the actual division of inheritance. Tablets on the division of inheritance indicate that the eldest or firstborn son, or primary heir was given some preferential treatment (a larger portion, extra share or privilege portion), albeit the quantity varied. In Sumer (Ur III) the eldest son received a larger portion (Lafont and Westbrook 2003:207). In the Ancient and Neo-Babylonian period, the eldest son received 10% extra share (Akk. *elâtum*, Sum. SIB.TA) (Nippur, Ur and Kutalla), or a double share (Larsa, Mari and Kutalla) (Westbrook 2003:396 and Oelsner, Wells and Wunsch 2003:939). In Eshnunna, the heir (TIM 4, IBILA = *aplum*) received two shares (“he will take two shares”—*šittin ileqqema*).³²⁸ The principle of double share is also attested in Tell Harmal (IM52624) (“he will take his double share”—*šittišu ileqqe*) (Ellis 1974:142ff), Nuzi

³²⁸ Also see Podany et al. (1991–1993:47) for the same notion of “two shares” in a contract from the reign of Iggi-Lim of Hana.

(HSS IX 24)³²⁹ (Zaccagnini 2003:600) and Emar (*kuburu/kuburtu*) (Rowe 2003:678); while Ugarit (Rowe 2003:729) and Assyria (Radner 2003:841) talk of an extra share. Worth noting is that the Neo-Assyrian extra share is also known as the “share of the eldest brother” (Ibid.).

Generally, the remaining portion of the inheritance was shared equally (*ullīš mithariš* or *mithariš izuzzū*- IM52624) among the other brothers but the practice in Kutalla indicates that the eldest son received more than a double share of *prebends* and *slaves* (Westbrook 2003:396). Another tablet from Nippur talks of “1 tray of honour (?) (as the) privileged portion by right of primogeniture” (O’Callaghan 1954:140 and Claassens 2013:59–89) which could be an indication that the eldest received far more besides the 10% extra share. Although the quantity of inheritance for the eldest son varied between regions and cities it is important to note that the eldest son [firstborn, first-ranked son, primary heir or favoured son-as in Ugarit (conf. Rowe 2003:729–730)] was treated preferentially. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that some sources indicate that the testator could either divide his inheritance equally among his sons or disinherit the eldest son in favour of another (Conf. Gadd 1926 No. 12, Speiser 1928–29, Paradise 1972:66ff, Davies 1993:186ff and Bruce 2010:132–134).

2. Adoption Contracts on Inheritance and the Preferential Treatment of Firstborn Sons

2.1. Mari

A text from Mari which can be dated from the time of Hammurabi (Davies 1993:181 and Mendelsohn 1959:38) illustrates the preferential inheritance right of a firstborn son. Its main content is the adoption of a son. However, it also mentions that this son is nominated firstborn and treated preferentially by allotting to him ‘two shares’ of the inheritance (Davies 1993:181, Mendelsohn 1959:38, Boyer 1958 and Malamet 1971:8). This contract specifies that no other son (biological or adopted) of the adopters (*Hillalum* and *Alitum*) will displace *Iahatti-Il* from the firstborn position. Thus *Iahatti-Il* is given preference as firstborn and liable to two portions of inheritance (Davies 1993:182). In another adoption contract, the adoptee was born through caesarean section.³³⁰ The adopter (*Ibiq-iltum*) renamed the adoptee (*Mār-Ištar*) and designated him as the only eldest and heir who cannot be displaced by 10 possible sons born to the adopter (Oppenheim 1960:292–294, Paulissian 1999:7 and Lurie 2005:282. A similar contract is recorded in VAT26). In a related contract *Sinqi-Ištar* and his wife nominate an adopted son as the eldest son with conditions that he will not be displaced by seven possible biological sons (Paulissian 1999:7). Although these two examples do not indicate the inheritance portion of the firstborn, they highlight the preferential treatment of the firstborn or eldest son.

2.2. Tell Harmal

A tablet from Tell Harmal (IM51349) mentions that a two-year-old lad was adopted by a couple and raised to the position of chief heir (Ellis 1975:132). This is inferred from the fact that another son is described as ‘a secondary heir’ (*teerdinaššu*)

³²⁹ Conf. HSS V 7, 21, 60, 67, 71; HSS XXIX 4, 5, 6, 22, 37, 46 and 51. Also see Podany et al. (1991–1993:47).

³³⁰ This child was born through caesarean section. Young (1944:2) has also argue that Caesarean section is “is one of the oldest in the history of medicine ...in that the history of its origin is lost in the mists of antiquity...” Also confer Gunaratna (2010) <https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz>. Accessed on 19 Mar. 2015.

(Ellis 1975:132. Also conf. Paradise 1972:45ff and HSS V 67:10).³³¹ The first boy described as a young boy (*ṣuḥārum*), is thought to have been adopted after the couple had a son, or had earlier adopted one (Ellis 1975:132). The said son then had to be relegated to the secondary position when this couple adopted the second and raised him to the position of chief heir (Ibid.). This also means that as *chief heir*, the young boy (*ṣuḥārum*) would have a privilege portion during the distribution of inheritance. In another Tell Harmal tablet (YBC 11174), two adopted sons are differentiated with the words *rabû* and *ṣeḥru* (Simmons 1960:32). *Aliwum* is *rabû* (older, elder, firstborn) and *Sin-rēmenī* is *ṣeḥru* (younger). *Aliwum*'s nomination as elder gives him preference when it comes to the distribution of inheritance on condition that both adoptees meet the requirements of the contract.

2.3. Nuzi

An adoption tablet from Nuzi shows that a man adopts a son as an heir with the hope of having a natural son(s). He therefore outlines that the adoptee will be demoted to the second rank if he begets a natural son(s) (Speiser 1928:30, Paradise 1972:7 and Paulissian 1999:7).³³² In another adoption contract from Nuzi, the adoptee (*Wullu*) is made heir on condition that he marries the daughter (*Nuhaya*) of the adopter as his only wife (ANET: 219d–220a).³³³

2.4. Emar

An adoption contract from Emar presents an analogous situation as in Nuzi. In this contract a couple adopts an heir to marry their daughter with prohibitions of no subsequent marriage outside the family because they want to keep the inheritance within the family (Dalley and Teissier 1992:91).

2.5. Tell Taban

An adoption contract from Tell Taban follows the practice in Mari where the adoptee is nominated heir and protected from any disputes. In this tablet *Isme-[Dagan]* and *Aya* adopt *Salummatu-ir'anni* and designate him as the senior child who is due two shares of inheritance (Yamada 2011:61–84). The senior son is protected from further claims from possible sons of *Isme-[Dagan]* and *Aya* (Ibid.).

1.3. Marriage Contracts

In an Alalakh marriage contract³³⁴ between *Irihalpa* and *Naidu*, *Irihalpa* nominates a firstborn son from the possible sons of his wife (*Naidu*) and would-be wife (*Irihalpa's niece*) (Mendelsohn 1959:38. Also conf. Wiseman 1953, The Alalakh Tablet No. 92, ANET 185b and COS 3.101B). In this contract *Irihalpa* has the option to take his niece as a wife in case *Naidu* does not bear a son. Nevertheless, provision is made that *Naidu's* son is the firstborn even if *Irihalpa* has older sons with his niece. Thus,

³³¹ A similar word "*tierteennu*" is applied in adoption contracts in Kirkuk to designate a *secondary heir* (Speiser 1928–29:30 and 34, 53).

³³² Conf. Speiser (1928–29:30–35) for other adoption tablets (especially H7 and H60).

³³³ This practice is also attested in Emar where a couple adopts an heir to marry their daughter (with prohibition of no subsequent marriage outside the family) as a means to keep inheritance within the family (Dalley and Teissier 1992:91).

³³⁴ Although this is a marriage contract, of the fifteenth century, it is interesting that there is the custom where a father chooses his firstborn, regardless of the time of birth. Other parts of this contract are treated in detail in other works. My interest here is in the clause that supports the situation of a firstborn son.

Naidu's possible son is given preference over all other sons born to *Irihalpa* not because *Naidu's* son is eldest, but because *Naidu* is the first-ranking or favourite wife.

1.4. Adoption, Inheritance and Preferential Treatment of Firstborn Sons in Ancient Egypt

Besides legal codes, other sources of adoption and inheritance in Ancient Egypt include wills, royal inscriptions or edicts, administrative orders, private legal documents, letters to the dead, historical documents, literature and scholastic documents (Jasnow 2003:93–95). These sources are distributed over the three early millennia (Ibid.).

1. Adoption

The 3rd millennium presents no vivid examples of adoption. While some scholars have argued that “mortuary priests” were often adopted to serve endowers, others have expressed doubts (Allam as in Jasnow 2003:120). The same adoption practice was observed in the first part of the 2nd millennium, albeit Allam suggests that *s3.t wr.t* refers to “adoptive daughters” in Sinuhe (Ibid.). In the second part of the 2nd millennium, an adoption papyrus presents three adoption cases where the adoptees were given varying shares in inheritance. In one of the cases, a couple adopts the children of a surrogate wife besides the main wife’s brother who later marries the adopted daughter of the surrogate wife (Jasnow 2003:327). Nevertheless, inheritance is shared equally among all the children (Ibid.). In a related case a man adopts his second wife as his daughter and grants his two-thirds share of inheritance to her, besides her legal one-third share, at the expense of the first wife and her children (Ibid. 327–328). In the “third intermediate period” of the 3rd millennium, adoption is tied to religious rites where the ‘god wives’ were succeeded through adoption (Ibid. 801). In the Demotic legal texts, adoption is portrayed as “self-sale,” where children sell themselves into slavery “to act as eldest son” (Manning 2003:838), to gain inheritance in return for funeral services (Ibid.).

2. Inheritance

In the 3rd millennium Ancient Egypt, wives, children and brothers could own shares of inheritance, albeit sons received more than daughters but less than wives (Jasnow 2003:124–126). While shares among children seemed to have favoured sons, this favour was tied to a son’s ability to perform the mortuary cult and bury the parent (Ibid.). Jasnow (2003:125) mentions that a man declared himself as his mother’s ‘eldest son’ and ‘heir’ because he buried her and performed the mortuary cultic rites. In the same light, a Nikauankh inscription (5th Dynasty) reserves the mortuary rites as the obligation of the eldest son (Ibid.) and another inscription on a tomb in Hargasa (6th Dynasty) describes the eldest son as a ‘beloved and possessor of property’ (Ibid. 126). In the 2nd millennium, sons remained the primary heirs although others could share in the inheritance. Sinuhe is said to have left his possession and his tribe to his eldest son (Ibid. 278) and Seidl argues that it was a normal customary right for the eldest son to inherit (Ibid. 333), while Allam ties inheritance to the eldest son’s obligation to bury his parents (Ibid. 335). Nevertheless, Naunakhte’s will indicates that one had the right to choose who should inherit depending on the one’s attitude. In her will, she disinherits four of her children who did not support her financially and excludes one son from further shares in her property (Ibid.). The expectation of the 1st millennium was same as those of the 3rd and 2nd where a son inherits. In the Demotic Law period, the eldest son had an extra share (also known as “share of the eldest brother”) during the division of inheritance because he was responsible for the

burial of his parents (Manning 2003:839, 840–841). Shares were often stipulated in deeds of division which specified each child's portion and type of inheritance (Ibid. 840). While all Egyptian children had a portion of inheritance, sons were treated preferentially with respect to land (Ibid. 841). Although a father could disinherit his children, he had to keep one of his sons "or someone acting as a 'son' to inherit his property" (Ibid.). Thus, a father could adopt a son as an heir in the case of a lack of heirs or if he disinherited all his biological sons (Ibid. 842). One document (TAD B2.11) in the Elephantine papyri presents the division of inheritance. In TAD B2.11, Mahseiah and Jedaniah (two Egyptian slaves and sons of Nathan) share Mibtahiah's property between themselves (Botta 2009:57–58, 113–116). The slaves are shared equally between these brothers and this might be an indication that inheritance was shared equally to heirs. Sons were primary inheritors but where a man died without sons, daughters could inherit (TAD B2.2:32–34). Where no children existed, the wife had control of the property and in case the wife died, the husband inherited the wife's property (TAD B2.6:21). Botta (2009:57) has argued that this document suggests that Jedaniah was the firstborn son who had preferential and hereditary rights because Mabtahiah's archives were in his keeping.

3. *A Biblical View on the Preferential Treatment of Firstborn Sons in Ancient Egypt*

The biblical encounter between YHWH and the Egyptian Pharaohs (Ex 11:5) may suggest that the Egyptian firstborn son had a privilege.³³⁵ In the last of the 10 plagues, YHWH declares that all the Egyptian firstborns of animals and humans (regardless of class) will die.

Ex 11:5a וּמֹת כָּל־בְּכוֹר בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

"And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die"

5b מִבְּכוֹר פַּרְעֹה הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּאֹו

"From the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits upon the throne"

5c עַד בְּכוֹר הַשִּׁפְחָה אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרֵי הָרָחִים

"Even to the firstborn of the maidservant who is behind the mill"

5d וְכָל בְּכוֹר בַּחֲמֹה

"And all the firstborn of the cattle"

The emphasis on "Pharaoh who sits upon the throne," "slave girl," and "cattle," indicates the importance of the firstborn. Although these may refer to biological firstborns, there are other usages of firstborn which suggest non-biological relations. In Ex 4:22–23, YHWH calls Israel "my firstborn son" and promises to kill Pharaohs firstborn son if Pharaoh refuses to free the Israelites.

1.5. *Remarks on Adoption/Marriage Contracts and the Preferential Treatment of Firstborn Sons*

Studies have shown that the reason for adoption in the ANE was more juridical than social because adopters moved beyond childlessness into a jurisprudence which provided avenues for the expedition of matrimony, property and commercial procedures (Westbrook 2003:50–54). Although the focus of the adoption contracts has been on the disposition of property, their arrangements are woven inside marriage and commercial transactions. These adoption contracts from Mesopotamia all agree that children could be adopted and designated heirs and this has an effect on other

³³⁵ Also conf. Marsman (2003:262).

possible natural or adopted sons. From the examples cited, Mari and Tell Taban probably protected the position of the adoptee as all the contracts do not permit other possible sons from displacing the adoptee from firstborn and heir. The reverse seems to have happened in Tel Harmal and Nuzi as the adoptees could be displaced by possible natural sons to the adopters. Also, the tablet from Tel Harmal might suggest that a natural son could be displaced by an adopted son—a practice comparable to disinheriting a son for various reasons (Conf. LH). In some parts of Nuzi as well as in Emar, the adoptee is obliged to marry the daughter of the adopters to maintain heirship, failure (or marrying other wives), of which could lead to a forfeiture of heirship or disinheritance. Another Alalakh tablet which is a marriage contract protects the place of a possible son from the first-ranking wife against any sons born to other wives of the father (LH). While these tablets indicate various positions for the adoptees, they highlight the fact that designation of an heir could be based on the father's favour for a son (regardless of age) or based on the position of the son's mother as first-ranked wife. The implication is that once nominated, the favourite son was given preference in the actual distribution of inheritance. Thus, a firstborn son could either be the father's favourite son or the son of the first-ranking wife.

2. Terminology for Firstborn and Younger that illustrate the Preferential Treatment of Firstborn Sons in the ANE

The ANE had a variety of terminology for the firstborn who in some cases was regarded as heir. This makes the meaning of such terminology fluid, especially in situations where the writer does not qualify the term. Since the focus is on the preferential treatment of firstborn sons, I will concentrate on how the terminology applied depicted the preferential treatment of firstborn son, with respect to the younger or other sons. While the most frequently-used words that indicated the preferential treatment of one son over the others were *rabûm* (eldest, elder, first) and *šeḫrum* (youngest, younger), Bruce (2010) has argued that the basic Akkadian term for firstborn was *aplum* which in itself carried the notion of privilege in inheritance division. In the study of *aplum*, Kraus (1969:19–22) has traced its etymology and argued that *aplum* is equivalent to the Sumerian IBILA [also identical to DUMU.NITA (male offspring) or DUMU.UŠ (special son- *fils unique*) (Geuthner 2003)] and often used synonymously to *mārum* and *šumum* (Sumerian- DUMU) to designate *son*, *favourite son* or an *heir* (Conf CAD1.2:173).³³⁶ Furthermore CAD1.2 indicates that *aplum* was also used to define an *heir in a preferential position* or *eldest (firstborn) son* (Sumerian DUMU.GAL), *eldest in rank*, *favoured son* or simply *son* (CAD1.2:174ff). In the Mari tablet, for example, *lahatti-II* is described as *aplum* which according to Davies (1993:182) is a common word for 'son or heir,' and not exclusively firstborn or eldest.³³⁷ John has mentioned that in Babylonian and Assyrian laws, the term *aplūtu*, a

³³⁶ Conf. Huehnergard 2011³, Geuthner 2003, Delitzsch 1979 and Gordon 1968. In the Sumerian laws *son*, *firstborn son*, *eldest son* or *heir* are used interchangeable in the context of inheritance. However, IBILA is used exclusively for an *heir*. The distribution of these words in the Sumerian laws is as follows:

- DUMU-*son* (epilogues of LU, SLET§§5 and 6; and SLHF iv25–26), *male child* (LU§5) or *favoured son* (LL§31).
- DUMU.ŠEŠ-*eldest brother* (LL§32).
- DUMU.SAG-*primary son* (epilogue of LL). Also conf. "premier-né (firstborn)" (Geuthner 2003)
- DUMU.NITA-*son* (prologue of LL), *male offspring* (LL§b), or *child* (LL§§20a and b; 24, 25, 27 and 32).
- IBILA defines *heir* (LL§§b, 27, 31, 32; SLHF iv27–28, iv31–34).

³³⁷ This contrasts Noth's argument that this text is evidence of the custom's general acceptance and practice in Mari (Noth: 1961:19–20). Davies thinks that the main issue at stake with Noth's argument is

derivative of *aplum*, was also used to express a daughter's relationship to her parents as heir (John 1904:77. Also conf. CAD1.2:175ff). As 'son or heir' *aplum* also signified an adopted son who has been offered material property (John BM: 77, LAI: 157–158). This could be granted while the adopter was still alive. In this case, *aplūtu* became synonymous to 'heritage, share or inheritance' (Ibid. BM: 77, LAI: 158, CH§181:70 and CH§182:88). However, John mentions that the process becomes complicated when the parentage of the beneficiary of the *aplūtu* is not mentioned, thus making it difficult to actually decipher whether the beneficiary is an adoptee or a biological son (Ibid.). This means that *aplum* as heir also defined the position of an oldest daughter (where no sons existed), and could be applicable to both natural and adopted sons. Thus votaries, who were not permitted to bear children but were required to nominate the heir, gave their adoptee *aplūtu* (Ibid. Also conf. Bruce 2010:131n2).³³⁸ In addition, the basic meaning of *aplum* as *heir* (with respect to sons) is ambiguous most especially because all sons in Mesopotamia were heirs and had a share in their father's inheritance. This makes it difficult to establish the context "in which *aplum* denotes the heir and in which it is simply a synonym to *mārum*" (CAD1.2:176). Nevertheless, the one who was given preference with some extra portion of the inheritance was often qualified either as chief heir [*aplum rabum*, Sumerian– IBILA (DUMU.UŠ) or eldest son (*mārum rabūm*, Sumerian–DUMU.GAL or DUMU.SAG. Also, see Kraus 1969:23–*ältester sohn*) (Conf. CAD14:26ff) or favourite heir. While *aplum* defines an heir, its meaning (as *one who receives preference in inheritance division*) can only be derived from the context. When used with *rabūm* (*aplum rabūm*), it clearly defines an heir in a preferential position in contrast to other heirs not given preference (*aplum šeḫrum*). Apart from *aplum*, *aḫum* (Sumerian– ŠEŠ, basic meaning as *brother*) was also used to designate someone in a preferential position, as *heir* (*aḫum rabūm*– *oldest brother*; Sumerian– DUMU.ŠEŠ). The meaning of an eldest son or brother was also made explicit by the use of *aḫum šeḫrum* (Sumerian– ŠEŠ.ANI – *younger brother, youngest brother, secondary brother*) (Conf. CAD2.2:175) as its contrast. According to the laws and contracts studied, it is generally agreed that the *eldest son* had a privilege in inheritance. However, some adoption tablets have indicated that *younger sons* and *possible sons* were also nominated firstborn sons. This calls for an understanding of the use of *rabūm* and *šeḫrum* as indicators for preferential treatment in the ANE.

3. The Use of *rabūm* (first, elder, favorite, primary) and *šeḫrum* (younger, secondary) to Mark Preferential Treatment in Heirship and Inheritance Division in the ANE

The use of *rabūm*³³⁹ and *šeḫrum* together with their cognates is found all over the ANE as attested by various tablets. There seems to be an agreement on the use of the terms which are translated as *elder* and *younger*. As mentioned above, Akkadian *aplum* (Sumerian IBILA) carried the notion of privilege in inheritance division, and was applied to adopted sons who were raised to the position of firstborn in situations where the testators had other sons (natural or adopted). Also, some texts have

the difference between *aplum*, used in the Mari text for the *son* and the commonly applicable *mārum restūm* or *mārum rabūm* which is specific for the eldest son. There is evidence that in Post Old Babylonian legal texts, *aplum* is used synonymously to *mārum* (AD1:2. Also conf. Kraus 1969:19–26).

³³⁸ Bruce (2010) has argued that *aplum* is the basic Akkadian term for firstborn, and that adoptees were often called the *aplum* or *aḫum rabūm* of the adopters, thus giving evidence that *aplum* is a well attested term for a firstborn, heir in preferential position or oldest son. If being an *heir* was equal to being regarded as *firstborn* then it is logical to argue that this term denotes an *heir* with *firstborn rights*. In AD1:2, *aplum* describes either a son and heir or the oldest son who is in a preferential position.

³³⁹ Apart from the translation of *rabūm* as *elder*, it also assumes one of the following: "senior, chief, adult, full grown, important, noble, significant, main, principal and great."

indicated that the position of the elder could be altered by the testator. While there is agreement on the use of *rabû* and *šeḫru*, none exists on the consistency and use of the various terms that denote son or heir.³⁴⁰ According to LH §165, the “one who finds favour” (*ša inšu maḫru*) with the father is the heir (Driver and Miles 1952:345). This is another designation for a *rabûm*—“elder” who assumes the position of heir. Although this is used as an equivalence of *mārum rabûm* its base is favour, and seniority or age is not taken into consideration. Another designation, *mārum reštum* (first son, foremost son, eldest son), defines the position of an heir in terms of family ranking. This designation, *mārum reštum*, is also used interchangeably with *mārum rabûm*. The Assyrian Dictionary attests that the adjective *maḫrûm* (the first) is often used to describe one’s position in terms of age and social status (“first in social status, in age, in eminence”) (CAD10:1) and this may imply that being first also means to *grow in reputation*; or *being elevated to a famous social status*. A similar meaning is given to *rabûm* (Parpola et al. 2007 and CAD14). From the designations, it is possible to argue that being a *rabûm* could also be equal to being a favourite son (*maḫrum*), the first in rank (*maḫrûm*) or the eldest child (*reštum*). Therefore, the following variables are applied across the ANE to designate an elder or older one (firstborn son)—*aplum*, *aplum rabûm*, *mārum*, *mārum rabûm*, *aḫum*, *aḫum rabûm*, *reštum* [Sumerian—IBILA (DUMU.UŠ, DUMU.NITA), DUMU.GAL, DUMU.SAG and DUMU.ŠEŠ]. In the context of inheritance where the males are dominant or where descent is patrilineal, as in the ANE tablets just studied, it is acceptable to render these as *eldest son* or *eldest brother*, which by implication will mean *firstborn son*.

Just like *rabûm*, *šeḫrum* (*young son*), has been attested to be used to designate children of both sexes including children of slaves and legal wives (HSS XIX 52). Driver and Miles have argued that *šeḫrum* was also used to label infants who were not of marriageable age, to differentiate them from those who were of marriageable age (Driver and Miles 1952:341–347 and 347n1). As an infant, a *šeḫrum* was “*regarded to be unable to perform the father’s service*” (Ibid. 347).³⁴¹ The verb form of *šeḫrum* (*šeḫêru*—which, among others, means “*to make smaller or to reduce*”) describes a process of reduction or demotion (CAD16). This might imply that *šeḫrum* could also be used to describe a *rabûm* or a *reštum* who has been demoted from his position in favour of another. In addition, where *rabûm* assumes the meaning of “first in rank,” *tardennu* (second in rank) (CAD14 and 18) is applied as its contrast. *Šeḫrum* as used in the ANE also carried the notion of a younger child or one who did not find favour with the father or an apprentice.³⁴² From the ANE tablets, there is evidence that junior sons were given preference to elder ones and possible sons were given preference to existing sons. Following the usage and meaning of *šeḫrum*, it can be concluded that anyone who is affected by the preferential treatment of others is a *šeḫrum*. A *mārum šeḫrum* therefore is either an infant brother (minor) or an elder son who has

³⁴⁰ There is evidence that *mārum* and *aḫum* were not exclusively used for sons/brothers but designated both sons and daughters, thus permitting females to share in the inheritance. Driver and Miles (1952:335–341) have also argued that these words, although basically referring to the male, often included females wherever the context permitted.

³⁴¹ The role of a *šeḫrum*, as a “minor” (AD16), within the inheritance law is insignificant because the *šeḫrum* is unable to carry out any responsibilities which means that it is unacceptable to make a *šeḫrum* an heir.

³⁴² As a younger child, *šeḫrum* also means a junior in a biological relation or with respect to age, strength or knowledge. As an unfavoured child, it presents a situation in which a junior is given preference to a senior, thus demoting the senior to an insignificant or second position in the family inheritance or where a child adopted after another assumes the position of the firstborn, thus relegating the previous to an inferior position.

not won the father's favour, or an apprentice or a junior son.³⁴³ The fluidity of the use and meanings accorded to *mārum rabûm* and *mārum šeḫrum* remains problematic and no clear decision can be made. The above data shows that there were several possible ways of choosing an heir (*mārum rabûm*, *aḫum rabûm*, *mārum reštum*) who in this context assumes the firstborn rights. Thus a preliminary conclusion can be that a *mārum rabûm* fits one of the following: (a) chronological firstborn (eldest) son of the father (biological or adopted); (b) chronological firstborn (eldest) son of a legal wife (regardless of the existence of other adopted sons or those born to concubines or slave-wives); (c) chronological firstborn (eldest) son who is of marriageable age; or (d) any of the sons who finds favour with the father (biological or adopted) or who is deemed capable to represent and carry on the role of the father regardless of age or chronology (Matthews 2003:16). On the other hand, a *mārum šeḫrum* could mean: (a) a son other than the firstborn (eldest); (b) chronological eldest son (biological or adopted), placed in a second position (*tardennu*) by father's choice; (c) chronological firstborn (eldest) son (biological or adopted) who is deemed unfit to represent the actions of the father (insignificant); (d) chronological firstborn (eldest) son (biological or adopted) who does not win his father's favour; or (e) an infant or minor.

4. Summary on the ANE Designations of Firstborn and Firstborn Rights

The ANE presents a wide variety on the choice of an heir. Many of the archaeological texts acknowledge the preferential treatment of the firstborn son, but there remains an uncertainty in the way the term designating the firstborn son is applied. The most widely used designations have been *mārum rabûm* (synonymous to *aplum*, *aplum rabûm* and *aḫum rabûm* [Sumerian IBILA (DUMU.UŠ or DUM.NITA), DUMU (as favourite son, LL§31), DUMU.GAL, DUMU.SAG and DUMU.ŠEŠ]) and *mārum šeḫrum* (synonymous to *aḫum šeḫrum*, *aplum šeḫrum*, *tardennu*); for elder and younger respectively, albeit their application in various tablets presents an ambiguity. In general, this discrepancy gives the notion that elder (*mārum rabûm*) and younger (*mārum šeḫrum*) reflected more a status symbol than actual biological or age chronology. An important discovery is the fact that no tablet has dealt with an inheritance situation which involves twins. Nevertheless, if one considers the meaning of *elder* and *younger* as status symbols, then inheritance in the case of twins will follow the same rules. A late Jewish law makes provision for inheritance when the sons are twins and states that the twins are equal heirs regardless of the time lapse between their births (Rackman 1977:84).

From the discussion, a general statement can be made that the heir or firstborn (eldest) son in the ANE was appointed based on the principle of *male primogenitor*, where the eldest male child (biological or adopted) was given priority, or *male ultimogeniture*, where the younger male child (biological or adopted) was given priority—eldest and younger assuming the meaning of *mārum rabûm* and *mārum šeḫrum* respectively, as stated in the preceding paragraphs.

4.5.2. Biblical Understanding of בְּכֹר (Firstborn) and מִשְׁפַּט בְּכֹרָה (Firstborn Rights)

The issue of the firstborn was reflected in the sociolegal and religious lives of the ancient Israelites with reference to humans, animals and plants. All firstborns were of a great and significant cultic value. While firstborn males of humans had a special status with respect to inheritance, those of animals and plants were generally

³⁴³ It seems this was the popular usage in the ANE since anyone who could not represent the father was regarded as a *šeḫrum*. Also, anyone who did not win the father's favour was regarded as an infant and thus insignificant with respect to ability of family leadership.

regarded as good for sacrifices. Accordingly, the male firstborns of humans had both a sociolegal and a religious status. These two seem tied together, although one had to be a firstborn son before the cultic status could follow. In this case, the religious implication was dependent on the sociolegal significance. In Hebrew, the term בכר designates the 'firstborn' which is used in the OT (Walton 1998:18 and 2003:21; Tsevat 1975:121–127 and Arnold 1997:658–659) to describe 'the first fruit of the father's strength' (Gen 49:3, Deut 21:17, Ps 78:51 and 105:36), or 'that which first opens the (mother's) womb (Ex 13:2, 12, 15) (Walton 2003:21 and Arnold 1997:658). The former use of בכר impresses on the paternal relationship, while the latter captivates the maternal relationship. This was easily applicable and understood with respect to humans, but how these applied to animals and plants is not mentioned and remains unclear. There is also evidence that בכר was applied to non-biological relationships as well, thus making its understanding tripartite—animal, biological and non-biological firstborns. We have seen that in Exodus (e.g. Ex 4:22–23, and 11:5) YHWH calls Israel 'my firstborn son,' a position he bestowed upon them as *his beloved*, which has nothing to do with the biological process. As it was in the ANE, the firstborn males of humans in Ancient Israel were entitled to privileges known as "the firstborn rights." There are three biblical passages which present the legislation for this: Deut 21:15–17, Num 27:1–11 and Num 36:1–12. The basic assumption in these legislations is that a male has the privilege of inheritance. In Num 27:1–11, other family members are mentioned besides the male child and in order of right of inheritance. These include daughters (v8), brothers (v9), uncles (v10) or close kinsmen (v11). The inheritance of the daughters is elaborated and regulated in Num 36:1–12, with conditions binding any daughter who vies for the right of inheritance. This regulation aims to keep the inheritance within the same tribe and requires that the daughter who vies for inheritance marries within the tribe of her father (Ben-Barak 1980:25–26).

In Deut 21:15–17, the male firstborn (בכר) is entitled to a double portion of inheritance (משפט בכרה) which is a birthright (בכרה—v17). This legislation lays emphasis on the position of the firstborn male, taking into consideration the father's relation to the firstborn (v15). It is unequivocal against discrimination on grounds of paternal disfavour against a son born to an unloved wife. Whether the father loves the mother or not, does not count and the first son is due the double portion³⁴⁴ of the inheritance by virtue of his position. Despite the unequivocal nature of the injunction, there are indications that the patriarchs had varying approaches to the designation of an heir. Some of the variations are seen in the interpretation of the "Abraham and Eliezer" (Gen 15:1–6), "Isaac and Ishmael" (Gen 16 and 21:1–22), and "Manasseh and Ephraim" (Gen 48:12–20) and "Reuben and Joseph" (Gen 48:22 and 1 Chr 5:1–2) narrative sections. An understanding of these sections can enlighten us on how the patriarchs designated firstborn sons and heirs. Thus, in the following paragraphs I will discuss the meaning and understanding of firstborn and the designation of heirs in these passages.

³⁴⁴ Davies (1993) prefers to describe the share of the firstborn son's inheritance as 'privilege portion...of the property,' because some scholars talk of a 'two-third' portion (Hayes 1991:304, van Seters 1975:92 and Phillips 1973:142). Conversely, the translation of 'two-thirds' makes sense in a situation where two sons are involved. Where there are more than two sons the firstborn receives whatever the double portion may entail.

1. Abraham and Eliezer (Gen 15:1–6)

According to Gen 15:2–3 it is plausible to argue that Abraham had earmarked Eliezer as a potential heir. However, he was not Abraham's biological son or relative. These verses have often been interpreted with the background that Abraham had previously adopted Eliezer as his son and heir. Thus, when YHWH makes his promise about Abraham's greatness, Abraham reacts as follows (Gen 15:2):

ויאמר אברם

"And Abram said"

אדני יהוה

"Lord YHWH"

מהיתתלי

"What will you give me"

ואנכי הולך ערירי

"For I continue childless"

ובן-משק ביתי³⁴⁵ הוא דמשק אליעזר

"And the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

It therefore seems plausible to argue that Abraham had adopted Eliezer as his firstborn, while hoping and expressing his desire to have a biological son according to YHWH's promise. Although Abraham's request to God means that Eliezer is a potential heir, his confidence in having a biological heir makes the whole scenario ambiguous. If Abraham's chief servant in Gen 24:2 is to be equated with Eliezer, then Abraham still trusted him after Isaac's birth. A general view holds that when Isaac is born, Eliezer is demoted as heir of the family and that when Abraham divides his estate, he gives nothing to Eliezer (Gen 25:5–6), as Eliezer is not even mentioned. If this is considered, then Eliezer lost his firstborn rights to Isaac. Eliezer's adoption as heir is not very convincing and challengeable because nothing is said about it in this narrative. It seems probable that Abraham relied upon him to carry on with his functions, especially in his response to God. Abraham's words show a worry which indicates that he has no other choice but to allow Eliezer to inherit his property—as his firstborn with all the firstborn rights, on condition that God does not fulfil his promise of an heir. The text does not call Eliezer firstborn and any argument in this direction is an implication of Abraham's words. Nevertheless, it is also important to pick on Abraham's assurance and his anxious waiting for a biological heir. Abraham's words might have expressed his desperation but he expresses confidence by presenting his request to God—"Adonai YHWH,... I continue to be childless." Another issue is that Abraham's confidence in Eliezer would have grown as his chief servant who was well accountable—one who can take care of his master's estate. So, if Abraham's chief servant in Gen 24:2 is to be equated to Eliezer, then Abraham still trusted him as his chief servant after Isaac's birth, so much so that he could entrust the search of Isaac's future wife in his hands. A proper designation will be that Eliezer built confidence with his master and became the care-taker of his master's estate.

2. Isaac and Ishma'el (Genesis 16 and 21:1–22)

Genesis 16 presents the story of the birth of Ishma'el to Abraham. The narrative states that this was Sarai's proposal as an attempt to salvage the situation of

³⁴⁵ Although דמשק אליעזר may be considered a gloss, it still shows that Eliezer is going to be Abraham's heir.

Abraham's crisis of an heir. In Gen 15:1–6, Abraham expresses his need for a biological heir. Gen 16:2 seems to be a solution to Abraham's plea as a child will finally be born to Sarai through her slave–Hagar and Abraham. If this happens then Abraham finally has a biological son. Hence, the birth of Ishma'el to Abraham means that he is rightfully the firstborn son, with respect to Abraham and Hagar. The birth of Isaac in Gen 21:1–8 generates a crisis. Finally, God has fulfilled his promise to Sarai (Genesis 18). Abraham now boasts of two sons. One out of Sarai's command for him to have a baby with Hagar, and another as a fulfilment of God's promise. Who will be the heir in this situation? Both are Abraham's legitimate sons, although Isaac is Sarai's firstborn son. Gen 21:9–12 elaborates on an ensuing crisis that broke out after Isaac's birth. This is because one of the sons would be heir. Will the heir be the firstborn of Abraham or the first born of Sarah—a legitimate wife? It might depend on what the reader at this stage considers to be firstborn. There are two sides to this explanation viz: (a) if one takes בכר to mean 'the first fruit of the father's strength,' (Gen 49:3, Deut 21:17, Ps 78:51 and 105:36), then the lot falls on Ishma'el; and (b) if one takes בכר to mean 'that which first opens the (mother's) womb,' (Ex 13:2, 12, 15), then both Ishma'el and Isaac are qualified. The simplest way to resolve this has often been to plead for the legitimacy of Sarai and the illegitimacy of Hagar. And this has led to the dismissal of Ishma'el as the son of a slave-girl or illegitimate wife.³⁴⁶ Ishma'el meets the requirement of firstborn as Abraham's first strength and Isaac too fulfils this as the first to open Sarai's womb. But according to the נשפט בכרה in Deut 21:15–17, it seems more likely that Ishma'el would have been the heir.³⁴⁷

Both children are qualified according to the meaning of בכר and there is a need to make a choice. It is at this point that Sarai comes in and convinces Abraham to send Ishma'el away. As influential as Sarai was to convince Abraham to have a baby with Hagar, she does the same as she instigates the movement of Ishma'el and Hagar (Gen 21:10). Steinberg has argued that the mother's influence played a key role and Sarai fits into this view because she uses her position to exert influence over the choice. Sarai takes advantage of Hagar's foreign identity and her servant status and influences Abraham. An argument against this can be that Abraham only acts when God intervenes. This is true but God's intervention only serves Sarai's purpose. Sarai (as correct mother or legitimate wife) does everything to secure the inheritance for her son. Ishma'el is thus demoted to an insignificant position and although he receives his share of the inheritance (Gen 25:5–6), he is not the firstborn. Therefore, Isaac is given preference to Ishma'el (Genesis 16, 21:8–21) as a matter of choice and not age. Thus, firstborn in this case becomes the firstborn son of the legitimate wife.

³⁴⁶ This still does not resolve the crisis because it was a socio-legal prescription that wives were allowed to hand their maidservants to their husbands to bear them children if they were barren. The legislation in Deut 21:15–17 does not cover this and there is no evidence that the son of the maid-servant was regarded as illegitimate. On the contrary, Jacob's children born of his wives' maidservants are counted among his legitimate sons and receive the same share of inheritance as the others but for the double portion which goes to Jacob's favourite son—Joseph. If, as Driver and Miles (1972:332–333) and Davies (1993:178) argue, the sons of maid-servants were supposed to be adopted according to the Babylonian law, then the meaning of בכר as 'first fruit of a father's strength' is blurred by this practice.

³⁴⁷ Some scholars argue that in line with LH §170, the son of the chief wife and that of the slave wife were not of equal status as far as the inheritance was concerned. Since the son of the chief wife had the right of inheritance, those of the slave wife could only attain that position by adoption (Driver and Miles 1972:350–351). Therefore, Ishma'el could only be the heir if Abraham had adopted him as his son.

3. *Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen 48:12–20)*

Manasseh and Ephraim were the sons of Joseph. Manasseh was the first while Ephraim was the junior. But during the final blessing, Jacob prefers Ephraim to Manasseh. The reason for this is not given except that Joseph tries to point out to Jacob that Manasseh is the firstborn (v.17-20). However, Jacob's response indicates that he is quite aware of the decision and preference for Ephraim. Thus, Ephraim is made firstborn and Manasseh demoted. Ephraim becomes firstborn not by virtue of his age but through the choice of Jacob. Just as it is the case with Ishma'el and Isaac there is ample age difference between these two. In the above example, some proponents lay emphasis on the illegitimacy of Hagar. Here there is no illegitimate wife, yet Jacob switches the birth places of Joseph's children. This further raises a question on the meaning of legitimacy. Considering that the patriarchal family was endogamous, we are confronted here with a situation where Joseph is married to an Egyptian. So, what is the implication of this to the understanding of patriarchal inheritance? This is very important and requires further investigation. I will come back to this at the end of this section.

4. *Joseph and Reuben (Gen 48:22, 1Chr 5:1–2)*

Among Jacob's twelve sons, six were born of Le'ah; four of Jacob's concubines, and two of Rachel (Gen 29ff). Reuben was Jacob's firstborn and the son of Le'ah, and the narrator indicates that Jacob loved Rachel more than Le'ah probably because he did not intend to marry Le'ah. When it comes to inheritance, Jacob gives an extra portion to Joseph (Gen 48:22) and this can be attributed among other things to the fact that Joseph was the firstborn of Rachel—Jacob's beloved wife, or that Joseph was Jacob's favourite son or both. Reuben's demotion seems to be attached to his attitude towards his father. According to 1Chr 5:1–2 (Gen 49:3–4), Reuben is said to have dishonoured his father. Most commentators build upon this and claim that it was for this reason that Jacob disinherited Reuben. Accordingly, Bruce (2010:145) argues that:

A rule like the Deuteronomic one would have permitted out Jacob to demote Reuben without grounds. But because Reuben became guilty of misconduct, when he slept with Bilhah, the way became clear, legally, for Jacob to demote Reuben and to promote a younger son of his choosing—namely, Joseph—and to grant to him the birth-right. It is not necessary then to posit a contradiction between Jacob's actions and the principle contained in the text (Deut 21:15–21).

Although this claim is legitimate, there seem to be other situations and attitudes that favoured Joseph's choice. First Joseph had been Jacob's beloved son throughout. Secondly Joseph was firstborn to Jacob's beloved wife—Rachel. Even if one considers that Reuben was disinherited on grounds of his attitude, the issue of Jacob's love for Rachel cannot be annulled. This in my opinion, seems to be one of the main reasons because the Deuteronomic law also provides a hierarchy of succession or inheritance in Num 36:1–12. By implication, Jacob would have transferred the firstborn right to the next below Reuben by age. Unfortunately, Simeon still belonged to Le'ah who was hated.³⁴⁸ Nevertheless it will be unfair to tie Jacob's choice of disinheriting Reuben to

³⁴⁸ Because the sons of the maidens were often counted as legitimate and because they shared in the tribal inheritance, they also had the right to inherit. But both Simeon and Levi too were laid a charge for

his attitude and tie that of his choice of Joseph to his love for either Joseph or his mother or both. A closer look at the narrative section of Genesis 37–50 gives one the opportunity to uncover other qualities that played to Joseph's advantage. Besides being the beloved, he was presumed dead only to be found alive (Gen 46:30 and 48:11) and this probably raised his chances. Added to this was his attitude towards his family as one who can assume the position of a leader.³⁴⁹ He was sold into slavery but when his family united with him, he showed love to all of them (Gen 46:31–34, 47:11–12) and continued even after Jacob's death. I presume that none of the other brothers had such a caring concern for each other as Joseph did. It is possible to argue that Jacob hands the firstborn rights to Joseph based on his love for Rachel and the personal qualities Joseph exhibits as leader of the family. Placing this side-by-side the scene of Ephraim and Manasseh, it is logical to argue that Jacob uses this as an opportunity to tell Joseph that the issue of firstborn rights is encumbered by other qualities which go beyond the birth order and that the father can make a choice. This situation is also comparable to that of Solomon who inherited David's throne not because he was firstborn but because of David's love and promise to Bathsheba coupled with the recalcitrant nature of some of his other sons who were potential heirs.³⁵⁰ The choice of Joseph highlights the fact that a chronological firstborn could be demoted based on his attitude and that being firstborn is also tied to the ability to lead the family or play the father's role.

5. *Summary on the Biblical Understanding of Firstborn and Firstborn Rights*

If בכר is regarded as the 'first of the father's strength,' then it is unfair to argue that Ishma'el was not qualified to inherit Abraham because the status of his mother. Also, if בכר is considered as that which opens the womb or first offspring, with respect to the mother, then both Ishma'el and Isaac qualify, although the argument that Hagar was an illegitimate wife can be valid. The situation of Manasseh and Ephraim makes the meaning of legitimate wife ambiguous. Previously, I had tried to establish that the patriarchal marriage is endogamous and that a *correct mother* and a *correct wife* from within the lineage are important for inheritance. This goes on normally until Joseph finds himself in Egypt and marries an Egyptian. The blessing of Joseph's children who are half-Egyptian raises the question whether marriage (as being endogamous) is a good criterion for the choice of an heir.

Steinberg (1993:130) has argued that the division of heirship to all the children of Jacob is the effect of sororal polygyny, with the blessing of Joseph's sons as evidence. This may be a convincing argument but it does little to justify why Joseph's children are part of the blessing. Rather than depending on external sources, Jacob himself declares that Manasseh and Ephraim are the children God has given him in Egypt and solicits to Joseph that they bear his name (Gen 48:5–6). I suppose that Jacob adopts them as a replacement to Joseph who has a place of honour in a foreign

their massacre (Gen 49:5–7). This means that Dan would have been designated heir if Rachel had not born a son.

³⁴⁹ Bendor (1996:178–179) has rightly argued that the firstborn had a special position before being an heir. He continues that Reuben already exhibited leadership by showing concern for Joseph when his younger brothers wanted to kill him (Gen 37:21–22). The same can be said of Judah (Gen 37:26–27). Joseph portrays even more leadership qualities to take care of his family after being in exile all his life. Hence, being able to lead presents an added advantage to one who aspires to be heir.

³⁵⁰ Most commentators include the story of Jacob and Esau as an example to a situation in the patriarchal narrative where the firstborn legislation was abrogated. I have wilfully left this out because it constitutes the content under study.

land. It is also probable to assume that Jacob feels that it would be difficult for Joseph to leave Egypt. Thus, his children who are now adopted into the lineage of Jacob's forefathers—Abraham and Isaac (Gen 48:15–16), are a proper replacement to complete the 12 tribes.³⁵¹ When Jacob pronounces his adoption of Manasseh and Ephraim, he makes an acknowledgement of his other children despite their attitudes. I should add here that what Jacob does also recognises Joseph's love to his brethren who had sold him to which he further lays emphasis upon in the blessing (Gen 48:22–26). It is but understandable that Jacob should consider that YHWH had preserved Joseph to save his family and give him an opportunity to fulfil God's promise. Joseph's faithfulness to YHWH in Egypt plays to his advantage too. Another supposition is the need for a formidable force of unity for Jacob's children in a foreign land. In the absence of their parents, there is need to foster unity in a way that will keep them to fulfil the promises made to their father by returning to Machpelah for his burial and finally returning to inherit the land that God has promised. A third assumption might explain why Jacob decides to share his inheritance to all his children. The family is already grown and Jacob has seen his lower generations. He expresses satisfaction that YHWH has been faithful to him. Looking at the promise and his life it is obvious that he acknowledges that God has increased his household and made him prosper. Hence, he has seen YHWH fulfil his promise. The focus of Jacob's division of the inheritance to all his children is to foster this continuity. Every child receives according to what Jacob perceives of them. He had acknowledged that all are his sons regardless of who their mothers³⁵² are and what they have done. While Jacob wants to foster unity, he also wants everyone to increase because he has changed from an individual to a people (He is Jacob, but he is a people—Israel). A further look at the blessings of each of the sons, reveals that Jacob blesses Judah and imbues him with leadership and fortress as the one who will be the point of unity.³⁵³ Together with Joseph, Judah shares the responsibility of leadership in the family. This is where I can concur with Steinberg's (1993) sororal polygyny influence. Otherwise, I maintain that Jacob has become a people and accepted that he has seen YHWH's promise come true.

Looking back at the other patriarchs this is a valid argument. A promise that has gone through Abraham—one son, Isaac—two sons and Jacob—12 sons (plus a daughter) indicates a real fulfilment. In addition, Jacob has seen his grand and great grandchildren (Genesis 46) and probably he saw the children of his great grandchildren before his death. When they return from Jacob's burial, Joseph's brothers have

³⁵¹ Joseph is not one of the 12 tribes because Ephraim and Manasseh have been adopted as his replacements. Thus, Joseph has a double share in the division of the 12 tribes, expanding the division into 13 shares. Based on Jacob's blessing of Joseph's children, it is probable to argue that Joseph's normal share probably goes to Manasseh while his special portion goes to Ephraim.

³⁵² Here I concur with the argument that Steinberg (1993) offers to explain why the sons of Jacob's concubines are considered legitimate when compared to Ishma'el. She argues that Leah and Rachel adopted the sons born of Zilpah and Bilhah at birth by naming them, which is something which Sarah did not do for Ishma'el. Also Conf. Meade (1998:10).

³⁵³ It is important to remember that Judah proposed that Joseph be sold rather than killed because "he is our brother and our flesh" (Gen37:29). Despite the differences they had, Judah saw Joseph as part of him from another mother and would prefer him to be alive in a foreign land than to die. Jacob makes the same consideration when he decides to reward Reuben, Simeon and Levi after their atrocities. There seems to be a bond between Judah and Joseph that Jacob figured out and thus found them eligible to lead the new house (house of Israel)—which has grown into a people. In addition, he seems to have shifted the firstborn status from Reuben to Judah (Gen 49:1–28). Thus, he builds a partnership between one who has saved the family in love and has the wisdom to lead and the most senior son who by his position can rally the others within the family.

to approach him to remind him of his love and leadership towards them, thus stressing the importance of unity among the brethren in the foreign land. Joseph's response indicates that they are all heirs to their father Jacob-Israel. He is a servant as everyone is and as their father was. It is also important to mention that Joseph's response portrays his leadership qualities and love for his family as well as a sense of unity—something Joseph reiterates before his death (Gen 50:15–25). Although Joseph is the chosen heir (I will call this “primary heir” in terms of leadership), and Judah is imbued with fortitude to unite (“secondary heir”—as most senior with leadership qualities, maturity and wisdom), all the others are also heirs (“tertiary heirs”) to the various houses.³⁵⁴ With this approach, heirship moves beyond an individual's choice to a co-operation between various (sub)heirs or family heads (a type of democracy in its

³⁵⁴ Westbrook (1991:136) presents a similar approach and argues that Joseph had the double inheritance while seniority was still in the hands of Judah. The difference is that Westbrook does not consider Jacob's other sons as (sub)heirs. He writes: “It is Judah who is selected for the role of elder brother in the place of Reuben, for in addressing his sons on his death-bed, Jacob says to Judah (Gen 49:8), ‘the sons of your father shall bow to you,’ ... (and this) ‘refers to the right to administer paternal estate while undivided, which would normally have been assigned to the firstborn as the obvious person to retain the authority of the head of the household.’” While Westbrook's assertion of Judah's administrative power is sustainable, he talks of undivided inheritance which is not the case with Jacob's family. There is evidence in the narrative that Judah was given administrative power while Joseph only had the double share of inheritance as firstborn right. First, I have argued that every son has a portion of Jacob's inheritance which later becomes a tribe in Israel and that Joseph's portion is inherited by Jacob's adopted sons—Ephraim and Manasseh. This makes all Jacob's sons heir to their father's inheritance with each responsible for his tribe. Secondly, I have argued that Jacob understands that Joseph is unlikely to return to Israel because of his noble position in Egypt and because of his marriage. Thus, Jacob adopts Joseph's sons as a replacement. With everyone set to return (including Ephraim and Manasseh) Jacob imbues Judah—the elder, with the administrative power because of his wisdom and leadership quality, probably because Joseph will not return and because Ephraim (whom Jacob also favoured) is still too young to be leader over his uncles. Jacob's blessing of Judah has very important key elements that support Judah's leadership (Gen 49:8–12- NIV):

⁸ “Judah, your brothers will praise you;
your hand will be on the neck of your enemies;
your father's sons will bow down to you.”

⁹ You are a lion's cub, Judah;
you return from the prey, my son.
Like a lion he crouches and lies down,
like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
until he to whom it belongs shall come
and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

¹¹ He will tether his donkey to a vine,
his colt to the choicest branch;
he will wash his garments in wine,
his robes in the blood of grapes.

¹² His eyes will be darker than wine,
his teeth whiter than milk.

The underlined clauses indicate Judah's centrality to the administration of Jacob's family. He partners with Joseph as heir and his brothers are (sub)heir. Gen 49:8 and 10 indicates that Judah will remain the person who will unite the family and will remain the leader of the family. Judah's position in the later history of Israel supports this assertion as all rulers are from the house of Judah and he is the only one

prime). If this is considered then Jacob's heirship and inheritance can be illustrated as shown below.

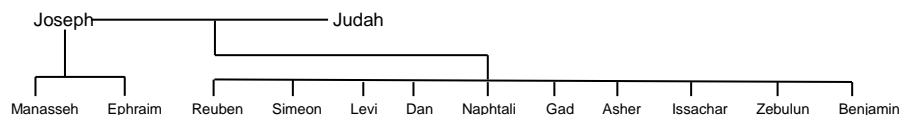


Fig 4.1. Multiple succession in Jacob's family

Apart from the legitimacy problem and the issue of the distribution of Jacob's inheritance, the cases of Joseph, Ephraim and Solomon as heirs present clear instances of a father's choice, more than that of Isaac and Ishma'el. Joseph was far younger than Reuben and there were other senior sons born to Leah. If one considers that Reuben disqualified himself as firstborn (Gen 35:22; 49:3–4 and 1Chr 5:1) (De Vaux 1997:42 and Davies 1993:178), then there were other seniors in line who qualify for heir and should be considered. The fact that none of the other elder brothers of Joseph were given the *נִשְׁפָּט בְּכֹרֶה* is evidence that the term *בְּכֹר* could also mean 'a beloved son, favoured son or best son.'³⁵⁵ The same situation applies to Ephraim and Manasseh. De Vaux (1997:42) acknowledges the meaning of *בְּכֹר* as 'a beloved son, favoured son or best son,' when he writes:

the examples quoted from the Israelite history are exceptions to the ordinary law, and merely emphasize the tension between juridical custom and the love which tended to make a father most fond of a son... (Gen.37:3; 44:20).³⁵⁶

Some scholars present two other explanations to this phenomenon which are contrary to the above. Firstly, there are some scholars who claim that the custom of the patriarchs was one in which the youngest son had the right of inheritance rather than the firstborn (De Vaux 1997:42, Jacobs 1888/1894:46–63 and Frazer 1918:429–566) and postulate that it is this custom known as 'ultimogeniture' which the patriarchs applied. There is no evidence to this practice in the scriptures as it is the case for the firstborn (Deut 21:15–17), who were due a double portion of inheritance. Secondly, others claim that the patriarchs lived at a time when the issue of birthright had nothing to do with the order of birth but that a father had to choose whom to inherit from among his sons (Falk 1961:73, Nuefeld 1944:261–262 and Davies 1993:178). They also base their argument on the fact that the legislation of Deut 21:15–17 might have been developed to counter this practice (Davies 1993:178). This is not tenable because there is biblical evidence that the practice continued even after the *נִשְׁפָּט בְּכֹרֶה* of Deut 21:15–17.

whose house is mentioned in later genealogies of Israel (e.g. Matt 1:3ff). I will argue (in the next paragraph §4.2.3.3) from an African perspective that this type of succession which involves multiple heirship is practiced in some African customs.

³⁵⁵ It is important to mention here that the word is not used in relation to Joseph. Nevertheless, Gen 37:3 portrays Joseph as the most favoured child of Jacob. When Jacob shares his inheritance, he gives an extra portion to Joseph (Gen 48:22) which is an indication that Joseph has assumed the *בְּכֹר* as the beloved son of Jacob.

³⁵⁶ It is important to note that De Vaux uses this argument in favour of ultimogeniture and argues that primogeniture in Ancient Israel was an exception to the legislation.

Again, in the discussion above on the firstborn and firstborn rights in the Hebrew Bible, I have not considered the situation where twins are involved. The assumption is that the meaning of firstborn is not biologically oriented and even in the case of twins, the same conclusions will be reached. The situation of Jacob and Esau will be studied in details later. However, it is important to highlight how these two interact in Isaac's *Toledoth*. Esau and Jacob are born as twins. During their birth, Esau first comes out and he is labelled—elder and Jacob is born minutes after and labelled—younger. Esau's eldership goes with the rights of the firstborn only after Isaac has indicated that Esau is his favourite son (Gen 25:28). They are described as תִּמְנִים—twins.

In English, the noun twins define, 'a group of two offspring born at one birth,' or 'two offspring born of a single gestation' (APA 2010). There are various types of twins which include identical twins—monozygote, fraternal or unidentical twins—dizygote, and conjoined or siamese twins. Of importance to this study are the monozygote and dizygote types. Identical or monozygote twins occur when a single zygote (fertilised egg or ovule) splits into two cells and develop into two individuals. The twins that develop from this common cell division are often genetically identical and of same sex (both either males or females) (Ibid.). The fertilisation here is from a single sperm cell and a single ovule. Also, unidentical, fraternal or dizygote twins occur when two different ova are fertilised independently by two different sperm cells at the same time (Ibid.). The two zygotes or fertilised ova are planted into the uterus and share the same uterine environment during their independent development and growth into different individuals. The developing fetuses are similar especially with respect to their age and development but are different genetically, although they can be of the same or different sexes. They are regarded as two brothers or sisters, or a brother and a sister who are of the same age.

The meaning and understanding of תִּמְנִים signify that Jacob and Esau are either part of an original whole from a single sperm cell and ovule (identical or monozygote), or separate individuals (fraternal or dizygote) from the development of two different zygotes at the same time. The common conception makes them identical either genetically or age wise. The text however presents their physical and behavioural differences which may be an exposition of their genetical differences (Gen 25:27, 29–34; 26:35, 27:11, 18–27, 41 and 28:6–9) (Cohen 2001:335). Hence, it is logical to consider that Esau and Jacob were fraternal or dizygote twins of the same sex and age. The birth of twins, whether monozygote or dizygote, is a natural process which, according to the definition of twins, cannot be used to determine their ages. They are of the same age from conception and it is impossible that the twins can be born or come out of the womb at the same time. Even in modern surgery, the surgeon would have to remove one before the other, the choice of which cannot be defined. The fact that one is born or removed by a surgeon before the other has nothing to do with age, except that it is a natural process. This process therefore should not be emphasised as definitive of the ages of the twins. What is more important with twins is that they are conceived at the same time and this makes them equal in age. The word twins in itself makes the issue of same age inevitable. If Isaac chose Esau, it was because he enjoyed Esau's game and Esau then became his favourite son. In summary, firstborn, according to the patriarchal narratives could be: (a) a chronological firstborn of the father; (b) a chronological firstborn of the chief wife; (c) a chronological firstborn of a chief wife who is loved (in a situation where two legitimate wives are involved); (d) any son who finds favour in his father's eyes regardless of age; (e) a son with leadership qualities/ one who is obedient; or (f) a son who loves the family and can assume the father's position.

This discussion has not been able to resolve the problem presented by the various ways that families in both the ANE and the patriarchal narratives made decisions on the choice of an heir. Although there are some similarities as well as differences, it is important to mention that the situation of the patriarchal families is reflected in some situations in the ANE cultures and through them one can get an understanding of how the patriarchs dealt with such issues. Before addressing that, I will present a brief discussion on the meaning of firstborn and inheritance from some African cultures and customs.

4.5.3. *Aspects of Succession and Inheritance in Some Non-Western (African) Customs*

Adamo (1998, 2001) together with some African scholars have argued that most African cultures and customs can enlighten the understanding of the patriarchal narratives on grounds of similar world view, cultural practices and customs. Here I am talking about succession and inheritance rather than firstborn and the firstborn rights because most of these cultures equate the word 'first' to "best" just as it was in Ancient Israel. The first in this sense is often the one who has been deemed appropriate to be the successor. Succession takes place within a family which constitutes the most important social organisation (Ollenu 1966:71, Ebi 2008:162 and Moodley 2012:16). When it comes to lineage, Africa has both the patrilineal and the matrilineal system. Nevertheless, succession in both is through the male child (conf. Alfredo 2013:115). In this section, I will briefly discuss succession and inheritance in some patrilineal kinship systems. The basic principle of succession in most African customary systems is based on the principle of primogeniture (Moodley 2012:19, Omotola 2004–2005:116).³⁵⁷ The issue of primogeniture is captured by a legal decision made in a South African court thus (Omotola 2004–2005:117–118):

The customary law of succession in Southern Africa is based on male primogeniture. In monogamous families the eldest son of the family head is his heir, failing him the eldest son's eldest male descendant. Where the eldest son has predeceased the family head without leaving male issue the second becomes heir; if he be dead leaving no male issue the third son succeeds and so on through the sons of the family head Women generally do not inherit in customary law. When the head of the family dies his heir takes his position as head of the family and becomes owner of all the deceased's property, he becomes liable for the debts of the deceased and assumes the deceased's position as guardian of the women and minor sons in the family. He is obliged to support and maintain them, from his own resources,....

Moodley (2012:19) supports that this is also practiced in South Africa as she writes:

On the death of a Native his estate devolves on his eldest son or his eldest son's eldest male descendant. If the eldest son has died leaving no male issue, the next son, or

³⁵⁷ Moodley (2012) confirms that this is prevalent in South Africa, Ghana, and Swaziland. Ebi (2008) and Omotola (2004–2005) confirm the same prevalence in Cameroon and Nigeria, while Musyoka (2010) also confirms that primogeniture is dominant in Kenya.

his eldest male descendent inherits, and so on through the sons respectively.

When Nzalie Ebi (2008:38) studies succession in Cameroon, he mentions that the word “succession” is often used as a synonym to inheritance and as a result, blurs the boundaries between these words. He argues that succession includes inheritance and a “title” and points out that the passing of the title may be unencumbered but when it concerns the property, there can be other issues attached to it (Ibid. 38–39). Also, as a successor “the heir” is regarded the ‘first’ among others in the family and as an administrator of family inheritance to enable it to move from one generation to the other.

As it is with the patriarchal systems, the choice of the successor rests with the father. The decision can be made earlier in his life time or on his death bed. Some customs require that the decision be made earlier and when it is done, the would-be successor assumes the title of the father and is known as such until the father dies.³⁵⁸ Although the choice of the deceased is important, there are other qualities which are expected of the chosen, otherwise it can lead to a family crisis. The successor by virtue of his position should be a father figure who can perform the duties of the father in his absence. Because of the qualities required, the family has an influence on who should be successor. The Bamileke custom of Cameroon states that:

The main successor is this child who is judged apt to continue the task of the father, to inherit the family home,³⁵⁹ the guard of the ancestors’ skulls and the advantages attached thereto and above all the respect that all the family and the surrounding acknowledged of the deceased.³⁶⁰

Also, the Ghanaian customary law states that (Ollenu 1966:87):

The senior boy or girl (in cases where females succeed) never automatically succeeds to the estate; an election by the deceased maternal or paternal relatives must be

³⁵⁸ Ebi (2008) notes this in the Douala, Bassa, Bassosi, Mendankwe, and Bayang customs of Cameroon.

³⁵⁹ The family home refers to all the family buildings and landed property that were under the administration of the deceased, plus the area which hosts the ancestral shrine—if these are not in the same vicinity. Also, the use of “main” signifies that there are other (sub)heirs.

³⁶⁰ Bafoussam Court of Appeal, Arrêt No. 29 du 22 Juillet 1993, (unpublished), as quoted in Ebi (2008:187) The above quotation is my translation of the French version which reads:

“L’ héritier principal est cet enfant qui, jugé apte à poursuivre l’oeuvre du père, hériter de la concession familial, de la garde des cranes des ancêtres et des avantages y attachés et surtout du respect que toute la famille et l’entourage reconnaissent au de cujus” (Ebi 2008:187). Also conf. Mbaku (2005:148). Matthews (2003:2) presents evidence that a similar situation was upheld in Mesopotamia because the one in charge had to represent the ‘household in court, and was responsible for maintaining its property within the community.’ Also, an Alalakh inscription of King Idrimi mentions that he carried out ancestral sacrifices and later handed them over to his son, which is an indication that the heir had to maintain the link between the ancestors and the living. The clauses read (COS 1.148):

I made my cities as they were previously with our fathers. (In accord with?) the signs that the gods of Alalakh established and the sacrifices of our father who repeatedly performed them, I repeatedly performed them. I performed them and entrusted them to my son Adad-nirari.

done strictly in accordance with the rules of native custom, and in most cases the choice goes to the senior surviving son of the deceased, when not proved to be a delinquent, i.e., a drunkard, spendthrift, litigious person or general waster. When the eldest son is disqualified for any reason from succeeding, the choice is given to one of his fit younger brothers.

Succession is bound to the growth of a family and the above quotations mean that the choice of a successor depends largely on the comportment of the individual vis-à-vis the family values. He must maintain the respect and dignity of the deceased and that of the family—as he commands the respect of all (the same respect that was given the deceased). He is also a liaison between the living and the dead, and thus maintains contacts with the ancestors. Even where an adopted son is made successor, the same procedures and values are taken into consideration.³⁶¹ The reasons to make a good choice for a successor are also bound to the roles the chosen one should play in the lives of family members. He is a father to every family member and at times should be consulted by everyone when important issues in their lives are concerned—good administrator³⁶² (Moodley 2012:20). His duties among others include: care and support for all, manage and pay family debts, provide marriage goods and garments for sons and daughters, maintain and cater for the needs of widows and minors, take responsibility to pay fines for crimes and offences committed by a family member, manage the property of the family and perform rituals on behalf of family members (Moodley 2012, Ebi 2008 and Omotola 2004–2005). The responsibilities are heavy and only one who can cope with these is often chosen. Another criterion is the physical, economic and providential abilities of the potential successor. In the primitive society where the males were expected to provide for the family through hunting, the ability of the potential successor to hunt and provide meat, other cooking ingredients or spices for the family was regarded indispensable (Mbaku 2005:160). This is because the ability to hunt was often equated to the ability to care for the family.

It is worth noting that although these qualities affect all potential successors, the line of succession differs depending on the type of marriage and that there are various types of successors to this effect. In monogamous marriages, the process is less complicated and the order of succession seems straight from one son to the other.³⁶³ In polygynous marriages, the order is more complicated and this has led to

³⁶¹ Some customs permit the family head to adopt a son as a successor when he has no sons. Although this goes with the approval of the family, it has been found that such adoptions occur mostly within the same lineage to maintain blood ties (Moodley 2012:40).

³⁶² Quoting Ngongang (1972:642), Ebi (2008:177) writes: “succession could be analysed in Cameroon as consisting of a transmission of the powers of administration of family property from father to sons.”

³⁶³ Moodley (2012:28) presents an order from a South African customary law as follows:

- The eldest son, or, if he is deceased, his eldest son.
- If the eldest son died without any male heirs, the second born son or his male heirs succeed, in order of their birth.
- If the deceased died without leaving behind any male heirs, or if he outlived all his male heirs, the deceased’s father is the successor.
- If the deceased outlived all his male heirs and his father, he is succeeded by his eldest brother.

simple or complex successions– the simple following almost the same steps as monogamous marriages while the complex assumes an enlarged method of succession (Moodley 2012:28–32). Moodley (2012) identifies some cultures that practice the complex form of succession. In this system, each household (mother and her children), is succeeded by the eldest son of the mother and the deceased is succeeded by the eldest son of the family (Moodley 2012:30–32). This multiple successorship is also attested in the *ngemba* tribes in Cameroon where two persons are often appointed either by the family head or the family. The first takes the role of the father while the second takes the administrative role and also plays the role of a counsellor to the first. The crucial nature of the counsellor means that the most senior often occupies it while the junior holds the title of the heir. Where large families are concerned, the same situation as that explained by Moodley (2012) holds, except that the heir is not the first son of the principal wife (as in the South African customs), but whoever meets the criteria for heir and elected by the family council– which can be made up of senior members of households, aunts, uncles and grandparents. Fig. 4.2 below can enlighten the understanding of multiple successors and the role of the family council. Let us consider (as shown in Fig. 4.2 below) that:

- A–is the family head (who is in a polygynous marriage of 5 wives).
- B–D–are the possible surviving siblings of A (males and female).
- E–J–are the most senior children of the 5 wives of A (note that J is a female and there is no son in the household).
- E–is the most senior son of A.
- G–is the designated heir of A by A’s choice and approved by the family council.

The diagram shows that A’s responsibilities are not limited to his children and wives but involves taking care of his surviving siblings. He represents the deceased father to his brothers and sister and should care for them as if their father was alive. This is because he represents the father in every capacity. He is also husband to five wives (plus his mother if she is still alive) and father to his own children. At A’s death (Fig. 4.2), the family council is made up of E to J plus B to D. The diagram shows that G is already confirmed as heir and together with E; they will pilot the affairs of the family. The most important issue here is that G and E have a tripartite role as follows:

- They are successor (G) and administrator/counsellor (E) of A’s inheritance and thus should continue to provide care to A’s surviving siblings as if A is still alive.

-
- If the deceased outlived all his male heirs and his father and his eldest brother, he is succeeded to by his eldest brother’s oldest son i.e. the deceased’s nephew.
 - If the deceased’s father or the deceased’s brothers have no male heirs to succeed him, the deceased is succeeded to by his grandfather or one of the grandfather’s male heirs according to their rank and status. This rule would also be applicable should the great-grandfather and his male heirs ever be considered for succession.
 - If the list of eligible heirs above is exhausted, meaning that there are no available male heirs to succeed the deceased, the deceased is succeeded to by the traditional ruler of his traditional authority.
 - If the deceased’s traditional authority does not have a traditional ruler, the President of the country succeeds the deceased.”

- They represent their father in the family council and should cater for the needs of their siblings.
- They also represent their households in the family council.

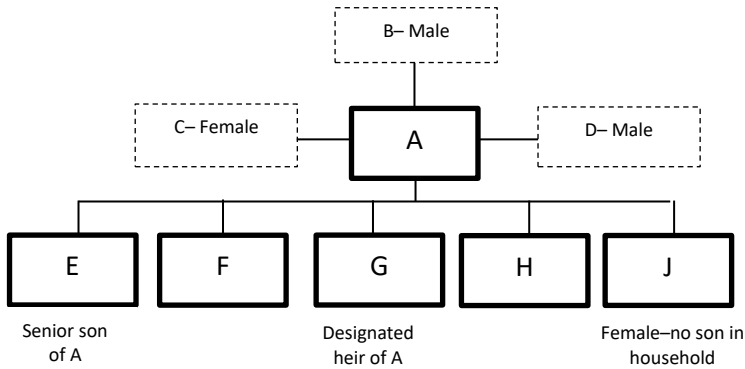


Fig 4.2 Multiple succession in the *ngemba* polygynous [adopted from Moodley's (2012) model]

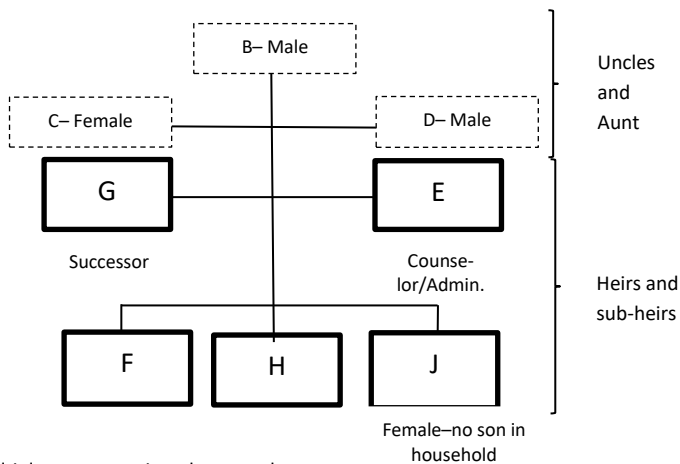


Fig 4.3. Multiple successors in polygynous homes.

Fig. 4.3 illustrates how the tripartite roles affect the structure of succession. It is important to note the following in the diagram:

- There are three important intersections which affect the administration of the family. The first indicates that A's surviving siblings can meet to make demands or evaluate the heirs and (sub)heirs. This can be done in the presence of G and E or with F, H and J. This does not constitute a family council until all members sit together.
- G and E can also confer with each other to evaluate F, H and J and the input of the uncles and aunt. This can be in the presence or absence of F, H and J.

- Also, F, H and J can meet to make demands or proposals, and evaluate the functions of G and E in their presence or absence. They can also take their proposals to the aunt and uncles before a family council meets.
- J is a female (sub)heir and such heirship is often temporal because it is transferred to the first son of J or the first son of J's siblings.

The nature of administration involved in succession and inheritance requires one who has a good comportment to meet such demanding tasks. Some African customs practice *sororate* marriages where a wife is taken as a “seed-raiser” to the wife who is unable to bear children to her husband (Moodley 2012:35). Where this is practiced (as in Swaziland) the “seed-raiser” is regarded as “an auxiliary wife of the house into which she has been placed, and all her children belong to that house as if they were the children of the main wife” (Ibid.).

1. Summary on Succession and Inheritance in Some African Customs

In the study of succession and inheritance from some non-western (African) cultures, I have considered examples from South Africa, Ghana, Swaziland, Cameroon, Kenya and Nigeria. These are representative customs and there are other forms of succession and inheritance that are not relevant for this study. One common feature is that male primogeniture is accepted, although its application can vary from one custom to another. Also, the father (family head—in some customs) has the right to appoint a successor, yet this right can be overruled especially in situations where the choice is not appropriate. The input of the family³⁶⁴ to the choice of a successor indicates that women too can be considered successors where no males are regarded fit or where the males are minors. These exceptional situations are attested by the *Bamileke* and *Ngemba* customs of Cameroon (Ebi 2008:183, 188 and 190). However, this decision is temporary because the female is expected to hand over the heirship to the minor (if that applies) or to her first male child when they come of age.

Another important issue to consider is that the power to elect also means that there is power to demote (Moodley 2012:42–44 for South Africa; 159 for Ghana and 233 for Swaziland), and this applies where the successor goes contrary to the customs. The adoption of a son as a successor and appointment of multiple successors has also been attested and used as a means to safeguard the family's interest as well as that of the family members. Where sororate marriages are concerned (as in Swaziland), the sororate wife is an auxiliary to the main wife and her children have the rights to inheritance.

4.5.4. Summary on Firstborn, Firstborn Rights, Succession and Inheritance

I have studied the rights of inheritance and the method of designating an heir from the ANE cultures, the Bible and some African cultural practices. As a result, one is enriched with a wide variety of practices with similarities and differences in approaches. The similarities and differences also play a great role in the understanding of the uniqueness of the customs and also their interconnectedness. From the ANE and Africa, there is a general agreement that the heir should, besides being the firstborn, possess such qualities that are required of one who wants to be in a leadership position. I have argued that this is echoed in Jacob's choice of Joseph—a biblical perspective. They also agree on the father's influence on the choice of heir. Thus, the

³⁶⁴ Actually, the family here is a council of senior members who sit together to deliberate and elect a successor based on the principles, values and customs of the lineage. A better rendering therefore will be family-heads since as heads they come together to deliberate on family issues.

meaning of firstborn ceases from being chronological to whoever finds favour in the father's eyes. However, both indicate a possibility of the father to alter his choice. This too applies to Joseph's situation. Another point of agreement is that the family can overrule the father's choice if it is inappropriate. The case of Rebekah could be biblical evidence. Again, all agree on the importance of the comportment of the individual (respect, love, leadership, moral integrity). Joseph represents a biblical example in this case. Also, the African perspective can enlighten our understanding as to why Jacob shared his inheritance among all his children. I earlier argued with respect to this that he adopted Manasseh and Ephraim; and that he was already becoming a great people and as a result he empowers two (Joseph and Judah) to pilot the affairs of the family as heirs among equals. The only exception is Joseph's extra portion which singles him out as the one who earned the firstborn right and Judah who is blessed to be the uniting power of the family. Such practice is also attested in some African customs. If one considers that Judah is made firstborn after Reuben, Simeon and Levi become ineligible, then the partnership that Jacob accords Joseph and Judah can be understood from the *Junior-heir* and a *senior-counsellor* in polygynous African family systems. Although different, the African perspective can give one an insight to understand Jacob's motive. In addition, each of Jacob's sons is designated a (sub)heir to a tribe with Joseph/Judah as leaders—a replica of multiple successors in African polygynous systems. The patriarchal customs have been attested in ANE archaeological data as well as some non-western African customs. As far as choosing an heir is concerned, the criteria can be as follows: correct mother, correct wife, being firstborn, possessing leadership qualities, showing love for family, ability to assume father's role, possessing father's blessing and the ability to fulfil all requirements even if you are not firstborn.

In the next section, I will apply these criteria to Genesis 27–28. My aim is to understand how the roles of family members are developed to this effect and how Jacob develops his heirship potentials within the narrative. I will also use cross-cultural data for comparative analysis.

4.6. ROLES IN GENESIS 27–28

When people find themselves in any social setting, they construct a new world following their interactions with members of the social group. This construction determines behaviour which is governed by the status that the social group assigns to individuals. The behaviour defines what is known as a role—“a set of behaviors that are expected of someone who holds a particular status.”³⁶⁵ In the western concept, for example, a female becomes a mother when she has given birth to a baby. This is because she is bound to learn and develop motherhood qualities that will enable her to care for her baby in a manner acceptable by society. The same goes for a male who has a child. Also, children have expectations from society. Therefore, one becomes a social being by constructing a new world in accordance with acceptable societal norms.

In the ANE and non-western societies, the development of roles (like mother, father, son, brother or sister) are not necessarily tied to a status or an outcome. A female, for example, does not necessarily become a mother because she has a child, but because she is a female of a child bearing age. Accordingly, Odoyuye (2002) argues that women in Africa have motherhood responsibilities, regardless of whether they have offspring or not. This means that all women are mothers as all men are fathers. In this situation, roles are attached to gender and age but not status. Mbaku

³⁶⁵ <http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/social-roles-definition-and-types-of-social-roles.html>. Accessed on Mar 17 2015.

(2005:160–166) has also argued that there is strict division of labour in families which help to define each member's role.³⁶⁶ The patriarchs of Genesis had a social system with a set of customs that defined the roles of every member of the family. Fathers were expected to meet up with certain demands as well as mothers and the children. When it came to the children, boys had different demands from girls. Nevertheless, each member had to behave in a way that met the family's aspiration as well as that of the society (customs). Thus, what was important was not what an individual achieved but what the family achieved through an individual. A good comportment would enhance the status of a family while a bad behaviour would affect the family negatively. Thus, an individual's success was measured in terms of its effect on the family regardless of its outcome (conf. Mbaku 2005:143 and 165).

In this section, I intend to study the roles of the members of Isaac's family. As mentioned earlier, three roles occur in Genesis 27–28 viz: Isaac as father, Rebekah as mother and Jacob/Esau as son. The importance of the roles will be to determine how they affect the choice of heir. Although sons qualified to be heir, they were also expected to assume acceptable behaviour that would enhance their eligibility. Basically, one had to be firstborn, possess the father's blessing, marry within the lineage, possess leadership qualities, love the family and obey parents to qualify. In the ensuing discussion, I will investigate how Jacob and Esau fit within these and how Isaac and Rebekah influence the choice of Jacob and/or Esau as heir through the development of their roles. I will divide this section into two parts. First, I will trace the roles of each member of the family and investigate how each member meets up with the expectation. Secondly, I will investigate how these roles develop within the narrative and how each member constructs and applies them. The outcome will be used to find out how Esau/Jacob qualified as Isaac's heir.

4.6.1. *Isaac's Role as Father (Genesis 27–28)*

In Genesis 27–28, Isaac is the patriarch, father and head of the family. As father, it is his duty to provide the needs of the family, exercise authority, protect wife and children, pray for the family (King and Stager 2001:38), educate the sons and train them in the way of YHWH (Ibid. 46). As patriarch and head of the family, Isaac is the liaison between the living and his ancestors and should maintain these links and ensure continuity. As patriarch and family head, he is heir to the patriarchal lineage and promise. It is his duty to ensure continuity through the bearing of sons, sacrifices, administration of family property/inheritance and the designation of an appropriate heir.

³⁶⁶ He writes: "Within the family, there is strict division of labor, with each person given well-defined tasks to perform. For example, the mother works in the fields producing food for the family; the elder children may help her in the fields or baby-sit younger ones and fetch firewood and water for cooking, bathing, and washing clothes; and the father is expected to provide important cooking ingredients such as palm oil, meat, and salt, as well as buy clothes and other important household items" (Mbaku 2005:160). "Boys spend more time with their fathers, and girls spend more time with their mothers and learn to cook and help in the house (regardless of whether they go to school or not). ... (In the modern times), women are primary farmers of foodstuffs, while men cultivate cash crops. Among the nomadic groups, the men keep livestock, and the women maintain the animal shed and sell dairy products.... The girls milk cows, churn butter, prepare cheese, and sell ... The boys perform security duties, watching over the cattle and the clan, (Ibid.161–162) ... the elders and the age ... also assist in taking care of children, ... resolve family conflicts, discipline children, tell stories that help children learn the culture and custom of the group,' (Ibid. 165).

1. *The Development of Isaac's Fatherhood*

Isaac comes into the patriarchal narratives as a response to God's promise through the prayers of Abraham. He is then handed the patriarchal heirship alongside inheritance. At the beginning of Isaac's *Toledoth*, Isaac is interceding for his wife and pleading with God to provide them with an heir. As a result, God blesses Isaac with twins. Isaac later constructs an altar and worships God. There is neither mention of sacrifices to the ancestors nor mention that his sons took part in the worship. However, if Isaac had to sacrifice and link his family with his ancestors, it can be assumed that he carried out all the patriarchal rituals and that his sons learnt from him. Isaac obeys the God of his ancestors and remains in Gerar (Gen 26:2). Isaac protects his family, farms crops and harvests, opens wells, and settles disputes between his family and others. Confirmation that Isaac fulfils his role of protection is not clear. However, in Genesis 26, we find Isaac protecting his wife for fear that she would be taken away, thus he tells Abimelech that Rebekah is his sister (Gen 26:7–11). This protection is family centered. In this sense, Isaac is also protecting his children from fear that they will be motherless or that they could be killed together with him. In another instance, Isaac protects his servants by asking them to relinquish all wells which are disputed (Gen 26:19–22). This is also where he shows his leadership and authority as head of the family. Before this he maintains the patriarchal tradition of listening and obeying God's command.

In Gen 26:12–15 and 19–22, Isaac's farm produce is blessed and he has a large harvest. He becomes rich and acquires cattle and sheep as well as servants. Here he is portrayed as one who is able to provide for the daily needs of his wife and children. Although it is not said that he went into the field, it is probable that he also trained his sons in farming and cattle rearing. Generally, in Genesis 26, Isaac is portrayed as a responsible father who does everything to keep his family alive and provide food and other needs. He shows authority over his family and servants and stands up to Abimelech and his people as a means to give a long-term protection to his descendants. What Isaac does is not only for his personal gains but for his present and future family. At the beginning of Genesis 27, Isaac indicates his choice of heir. Within this narrative we find him interacting with all sons and wife in a bid to hand over the patriarchal mantle to his heir. Although his choice shifts, there is evidence that he designates an heir whom he considers will follow the norms of the patriarchal lineage (conf. Boase 2001:333).

2. *Remarks on Isaac's Role and Fatherhood*

Isaac's fatherhood is seen in his potential to lead his family, provide for them, protect them, ensure continuity of the lineage, train his children, and designate an heir. He shows diplomacy in some instances, and weaknesses in others. When he tells Abimelech that his wife is his sister it could be that (a) he is speaking the truth because he is from the same lineage with Rebekah (Genesis 24) or (b) he is being diplomatic to protect himself and his family. Both ways play to his advantage and he secures safety for his family. When Isaac asks his servants to relinquish the wells that are under dispute, he is still using diplomacy to protect his family from any attack. When Isaac designates his heir, he is being led either by the heir's ability to perform in the field and provide for the family (conf. Mbaku 2005:160) or by his ego and appetite for his son's game. The narrative does not tell us how he interacted with his sons prior to Genesis 27, except that Esau and his wives were a nuisance to both Isaac and Rebekah. This may, in other words, be a summary of the life of Esau. But he has the skill to hunt and provide meat to his father and his family. So, Isaac sees Esau as a potential heir regardless of his attitude towards him and his wife. At his age and with his

failing health, Isaac needs attention and Esau probably provides exactly what makes him feel happy and satisfied even if it is temporary. Nevertheless, Isaac has a wife as part of his family who works out issues in a different way. If he was unsatisfied with his wife's intervention, surely the narrator would mention it. Here it is understood that he accepts his wife's input wholly and ratifies it by issuing a second blessing. To elaborate on this last point, I will compare Isaac's blessings of Jacob to the Abrahamic blessing to determine whether Jacob actually receives the patriarchal blessing because Isaac's blessing is a transfer of the Abrahamic covenant. Also, YHWH's blessing to Jacob will be used as an elaboration of what Isaac does in summary form in Gen 28:1–4.

Verse Gen	Abraham's blessing	Parallel clauses	Verse Gen	Jacob's blessing
12:3a	ואברכה מברכיך		27:29g	ארייך ארור
12:3b	ומקללך אאר		27:29h	ומברכיך ברוך
12:3c	ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה		28:13e	הארץ
13:14b	שא נא עינייך וראה מן־המקום אשר־אתה שם צפנה ונגבה וקרמה וימה		28:13f	אשר אתה שכב עליה לך
13:15a	כי את־כל־הארץ		28:13g	אתננה
13:15b	אשר־אתה ראה לך		28:13h	ולזרעך
13:15c	אתננה		28:14a	והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ
13:15d	ולזרעך עד־עולם		28:14b	ופרצת ימה וקרמה וצפנה ונגבה
13:16a	ושמתי את־זרעך כעפר הארץ		28:14c	ונברכו בך כל־משפחת האדמה
13:16b	אשר אס־יוכל איש למנות את־עפר הארץ			
13:16c	את־עפר הארץ גם־זרעך ימנה			

Table 4.1 Parallels between the blessings

Verse Gen	Abraham's blessing	Common words	Verse Gen	Jacob's blessing
12:3a	ואברכה מברכיך	ארץ כל־משפחת אדמה אשר אתה הארץ לך זרעך ונברכו בך את־עפר כעפר מברכיך ולזרעך אתננה ימה וקרמה וצפנה ונגבה	27:29g	ארייך ארור
12:3b	ומקללך אאר		27:29h	ומברכיך ברוך
12:3c	ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה		28:13e	הארץ
13:14b	שא נא עינייך וראה מן־המקום אשר־אתה שם צפנה ונגבה וקרמה וימה		28:13f	אשר אתה שכב עליה לך
13:15a	כי את־כל־הארץ		28:13g	אתננה
13:15b	אשר־אתה ראה לך		28:13h	ולזרעך
13:15c	אתננה		28:14a	והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ
13:15d	ולזרעך עד־עולם		28:14b	ומה וקרמה וצפנה ונגבה ופרצת
13:16a	ושמתי את־זרעך כעפר הארץ		28:14c	ונברכו בך כל־משפחת האדמה
13:16b	אשר אס־יוכל איש למנות את־עפר הארץ			
13:16c	את־עפר הארץ גם־זרעך ימנה			

Table 4.2 Common word and/or clauses that occur in both blessings

Tables 4.1 and 4.2, and Fig. 4.4 are parallels which illustrate how Isaac's blessing of Jacob corresponds to the Abrahamic promise and covenant. It is important to mention

that the blessing is scattered in various parts of Abraham's and Isaac's narratives. In this comparison I have considered all the elements of the blessing. Table 4.1 presents the parallel clauses with respect to the semantics and syntax. The second (Table 4.2) presents the various parallels (words or clauses); and the Venn diagram (Fig. 4) presents the common words and the roots of the verbs that occur in both blessings. When Isaac blesses Jacob in Gen 27:28–29, he mentions elements of YHWH's promise to Abram (Gen 12:3). This blessing concentrates on Jacob's security. Thus, those who bless him will be blessed (12:3a // 27:29h) and vice versa for those who curse him (12:3b // 27:29g).



Fig 4.4 Venn diagram indication relationship between Abraham's and Jacob's blessing

Before Jacob's departure to Paddan Aram, Jacob is blessed the second time by Isaac. Here Isaac gives the blessing in a summary form and YHWH seems to elaborate on it in the vision of Beth'el (Gen 28:4a–d).

- 4a ויתן לך את־ברכת אברהם לך
 "And may he give to you the blessing of Abraham to you"
- 4b ולירעך אתך
 "And to your offspring with you"
- 4c לרשתך את־ארץ מגריך
 "That you may possess the land of your sojournings"
- 4d אשר־נתן אלהים לאברהם
 "Which God gave to Abraham"

Jacob's third blessing comes during his encounter with YHWH at Beth'el. In Jacob's vision, he receives YHWH's promise which to a greater extent represents the Abrahamic promise. The parallels between the Abrahamic promise in Gen 13:14–16 and YHWH's promise to Jacob at Beth'el is amazing. The parallels either contain the same message with synonymous vocabulary or use the same verbs and/or even tenses.

- 12:3c // 28:14c—the same vocabulary and word order:

ונברכו בך כל־משפחת האדמה

“And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed”

- 13:14b // 28:14b—some common vocabulary which is used to define the area of land that Abraham and his descendants will inherit.

13:14b וראה מן־המקום אשר־אתה שם צפנה ונגבה וקדמה וימה

“And look...northward and southward and eastward and westward...”

28:14b ופרצת ימה וקדמה וצפנה ונגבה

“And spread westward and eastward and northward and southward...”

- 13:16a, b, c // 28:14a—some common vocabulary appears in this parallel as 28:14a presents a summary of an elaborated promise that YHWH made to Abraham.

13:16a ושמתי את־זרעך כעפר הארץ

“I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth”

16b אשר אם־יוכל איש למות את־עפר הארץ

“Which if a man is able to count the dust of the earth”

16c גם־זרעך ימנה

“He will also count your offspring”

28:14a והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ

“And I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth”

- 13:15a, b, c, d // 28:13e,f,g,h— common vocabulary to a greater extend and the same information about the future of Abraham’s offspring.

13: 15a כי את־כל־הארץ

“For the whole land”

15b אשר־אתה ראה

“Which you are seeing”

15c לך אתננה

“To you I will give it”

15d ולזרעך עד־עולם

“And to your offspring forever”

28: 13e הארץ

“The land”

13f אשר אתה שכב עליה

“Which your are sleeping upon”

13g לך אתננה

“To you I will give it”

13h ולזרעך

“And to your offspring”

Although there are differences in words, 13:15c // 28:13g; and 13:15d // 28:13h provide the same information about the land to be inhabited at a later date. Also 13:15a // 28:13e with the implication that 'the land' can also be used to represent 'the whole land.' The above comparison of the vocabulary of the blessings indicates that 80 per cent of the words are common to both blessings. Only 18 per cent of words from Jacob's blessings are absent in the Abrahamic promise. Some words occur in the same roots and some are synonyms—e.g. ארר // קלל (Gen 12:3b and 27:29g). Thus, it is possible to conclude that Isaac fulfils his role as father, family head and custodian of the patriarchal lineage/blessing and that Isaac successfully transfers the Abrahamic promise to Jacob.

4.6.2. *Rebekah's Role as Mother (Genesis 27–28)*

The general assumption that women were their husband's property has been challenged by many scholars³⁶⁷ who see women's activities within the household as an exercise of their authority (conf. King and Stager 2001:49). Rebekah is one of such women who had roles to play within her family to ensure its growth and sustainability. She bore twins for her husband which is one of the primary means for continuity of her lineage. As a mother within the patriarchal age she had the duty to care for her family, instil discipline, train her children to grow up within the norms of her society (conf. Meyers 1988:149–154), exercise authority over her household (husband inclusive), provide food and clothing, draw water, intercede for her family and ensure the purity of the lineage.

1. *The Development of Rebekah's Motherhood*

Rebekah comes into the Genesis narrative as an active lady ready for marriage (Gen 24). She participates in her marriage decisions showing hospitality to Abraham's servant (Gen 24:45–48 and 58. Also conf. Schectman 2009:85) and when she is blessed by pregnancy, she intercedes for the children because of their struggle in her womb (Gen 25:21–23). In Genesis 26, Rebekah puts her life on the line and accepts her husband's sister status to safeguard her family. She cares for her family, cooking and nourishing them with what they like most (Gen 27:9 and 14). She is concerned with each family member's activities and monitors each member to ensure that the lineage is preserved (Genesis 27). Rebekah develops her motherhood by satisfying all her requirements as a mother would do for her family. That she has authority over her family is seen in the way she understands every member's activities (Genesis 27). Her care to her family takes many facets:

- Putting her life on the line to safeguard her husband and family from Abimelech.
- Putting her life in danger to safeguard proper transfer of lineage blessing and inheritance (Gen 27:6–17).
- Cooking for her family in a way that satisfy their needs (Gen 27:9 and 14).
- She probably weaved clothes for them and did laundry and this may explain why she had Esau's garment in her keeping (Gen 27:15).
- If she drew water when she was a maiden, she probably continued to do same.

³⁶⁷ Some include: Tribble (1984) and Meyers (1988). Ljung (1989:22–33) argues that ancient Israelite women were seen from the perspective of males and that the women of the patriarchs represent a tradition prior to that of Ancient Israel where women had more equal contributions.

Rebekah is also involved in the training and discipline of her children. Her complaint against Esau and his wives probably indicates that they never listened to her as Jacob did (Gen 27:6–17 and 28:7). Her active involvement in her marriage is also an indication that she is involved in running her home. She consults her husband (Gen 27:46) and son (Jacob–Gen 27:6–17 and 42–45), and influences them to make decisions. Gen 27:46 also indicates that Rebekah is concerned about the future and purity of the lineage. She probably reflects on the kinship values of endogamy and wishes to maintain its purity. When it comes to the choice of an heir, Rebekah's actions are an indication that she has a role to play in the choice of who should be the heir. As a mother, Rebekah has shown that she understands her family and what everyone can do. If the heir is irresponsible, family inheritance will be lost and the lineage will be profaned. Also, she would be a suffering widow if the heir is irresponsible. Based on this Rebekah steps in to rescue her family's future and prepares a choice of heir which her husband approves without difficulty. To achieve this, Rebekah interacts with all family members. She is the only one in the family who gets to interact with all members. She exercises diplomacy at every level to ensure unity of purpose and peace.

2. *Remarks on Rebekah's Role and Motherhood*

According to the narrative of Genesis 24, Rebekah fits as a model wife for Abraham's son. She takes care of her husband–Isaac and family and meets up with all demands required of a wife. While all her actions are important, it will be necessary to investigate how she exercises her influence over her son and husband to determine the future of her family. Rebekah listens to her husband's conversation with one of her sons and exerts her influence on the other to meet up with the demands. Many who evaluate Rebekah posit that she tricked her son and husband. What is important here is to investigate her report to Jacob. Did she report what she heard or something different? Where did she bring in the twist? I will compare Isaac's instructions to Esau and Rebekah's reported speech on what she heard from Isaac's and Esau's conversation.

The diagrams below present in tabular and graphical forms a comparison between Isaac's instructions to Esau and Rebekah's instructions to Jacob. Table 4.3 indicates the parallel clauses that occur in both instructions, Table 4.4 indicates the occurrences of words with same root or synonyms with the same meaning and the Venn diagram (Fig. 4.5) presents an intersection (common words and vocabulary) between Rebekah's instructions to Jacob and Isaac's instructions to Esau. It is important to note that Rebekah first presents a reported speech of what Isaac says to Esau and then moves on to present a counter command in almost the same manner as Isaac's instructions to Esau. This probably means that Rebekah must use many more words to bring Jacob to understand what her instructions entail. Nonetheless, there is evidence from the comparison that Rebekah reports what she hears. Her instructions to Jacob include 62 percent of the vocabulary from Isaac's direct speech to Esau. The remaining 38 percent of Isaac's instruction are centred on Esau's going to the field to hunt game which have a counterpart in Rebekah's instructions to Jacob to go to the flock and bring two lambs. The difference in the vocabulary is created by Rebekah's commands to Jacob. While she uses the most important of Isaac's vocabulary, she adds: "in the presence of the Lord." Otherwise, Rebekah presents all of Isaac's

Gen 27		Parallels	Gen 27	
6c	הנה		2b	הנה־נא
6d	שמעתי את־אביך		2c	זקנתי
6e	מדבר אל־עשׂו אחיך		2d	לא ידעתי יום מותי
6f	לאמר		3a	ועתה
7a	הביאה לי ציד		3b	שא־נא כליך תליך וקשתך
7b	ועשה־לי מטעמים		3c	וצא השדה
7c	ואכלה		3d	וצורה לי צידה [ציד]
7d	ואברככה		4a	ועשה־לי מטעמים
7e	לפני יהוה		4b	כאשר אהבתי
7f	לפני מותי		4c	והביאה לי
8a	ועתה בני		4d	ואכלה
8b	שמע בקלי		4e	בעבור חברכך נפשי
8c	לאשר אני מצוה אתך		4f	בשרם אמות
9a	לך־נא אל־הצאן			
9b	וקח־לי			
9c	מושם שני נדיי עזים טבים			
9d	ואעשה אתם מטעמים לאביך			
9e	כאשר אהב			
10a	והבאת לאביך			
10b	ואכל			
10c	בעבר אשר יברכך			
10d	לפני מותי			

Table 4.3 Table Parallels in both speeches

instructions. Both speeches have a common structure. They introduce the subject matter under discussion with the particle הנה (2b//6c), and present the instructions with the particle ועתה (3a//8a).

In Isaac's speech, the emphasis seems to lie on his age and proximity to his death, which he considers as tangible reasons to persuade Esau to follow the instructions he gives in vv3–4:

הנה־נא

"Behold please"

זקנתי לא ידעתי יום מותי

"I am old and I do not know the day of my death"

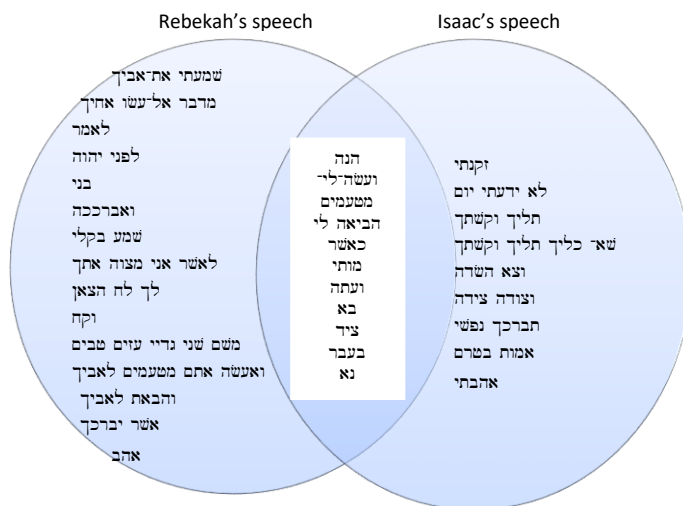


Fig 4.5 Venn diagram indication relationship between Isaac's and Rebekah's reported speech

Gen 27		Common words	Gen 27
6c	הנה	הנה	2b נא
6d	שמעתי את-אביך	מטעמים ועשה-לי-	2c זקנתי
6e	מדבר אל-עשו אחיך	הביאה לי	2d לא ידעתי יום מותי
6f	לאמר	כאשר	3a ועתה
7a	הביאה לי ציד	מותי	3b שא-נא כליך תליך וקשתך
7b	ועשה-לי מטעמים	ועתה	3c וצא השדה
7c	ואכלה	נא	3d וצודה לי צידה [ציד]
7d	ואברככה	ציד	4a ועשה-לי מטעמים
7e	לפני יהוה	בעבר	4b כאשר אהבתי
7f	לפני מותי	ואכלה	4c והביאה לי
8a	יעתה בני		4d ואכלה
8b	שמע בקלי		4e בעבור תברכך נפשי
8c	לאשר אני מצוה אתך		4f בטרם אמות
9a	לך-נא אל-הצאן		
9b	וקח-לי		
9c	משם שני גדיי עזים טבים		
9d	ואעשה אתם מטעמים לאביך		
9e	כאשר אהב		
10a	והבאת לאביך		
10b	ואכל		
10c	בעבור אשר יברכך		
10d	לפני מותי		

Table 4.4 Common words, synonyms and/or clauses

Contrary to Isaac, Rebekah's emphasis shifts to the instructions she gives to Jacob as a method to persuade him to follow them as required (vv9–10):

לך-נא אל-הצאן

"Go to the flock"

וקח-לי משם שני גדיי עזים טבים

"And bring to me from there two good lambs"

ואעשה אתם מטעמים לאבך

"And I will prepare savoury food to your father"

כאשר אהב

"Just as he loves"

To underscore the importance of their instructions, both Isaac and Rebekah resort to the use of *והביאה לי*—"And bring to me" (4c/7a, 9b). This common vocabulary might indicate that Rebekah wants to ensure that Jacob follows Isaac's instructions to Esau. Rebekah's constant repetition of *מטעמים* together with *עשה* underscores the importance of the savoury food (4a/7b,9d).

Most of parallels in both speeches present variations. While some of these variations present synonymous vocabulary, other variations present different sentences but whose responses can portray parallel actions in the speeches.

- Twice, Rebekah uses *לפני מותי* (7f, 10d—"before I die") to talk about Isaac's death, while Isaac uses *בטרם אמות* (4f—"before I die"). Also, *כאשר אהבתי* (4b—"such as I love") // *כאשר אהב* (9e—"such as he loves") indicates Isaac's love for his special meal. Another parallel with variation is *נפשי בעבור תברכך* (4e—"in order that my soul may bless you"), *בעבר אשר יברכך* (10c—"in order which he may bless you") and *ואברככה* (7d—"and I may bless you").
- 3c and d can be seen as presenting a parallel action or situation to 9a and b. Isaac asks Esau to *go forth* to the *field* (3c), and *hunt game* for him (3b); while Rebekah asks Jacob to *go* to the *flock* and *bring* to her *two good kids*.

לך-נא אל-הצאן // 9a וצא השדה 3c

"And go forth to the field" "And go, please to the flock"

וקח-לי משם שני גדיי עזים טבים // 9b, c 3d וצידה לי (צידה) [ציד]

"And hunt for me a

hunting (game)"

And bring to me from there two fine

lambs"

Although there are parallels between what Isaac tells Esau and what Rebekah reports to Jacob, there are some omissions and additions. Rebekah does not say anything about Isaac's age to Jacob (2c). Also, 3b-d is not accounted for by Rebekah and although there are parallels in Rebekah's command, nothing is mentioned about *going to the field and hunting game* when she reports what she heard. However, one can argue that this part of Isaac's instructions is incorporated in *והביאה לי ציד*—"and bring to me game". 6b is an addition which introduces Rebekah's speech to Jacob, and 8b and 8c make Rebekah's appeal to Jacob appear in the nature of a command which requires no objection. In 7e, Rebekah adds *יהיה לפני יהוה* ("before YHWH") to Isaac's words. Isaac does not mention that he wants to bless Esau in the presence of YHWH. There are differences between Isaac's instructions to Esau and Rebekah's report/instructions to Jacob, but the similarities are overwhelmingly far greater than the differences. Generally, Rebekah follows Isaac's speech by either repeating his words or by paraphrasing them. She also modifies the vocabulary in a way that meets

her desire to persuade Jacob to carry out her instructions. An important addition by Rebekah is that Isaac's blessing is done in the presence of YHWH. As a family whose life is shaped by YHWH's promise to their ancestors, it is possible to argue that all members understood the importance of YHWH's involvement to their continuity and sustenance. Therefore, Rebekah could hardly fathom any blessing as mere or ordinary without YHWH's approval. She probably knew that YHWH often spoke to the patriarchs and had also experienced it (Gen 25:22–23). Rebekah's addition "in the presence of YHWH," defines the family's religious centred life and the importance of the patriarchal blessing.³⁶⁸ She uses this addition to shape and increase Jacob's interest and involvement. Also, Isaac seems to appeal to Esau while Rebekah commands Jacob and leaves no opportunity for refusal or objection to her plans.

If one should evaluate Rebekah in her role as a mother, there is evidence that she represents her role well. She is often there when needed and acts proactively to make things work well for her family (Schectman 2009:85). Cross-cultural data mentions that motherhood is divine (Odooye 2002:57) and is often associated with meticulous care, nourishment, protection and shelter, help, patience and effectiveness; receptivity, warmth, tenderness, refuge, ever presence, welcoming and ability to figure out delicate situations (Nyamiti 1981:270). Odooye (1995:59) adds "training and discipline, but never destroying," because a mother's affection moderates discipline to ensure survival of the young (Also conf. Meyer 1999:38). In this way, motherhood involves multitasking where hardship, happiness, threats and promises can occur (Nyamiti 1981:270)—a rhythm and symbol of life (Odooye 2002:57). All these qualities can be seen in Rebekah's approach to her family. This quality of motherhood was probably indispensable for a household like Rebekah's. She used her authority at the right places and at the right time. One thing we should note in Rebekah's situation is the failing health of her husband. Although an argument can be that Rebekah dies before Isaac, her actions follow the failing health of her husband and his pronouncements and she thus acts wisely with the interest of the family as her main focus.

4.6.3. *Esau's/Jacob's Roles as Sons (Genesis 27–28)*

In the social custom of the patriarchs, children also played a great role. Although most of the roles followed the gender of the children, there is evidence that females performed some roles that one would think were exclusively for males. Daughters were required to carry out indoor chores with their mothers and sons were expected to be outdoor with their fathers either hunting or tending cattle. Children of both sexes were expected to give unflinching obedience to their parents during their lives, old age and even after their death. In the patriarchal system, sons were often valued because they were an indication of the continuity of the lineage. Thus, one of the roles of a son was to be able to get married and carry on the lineage and keep the family's name (King and Stage 2001:42). Just like daughters, a son had to help his parents in the farm/field and house chores, go with their fathers to hunt, and to the sanctuaries or temple for religious rights. As far as the patriarchal narratives of Genesis are concerned, the requirements of a son include obedience to the parents, marrying and carrying on with the lineage, inherit the father's patriarchal blessing, support their parents at old age and lay them to rest or bury them where they wish. Esau and Jacob were both sons of Isaac and Rebekah and different roles were often assigned to sons and daughters in the patriarchal age. Does this mean that a mother who hadn't a daughter, as in this case, had to do all the house chores by herself? Certainly not!

³⁶⁸ Jacob's fear of a possible curse goes in this same direction. He understood that his father's curse was equal to a curse from YHWH.

The narrative says nothing about this but it would be proper to assume that in such a case, the sons will help both parents and meet up with their required roles. Esau and Jacob come into the narrative in Gen 25:22 and when they are born (Gen 25:25–26), their childhood lives are given in a summary in Gen 25:27.

1. *Esau as Son*

Esau is assumed to be firstborn (firstborn not by age but following a birth process) and named after his appearance (Gen 25:25). He grows to be a *skilful hunter* and his father falls in love with him because of this skill and because of the game he brings from his hunting (Gen 25:27–28). The narrator mentions that Esau *despises his birthright by selling it for a bowl of pottage* to his brother Jacob (Gen 25:29–34). Esau is then mentioned again in Gen 26:34 where the narrator indicates that he is *married out of the lineage* and that his wives do not meet up with their roles of care and obedience to Esau's parents. At the beginning of Genesis 27, Isaac invites Esau and nominates him as heir with instructions to follow to assume the heirship (Gen 27:1–5). Overhearing this, Rebekah (who probably still *grudges Esau and his wives for negligence*) overturns the blessings in favour of Jacob (27:6–29). Esau bears a grudge and plans to *kill* his brother when his father is dead (a *means to restore his place*) but it does not take place because Jacob is sent to Paddan Aram to go and get a wife from the lineage. While he *tries to amend his marriage (by marrying Ishma'el's daughter)*, it is certain that his actions are too late and Jacob has been made heir.

1.1. *The Development of Esau's Sonship*

Esau grows as a model child until he neglects his birthright. Although it is uncertain that the parents know about this, the narrator indicates by this that Esau is negligent. If he can sell his birthright for a bowl of pottage, it is possible to sell the inheritance of the family for any amount if he needs it. Also, the narrator indicates by this that what is important for Esau is what satisfies him momentarily and the future has no place in his plans.³⁶⁹ Being a hunter does not mean that Esau does not help in other activities in the house. It will be worthwhile to assume that he takes part in the growth of his family in Gerar and what he gets from his hunt helps the whole family. Gen 26:34–35 presents a very important attitude of Esau. He is married, which is an indication that he is ready to continue the lineage, but his wives “brought bitterness of spirit” to both parents. This “bitterness of spirit” can be seen in two ways:

- *Esau got married without parental consent:* The patriarchal custom has been one in which the wife to the heir is being sought from the family lineage. The father either sends his servant (as with Abraham), or “the heir to be” to one of the relatives (member of the lineage) to get married to one of the daughters. Although the sender is often the father, it is probable that the consent of the mother too is important. In the later tradition where the lineage of the wife is not crucial, none is said to be a “bitterness of spirit” to the heir's parents (Judah and Tamar—Gen 38:13–30 and Joseph and Asenath—Gen 41:45).

³⁶⁹ Probably this is a reflection of Esau's description in Gen 25:27 as “אִישׁ יָדַע—a man of knowledge or a cunning man.” From the African perspective, knowledge is used at times as a synonym to *pride* which carries the notion of *disobedience* or *arrogance*. This is captured by a Cameroonian pidgin proverb “*Overdone na mbout*”—literally, ‘he who claims knowledge is a fool’ (Lapirro de Mbanga 2010). It is often used to describe people who try so hard to be smart and knowledgeable and at the same time do not take other opinions as valid or ignore everyone around them, just to end up as losers or looking stupid.

The narrator does not tell us that Isaac and/or Rebekah are involved in Esau's marriage and the bitterness may also mean here that they are not in favour of Esau's choice.

- *Esau's wives were recalcitrant or rebellious*: The meaning of bringing "bitterness of spirit" has a wide range which includes: disobedience, causing anger, bringing dispute or contention, stubbornness, defiance, transgresses machination or obstinacy.³⁷⁰ The rebellious nature of Esau's wives indicates that they do not respect or obey Isaac and Rebekah and by implication cause Esau to behave the same.

If these two points can reflect Esau's life with his family and his parents, then Esau does not obey his parents and does not care that his wives cause misery to his parents (a probable reflection of Gen 25:29–34). In addition to his rebellious wives and his care free attitude, Esau indicates by his character that he does not have the best interest of the family in the forefront, but instead is more concerned with his own personal satisfaction. The narrative in Gen 27:41 presents *Esau's plans to murder his brother* (the only instance where he uses the word "brother" with respect to Jacob). If his interest is the welfare of the family, murder will not be an option. His plans are out to satisfy his ego momentarily. This may also explain why he decides to marry another wife (Gen 28:6)—an indication that he has realised his comportment has played to his disadvantage. Also, in this narrative, Esau shows no regards for Rebekah. He believes in his relationship with Isaac and his skill of hunting and providence, and thinks that obedience to his mother is out of place. The fact that the narrator does not actually show him interacting with Rebekah at any instance in the narrative is evidence to this argument. Even in the whole *Toledoth* of Isaac until the death of Rebekah, Esau is not mentioned to have had a good relation or to have obeyed his mother. However, when he grows up and establishes his own family, Esau's attitude towards his family changes and he unites with his brother to bury his father (Genesis 32–33).

1.2. Remarks on Esau's Role and Sonship

In evaluating Esau, it will be fair to recognise his input to his family through his skilful hunting. It will also be important to acknowledge that he was part of the growth of the family's wealth in Gerar. However, it seems Esau's hunting skill and Isaac's love for him weakens his interest in the respect of social customs. Esau is aware that Isaac has the final say to the heir and because he is firstborn and Isaac's favourite, he probably assumes that nothing could bereft him of his inheritance. This leads to a development of a care free approach to his parents and even his wives follow suit in making life unbearable. When Esau realises this, it is already too late because the inheritance has been passed and the Abrahamic blessing pronounced.

2. Jacob as Son

When Jacob is born, he is referred to as second (or younger because he comes out a few minutes after his brother). He is also named following his appearance and he *dwells in the tents with his mother*.³⁷¹ The narrator mentions that *Jacob bargains for Esau's birthright for a bowl of pottage* (Gen 25:29–34). However, it should

³⁷⁰ Koehler and Baumgartner (2001:632–633), Clines (2001:482), Schwienhorst (TDOT:5–10) and van Gemeren (NIDOTTE vol 2:1100–1102).

³⁷¹ The text, describes Jacob as *איש תם* (*man of integrity*). *תם* is from the root *תם* which in the OT often signifies 'innocence or moral integrity, or blamelessness' (Hamilton 1995:181). The root *תם* is also at-

be noted that the narrator does not mention that Jacob by the bargain assumed the firstborn position. Jacob comes in again in Gen 27:6 when he is summoned by Rebekah to present her counter instruction concerning Isaac's blessing of Esau. The narrator makes us understand that *Jacob tries to counter his mother's plans* but meets a command that demands his *unflinching loyalty and obedience* (Gen 27:6–29). Jacob obeys his mother and follows her command. He later presents himself to his father and does exactly what his mother requires. As a result, he is blessed in the place of Esau. When Esau returns and is in a rage, no mention is made of Jacob. He is mentioned again when his mother summons him the second time. This time, he must be sent away temporarily because Esau plans to murder him. While *he does not object*, he is invited by his father and blessed the second time to *go to Paddan Aram and get married to a wife (from his mother's brother's family)* (Gen 28:1–5). He obeys his father and sets out for the journey. On his way to Paddan Aram, he meets God in a vision who confirms the blessing issued to him by his father. In the confirmation, God promises to protect him, provide for him, and make his offspring great; and to bring him back to his father's house (Gen 28:10–22).

2.1. *The Development of Jacob's Sonship*

Jacob also grew as a model child and soon bargained for his brother's birth-right. The narrator does not tell us that he assumed this position. Also throughout the narrative, Jacob himself does not mention that he needs to be the firstborn because he already bought the firstborn right from Esau. It is probable that the narrator here lays a contrast between Esau who is negligent and care free and Jacob who is diligent and foresighted. This may also mean that Jacob is family centred. As a son, Jacob seems to be in the position of a daughter who is always with the mother helping and cooking. This does not mean that he is not involved in other activities with his father. Jacob is also present when his family acquires wealth in Gerar. While he is with his mother, it can be argued that he spends some time farming with his father too. Jacob too contributes to sustain the family with farm produce. He probably helps in taking care of the flock and drawing water for his mother. Genesis 27–28 presents Jacob as an obedient son. He is said to obey both parents. When Rebekah changes her instructions into a command, Jacob submits and withdraws his opinion. When Rebekah asks him to go to Paddan Aram, he does not argue. The same applies when Isaac calls Jacob and instructs him not to get married to Canaanites. The narrator only tells us that Jacob goes to Paddan Aram as a sign of obedience to his father and mother.³⁷²

tested in Arabic with the meaning 'to be kept in subjection, enslaved (by love)' (Ibid.). But since the narrator does not condemn Jacob as he does with Esau (25.34) (Elazar 2001:300), it is likely that Jacob is a man of integrity. Thus, Von Rad questions: "But how are we moderns to answer the obvious question about motives, especially those of Rebekah? Can it be answered at all according to the manner of the whole narrative? Did Rebekah really intend to further the divine plans which Isaac had culpably neglected? Doubtlessly Rebekah's deed has something magnanimous and militant about it ..., but did it occur only because she kept her eye on the promise? Or ought one to speak of the greater worthiness of the younger son because of his character and way of life?" (Von Rad 1961:275).

³⁷² Many read Jacob's journey to Paddan Aram as an escape from Esau. While this is supported by the narrative, there is also an indication that his response is based on obedience. When Rebekah asks him to go to his uncle, he does not leave until his father invites him and blesses him. Worth noting is that two reasons are given to Jacob for this journey. Rebekah asks him to go to Haran as a means to avert Esau's anger. Isaac blesses him and sends him to go and get a wife from Laban's daughters. If there is any issue of escape, it is Rebekah who has it in mind and Jacob obeys his father to go and get a wife. The narrator makes Isaac's instructions the final motif of Jacob's departure and repeats it in the following verse where Esau tries to amend his marital status to lay emphasis on Esau's marriage/disobedience

Despite his obedience, it will be improper to argue that Jacob does not contribute to Rebekah's plans. When Jacob agrees with Rebekah, he goes before his father and claims to be Esau. If Jacob had not been interested in the inheritance, he would have probably said no. Nevertheless, we are dealing with one who probably feels the rage of Esau's rebellious wives against the parents he obeys. So, Jacob is caught between allowing his brother to acquire the inheritance and bereft him and his mother of their livelihood or to take the opportunity to set the family in order. While he is reluctant, his mother's command requires no objection. Jacob follows every command without disobeying and even when Isaac invites him, he obeys. Probably Isaac's invitation to Jacob is where the whole situation would have changed. Jacob knew that although he obeyed his mother, he had taken advantage of his brother and ailing father. This invitation should bring some fright in Jacob and he should express the same concern for a possible curse. The narrator does not mention this except that Jacob obeys. Isaac's reaction (acceptance of Jacob) possibly indicates that he needed to have sought the consent of Rebekah and now that things have gone in another way he has no problem. Also, Isaac's instruction to Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman is an indication that Isaac acknowledges the "bitterness of spirit" that Esau's wives bring to them and the family. The narrator presents Jacob as one who shows love to his parents and obeys them. He is also portrayed as one who is family centred and has concern for every member's welfare. While Jacob leaves his home with mixed feelings, he meets God's approval. Also, although he feels separated from his brother, Jacob builds up himself to reconcile with Esau at a later date and they bury their father (Genesis 32–33).

2.2. *Remarks on Jacob's Role and Sonship*

The evaluation of Jacob presents a contrast to Esau. It will be fair to argue that Jacob was involved in the life of the family and played his role as required by the custom. It will also be fair to argue that he took care of the family by cooking food from his farm produce and taking care of the sheep. That he obeys his parents is seen in his interaction with both even at moments where one can read that tension will make him avoid it. Also, Jacob's going to Paddan Aram to find a wife restores parental consent in the choice of marriage, and also maintains the purity of the lineage. Important to Jacob's approach besides his obedience is his creativity. When Rebekah sends him to Isaac she does not instruct Jacob on what to say probably because she does not know the questions Isaac can ask. When Jacob presents himself before Isaac, he becomes creative and gives the appropriate responses to all questions. Jacob's foresight, family centred nature and obedience to his parents earns him the position of an heir.

4.6.4. *Criteria for Becoming an Heir and Evaluation of Family Member's Roles*

In §4.2.2, I outlined five criteria for becoming an heir. After discussing the roles, another criterion which is obedience to both parents will be added. In the evaluation of Isaac's family members' contribution to the choice of his heir, I will deal with the following criteria: (a) correct mother, (b) firstborn son, (c) correct wife, (d) obedience to parents, and (e) possession of family/ Abrahamic blessing.

1. *Correct Mother*

We have seen that the *correct mother* (Steinberg 1993) was a mother from the patriarchal lineage and one who could influence decisions on behalf of her son.

and Jacob's obedience. Esau still marries without parental consent which is the first failure he had with the previous marriages.

We have also seen that Sarah's influence on Abraham against Hagar and Ishma'el presents a good example. In addition, we have noted that the correct mother was also the beloved wife of the patriarch as in the case of Rachel. In the narrative under study, both sons (Esau and Jacob) have the correct mother and by virtue of this criterion are qualified to be heir. However, the *correct mother* should influence the decision in favour of her son, Jacob. An evaluation of Rebekah's attitude has been done in the previous chapters and here I argue that what she does is an expression of her motherhood. She exerts her motherhood authority on her household to influence the choice of heir. Cross-cultural data confirms a mother's influence on the choice of heir. A royal inheritance contract indicates that when Hammurabi is presented to the public, Ammitaku reminds the public of the role of Hammurabi's grandmother in Hammurabi's appointment as heir. It reads (COS 2.136):

Ammitaku the governor of Alalakh during his life time, in the presence of Yarimlin the king, his lord, he willed his house: his city house, city areas, fields, and whatever is his, just as his father and mother had appointed him to be king he has appointed Hammurabi his son, whom Nawarari bore to him, to be governor of the city. Thus he said: ... Hammurabi my son [...] There is no other heir. Hammurabi is the lord of my city and my house. He is the servant of Yarimlin the king my lord.

The appointment of Hammurabi as heir mentions the role of his grandmother and that of his mother. This is a royal inheritance and the role of the mother seems indispensable. Hence, one can argue that this is confirmation that mothers had an influence in the choice of heir. In this narrative section the role of Rebekah, as the *correct mother* also meets this criterion. Nevertheless, her role is very crucial and will be substantiated later (conf. §4.6.6).

2. *Firstborn Son*

We have seen that "firstborn" does not necessarily designate a biological birth order but in many instances, it is a status symbol accorded by the family head or family council to anyone who possesses the qualities of an heir. The cross-cultural data from the ANE indicates that some families maintained the chronological firstborn as heir [conf. data from Mari (§4.2.3.1.1), Tell Harmal (§§4.2.3.1.3.1, 4.2.3.1.3.2 and 4.2.3.1.3.4), Nippur (§4.2.3.1.4) and Nuzi (§4.2.3.1.5, HSS IX 24 and HSS XIX 46) and Larsa], while other either raised another child to the firstborn position [conf. data from Alalakh (4.2.3.1.2) and Ur], or adopted a son and named him first born [conf. data from Tell Harmal (§§4.2.3.1.3.3 and 4.2.3.1.3.4) and Nuzi]. This variation is governed by the quality or expectations of an heir. Thus, any heir who could not meet up with the demands of the firstborn was disinherited. In the same light, data from some African customs follow the same prescriptions as those of the ANE. The qualities of a firstborn are also crucial and include: observing all customs, representing the family's interest, love for family members, care for all, manage family inheritance, obey the elders and maintain a link between the living and the ancestors; and take care of the general administration of the family (good leadership qualities). The cultural practices from Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Swaziland maintain that the firstborn, who is not often the biological firstborn, is one who is deemed fit to represent the family head in the moral, cultural and administrative domains. This is also the situation in some patriarchal narratives. We have seen that Isaac was obedient, and when Jacob appoints his heirs, most of the qualities enumerated are found in Joseph

and Judah. In Genesis 27–28, both Esau and Jacob qualify as firstborns. Jacob becomes firstborn and heir because he meets other qualities which Esau completely misses. Apart from Esau's skill in hunting, the narrator indicates that he possesses no other quality to become heir. Esau and his wives are a menace to his parents, he fails to seek their consent before marriage, he marries another wife still without their consent, and he does not obey both parents. This falls below the expectation of an heir following the biblical and extra-biblical data.

3. *Correct Wife*

I began by focusing on the *correct wife* as a member of the lineage as with the case of Abraham and Isaac. However, as the narrative evolves, other questions arise. There is the case of Joseph who marries an Egyptian and Judah who marries Tamar. These two form the core of Jacob's inheritance as Joseph is the heir and Judah stands as the uniting force and the elder. If these two are taken into consideration, it is possible to argue that the issue of the correct wife was not limited to the patriarchal lineage but could include a wife who was ready to accept the patriarchal norms and customs. Another important consideration for the *correct wife* is obedience to the parents of the potential heir. Some African customs who argue that the consent of the parents is required for marriage explain that the importance of this consent is to give a platform for cooperation between the wife and the husband's parents. While parental consent is ambivalent in the patriarchal narrative, its function in the family of Isaac and Rebekah is of prime importance. Esau married without parental consent and his wives brought a "bitterness of spirit" to his parents. This would not be the case if he sought the consent of his parents. Judah had Shuah's daughter impregnated and got married to her and when she died, Judah impregnated Tamar who later became his wife (Genesis 38). Joseph married an Egyptian–Asenath. Both Judah and Joseph had no parental consent. While Joseph can be exempted because of his stay in Egypt (with no intention he would ever see his family again), this was not the case with Judah. However, one thing is common with both wives–the narrator does not say they disrespected Jacob, Le'ah or Rachel. Even when Jacob adopts Manasseh and Ephraim, nothing is heard of Asenath. Thus, from the narrative it is possible to assume that Tamar and Asenath were in good terms with Jacob. With this perspective, a *correct wife* then is one who is ready to accept wholeheartedly the patriarchal customs which include respect and obedience to the patriarchs, their ancestors and worship of YHWH. Therefore, Esau's marriages played to his disadvantage.

4. *Obedience to Parents*

Obedience to parents is a custom that every culture values. This too was part of the patriarchal custom. Even after they left Egypt, it was made part of the legislation that YHWH gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. There are three pieces of legislation to underscore the importance of honour and obedience to parents.

Ex 20:12

כְּבֹד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ לְמַעַן יָרֵכּוֹן יְמֶיךָ

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live"

עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ

"Upon the land the Lord your God gives you"

Ex 21:15

וּמַכָּה אָבִיו אִמּוֹ מוֹת יוֹמָת

"And he who attacks his father and mother shall surely be put to death"

Lev 19:3

אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָא

"Everyman shall fear his father and mother"

The obligation to show respect to parents was very important and this respect had to continue even after their death. Isaac was obedient to Abraham. Even when Abraham wanted to sacrifice Isaac, the narrator gives the impression that Isaac succumbed (Genesis 22). Eliezer obeyed his master and followed his instructions to get a wife for Isaac from among Abraham's kinship (Genesis 24). This is not just because he was a servant, but because Abraham was an elder and it was customary to obey all elders. Joseph obeyed Jacob and continued to do so even after Jacob's death. He, together with his brothers, buried Jacob in Machpelah (Gen 50:1–14) following Jacob's wish. Honour underscores the importance of both parents to the lives of the children and the community. Disobedience to one parent might be seen to mean disobeying both. Cross-cultural data from Cameroon indicates that the potential heir has to be a link between the ancestors and the living (Ebi 2008:187). This role can only be accomplished if the heir shows respect and obedience to his parents when they are alive. The narrator of Genesis 27–28 has indicated that Jacob is the one who shows respect to both parents, and Esau and his wives have no respect for Rebekah. Thus, when it comes to obedience, Jacob again is favoured. To underscore the centrality of a mother's honour in the African perspective, Christaller states that "when one's mother lies dying, one does not pursue disputes" (Odooyue 1995:60). In the same light inheritance in Ugarit was sometimes willed to the mother who had the right to hand it to the son who honoured her (Rainey 1962:214).³⁷³ Thureau-Dagin (1937:245–255) also argues that this was a common practice in Arrapha, Babylon, and Assyria. He writes (Ibid. 250–251):

En Babylonie et en Assyrie, aussi bien que dans le pays d'Arrapha, un mari était autorisé par la loi ou la coutume à laisser tout ou partie de ses biens à sa femme. Celle-ci, à moins de remariage, en a la jouissance sa vie durant. Elle ne doit en principe en rien aliéner. Elle n'est cependant pas seulement usufruitière, car, s'il y a deux ou plusieurs fils, elle a en général le droit de choisir celui qui héritera³⁷⁴ (Also conf. LH§ 150).

5. Possession of Family/Abrahamic Blessing

The family blessings are often given to one who meets the criteria of an heir. In Genesis 27, Isaac nominates Esau to hand the family blessings to him. It is possible that with his ailing health, nothing satisfies him better than Esau's game so he thinks that Esau would be a good choice. We have seen from the ANE customs that it is possible to alter the positions of sons, change or disinherit an heir. This means that, although the father has the authority to nominate an heir, the decision can be overruled

³⁷³ Meyers (1978:98) argues that wives had an honourable position in the Ancient Israelite society. Thus, the need to honour one's mother was important. Also See (Alfredo 2013:8).

³⁷⁴ Translation: "In Babylonia and Assyria, as well as in the country of Arrapha, a husband was permitted by law or the custom to allow all or part of his property to his wife. The latter without remarriage, enjoys such during her life. She must not, in principle be estranged from anything. It is however not usufructuary, because if there are two or more sons, she generally has the right to choose the one who will inherit."

depending on the personal comportment of the chosen heir. The same holds for the Bamileke custom of Cameroon and some South African customs where the choice of the father can be overruled or changed. This forces consultation between the father and others (including the mother) to avoid such changes. Isaac would have made a better choice if he consented with Rebekah. However, he appreciates Rebekah's input and validates her choice. Jacob has up to this point fulfilled all the criteria for an heir. However, his food and farm produce do not satisfy Isaac's cravings as Esau's game. But Rebekah is there as a guard to the future of the family. Hence, she intervenes to change the choice of heir. From the Malagasies perspective, Lambek (2011:2–16) has argued that succession is a broad field and becomes more complex when it involves spirit possession. He writes (Ibid. 11):

succession may be described as ethical insofar as it is not merely a playing out of law, the naturalized transmission of substance, or selfish competition, but entails acts of bestowal, reception, initiative, and affirmation of responsibility for oneself and on behalf of others and, equally, of exercising judgment with respect to those others.

While it is hard to understand how Jacob meets up with the custom by following Rebekah's commands which, in this case, seems to be against the law, there are other qualities and initiatives that need to be recognised in Jacob. In this case I build on Jacob's obedience to his parents as one of the main qualities that gives him the advantage over Esau.

4.6.5. *How Jacob Develops His Potentials to Become Heir*

I began by laying requirements that a potential heir should accomplish to qualify as Isaac's heir. Two sons (Esau and Jacob) are involved and the narrator makes us understand that Esau has been eliminated. This means that Jacob qualifies as Isaac's heir. This paragraph will investigate how Jacob meets the requirements for an heir and how he develops the potential to meet up with the requirements. As a reminder, the requirements are as follows:

- Correct mother—one who can influence the choice of heir.
- Firstborn son—one who can represent the father and family in leadership according to the customs.
- Correct wife—wife from the patrilineage or one who is ready to follow the patriarchal customs.
- Obedience—to both parents and elders, and love for family.
- Possession of family/Abrahamic blessing—a result of one's personal comportment vis-à-vis the first four points.

Esau and Jacob have the *correct mother* and she has to influence the choice of the heir based on the patriarchal custom, just as Sarah did with Abraham, to secure the blessing and the lineage. At the beginning of Isaac's *Toledoth*, Jacob is loved by his mother and no reason is given for this relationship. At the same time, Isaac loves Esau and this is attached to his hunting skill and Isaac's love for Esau's game. Jacob is also described as a "man of the tent" (quiet man or innocent man, man of moral integrity, blameless man?). The word which is translated "man of the tents" has the meaning of either a "man of integrity or an innocent and blameless man." As such, Jacob remains close to his mother even as he serves his father. The narrator also informs us that

besides his mother's love, Jacob is foresighted (Gen 25:29–34). With this foresight, Jacob begins to build his leadership personality. That Esau accepts to sell his birthright for a bowl of pottage significantly contrasts him with Jacob who makes no such decision throughout his life. Esau already presents himself as a care free person who is interested in what satisfies him instantly. The question raised here is whether Jacob actually acquired the birthright. The narrator leaves this open but since Jacob never claims anywhere that he bought the birthright, it becomes unlikely that this was a fait accompli. Also, Jacob would not oppose his mother when she wants him to sit in as Esau if the act of Esau's sale of birthright was a done deal.³⁷⁵ There is evidence that Jacob obeys both parents as they wish.³⁷⁶ Although he questions Rebekah, Jacob follows her instructions as demanded to completion, especially as Rebekah pledges her life for the course. Also, he obeys Isaac and goes to Paddan Aram. When it comes to obedience, the narrator attaches it to Jacob. However, when it comes to disobedience or making life unbearable, the narrator attaches it to Esau. By this the narrator wants the reader to understand that the more Esau shifts away, the more Jacob gets closer to be heir. Again, every expression of Esau's malice presents Jacob with an opportunity to foster his heirship potential. This is the case with Gen 26:34–35 as opposed to Gen 27:14 and 28:5.

When it comes to marriage, there is parental consent. Esau already gets married to two Canaanites while Jacob waits for his parent's proposal. Worst still, Esau's wives are a menace to Rebekah and Isaac and make life very bitter for both. This probably gives Jacob the opportunity to wait on his parent's decision and thus increases his potential to become heir. It will be important to remember that Isaac never asked for a wife. When Abraham thought Isaac was of age, he sent his servant to go and get a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24). Jacob waits until Isaac proposes that he should go to Paddan Aram and get a wife. Jacob follows in the footsteps of his ancestor Abraham—a quality which highlights his leadership potential and ability to carry on with the Abrahamic lineage. Jacob acquires the family blessing with the influence of his mother who has endured the bitterness of Esau's wives. Rebekah uses her influence to switch things in favour of Jacob. Then she proposes to Isaac that he should send Jacob to get a correct wife from the lineage. While Jacob obeys and takes off to find a correct wife, God intervenes and seals the heirship by issuing Jacob with the Abrahamic blessing. In the evaluation of Jacob's acquisition of the heirship, scholars focus on his action as trickery and pay little attention to his positive approach to the patriarchal customs. On an important note, the leadership quality that catapults Jacob to heirship is his willingness to obey. If he disobeyed Rebekah, the plans would have failed. If he disobeyed Isaac, the same situation would have happened. A question that needs to be answered is why Isaac decides to issue the blessing to Esau if he is

³⁷⁵ Scholars hold that Jacob is probably playing a trick here as he tricked Esau to sell his birthright. I see a family which lives together with two sons who are potential heir. As the father expresses love for one, he probably becomes recalcitrant, thus giving the other the opportunity to develop his heirship potential (conf. Lapiro de Mbanga 2010).

³⁷⁶ Each time when one argues for Esau's disobedience, a counter argument is often Jacob's trickery and Rebekah's deceit. It is important here that the narrator does not say that Jacob deceives Isaac or that Rebekah tricks Isaac. These words are from Isaac and Esau. Also, Jacob does not make plans but succumbs to his mother's plans. If Isaac felt that there was some injustice done, he would have reacted. If anyone deceives, it should be Rebekah. Note the change in her vocabulary when Esau plans to kill Jacob in Gen 27:45c—"that which you (Jacob) did to him." Rebekah vindicates herself and it is now Jacob who caused Esau's anger. However, this is an expression of her motherhood and I will argue that she uses diplomacy to resolve the heirship to Jacob and maintain the peace of her family. Thus, Isaac agrees with her plan.

not qualified? The narrator presents Isaac as one whose sensory capabilities have reduced and as one who functions on probabilities. The following are indicative that Isaac's senses would have greatly diminished because of his age:

- Sight (Gen 27:1)—Isaac's eyes were dim and he lost his sight.
- Touch (Gen 27:21–22)—It is unlikely that Esau was as hairy as the skin of a lamb. Thus, this is an indication that Isaac's sense of touch had diminished.
- Sound (Gen 27:22 and 24)—Isaac has two sons and his inability to distinguish their voices indicates that his sense of hearing also diminished. He doubts whether the one posing before him is Esau, but he cannot confirm because he is not sure of his sons' voices.
- Smell (Gen 27:25 and 27)—If one argues that the smell of Esau's garment deceived Isaac, he would have smelled that he was eating lamb and not game.
- Taste (Gen 27:25) —Isaac asked for game but when he is presented with lamb, he eats and it tastes like game in his mouth.

If Isaac's senses have greatly diminished, then it is possible that he should be prone to making wrong choices based on what is important for him at the moment of the decision. In this case, Rebekah should step in to protect the lineage.³⁷⁷ It seems therefore that Isaac just craved for some good food and Rebekah provided it to prevent Esau from becoming heir. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the narrator leaves this open.

Cross-cultural data informs us of the requirements for an heir and our evaluation of Jacob with respect to the requirements indicates that he meets up with every requirement and thus becomes heir. How his mother exerts her influence is her quality but Jacob follows instructions from both parents and finally wins the favour of both. Jacob's foresight and leadership potential, his interest in the patriarchal tradition, his obedience³⁷⁸ to his parents and his mother's influence grant to him Isaac's heirship.

4.6.6. *Rebekah's Centrality to the Transfer of Isaac's Heirship*

The main question here is the nature of the acquisition of the blessing. Scholars are divided and various labels have been given to Rebekah and Jacob. Nevertheless, cross-cultural data can enlighten readers to see the possibility of changing an heir based on his comportment. Jacob's choice follows an acceptable convention and Isaac, and later God, approves Jacob as the one to carry on the patriarchal mantle. Rebekah's intervention in the choice of heir in Isaac's *Toledoth* shows the indispensability of a mother and her motherhood qualities in every family. Although Jacob meets every criterion for heir, Rebekah's input to prepare Jacob for this role has been immeasurable. This quality of Rebekah has led some scholars to place her on equal level with the patriarchs. While I commend her for her qualities, I will regard her as a counterpart of her husband because that was the acceptable norm. How she develops and uses her motherhood within the narrative still deserve some further investigation which is the main aim of this paragraph. Rebekah's motherhood puts her in an important position in the family especially with respect to her husband as far as decision making is concerned (Matthews and Benjamin 1993:24–31). She uses every quality

³⁷⁷ Matthews and Benjamin (1993:23) mention that mothers of Ancient Israelite households also had the role to designate an heir.

³⁷⁸ There is also evidence from ANE that obedience to both parents was an obligation. John (1904:74–M383) states: "A son who repudiated his mother was branded and expelled from house and city."

at her disposal to get the required results. Contrary to what some scholars hold as deceit or lies telling, Rebekah uses a positive approach with the family as her prime motive. Because of her actions, scholars argue that she is a matriarch.

A matriarch is a woman who is either head of a family or tribe; founder of a people; or a venerable woman (APA 2010). Matriarchs are often regarded as mothers whose roles contribute to sustain a people. These roles can be described as motherhood. While Rebekah is not the founder of a people, her role contributes to sustain the patriarchal lineage. Thus, she is a matriarch, not on equal basis as a patriarch but as a counterpart or complement. Rebekah's motherhood is central because it can be read as a flashback (analepsis) to establish a link between Isaac's descendants and others before him (25:19) and a flash forward (prolepsis) to the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise and the later life of the Israelite peoples. In this way, Rebekah's motherhood becomes crucial to the continuity and subsequent fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise in Genesis 12. Motherhood comes from the word mother—'a woman who has given birth to offspring' (Hanks et al. 1988:740). It is defined as 'the state of being a mother or the qualities characteristic of a mother' (Ibid. 741). From a sociocultural and anthropological perspective, motherhood may signify a system of qualities and characteristics employed by a mother to nurture a family. Such characteristics may include schemes, methods, skills or techniques, expressed through maternal authority, affection, protection, instruction, providence, education, counsel, training and discipline of the members of a family. The understanding of motherhood in this sense presupposes a family as a basic social unit. Contrary to the modern understanding of a family, there is evidence that the ANE family as well as some non-western (African) family systems are made up of both immediate and extended family members sharing the same house or compound with customs that keep the unity of the family among which are: patriarchy, endogamy, patrilineal descent and polygyny (Patai 1959:17–19). Although the system is patriarchal in nature, there is mention of the prominence of women within them and their active involvement in decision making. For example, an inheritance tablet from Alalakh gives Naidu (primary wife) preference to name her son as heir even if the other wives have sons before her (conf. §4.2.3.1.2). In the same light, there is evidence from some African cultures that women were given the status of heir and they also participated in deliberations that led to the choosing of an heir (conf. §4.2.3.3.1). Rebekah's motherhood in Genesis 27–28 is seen in her relationship with members of her family. She is very agile with respect to her role and character and controls all events within the family (Meyers 2000:143 and Schectman 2009:85). The use of the kinship terms *mother*, *father* and *son* emphasises that all involved in this narrative constitute a family. Also, these kinship terms designate hierarchy where the father is the head of the family. However, there is evidence that wives had an important role. Rebekah plays a great role in her family life, first as mother (Gen 27:11–17) and then as wife (conf. King and Stager 2001:50). According to Steinberg, Rebekah's actions are motivated by her personal interest to secure her motherhood in Isaac's house (Steinberg 1984:180–181, idem 1993:97). This is seen in the way she shuttles between members of the family and influences their actions for the good of all. There are also issues of marriage and heirship/inheritance (succession) which help to highlight Rebekah's motherhood. Steinberg has also argued that "motherhood conferred social and cultural validation on a woman within the family unit," and that "a woman served the interests of her husband's family, and her own interests as well," when she became a mother (Steinberg 1993:180). Rebekah adopts this approach especially as Esau and his wives are a menace to her ailing husband and herself. If by rule Esau as

firstborn is to be heir, life will be meaningless for her.³⁷⁹ Whatever comportment or characteristic that family exhibits, Rebekah uses it as a basis to express her motherhood (Ibid. 97). At the beginning of Isaac's *Toledoth*, the narrator informs us that Isaac loves Esau because his hunting skill provides him game (Gen 25:25). While Isaac's love for Esau is based on personal satisfaction, Rebekah's motive for loving Jacob is not stated. When the narrative unfolds, Rebekah is seen dealing with every member of her family. Wenham (1994:177) suggests that Jacob was easy to manipulate, while Clifford (1991:399) also raises concern whether Rebekah is not using her knowledge of the oracle to be on the winning side. The narrator says nothing about any of these claims but indicates by his description of Rebekah that she has a mastery of her family and understands how to deal with each member.

One main source of Rebekah's information is eavesdropping (Gen 27:5). She does this not out of contempt, but for the sake of family welfare. She uses the information gathered to exercise her motherhood by diverting the choice of heir from Esau to Jacob, first to preserve lineage purity, and second, to secure her future livelihood in case Isaac dies. Again, Herbert's (1962:78ff) and Westermann's (2004:193ff) suggestion that Rebekah's love can be a means of protecting the underprivileged within the family (i.e., Jacob) is tenable. Cross-cultural data from some African customs indicates that the protection of children is one of the most important qualities of motherhood (conf. §4.6.2). Nyamiti (1981:270) and Odooye (2002:57–59) argue that motherhood protection and discipline ensures the survival of the weak or young. In addition, Alter's (1981:44) argument that Rebekah's love is not discriminatory, but 'justly grounded,' offers a fitting summary of her motherhood. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Herbert (1962) and Westermann (2004) see only Jacob as the underprivileged and here I will include both Rebekah and her ailing husband.

Esau's marriages in Gen 26:34–35, repeated in Gen 27:46 and Gen 28:6–9, provide another basis for the development of Rebekah's motherhood. Rebekah's speeches indicate that Esau does not seek parental consent and that the marriages are unacceptable. From Rebekah's reactions, two reasons can be advanced for the unacceptable nature of Esau's marriages (Guenther 2005:387–388 and Oden 1983:193): (a) Esau marries out of the patriarchal pedigree; and (b) Esau's wives bring a "bitterness of spirit" to both Isaac and Rebekah. Isaac raises no complaint and nominates Esau as heir. Rebekah still takes this as an opportunity to establish her motherhood authority. Following the criteria set from biblical and extra-biblical data, it is possible to argue that although Isaac feels that he is near his death, it is unacceptable to hand the patriarchal mantle and inheritance to one who has no honour for his mother or his father, and to one whose wives bring a "bitterness of spirit" to both his parents (Gen 26:35). Cross-cultural data from the ANE, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Swaziland as well as biblical legislation stipulate that such a son is not fit to be an heir.³⁸⁰ Rebekah probably understands that Isaac's ailing health can

³⁷⁹ Rebekah asks her husband: "If Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, such as these, of what worth shall my life be?" (Gen 27:46).

³⁸⁰ The punishment stipulated for anyone who does not honour his parents in Deut 21:18–21 indicates that disobedience was a serious offence. It states: 'If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard." Then all the men of his town are to stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.' Although death is not prescribed as punishment from the African perspective, the customs insist on the comportment of the potential heir with respect to parents, elders, family and the community. One of the criteria stipulates that the potential heir should be able to

lead him to unacceptable decisions. She does not take on disputes but continues to establish herself in every situation to ensure the posterity of the family. Thus, when Isaac asks for good game, she presents a recipe of two lambs to meet Isaac's game cravings and as a result turns the favour to Jacob whom she feels is apt to represent the interest of the family even after Isaac's death. Rebekah is aware that she would live a miserable life if Esau becomes heir, but would live a better life if Jacob becomes heir. Thus, the narrator lays emphasis on the importance of Esau's marriages by featuring them three times in the *Toledoth* of Isaac. The importance of correct marriage in a kinship and parental consent cannot be underestimated and there is evidence of the same practices of parental consent in some African customs. Mbiti (1969:133) points out the importance of choosing an acceptable partner and argues that if the choice is made by the son, the endorsement of the parent is sought. The same holds in Cameroonian cultural custom where the marriage is either arranged or the would-be spouses seek their parents' approval (Mbaku 2005:143–144). Also from Babylonian and Assyrian laws, parental consent was required for a son to get married and it was the obligation of the father to prepare the marriage festivities (John 1904:74).³⁸¹

Jacob's counter reaction to Rebekah's plan (Gen 27:11) provides another opportunity for Rebekah to display her motherhood. Motherhood exhibits the authority of a mother over members of her family. The centrality of a mother makes this authority inevitable to members of the family. When Rebekah's plan meets Jacob's resistance, she remains positive. Her tenacity succeeds because she convinces Jacob of the need to follow her plan and decides to issue a command to Jacob, leaving no room for further questioning or objection. She makes Jacob understand that she would put her life in line in case the plan meets an adverse reaction (Allen 1977:191). Who, in Jacob's situation, would reject a mother's proposal if she pledges her life for it? Exum (1993:142) presents a strong argument that Rebekah's response to Jacob: 'Upon me be the curse, my son,' is a testimony of her lack of authority. But Exum does not take into account the centrality of Rebekah's authoritative role as mother in the life of Jacob and especially within a culture which has strong kinship values for motherhood. Odoyuye (1995:60) has argued from an African perspective that 'the welfare of the children [and family] takes precedence over everything else in a [mother's] life,' and this is just what Rebekah expresses. The family's survival in general and Jacob's survival in particular is foremost in Rebekah's plans. She therefore does not hesitate to lay her life down for this course. Her resoluteness is the motherhood skill that brings success to her plans. Jacob's obedience expresses his role and honour to his mother and meets the kinship requirement of a son (conf. Ex 20:21). In addition, it is important to note that Rebekah's instructions to Jacob are a command which need immediate response (Gen 27:13 and 43). Nyamiti (1981:240) and Odoyuye (2002:57) have also argued that motherhood is divine and symbolises life.³⁸² On a mother's authority, Odoyuye (2002:57) writes:

command the same respect that the father has within and outside the family (Ebi 2008:187) and another specifies that the potential heir should not be a waster (Ollenu 1968:87). Also, conf. John (1904:74–M383).

³⁸¹ For other ANE examples of parental consent for marriage, conf. Greengus (1966 and 1969).

³⁸² In the same light Lesko (1978) has argued that the Ancient Egyptian family was centred around the mother. She found inscriptions that venerated mothers and one of them (from Lichtheim, II, 141) reads (Lesko 1978:30):

Double the food your mother gave you.
Support her as she supported you;
She had a heavy load in you,
But she did not abandon you.

By nature, dominion is maternal for two reasons: the identity of a child's mother alone is certain, and power over a child is initially in the hands of the mother who nourishes and trains it.³⁸³

Rebekah employs such maternal dominion to save her family and the continuity of the patriarchal lineage. Those who see Jacob as weak and easily manipulated miss the centrality of a mother in the life of her children which demands a strict reciprocity even when the child is an adult. It is this reciprocal relationship that Jacob observes when he obeys Rebekah and this agrees with the social customs in place.

Esau's plan to murder his brother presents an opportunity for Rebekah to develop her motherhood. Steinberg (1993:97) describes Rebekah's *modus operandi* as '[running] interference.' This *modus operandi* gives Rebekah the opportunity to exert influence over the members of her household. She uses this to shape the family according to acceptable cultural norms (Gen 24:3), and to secure her future. She exercises diplomacy and manages the family in such a way that avoids open confrontation, by modifying speeches to get a good hearing or advocate for urgency.³⁸⁴ Rebekah does this when Esau plans to murder Jacob after Isaac's death. With Isaac's failing health, Rebekah probably sees herself as the custodian of the family, culture and eventually the lineage and does everything in her power to hold all these in equilibrium. Rebekah's interference is not always direct, yet each instance exerts colossal influence on the final decision. Exum (1993:136–138) mentions 'influence' as one important approach to Rebekah's interference, in addition to eavesdropping and discussing with members of the family. This influence leads Rebekah to her ultimate goal—welfare of all.

Rebekah develops the ability to manage, mediate (Matthews and Benjamin 1993:25–29) and keep her family in unity. Readers may easily dismiss any success of Rebekah's plan on this front. But at the end of this narrative section Rebekah is united with her husband and Jacob and this prompts Esau to try to make amends (conf. Allen 1977:210–211). The fact that Isaac blesses Jacob the second time is evidence that Rebekah has helped him to make the right choice. Motherhood provides the ability to unite the family when there is a conflict. This is because a mother's discipline is for corrective purposes. Odoyuye (1995:60) has argued that family welfare takes precedence in motherhood. Rebekah maintains this in her discipline of family members to preserve the lives of all members. She exhibits this quality in her mode of operations thus prompting Esau to realise that his comportment and behaviour towards the other members of the family affected his heirship opportunity.

Pay attention to your offspring.
Bring him up as did your mother.
Do not give her cause to blame you.

³⁸³ In the same light, Diop (1989:32) argues, with respect to the importance of a mother in a matrilineal descent, that "it is almost everywhere thought that a child owes more from a biological point of view to his mother than to the father. The biological heredity on the mother's side is stronger and more important than the heredity on the father's side. Consequently, a child is wholly that which its mother is and only half of what the father is." Although Diop uses this argument to define the importance of a mother in a matrilineal descent, this argument also indicates the prime importance and dominance of a mother upon a child from a biological perspective.

³⁸⁴ Craven (1989:50), argues that this was an acceptable attitude for women who lived in a male-dominated society. He talks about trickery, but I see a diplomatic quality in Rebekah which saves her family from a future disaster than a situation of lies telling.

4.7. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter has been to study the roles of the *dramatis personae* in Genesis 27–28 by investigating how these roles are developed by the individuals within the narrative. At the beginning of this chapter I acknowledged the importance of the application of socioscientific approaches to the study of the Old Testament. I then moved on to mention its use by some pioneer Old Testament scholars and acknowledged the growing interest in the use of social sciences like sociology and anthropology to the study of the Old Testament from both the Western and some non-western perspectives. I reviewed the works of Selman, Steinberg, Boase and Adamo, and laid a methodological approach for the analysis of data. From Selman's comparative approach to the use of ANE data; Steinberg's household economic perspective; Boase's synchronic and diachronic roles of Isaac; and Adamo's African perspective to the study of the Old Testament, I developed a historical-cultural methodology to read Genesis 27–28 which differentiates my approach from others. The methodology includes the social organisation of the patriarchal society based on an individual's input in the family, an anthropological dimension based on kinship and a cultural dimension which defines the norms that members of the lineage should follow. I also studied the patriarchal family and its kinship and marriage systems; the concept of firstborn and firstborn rights from the biblical and Ancient Near Eastern perspectives; as well as succession and inheritance in some African cultures (Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigerian, South Africa and Swaziland), in an effort to investigate how cross-cultural data from the ANE and Africa can inform one's understanding of this narrative section. This led me to study the development of roles in Genesis 27–28 (Isaac—as father; Rebekah—as mother and Esau/Jacob—as sons) and to develop the criteria that led to the choice of heir to include: (a) having the correct mother—one who can influence the choice of heir; (b) being firstborn—one who can represent the father in leadership, morality and administration; (c) having the correct wife—one from the lineage or one out of the lineage who is ready to follow the patriarchal custom; (d) being obedient—obedience to both parents (respecting their wishes and parental consent for marriage); and (e) possessing the family/Abrahamic blessing.

Following the criteria, I established that Jacob meets the requirements coupled with Rebekah's input as the correct mother. The basic reason is the disobedience of Esau which provides Jacob the opportunity to develop his heirship potential. Because of Rebekah's influence and input to the choice of heir, I have studied how she develops her motherhood qualities and I found out that every action or event in the family presented Rebekah with an opportunity to develop and express her motherhood potentials. Among the qualities are: her authority, her ability to understand members of her family, her ability to influence her husband and Jacob to action, and her ability to hold the tension in equilibrium until it is resolved. I conclude that Rebekah succeeds to unite her family as she can let Isaac accept her choice and offer a second blessing to Jacob. Isaac is then able to instruct Jacob to go and get a correct wife from the lineage. This prompts Esau's attempt to amend his marital situation—but it is already too late.³⁸⁵ YHWH's intervention makes a good resolution because YHWH confirms Jacob's choice and reaffirms Jacob as bearer of the Abrahamic promise.

³⁸⁵ This reaction of Esau and the information given in these verses by the narrator raise a question on the irreversibility of Isaac's blessing. First Esau has plans to murder his brother and second he tries to amend his marital situation which can serve as an indication that the blessing could be averted either by death or by amending his marital situation. Albeit, his second marriage does not concur with the patriarchal inheritance customs because he still fails to seek parental consent and marries out of the patriarchal pedigree. Esau's actions present a possibility that Isaac's blessing is reversible and I construe that

Although I have incorporated biblical and cross-cultural data from some African customs and the ANE to study the roles, I do not claim that this approach has resolved all socioscientific issues raised in this narrative section. The issue of the validation of the method of acquisition remains unresolved. Nevertheless, if one considers that these were acceptable customs, then the problem lies with our approach to the text and our difficulty to understand the sociocultural and anthropological settings. Lambek's (2011:11) study indicates that there are often such gaps which cannot be easily resolved by both sociologists and cultural anthropologist. He studies succession in Mayotte Malagasy which involves kinship and spirit possession and argues that "when the lines of succession are ambiguous, plural or overlapping...the results can be conflict or connection.... (and) succession may be described as ethical insofar as it is not merely a playing out of law ... resolved or justified by attributing success to some kind of outside intervention like God or spirits" (Ibid.). Also, I have argued that the narrator gives the impression that Isaac's blessing is reversible. Esau's second marriage as a reaction to Isaac's instructions to Jacob is evidence to this. In this light, I argue that Rebekah's actions are in line with the customs and Isaac agrees with her. This also explains why YHWH confirms Jacob's heirship.

the irreversibility only sets in when YHWH confirms the choice. Hence, the reversibility of Isaac's blessing and Esau's actions serve to highlight the legitimacy of Rebekah's actions to influence the choice of heir.

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. SUMMARY

In this study, every major section has a summary and a conclusion which relates to the arguments and proposes a possible synthesis. The focus of this chapter will be a discussion on how all these summaries and conclusions meet the primary aim of this study. These will then lead to general conclusions on the outcome of the research and highlight areas of interest for further investigation. It is important to recall that the primary aim of this research has been to study Genesis 27–28 from text-syntactic, literary and socioscientific perspectives as an attempt to propose an understanding to the theological and moral conundrums posed by the actions and characteristics of those involved in this narrative section. The topic, as it stands, highlights three major perspectives which form the three major parts of this research. Thus, I began by setting up a methodology that can guide me to the end.

Chapter one defined the scope of this research, its interest and the contributions that it could bring to the understanding of this chosen narrative section. This led me to specify the questions to be answered and to lay a methodological approach. The methodology included three aspects: (a) a linguistic study of participants based on a model developed by the ETCBC which had been used for linguistic interpretation of BH texts; (b) a literary study of characters which focused on the methods applied by the narrator to portray characters, the effects of the characterisation of individuals, and the effects of the networks created by each character (Moretti's network theory) on the structure and understanding of narratives; and (c) the socioscientific (sociocultural and anthropological) study of actors which focused on the roles they played within narratives, and how these roles affected the understanding of the narrative. In addition, the socioscientific approach incorporated cross-cultural data from the Ancient Near East and from some non-western (African) customs.

Chapter two studied participants and focused on the devices used by the narrator in the referencing of various participants. This chapter had two parts. The first studied participant referencing by applying the distributional model of de Regt (1991–92, 1999a, b) and the discourse-functional model of Runge (2007); and the second applied tools developed by the ETCBC, which have been used for the CALAP and Turgama projects. The distributional and discourse-functional approaches laid ground work for an understanding of the linguistic approach of the ETCBC which formed the basis of this study. In this research I realised that the scope of participants within Genesis 27–28 was broader than the devices which are currently in place and that these devices were unable to account for the complex nature and types of participants in BH narratives. Thus, the three-fold classification into main, minor and prop, is unsatisfactory and had affected the way both Runge and de Regt observed the distribution and functions of devices in BH narratives. To account for the insufficiency of the three-fold classification, I proposed a seven-fold classification, which affected both the meaning and functions of participants. I began by arguing that the patriarchal narratives should be read with the *Toledoth* of Terah, Isaac and Jacob forming major structural boundaries and posited that the *Toledoth* formulae are linguistic markers which indicate a change in the *main* actant and also introduced a new phase in the activities of actants. I also argued that the *Toledoth* introduce the stories of Terah, Isaac and Jacob whom I called the *main* actants. Besides the major, minor and prop, as types of participants, I added the main, central, dominant and dominated participants.

In addition, I argued that once a participant is activated, the participant remains active or semi-active throughout the narrative section. The main reason for this assertion was my difficulty to be exact in determining the amount of length of absence that led a participant to be inert or inactive. When Runge applied his approach to Genesis 27, for example, he placed Esau and Jacob on the same activation scale. But a closer look at the narrative indicated that Jacob was reactivated in Gen 27:6—"518 clause atoms" after his last occurrence in Gen 25:34; while Esau was reactivated in Gen 27:1—"22 clause atoms" after his last occurrence in Gen 26:34. The same applied to Isaac with three clause atoms. Also, when Esau was reactivated in Gen 27:1, his reference was overencoded more than that of Jacob who seemed to be offline from Gen 25:34. Therefore the narrator considered that these actants were still active and the references served for continuation and contrast between Esau and Jacob respectively or for other purposes. Based on my argument, all the participants in this narrative section were active and the implication was that the *main* participant was never "*not there*" because the story was his story and that all the participants were major participants. Each time an actant played a passive role, I argued that the said actant was being *dominated* by the more active (*dominant*) actant. Furthermore, the participant around whom the narrative revolved occupied a central position (*central* participant—*hero* in the literary approach) and this participant was different from that about whom the story was written (*main* participant). In Genesis 27–28, Isaac qualified as the main participant because it was his story and as long as he lived. In the same light, Jacob qualified as the central participant because the story revolved around him.

When I applied Runge's approach (S1/N1–S5/N5) to Gen 27:1–28:5, I found some gaps. Notable was Runge's argument that the S1 and S2 contexts were S1/N1 and S2/N2 respectively, with elided non-subjects. Also, I applied Runge's model to the computer text hierarchy and the results highlight the insufficiency of the S1/N1–S5/N5 model because of it relied on the limited referencing devices in use. First, Runge's model did not provide for the recognition of narratives embedded in discursive sections nor identified embedded (sub)paragraphs. Second, it did not provide for an activation context when an actant was involved in a monologue. When I applied this model to the study of Genesis 27–28, I considered that Jacob was in the S1 context in the monologues of Gen 28:16–22 and argued that Runge's model needed further expansion to be able to account for monologues (maybe an inclusion of another S-context besides the S1 and S1+ contexts). Besides there were other contexts that this model could not account for (e.g. N4+N2 contexts). More crucial was the fact that a clause in this model was split into further clauses by the ETCBC encoding. Nevertheless, Anchoring Relations provided an important referencing device in Runge's model. Besides its use for activation, the Anchoring Relation (AR) also had pragmatic functions (salience, thematic highlighting, cataphoric highlighting, POV, switching in centre of attention, and determining the central participant), albeit Runge's use of this device for thematic and cataphoric highlighting remained disputable.

The second part of chapter two studied the text-syntactic approach to participant referencing based on the encoding of the ETCBC. I presented arguments for the text hierarchy which explained how daughter clauses were syntactically connected to the mother clauses at various levels in the text hierarchy. An important argument of the ETCBC model was its search for coherence and cohesion from linguistic signals within the text. On the narrative level, the signals included grammatical features (clause types), morphological and lexical relations (between two clauses), and syntactic markers of paragraphs and patterns of participant reference (Talstra 1997:88–89). In Genesis 27–28, the following connections occurred at the narrative level:

- *At the phrase-level clause atoms:* (a) participial clauses connected to the immediately preceding clause or to each other (when they appeared in parallel) before connecting to another clause; (b) relative clauses connected to the immediately preceding clause; (c) infinitive clauses connected to the immediately preceding clause; (d) NmCIs connected to the immediately preceding clause; and (e) other adjunct clauses connected to the immediately preceding clause.
- *At the text-level clause types:* (a) WayX clauses connected to each other; (b) WayX clauses connected to Way0 clauses; (c) Way0 clauses connected to each other; (d) Way0 clauses connected to WayX clauses; (e) WXQtI clauses connected to WayX clauses; and (f) Way0 clauses connected to xQtI (27:36d), xYqtI (27:33h, i) and WxQtI (27:16), when a narrative was embedded in a discursive.
- *Paragraph markers at various levels:* (a) Clause level [WayX (where X = NP), Way0 (indicated by change in roles of participants), and WXQtI]. (b) Meta narrative level (וידי) and (c) כי + InfC + NP.
- *Morphological connections* with the same PNG of verb, prefix of verb or suffix of verb and NP or similar verb forms.
- *Lexical patterns* with syntactic constructions between clauses.
- *Participants and types:*
 - Individual and type: (a) Isaac—main participant; (b) Jacob—central participant; (c) Rebekah—major participant; and (d) Esau—major participant.
 - Set of participants and types: (a) Isaac (dominant) and Esau (dominated); (b) Rebekah (dominant) and Jacob (dominated); (c) Isaac (dominant) and Jacob (dominated); and (d) Rebekah (dominant) and Isaac (dominated).

The ETCBC model also indicated syntactic connections within the narrative discursive sections which I discussed under communication level analysis with intention to understand from a syntactic perspective how cohesion and coherence was achieved in the whole of Genesis 27–28. To meet the requirements, I derived a structure from the text hierarchy and discussed how phrases connected with each other to build clauses; and how the clauses connected to build up the whole narrative in a meaningful manner. I compared the structure to that of Runge and de Regt to further highlight the differences between the encoding of the ETCBC and other approaches. It was within the discussion of the coherence and cohesion of this narrative from a linguistic perspective that the importance of the ETCBC approach was appreciated. This led me to present some advantages of this approach over those already applied by Runge and de Regt. The primary and notable advantage was the computer-human interactive approach of the ETCBC which facilitated the processing of a narrative with paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraph marking and an indication of the connections between the clauses—something which would probably take a long time to be performed manually, yet with a lot of deficiencies. I concluded by pointing out how the ETCBC encoding had an edge over other approaches because it sought to identify forms and their distribution by applying computer operations.

The focus of the third chapter was on the literary approaches to the study of Genesis 27–28. Three aspects of literary approaches considered were: character and characterisation, characterisation and literary structure, and character-systems (network theory). The first two aspects focused on the qualitative analysis of the narrative and the third focused on the quantitative analysis.

After introducing the literary theory, I built upon the works of Bar-Efrat, Alter, Berlin, Sternberg, and Gunn and Fewell, and developed a methodological approach to the qualitative analysis of this chapter. I noted that Berlin differentiated her approach from the other authors by expanding Forster's two-fold classification of characters to a three-fold, to account for the changing nature of characters within a narrative. She moved further to discuss POV as the perspective from which a narrative is written. I also noted that all authors unconsciously applied linguistic signals to trace characters and relate them to their actions or traits analeptically or proleptically as follows: (a) use of name to introduce or activate a character; (b) use of epithet or name plus epithet, as a literary device (analepsis or prolepsis); (b) use of pronouns to continue to trace and relate a character to his or her activities; and (c) application of delayed naming as a method to indicate a character's change from a lower to an upper category. The authors failed to determine the effects of such devices on the narrative structure. I used Fokkelman's stylistic concentric (ABCB'A') and symmetric (ABC C'B'A') reading approaches to illustrate how this failure had led to multiple structures for the same narrative (sub)unit. At the same time, I argued, based on Walsh's study of BH narrative structures, that the linguistic signals could bridge the seeming differences between the linguistic and literary structures of narratives. When Walsh studied structures in BH, he differentiated between text based structural markers and other stylistic structural markers. I found out that Walsh's text based markers agreed to a larger extent with the linguistic structural markers of the ETCBC database encoding. In addition, I incorporated Moretti's network theory, whose base was the quantitative analysis of characters and their relations, to develop a methodological approach to enlighten our reading and understanding of how individuals' portrayals, relations and spheres of influence helped in the transfer of the patriarchal blessings in Genesis 27–28; and also, the effects that the methods of portrayal had on the structure of this narrative section. I posited that prior knowledge of a character from other narrative sections influenced how the reader understood the way the characters in Genesis 27–28 were portrayed. Based on this prior knowledge and portrayal of the characters in previous narrative sections, I studied the portrayal of these characters in Genesis 27–28. While all the characters were portrayed by name, name plus epithet or only by epithet, there were traits unique to each character which formed part of their portrayal.

Isaac was also portrayed as: (a) weak and easily manipulated, dependent upon Rebekah, one with waning senses, one who was indecisive and lacked will power, and old and blind. From the portrayals, I argued that: (a) Isaac acted as an individual (Gen 27:1–47); (b) Isaac acted as family head (Gen 27:48–29:9); (c) the narrator used *his father* analeptically referring to Abraham as custodian of the patriarchal blessing; and (d) the narrator applied *Isaac his father* to portray one who was caught between what he liked and what he had to do. Therefore, Isaac presented a multi-complex personality and fulfilled the requirements of a *full-fledged* character.

Rebekah's unique traits could be summed up as: active and decisive, one who acted with foresight, affectionate, independent and uncompromising, and creative and innovative. Thus, she presented a multi-complex personality and fulfilled the requirements of a *full-fledged* character.

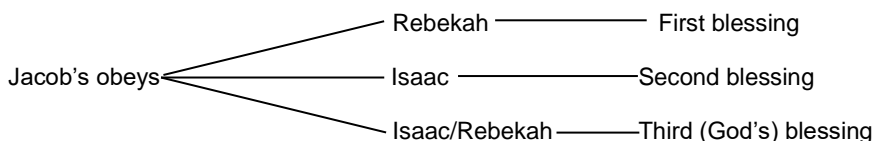
Unique to Esau's portrayal were: his hairy nature (hairy man), his hunting skill (hunter- man of the field), his plans to slay Jacob (one who planned murder); his carefree nature (spurned his birthright), and his disobedience (one who married without parental consent and outside the patriarchal pedigree). Esau too presented a multi-complex personality which made him a *full-fledged* character.

Jacob possessed the following unique traits: his smooth skin (man of the tents or man of integrity—which contrasted him with Esau), one who feared to be

cursed, one who obeyed, Esau (firstborn son)—when he presented himself to Isaac for the blessing), and deceiver. In the same line with the other characters, Jacob presented a multi-complex personality and also classified as *full-fledged*. From the portrayals of Esau and Jacob, I construed that the narrator applied the technique of contrast as illustrated in the table below.

Esau	Jacob
Esau his son	Jacob her son
Esau his elder son	Jacob her younger son
Esau her elder son	Jacob her younger son
His son	Her son
Hairy skin	Smooth skin
Disobey (inferred)	Obey

When I evaluated the characters vis-à-vis their various portrayals, I noted that literary analysts regarded Isaac and Esau (protagonists?) as victims, with Rebekah and Jacob (antagonists?) as their victimisers. Nevertheless, I argued that such an evaluation was imposed upon the text rather than drawn from it. One of such evaluations, for example, was the claim that Jacob tricked Esau to sell his birthright. The narrative section of Gen 25:29–34 actually presented Jacob bargaining for this birthright. But this was not mentioned again by the narrator or by Jacob. In Gen 27:11, Jacob pointed out a danger of sitting in for Esau (his smooth skin) and did not claim that he had bought the birthright. Therefore, it was unlikely that Jacob acted from this background. I also construed that this was the narrator's technique which presented Esau as a care free person—one who spurned the value of heirship and consequently could compromise the future of the family and its inheritance. Alternatively, if the sale of the birthright was regarded as a *fait accompli*, then the trickster should have been Esau who having sold the birthright hurried to go and hunt as an attempt to outsmart Jacob. Although this is possible, it is not found in the narrative. However, this argument could enlighten the moral and theological dimensions of this narrative. Against external arguments from assumptions which the narrator remained silent, I argued that the narrator's portrayals of Jacob highlighted some possible reasons why Jacob became heir—the most important being his obedience. This obedience could be summarised as shown below.



It is important to mention here that Jacob's obedience did not portray Esau as one who never obeyed. The narrative indicated that Esau obeyed Isaac and went out to hunt. Nonetheless, if his marriages were an issue of disobedience then the narrative portrayed him as one who did not follow the most important aspects of the patriarchal customs, which in turn affected his position as potential heir. I concluded this part with a discussion of the structural effects of characterisation and character's POV with a focus on the narrator's use of name, macro-syntactic markers (הנה, הנה, הנה, הנה, הנה) and direct discourse and narration.

The second part of chapter three studied the effects of character portrayal on the structure of Genesis 27–28 with a focus on how the ETCBC linguistic approach could complement Fokkelman's concentric and symmetric stylistic reading. I began by

illustrating the multiple structures that literary analysts had for this narrative section with none similar to the other. This gave me the opportunity to build upon Walsh's text based structural markers to discuss their similarities and differences to those of the ETCBC encoding. Amazingly, the results indicated that there were more similarities than differences. I applied these markers to Genesis 27–28 and developed a symmetric (ABCC'B'A') structure based on the ETCBC text hierarchy encoding. When I compared the structure to that of some literary analysts (especially Fokkelman), I came up with the following assumptions:

- Concentric and symmetric (sub)unit markers do not occur linearly but at various levels in the substratum of the text. The stylistic layout does not indicate the level of the (sub)units in the text hierarchy or text substratum.
- Concentric and symmetric (sub)unit markers can be embedded (sub)paragraphs.
- Other concentric and symmetric structures can occur within larger ones.
- Embedded (sub)units contain details which shape a reader's understanding of the narrative.
- The stylistic arrangements build up to the central (sub)unit(s) which may or may not contain the turning point or climax of the narrative. The climax is the turning point in the narrative structure which can force a denouement. This implies that (sub)units can have other turning points, which do not initiate a denouement.
- Labels of the concentric or symmetric (sub)unit must agree with the whole narrative section.
- Concentric and symmetric (sub)units should mirror each other in a reverse direction.
- Concentric and symmetric (sub)unit markers should follow the text based markers.
- The concentric or symmetric (sub)units labelled A–A' of every narrative (sub)unit should begin and end with the character that is the focus of the narrative [the character whose story is told—*main character* or the character who is the focus of the (sub)unit].

I applied these assumptions to Genesis 27–28 and to other narratives in Jacob's *Toldoth* (Genesis 37 and 38) and discussed the similarities, differences and implications of these assumptions on the structure and the understanding of the three chosen narrative sections. I concluded that that concentric (ABCB'A') and symmetric (ABCC'B'A') structural markers should follow the linguistic markers that used by Walsh and the ETCBC database, while the non-text markers could be stylistic embellishments to foster the understanding of the narrative. The following linguistic markers were found useful in this investigation:

- Change of character(s) and/or set of characters.
- Explicit use of character's name in the subject position.
- Change of setting
 - a. Time—marked by **וַיְהִי**.
 - b. Place—marked by movement.

- i. Within the same locality (action verbs—come, go or bring).
 - ii. Change of geographical location (action verbs—come or go).
- Change in the narrative tense—Wayyiqtol to WXQatal or vice versa.
- The *Toledoth* formulae as major (sub)unit markers in the patriarchal narratives.

The third part of chapter three focused on the application of Franco Moretti's network theory. After defining the theory, I applied it to study the character networks created by the interactions between Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, Jacob and God. Three character-systems were considered: (a) complete character-system—where a link occurred between two characters if a speaking act was involved (Moretti's approach); (b) complete dialogue character-system—where speaker and addressee uttered at least a single word to each other; and (c) incomplete dialogues—where speaker did not receive a response from the addressee. I engaged in the process of elimination of characters at each stage and measured the distances between characters by counting the number of words as the weighted values for each link. The data collected from Moretti's approach identified Rebekah as the central character in Genesis 27–28. When I applied the same input to Gephi 0.8.2 visualization software to generate weighted degree networks matrices, I established that Moretti's use of central character was synonymous to main character and that he continuously used the words protagonist and antagonist to refer to characters. From my differentiation of main and central character, I construed that the character who spoke the highest number of words was the main character while the one who minimised the distances between the nodes in the network was the central character. In the case of Genesis 27–28, the main character was Isaac and the data confirmed him as the one who spoke the highest number of words. This led me to move a step further to use other centrality indices of Gephi 0.8.2 to generate weighted degree for various characters in the network matrices. The output data confirmed Jacob as the central character because of his ability to cluster other nodes and because of his interconnectedness to important nodes in the character-system. It is important to note that the results were not evident from the character-systems because Moretti's approach did not account for monologues as words spoken to another character. Building upon Moretti's approach, I argued that monologues were prompted by situations in the narrative and that a character who uttered monologues reacted to prompts that contributed to the understanding of a play or a narrative. Without the prompts, the monologues would not be understood. As a result, I accounted for monologues in Genesis 27–28 and followed the same process of measuring the distances and eliminating characters at each stage. The data collected confirmed Jacob as the central character in all character-systems and matrices except where he was eliminated or where he appeared only with Isaac or Rebekah. When I applied this approach to Gephi 0.8.2, Jacob maintained his centrality in both the weighted and non-weighted networks, as well as Isaac as main character. From the studies and application of Moretti's network theory, I construed that: (a) protagonist and antagonist were ambiguous devices of character portrayal; (b) the main character should be differentiated from central character; (c) the main character spoke the highest number of words; (d) monologues should be counted as spoken word; (e) other centrality indices should be applied to determine the central character; and (f) the main and central characters had the ability to maintain their status in every character-system, except where they were eliminated. In conclusion, I argued that the literary ap-

proaches strengthened linguistic markers by further substantiating their uses in various parts of the narrative. In addition, all the literary approaches confirmed that Jacob was the central character—hence, the heir.

Chapter four studies the roles of the individuals in Genesis 27–28 from a socioscientific perspective which represented a different approach from chapters two and three. It sought to understand how socioscientific approaches could enlighten our understanding of Genesis 27–28. At the beginning of this chapter I argued that the narrator's application of sociolinguistics made this approach valid. This led me to the works of Selman (1974, 1980), Steinberg (1993), Boase (2001) and Adamo (1998, 2001), who presented various aspects on the application of social sciences to the study of the Old Testament. Selman studied the effects of archaeological discoveries on Old Testament interpretation and concluded by advocating for a careful appropriation of the material not as proof of historical existence and dating of the patriarchal period, but as information that could inform scholars of the nature of the patriarchal cultures. Steinberg applied sociology and anthropology to the study of the patriarchal narratives from a house economic perspective, incorporated cross-cultural data analysis and set three criteria for a potential heir. Adamo applied (some) African cultural customs to the study of the Old Testament and claimed that the similarities were not a coincidence but evidence that the interactions between Africans and the Ancient Israelites helped to shape Ancient Israelite cultural practices.

I also argued that the ancient archaeological material and non-western (African) customs could inform our understanding and interpretation of the Old Testament and I differentiated my approach from the others by focusing on how the similarities within these customs and the archaeological discoveries developed from within the biblical narrative. I engaged in the study of the sociocultural and anthropological settings of the patriarchs by understanding the nature of the patriarchal family and the roles that kinship and marriage played within such families. With the understanding of the kinship and patriarchal family, I studied the concept of firstborn and firstborn rights from the biblical, ANE and some non-western (African) perspectives and established that both primogeniture and ultimogeniture was applicable. However, the potential heir had to meet certain prerequisites. When I studied the roles of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob in Genesis 27–28 and how these roles were developed, I focused on how these roles and their development had affected the choice of heir. I then incorporated cross-cultural data from ANE and some African (Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Swaziland) customs to enlighten the understanding of these roles and developed the following criteria for the choice of heir: having the correct mother, being the firstborn, having the correct wife, being obedient, and possessing the family/Abrahamic blessings. I noted that both Esau and Jacob were qualified to be heir and that the one who met the set criteria deserved to be heir. I applied the above criteria to Esau and Jacob to uncover how each of them developed their heirship potentials and found out that Jacob exploited every opportunity with the help of Rebekah to follow the customs of the patriarchs. Jacob obeyed his parents and waited for them to arrange for his marriage just as it happened to Isaac. On the contrary, Esau married out of his parents' consent and his wives made life bitter for his parents. While Rebekah aided Jacob, I argued that his personal comportment gave him an advantage over Esau. Since Rebekah's input to the transfer of Isaac's blessing continues to undergo scrutiny, I added a portion which examined how she developed her motherhood qualities to influence Isaac's choice of heir. Important to Rebekah's motherhood qualities were: eavesdropping, active influences on every family member's decisions, exerting authority, holding her family in equilibrium, being diplomatic, and being family focused. When I concluded this chapter, I mentioned that there was evidence from the

text that Rebekah's intervention in Gen 27:41–46 was an acceptable cultural norm because of the possibility to reverse the blessing. If Isaac was not satisfied, he would have mentioned it. Also, if Jacob's comportment and obedience were equated to moral uprightness of a **איש תם** then this agreed with my argument for a reassessment of these characters from both the moral and theological perspectives. Isaac's ratification of his wife's choice and his voluntary handing of a second blessing supported this assertion. Based on this, God's later blessing of Jacob did not contradict, but conformed to the ethical and cultural norms of the patriarchs.

5.2. CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1. *Conclusions on the Linguistic Approaches*

In the linguistic approaches, I focused on the distributional (de Regt) and discourse-functional (Runge) approaches to participant referencing, on the one hand; and the text-syntactic (ETCBC) approach to participant referencing on the other. I identified similarities and differences and also highlighted the contribution of the ETCBC's text-syntactic approach. From the text-syntactic approach of Genesis 27–28, I reached the following conclusions:

- Participants in BH narratives are complex and a proper study requires a classification that can properly account for these complexities.
- The three-fold classification of participants (major, minor and prop) is unable to account for the changing nature of participants from one (sub)paragraph to the next within the same narrative section. Hence, our approach has proposed an expansion to include the main, central, dominant and dominated participants. In Genesis 27–28, Isaac is the main participant and Jacob is the central participant.
- The length of absence of a participant is not a good criterion to be applied to classify participants or to determine the amount of encoding required to reactivate a participant in a narrative. Our *Toledoth* approach noticed that participants in Genesis 27–28 were active in the preceding narrative sections or other patriarchal narrative sections and I have argued that all the participants are major and active at the beginning of Genesis 27–28. Also, due to the ambiguity involved to determine the length of absence that makes a participant fade into inactivity, we have construed that once a participant is activated, the participant remains active or semi-active within the narrative section and does not fall into inactivity, regardless of the number of intervening participants. Hence, the activation of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob in Genesis 25 is enough to keep them active throughout the *Toledoth* of Isaac.
- Participant activation by Anchoring provides an avenue for the participants to progress into a major participant. Once a participant progresses into a major participant, it does not recline to a minor participant. Hence, a prop or minor participant in one narrative section can become a major participant in another section.
- Anchoring Relations provide a place for an activated participant in a narrative, define centrality and pragmatically mark significance. In addition, Anchoring Relations call for the application of sociolinguistics to the study of Genesis 27–28.

- The method of participant referencing has semantic, processing and pragmatic effects. There continue to be discrepancies on how the narrator applies devices and their effects on the narrative. This is based on several factors which include difficulties to deal with a huge linguistic corpus and the inability of the linguist to clearly recognise and identify the devices. The ETCBC has applied linguistic conventions to create a human-computer interactive linguistic database which has been applied to this study with useful results, increasing consistency and minimising the errors.
- The ETCBC linguistic approach to the study of narratives provides a visual text hierarchy which can enable linguists to understand the syntactic relations between clauses and also to clearly identify the devices applied by the narrator for participant referencing. The main aim of this approach is to identify all formal devices and their distribution within the narrative.

5.2.2. *Conclusions on the Literary Analysis approaches*

The literary approaches focused on characters and characterisation; the effects of the methods of portrayal on the understanding of narratives; the use of stylistic devices and their effects on the marking of (sub)units; and Moretti's network theory. When I applied these approaches to the study of characters in Genesis 27–28, I reached the following conclusions:

- Characters present multi-complex personalities which require a wider scope of classification to account for their changing behaviour. The classification of round and flat has been unable to account for this multiple behaviour. Berlin's scope of classification provides a basis, albeit she is unable to differentiate between a main and a central character.
- The *main* character is the one about whom a narrative is written and a *central* character is the one around whom a narrative revolves. Following our *Toledoth* reading approach, Genesis 27–28 is a (sub)unit within Isaac's *Toledoth*. Isaac is the *main* character because it is his *Toledoth* and Jacob is the *central* character because the narrative revolves around him.
- The understanding of the methods of character portrayal in Genesis 27–28 considers how these characters have been portrayed in other patriarchal narratives. This is justified because the reader applies prior knowledge to continue to understand the characters.
- Character portrayal also serves to indicate a progression and change in status within a narrative.
- The use of pronouns and verbal inflection is important to connect a character to the narrator's portrayal of the character. This provides the reader with tools that the narrator applies to keep a character to its traits. Thus, pronouns and verbal inflection also serve as methods of portrayal.
- The method of character portrayal affects the reading and understanding of narratives. In Genesis 27–28, all the characters are full-fledged characters and the narrator's use of name or epithet to portray the characters have both analeptic and proleptic effects.

- The nature of POV has both explicit and implicit effects in a narrative and a proper understanding of characters requires both.
- The method of character portrayal affects the structure of a narrative. This has led to a multiplicity of structures for the same narrative unit. The influence of the concentric (ABCB'A') and symmetric (ABCC'B'A') stylistic approach to the reading of narratives has been considered. The aim has been to bridge the gap between literary stylists and linguists. Our study has indicated that literary stylists acknowledge the importance of linguistic structural markers. Building upon Walsh's (2001) notion of text based literary markers, the linguistic approach of the ETCBC and our *Toledoth* reading approach, I have proposed rules for demarcating the concentric and symmetric structures of Genesis 27–28, 37 and 38.
- Characters form networks which can be used to determine their spheres of influence, closeness to power and authority. The distance between characters can be measured as a method to determine the main and central characters of a narrative. In Genesis 27–28, I applied Franco Moretti's Network Theory and incorporated the Gephi 0.8.2 software for the analysis of various character-systems. The results obtained concur that Isaac is the main character and Jacob is the central character.

5.2.3. *Conclusions on the Socioscientific Approaches*

The socioscientific approach focused on the application of archaeological findings from the ANE and cross-cultural data from some African customs to the study of roles in Genesis 27–28. From this study, I reached the following conclusions:

- Archaeological findings are important assets to the study and understanding of the patriarchal narratives. The many tables and customs of the ANE can inform readers on the nature of the patriarchal customs. Although they originate from varying places, they portray similar practices as those found in the patriarchal narratives. Nevertheless, it will be unacceptable to use such finding as proof of the historicity of the patriarchs. Many ANE tablets discuss the issue of the roles of parents and children, as well as what is required for would be heirs. Prominent is the issue of the firstborn and firstborn rights. Our study has indicated that the issue of primogeniture was widely accepted, although its understanding had various implications which are very different from those of our current understanding. Being a firstborn, for example, was not a biological process but a matter of a given privilege. Hence, a son could be adopted to bear the title firstborn.
- Some non-western (African) customs are also important to the understanding of the patriarchal narratives and Genesis 27–28. The claim that an interaction occurred between the patriarchs and some African customs cannot be ignored. These African customs also present similar practices as found in the patriarchal narratives.
- Cross-cultural data from some African customs which is relevant to Genesis 27–28 mentions that the father had the right to choose an heir. Nevertheless, this choice could be influenced by the family because the heir had to carry the responsibilities of the father of the

family. There is also an indication that the choice could be overruled depending on the comportment of the chosen heir.

- From both the ANE and some African customs, the honour, respect and obedience of parents (especially the mother) is a strong requirement. Cross-cultural data indicates that customs allowed for the disinheritation of an heir on grounds of disrespect. Thus, in Genesis 27–28, Rebekah's role as a mother is indispensable with regards to the choice of heir.
- Rebekah's actions are not condemned by the narrator because they are probably acceptable within the cultural norms. Isaac also does not condemn her but approves her choice. Whatever Rebekah does to sway the heirship to Jacob constitutes her motherhood qualities and she acts within the confines of the patriarchal customs.
- A son becomes an heir based upon his personal comportment to the family and not only to the father. Cross-cultural data supports this and in Genesis 27–28, Jacob is the only one who is said to have obeyed his father and mother. The narrative does not indicate that Esau had respect for his mother. It is Jacob's obedience which, as I have argued, formed the basis of his success.

5.2.4. *General Concluding Remarks*

The summaries and conclusions from the various approaches lead us back to the preliminary questions the focus of which has been to investigate the compatibility of the linguistic, literary and sociocultural and anthropological approaches to the study of Genesis 27–28.

When I began, I argued for the primacy of the linguistic approach. This approach which together with the literary approach constituted the ahistorical reading of Genesis 27–28 took the text as it was in its final form. The historical-cultural approach also considered the final form of the text as a starting point. This set a point of agreement for both the ahistorical and historical-cultural reading methods. The ahistorical reading of this narrative section did not necessarily cancel historical-cultural questions but reinforced them by exposing the language of the portion which called for a historical-cultural inquiry. Participants (linguistic) in Genesis 27–28 were referenced using linguistic signals which portrayed (characterised) various character traits or behaviour of the characters, made concrete in the various roles they played within the narrative. The advantage of the primacy of the ahistorical approach was its ability to expose some social practices through the narrator's application of sociolinguistics. It was at this point that the historical-cultural reading could then ask questions or apply other approaches to explain the practical implications of sociolinguistics. I have argued that when the narrator identified Isaac as "father," for example, it had linguistic, literary and sociocultural implications.

- Linguistically, a father is a participant or a clause constituent in syntactic relationship with others.
- Literarily, a father could denote a male in relation to his natural or adopted children, the head of a family or generation; or an ancestor.
- Socioculturally, a father does not necessarily go with age or child bearing. It can be a status given by the community in honour of such services which reflect those of one seen from the linguistic and literary perspectives. In addition, father defines a role within a social hierarchy.

First, from the linguistic understanding, it is then appropriate to investigate the implication of the designation of father and the roles that come with it within the cultures where the narrative originate. In addition to the primacy of the linguistic approach, I also argued that the use of the final form of the text marked a crucial point of agreement. Second, although I applied cross-cultural data to study the roles, the narrative formed the basis to the understanding of these roles. The basic question had been how these roles developed within the narrative. To understand the roles, linguistic devices had also been essential. Third, the text-syntactic approach laid ground work for proper interpretation. Structure was very important in the understanding of the narrative. Hence the text-syntactic approach identified the markers of (sub)paragraphs and embedded (sub)paragraphs which could enable the literary stylists or analysts to carry out proper analysis. Fourth, the fact that all three approaches identified Jacob as the heir gave evidence of their compatibility. This implied that the sharp demarcation between approaches to biblical interpretation could not be sustained anymore. While each approach has a different focus, the understanding of the narrative is crucial.

But what about the moral and theological problems that came with the reading of this narrative? The actions of Rebekah and Jacob remained problematic although I argued that they acted within acceptable patriarchal norms; and that God's blessing of Jacob conformed to the patriarchal customs. The text indicated the coming together of Jacob, Rebekah and Isaac before Jacob's departure to Paddan Aram. The blessing that Isaac gave to Jacob before his departure was unsolicited and this could be an approval of Rebekah actions. Jacob's key quality had been his obedience and comportment to follow in the footsteps of the patriarchs before him (especially on the issue of marriage and obedience). While the process of acquisition of the first blessing was questionable, the wordings of the second blessing indicated Isaac's satisfaction with the one who would carry the patriarchal mantle. Thus, he invoked the Abrahamic blessing upon Jacob. Based on these, it was probable to conclude that the problem might be in our approach to the narrative from our various perspectives which failed to capture the sociocultural and anthropological undertones in the narrative. Furthermore, since the text did not condemn Rebekah or Jacob, it would be unjust to condemn them either.

This research had been a modest attempt to contribute to the compatibility of the linguistic text-syntactic, literary, socioscientific studies of Genesis 27–28. While I hope to have contributed to the arguments that make up the understanding of this pericope, I must acknowledge that my approach is a single dimension and cannot in anyway answer all the questions related to this text.

Appendix 1: Hebrew Text

	Cl#	§	Gen.	verse	Clause type	Narrative type
ויהי	1	#	27	01a	Way0	N
כִּי־זָקֵן יִצְחָק	2		27	01b	xQtlX	N
וּתְכַהֵן עֵינָיו	3	#	27	01c	WayX	N
מֵרֵאָתָּה	4		27	01d	InfC	N
וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ הַגָּדֹל	5		27	01e	Way0	N
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו	6		27	01f	Way0	N
בְּנִי	7		27	01g	Voct	NQ
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו	8	#	27	01h	Way0	N
הַנָּנִי	9		27	01i	NmCl	NQ
וַיֹּאמֶר	10	#	27	02a	Way0	N
הַנְּהִינָא זִקְנָתִי	11		27	02b	xQtl0	NQ
לֹא יָדַעְתִּי יוֹם מוֹתִי	12		27	02c	xQtl0	NQ
וַעֲתָה	13		27	03a	MSyn	NQ
שֹׁאֵנָא כְּלִיךְ תְּלִיךְ וּקְשֶׁתְךָ	14		27	03b	ZIm0	NQ
וְצֵא הַשָּׂדֶה	15		27	03c	WIm0	NQ
וְצֹרֶה לִי צִידָה	16		27	03d	WIm0	NQ
וַעֲשֵׂה־לִּי מִטַּעֲמִים	17		27	04a	WIm0	NQ
כְּאִשֶּׁר אֶהְבֹּתִי	18		27	04b	xQtl0	NQ
וְהִנֵּי־אֵהָלָה לִּי	19		27	04c	WIm0	NQ
וְאֹכְלָה	20		27	04d	WYqtl0	NQ
בַּעֲבוּר תְּבַרְכֵּךְ נַפְשִׁי	21		27	04e	xYqtlX	NQ
בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת	22		27	04f	xYqtl0	NQ
וּרְבִקָּה שָׁמַעַת	23		27	05a	Ptcp	N
בְּדַבַּר יִצְחָק אֶל־עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ	24		27	05b	InfC	N
וַיִּלֶּךְ עָשָׂו הַשָּׂדֶה	25	#	27	05c	WayX	N
לְצֹרֶה צִיד	26		27	05d	InfC	N
לְהֵבִיא	27		27	05e	InfC	N
וּרְבִקָּה אָמְרָה אֶל־יַעֲקֹב בְּנָה	28	#	27	06a	WXQtl	N
לֹאֲמֹר	29		27	06b	infC	N
הִנֵּה שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת־אֲבִיךָ	30		27	06c	xQtl0	NQ
מִדְּבַר אֶל־עֵשָׂו אֲחִיךָ	31		27	06d	Ptcp	NQ
לֹאֲמֹר	32		27	06e	InfC	NQ
הִבִּיאָה־לִּי צִיד	33		27	07a	ZIm0	NQQ
וַעֲשֵׂה־לִּי מִטַּעֲמִים	34		27	07b	WIm0	NQQ
וְאֹכְלָה	35		27	07c	WYqtl0	NQQ
וְאֲבִרְכֶכָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לִפְנֵי מוֹתִי	36		27	07d	WYqtl0	NQQ
וַעֲתָה	37		27	08a	MSyn	NQ
בְּנִי	38		27	08b	Voct	NQ
שָׁמַע בְּקִלִּי	39		27	08c	ZIm0	NQ

לאשר אני מצוה אתך	40		27	08d	NmCl	NQ
לך-נא אל-הצאן	41		27	09a	ZIm0	NQ
וקח-לי משם גדי עזים שנים	42		27	09b	WIm0	NQ
ואעשה אתם משעמים לאביך	43		27	09c	WYqtI0	NQ
כאשר אהב	44		27	09d	xQtI0	NQ
והבאת לאביך	45		27	10a	WQtI0	NQ
ואכל	46		27	10b	WQtI0	NQ
בעבר אשר יברכך לפני מותו	47		27	10c	xYqtI0	NQ
ויאמר יעקב אל-רבקה אמו	48	#	27	11a	WayX	N
הן עשו אחי איש שער	49		27	11b	NmCl	NQ
ואנכי איש חלק	50		27	11c	NmCl	NQ
אולי ימשני אבי	51		27	12a	xYqtIX	NQ
והייתי בעיניו כמתעתע	52		27	12b	WQtI0	NQ
והבאתי עלי קללה	53		27	12c	WQtI0	NQ
ולא ברכה	54		27	12d	Ellp	NQ
ותאמר לו אמו	55	#	27	13a	WayX	N
עלי קללתך	56		27	13b	NmCl	NQ
בני	57		27	13c	Voct	NQ
אך שמע בקלי	58		27	13d	xIm0	NQ
ולך	59		27	13e	WIm0	NQ
קח-לי	60		27	13f	ZIm0	NQ
וילך	61	#	27	14a	Way0	N
ויקח	62		27	14b	Way0	N
ויבא לאמו	63		27	14c	Way0	N
ותעש אמו משעמים	64	#	27	14d	WayX	N
כאשר אהב אביו	65		27	14e	xQtIX	N
ותקח רבקה את-בנדי עשו	66	#	27	15a	WayX	N
בנה הגדל החמדת						
אשר אתה בבית	67		27	15b	NmCl	N
ותלבש את-יעקב בנה הקטן	68		27	15c	Way0	N
ואת ערת גדיי העזים הלבשה	69		27	16	WxQtI0	N
על-ידיו ועל חלקת צואריו						
ותתן את-המשעמים ואת-הלחם	70		27	17a	Way0	N
אשר עשתה	71		27	17b	xQtI0	N
ביד יעקב בנה	72		27	17c	Defc	N
ויבא אל-אביו	73	#	27	18a	Way0	N
ויאמר	74		27	18b	Way0	N
אבי	75		27	18c	Voct	NQ
ויאמר	76	#	27	18d	Way0	N
הנני	77		27	18e	NmCl	NQ
מי אתה	78		27	18f	NmCl	NQ
בני	79		27	18g	Voct	NQ

ויאמר יעקב אל־אביו	80	#	27	19a	WayX	N
אנכי עשו בכרך	81		27	19b	NmCl	NQ
עשיתי	82		27	19c	ZQtI0	NQ
כאשר דברת אלי	83		27	19d	xQtI0	NQ
קום־נא	84		27	19e	ZIm0	NQ
שבה	85		27	19f	ZIm0	NQ
ואכלה מצירי	86		27	19g	WIm0	NQ
בעבור חברכני נפשך	87		27	19h	xYqtIX	NQ
ויאמר יצחק אל־בנו	88	#	27	20a	WayX	N
מה־זה	89		27	20b	NmCl	NQ
מה־הרת	90		27	20c	ZQtI0	NQ
למצא	91		27	20d	InfC	NQ
בני	92		27	20e	Voct	NQ
ויאמר	93	#	27	20f	Way0	N
כי הקרה יהוה אלהיך לפני	94		27	20g	xQtIX	NQ
ויאמר יצחק אל־יעקב	95	#	27	21a	WayX	N
גשה־נא	96		27	21b	ZIm0	NQ
ואמשך	97		27	21c	WYqtI0	NQ
בני	98		27	21d	Voct	NQ
האתה זה	99		27	21e	NmCl	NQ
בני עשו	100		27	21f	Ellp	NQ
אם־לא	101		27	21g	Ellp	NQ
וינש יעקב אל־יצחק אביו	102	#	27	22a	WayX	N
וימשחו	103	#	27	22b	Way0	N
ויאמר	104		27	22c	Way0	N
הקל קול יעקב	105		27	22d	NmCl	NQ
והידים ידי עשו	106		27	22e	NmCl	NQ
ולא הכירו	107		27	23a	WLQtI0	N
כ־היו ידיו כ־ידי עשו אחיו ש־ערת	108		27	23b	xQtIX	N
ויברכהו	109		27	23c	Way0	N
ויאמר	110		27	24a	Way0	N
אתה זה	111		27	24b	Nmcl	NQ
בני עשו	112		27	24c	NmCl	NQ
ויאמר	113	#	27	24d	Way0	N
אני	114		27	24e	NmCl	NQ
ויאמר	115	#	27	25a	Way0	N
הגשה לי	116		27	25b	ZIm0	NQ
ואכלה מציד בני	117		27	25c	WYqtI0	NQ
למען חברכך נפשי	118		27	25d	xYqtIX	NQ
וינש־לו	119	#	27	25e	Way0	N
ויאכל	120	#	27	25f	Way0	N
ויבא לו יין	121	#	27	25g	Way0	N

וישח	122	#	27	25h	Way0	N
ויאמר אליו יצחק אביו	123	#	27	26a	WayX	N
גש-הינא	124		27	26b	ZIm0	NQ
ושקח-לי	125		27	26c	WIm0	NQ
בני	126		27	26d	Voct	NQ
ויגש	127	#	27	27a	Way0	N
וישקח-לו	128	#	27	27b	Way0	N
וירח את-ריח בגדיו	129		27	27c	Way0	N
ויברכהו	130		27	27d	Way0	N
ויאמר	131		27	27e	Way0	N
ראה	132		27	27f	ZIm0	NQ
ריח בני כריח שדה	133		2	27g	Nmcl	NQ
אשר ברכו יהוה	134		27	27h	xQtIX	NQ
ויתן-לך האלהים משל השמים ומשמני הארץ	135		27	28a	WYqtIX	NQ
ורב דגן ותירש	136		27	28b	Ellp	NQ
יעבדוך עמים	137		27	29a	ZYqtIX	NQ
וישתחו לך לאמים	138		27	29b	WYqtIX	NQ
הוה גביר לאחריך	139		27	29c	ZIm0	NQ
וישתחו לך בני אמך	140		27	29d	WYqtIX	NQ
אדריך ארור	141		27	29e	Ptcp	NQ
ומברכך ברוך	142		27	29f	Ptcp	NQ
ויהי	143	#	27	30a	Way0	N
כאשר כלה יצחק	144		27	30b	xQtIX	N
לברך את-יעקב	145		27	30c	InfC	N
ויהי	146		27	30d	Way0	N
אך יצא יעקב מאת פני יצחק אביו	147		27	30e	xQtIX	N
ועשו אחיו בא מצידו	148	#	27	30f	WXQtI	N
ויעש גם-הוא מטעמים	149	#	27	31a	WayPP	N
ויבא לאביו	150		27	31b	Way0	N
ויאמר לאביו	151		27	31c	Way0	N
יקם	152		27	31d	ZYqtI0	NQ
אבי	153		27	31e	Voct	NQ
ויאכל מציד בנו	154		27	31f	WYqtI0	NQ
בעבור חברכני נפשך	155		27	31g	xYqtIX	NQ
ויאמר לו יצחק אביו	156	#	27	32a	WayX	N
מי-אתה	157		27	32b	Nmcl	NQ
ויאמר	158	#	27	32c	Way0	N
אני בנך בכרך עשו	159		27	32d	NmCl	NQ
ויחרר יצחק חרדה גדלה אד-מאד	160	#	27	33a	WayX	N
ויאמר	161		27	33b	Way0	N

מיראפוא האו	162		27	33c	NmCl	NQ
הצד-ציד	163		27	33d	Ptcp	NQ
ויבא לי	164		27	33e	Way0	NQN
ויאכל מכל	165		27	33f	Way0	NQN
בטרם תבוא	166		27	33g	xYqtl0	NQ
ואברכהו	167		27	33h	Way0	NQN
גס-ברוך יהוה	168		27	33i	xYqtl0	NQND
כשמע עשו את-דברי אביו	169	#	27	34a	InfC	N
ויצעק צעקה גדלה ומרה אד-מאד	170		27	34b	Way0	N
ויאמר לאביו	171		27	34c	Way0	N
ברכני	172		27	34d	ZIm0	NQ
גס-אני	173		27	34e	NmCl	NQ
אבי	174		27	34f	Voct	NQ
ויאמר	175	#	27	35a	Way0	N
בא אחיך במרמה	176		27	35b	ZQtlX	NQ
ויקה ברכתך	177		27	35c	Way0	NQN
ויאמר	178	#	27	36a	Way0	N
הכי קרא שמו יעקב	179		27	36b	xQtl0	NQ
ויעקבני זה פעמים	180		27	36c	Way0	NQN
את-בכרתי לקח	181		27	36d	xQtl0	NQN
והנה עתה לקח ברכתי	182		27	36e	WxQtl0	NQN
ויאמר	183		27	36f	Way0	N
הלא-אצלת לי ברכה	184		27	36g	xQtl0	NQ
ויען יצחק	185	#	27	37a	WayX	N
ויאמר לעשו	186		27	37b	Way0	N
הן גביר שמתי לך	187		27	37c	xQtl0	NQ
ואת-כל-אחיו נתתי לו לעבדים	188		27	37d	WxQtl0	NQ
ודגן ותירש סמכתיו	189		27	37e	WxQtl0	NQ
ולכה אפוא	190		27	37f	NmCl	NQ
מה אעשה	191		27	37g	xYqtl0	NQ
בני	192		27	37h	Voct	NQ
ויאמר עשו אל-אביו	193	#	27	38a	WayX	N
הבכה אחת	194		27	38b	CPen	NQ
הוא-לך	195		27	38c	NmCl	NQ
אבי	196		27	38d	Voct	NQ
ברכני	197		27	38e	ZIm0	NQ
גס-אני	198		27	38f	Ellp	NQ
אבי	199		27	38g	Voct	NQ
וישא עשו קלי	200	#	27	38h	WayX	N
ויבך	201		27	38i	Way0	N
ויען יצחק אביו	202	#	27	39a	WayX	N
ויאמר אליו	203		27	39b	Way0	N

הנה משמני הארץ יהיה מושבך	204		27	39c	xYqtlX	NQ
ומטל השמים מעל	205		27	39d	Ellp	NQ
ועל־חרבך תחיה	206		27	40a	WxYqtl0	NQ
ואת־אחיך תעבד	207		27	40b	WxYqtl0	NQ
והיה	208		27	40c	MSyn	NQ
כאשר תריר	209		27	40d	xYqtl0	NQ
ופרכת עלו מעל צוארך	210		27	40e	WQtl0	NQ
וישטם עשו את־יעקב על־הברכה	211	#	27	41a	WayX	N
אשר ברכו אביו	212		27	41b	xQtlX	N
ויאמר עשו בלבו	213	#	27	41c	WayX	N
יקרבו ימי אבל אבי	214		27	41d	ZYqtlX	NQ
ואהרנה את־יעקב אחי	215		27	41e	WYqtl0	NQ
ויגר לרבקה את־דברי עשו בנה הגדל	216		27	42a	Way0	N
ותשלח	217	#	27	42b	Way0	N
ותקרא ליעקב בנה הקטן	218		27	42c	Way0	N
ותאמר אליו	219		27	42d	Way0	N
הנה עשו אחיך מתנחם לך	220		27	42e	Ptcp	NQ
להרנך	221		27	42f	InfC	NQ
ועתה	222		27	43a	MSyn	NQ
בני	223		27	43b	Voct	NQ
שמע בקלי	224		27	43c	ZIm0	NQ
וקים	225		27	43d	WIm0	NQ
ברח־לך אל־לבן אחי הרנה	226		27	43e	ZIm0	NQ
וישבת עמו ימים אחדים	227		27	44a	WQtl0	NQ
עד אשר־תשוב חמת אחיך	228		27	44b	xYqtlX	NQ
עד־שוב אף־אחיך ממך	229		27	45a	InfC	NQ
ושכח	230		27	45b	WQtl0	NQ
את אשר־עשית לו	231		27	45c	xQtl0	NQ
ושלחתי	232		27	45d	WQtl0	NQ
ולקחתיו משם	233		27	45e	WQtl0	NQ
למה אשכל גם־שניכם יום אחד	234		27	45f	xYqtl0	NQ
ותאמר רבקה אל־יצחק	235	#	27	46a	WayX	N
קצתי בחיי מפני בנות חת	236		27	46b	ZQtl0	NQ
אס־לקח יעקב אשה מבנות־חת כאלה מבנות הארץ	237		27	46c	Ptcp	NQ
למה לי חיים	238		27	46d	NmCl	NQ
ויקרא יצחק אל־יעקב	239	#	28	01a	WayX	N
ויברך אתו	240		28	01b	Way0	N
ויצוהו	241		28	01c	Way0	N
ויאמר לו	242		28	01d	Way0	N
לא־תקח אשה מבנות כנען	243		28	01e	xYqtl0	NQ

קום	244		28	02a	ZIm0	NQ
לך פדנה ארם ביתה	245		28	02b	ZIm0	NQ
בתואל אבי אמך						
וקח-לך משם אשה	246		28	02c	WIm0	NQ
מבנות לבן אחי אמך						
ואל שדי יברך אתך	247		28	03a	WXYqtl0	NQ
ויפרך	248		28	03b	WYqtl0	NQ
וירבך	249		28	03c	WYqtl0	NQ
והיית לקהל עמים	250		28	03d	WQtl0	NQ
ויתן-לך את-ברכת אברהם	251		28	04a	WYqtl0	NQ
לך ולזרעך אתך						
לרשתך את-ארץ מגריך	252		28	04b	InfC	NQ
אשר-נתן אלהים לאברהם	253		28	04c	xQtlX	NQ
וישלח יצחק את-יעקב	254	#	28	05a	WayX	N
וילך פדנה ארם אל-לבן בן-בתואל	255	#	28	05b	Way0	N
הארמי אחי רבקה אם יעקב ועשו						
וירא עשו	256	#	28	06a	WayX	N
כי-ברך יצחק את-יעקב	257		28	06b	xQtlX	N
ושלח אתו פדנה ארם	258		28	06c	WQtl0	N
לקחת-לו משם אשה	259		28	06d	InfC	N
בברכו אתו	260		28	06e	InfC	N
ויצו עליו	261	#	28	06f	Way0	N
לאמר	262		28	06g	InfC	N
לא-תקח אשה מבנות כנען	263		28	6h	xYqtl0	NQ
וישמע יעקב אל-אביו ואל-אמו	264	#	28	07a	WayX	N
וילך פדנה ארם	265		28	07b	Way0	N
וירא עשו	266	#	28	08a	WayX	N
כי רעות בנות כנען	267		28	08b	AjCl	N
בעיני יצחק אביו						
וילך עשו אל-ישמעאל	268	#	28	09a	WayX	N
ויקח את-מחלת בתי-ישמעאל בן-	269		28	09b	Way0	N
אברהם אחות נביותעל-נשיו לו לאשה						
ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע	270	#	28	10a	WayX	N
וילך חרנה	271		28	10b	Way0	N
ויפנע במקום	272		28	11a	Way0	N
וילך שם	273		28	11b	Way0	N
כי-בא השמש	274		28	11c	xQtlX	N
ויקח מאבני המקום	275		28	11d	Way0	N
וישם מראשתיו	276		28	11e	Way0	N
וישכב במקום ההוא	277		28	11f	Way0	N
ויחלם	278		28	12a	Way0	N
והנה סלם מצב ארצה	279		28	12b	Ptcp	N

וראשו מניע השמימה	280		28	12c	Ptcp	N
והנה מלאכי אלהים עלים	281		28	12d	Ptcp	N
וירדים בו	282		28	12e	Ptcp	N
והנה יהוה נצב עליו	283		28	13a	NmCl	N
ויאמר	284	#	28	13b	Way0	N
אני יהוה אלהי אברהם	285		28	13c	NmCl	NQ
אביך ואלהי יצחק						
הארץ	286		28	13d	CPen	NQ
אשר אתה שכב עליה	287		28	13e	Ptcp	NQ
לך אתננה	288		28	13f	xYqtl0	NQ
ולזרעך	289		28	13g	Ellp	NQ
והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ	290		28	14a	WQtlX	NQ
ופרצת ימה וקדמה וצפנה ונגבה	291		28	14b	WQtl0	NQ
ונברכו בך כל־משפחת	292		28	14c	WQtlX	NQ
האדמה ובזרעך						
והנה אנכי עמך	293		28	15a	NmCl	NQ
ושמרתוך בכל	294		28	15b	WQtl0	NQ
אשר־תלך	295		28	15c	xYqtl0	NQ
והשבתיך אל־האדמה הזאת	296		28	15d	WQtl0	NQ
כי לא אעזבך	297		28	15e	xYqtl0	NQ
עד אשר אס־עשיתי	298		28	15f	xQtl0	NQ
את אשר־ברתי לך	299		28	15g	xQtl0	NQ
וייקץ יעקב משנתו	300	#	28	16a	WayX	N
ויאמר	301		28	16b	Way0	N
אכן יש יהוה במקום הזה	302		28	16c	NmCl	NQ
ואנכי לא ידעתי	303		28	16d	WXLQtl	NQ
ויירא	304		28	17a	Way0	N
ויאמר	305		28	17b	Way0	N
מה־נורא המקום הזה	306		28	17c	AjCl	NQ
אין זה	307		28	17d	NmCl	NQ
כי אס־בית אלהים	309		28	17e	Ellp	NQ
וזה שער השמים	309		28	17f	NmCl	NQ
וישכם יעקב בבקר	310	#	28	18a	WayX	N
ויקח את־האבן	311		28	18b	Way0	N
אשר־שם מראשתיו	312		28	18c	xQtl0	N
וישם אתה מצבה	313		28	18d	Way0	N
ויצק שמן על־ראשה	314		28	18e	Way0	N
ויקרא את־שם־המקום ההוא בית־אל	315		28	19a	Way0	N
ואולם לזו שם־העיר לראשנה	316		28	19b	NmCl	N
וידר יעקב נדר	317	#	28	20a	WayX	N
לאמר	318		28	20b	InfC	N
אס־יהיה אלהים עמדי	319		28	20c	xYqtlX	NQ

ושמרני בדרך הזה	320		28	20d	WQtI0	NQ
אשר אנכי הולך	321		28	20e	Ptcp	NQ
ונתן-לי לחם	322		28	20f	WQtI0	NQ
לאכל	323		28	20g	InfC	NQ
ובגר	324		28	20h	Defc	NQ
ללבש	325		28	20i	InfC	NQ
ושבתי בשלום אל-בית אבי	326		28	21a	WQtI0	NQ
והיה יהוה לי לאלהים	327		28	21b	WQtIX	NQ
והאבן הזאת	328		28	22a	Defc	NQ
אשר-שמתי מצבה	329		28	22b	xQtI0	NQ
יהיה בית אלהים	330		28	22c	ZYQtI0	NQ
וכל	331		28	22d	CPen	NQ
אשר תתן-לי	332		28	22e	xYqtl0	NQ
עשר אעשרנו לך	333		28	22f	xYqtl0	NQ

Appendix 2A: Applying Runge's S1/N1–S5/N5 Model to the ETCBC Encoding

	Cl#	§	Gen	verse	Clause type	Narra- tive type
ויהי	1	#	27	01a	Way0	N
S4 כי-זקן יצחק	2		27	01b	xQtIX	N
S1 ותכהין עיניו	3	#	27	01c	WayX	N
סמראת	4		27	01d	InfC	N
N4 ויקרא S1 את-עשו בנו הגדל	5		27	01e	Way0	N
N1 ויאמר S1 אלי-ו	6		27	01f	Way0	N
בני	7		27	01g	Voct	NQ
N2 ויאמר S2 אלי-ו	8	#	27	01h	Way0	N
הנני	9		27	01i	NmCl	NQ
S2 ויאמר	10	#	27	02a	Way0	N
הנה-נא זקנתי	11		27	02b	xQtI0	NQ
לא ידעתי יום מותי	12		27	02c	xQtI0	NQ
ועתה	13		27	03a	MSyn	NQ
ש-נא כליך תליך וקשתך	14		27	03b	ZIm0	NQ
וצא השדה	15		27	03c	WIm0	NQ
וצודה לי צידה	16		27	03d	WIm0	NQ
ועשה-לי מטעמים	17		27	04a	WIm0	NQ
כאשר אהבתי	18		27	04b	xQtI0	NQ
והניאה לי	19		27	04c	WIm0	NQ
ואכלה	20		27	04d	WYqtl0	NQ
בעבור חברךך נפשי	21		27	04e	xYqtlX	NQ
בטרם אמות	22		27	04f	xYqtl0	NQ
S4 ורבקה שמועת	23		27	05a	Ptcp	N
N4 בדבר יצחק S4 אל-עשו בנו	24		27	05b	InfC	N

25	#	27	05c	WayX	N
26		27	05d	InfC	N
27		27	05e	InfC	N
28	#	27	06a	WXQtI	N
29		27	06b	infC	N
30		27	06c	xQtI0	NQ
31		27	06d	Ptcp	NQ
32		27	06e	InfC	NQ
33		27	07a	ZIm0	NQQ
34		27	07b	WIm0	NQQ
35		27	07c	WYQtI0	NQQ
36		27	07d	WYQtI0	NQQ
37		27	08a	MSyn	NQ
38		27	08b	Voct	NQ
39		27	08c	ZIm0	NQ
40		27	08d	NmCl	NQ
41		27	09a	ZIm0	NQ
42		27	09b	WIm0	NQ
43		27	09c	WYQtI0	NQ
44		27	09d	xQtI0	NQ
45		27	10a	WQtI0	NQ
46		27	10b	WQtI0	NQ
47		27	10c	xYQtI0	NQ
48	#	27	11a	WayX	N
49		27	11b	NmCl	NQ
50		27	11c	NmCl	NQ
51		27	12a	xYQtIX	NQ
52		27	12b	WQtI0	NQ
53		27	12c	WQtI0	NQ
54		27	12d	Ellp	NQ
55	#	27	13a	WayX	N
56		27	13b	NmCl	NQ
57		27	13c	Voct	NQ
58		27	13d	xIm0	NQ
59		27	13e	WIm0	NQ
60		27	13f	ZIm0	NQ
61	#	27	14a	Way0	N
62		27	14b	Way0	N
63		27	14c	Way0	N
64	#	27	14d	WayX	N
65		27	14e	xQtIX	N
66	#	27	15a	WayX	N

עשו בנה הגרל N4 ^L החמדת				
אשר אתה N3 ^L בבית	67	27	15b	NmCl N
ותלבש S3 ^L את-יעקב בנה הקטן N4 ^L	68	27	15c	Way0 N
ואת ערת גדיי העזים הלבישה S1 ^L	69	27	16	WxQtl0 N
על-ידי ועל חלקת צואריו N1 ^L				
ותתן את-המטעמים ואת-הלחם	70	27	17a	Way0 N
אשר עשתה S1 ^L	71	27	17b	xQtl0 N
ביר יעקב בנה N4 ^L	72	27	17c	Defc N
ויבא S3 ^L אל-אביו N4 ^L	73	# 27	18a	Way0 N
ויאמר S1 ^L	74	27	18b	Way0 N
אבי	75	27	18c	Voct NQ
ויאמר S2 ^L	76	# 27	18d	Way0 N
הנני	77	27	18e	NmCl NQ
מי אתה	78	27	18f	NmCl NQ
בני	79	27	18g	Voct NQ
ויאמר יעקב S2 ^L אל-אביו N2 ^L	80	# 27	19a	WayX N
אנכי עשו בכרך	81	27	19b	NmCl NQ
עשיתי	82	27	19c	ZQtl0 NQ
כאשר דברת אלי	83	27	19d	xQtl0 NQ
קוס-נא	84	27	19e	Zlm0 NQQ
שבה	85	27	19f	Zlm0 NQQ
ואכלה מצדי	86	27	19g	Wlm0 NQQ
בעבור תברכני נפשך	87	27	19h	xYqtlX NQQ
ויאמר יצחק S2 ^L אל-בנו N2 ^L	88	# 27	20a	WayX N
מה-זה	89	27	20b	NmCl NQ
מהרת	90	27	20c	ZQtl0 NQ
למצא	91	27	20d	InfC NQ
בני	92	27	20e	Voct NQ
ויאמר S2 ^L	93	# 27	20f	Way0 N
כי הקרה יהוה אלהיך לפני	94	27	20g	xQtlX NQ
ויאמר יצחק S2 ^L אל-יעקב N2 ^L	95	# 27	21a	WayX N
גש-נא	96	27	21b	Zlm0 NQ
ואמשך	97	27	21c	WYqtl0 NQ
בני	98	27	21d	Voct NQ
האחה זה	99	27	21e	NmCl NQ
בני עשו	100	27	21f	Ellp NQ
אס-לא	101	27	21g	Ellp NQ
ויגש יעקב S2 ^L אל-יצחק אביו N2 ^L	102	# 27	22a	WayX N
וימשהו S3/N3 ^L	103	# 27	22b	Way0 N
ויאמר S1 ^L	104	27	22c	Way0 N

הקל קול יעקב	105	27	22d	NmCl	NQ
והידים ידי עשו	106	27	22e	NmCl	NQ
ולא הכירן S1/N1	107	27	23a	WLQtI0	N
כי-היו ידין S3 כידי עשו אחיו N4 שער	108	27	23b	xQtIX	N
ויברכהו S4/N3	109	27	23c	Way0	N
ויאמר S1	110	27	24a	Way0	N
אחה זה	111	27	24b	Nmcl	NQ
בני עשו	112	27	24c	Nmcl	NQ
ויאמר S2	113	# 27	24d	Way0	N
אני	114	27	24e	NmCl	NQ
ויאמר S2	115	# 27	25a	Way0	N
הגשה לי	116	27	25b	ZIm0	NQ
ואכלה מציד בני	117	27	25c	WYqtI0	NQ
למען חברכך נפשי	118	27	25d	xYqtIX	NQ
וינש S2 -ל N2	119	# 27	25e	Way0	N
ויאכל S3	120	# 27	25f	Way0	N
ויבא S4 ל N3 יין	121	# 27	25g	Way0	N
וישח S3	122	# 27	25h	Way0	N
ויאמר אליו N4 יצחק אביו S1	123	# 27	26a	WayX	N
גשה-נא	124	27	26b	ZIm0	NQ
ושקה-לי	125	27	26c	WIm0	NQ
בני	126	27	26d	Voct	NQ
וינש S2	127	# 27	27a	Way0	N
וישק S4 -ל N3	128	# 27	27b	Way0	N
וירח S1 את-ריח בגדיו N1	129	27	27c	Way0	N
ויברכהו S1/N1	130	27	27d	Way0	N
ויאמר S1	131	27	27e	Way0	N
ראה	132	27	27f	ZIm0	NQ
ריח בני כריח שדה	133	2	27g	Nmcl	NQ
אשר ברכו יהוה	134	27	27h	xQtIX	NQ
ויתן-לך האלהים מטל	135	27	28a	WYqtIX	NQ
השמים ומשמני הארץ					
ורב דגן ותירש	136	27	28b	Ellp	NQ
יעבדוך עמים	137	27	29a	ZYqtIX	NQ
וישתחו לך לאמים	138	27	29b	WYqtIX	NQ
הוה גביר לאחיק	139	27	29c	ZIm0	NQ
וישתחו לך בני אמך	140	27	29d	WYqtIX	NQ
ארריך ארור	141	27	29e	Ptcp	NQ
ומברכך ברוך	142	27	29f	Ptcp	NQ
ויהי	143	# 27	30a	Way0	N

S4	כאשר כלה יצחק	144	27	30b	xQtlX	N
N4	לברך את-יעקב	145	27	30c	InfC	N
	ויהי	146	27	30d	Way0	N
S4	אך יצא יצא יעקב	147	27	30e	xQtlX	N
N4	מאת פני יצחק אביו					
	ועשו אחיו S4 בא מצידו	148	# 27	30f	WXQtl	N
S1	ויעש גס-הוא S1 מטעמים	149	# 27	31a	WayPP	N
N4	ויבא S1 לאביו	150	27	31b	Way0	N
N1	ויאמר S1 לאביו	151	27	31c	Way0	N
	יקם	152	27	31d	ZYqtl0	NQ
	אבי	153	27	31e	Voct	NQ
	ויוכל מציד בנו	154	27	31f	WYqtl0	NQ
	בעבור חברוני נפשך	155	27	31g	xYqtlX	NQ
S2	ויאמר לו N2 יצחק אביו	156	# 27	32a	WayX	N
	מיראתה	157	27	32b	Nmcl	NQ
	ויאמר S2	158	# 27	32c	Way0	N
	אני בנך בכרך עשו	159	27	32d	NmCl	NQ
	ויחרר יצחק S2 חרדה גדלה אד-מאד	160	# 27	33a	WayX	N
	ויאמר S1	161	27	33b	Way0	N
	מיראפוא האו	162	27	33c	NmCl	NQ
	הצד-ציר	163	27	33d	Ptcp	NQ
	ויבא S4 ל N2	164	27	33e	Way0	NQN
	ויוכל S2 מכל	165	27	33f	Way0	NQN
	בטרם תבוא	166	27	33g	xYqtl0	NQ
	ואברכה S1/N4	167	27	33h	Way0	NQN
	גס-ברוך יהיה	168	27	33i	xYqtl0	NQND
N2	כשמע עשו S2 את-דברי אביו	169	# 27	34a	InfC	N
S1	ויעקב S1 צעקה גדלה ומרה אד-מאד	170	27	34b	Way0	N
N4	ויאמר S1 לאביו	171	27	34c	Way0	N
	ברכני	172	27	34d	ZIm0	NQ
	גס-אני	173	27	34e	NmCl	NQ
	אבי	174	27	34f	Voct	NQ
	ויאמר S2	175	27	35a	Way0	N
	בא אחיך במרמה	176	27	35b	ZQtlX	NQ
N4	ויקח S4 ברכתך	177	27	35c	Way0	NQN
S3	ויאמר S3	178	# 27	36a	Way0	N
	הכי קרא שמו יעקב	179	27	36b	xQtl0	NQ
S4/N2	ויעקבני S4/N2 זה פעמים	180	27	36c	Way0	NQN
N3	את-בכרת S3 לקח	181	27	36d	xQtl0	NQN

והנה עתה לקח N1 ברכתי S1	182	27	36e	WxQtI0	NQN
ויאמר S1	183	27	36f	Way0	N
הלא-אצלת לי ברכה	184		36g	xQtI0	NQ
ויען יצחק S2	185	# 27	37a	WayX	N
ויאמר S1 לעשו N4	186	27	37b	Way0	N
הן גביר שמתיו לך	187	27	37c	xQtI0	NQ
ואת-כל-אחיו נתתי לו לעבדים	188	27	37d	WxQtI0	NQ
ודגן ותירש סמכתיו	189	27	37e	WxQtI0	NQ
ולכה אפוא	190	27	37f	NmCl	NQ
מה אעשה	191	27	37g	xYqtI0	NQ
בני	192	27	37h	Voct	NQ
ויאמר עשו S2 אל-אביו N2	193	# 27	38a	WayX	N
הברכה אחת	194	27	38b	CPen	NQ
הוא-לך	195	27	38c	NmCl	NQ
אבי	196	27	38d	Voct	NQ
ברכני	197	27	38e	ZIm0	NQ
גם-אני	198	27	38f	Ellp	NQ
אבי	199	27	38g	Voct	NQ
וישא עשו S1 קלו	200	# 27	38h	WayX	N
ויבך S1	201	27	38i	Way0	N
ויען יצחק אביו S4	202	# 27	39a	WayX	N
ויאמר S1 אליו N4	203	27	39b	Way0	N
הנה משמני הארץ יהיה מושבך	204	27	39c	xYqtIX	NQ
ומשל השמים מעל	205	27	39d	Ellp	NQ
ועל-חרבך תחיה	206	27	40a	WxYqtI0	NQ
ואת-אחיך תעבד	207	27	40b	WxYqtI0	NQ
והיה	208	27	40c	MSyn	NQ
כאשר תריד	209	27	40d	xYqtI0	NQ
ופרכת עלו מעל צוארך	210	27	40e	WQtI0	NQ
וישטם עשו S2 את-יעקב N4 על-הברכה	211	# 27	41a	WayX	N
אשר ברכו N1 אביו S4	212	27	41b	xQtIX	N
ויאמר עשו S4 בלבו	213	# 27	41c	WayX	N
יקרבו ימי אבל אבי	214	27	41d	ZYqtIX	NQ
ואהרנה את-יעקב אחי	215	27	41e	WYqtI0	NQ
ויגד לרבקה N4 את-דברי	216	27	42a	Way0	N
עשו בנה הגדל N2					
ותשלח S3	217	# 27	42b	Way0	N
ותקרא S1 ליעקב בנה הקטן N4	218	27	42c	Way0	N
ותאמר S1 אליו N1	219	27	42d	Way0	N
הנה עשו אחיך מתנחם לך	220	27	42e	Ptcp	NQ

להרנג	221	27	42f	InfC	NQ
ועתה	222	27	43a	MSyn	NQ
בני	223	27	43b	Voct	NQ
שמע בקלי	224	27	43c	ZIm0	NQ
וקום	225	27	43d	WIm0	NQ
ברח-לך אל-לבן אחי חרנה	226	27	43e	ZIm0	NQ
וישבת עמו ימים אחדים	227	27	44a	WQtl0	NQ
עד אשר-תשוב חמת אחיך	228	27	44b	xYqtlX	NQ
עד-שוב אף-אחיך ממך	229	27	45a	InfC	NQ
ושכח	230	27	45b	WQtl0	NQ
את אשר-עשית לו	231	27	45c	xQtl0	NQ
ושלחתי	232	27	45d	WQtl0	NQ
ולקחתיו משם	233	27	45e	WQtl0	NQ
למה אשכל גם-שניכם יום אחד	234	27	45f	xYqtl0	NQ
ותאמר רבקה <u>S1 אל-יצחק</u> N4	235	# 27	46a	WayX	N
קצתי בחיי מפני בנות חת	236	27	46b	ZQtl0	NQ
אם-לקח יעקב אשה מבנות-חת	237	27	46c	Ptcp	NQ
כאלה מבנות הארץ					
למה לי חיים	238	27	46d	NmCl	NQ
ויקרא יצחק <u>S2 אל-יעקב</u> N4	239	# 28	01a	WayX	N
ויברך <u>S1 אתו</u> N1	240	28	01b	Way0	N
ויצוהו <u>S1/N1</u>	241	28	01c	Way0	N
ויאמר <u>S1 לו</u> N1	242	28	01d	Way0	N
לא-תקח אשה מבנות כנען	243	28	01e	xYqtl0	NQ
קום	244	28	02a	ZIm0	NQ
לך פדנה ארם ביתה בתואל אבי אמך	245	28	02b	ZIm0	NQ
וקח-לך משם אשה מבנות לבן אחי אמך	246	28	02c	WIm0	NQ
ואל שדי יברך אתך	247	28	03a	WXYqtl0	NQ
ויפרך	248	28	03b	WYqtl0	NQ
ויברך	249	28	03c	WYqtl0	NQ
והיית לקהל עמים	250	28	03d	WQtl0	NQ
ויתן-לך את-ברכת אברהם	251	28	04a	WYqtl0	NQ
לך ולזרעך אתך					
לרשתך את-ארץ מגריך	252	28	04b	InfC	NQ
אשר-נתן אלהים לאברהם	253	28	04c	xQtlX	NQ
וישלח יצחק <u>S1 את-יעקב</u> N1	254	# 28	05a	WayX	N
וילך <u>S3 פדנה ארם</u>	255	# 28	05b	Way0	N
<u>אל-לבן בן-בתואל הארמו אחי</u>					
<u>רבקה אם יעקב ועש</u> N5					
וירא <u>S4 עש</u>	256	# 28	06a	WayX	N
כי-ברך יצחק <u>S4 את-יעקב</u> N4	257	28	06b	xQtlX	N
ושלח <u>S1 אתו</u> N1 פדנה ארם	258	28	06c	WQtl0	N

לקחת-לוי N1 משם אשה	259	28	06d	InfC	N
בברכו S4 אתו N1	260	28	06e	InfC	N
ויצו S1 עליו N1	261	# 28	06f	Way0	N
לאמר	262	28	06g	InfC	N
לא-תקח אשה מבנות כנען	263	28	6h	xYqtl0	NQ
וישמע יעקב S2 אל-אביו N2 ואל-אמו N4	264	# 28	07a	WayX	N
וילך S1 פדנה ארם	265	28	07b	Way0	N
וירא S4 עשו	266	# 28	08a	WayX	N
כי רעות בנות כנען S5 or INT	267	28	08b	AjCl	N
בעיני יצחק אביו N4					
וילך S4 עשו אל-ישמעאל N4 or INT	268	# 28	09a	WayX	N
ויקח S1	269	28	09b	Way0	N
את-מחלת בתי-ישמעאל בך					
אברהם INT אחות נביות-על-נשיו לו לאשה					
ויצא יעקב S4 מבאר שבע	270	# 28	10a	WayX	N
וילך S1 חרנה	271	28	10b	Way0	N
ויפגוע S1 במקום	272	28	11a	Way0	N
וילך S1 שם	273	28	11b	Way0	N
כי-בא השמש	274	28	11c	xQtlX	N
ויקח S4 מאבני המקום	275	28	11d	Way0	N
וישם S1 מראשתיו	276	28	11e	Way0	N
וישכב S1 במקום ההוא	277	28	11f	Way0	N
ויחלם S1	278	28	12a	Way0	N
והנה סלם מצב ארצה	279	28	12b	Ptcp	N
וראשו מניע השמימה	280	28	12c	Ptcp	N
והנה מלאכי אלהים INT עליהם	281	28	12d	Ptcp	N
וירדים בו	282	28	12e	Ptcp	N
והנה יהוה INT נצב עליו	283	28	13a	NmCl	N
ויאמר S1	284	# 28	13b	Way0	N
יהוה אלהי אברהם אביך ואלהי יצחק אני	285	28	13c	NmCl	NQ
הארץ	286	28	13d	CPen	NQ
אשר אתה שכב עליה	287	28	13e	Ptcp	NQ
לך אחננה	288	28	13f	xYqtl0	NQ
ולזרעך	289		13g	Ellp	NQ
והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ	290	28	14a	WQtlX	NQ
ופרצת ימה וקדמה וצפנה ונגבה	291	28	14b	WQtl0	NQ
ונברכו בך כל-משפחת האדמה ובזרעך	292	28	14c	WQtlX	NQ
והנה אנכי עמך	293	28	15a	NmCl	NQ

ושמרתוך בכל	294	28	15b	WQtI0	NQ
אשר-תלך	295	28	15c	xYqtI0	NQ
והשבתיך אל-האדמה הזאת	296	28	15d	WQtI0	NQ
כי לא אעזבך	297	28	15e	xYqtI0	NQ
אד אשר אס-עשיתי	298	28	15f	xQtI0	NQ
את אשר-דברתי לך	299	28	15g	xQtI0	NQ
וייקץ יעקב ^{S2} משנתו	300	#	28	WayX	N
ויאמר ^{S1}	301	28	16b	Way0	N
אכן יש יהוה במקום הזה	302	28	16c	NmCl	NQ
ואנכי לא ידעתי	303	28	16d	WXLQtI	NQ
ויירא ^{S1}	304	28	17a	Way0	N
ויאמר ^{S1}	305	28	17b	Way0	N
מה-נורא המקום הזה	306	28	17c	AjCl	NQ
אין זה	307	28	17d	NmCl	NQ
כי אס-בית אלהים	309	28	17e	Ellp	NQ
וזה שער השמים	309	28	17f	NmCl	NQ
וישכם יעקב ^{S1} בבקר	310	#	28	WayX	N
ויקח ^{S1} את-האבן	311	28	18b	Way0	N
אשר-שם ^{S1} מראשתיו	312	28	18c	xQtI0	N
וישם ^{S1} אתה מצבה	313	28	18d	Way0	N
ויצק ^{S1} שמן על-ראשה	314	28	18e	Way0	N
ויקרא ^{S1} את-שם-המקום ההוא בית-אל	315	28	19a	Way0	N
ואולם לזו שם-העיר לראשנה	316	28	19b	NmCl	N
וידר יעקב ^{S1} נדר	317	#	28	WayX	N
לאמר	318	28	20b	InfC	N
אס-יהיה אלהים עמדי	319	28	20c	xYqtIX	NQ
ושמרני בדרך הזה	320	28	20d	WQtI0	NQ
אשר אנכי הולך	321	28	20e	Ptcp	NQ
ונתן-לי לחם	322	28	20f	WQtI0	NQ
לאכל	323	28	20g	InfC	NQ
ובגד	324	28	20h	Defc	NQ
ללבש	325	28	20i	InfC	NQ
ושבתי בשלום אל-בית אבי	326	28	21a	WQtI0	NQ
והיה יהוה לי לאלהים	327	28	21a	WQtIX	NQ
והאבן הזאת	328	28	22a	Defc	NQ
אשר-שמתי מצבה	329	28	22b	xQtI0	NQ
יהיה בית אלהים	330	28	22c	ZYqtI0	NQ
וכל	331	28	22d	CPen	NQ
אשר תתן-לי	332	28	22e	xYqtI0	NQ
עשר אעשרנו לך	333	28	22f	xYqtI0	NQ

Appendix 2B: Text Hierarchy of Genesis 27–28

1	01	And it happened
2		└─ For Isaac was old
3		└─└─ And his eyes were dim
4		└─└─└─ From seeing
5		└─ And he called Esau his elder son
6		└─└─ And he said to him
7		└─└─└─ My son
8		└─└─ And he said to him
9		└─└─└─ Here I am
10	02	└─ And he said
11		└─└─ Behold! Please I am old
12		└─└─└─ And I do not know the day of my death
13	03	└─└─ And now
14		└─└─└─ Please, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow
15		└─└─└─└─ And go out to the field
16		└─└─└─└─└─ And hunt game for me
17	04	└─└─└─└─└─ And prepare savoury food for me
18		└─└─└─└─└─└─ Just as I love
19		└─└─└─└─└─└─ And bring it to me
20		└─└─└─└─└─└─└─ That I may eat
21		└─└─└─└─└─└─ In order that my soul will bless you
22		└─└─└─└─└─└─└─ Before I die
23	05	└─ And Rebekah was listening
24		└─└─ As Isaac spoke to Esau his son
25		└─ And Esau went to the field
26		└─└─ To hunt game
27		└─└─└─ And bring it
28	06	└─ And Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son
29		└─└─ Saying
30		└─└─└─ Behold I heard your father
31		└─└─└─└─ From speaking to Esau your brother
32		└─└─└─└─└─ Saying
33	07	└─└─└─└─└─└─ Bring me game
34		└─└─└─└─└─└─└─ And prepare savoury food for me
35		└─└─└─└─└─└─└─└─ That I may eat
36		└─└─└─└─└─└─└─└─ And I may bless you in the presence of YHWH before I die
37	08	└─ And now
38		└─└─ My son
39		└─└─└─ Listen to my voice
40		└─└─└─└─ And to my command to you
41	09	└─└─ Please go to the flock
42		└─└─└─ And bring to me (from there) two good kids (of goats)
43		└─└─└─└─ And I will prepare savoury food for your father
44		└─└─└─└─└─ Just as he loves.
45	10	└─ And (you) bring it to your father
46		└─└─ That he may eat
47		└─└─└─ In order that his soul may bless you before his death
48	11	└─ And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother
49		└─└─ Behold! Esau my brother is a hairy man
50		└─└─└─ And I am a smooth man
51	12	└─└─ Perhaps my father will feel me
52		└─└─└─ And I shall be a mockery in his eyes
53		└─└─└─ And I will bring a curse upon myself
54		└─└─└─└─ And not a blessing
55	13	└─ And his mother said to him
56		└─└─ Upon me be the curse
57		└─└─└─ My son
58		└─└─└─└─ Just listen to my voice
59		└─└─└─└─ And go
60		└─└─└─└─└─ And bring (it) to me

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And he kissed him
And he smelled the smell of his garments
And he blessed him
And he said
See!
The smell of my son is like the smell of a field
Which YHWH has blessed
May God give to you the dews of heaven and the fatness of the earth
And plenty of grain and wine
Let people serve you
And may nations bow to you
May you be lord over your brothers
And may the sons (children) of your mother bow to you
Let those who curse you be cursed
And let those who bless you be blessed.
And it happened
As Isaac just finished
To bless Jacob
And it happened
Just as Jacob departed from the presence of Isaac
And Esau his brother returned from his hunting
And he, (he) also prepared savoury food
And he brought it to his father
And he said to his father
Let him arise
My father
And eat from the game of his son
In order that your soul may bless me
And Isaac his father said to him
Who are you?
And he said
I am your son, your firstborn Esau
And Isaac trembled greatly and exceedingly
And he said
Who then is he
Who hunted game
And brought to me
And I ate all
Before you came
And I have blessed him
Even so he shall be blessed
As soon as Esau heard the words of his father
He cried bitterly and exceedingly
And he said to his father
Bless me
Even me
My father
And he said
Your brother came in a guile
And he has taken your blessing
And he said
For that he rightly named Jacob
And he has deceived me twice
He took my birthright
And behold, now he has taken my blessing
And he said
Is there no blessing left for me my father
And Isaac answered
And he said to Esau
Behold I have made him lord over you
And I have given all his brothers to him as his servants
And I have sustained him with grain and wine
And now
What shall I do
My son
And Esau said to him
Have you but one blessing

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It is to you
 My father?
 Bless me
 Even me
 My father
 And Esau raised his voice
 And wept
 And Isaac his father answered
 And said to him
 Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be
 And from the dew of heaven above
 And you shall live by your sword
 And you shall serve your brother
 And it shall happen
 When you shall have dominion
 And you shall break his York from your neck
 And Esau grudged Jacob because of the blessing
 Which his father blessed him
 And Esau said in his heart
 The days of mourning for my father are near
 And I will slay Jacob my brother
 And the words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah
 And she sent
 And she called Jacob her younger son
 And she said to him
 Behold Esau your brother seeks comfort (about) you
 To kill you
 And now
 My son
 Listen to my voice
 And arise
 And flee to Laban my brother to Haran
 And dwell with him for a few days
 Until the fury of your brother subsides
 Until the anger of your brother
 subsides
 And he forgets
 What you
 have done to
 him
 And I will send
 And fetch you from there
 Why should I be deprived of you both in one day
 And Rebekah said to Isaac
 I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth
 If Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth such as these from the daughters of
 the land
 What good shall my life be
 And Isaac called Jacob
 And he blessed him
 And he commanded him
 And he said to him
 Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan
 Arise
 Go to Paddan Aram to the house of Bethu'el, the father of your mother
 And take a wife from there from the daughters of Laban the brother of your
 mother
 And El Shaddai will bless you
 And make you fruitful
 And multiply you
 That you may become a multitude of people
 May he give to you and to your offspring the blessing of Abraham,
 your father
 That you may possess the land of your sojournings
 Which God gave to Abraham
 And Isaac sent Jacob
 To Paddan Aram to Laban son of Bethu'el the Aramean brother of Rebekah mother of Jacob and
 Esau

256 06 [And Esau saw
 257 [That Isaac blessed Jacob
 258 [[And sent him to Paddan Aram
 259 [[[To take a wife from there
 260 [[[(And) as he blessed him
 261 [[[And sent him forth
 262 [[[[Saying
 263 [[[[Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan
 264 07 [[And Jacob obeyed his father and mother
 265 [[And he went to Paddan Aram
 266 08 [And Esau saw
 267 [[That the daughters of Canaan were evil in the eyes of Isaac his father
 268 09 [And Esau went to Ishma'el
 269 [[And he married Mahalath the daughter of Ishma'el the son of Abraham the sister of Nebaioth in
 addition to the wives he had
 270 10 [And Jacob set out from Beersheba
 271 [[And he went to Haran
 272 11 [[And he came to a place
 273 [[[And he spent the night there
 274 [[[[Because it was sun set
 275 [[[And he took one of the stones from the place
 276 [[[And he put it for his pillow
 277 [[[And he lay down in that place
 278 12 [[And he dreamt
 279 [[[And behold a ladder set from the earth
 280 [[[[And its head reached towards the heavens
 281 [[[[And behold the messengers of God ascending
 282 [[[[[And descending on it
 283 13 [[[And behold YHWH stood above it
 284 [[[[And he said
 285 [[[[[I am YHWH the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac
 286 [[[[[[The earth
 287 [[[[[[[Upon which you lay
 288 [[[[[[[I will give it to you
 289 [[[[[[[And to your offspring
 290 14 [[[[[[[And your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth
 291 [[[[[[[[And you shall spread to the west, and to the east and
 to the north and to the south
 292 [[[[[[[[And all the families of the earth will be blessed in
 you and in your offspring
 293 15 [[[[[And behold, I am with you
 294 [[[[[And will keep you in all
 295 [[[[[[Which you go
 296 [[[[[And will bring you back to this land
 297 [[[[[[For I will not leave you
 298 [[[[[[[Until I have done
 299 [[[[[[[What I have promised to you
 300 16 [And Jacob awoke from his sleep
 301 [[And he said
 302 [[[Surely YHWH is in this place
 303 [[[[And I did not know
 304 17 [And he was afraid
 305 [[And he said
 306 [[[How awful is this place
 307 [[[[This is none
 308 [[[[[Than the house of God
 309 [[[[[And this is the gate of heaven
 310 18 [And Jacob rose up early in the morning
 311 [[And he took the stone
 312 [[[Which he placed under his head
 313 [[[And he set it as a pillar
 314 [[[And he poured oil upon its head
 315 19 [And he called the name of that place Beth'el
 316 [[[But the name of the city was first called Luz
 317 20 [And Jacob vowed
 318 [[Saying
 319 [[[If God will be with me
 320 [[[[And will bless me in this way
 321 [[[[[Which I go

322		L	L	L	[[[And will give me bread
323								To eat
324						[[And garments
325								To wear
326	21							And shall bring me safely to my father's house
327					[Then YHWH shall be my God
328	22					[[And this stone
329								Which I have set as a pillar
330								Shall be God's house
331						[[And all
332								That you shall give to me
333								I will surely give a tenth to you

Appendix 2C: Participant and referencing pattern

Verse	Actors/Participants	Reference
27:1–4	Isaac	NP <Su>
	Isaac	NP <Su> Way0 pn- clitic <Su>– «his eyes » <Ob>– « <u>his</u> son » <Co>–to <u>him</u>
27:5	Rebekah	NP <Su> of Ptcp Clause
	Esau	NP + AR <Ob>– «Esau his elder son » <Co> of Ptcp clause–«to Esau » Way0
	Isaac	NP <Su>
	Esau	NP <Su>
27:6	Rebekah Jacob	NP <Su> pn- clitic (<Ob>)]– « <u>her</u> son » NP+AR <Co>– «Jacob her son »
27:11	Jacob Rebekah	NP <Su> pn- clitic <Ob>– « <u>his</u> mother » NP+ AR <Co>– «Rebekah his mother »
27:13	Rebekah	AR <Su>– «his mother » pn- clitic « mother of him »
27:14	Jacob	Way0 (3 times) pns <Co> «to <u>him</u> / <u>his</u> mother » AR <Su> «his mother » AR <Su> « his father » NP <Su> pn- clitic <Ob> « <u>her</u> elder son/ her younger son » NP + AR <Ob> « Jacob her younger son/Jacob her son » pn- clitic <Su> « <u>his</u> mother/his neck » AR <Su> « his father » NP + AR <Ob> « Esau her elder son »
27:15–17	Rebekah Isaac Rebekah Jacob Isaac Esau	
27:18	Jacob Isaac	Way0 (2 times) pn- clitic <Co> « <u>his</u> father » AR <Co> « his <u>father</u> » Way0
27:19	Jacob Isaac	NP <Su> pn- clitic <Co> « <u>his</u> father » AR <Co> «his <u>father</u> »
27:20	Isaac Jacob	NP <Su> pn- clitic <Co> « <u>his</u> son » Way0 AR <Co> «his <u>son</u> »

27:21	Isaac Jacob	NP <Su> NP <Co>
27:22–25		NP <Su> pn- clitic <Co> « <u>his</u> father » Way0 (4 times) NP + AR <Co> «Isaac his father » Way0 (7 times)
27:26–29	Isaac Jacob	NP + AR <Su> «Isaac his father » Way0 (3 times) Way0 Pn- clitic «his father »
27:30–31	Isaac Jacob Esau	NP <Su> NP <Su> NP + AR (Anchoring Relation) <Su> «Esau his brother » pn- Independent <Su> «he » Way0 (2 times)
27:32–37	Isaac Esau Jacob	NP + AR <Su> «Isaac his father » NP <Su> twice Way0 (5 times) NP <Su> Way0 (5 times) pn – possessive «your blessing » Way0 (4 times)
27:38–40	Esau Isaac	NP <Su> pn- clitic <Co> «his father » Way0 NP+AR <Co> «to his <u>father</u> » AR <Co> «his father »
27:41–46	Esau Jacob Isaac Rebekah	NP +AR <Ob> «Esau her elder son » NP <Su> pn- clitic <Su> « <u>his</u> father » NP +AR <Co> «Jacob her younger » pn <Ob> NP <Ob> AR <Su> «his father » NP <Su>/ <Co> pn- clitic <Ob> « <u>her</u> elder son/ her younger son »
28:1–5	Isaac Jacob Rebekah Esau	NP <Su> (twice) Way0 (3 times) NP <Su> (once)/ <Co> (twice) pn- clitic- three times «him » Way0 NP +AR <Co> NP <Co>
28:6–9	Esau Isaac Jacob Rebekah	NP <Su> (3 times) NP +AR <Co> «Isaac his father » « <Co> «his father » NP <Su> Way0 (three times) NP <Su> (Once) <Ob> (once) pn- clitic <Ob> (three times) « <u>him</u> / his father and his mother » (2 times) Way0 <Ob> AR <Co> «his mother »
28:10–22	Jacob	NP <Su> (7 3 times) line 32) Way0 (16 times)

Appendix 3A

A. Unweighted diagrams

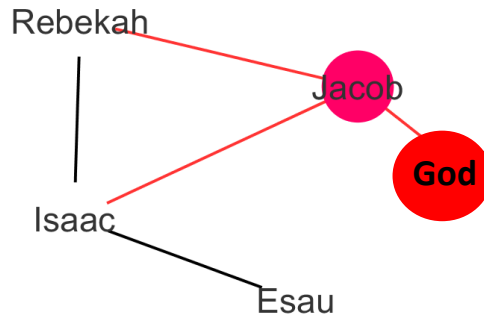


Figure 3.1 Jacob eliminated from network

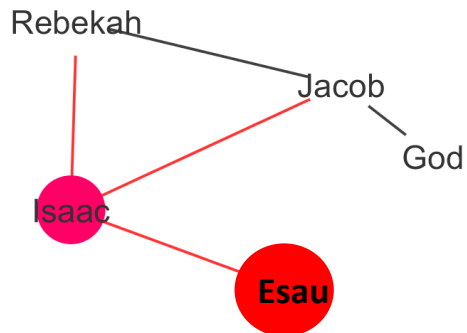


Figure 3.2 Isaac eliminated from network

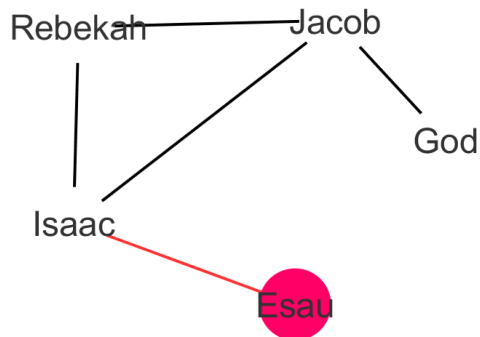


Figure 3.3 Esau eliminated from network

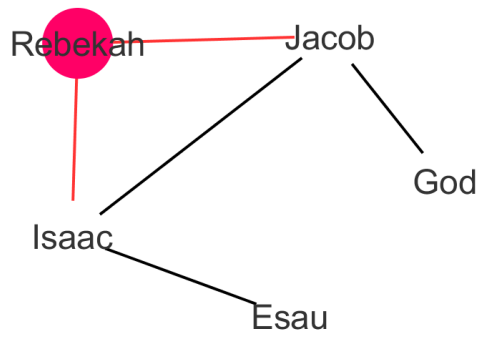


Figure 3.4 Rebekah eliminated

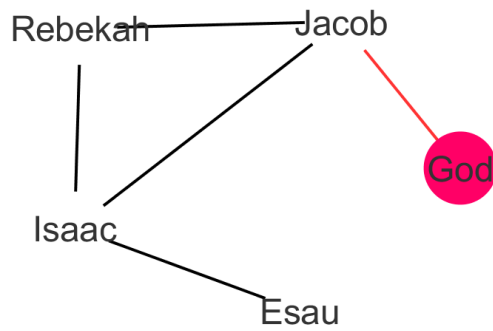


Figure 3.5 God eliminated from network

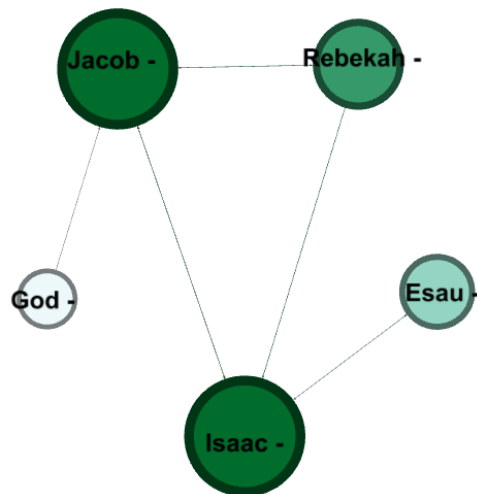


Figure 3.6 Undirected and non-weighted network

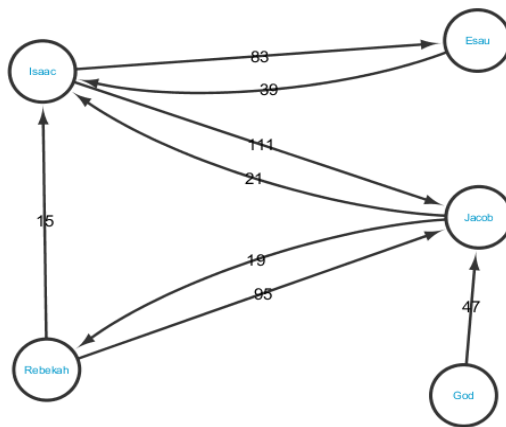


Figure 3.7 Directed and non-weighted (labeled) network in and out degrees

B. Weighted Diagrams

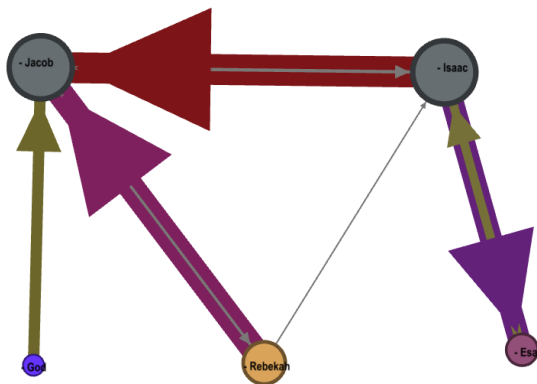
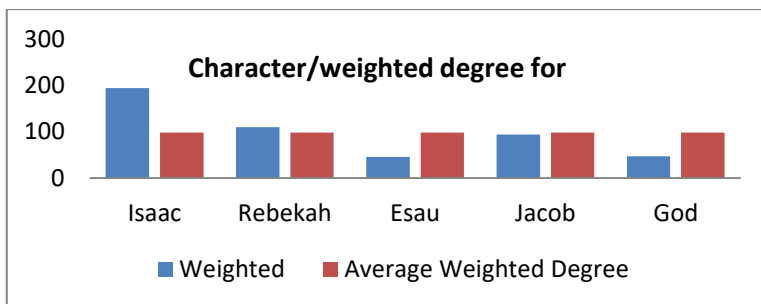


Figure 3.8 Weighted and directed character-system



Graph 1

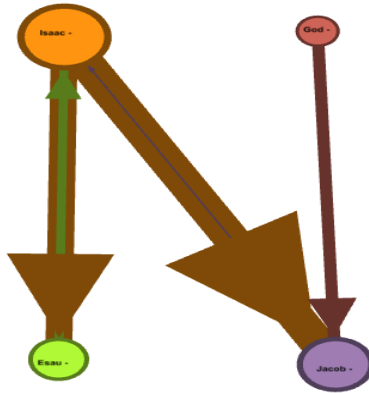
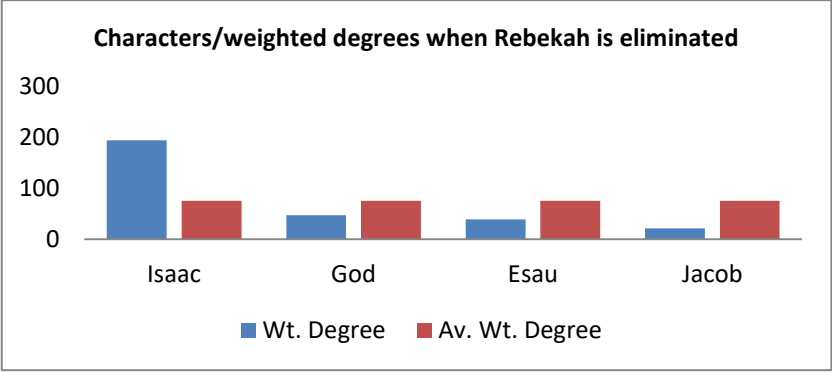


Figure 3.9 Directed/weighted network when Rebekah is eliminated (Complete network)



Graph 2

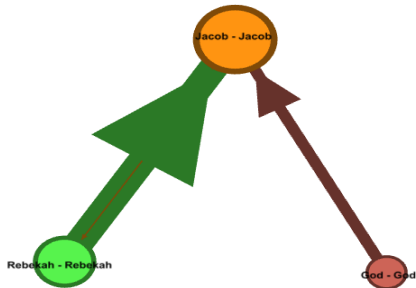
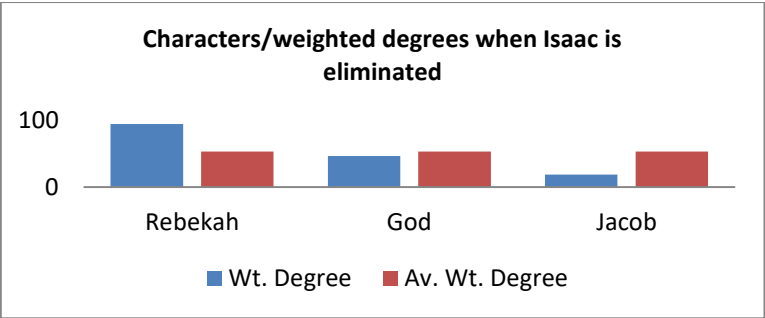


Figure 3.10 Weighted/directed network when Isaac is eliminated (Complete network)



Graph 3

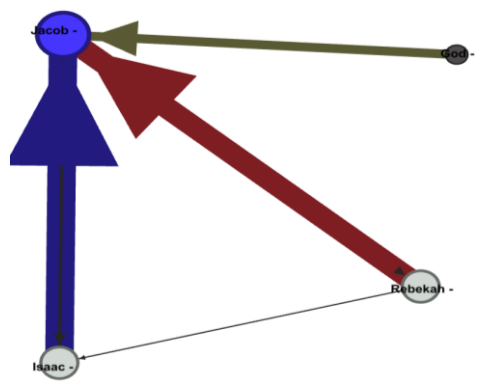
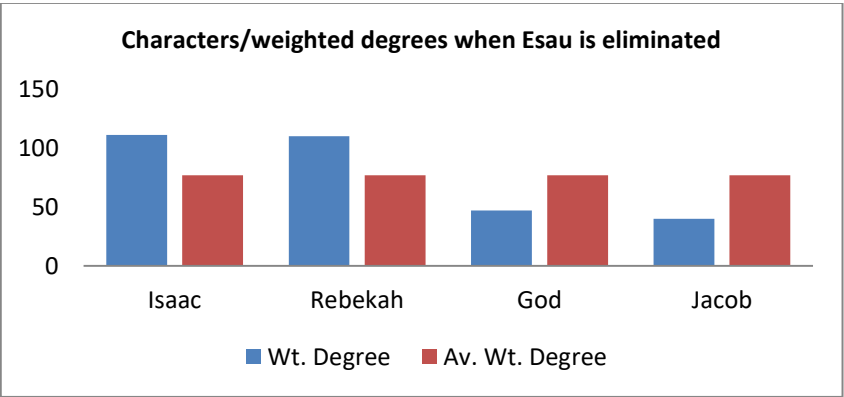


Figure 3.11 Weighted/directed network when Esau is eliminated (Complete network)



Graph 4.

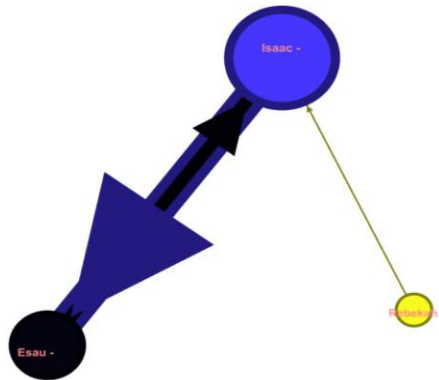
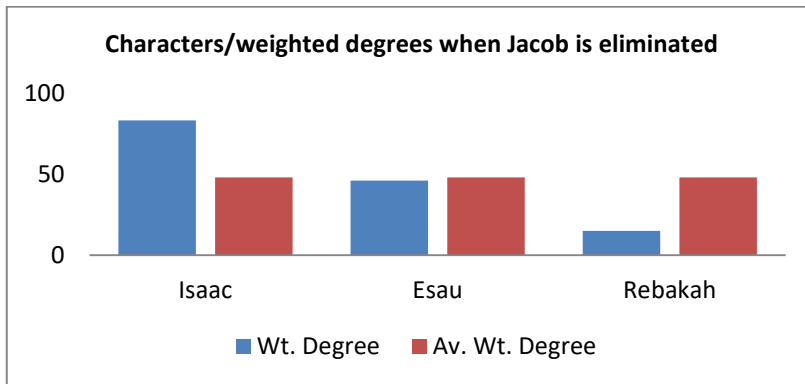
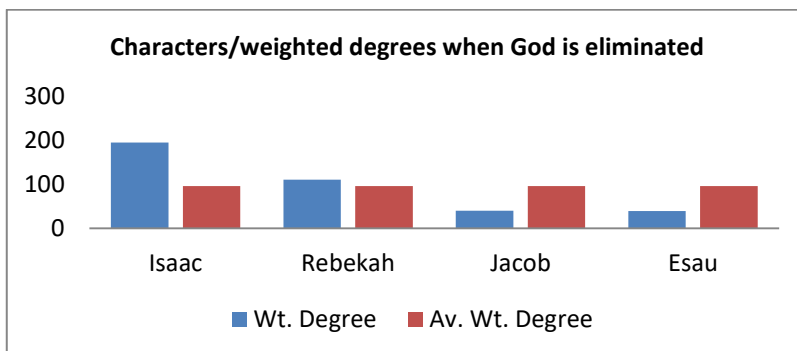


Figure 3.12 Weighted/directed network when Jacob is eliminated (Complete network)



Graph 5



Graph 6

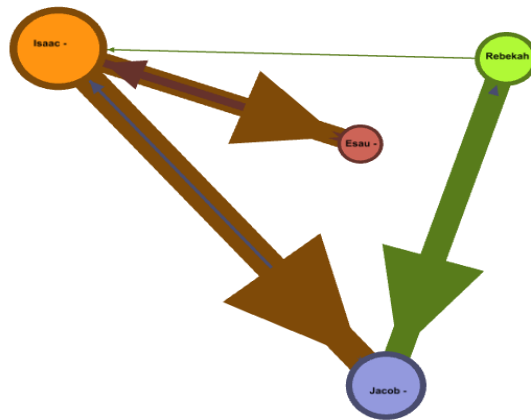


Figure 3.13 Weighted/directed when God is eliminated (Complete network)

C. Complete Dialogues

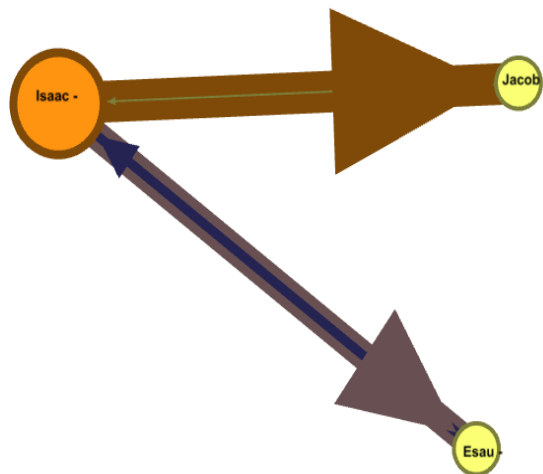


Figure 3.14 Complete Dialogue weighted/directed network when Rebekah is eliminated

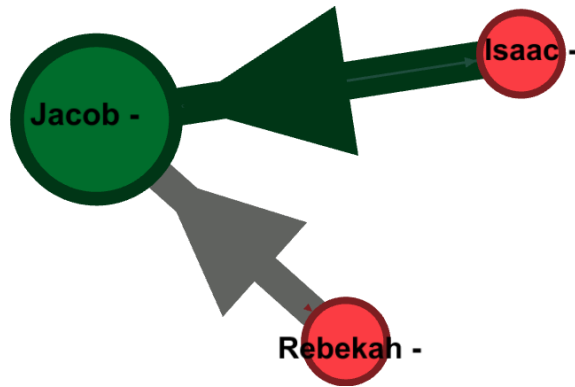


Figure 3.15 Complete dialogue weighted/directed network when Esau is eliminated

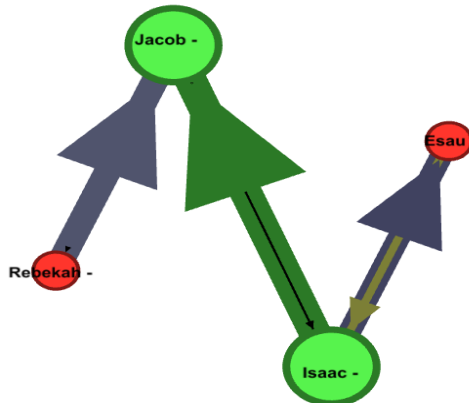
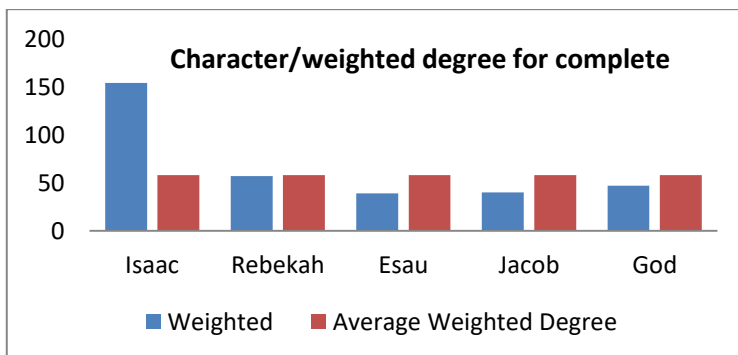


Figure 3.16 Weighted and directed character-system for complete dialogues.



Graph 7

D. Incomplete Dialogues

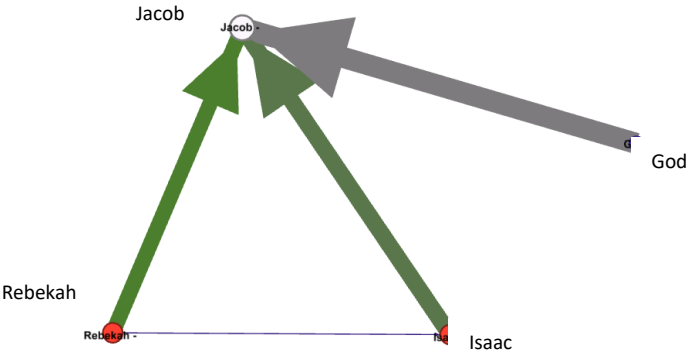
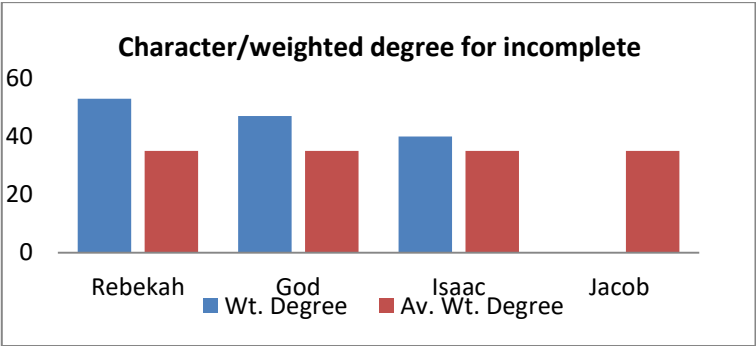


Figure 3.17 Weighted and directed network for incomplete dialogues character-system



Graph 8

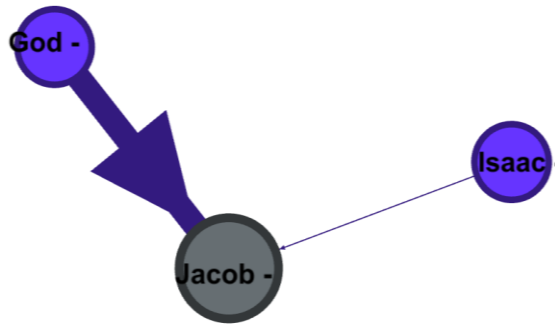


Figure 3.18 Incomplete dialogue weighted/directed network when Rebekah is eliminated

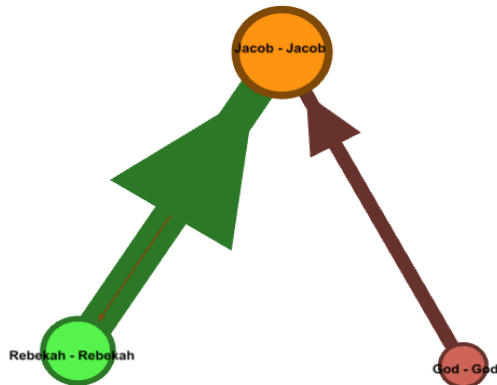
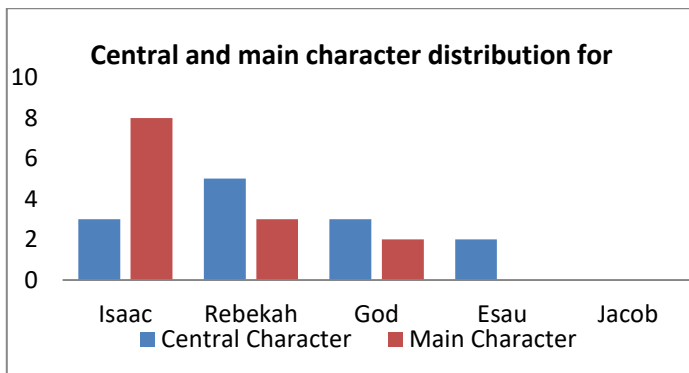
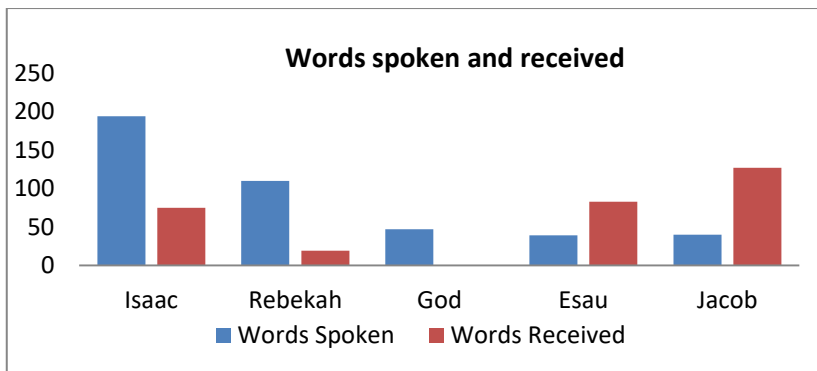


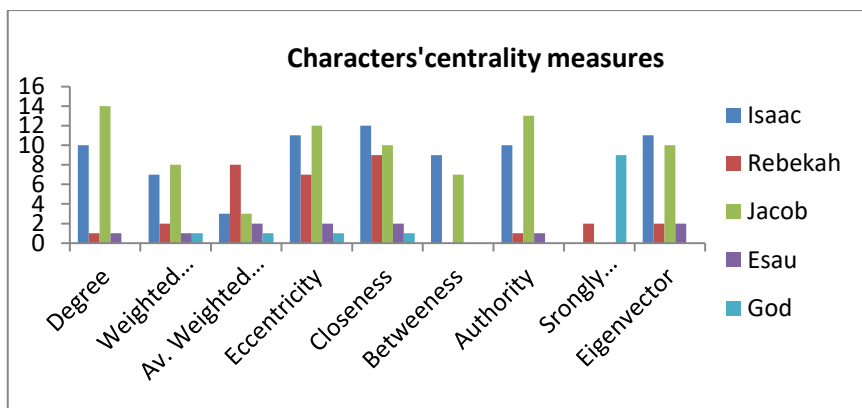
Figure 3.20 Weighted/directed network when Isaac is eliminated



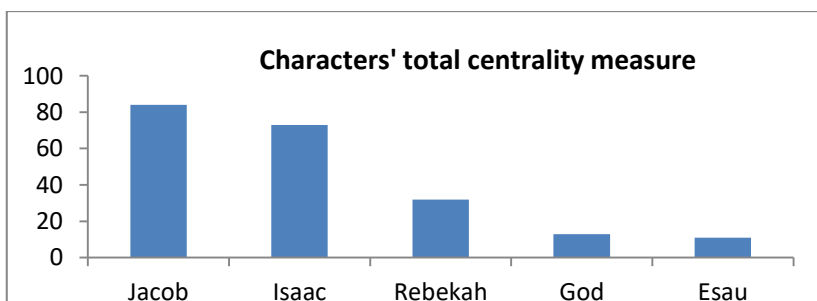
Graph 9



Graph 10



Graph 11



Graph 12. Characters' total centrality

E. Weighted Diagrams for all spoken words

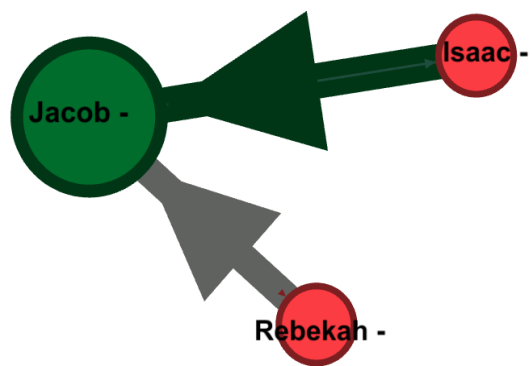


Figure 3.21 Weighted/directed network when Esau is eliminated

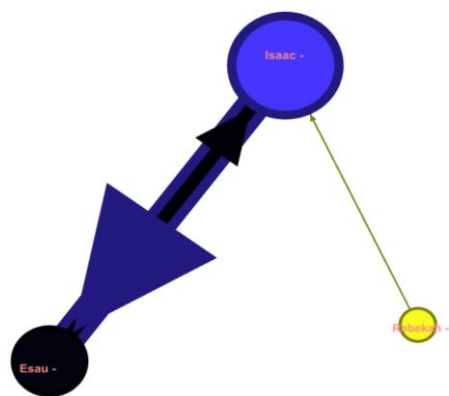


Figure 3.22 Weighted/directed network when Jacob is eliminated

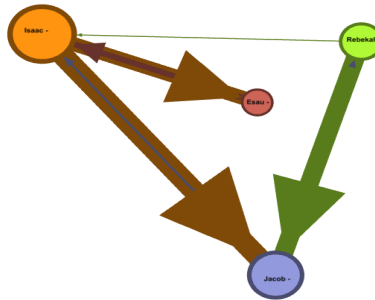


Figure 3.23 Weighted/directed when God is eliminated

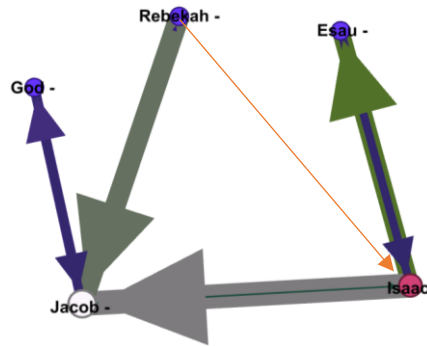


Figure 3.24 Weighted/directed diagram when a spoken words are considered

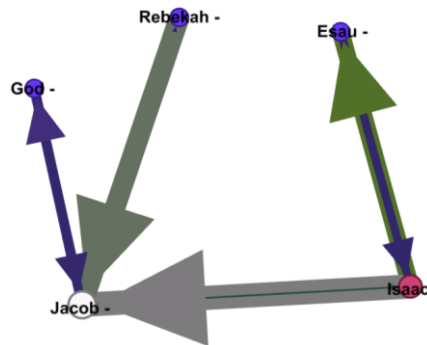


Figure 3.25 Weighted and directed diagram of complete dialogues

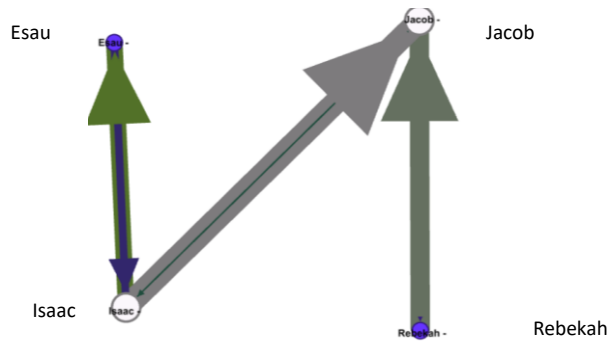


Figure 3.26 Weighted/directed network when God is eliminated in complete dialogues

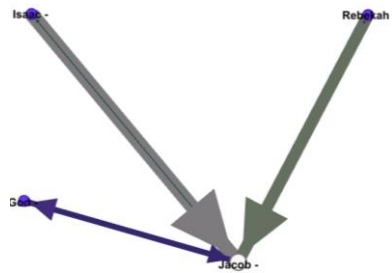


Figure 3.27 Weighted/directed network when Esau is eliminated in complete dialogues

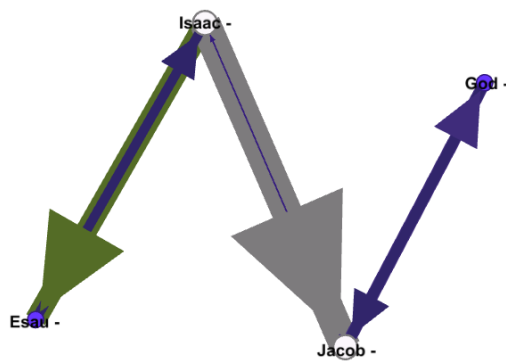


Figure 3.28 Weighted/directed network when Rebekah is eliminated

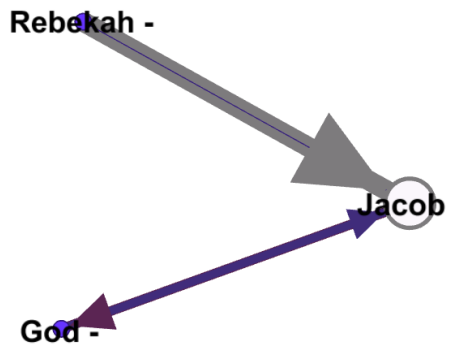


Figure 3.29 Weighted/directed network when Isaac is eliminated

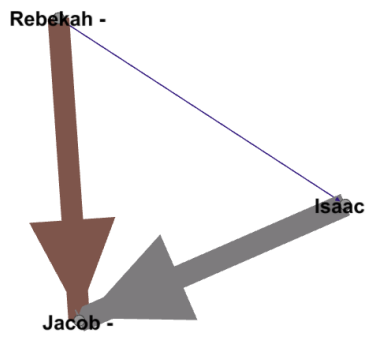


Figure 3.30 Weighted and directed

Appendix 3B

Network output data generated using Gephi 8.2.0

Table 3.20 Input data: Weighted Network

Source	Target	Type	ID	Weight
Isaac	Esau	Directed	1	83
Isaac	Jacob	Directed	2	111
Esau	Isaac	Directed	3	39
God	Jacob	Directed	8	47
Rebekah	Isaac	Directed	7	15
Rebekah	Jacob	Directed	5	95
Jacob	Isaac	Directed	4	21
Jacob	Rebekah	Directed	6	19

Table 3.21 Output data: Weighted and directed

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	3	2	5	269	75	194	2	0.75	1	0.333	0.333	0	0.333	1	1.6	86	1 . 6 2 5
Rebekah	1	2	3	129	19	110	2	0.75	0	0.167	0.167	0	1	0.450			
Esau	1	1	2	122	83	39	3	0.5	0	0.167	0.167	0	0	0.549			
Jacob	3	2	5	293	253	40	2	0.75	1	0.333	0.25	0	0.167	0.807			
God	0	1	1	47	0	47	3	0.5	0	0	0.083	1	0	0			

Table 3.22 Output data: Weighted and directed for Complete dialogues

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	2	2	4	254	60	194	2	0.75	0.667	0.3	0	0	0	1	1.5	92	1.667
Rebekah	1	1	2	114	19	95	3	0.5	0	0.2	1	0		0.618			
Esau	1	1	2	122	83	39	3	0.5	0	0.2	0	0	0	0.618			
Jacob	2	2	4	246	206	40	2	0.75	0.667	0.3	1	0	0	1			

Table 3.23 Output data: Weighted and directed for incomplete dialogues

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	1	1	2	40	15	40	1	1	0.083	0.333	0.333	1	0	0.069	1	28	1
Rebekah	0	2	2	53	0	53	2	1	0	0	0.333	2	0	0			
Jacob	3	0	3	125	125	0	0	0	0	0.667	0	0	0	1			
God	0	1	1	47	0	47	1	0	0	0	0.333	3	0	0			

Table 3.24 Output data: Weighted and directed Network when Rebekah is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	2	2	4	254	60	194	1	1	0.5	0.375	0.375	0	0	1	1.25	75.25	1.57
Esau	1	1	2	122	83	39	2	0.667	0	0.25	0.25	0	0	0.704			
Jacob	2	1	3	179	158	21	2	0.667	0.333	0.375	0.25	0	0	0.711			
God	0	1	1	47	0	47	3	0.5	0	0	0.125	1	0	0			

Table 3.25 Output data: Complete Dialogues when Rebekah is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	2	2	4	254	60	194	1	1	1	0.429	0.429	0	0	1	1.33	84.7	1.3
Esau	1	1	2	122	83	39	2	0.667	0	0.286	0.286	0	0	0.707			
Jacob	2	1	2	132	111	21	2	0.667	0	0.286	0.286	0	0	0.707			

Table 3.26 Output data: Incomplete or unidirectional Dialogues when Rebekah is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	0	1	1	40	0	40	1	1	0	0	0.5	1	0	0	0.667	29	1.3

Jacob	2	0	2	87	87	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1			
God	0	1	1	47	0	47	1	1	0	0	0.5	2	0	0			

Table 3.27 Output data: Weighted Network when Isaac is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Rebekah	1	1	2	114	19	95	1	1	0	0.4	0.4	1	0	0	1	53.67	1.25
Jacob	2	1	3	161	142	19	1	1	0.5	0.4	0.6	1	0	0			
God	0	1	1	47	0	47	2	0.667	0	0.2	0	0	1	0			

Table 3.28 Output data: Weighted and directed for complete dialogues

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Rebekah	1	1	2	114	19	95	1	1	?	0.5	0.5	0	0	1	1	57	1
Jacob	1	1	2	114	95	19	1	1	?	0.5	0.5	0	0	1			

Table 3.29 Output data: Incomplete dialogues when Isaac is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Rebekah	0	1	1	38	0	1	1	1	0	0	0.5	1	0	0	0.67	28.33	1
Jacob	2	0	2	0	85	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1			
God	0	1	1	47	0	1	1	1	0	0	0.5	2	0	0			

Table 3.30 Output data: Weighted Network When Esau is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	2	1	3	147	36	111	2	0.667	0	0.333	0.333	0	1	1	1.5	77	1.33
Jacob	3	2	5	293	253	40	1	1	0.5	0.444	0.333	0	0.167	1			
Rebekah	1	2	3	129	19	110	1	1	0	0.222	0.222	0	1	0.618			
God	0	1	1	47	0	47	2	0.6	0	0	0.111	1	0	0			

Table 3.31 Output data: Complete Dialogues when Esau is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	1	1	2	132	21	111	2	0.667	0	0.286	0.286	0	0	0.707	1.33	82	1.33
Jacob	2	2	4	246	206	40	1	1	1	0.429	0.429	0	0	1			
Rebekah	1	1	2	114	19	95	2	0.667	0	0.286	0.286	0	0	0.707			

Table 3.32 Output data: Weighted Network when Jacob is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	2	1	3	137	54	83	1	1	0.5	0.6	0.4	0	0	1	1	45.67	1.25
Esau	1	1	2	122	83	39	1	1	0	0.4	0.4	0	0	1			
Rebekah	0	1	1	15	0	15	2	0.667	0	0	0.2	1	0	0			

Table 3.23 Output data: Complete Dialogues when Jacob is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	1	1	2	122	39	83	1	1	??	0.5	0.5	0	0	1	1	61	1
Esau	1	1	2	122	83	39	1	1	??	0.5	0.5	0	0	1			

Table 3.34 Output: Incomplete Dialogues when Jacob is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Rebekah	0	1	1	15	15	0	1	1	?	0	0	1	0	0			

Table 3.35 Output Data: Weighted Network when God is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	3	2	5	269	75	194	2	0.75	0.667	0.364	0.364	0	0.333	1	1.75	95.75	1.5
Esau	1	1	2	122	83	39	3	0.5	0	0.182	0.182	0	0	0.554			
Jacob	2	2	4	246	206	40	2	0.75	0.333	0.273	0.273	0	0.5	0.802			
Rebekah	1	2	3	129	19	110	2	0.75	0	0.182	0.182	0	1	0.445			

Table 3.36 Output: Incomplete Dialogues when God is eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Rebekah	0	2	2	53	0	53	1	1	0	0	0.5	2	0.5	0	1	31	1
Isaac	1	1	2	55	15	40	1	1	0	0.4	0.5	1	0.5	0.07			
Jacob	2	0	2	78	78	0	0	0	0	0.6	0	0	0.5	1			

Table 3.37 Centrality distribution in the data generated output

Character	Indices									Total occurrences
	C	D	P	G	H	I	J	L	N	
Isaac	10	7	3	11	12	9	10	0	11	73
Rebekah	1	2	8	7	9	0	1	2	2	32
Jacob	14	8	3	12	10	7	13	0	10	84
Esau	1	1	2	2	2	0	1	0	2	11
God	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	9	0	13

Output data generated from Gephi 0.8.2 when a return link is added between Jacob and God

Table 3.38 Input data

Source	Target	Type	ID	Weight
Isaac	Esau	Directed	1	83
Isaac	Jacob	Directed	2	111
Esau	Isaac	Directed	3	39
Jacob	God	Directed	9	54
God	Jacob	Directed	8	47
Rebekah	Isaac	Directed	7	15
Rebekah	Jacob	Directed	5	95
Jacob	Isaac	Directed	4	21
Jacob	Rebekah	Directed	6	19

Table 3.39 Complete table

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	3	2	5	276	82	194	2	0.667	0.5	0.286	0.286	0		1	1.8	98.2	1.7
Esau	1	1	2	129	83	46	3	0.444	0	0.143	0.143	0		0.5			
Jacob	3	3	6	347	253	94	2	0.8	0.667	0.286	0.286	0		1			
Rebekah	1	2	3	129	19	110	2	0.667	0	0.143	0.143	0		0.5			
God	1	2	3	101	54	47	3	0.5	0	0.143	0.143	0		0.5			

Table 3.40 Rebekah Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	2	2	4	261	67	194	2	0.75	0.667	0.3	0.3	0		1	1.5	90.5	1.667
Esau	1	2	3	129	83	46	3	0.5	0	0.2	0.2	0		0.618			
Jacob	2	2	4	233	158	75	2	0.75	0.667	0.3	0.3	0		1			
God	1	1	2	101	54	47	3	0.5	0	0.2	0.2	0		0.618			

Table 3.41 Isaac Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis																Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N		O	P	Q
Rebekah	1	1	2	114	19	95	2	0.667	0	0.286	0.286	0		0.707		1.333	71.667	1.333
Jacob	2	2	4	215	142	73	1	1	1	0.429	0.429	0		1				
God	1	1	2	101	54	47	2	0.667	0	0.286	0.286	0		0.707				

Table 3.42 God Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis																Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	Nodes	A	Nodes	A	Nodes	A	Nodes	A	Nodes	A	Nodes	A	Nodes	A	A	Nodes	A
Isaac	3	2	5	276	82	194	2	0.75	0.667	0.364	0.364	0		1		1.75	97.5	1.5
Esau	1	1	2	129	83	46	3	0.5	0	0.182	0.182	0		0.554				
Jacob	2	2	4	246	206	40	2	0.75	0.667	0.273	0.273	0		0.802				
Rebekah	1	1	2	129	19	110	2	0.75	0	0.182	0.182	0		0.445				

Table 3.43 Esau Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis																Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N		O	P	Q
Isaac	2	1	3	147	36	111	2	0.6	0	0.273	0.273	0		0.815		1.75	90.5	1.417
Jacob	3	3	6	347	253	94	1	1	0.833	0.364	0.364	0		1				
Rebekah	1	2	3	129	19	110	2	0.75	0	0.182	0.182	0		0.532				
God	1	1	2	101	54	47	2	0.6	0	0.182	0.182	0		0.532				

Table 3.44 Jacob Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis																Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N		O	P	Q
Isaac	2	1	3	144	61	83	1	1	0.5	0.6	0.4	0		1		1	48	1.25
Esau	1	1	2	129	83	46	1	1	0	0.4	0.4	0		1				
Rebekah	0	1	1	15	0	15	2	0.667	0	0	0.2	1		0				

Output data generated from Gephi 0.8.2 : Complete Dialogues

Table 3.45 Input data

Source	Target	Type	ID	Weight
Isaac	Esau	Directed	1	83
Isaac	Jacob	Directed	3	111
Esau	Isaac	Directed	2	39
Jacob	God	Directed	8	54
God	Jacob	Directed	7	47
Rebekah	Jacob	Directed	5	95
Jacob	Isaac	Directed	4	21
Jacob	Rebekah	Directed	6	19

Table 3.46 Complete table

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	2	2	4	261	67	195	2	0.667	0.5	0.231	0.231	0		0.769	1.6	95.2	1.8
Esau	1	1	2	129	83	46	3	0.444	0	0.154	0.154	0		0.418			
Jacob	3	3	6	347	253	94	2	0.8	0.833	0.308	0.308	0		1			
Rebekah	1	1	2	114	19	95	3	0.5	0	0.154	0.154	0		0.54			
God	1	2	3	101	54	47	3	0.5	0	0.154	0.154	0		0.54			

Table 3.47 Rebekah Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	2	2	4	261	67	194	2	0.75	0.667	0.3	0.3	0		1	1.5	90.5	1.667
Esau	1	1	2	129	83	46	3	0.5	0	0.2	0.2	0		0.618			
Jacob	2	2	4	233	158	75	2	0.75	0.667	0.3	0.3	0		1			
God	1	1	2	101	54	47	3	0.5	0	0.2	0.2	0		0.618			

Table 3.48 Isaac Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis														Network Analysis			
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Rebekah	1	1	2	114	19	95	2	0.667	0	0.286	0.286	0	0.707	1.333	71.667	1.333	
Jacob	2	2	4	215	142	73	1	1	1	0.429	0.429	0	1				
God	1	1	2	101	54	47	2	0.667	0	0.286	0.286	0	0.707				

Table 3.49 God Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	2	2	4	261	67	194	2	0.75	0.667	0.3	0.3	0		1	1.5	93.75	1.667
Esau	1	1	2	129	83	46	3	0.5	0	0.2	0.2	0		0.618			
Jacob	2	2	4	246	206	40	2	0.75	0.667	0.3	0.3	0		1			
Rebekah	1	1	2	129	19	95	3	0.5	0	0.2	0.2	0		0.618			

Table 3.50 Esau Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	1	1	2	132	21	111	2	0.6	0	0.2	0.2	0		0.577	1.5	86.75	1.5
Jacob	3	3	6	347	253	94	1	1	1	0.4	0.4	0		1			
Rebekah	1	1	2	114	19	95	2	0.6	0	0.2	0.2	0		0.577			
God	1	1	2	101	54	47	2	0.6	0	0.2	0.2	0		0.577			

Table 3.51 Jacob Eliminated

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Isaac	1	1	2	129	46	83	1	1	??	0.5	0.5	0		1	1	64.5	1

Esau	1	1	2	129	83	46	1	1	??	0.5	0.5	0		1			
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Output data generated from Gephi 0.8.2 when monologues are included: Incomplete Dialogue

Table 3.52 Input data

Source	Target	Type	ID	Weight
Rebekah	Isaac	Directed	1	15
Isaac	Jacob	Directed	2	40
Rebekah	Jacob	Directed	3	38

Table 3.53 Plus monologues: Incomplete dialogue

Node /Edge Analysis															Network Analysis		
Nodes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Rebe	0	2	2	53	0	53	1	1	0	0	0.5	2		0	1	31	1
Isaac	1	1	2	55	15	40	1	1	0	0.4	0.5	1		0.07			
Jacob	2	0	2	78	78	0	0	0	0	0.6	0	0		1			

Table 3.54 Centrality distribution in the data generated output

Character	Indices									Total occurrences
	C	D	P	G	H	I	J	L	N	
Isaac	6	5	1	7	9	6	6		6	46
Rebekah	1	0	2	2	2			2		9
Jacob	9	7	7	11	10	10	10		10	74
Esau	1	1	1	1	1		1		2	8
God										0

Key to Appendix 3B:

A–In-Degree

B–Out-Degree

C–Degree

D–Weighted Degree

E–Weighted In-Degree

F–Weighted Out-Degree

G–Eccentricity

H–Closeness Centrality

I–Betweenness

J–Authourity

K–Hub

L–Strongly Connected

M–Clustering Coefficient

N–Eigenvector

O–Average Degree

P–Average Weighted Degree

Q–Average Edge Path Length

Appendix 3C

Key to Tables 3.7c, 3.8b and 3.9b

- Narrative levels 1–13 indicates the level of a (sub)unit in the text hierarchy of the ETCBC database.
- §–(sub)unit.
- §–Turning points
- The numbers 1a–20a, 2a–36a and 1a–29d are the verses which mark (sub)paragraphs.

List of Abbreviations

Books of the Bible

Genesis	Gen	Proverbs	Prov
Exodus	Ex	Ecclesiastes	Eccles
Leviticus	Lev	Isaiah	Isa
Numbers	Num	Jeremiah	Jer
Deuteronomy	Deut	Lamentations	Lam
Joshua	Josh	Ezekiel	Ezek
Judges	Judg	Daniel	Dan
Ruth	Ru	Hosea	Hos
1 Samuel	1Sam	Joel	Joel
2 Samuel	2Sam	Amos	Amos
1 Kings	1 Kgs	Obadiah	Obad
2 Kings	2 Kgs	Jonah	Jon
1 Chronicles	1Chr	Micah	Micah
2 Chronicles	2Chr	Nahum	Nah
Ezra	Ezra	Habakkuk	Hab
Nehemiah	Neh	Zephaniah	Zeph
Esther	Esth	Haggai	Haggai
Job	Job	Zechariah	Zech
Psalms	Ps	Malachi	Mal

Grammar and Dictionaries

CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> by Oppenheim, Adolf L. and Reiner, Erica. 20 Volumes. The Oriental Institute of Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A. and J.J. Augustin Verlagsbuchhandlung, Glückstadt, Germany.
BDB	Brown, S.; Driver, S.R. and Briggs, C.A. 2000 [reprint of 1906]. <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon</i> . Boston: Hendrickson.
Dav	Davidson, A.B. 1962 ⁵ . <i>An Introductory Hebrew Grammar with Progressive Exercises in Reading and Writing</i> . (Revised by John Mauchline). Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
GKC	Gesenius, W.; Kautzsch, E. and Cowley, E.A. 1985 [reprint of 1910 ²]. <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited and enlarged by Kautzsch, E. Oxford: Clarendon.
J-M	Joüon, P. and Muraoka, T. 1993. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute.

NIDOTTE	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> by Gemenen, W.A. van (ed.) 5 Volumes. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> by Botterweck, G.J. and Riggren, H. Trans. by John, T.W. 15 Volumes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
NIBC	The New International Bible Commentary Series
NICOTS	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament Series
WBC	World Biblical Commentary Series

Clause types and narrative types

AjCl	Adjectival clause	NP	Noun Phrase
CPen	Casus Pendens	NQ	Narrative Quotation
Defc	Defective	NQN	Narrative in a Narrative Quotation
Ellp	Ellipses	NQQ	Quotation in a Narrative Quotation
InfC	Infinitive construct	pn	pronoun
Im (pv)	Imperative	Ptcp	Participle
(I)PP	(Independent) Personal Pronoun	Qtl	Qatal
Msyn	Macro-syntactic	Voc	Vocative
N	Narrative	Way	Wayyiqtol
NmCl	Nominal Clause	Yqtl	Yiqtol

Parsing labels

1	1 st person	<ap>	Apposition
2	2 nd person	<Cj>	Conjunction
3	3 rd person	<Co>	Complement
Cstr	Construct	<lj>	Interjection
F	Feminine	<PC>	Predicate Complement
M	Masculine	<PO>	Predicate with Object suffix
pl	plural	<Pr>	Predicate
sg	singular	<Sc>	Supplementary constituent
PNG	Person, Number and Gender	<Su>	Subject

Ancient Near East Collection

ANE	Ancient Near East
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament</i> , by Pritchard, J.B. (ed.) 1969 [1950]. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
ARN	1952. Muazzez, Çiğ and F.R. Kraus. <i>Altbabylonische Rechtsurkunden aus Nippur</i> . Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi/Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri.
BC	Babylonian Collection.
BE	Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania. Series A: Cuneiform Texts. Philadelphia: Department of Archaeology, University of Philadelphia. 6/2 Arno Poebel, 1909. <i>Babylonian Legal and Business Documents from the Time of the First Dynasty of Babylon, Chiefly from Nippur</i> .
BM	Johns, C.W.H. 1904. <i>Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts and Letters</i> . New York: Scribner's Sons.
CH/LH	Code of Hammurabi or Law of Hammurabi.
COS	<i>Context of Scripture</i> , 3 Volumes, by Hallo W.W. (ed.). Leiden: Brill. 1997 (Vol. 1). <i>Canonical Composition from the Biblical World</i> . 2000 (Vol. 2). <i>Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World</i> . 2002 (Vol. 3). <i>Archival Documents from the Biblical world</i> .

HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
IM	Iraqi Museum
LL	Law of Lipit-Ishtar
LU	Lawn of Ur-Namma
MAL	Middle Assyrian Law
NAL	Neo-Assyrian Law
NBC	Nies Babylonian Collection
NBL	Neo-Babylonian Law
OECT	1930. <i>Oxford Edition of Cuneiform Texts</i> . London: Oxford University Press.
PBS	Publication of the Babylonian Section. Philadelphia: Philadelphia University Museum. University of Philadelphia. 8/2 Chiera, Edward 1922. <i>Old Babylonian Contracts</i> .
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization. Chicago: Oriental Institute of Chicago. University of Chicago. 44 Stone, Elizabeth C. 1987. <i>Nippur Neighborhoods</i>
SLET	Sumerian Law Exercise Tablet
SLHF	The Sumerian Law Handbook of Forms
TAD	The Textbook of Aramaic Documents
VAB	Vorderasiatische Bibliothek
VAT	Vorderasiatische Tontafeln
YBC	Yale Babylonian Collection

Others Abbreviations

B&B	Babel und Bibel
CALAP	Computer-Assisted Analysis of the Peshitta
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
DU(s)	Development Unit(s)
Ed(s)	Editor(s)
et al.	et alii (and others)
ETCBC	Eep Talstra Center for Bible and Computer
f(n)	footnote
ff	following
ICC	The International Critical Commentary Series
Ibid.	Ibidem (in the same place)
Idem	the same
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JBQ	Jewish Biblical Quarterly
JCS	Journal for Cuneiform Studies
JL	Journal of Linguistics
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JOAAR	Journal Of the American Academy of Religion
JS	Journal for Semitics
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JSOT(Sup)	Journal for the Study of Old Testament (Supplement)
KJV	King James Version
LAI	Library of Ancient Inscriptions
MT	Masoretic Text
NIV	New International Version
OJOT	Ogbomoso Journal of Theology
POV	Point of view

SHEBANQ	System for HEBrew Text Annotations for Queries and markup
SBL	Society for Biblical Literature
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SN	Social Networks
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
VT(Sup)	Vetus Testamentum (Supplement)
VU	Vrije Universiteit

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Summary

Participants, Characters and Roles: A Text-Syntactic, Literary and Socioscientific Study of Genesis 27–28

The research has shown that it is fruitful to combine the linguistic text-syntactic, literary and socioscientific approaches to the study of Genesis 27–28 in particular and biblical narratives in general. It has also illustrated that the computer-assisted linguistic analysis of the Eep Talstra Centre for Bible and Computer and Moretti's application of the Network Theory to literary studies are important tools to the understanding and analysis of biblical narratives.

Besides the introductory section in which I have paid attention to the definition of the methodological approaches, this research falls into three main sections as indicated in the title. In the introduction, I sought to make a difference between various approaches to the study of Genesis 27–28 and the approaches that I applied. Initially, I acknowledged the division of biblical interpretation into the two broad streams of diachronic (historical-critical) and synchronic approaches and their adherents. I moved forward to establish that my methodology falls within the synchronic approach based on the acceptance of the final form of the text as my starting point, albeit it incorporates some socioscientific findings which are considered in the broader diachronic approach. To differentiate my methodology, I argued for the ahistorical (text-syntactic and literary) and the historical-cultural (socioscientific: sociocultural and anthropological) approaches.

The first part of this research has focused on the linguistic text-syntactic study of participants. I observed that there is diversity in the way linguists apply the linguistic devices to the referencing of participants at various stages of a narrative. A survey of recent linguistic approaches to participant referencing revealed that the referencing patterns identified have been affected by the classification of participants into major, minor and prop. Besides, when it comes to "distance" to the last mention of a participant, it appeared that different definitions of the textual units such as "clauses" are used and that the text-syntactic connections between clauses (which affects, e.g., the count of sentences) are not always taken into account. Building upon the works of de Regt, Runge, Talstra and the ETCBC, I have proposed an expansion of the types of participants to include main, central, dominant and dominated participants, besides the major, minor and prop. In the analysis of Genesis 27–28, I gave preference to the text-syntactic approach of the ETCBC in which the grammatical analysis of the text moved beyond the clause to higher-level patterns and communication processes, identifying embedded (sub)paragraphs, narratives in discursives and direct speeches embedded in discursives; with a resulting text hierarchy in which lower-level (sub)paragraphs are embedded recursively into higher-level (sub)paragraphs.

The second part of this research has focused on the literary portrayal of characters in a narrative and the effects of the methods of portrayal on the understanding of narratives. It built on the results of part one by stressing the

importance of linguistic devices to a proper literary study. This part of the research has three subsections. This first subsection has dealt with the general portrayal of characters in biblical literature. A survey of modern authors revealed that there are generally acknowledged methods of character portrayal, which can be divided into direct and indirect methods, and that characters can be categorized as “round” or “flat”. However, Berlin moved further to advocate for a third class of characters (agent), and the application of point of view as a method of portrayal, while Sternberg did the same for the analytic and proleptic uses of epithets as important methods of character portrayal. The survey also revealed how biblical literary analysts argued for the importance of linguistics to a proper literary analysis but usually paid little attention to the way in which a character’s portrayal was sustained or continued in a narrative through the applications of linguistic devices. Thus they took the use of pronouns as referencing devices for granted. I have tried to incorporate the linguistic observations in the literary analysis and argued that pronouns are a method of portrayal, applied by narrators to sustain or continue a character’s portrayal which then enables a reader to understand a narrative.

The second subsection studies the structuring effects of character portrayals. A survey of literary structures proposed by literary analysts, including symmetric (ABCC'B'A') and concentric (ABCB'A') patterns revealed some pandemonium as each literary analyst developed a structure based upon his/her interests. The units in these patterns were identified on the basis of word repetitions or other similarities, rather than on linguistic structural markers. Walsh’s (2001) study of literary structures in Biblical Hebrew presented some tools which could guide literary analysts to common structural markers. Important to this research has been his demarcation of linguistic (text based) (sub)unit markers and stylistic markers. His preference to linguistic markers laid emphasis on the importance of linguistics to proper literary analysis. I realised that Walsh’s linguistic text-based markers agreed largely with the linguistic devices applied in the development of the text hierarchy of the ETCBC database. Building upon the works of Fokkeman, Walsh, and the ETCBC database encoding, I have proposed a symmetric (ABCC'B'A') structure for Genesis 27–28 and also a method of developing the concentric (ABCB'A') and symmetric (ABCC'B'A') structures for the patriarchal narratives based on the *Toledoth* of each patriarch.

The last subsection focused on Moretti’s Network Theory which studied the amount of space occupied by each character and applied it to determine characters’ importance in narratives. This theory which is a quantitative stylistic approach applied computer operations to measure the distances between characters through the number of words spoken and displayed visual graphical outputs in which characters’ interactions are quantified. The aim of this theory has been to determine how character-space affected centrality and prominence. When Moretti applied this theory, he considered that characters interacted only when there was a speaking action between them and he moved on to illustrate its efficacy in Shakespearean drama. I adapted Moretti’s analytical model by (1)

including soliloquys (which are excluded in Moretti's work) and (2) distinguishing between "central" and "main" characters (3) applying other centrality algorithms in addition to the Degree Centrality that Moretti relied on.

When I applied the network theory to the study of Genesis 27–28 I differentiated my approach from his by arguing that all spoken words be accounted for and by incorporating other network indices applied in the gephi 0.8.2 visualisation software. This proved effective because the results corroborated with those of the linguistic and other literary approaches with respect to the central and main character, actor or participant.

The third part of this research has focused on the socioscientific study of the roles of participants, characters or actors. It built upon the results of parts 1 and 2 and argued that the devices used in participant referencing and the methods of character designation highlighted the sociocultural and anthropological roles of the participants or actors in the cultures within which these narratives originated. While "Isaac his father" is over-specification from a text-syntactic perspective, it is a methods of character portrayal from a literary perspective, and defines the socioscientific role of Isaac as "father." Thus Part three has studied the importance of such roles to the understanding of the narrative. The socioscientific approach applied Ancient Near Eastern tablets and sociocultural/anthropological practices from some non-western (African) cultures to enlighten our understanding of the roles of individuals within cultures similar to those of Ancient Israel. A survey of the application of these materials indicated a clear divide between scholars who saw a correlation between ANE discoveries and the patriarchal narratives and others who rejected the application of such discoveries as historical proof of the dating of the patriarchs, or as "proof texts." Nevertheless, scholars agreed that such material could inform our understanding of the patriarchal narratives. Building upon this agreement, I argued that the Bible should be the most important interpretative key to such similarities. This means that the role of Isaac as "father" for example had to be under-stood from the way it developed in the patriarchal narrative. Applying this to Genesis 27–28, I have studied how each character developed his/her role based on their relationships with each other as members of the same family. I found out that success in Isaac's family was measured in terms of its effect on the family. I also drew insights from Ancient Near Eastern and some African customs on firstborn, firstborn rights and succession, studied how both Esau and Jacob developed their potential for heirship, and proposed why Jacob became heir. Rebekah's contributions to influence Jacob's choice as heir led me to devote a paragraph on Rebekah's motherhood. The results indicated that Jacob's comportment and his obedient relationship to both parents increased his chances. While Rebekah has often been labeled negatively, I have argued she exercised her motherhood perfectly because she used every opportunity to change things for the welfare of the family.

The fact that three approaches to the study of Genesis 27-28 came to the same conclusions indicated the importance of the interdisciplinary study to scriptures. However, I have argued, in line with Talstra, Van Peursen and Bakker, on the primacy of the linguistic approach because the literary and socioscientific approaches are only applied to answer questions raised from the linguistic reading of a text.