# Complementation and Common Ground: Discursive effects in Biblical Hebrew

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**Abstract**

The choice of clausal connectives, such as complementizers or causal adverbials, is often sensitive to whether the content of the introduced clause is in the Common Ground or not. For example, English complementizer *that* and causal *for* often introduce clauses whose information content is in the Common Ground (as opposed to unmarked zero and *because*, respectively). This article shows that the notion of Common Ground can be usefully applied to the highly polysemous Biblical Hebrew clausal connective כִּי *kī* as well. In particular, I describe three types of reference to the Common Ground: (a) simple reference to discourse-old information, (b) accommodated reference to discourse-new but expected information, and (c) imposed reference where discourse-new information is presented as part of the Common Ground for discursive effect. The many different uses of *kī* (introducing object and subject clauses as well as causal, temporal, conditional, adversative, concessive, and resultative adverbials) can then be derived from contextual clues given the general function of marking Common Ground. Furthermore, I argue that this function of *kī* is related to its origin as a [+distal] deictic lexeme, much like English *that*. The analysis thus adds to a growing body of evidence for the possibility of employing referential features in the left periphery to express relations between interlocutors on the one hand and information content on the other.

**Keywords:** complementizers; information status; Common Ground; [+distal]; Biblical Hebrew

# 1 Introduction

In some cases, the choice for a clausal connective depends on the information status of the content of the introduced clause. This has for example been argued for the English complementizer *that*, which has been argued to be used more often when the complement clause provides information that is in the Common Ground (Staps & Rooryck 2023). Consider the following examples:

(1) a. *Bio industry is still allowed.*
b. ***That** bio industry is still allowed!* (Staps & Rooryck 2023: 1204)

(2) a. *I always believed (**that**) the jury was bribed.* (Staps & Rooryck 2023: 1209)
b. **(**That**) the jury was bribed, I always believed.* (Staps & Rooryck 2023: 1209)

In (1b), *that* triggers an exclamative reading. The propositional content of exclamatives is presupposed in the Common Ground (Zanuttini & Portner 2003), so the choice for *that* can be said to depend on the Common Ground status of the complement clause. Example (2) shows that *that* is required in topicalized object clauses. Topics are necessarily discourse-old and hence in the Common Ground, so again, the choice for *that* depends on information status.

Such observations hold not only for "neutral" complementizers; similar facts obtain, for example, with causal adverbs. As just one example, English *for* is typically used to introduce parenthetical causal clauses, which contain backgrounded information that may already be familiar to the Addressee. Thus, speakers for whom *for* is still productive prefer *for* over *because* in (3a), while *because* is preferred in (3b), where new information is introduced.[1] In sentences like (3a), the Speaker assumes that the information in the *for*-clause is known, or can readily be assumed by, the Addressee.[2]

(3) a. *An automatic timer would soon turn [the light] off, **for** we [Ladover Jews] do not tamper with electricity on Shabbos.* (Chaim Potok, 1990, *The gift of Asher Lev*)
b. *My mother's sister ..., who had been unable to attend the funeral **because** her husband had undergone bypass surgery ..., flew in from Boston.*
(Chaim Potok, 1990, *The gift of Asher Lev*)

For the case of *that*, Staps & Rooryck (2023) argue that the sensitivity to Common Ground status can be related to the original function of this lexeme as a [+distal] demonstrative. As a [+distal] deictic element, this function word gets reinterpreted in the sentential domain to refer to the Addressee, who is "far" from the Speaker. As a result, it comes to mark Common Ground, which involves the Addressee.

[1] Similarly, *since* introduces specifically not-at-issue causal clauses compared to *because* (Charnavel 2017). There is some correlation between discourse-old information status and not-at-issueness, since discourse-new information content is typically at-issue.

[2] *For*-clauses can be analyzed as right dislocations (De Vos in preparation), which are associated with discourse-old or inferential information status (e.g. Grosz & Ziv 1998).

In this article I extend this analysis to an unrelated language, demonstrating its wide applicability. I work out the case of the Biblical Hebrew clausal connective כִּי *kī* in detail, to illustrate the different discursive effects a reference to the Common Ground can have. I will argue below that like English *that*, *kī* carries a [+distal] feature, which makes a Common Ground analysis a priori likely. The Biblical Hebrew clausal conjunction and complementizer *kī* is highly polysemous, and thus also serves as a good test case for an analysis based on Common Ground. A look at any dictionary suggests a plethora of different uses: introducing object and subject clauses ('that'), causal 'because, for', temporal 'when', conditional 'if', adversative 'but', concessive 'though', resultative 'so that', and more. Previous scholarship has failed to reduce these different uses to a single semantic core. I argue that marking Common Ground could constitute this semantic core, and that the different uses can be derived from syntactic and pragmatic clues based on this general semantics.

The chapter thus makes two contributions: it shows that clausal connectives in unrelated languages are sensitive to reference to Common Ground, and it discusses in depth the different discursive effects reference to Common Ground can have. The remainder of the introduction provides an overview of the framework I use to describe the interpretive value of [±distal] in the sentential domain (section 1.1), the necessary background on Biblical Hebrew for readers unfamiliar with this language (section 1.2), as well as a brief history of scholarship on *kī* specifically (section 1.3). In section 2 I describe my method and give an overview of the data. The following sections present an in depth analysis of the different ways in which *kī* can be used, in which I show how each use derives from the core function of marking Common Ground (sections 3 to 7). Section 8 concludes.

## 1.1 Theoretical framework

One of the main claims of Staps & Rooryck (2023) is that the [+distal] feature of the English demonstrative *that* is still present, but differently interpreted, when *that* is used as a complementizer.[3] English *that* marks not only spatial distance (**this*/*that book over there*) but also involvement with the Addressee, who is "far" from the Speaker. This notion is interpreted in different ways, depending on the context; in the sentential domain, complementizer *that* is interpreted as referring to Common Ground between Speaker and Addressee.[4]

In the model proposed by Staps & Rooryck (2023), information content is positioned in an abstract space around Speaker and Addressee. The Common Ground is conceptualized as accessible and "close" to the Addressee and, as a result, "far" from the Speaker. Figure 1 (reproduced from Staps & Rooryck 2023: 7) clarifies the model. The circle around

[3] The discussion here is necessarily brief; for examples from languages other than English, as well as more references, see the original article.

[4] Staps & Rooryck (2023) introduce the term "Shared Discourse Space" for the region tracked by both the Speaker and the Addressee. Shared Discourse Space is more general than Common Ground and does not only contain information content. Since this article deals exclusively with the sentential domain, the more common term "Common Ground" suffices here. The argument is fully compatible with an analysis based on Shared Discourse Space, should this be needed for data not covered in this study.

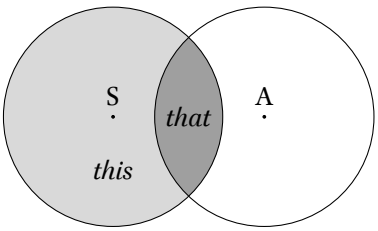


**Figure 1:** The information content tracked by the Speaker and Addressee. The intersection, the Common Ground, is seen as "far" from the Speaker (Staps & Rooryck 2023: 7).

S stands for the information content tracked by the Speaker; the circle around A for the information content tracked by the Addressee. The intersection of these sets (shaded dark gray in fig. 1) can, under some assumptions, be seen as the Common Ground.[5] The light gray shaded region represents the Speaker-private information content; information that is not tracked by the Addressee. Even though both gray regions are equally accessible to the Speaker, languages use [–distal] and [+distal] forms to refer to the light and the dark region, respectively. Thus, while the distance is measured from the Speaker's origo, it reflects the accessibility to the Addressee, i.e., Common Ground status.

Most notably, Addressee involvement plays a role in the interpretation of complementizer *that*. Since *that* is [+distal], it refers to the discourse-old information content in the Shared Discourse Space. This explains why *that* is used in exclamatives, whose propositional content is presupposed (see [1] above): *that* refers to the information content in the Common Ground "near" the Addressee. In addition, the same model can be used to explain a variety of other phenomena, such as the fact that *that* is required in topicalized object clauses, even when the corresponding sentence without topicalization allows *that*-deletion (2). As discussed by Rizzi, there have been different syntactic accounts of this phenomenon (Kratzer et al. 2020), but these need to introduce otherwise uncorroborated assumptions (Staps & Rooryck 2023: 1209). By contrast, the pattern in (2) naturally follows from the model in fig. 1: topics are necessarily discourse-old and therefore have Common Ground status; obligatory *that* marks their position in the dark gray shaded region of fig. 1. Though in both the case of topicalized object clauses and that of exclamatives, *that* is not in opposition with *this*, it is still clear that the interpretation of the [+distal] feature (i.e. Addressee involvement) plays a role in the interpretation of the complementizer *that*.

Speakers can interact with the abstract spatial model in fig. 1 in different ways. In the most basic cases, [+distal] forms are used to refer to discourse-old information content (which is in the Common Ground), and [–distal] forms are used to refer to discourse-new information content. However, there are two cases in which discourse-new information

[5] The main assumption is that this model is viewed from the perspective of the Speaker. Therefore, the circle around the Addressee represents not what is actually tracked by the Addressee, but what the Speaker *assumes to be* tracked by the Addressee. Without this assumption, it would not be possible for the Speaker to determine the content of the differently shaded regions, which is necessary if language use (e.g., the use of *kī*) depends on it. See Staps & Rooryck (2023: 1202–1203) for more discussion.

content can be presented as part of the Common Ground: when the content can be *accommodated* by the Addressee and when it is *imposed* by the Speaker. Declarative sentences with discourse-new information content are typically modeled as a request or proposal to update the Common Ground (cf. Farkas & Bruce 2010: 92). However, by explicitly placing the content "near" the Addressee with a [+distal] element, the Speaker can present it as if it is already part of the Common Ground. The Speaker does so to signal that they expect that the request for a Common Ground update will be granted, or, alternatively, to emphasize that they do not allow the Addressee to reject the proposal to update the Common Ground. In the first case, the Speaker assumes that the Addressee can *accommodate* the information content; in the second case, the Speaker *imposes* the content on the Common Ground.[6]

These three types of reference (to discourse-old, accommodated, and imposed information content) can all be seen as referencing to information conceptually "near" the Addressee. Discourse-old information content is "near" the Addressee because it is known and accessible to her. When new information content is placed "near" the Addressee by the Speaker, she can thereby suggest that the Addressee should easily be able to accommodate it. When this is not the case, this forces the Addressee to react; this is a case of information content imposed on the Common Ground. It is not surprising, then, that an originally [+distal] deictic element like English *that* can be used to interact with the Common Ground in these different ways: [+distal] *that* refers to a space "far" from the Speaker, but "near" the Addressee.

## 1.2 Biblical Hebrew

To show in more detail how a [+distal] feature can be interpreted in the sentential domain to express properties of the relation between speakers and information content, this article discusses the case of the Biblical Hebrew clausal connective *kī* in depth. Biblical Hebrew is a Semitic language spoken roughly in the first millennium before the common era. It is preserved primarily in the Hebrew Bible (which formed the basis for the Christian Old Testament). Though working with an ancient language has the obvious drawback that no constructed examples can be tested with native speakers, this is mitigated by the availability of a long history of translation and interpretation.

Like other Semitic languages, Biblical Hebrew uses a system of verbal templates or stems to express Aktionsart (simple, pluractional, and causative) and Voice (active, passive, reflexive, and middle). When the meaning of a certain stem is lexicalized I will simply give an appropriate English translation without glossing the template. There are two main conjugations that express tense, aspect, and mood: a "perfective" that marks perfective/gnomic aspect and/or past tense, and an "imperfective" that marks imperfective aspect, non-past tense, and various modal nuances. In keeping with the traditional terminology I will gloss these PFV and IPFV, respectively, despite the fact that their semantics is broader

[6] For more details and references, see Kocher (2022: 176–177). Some examples may be helpful here. The reader may browse ahead and compare cases of accommodation (e.g. [5; 14; 17; 20–21]) with those of imposition (e.g. [8; 16; 22]).

than this. In addition to these two conjugations there is a sequential preterite form used in narratives (traditionally called *wayyiqṭol*, I gloss it as and.PRET), and a sequential modal form (traditionally called *wəqāṭaltí*, I gloss it as and.MOD). Besides the imperative (IMP) of the second person, Biblical Hebrew has a jussive (JUSS) of the second and third person. There is a regular infinitive (INF) as well as an "infinitive absolute" (INFABS) whose purpose in my examples is to strengthen an immediately following finite form of the same verb.

Nominals are inflected for gender (masculine or feminine) and number (singular, plural, or dual; the latter of limited productivity). Verbs agree with their subject in these features (but plural forms are used for dual subjects, and the first person has common gender). I only indicate gender on nouns where needed to clarify agreement. Nominals can be in the "construct state" to indicate possession by the immediately following nominal in the unmarked "absolute state". I do not gloss the absolute state and simply gloss the construct state with "-of" or ".of".

Finally, for this article on the clausal connective *kī* it is important to mention that the distinction between main and subordinate clauses is not in strict in Hebrew as it is in, for example, English. For simplicity I will sometimes refer to *kī*-clauses as "subordinate" to a corresponding "main" clause, but it should be kept in mind that the relation between the two clauses is often more paratactic than hypotactic.

## 1.3 Biblical Hebrew *kī*

As mentioned above, Biblical Hebrew *kī* has many different uses: introducing object and subject clauses ('that'), causal 'because, for', temporal 'when', conditional 'if', adversative 'but', concessive 'though', resultative 'so that', and more. It is generally accepted that *kī* derives from an originally deictic morpheme **ka*, so we are not dealing with multiple, accidentally homonymous particles. The morpheme **ka* is clearly ancient, given its appearance in at least Phoenician, Aramaic, and Arabic with similar functions (Lipiński 2001: §49.9). Many authors have pointed to this morpheme as evidence for a general "deictic" meaning of *kī* (e.g. Muilenburg 1961; Schoors 1981). What has not been given attention, however, is that **ka* is specifically a [+distal] deictic morpheme, referring to things at some distance from the Speaker.[7] This [+distal] feature forms the basis for an interpretation based on Addressee involvement within the framework of Staps & Rooryck (2023), summarized in section 1.1.

There is no consensus as to how the different meanings of *kī* are related to each other and to original **ka*. In very broad strokes, the literature can be divided into those scholars who claim that all (or at least most) uses of *kī* can be reduced to a single semantic

[7] Lipiński (2001: §36.35, 36.37, 36.41) gives a handful of demonstratives in Semitic and beyond where **ka* appears to be proximal, but these are only a handful of isolated instances. Distal demonstratives take **ka* more often and more consistently. This is especially clear in West Semitic, where **ka* also appears in demonstratives. According to Hasselbach (2007: 3), **ka* "regularly marks far deixis in those languages in which it occurs". In some languages where forms going back to **ka* are in paradigmatic contrast with the third person personal pronoun used as a [+distal] demonstratives, it appears that the forms based on **ka* are specifically used to refer to something near or known to the Addressee (e.g., 'give me *that* (from **ka*)' referring to an object near the Addressee; Jewish Babylonian Aramaic; Bar-Asher Siegal 2013: 82). This would align with the notion of Addressee involvement, but a discussion of these demonstrative forms is out of scope here.

core (e.g. Muilenburg 1961; Schoors 1981), and those scholars who claim that diachronic processes like grammaticalization have lead to a highly polysemous lexeme (e.g. Locatell 2017, 2020).[8] The synchronic approach has been abandoned by most recent authors with the exception of Follingstad (2001), because the ways in which functions of *kī* can be said to be "deictic" are not well-defined, so that the theory is not constrained enough.[9] Furthermore, it is unclear how some functions, like the causal one, can be reduced to the very general notion of deixis. On the other hand, diachronic developments can often be made conceivable but not proven. A diachronic account also does not answer the question how speakers could have understood which function of *kī* is used in a particular instance, given the high degree of polysemy.

I argue that a primarily synchronic account is possible using the notion of Addressee involvement introduced in section 1.1.[10] I will show, for example, that *kī* is not used to introduce just any object clause, but specifically those object clauses whose information content is in the Common Ground. The same goes for other uses: *kī* cannot introduce just any temporal, conditional, or adversative (etc.) clause, but only those where the provided information content is in the Common Ground. This provides a much more economical description of *kī* than a diachronic approach; I will need to assume a semantic shift in only two cases, and both are typologically plausible. Roughly, *kī* is used when the information content of the complement clause is in the Common Ground, and the particular interpretation as causal, temporal, conditional, etc., largely depends on context.[11]

## 2 Method and overview of the data

My analysis is based on an exhaustive analysis of the 808 uses of *kī* with a clausal complement in the narrative portions of the biblical books Genesis, Judges, Samuel, and Ruth. These books are considered to be similar in terms of time and place of origin, and thus

[8] See further Redslob (1835), Vriezen (1958), Muilenburg (1961), Schoors (1981), Bandstra (1982), Claassen (1983), Thorion (1984), Aejmelaeus (1986), Gross (1991), Benigni (1999), Follingstad (2001), Park (2016), and Locatell (2017, 2020). Some passages in works with a broader scope are relevant as well, in particular Watts (1964: 118–149); Muraoka (1985: 158–164); Van der Merwe (1993: 38–41); and Conklin (2011: 46–59). I will not summarize related work here, as this has been done recently by Locatell (2017), and only refer to these earlier sources where relevant to the argumentation of the present paper.

[9] This critique applies to Follingstad (2001) as well. He attempts to reduce *kī* to a "discourse deictic particle" with the function of setting up a new Mental Space and shifting viewpoint to this space. This can perhaps be related to a [+distal] feature, and in some cases, Follingstad recognizes reference to Common Ground (2001: 152). However, it is not clear that the Mental Space Theory is precise enough to exclude uses of *kī* that do not occur, and in some cases it actually makes incorrect predictions. For example, Follingstad (2001: 268–269) claims that *kī* can introduce a "hypothetical" conditional to which the Speaker does not need to commit, while the Speaker does need to commit to the truth of conditionals introduced by אִם *ʾim* 'if'. This is contrary to the consensus, which I will support in section 6.2.

[10] Park (2016), like me, aims to reduce the description of *kī*, but uses the notion of "nominalization". In South Asian languages, nominalization constructions can have a wide variety of functions (Yap, Grunow-Hårsta & Wrona 2011) that indeed show a curious overlap with the functions of *kī*. Unfortunately, the notion of "nominalization" is not very well-defined. At the very least, an explanation should be given why "nominalizers" across unrelated languages take on similar functions, and what the relation between the form and function of these "nominalizers" is. Without such an argument, I find it difficult to relate my own proposal to this analysis.

[11] One occasionally finds generic arguments against such a reductionist approach (Aejmelaeus 1986: 195; Locatell 2017: 114). However, the persistence of lexical meaning is, in fact, entirely expected in grammaticalization processes (Hopper 1991: 28–30). It is therefore not surprising if aspects of the [+distal] deictic meaning of Semitic **ka* are preserved in Biblical Hebrew *kī*, and my claim is that this is the most economical description of the data.

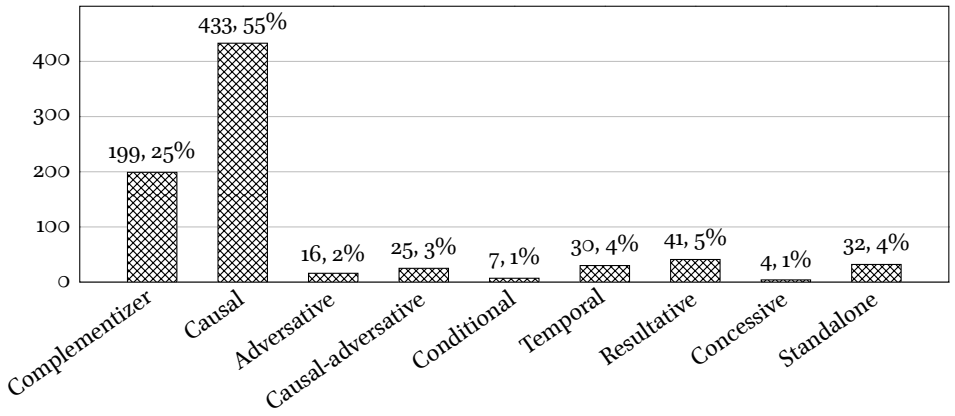


**Figure 2**: Distribution of *kī* over use types.

form a relatively homogeneous corpus. I focus on narrative texts because these contain most direct speech, where we can expect the interaction with Common Ground to be the largest.[12] However, I also included uses of *kī* where the narrator is the Speaker and the reader is the Addressee.

Each instance of *kī* was classified as belonging to a certain use type (e.g. causal, complementizer, etc.).[13] My classification of each instance can be found in the data set accompanying this paper (Staps 2023). The use types are based on the common categories found in reference works and literature on *kī*: (a) introducing object and subject clauses ('that'; tagged as "complementizer"), (b) causal 'because, for', (c) adversative 'but', (d) causal-adversative 'not X, *because*/*but rather* Y', (e) conditional 'if', (f) temporal 'when', (g) resultative 'so that', and (h) concessive 'though'.[14] Instances where the *kī*-clause does not seem to relate to a corresponding "main" clause were classified as (i) standalone; this group will be further subcategorized in section 7. Five cases were ambiguous; I will mostly ignore these for ease of exposition.[15] The distribution over the various types is shown in fig. 2: more than half of the occurrences are causal, and about one in four instances of *kī* introduces an object or subject clause.

[12] It is quite conceivable that the use of *kī* in poetry follows a different, but comparable, distribution (see e.g. Meyer 2001). In poetry it is often much less clear what the Common Ground contains, so the Common Ground may be a weaker factor in choosing between *kī* and alternatives in poetic texts. It is also possible that there are differences in distribution between narrative (the Speaker is the author) and direct speech reports (the Speaker is a character in the text). I will have to leave both questions for further study, however.

[13] I excluded some instances of the fossilized construction כִּי אִם *kī 'im*, and two instances of bare *kī*, in the meaning 'except', which I assume to have grammaticalized more or less independently.

[14] Naturally, there are cases that can be classified as one of two categories, in particular in the temporal/causal, temporal/conditional, and causal/resultative categories (cf. Locatell 2020). My argument does not rely on a sharp distinction between these categories, so I have in these cases selected what seemed to be the most relevant category without spending too much thought on it.

[15] Gen. 8:21 (causal/concessive); 21:7 (adversative/standalone); 38:16c (conditional/resultative); 1 Sam. 15:24a (resultative/standalone); 2 Sam. 18:3b (causal *or* adversative, but not causal-adversative). See the data set for more details.

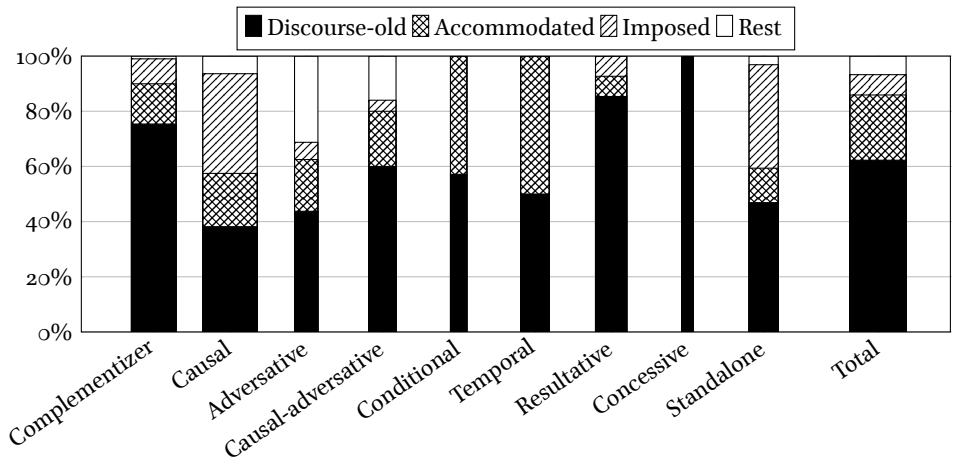


**Figure 3**: Distribution of types of reference to the Common Ground for each use type of *kī*. Column width indicates type frequency (not to scale).

Each instance was also tagged for the way it interacts with Common Ground. As explained in section 1.1, the information content of the *kī*-clause can be (a) discourse-old and thus part of the Common Ground, (b) easily accommodated by the Addressee as new Common Ground, (c) imposed on the Common Ground by the Speaker for discursive effect. There are some cases where the information content in the *kī*-clause does not fit either of these cases; these were classified as (d) rest. I will discuss these separately below, to show why they do not constitute counter-examples for my claim that *kī* marks reference to Common Ground. Nevertheless I also include many examples where information is in the Common Ground, in order to demonstrate the ways in which this can be used in discourse. Figure 3 shows the distribution of types of reference to the Common Ground for each use type of *kī*; the numbers from which this graph has been compiled are given in table 1.

It can immediately be seen that in the vast majority of cases, the information content of the *kī*-clause is in the Common Ground, easily accommodated, or imposed: in only 7% of the total number of cases there is no reference to Common Ground. The cases where *kī* apparently does not interact with Common Ground are mostly isolated in a few use types (causal, adversative, and causal-adversative).

## 3 Object and subject clauses introduced with *kī*

I will now discuss each type of *kī*-clause in turn. I begin with object and subject clauses (this section), followed by several types of adverbial clauses (sections 4 to 6), and finishing with standalone *kī*-clauses (section 7).

| Type | Common Ground | | Accommodated | | Imposed | | Rest | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Complementizer | 150 | 75% | 29 | 15% | 18 | 9% | 2 | 1% | 199 |
| Causal | 245 | 57% | 124 | 29% | 23 | 5% | 41 | 9% | 433 |
| Adversative | 7 | 44% | 3 | 19% | 1 | 6% | 5 | 31% | 16 |
| Causal-adversative | 15 | 60% | 5 | 20% | 1 | 4% | 16 | 25% | 25 |
| Conditional | 4 | 57% | 3 | 43% | 0 | | 0 | | 7 |
| Temporal | 15 | 50% | 15 | 50% | 0 | | 0 | | 30 |
| Resultative | 35 | 85% | 3 | 7% | 3 | 7% | 0 | | 41 |
| Concessive | 4 | 100% | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 4 |
| Standalone | 15 | 47% | 4 | 13% | 12 | 38% | 1 | 3% | 32 |
| **Total** | **490** | **62%** | **186** | **24%** | **58** | **7%** | **53** | **7%** | **787** |

**Table 1**: Distribution of instances of *kī* and the use of Common Ground per type.

It is cross-linguistically not uncommon for complementizers such as *kī* to develop from deictic elements.[16] I will not concern myself here with the question why an originally [+distal] deictic element becomes a complementizer; this has been addressed in great detail elsewhere.[17] Rather, I will compare complement clauses introduced by *kī* with other complementation strategies to show that *kī*-clauses are used specifically when reference to Common Ground is being made.

The object clauses introduced by *kī* in my corpus can be divided into four main categories depending on the type of matrix predicate. By far the most common are (a) verbs of perception (רָאָה *rāʾâ* 'see'; שָׁמַע *šāmaʿ* 'hear') and (b) cognitive verbs (יָדַע *yāḏaʿ* 'know'); less common are (c) speech verbs (הִגִּיד *higgīḏ* 'inform') (see Miller 2003: 98 on the relative rarity of this category). The remaining category contains (d) miscellaneous constructions: cases where the object clause is governed by a noun (עֵד *ʿeḏ* 'witness') or preposition (עַד *ʿaḏ* 'until'), as well as cases where *kī* introduces a subject clause.

## 3.1 Verbs of perception

The verb רָאָה *rāʾâ* 'see' occurs 65 times with *kī* in my corpus, שָׁמַע *šāmaʿ* 'hear' 20 times, and הִתְבַּשֵּׂר *hiṯbaśśer* 'receive good news' once. These verbs are most frequently used to describe an event in which the subject becomes aware of information that was already known to the Addressee (usually, the reader of the text). It is better understood as 'realize'

[16] For example, English *that* is both a distal demonstrative (*that book*) and a complementizer (*I know that …*); it shares these functions with Semitic **ka*. In Latin, the complementizer *quod* (*Scio quod …* 'I know that …') is made up of the interrogative element *qu-* and the medial demonstrative *-id*. In Russian, the complementizer *što* (*ya znayu što …* 'I know that …') is related to the demonstratives *eto* (*eta kniga* 'this book') and *to* (*von to pal'to* 'that coat over there').

[17] It is usually assumed that the English complementizer *that* developed from a cataphoric pronoun: *Galileo said that*$_i$*:* [*the earth is round*]$_i$ > *Galileo said* [CP *that the earth is round*] (Roberts & Roussou 2003: 113, and references therein). This grammaticalization path is somewhat problematic for Hebrew *kī*, which never was a demonstrative. However, this grammaticalization path has been challenged in recent work (Kayne 2014: 189; Axel-Tober 2017), for example because it does not explain why complementizers are typically based on [+distal] elements (**Galileo said* ***this*** *the earth is round*). For this reason, I assume that complementizers are not simply reanalyzed demonstratives, but lexicalizations of the same deictic [+distal] feature in a different syntactic environment (C rather than D); see Staps & Rooryck (2023).

than as ‘see’, as in (4), where the information is clearly in the Common Ground for the Addressee (the reader).

(4) Gen. 16:4: וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הָגָר וַתַּהַר וַתֵּרֶא כִּי הָרָתָה

*way-y-ā̊ḇō’-Ø* *’ɛl* *hā̊gā̊r* *wat-t-ahar-Ø* *wat-t-ērɛ’-Ø*
and.PRET-3M-come-SG to Hagar and.PRET-F-conceive-3SG and.PRET-F-see-3SG

***kī*** *hā̊rā̊-ṯā̊*
**COMP** conceive\PFV-3F.SG

‘And he came into Hagar and she conceived, and she saw *that* she had conceived.’

The information can also be accommodated, as in (5). In this example, the fact that the man cannot overpower Jacob is easily accommodated by the Addressee given the information that they wrestle for a long time (until daybreak).

(5) Gen. 32:25–26: וַיֵּאָבֵק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר: וַיַּרְא כִּי לֹא יָכֹל לוֹ

*way-y-ē’ā̊ḇēq-Ø* *’īš* *ʿimm-ō* *ʿaḏ* *ʿălōṯ* *haš=šā̊ḥar*
and.PRET-3M-wrestle-SG man with-him until go_up\INF.of the=daybreak

*way-y-ar’-Ø* ***kī*** *lō’* *yā̊ḵōl-Ø* *l-ō*
and.PRET-3M-see-SG **COMP** not be_able\PFV-3M.SG to-him

‘And a man wrestled with him until daybreak, and he realized *that* he could not overpower him.’

A comparison with other complementation strategies is most helpful to show that *kī*-clauses are associated with Common Ground; I will use רָאָה *rā̊’ā̊* ‘see’ as a running example. In my corpus, this verb also occurs with clausal complements introduced by וְהִנֵּה *wə-hinnē* ‘and behold’.[18] With this construction, the information given in the complement clause is new and not anticipated by the Addressee:[19]

(6) Gen. 22:13: וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה־אַיִל אַחַר נֶאֱחַז בַּסְּבַךְ בְּקַרְנָיו

*way-y-iśśā̊’-Ø* *’aḇrā̊hā̊m* *’ɛṯ* *ʿēn-ā̊yw* *way-y-ar’-Ø* ***wə=hinnē***
and.PRET-3M-lift-SG Abraham OBJ eye-DU.his and.PRET-3M-see-SG **and=behold**

*’ayil* *’aḥar* *nɛ’ĕḥaz-Ø* *b=as=səḇaḵ* *bə=qarn-ā̊yw*
ram behind hold\MID.PFV-3M.SG in=the=bush in=horn-PL.its

‘As Abraham looked up, he saw—*and behold!*—a ram behind [him]; it had been caught with its horns in a bush.’

An event being seen can also be described with a nominal complement, when modified by a participle used attributively:

[18] There are some cases where the complement is introduced by an interrogative pronoun. In these cases the information content is evidently not known to the Speaker (e.g. Gen. 37:20: ‘and we’ll see *what* will become of his dreams!’), so I will not compare these instances to complementation with *kī* here.

[19] Also Gen. 19:28; Jdg. 21:21. With a participle the complement can be either clausal or nominal: Gen. 18:2; 24:63; 26:8; 29:2; 37:25; Jdg. 3:24; 9:43; 1 Sam. 10:11; 2 Sam. 13:34. The following are ambiguous between participle and suffix conjugation: Gen. 33:1; 2 Sam. 18:24.

(7) 2 Sam. 11:2: וַיַּ֣רְא אִשָּׁ֔ה רֹחֶ֖צֶת מֵעַ֣ל הַגָּ֑ג

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *way-y-arʾ-Ø* | *ʾiššå* | *rōḥɛṣ-ɛṯ* | *mē=ʿal* | *hag=gå̄g* |
| and.PRET-3M-see-SG | woman | bathe\PTCP-F.SG | from=on | the=roof |

'… and he saw a woman bathing from upon the roof.'

This strategy can be combined with *hinnē* 'behold', in which case the information is noteworthy (e.g. Gen. 18:2). When *hinnē* 'behold' is not used (as in [7]), the information is new and unexpected (hence not easily accommodated), but also not marked as particularly noteworthy or immediately requiring the Addressee's attention; this strategy thus provides a middle ground between complementation with *kī* on the one hand, and *hinnē* on the other. The overall division of labor is clear: *hinnē* 'behold' introduces discourse-new or noteworthy information, and *kī* introduces discourse-old or easily accommodated information. A nominal complement modified by an attributively used participle, unless combined with *hinnē* 'behold', is used for information that is new and not expected, but also not particularly noteworthy.

## 3.2 Cognitive verbs

The class of cognitive verbs consists primarily of יָדַע *yå̄ḏaʿ* 'know' (72 times); other verbs in this class are נִחַם *niḥam* 'regret' (4 times), בִּין *bīn* 'understand' (twice), כִּחֵד *kiḥēḏ* 'hide', and זָכַר *zå̄ḵar* 'remember' (both once). All these less frequent predicates are factive and thus necessarily refer to Common Ground (e.g. 1 Sam. 15:35b: 'I have come to regret (*niḥam*) *that* I have made Saul king'). The verb *yå̄ḏaʿ* 'know' is often used in the same sense as *rå̄ʾå̄* 'see', meaning 'realize', and then has a complement that is obviously discourse-old or accommodated by the Addressee. However, *yå̄ḏaʿ* 'know' can be used more easily to impose information on the Common Ground:

(8) 1 Sam. 28:1: תֵּדַ֗ע כִּ֤י אִתִּי֙ תֵּצֵ֣א בַֽמַּחֲנֶ֔ה

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *t-ēḏaʿ-Ø* | ***kī*** | *ʾitt-ī* | *t-ēṣēʾ-Ø* | *ḇ=am=maḥănɛ* |
| 2-know\IPFV-M.SG | **COMP** | with-me | 2-go_out\IPFV-M.SG | in=the=camp |

'(And Achish said to David:) "You should know … *that* you will go out with me in battle."'

Here, David, an Israelite, has sought refuge with the Philistine king Gath. When the Philistines prepare to fight Israel, Achish makes sure that David understands that he has to fight on Achish's side now, and cannot refuse to participate. This is not something they discussed before. *Kī* imposes this information on the Common Ground, which works well for a command. Other than cases of imposition, however, *kī*-clauses with cognitive verbs are quite similar to those with verbs of perception.

## 3.3 Speech verbs

The most frequent speech verb with *kī*-clauses is הִגִּיד *higgīḏ* 'inform' (13 times, and 5 times in the passive); we also have נִשְׁבַּע *nišbaʿ* 'swear' (2 times), and אָמַר *ʾāmar* 'say', בִּשֵּׂר *biśśēr* 'bring good news', and גָּלָה אֹזֶן *gālā ʾōzɛn* 'uncover the ear' (1 time each).[20] The large number of occurrences with *higgīḏ* 'inform' compared to the overall more common *ʾāmar* 'say' already reflects the fact that *kī* refers to the Common Ground, since the complement of *higgīḏ* 'inform' is more often already known to the Addressee:[21]

(9) Jdg. 9:46–47: וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־צְרִיַח בֵּית אֵל בְּרִית: וַיֻּגַּד לַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ כִּי הִתְקַבְּצוּ כָּל־בַּעֲלֵי מִגְדַּל־שְׁכֶם:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *way-y-ʾāḇōʾ-ū* | *ʾɛl* | *ṣərīaḥ* | *bēṯ* | *ʾēl* |
| and.PRET-3M-come-PL | to | stronghold.of | house.of | El |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *bərīṯ* | *way-y-uggaḏ-Ø* | *la=ʾăḇīmɛlɛḵ* | ***kī*** |
| Berith | and.PRET-3M-inform\PASS-SG | to=Abimelech | **COMP** |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *hīṯə-qabbəṣ-ū* | *kå̄l* | *baʿăl-ē* | *mīḡədal* | *šəḵɛm* |
| REFL-gather\PLURACT.PFV-3PL | all.of | lord-PL.of | tower.of | Shechem |

'And [the leaders of the Tower of Shechem] came to the stronghold of the house of El-Berith. And Abimelech was informed *that* all the leaders of the tower of Shechem had gathered.'

A comparison with asyndetic indirect speech (Miller 2003: 119–123) is interesting here.[22] It should be noted that asyndetic indirect speech only occurs embedded within direct speech (Miller 2003: 120), and the absence of a complementizer may therefore be attributed in part to register (cf. the more frequent omission of the English complementizer *that* in direct speech: Elsness 1984; Rissanen 1991). However, when we compare indirect speech with and without complementizer, both embedded in direct speech, a Common Ground effect can be observed:

(10) Gen. 12:13: אִמְרִי־נָא אֲחֹתִי אָתְּ

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *ʾimr-ī* | *nå̄ʾ* | *ʾăḥōṯ-ī* | *ʾå̄tt* |
| say\IMP-F.SG | please | sister-mine | you |

'(Abram said to his wife Sarai: "…) Please say Ø you are my sister."'

[20] I follow Miller (2003: 103–116) in rejecting the idea that *kī* can introduce direct speech: *kī* either introduces indirect speech, or it is the first word in the reported direct speech. I discuss cases of the former here; when *kī* is part of the reported speech it can have any other function, which I discuss throughout the rest of this article.

[21] Keep in mind here, again, that the Addressee, for our purposes, is not the Addressee of the speech event (the one who is being informed), but the Addressee of the reporting of the speech event (typically, the reader).

[22] Indirect speech can also be introduced with the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר *ʾăšɛr* (Miller 2003: 97–98), but since this is rare and mostly a feature of Late Biblical Hebrew, I will not compare the two here.

(11) Gen. 12:18: וַיִּקְרָא פַרְעֹה לְאַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר ... לָמָּה לֹא־הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי כִּי אִשְׁתְּךָ הִוא׃

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *way-y-iqrɑ̄ʾ-Ø* | *pɑrʿōh* | *lə=ʾaḇrɑ̊m* | *way-y-ōʾmɛr-Ø* | ... | *lɑ̊mmɑ̊* | *lōʾ* |
| and.PRET-3M-call-SG | Pharaoh | to=Abram | and.PRET-3M-say-SG | ... | why | not |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *higgaḏ-tɑ̄* | *l-ī* | ***kī*** | *ʾišt-əḵɑ̄* | *hīʾ* |
| inform\PFV-2M.SG | to-me | **COMP** | wife-yours | she |

'So Pharaoh called Abram and said: "... Why have you not told me *that* she is your wife?"'

In (10), Abram's idea to pretend that Sarai is his sister is new to the Addressee (Sarai), and there is no reason why it should be easily accommodated. As a result, *kī* is not used. However, in (11), Pharaoh has found out that Sarai is Abram's sister. The information is in his and Abram's Common Ground, and the indirect speech is introduced with *kī* accordingly.[23]

One could object that the pair in (10–11) is not minimal because two different verbs are used: *higgīḏ* 'inform' with *kī* in (11) and *ʾɑ̊mar* 'say' without in (10). Since asyndetic indirect speech complements are only ever found with *ʾɑ̊mar* 'say' (Miller 2003: 121), a better minimal pair cannot be given.[24] However, note that the simple fact that *kī* appears with one verb and not the other can and should be seen as reflecting the function of the complementizer to mark Common Ground: meaning 'inform', *higgīḏ* is simply much more suitable to talk about common knowledge, whereas *ʾɑ̊mar* 'say' is more often used in contexts where the Addressee is given new information, such as imperatives (10). This distribution therefore confirms the hypothesis concerning *kī*.

## 3.4 Miscellaneous complementation structures

Although nominalized *kī*-clauses are usually object clauses complementing verbs, they can also complement nouns and prepositions, or function as subject clauses. With nouns we only find עֵד *ʿēḏ* 'witness' (1 Sam. 12:5; Ruth 4:9) and עֵדָה *ʿēḏɑ̄* 'legal proof' (Gen. 21:30b); with prepositions we only have עַד *ʿaḏ* 'until' (3 times).

The nouns *ʿēḏ* 'witness' and *ʿēḏɑ̄* 'legal proof' are used with *kī* only to establish who can corroborate a certain fact. This is always a known fact, that is, a fact in the Common Ground:

(12) 1 Sam. 12:5: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם עֵד יְהוָה בָּכֶם ... כִּי לָא מְצָאתֶם בְּיָדִי מְאוּמָה׃

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *way-y-ōʾmɛr-Ø* | *ʾălē-hɛm* | *ʿēḏ* | *yhwh* | *bɑ̊-ḵɛm* | ... | ***kī*** | *lōʾ* |
| and.PRET-3M-say-SG | to-them | witness | Yahweh | against-you | ... | **COMP** | not |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *məṣɑ̊ʾ-ṯɛm* | *bə=yɑ̊ḏ-ī* | *məʾūmɑ̊* | |
| find\PFV-2M.PL | in=hand-mine | anything | |

[23] In Gen. 12:19, Pharaoh continues to ask: 'why did you say, "she is my sister"?', without *kī*. But *kī* is here excluded since the complement is a direct speech report, as can be seen from the pronominal reference (Miller 2003: 120).

[24] The one example of *ʾɑ̊mar* 'say' with a *kī*-clause has the verb in the meaning 'think, say to oneself': 'I thought that you really hated [your bride], so I gave her to your best man.' (Jdg. 15:2). Common Ground is imposed here; the Speaker informs the Addressee of an assumption he made based on the Addressee's earlier behavior.

‘(And they said: “You have not wronged us …”) So he said to them: “Yahweh is a witness against you …*that* you have not found any [charge] against me.”’

Here, the complement clause simply reiterates what has already been said in the previous verse. Without *kī*, *ʿēḏ* ‘witness’ can be used with new information. In the following example, it is clear that Laban and Jacob are going to form some kind of covenant, but the preceding context provides no information based on which the Addressee can deduce that the cairn will be a marker of the border between them. Therefore *kī* would be inappropriate:

(13) Gen. 31:52: עֵד הַגַּל הַזֶּה … אִם־אָנִי לֹא־אֶעֱבָר אֵלַיִךְ אֶת־הַגַּל הַזֶּה וְאִם־אַתָּה לֹא־תַעֲבֹר אֵלַי אֶת־הַגַּל הַזֶּה … לְרָעָה׃

| *ʿēḏ* | *hag=gal* | *haz=zɛ* | … | *ʾim* | *ʾănī* | *lōʾ* | *ʾ-ɛʿĕḇōr* | *ʾēlɛ-ḵă* | *ʾɛṯ* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| witness | the=cairn | the=this | … | if | I | not | 1SG-pass_over\IPFV | to-you | OBJ |

| *hag=gal* | *haz=zɛ* | *wə=ʾim* | *ʾattă* | *lōʾ* | *ṯ-aʿăḇōr-Ø* | *ʾēla-y* | *ʾɛṯ* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| the=cairn | the=this | and=if | you | not | 2-pass_over\IPFV-M.SG | to-me | OBJ |

| *hag=gal* | *haz=zɛ* | … | *lə=răʿă* |
|---|---|---|---|
| the=cairn | the=this | … | for=evil |

(Laban to Jacob:) “‘This cairn is a witness …: Ø I will not pass this cairn to you, and you will not pass this cairn … to me to do harm.”’

Each instance with *ʿaḏ* ‘until’ (Gen. 26:13; 41:49; 2 Sam. 23:10) describes the direct consequence of the matrix clause. For instance, in (14), being very wealthy is a direct consequence of becoming more and more wealthy. The *kī*-clause is therefore easily accommodated in the Common Ground:

(14) Gen. 26:13: וַיִּגְדַּל הָאִישׁ וַיֵּלֶךְ הָלוֹךְ וְגָדֵל עַד כִּי־גָדַל מְאֹד׃

| *way-y-igdal-Ø* | *hă=ʾīš* | *way-y-ēlɛḵ-Ø* | *hălōḵ* |
|---|---|---|---|
| and.PRET-3M-be_great-SG | the=man | and.PRET-3M-go-SG | go\INFABS |

| *wə=gădēl-Ø* | *ʿaḏ* | ***kī*** | *gădal-Ø* | *məʾōḏ* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| and=be_great\PTCP-M.SG | until | **COMP** | be_great\PFV-3M.SG | very |

‘The man was wealthy, and he became more and more wealthy[25] to the point *that* he was very wealthy.’

The remaining cases are subject clauses. Two of these begin with אַף כִּי *ʾap̄ kī* ‘[it is] even [the case] that’ (Gen. 3:1; 1 Sam. 14:30). I first discuss the other four, which are more straightforward: they all nominalize a previously introduced proposition, and thus refer to Common Ground (1 Sam. 25:30; 2 Sam. 9:1; 18:3; Ruth 2:22). For instance, in (15), the nominalized clause refers to the same proposition as the earlier ‘you will not go out’:

[25] Reading *gădōl* (INFABS) for *gădēl*; for the durative interpretation cf. Gzella (2008).

(15) 2 Sam. 18:3c: לֹ֣א תֵצֵ֔א ... וְעַתָּ֥ה טֽוֹב כִּי־תִהְיֶ֥ה־לָּ֛נוּ מֵעִ֖יר לַעְזֽוֹר׃[26]

*lō'* *ṯ-ēṣē'-Ø* ... *wə=ʿattå̄* *ṭōḇ* ***kī*** *ṯ-īhəyɛ-Ø* *lå̄-nū*
not 2-go_out\IPFV-M.SG ... and=now good **COMP** 2-be\IPFV-M.SG for-us
*mē=ʿīr* *la=ʿzōr*
from=city for=help

'(The king said to the people: "I myself will also go out with you." But the people said:) "[You will not go out]$_i$ ...; now, it is better *that* [you provide support for us from the city]$_i$."'

These cases thus confirm the hypothesis that *kī* marks the use of Common Ground (unfortunately, however, they cannot be compared to asyndetic finite subject clauses; these do not exist).

The cases with *'ap kī* '[it is] even [the case] that ...' are as follows:[27]

(16) Gen. 3:1: אַף כִּי־אָמַ֣ר אֱלֹהִ֔ים לֹ֥א תֹאכְל֖וּ מִכֹּ֣ל עֵ֥ץ הַגָּֽן׃

***'ap*** ***kī*** *'å̄mar-Ø* *'ĕlōhīm* *lō'* *ṯ-ō'ḵəl-ū* *mik=kōl* *ʿēṣ*
**even** **COMP** say\PFV-3M.SG God not 2-eat\IPFV-M.PL from=all.of tree.of
*hag=gå̄n*
the=garden

'(And the snake said to the woman:) "Is it *really* the case *that* God has said: 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"'

(17) 1 Sam. 14:30a: אַף כִּ֣י לוּא֩ אָכַ֨ל הַיּ֜וֹם הָעָ֗ם מִשְּׁלָ֤ל אֹיְבָיו֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר מָצְא֔וּ כִּ֥י עַתָּ֛ה לֹא־רַבְתָּ֥ה מַכָּ֖ה בַּפְּלִשְׁתִּֽים׃

***'ap*** ***kī*** *lū'* *'å̄ḵōl* *'å̄ḵal-Ø* *hayyōm* *hå̄=ʿå̄m*
**even** **COMP** had_not eat\INFABS eat\PFV-3M.SG today the=army(M)
*miš=šəlal* *'ōyəḇ-å̄yw* *'ăšɛr* *må̄ṣå̄'-Ø* *kī* *ʿattå̄* *lō'*
from=provision.of enemy-PL.its REL find\PFV-3M.SG COMP now not
*rå̄ḇə-ṯå̄* *makkå̄* *b=ap=pəlištī-m*
be_great\PFV-3F.SG slaughter(F) against=the=Philistine-PL

'(See how my eyes gleamed when I tasted just a little of this honey.) It's *certainly* the case *that*, had the army today eaten from the enemies' provision which it found, that now the slaughter of the Philistines would have been greater.'

Example (16) is a case of imposed Common Ground: the snake presumably knows that God has only forbidden the people to eat from one tree, but gains the woman's trust by pretending he is asking a simple question. By pretending that he is ill-informed, the snake presents itself as harmless to the woman, which it will subsequently exploit. In (17),

[26] The consonantal text has לעזיר; a misspelling or the same form with distant assimilation (Tsumura 2014: 137–138).

[27] The construction *'ap kī* can sometimes be read as 'how much more/less', introducing a clause that provides a stronger reason for an implicit assertion than the reason provided in the previous clause (Van der Merwe, Naudé & Kroeze 2017: §40.14.1b). Three cases where *'ap kī* should be read together are classified as causal (1 Sam. 21:6b; 23:3; 2 Sam. 16:11a).

Common Ground is accommodated. In the previous clause, the Speaker has suggested that he was strengthened by eating just a little of the enemies' provisions; the following verse simply extends this to the rest of the army.

### 3.5 Summary

In conclusion, both the distribution of complementizer *kī* over different matrix predicates and a comparison with other complementation strategies support the hypothesis that *kī* marks information in the Common Ground, or information that is easily accommodated in the Common Ground. In terms of distribution we may note the frequent use with רָאָה *rå̄ʾå̄* in the sense 'realize (old information)' rather than the literal 'see (something new)', as well as the preference for הִגִּיד *higgīḏ* 'inform (of old information)' over אָמַר *ʾå̄mar* 'say (something new)'. I have compared *kī* to various other complementation strategies, such as וְהִנֵּה *wə-hinnē* 'and behold' and asyndetic indirect speech, which can all be shown to be used when the complement is not in the Common Ground yet, in contrast to the cases with *kī*. The following sections proceed with the analysis of adverbial *kī*-clauses.

## 4 Causal *kī*

As mentioned in section 2, *kī* most frequently introduces a causal clause, which gives the cause, reason, or ground for the event described in the main clause.[28] In the majority of cases (almost 90%), the cause given in the clause is either already in the Common Ground or easily accommodated by the Addressee. It is not uncommon for causal conjunctions to be sensitive to reference to Common Ground. As mentioned in passing in the introduction, similar observations apply to, for example, English *since* (e.g. Dancygier & Sweetser 2000). Examples of such straightforward cases of causal *kī* are given in (18–21). In (18), the reason is in the Common Ground, because it is cultural knowledge which the Speaker (writer) assumes the Addressee (reader) to have. In (19), the reason is in the Common Ground because it has been given in the previous clause.

(18) Gen. 34:14: לְֹא נוּכַל ... כִּי־חֶרְפָּה הִוא לָֽנוּ׃

*lō'* *n-ūḵal* ... ***kī*** *ḥɛrpå̄* *hī'* *lå̄-nū*

not 1PL-be_able\IPFV ... **COMP** disgrace it for-us

'We cannot (do this, giving our sister to a man who is uncircumcised), *for* it is a disgrace to us.'

[28] The discussion of causal-adversative *kī* is delayed until section 5, where adversative *kī* is discussed as well.

(19) Jdg. 14:17: וַתֵּבְךְּ עָלָיו שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה לָהֶם הַמִּשְׁתֶּה וַיְהִי | בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיַּגֶּד־לָהּ כִּי הֶצִיקַתְהוּ

*wat-t-ēḇk-Ø* *ʿål-åyw* *šiḇʿa-ṯ* *hay=yåm-īm* *ʾăšɛr* *håyå-Ø*
and.PRET-F-cry-3SG on-him seven-of the=day-PL REL be\PFV-3M.SG
*lå-hɛm* *ham=mištɛ* *wa-y-əhī-Ø* *b=ay=yōm* *haš=šəḇīʿī*
for-them the=party(M) and.PRET-3M-be-SG on=the=day the=seventh
*way-y-aggɛḏ-Ø* *l-åh* ***kī*** *hĕṣīq-aṯ-hū*
and.PRET-3M-inform-SG to-her **COMP** press\PFV-3F.SG-him

'She cried in his presence during the seven days of their party, and on the seventh day he told her, *because* she pressed him so.'

In (20), it is said that the grain that Joseph is storing is 'a very great quantity', and eventually he has to stop counting it. Based on this, the information in the *kī*-clause (that the stored grain had become immeasurable) is easily accommodated. Similarly, in (21), Samuel has to take oil and go to Jesse. Based on this (and the fact that Saul has been rejected as a king in the preceding chapter), it is easily accommodated that someone in Jesse's family will be the new king.

(20) Gen. 41:49b: וַיִּצְבֹּר יוֹסֵף בָּר כְּחוֹל הַיָּם הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד עַד כִּי־חָדַל לִסְפֹּר כִּי־אֵין מִסְפָּר׃

*way-y-iṣbōr-Ø* *yōsēp* *bå̄r* *kə=ḥōl* *hay=yåm* *harbɛ*
and.PRET-3M-store-SG Joseph grain like=sand.of the=sea be_great\CAUS.INF
*məʾōḏ* *ʿaḏ* *kī* *ḥå̄ḏal-Ø* *li=spōr* ***kī*** *ʾēn* *mispå̄r*
very until COMP stop\PFV-3M.SG to=count\INF **COMP** not_exist number

'And Joseph stored grain—as much as the sand of the sea, a very great quantity—to the point that he stopped counting it *because* it was immeasurable.'

(21) 1 Sam. 16:1: מַלֵּא קַרְנְךָ שֶׁמֶן וְלֵךְ אֶשְׁלָחֲךָ אֶל־יִשַׁי בֵּית־הַלַּחְמִי כִּי־רָאִיתִי בְּבָנָיו לִי מֶלֶךְ׃

*mallēʾ-Ø* *qarn-əḵå̄* *šɛmɛn* *wə=lēḵ-Ø* *ʾ-ɛšəlå̄ḥ-ăḵå̄* *ʾɛl*
fill\IMP-M.SG horn-yours oil and=go\IMP-M.SG 1SG-send_out\IPFV-you.OBJ to
*yišay* *bēṯ hallaḥmī* ***kī*** *rå̄ʾī-ṯī* *bə=ḇå̄n-åyw* *l-ī* *mɛlɛḵ*
Jesse the_Bethlehemite **COMP** see\PFV-1SG in=son-PL.his for-me king

'Fill your horn with oil and go, I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, *for* I have seen a king for me amongst his sons.'

Things become more interesting in cases where Common Ground is imposed. In the following example, David has just sneaked into Saul's camp while Abner was on guard. David then says to Abner that he could have killed Saul. Using *kī*, David pretends that Abner should know that an enemy soldier (David himself) came into the camp, thus emphasizing that Abner did not do a very good job protecting Saul.

(22) 1 Sam. 26:15: וְלָמָּה לֹא שָׁמַרְתָּ אֶל־אֲדֹנֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי־בָא אַחַד הָעָם לְהַשְׁחִית אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲדֹנֶיךָ׃

*wə=lå̊mmå̊* *lō'* *šå̊mar-tå̊* *'el* *'ăḏōnɛ-ḵå̊* *ham=mɛlɛḵ* ***kī***
and=why not guard\PFV-2M.SG to lord-yours the=king **COMP**

*ḇå̊'-Ø* *'aḥaḏ* *hå̊=ʿå̊m* *lə=hašḥīṯ* *'ɛṯ* *ham=mɛlɛḵ* *'ăḏōnɛ-ḵå̊*
come\PFV-3M.SG one.of the=army to=destroy\INF OBJ the=king lord-yours

'And why haven't you protected your lord the king, *given that* a soldier came to kill the king your lord?'

In all the examples in (18–22), the Speaker positions a sentential complement close to the Addressee using [+distal] *kī*. Depending on the context, this can have several effects: it may signal to the Addressee that discourse-old information is being referenced (18–19), or the Addressee may be prompted to accommodate some new information in the Common Ground (20–21), or the Speaker may present information as something the Addressee should have known, knowing full well that they do not (22).

As further evidence for the fact that causal *kī* marks Common Ground, it is interesting to see that when a cause consists of partially new information, the new information can be introduced by *wə-hinnē* 'and behold'.[29] In (23), the theory predicts that simply וְ *wə* 'and' would be infelicitous, because that would incorrectly suggest that the Addressee already knows that the land is good:

(23) Jdg. 18:9: קוּמָה וְנַעֲלֶה עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי רָאִינוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה טוֹבָה מְאֹד

*qūm-å̊* *wə=n-aʿ̆ălɛ* *ʿ̆ălē-hɛm* ***kī*** *rå̊'ī-nū* *'ɛṯ*
stand_up\IMP-M.SG and=1PL-go_up\IPFV to-them **COMP** see\PFV-1PL OBJ

*hå̊=ʾå̊rɛṣ* ***wə=hinnē*** *ṭōḇ-å̊* *məʾōḏ*
the=land(F) **and=behold** good-F.SG very

'(And the Danites returned to their brothers in Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brothers said to them: "How did it go?" And they said:) "Come on, let's go up against them, *for* we saw their land, *and look*: it's very good!"'

## 4.1 Backgrounded causal clauses

There are, however, cases of causal *kī* where Common Ground is not being referred to or even imposed. Here the original [+distal] feature of *kī* is often still relevant. There are plenty of cases where the cause is backgrounded, and in that sense placed at a distance from the main topic of conversation. Quite often the *kī*-clause provides the reason for a positive or negative command (16 out of 39 cases without reference to Common Ground):[30]

[29] McCarthy (1980: 333–334) claims that *wə-hinnē* 'and behold' can have a causal sense and practically replace *kī*, but the examples are not convincing so I will not compare the two.

[30] In the data set these are marked with "command". Positive commands: Gen. 21:12; 31:12; 40:15a; 43:16; 1 Sam. 14:39a; 16:11; 23:27; Ruth 3:18a. Negative commands: Gen. 2:17; 21:17; 26:24; 35:17; Jdg. 13:5b; 1 Sam. 4:20; 16:7a; 2 Sam. 13:32a.

(24) Jdg. 13:5b: וּמוֹרָהֹ לֹא־יַעֲלֶה עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ כִּי־נְזִיר אֱלֹהִים יִהְיֶה הַנַּעַר מִן־הַבָּטֶן

*ū=mōrå̄* *lō'* *y-aʿălɛ-Ø* *ʿal* *rōʾš-ō* ***kī*** *nəzīr* *ʾĕlōhīm*
and=razor(M) not 3M-go_up\IPFV-SG on head-his **COMP** dedicated.of God
*y-ihyɛ-Ø* *han=naʿar* *min* *hab=bå̄ṭɛn*
3M-be\IPFV-SG the=boy from the=womb

'(Look, you are pregnant and will give birth to a son,) but a razor shall not come on his head, *for* the boy will be dedicated to God from the womb.'

(25) Gen. 43:16: הָבֵא אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים הַבָּיְתָה וּטְבֹחַ טֶבַח וְהָכֵן כִּי אִתִּי יֹאכְלוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים בַּצָּהֳרָיִם׃

*hå̄ḇē'-Ø* *ʾɛṯ* *hå̄=ʾănå̄š-īm* *hab=bå̄yəṯ-å̄* *ū=ṭəḇōaḥ-Ø*
bring\IMP-M.SG OBJ the=man-PL the=house-ALL and=slaughter\IMP-M.SG
*ṭɛḇaḥ* *wə=hå̄ḵēn-Ø* ***kī*** *ʾitt-ī* *y-ōʾḵəl-ū* *hå̄=ʾănå̄š-īm*
animal and=prepare\IMP-M.SG **COMP** with-me 3M-eat\IPFV-PL the=man-PL
*b=aṣ=ṣå̄hărå̄yim*
at=the=noon

'Bring the men to the house and slaughter an animal and prepare it, *for* the men will eat with me at noon.'

In such cases, the *kī*-clause provides an explanation, but it is most important to the Speaker that the command is followed. For this reason, the explanation in the causal clause can be backgrounded and hence marked with [+distal] *kī*. In the remaining cases, the *kī*-clause often provides information that is not crucial for the main story line and can therefore be seen as backgrounded as well.[31]

## 4.2 Lexicalized causal meaning

However, there remain some exceptions:

(26) Gen. 25:21: וַיֶּעְתַּר יִצְחָק לַיהוָה לְנֹכַח אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִוא

*way-y-ɛʿtar-Ø* *yiṣḥå̄q* *l=yhwh* *lənōḵaḥ* *ʾišt-ō* ***kī***
and.PRET-3M-pray-SG Isaac to=Yahweh on_behalf_of wife-his **COMP**
*ʿăqå̄r-å̄* *hī'*
barren-F.SG she

'And Isaac prayed to Yahweh on behalf of his wife, *since* she was barren(, and God heard his prayer and Rebekah his wife conceived.)'

In (26), it is not known to the Addressee that Rebekah is barren, nor is there any reason why it should be easily accommodated. However, the information is not backgrounded either, since it is picked up at the end of the verse: 'and Rebekah his wife conceived'. For the 10 exceptions of this type I have no explanation based on a synchronic interpretation

[31] In the data set these are marked with "backgrounded": Gen. 5:24; 10:25; 15:16; 21:16; 42:4; Jdg. 4:3; 16:17; 1 Sam. 20:26a; 30:12; 2 Sam. 13:2; 14:15; Ruth 1:6a; 3:17.

of the [+distal] feature.[32] I propose that the causal meaning of *kī* is lexicalized on the basis of the examples where Common Ground or distancing is relevant, so that the causal meaning could then be extended to other contexts.

Note that the causal meaning is more than frequent enough for such lexicalization to have taken place. Furthermore, the lexicalization is plausible since there is a clear developmental path. In an earlier stage of the language, there were only causal instances that are derived from a [+distal] feature (such as examples [18–25] discussed here). Speakers then reanalyzed *kī* as a simple marker of causation. This allowed for the spread to cases where the [+distal] feature does not seem to be interpretable any more (26).

A critic may argue that if we need to assume lexicalization to have occurred for some cases anyway, it is simpler to describe the causal meaning of *kī* as lexicalized in all instances, including when the [+distal] feature is interpretable. On such a view, the fact that the *kī*-clauses in (18–25) expresses information that is already in the Common Ground, or is easily accommodated/imposed, is accidental. This argument cannot be maintained. First of all, this alternative is not, in fact, simpler, since there is no reason why a causal interpretation should not be pragmatically inferred, just like other adverbial interpretations (see sections 5 and 6). More importantly, however, this alternative approach cannot account for the distribution of *kī*. Only 2% of the total number of causal *kī*-clauses is exceptional in this way, and in all other cases the cause is in the Common Ground, easily accommodated, or imposed. A quick look at a dictionary shows that this is a much larger portion of the data than is the case with other causal conjunctions (e.g. יַעַן *yaʿan*), and similarly it can be shown that *kī* is much more frequent with commands than other causal conjunctions. These distributional facts can only be explained if *kī* has not simply lexicalized a causal meaning, but if many of the causal instances of *kī* are in fact pragmatically inferred from the general meaning of referring to Common Ground.

## 5 Adversative and causal-adversative *kī*

An adversative clause provides a contrast. For example, in (27), the answer of the people contrasts with Samuel's advice not to appoint a king. Since the people already asked for a king in verse 5, this request is in the Common Ground and here marked by *kī*:

(27) 1 Sam. 8:19: וַיְמָאֲנוּ הָעָם לִשְׁמֹעַ בְּקוֹל שְׁמוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹּא כִּי אִם־מֶלֶךְ יִהְיֶה עָלֵינוּ׃

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *wa-y-əmāʾăn-ū* | *hāʿām* | *li=šmōaʿ* | *bə=qōl* | *šəmūʾēl* | |
| and.PRET-3M-refuse-PL | the=people | to=listen\INF | in=voice.of | Samuel | |
| *way-y-ōʾmər-ū* | *lō'* | ***kī*** | *ʾim* | *məlɛḵ* | *y-ihəyɛ-Ø* | *ʿālē-nū* |
| and.PRET-3M-say-PL | no | **COMP** | if | king | 3M-be\IPFV-SG | over-us |

'But the people refused to listen to Samuel and said: "no; *but* a king shall rule (lit.: be) over us!"'

[32] In the data set these are marked as "lexicalized meaning", for reasons explained below: Gen. 25:21; 37:17; Jdg. 6:30ab; 1 Sam. 4:13; 6:19a; 13:19; 30:6a; 2 Sam. 6:6; 19:27a.

I classified cases where the contrasting clause provides the reason or cause for a preceding negative statement as causal-adversative. Here again, the adverbial clause is in the Common Ground, because its propositional content has already been introduced in the preceding verse:

(28) Gen. 45:8: לְֹא־אַתֶּם שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי הֵ֫נָּה כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים

*lō’ ’attɛm šəlaḥ-tɛm ’ōṯ-ī hēnnå̄* ***kī*** *hå̄=’ĕlōhīm*
not you send\PFV-2M.PL OBJ-me here **COMP** the=God
‘(God sent me ahead of you …,) it is not you who have sent me here, *but/because* [it is] God.’

A comparison with other adversative strategies again shows that the degree of reference to Common Ground is especially high when *kī* is used. When the adversative clause presents new information, we often find the more neutral conjunction וְ *wə* ‘and, but, …’ instead:[33]

(29) Gen. 2:16–17: מִכֹּל עֵ֣ץ־הַגָּ֔ן אָכֹ֖ל תֹּאכֵ֑ל: וּמֵעֵ֗ץ הַדַּ֙עַת֙ טֹ֣וב וָרָ֔ע לֹ֥א תֹאכַ֖ל מִמֶּ֑נּוּ

*mik=kōl ʿēṣ hag=gå̄n ’å̄ḵōl t-ō’ḵēl-Ø* ***ū****=mē=ʿēṣ*
from=all.of tree.of the=garden eat\INFABS 2-eat\IPFV-M.SG **and**=from=tree.of
*had=daʿaṯ ṭōḇ wå̄=rå̄ʿ lō’ ṯ-ō’ḵal-Ø mimmɛn-nū*
the=knowledge.of good and=evil not 2-eat\IPFV-M.SG from-it
‘You may eat from all the trees of the garden, *but* from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat.’

A more marked way to introduce an adversative clause with new information content is to use רַק *raq* ‘however, but’.[34] In the following example, the *raq*-clause provides information that is not yet in the Common Ground:

(30) Exod. 8:24: אָנֹכִ֞י אֲשַׁלַּ֣ח אֶתְכֶ֗ם … רַ֚ק הַרְחֵ֣ק לֹא־תַרְחִיקוּ֔ לָלֶ֖כֶת

*’ănōḵī ’-ăšallaḥ ’ɛṯ-ḵɛm … **raq** harḥēq lō’*
I 1SG-send_away\IPFV OBJ-you … **however** be_far\CAUS.INFABS not
*ṯ-arḥīq-ū lå̄=lɛḵɛṯ*
2-be_far\CAUS.IPFV-M.PL to=go\INF
‘I will let you go …, *however*, be sure not to go very far.’

[33] Simply searching for “but” in an English translation yields many more examples where *wə* introduces new information (e.g. Gen. 6:8, 18; 8:9).

[34] However, אַךְ *’aḵ* ‘indeed, just, only, but’ regularly refers to discourse-old information content when used adversatively. (see Levinsohn 2011: 92–94 for contexts where adversative *’aḵ* is used to emphasize a previously introduced point). Though *’aḵ* has cognates in Tigrē and Geʿez, I am not aware of a widely accepted etymology. It is tempting to associate this particle, like *kī*, with **ka*, but the existence of some other particles sensitive to the contents of the Common Ground is not in itself problematic for my hypothesis.

Though most instances of adversative and causal-adversative *kī* make reference to Common Ground, both categories are characterized by a relatively high number of instances that cannot be explained using a [+distal] feature. In both adversative (31) and causal-adversative (32), the *kī*-clause provides information that is not easily accommodated and cannot be seen as backgrounded either:

(31) Jdg. 1:19a: וַיִּ֤רַשׁ אֶת־הָהָר֙ כִּ֣י לְא֔וֹ לְהוֹרִ֖ישׁ אֶת־יוֹשְׁבֵ֣י הָעֵ֑מֶק

*way-y-ōrɛš-Ø* *ʾɛṯ* *hå̄=hå̄r* ***kī*** *lō’* *lə=hōrīš* *ʾɛṯ*
and.PRET-3M-conquer-SG OBJ the=hill **COMP** not to=conquer\INF OBJ

*yōšəḇ-ē* *hå̄=ʿēmɛq*
inhabit\PTCP-M.PL.of the=plain

‘And [Judah] conquered the hill country, *but* they could not conquer the people living in the plains’

(32) Gen. 24:3–4: לְא־תִקַּ֥ח אִשָּׁ֛ה לִבְנִ֖י מִבְּנ֣וֹת הַֽכְּנַעֲנִ֑י אֲשֶׁ֥ר אָנֹכִ֖י יוֹשֵׁ֥ב בְּקִרְבּ֔וֹ: כִּ֣י אֶל־אַרְצִ֗י וְאֶל־מוֹלַדְתִּי֙ תֵּלֵ֔ךְ וְלָקַחְתָּ֥ אִשָּׁ֖ה לִבְנִֽי

*lō’* *ṯ-iqqaḥ-Ø* *ʾiššå̄* *li=ḇn-ī* *mib=bən-ōṯ* *hak=kənaʿănī*
not 2-take\IPFV-M.SG woman for=son-mine from=child-F.PL the=Canaanite

*ʾăšɛr* *ʾå̄nōḵī* *yōšēḇ-Ø* *bə=qirb-ō* ***kī*** *ʾɛl* *ʾarṣ-ī* *wə=ʾɛl*
REL I live\PTCP-M.SG in=midst-its **COMP** to land-mine and=to

*mōlaḏt-ī* *t-ēlēḵ-Ø* *wə-lå̄qaḥ-tå̄* *ʾiššå̄* *li=ḇn-ī*
motherland-mine 2-go\IPFV-M.SG and.MOD-take-2M.SG woman for=son-mine

‘You must not acquire a wife for my son from the women of the Canaanites among whom I am living, *but/because* you must go to my country and my motherland (instead) and take a wife for my son’

These cases are therefore exceptional in the same way as causal (26) above. As with causal *kī*, a diachronic account remains necessary for these cases. Given the relatively low number of occurrences of both adversative and causal-adversative, it is unlikely that these functions developed directly from the general meaning of *kī*. It is more likely that they are the result of a semantic shift, starting out with the already lexicalized causal meaning. It is easy to see how a causal meaning could expand to causal-adversative, and eventually lose the necessarily causal interpretation to become plain adversative; such a development is also widely attested cross-linguistically (cf. Locatell 2017: 247–248 and references therein).

In my corpus, lexicalized meanings are needed for 10 exceptional cases of causal *kī*, 4 cases of causal-adversative *kī*, and 5 cases of adversative *kī*.[35] Since the number of causal-adversative cases is roughly half of the number of causal cases, I consider it more likely

[35] These are marked with “lexicalized meaning” in the data set. For the causal cases, see footnote 32. Causal-adversative cases are Gen. 17:15; 24:4; 32:29a; 35:10; adversative cases are Gen. 40:14; Jdg. 1:19a; 4:9a; 1 Sam. 15:35a; 2 Sam. 17:11.

that the lexicalized causal-adversative meaning (and subsequently, the adversative meaning) developed from the lexicalized causal meaning, than that it developed independently from the general meaning of *kī*.

# 6 Remaning adverbial uses

Having discussed causal and adversative *kī*-clauses in sections 4 and 5, respectively, this section reviews the evidence of the remaining, lower-frequency types of adverbial clauses introduced by *kī*: temporal and conditional clauses (section 6.1), resultative clauses (section 6.2), and concessive clauses (section 6.3). In all these types of adverbial clauses, the information provided in the *kī*-clause is already in the Common Ground or easily accommodated, or (rarely) imposed on the Common Ground. There will therefore be no need to assume that any of these uses of *kī* are lexicalized, as expected given the low frequency of these categories. All instances can be derived synchronically from a [+distal] feature.

## 6.1 Temporal and conditional clauses

In my corpus only few instances of *kī* are temporal, and even less conditional.[36] The distinction is not always clear-cut, as seen in (33). For this reason, I will discuss them together.

(33) Gen. 32:18: וַיְצַו אֶת־הָרִאשׁוֹן לֵאמֹר כִּי יִפְגָּשְׁךָ עֵשָׂו

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *wa-y-əṣaw-Ø* | *ʾɛṯ* | *hå̄=riʾšōn* | *lē=ʾmōr* | ***kī*** |
| and.PRET-3M-command-SG | OBJ | the=first | to=say\INF | **COMP** |
| *y-ipəgåš-Ø-ḵå̄* | *ʿēśå̄w* | | | |
| 3M-meet\IPFV-SG-you.OBJ | Esau | | | |

'He (Jacob) commanded the first [servant], saying, "*If/When* Esau meets you"'

There are two ways in which *kī* interacts with Common Ground in such cases. First, temporal and conditional clauses introduced by *kī* always describe an event that the Speaker considers certain or likely to occur or have occurred. *Kī* is not used for conditions that the Speaker does not expect to be met, or events that are unlikely to occur or have occurred. By modifying a main clause M with a conditional C, the Speaker can enlarge the Common Ground: M only applies given the current Common Ground augmented with the information that C is met. However, *kī* can only be used when this augmentation is reasonable given the current Common Ground: it should be easy to accommodate C (when it is likely or expected to occur or have occurred), or the Common Ground should already entail C (when it is certain to occur or have occurred). Second, in most occurrences, the event or condition described is also already salient in the surrounding discourse, and in

[36] This low frequency may be due to the narrative genre of my corpus (cf. Locatell 2017: 252 n. 322; most of his conditional examples are from legal texts, which I did not include).

that sense tracked by both Speaker and Addressee: it is under discussion, even if it is not certain that the condition is met.

Concretely, the first observation means that when *kī* introduces a conditional clause, it describes reasonably realistic conditions: it describes conditions that are likely to happen. In that sense, these conditional uses are much like the temporal uses of *kī*, and unlike the more general conditional use of אִם *ʾim* 'if' (cf. the similar contrast between English *when* and *if*):

(34) Gen. 18:26: אִם־אֶמְצָא בִסְדֹם חֲמִשִּׁים צַדִּיקִם בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר וְנָשָׂאתִי לְכָל־הַמָּקוֹם בַּעֲבוּרָם׃

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***ʾim*** | *ʾ-ɛmṣǻʾ* | *b̲i=sḏōm* | *ḥămišš-īm* | *ṣaddīq-im* | *bə=ṯ̲ōk̲* | *hǻ=ʿīr* |
| **if** | 1SG-find\IPFV | in=Sodom | five-PL | righteous-PL | in=middle.of | the=city |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *wə-nǻśǻʾ-ṯ̲ī* | *lə=k̲ål* | *ham=mǻqōm* | *ba=ʿắb̲ūr-ǻm* |
| and.MOD-forgive-1SG | for=whole.of | the=place | for=sake-theirs |

'*If*/**When* I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.'

This is consistent with the fact that when *kī* and *ʾim* are combined, *kī* introduces a general condition, while *ʾim* introduces a more specific condition (Van der Merwe, Naudé & Kroeze 2017: §40.11(1a)). In such a construction, the condition in the *kī*-clause is more likely to be met than the condition in the *ʾim*-clause:

(35) Lev. 1:2–3: אָדָם כִּי־יַקְרִיב מִכֶּם קָרְבָּן לַיהוָה מִן־הַבְּהֵמָה מִן־הַבָּקָר וּמִן־הַצֹּאן תַּקְרִיבוּ אֶת־קָרְבַּנְכֶם׃ אִם־עֹלָה קָרְבָּנוֹ מִן־הַבָּקָר זָכָר תָּמִים יַקְרִיבֶנּוּ

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *ʾǻḏǻm* | ***kī*** | *y-aqrīb̲-Ø* | *mikk-ɛm* | *qårbǻn* | *l=yhwh* | *min* |
| man | **COMP** | 3M-present\IPFV-SG | from-you | offering | to=Yahweh | from |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *hab=bəhēmǻ* | *min* | *hab=bǻqǻr* | *ū=min* | *haṣ=ṣōʾn* | *t-aqrīb̲-ū* | *ʾɛṯ̲* |
| the=animals | from | the=herd | or=from | the=flock | 2-present\IPFV-M.PL | OBJ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *qårban-k̲ɛm* | ***ʾim*** | *ʿōlǻ* | *qårbǻn-ō* | *min* | *hab=bǻqǻr* | *zǻk̲ǻr* | *tǻmīm* |
| offering-yours | **if** | burnt_offering | offering-his | from | the=herd | male | perfect |

| | |
|---|---|
| *y-aqrīb̲-Ø-ɛnnū* | |
| 3M-present\IPFV-SG-it.OBJ | |

'*If*/*When* (*kī*) a man amongst you brings a sacrifice to Yahweh, you must bring your offer from the animals of the herd or the flock. *If*/**When* (*ʾim*) it is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish.'

This fits with the general meaning described for *kī* above: the adverbial clause does not introduce entirely unexpected information, but only information which is already expected, or at least easily accommodated given the Common Ground. In (33) above, with *kī*, Jacob's servant is going towards Esau and will therefore surely meet him, while in (34), with *ʾim*, it is not certain at all that there will be fifty righteous at Sodom. In (35), not all sacrifices are burnt offerings, so the condition in the *ʾim*-clause is less likely to be met than the condition in the *kī*-clause.

Temporal clauses with future reference time can be seen as an extreme case of such "expected conditionals": they are, in a way, conditionals of which the condition is certain to be met at some future point in time:

(36) Gen. 31:49: יְצֶף יְהוָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ כִּי נִסָּתֵר אִישׁ מֵרֵעֵהוּ׃

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *y-iṣep̄-Ø* | *yhwh* | *bēn-ī* | *ū=b̲ēn-ɛk̲å̄* | ***kī*** |
| 3M-guard\JUSS-SG | Yahweh | between-me | and=between-you | **COMP** |
| *n-isså̄t̲ēr* | *ʾīš* | *mē=rēʿ-ēhū* | | |
| 1PL-hide\MID.IPFV | one | from=companion-his | | |

'May Yahweh watch between me and you *when* we are hidden from each other.'

Temporal clauses with past reference time are similar. They require the described event to have occurred; *kī* cannot be used, for example, for counterfactuals, which are typically marked by לוּ *lū* 'if only'.[37] In several cases, a *kī*-clause with past reference time is frequentative ('whenever'), as in (37). This is only contextually inferred, however, and not contributed by *kī*, as this interpretation is not always available (38):[38]

(37) Jdg. 1:28: וַיְהִי כִּי־חָזַק יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּשֶׂם אֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי לָמַס וְהוֹרֵישׁ לֹא הוֹרִישׁוֹ׃

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *wa-y-əhī-Ø* | ***kī*** | *ḥå̄zaq-Ø* | *yiśrå̄ʾēl* | *way-y-å̄śɛm-Ø* | |
| and.PRET-3M-be-SG | **COMP** | be_strong\PFV-3M.SG | Israel | and.PRET-3M-put-SG | |
| *ʾɛt̲* | *hak=kənaʿănī* | *lå̄=mas* | *wə=hōrēš* | *lōʾ* | |
| OBJ | the=Canaanite | to=forced_labor | but=conquer\INFABS | not | |
| *hōrīš-Ø-ō* | | | | | |
| conquer\PFV-3M.SG-it.OBJ | | | | | |

'And *whenever* Israel was strong they would put the Canaanites to work, but they did not totally conquer them.'

(38) Gen. 27:1: וַיְהִי כִּי־זָקֵן יִצְחָק ... וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־עֵשָׂו | בְּנוֹ הַגָּדֹל

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *wa-y-əhī-Ø* | ***kī*** | *zå̄qēn-Ø* | *yiṣḥå̄q* | ... | *way-y-iqrå̄ʾ-Ø* | *ʾɛt̲* |
| and.PRET-3M-be-SG | **COMP** | be_old\PFV-3M.SG | Isaac | ... | and.PRET-3M-call-SG | OBJ |
| *ʿēśå̄w* | *bən-ō* | *hag=gå̄d̲ōl* | | | | |
| Esau | son-his | the=big | | | | |

'And *when* Isaac was old ..., he called Esau, his oldest son.'

[37] Note that a counterfactual, like a temporal or conditional clause, can be described as augmenting the Common Ground. The only difference is that a counterfactual augments the Common Ground with information known to be false. If *kī* were simply described as *augmenting* the Common Ground, there would be no way to exclude a counterfactual interpretation. But since *kī* is [+distal] and therefore marks information that is in the Common Ground or at least easily accommodated, a counterfactual interpretation is excluded.

[38] A frequentative interpretation is also possible in Jdg. 2:18a; 12:5; 16:16; 2 Sam. 6:13; and we have a durative interpretation ('while') in 1 Sam. 1:12; 17:48. Such interpretations are excluded in Gen. 6:1; 26:8; 31:37; 43:21; 44:24; Jdg. 6:5, 7; 8:1; 1 Sam. 14:29b; 22:22a; 2 Sam. 4:10, 11; 7:1, 12; 19:26. There does not appear to be a difference in the contribution of *kī* when preceded by וְהָיָה *wə-hāyā* 'and it will be' or וַיְהִי *wa-yəhī* 'and it was', compared to when *kī* stands alone. The contribution of these temporal markers can be seen as shifting the reference time (e.g. Van der Merwe, Naudé & Kroeze 2017: §40.24–25) independent from the discursive contribution made by *kī*.

To return to the second way in which temporal and conditional *kī* interacts with Common Ground: in most instances of temporal or conditional *kī*, the event or condition described in the adverbial clause is already salient in the surrounding discourse, and in that sense tracked by both Speaker and Addressee. Consider:

(39) Gen. 44:24: וַיְהִי֙ כִּ֣י עָלִ֔ינוּ אֶל־עַבְדְּךָ֖ אָבִֽי

*wa-y-əhī-Ø* ***kī*** *ʿ̊ālī-nū* *ʾɛl* *ʿaḇd-ăḵ̊ā* *ʾ̊āḇ-ī*
and.PRET-3M-be-SG **COMP** go_up\PFV-1PL to servant-yours father-mine
'And *when* we went up to your servant my father, …'

(40) Jdg. 2:16–18: וַיָּ֤קֶם יְהוָה֙ שֹׁפְטִ֔ים … וְכִֽי־הֵקִ֥ים יְהוָ֛ה ׀ לָהֶ֖ם שֹׁפְטִ֑ים

*way-y-ă̊qɛm-Ø* *yhwh* *šōp̄əṭ-īm* … *wə=**ḵī*** *hēqīm-Ø*
and.PRET-3M-establish-SG Yahweh judge-PL … and=**COMP** establish\PFV-3M.SG
*yhwh* *lă̊-hɛm* *šōp̄əṭ-īm*
Yahweh for-them judge-PL
'And Yahweh established judges … *Whenever* Yahweh established judges for them, (Yahweh would be with the judge …)'

(41) 1 Sam. 14:27–29b: וַיָּ֤שֶׁב יָדוֹ֙ אֶל־פִּ֔יו וַתָּאֹ֖רְנָה[39] עֵינָ֑יו: … אֹ֣רוּ עֵינַ֔י כִּ֥י טָעַ֖מְתִּי מְעַ֣ט דְּבַ֣שׁ הַזֶּ֑ה:

*way-y-ă̊šɛḇ-Ø* *yă̊ḏ-ō* *ʾɛl* *pī-w* *wat-t-ă̊ʾōr-ənă̊*
and.PRET-3M-return\CAUS-SG hand-his to mouth-his and.PRET-F-light_up-3PL
*ʿēn-ă̊yw* … *ʾōr-ū* *ʿēn-ay* ***kī*** *ṭă̊ʿam-tī* *məʿaṭ*
eye(F)-DU.his … light_up\PFV-3PL eye-DU.mine **COMP** taste\PFV-1SG little.of
*dəḇaš* *haz=zɛ*
honey the=this
'And [Jonathan] returned his hand to his mouth and his eyes lit up. (So a soldier spoke up and said, "Your father swore the army, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats anything today'" (…) But Jonathan said: "My father has brought misfortune on the land. See that) my eyes lit up *when* I tasted a little of this honey!"'

In (39), it is clear from the context to Joseph (the Addressee) that his brothers (the Speaker) have been to their father. It is therefore assumed to be part of the Common Ground, and *kī* can be used to refer to this event. In (40) this is even clearer, as the fact that Yahweh established judges has been introduced just a few sentences before. Example (41) is similar: the event described by the *kī*-clause is introduced in v. 27, and v. 28 (only given in translation) shows that the Addressee (the soldier) is aware of it as well.

To conclude this subsection: there are two ways in which temporal and conditional *kī*-clauses interact with the Common Ground. As we just saw, in many cases the event or condition is already tracked by both the Speaker and the Addressee, independent of whether it is likely to occur or have occurred. More importantly, however, in all instances

[39] Consonantal text: ותראנה *wat-t-ir'ɛ-nă̊* and.PRET-F-see-3PL 'and [his eyes] saw'.

the event or condition is certain or likely to occur or have occurred. As a result, if the event or condition is not yet in the Common Ground, it is at least easily accommodated. In this way these cases support the hypothesis about the general discursive contribution of *kī*.

## 6.2 Resultative clauses

Resultative clauses (sometimes called "consequential clauses") describe the result of the event described in the matrix clause; in English, resultative *kī* can often be translated with (*so*) *that*. When the result is also the purpose for a volitional act described in the matrix clause, a resultative clause is quite similar to a causal clause:

(42) Gen. 31:36: מַה חַטָּאתִי כִּי דָלַקְתָּ אַחֲרָי׃
*mah ḥaṭṭå'-tī* ***kī*** *ḏålaq-tå* *'aḥăr-ǻy*
what sin\PFV-1SG **COMP** chase\PFV-2M.SG behind-me
'How have I (Jacob) sinned *that* you (Laban) have chased after me?'

In (42), it is in the Common Ground that the Addressee chased after the Speaker, as the Addressee has just caught up with the Speaker when (42) is uttered. Note that there is no reason why a purpose or resultative clause in general should refer to a result in the Common Ground, as the following example with another resultative connective, לְמַעַן *ləma'an*, shows:

(43) Gen. 37:22: וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אֲלֵהֶם֙ רְאוּבֵ֔ן אַל־תִּשְׁפְּכוּ־דָ֖ם הַשְׁלִ֣יכוּ אֹת֑וֹ אֶל־הַבּ֤וֹר הַזֶּה֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בַּמִּדְבָּ֔ר וְיָ֥ד אַל־תִּשְׁלְח֖וּ־בּ֑וֹ לְמַ֗עַן הַצִּ֤יל אֹתוֹ֙ מִיָּדָ֔ם לַהֲשִׁיבֹ֖ו אֶל־אָבִֽיו׃
*way-y-ō'mɛr-Ø* *'ălē-hɛm* *rə'ūḇēn* *'al* *t-išpəḵ-ū* *ḏǻm*
and.PRET-3M-say-SG to-them Reuben not 2-shed\JUSS-M.PL blood
*hašlīḵ-ū* *'ōṯ-ō* *'ɛl* *hab=bōr* *haz=zɛ* *'ăšɛr* *b=am=miḏbǻr* *wə=yǻḏ*
throw\IMP-M.PL OBJ-him to the=pit the=this REL in=the=desert but=hand
*'al* *t-išləḥ-ū* *ḇ-ō* ***ləma'an*** *haṣṣīl* *'ōṯ-ō*
not 2-send\JUSS-M.PL against-him **in_order_to** rescue\INF OBJ-him
*miy=yǻḏ-ǻm* *la=hăšīḇ-ō* *'ɛl* *'ǻḇī-w*
from=hand-theirs to=return\CAUS.INF-him to father-his
'But Reuben said to them, "Don't shed blood; throw him into this pit in the desert but do not stretch out your hand against them," *in order to* rescue him out of their hand to return him to his father.'

In (43), the fact that Reuben tries to save Joseph is not yet known to the Addressee (the reader). It can be accommodated based on the contents of the direct speech report, but even this is not always the case. For instance, in (44) with the purposive construction לְ *lə* 'to' + infinitive, there is no reason in particular to think that Laban should go shear his sheep at this moment:

(44) Gen. 31:19: וְלָבָן הָלַךְ לִגְזֹז אֶת־צֹאנוֹ

*wə=lɑ̊ḇɑ̊n hɑ̊lak̲-Ø* ***li***=*gzōz* *ʾɛṯ* *ṣōʾn-ō*
and=Laban go\PFV-3M.SG to=shear\INF OBJ flock-his
'And Laban had gone *in order to* (*lə* 'to' + infinitive) shear his sheep.'

Nevertheless, we do not find such cases with resultative *kī*. Even in cases with future reference time, the resultative clause refers to the Common Ground because the prospected result has already been discussed. For instance, in (45), though the resultative is an irrealis with future time reference, it refers directly back to Saul's proposal in the previous verse.

(45) 1 Sam. 18:18: מִי אָנֹכִי ... כִּי־אֶהְיֶה חָתָן לַמֶּלֶךְ׃

*mī* *ʾɑ̊nōk̲ī* ... ***kī*** *ʾ-ɛhyɛ* *ḥɑ̊ṯɑ̊n* *l=am=mɛlɛk̲*
who I ... **COMP** 1SG-be\IPFV son_in_law to=the=king
'(Saul said to David: "Here is my oldest daughter Merab; I want to give her to you in marriage ..." But David said to Saul:) "Who am I ... *that* I should be the king's son-in-law?"'

This supports the hypothesis that *kī* is marked for reference to the Common Ground.

## 6.3 Concessive clauses

With a concessive clause (English *though*) the Speaker concedes some information to the Addressee, but at the same time denies that this information is incompatible with the assertion made in the matrix clause:

(46) 2 Sam. 12:12: כִּי אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ בַסֵּתֶר וַאֲנִי אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה נֶגֶד כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל

***kī*** *ʾattɑ̊* *ʿɑ̊śī-ṯɑ̊* *b̲=as=sɑ̊ṯɛr* *wa=ʾănī* *ʾ-ɛʿɛśɛ* *ʾɛṯ* *had=dɑ̊ḇɑ̊r*
**COMP** you do\PFV-2M.SG in=the=secret and=I 1SG-do\IPFV OBJ the=thing
*haz=zɛ* *nɛḡɛḏ* *kål* *yiśrɑ̊ʾēl*
the=this before all.of Israel
'*Though* you have acted in secret, I will do this before all of Israel.'

A concessive usually presupposes that the Addressee knows or can easily accommodate the conceded information. For instance, in English I can utter (47) only to someone of whom I know that they share my belief about France's likelihood to win; I have to assume that *France won't win this World Championship* is in the Common Ground or easily accommodated.

(47) *Though France won't win this World Championship, they are a treat to watch.*

The fact that concessive clauses always refer to Common Ground makes it pointless to compare *kī* with other markers of concessive clauses, such as אִם *ʾim* (Job 9:15; Jer. 15:1)

or וְ *wə* (e.g. Jdg. 16:15). However, the fact that the cases with *kī* all refer to information in the Common Ground or easily accommodated is of course entirely expected.

### 6.4 Low-frequency adverbial clauses: summary

This section reviewed four types of less frequent adverbial *kī*-clauses: temporal, conditional, resultative, and concessive clauses. It is particularly important that these lower frequency uses of *kī* adhere to the predicted patterns, since they are a priori less likely to have lexicalized and lost the [+distal] feature. The data reveals that in these *kī*-clauses the information provided in the clause is indeed always in the Common Ground, easily accommodated, or (rarely) imposed on the Common Ground for a discursive effect. This confirms the hypothesis that *kī* still has a [+distal] feature, which is interpreted as referring to the Addressee, and thus to the Common Ground.

## 7 Standalone *kī*-clauses

As is well-known and seen in the previous sections, *kī* usually connects two clauses. After classifying all instances of *kī* for the relation it establishes between the two clauses, some instances remained for which it is not clear that *kī* really connects two clauses. In the literature, these cases have often been referred to as "emphatic" or "asseverative", but in order not to make any assumptions I have classified them as "standalone".[40] Reviewing these cases, it becomes clear that there are three ways in which standalone *kī* can be used: to introduce oaths (section 7.1), conducive and rhetorical polar questions (section 7.2), or exclamatives (section 7.3). It is true that each of these functions can reasonably be called "emphatic", but it is nevertheless valuable to make precise what kinds of emphasis can be provided by *kī*, exactly. By spelling out what types of "emphatic" interpretations there are, exactly, we can prevent this category from becoming a universal catch-all.

### 7.1 Oaths

Oaths can be described as sincere and earnest speech acts meant to assure the Addressee of a certain assertion or promise (Conklin 2011: 2). They are typically accompanied by what Conklin (2011: 13–30) calls an "authenticating element" that is meant to assure the Addressee of the Speaker's sincerity, such as 'life of Yahweh' in (48):[41]

(48) 2 Sam. 12:5: חַי־יְהוָ֔ה כִּ֥י בֶן־מָ֖וֶת הָאִ֥ישׁ הָעֹשֶׂ֖ה זֹֽאת׃

| *ḥay* | *yhwh* | ***kī*** | *b̲ɛn* | *mǎwɛ̱t* | *hǎ́=ʾīš* | *hǎ́=ʿōśɛ-Ø* | *zō'̱t* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| life.of | Yahweh | **COMP** | son.of | death | the=man | the=do\PTCP-M.SG | this |

[40] Though some scholars have been skeptical towards the existence of emphatic/asseverative *kī* (e.g. Bandstra 1982; Aejmelaeus 1986; Locatell 2017), most authorities still assume this notion is useful in at least some instances (e.g. Waltke & O'Connor 1990: §40.2.2b; Joüon & Muraoka 2006: §164; Miller 2003: 103–116; Holmstedt 2010: 85, 92). Since both "emphasis" and "asseveration" are typically poorly defined, I believe the question is moot, though there is no denying that *kī* can be used in the three specific types of standalone clauses discussed here.

[41] Besides *kī*, a number of other particles can be used to introduce oaths (Conklin 2011: 60–65), but they do not appear often enough to enable a comparison with *kī*. For this reason I will only discuss oaths with *kī* in this subsection.

'By the life of Yahweh, *that* the man who does this is a dead man!'

There are 17 cases of standalone *kī* introducing an oath in my corpus, of which only six refer to discourse-old information content.[42] For example, in (49), the previous verse has already made the question of when the people will stop pursuing their brothers a topic of discussion, and therefore tracked in the Common Ground:

(49) 2 Sam. 2:27a: וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹאָב חַי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי לוּלֵא דִבַּרְתָּ כִּי אָז מֵהַבֹּקֶר נַעֲלָה הָעָם אִישׁ מֵאַחֲרֵי אָחִיו׃

*way-y-ōʾmɛr-Ø* *yōʾăḇ* *ḥay* *hăm=ʾĕlōhīm* ***kī*** *lūlēʾ* *dibbar-tā*

and.PRET-3M-say-SG Joab life.of the=God **COMP** had_not speak\PFV-2M.SG

***kī*** *ʾāz* *mē=hab=bōqɛr* *naʿălā-Ø* *hăm=ʿām* *ʾīš*

**COMP** then from=the=morning go_up\MID.PFV-3M.SG the=people(M) one

*mē=ʾaḥărē* *ʾāḥī-w*

from=behind brother-his

'(Abner called out to Joab: "... How long won't you tell the people to return from after their brothers?") And Joab said: "By the life of God, ([I swear] *that*) had you not spoken, (*that*) then [only] from the morning onwards would the people have ceased [pursuing], each from behind his brother."'

Usually, however, the content of the oath is not discourse-old, and cannot be accommodated either. Instead, it is imposed on the Common Ground.[43] This is also how I analyze (48) above. It is precisely the imposition that creates the interpretation as an oath. Forcing the Addressee to accept an assertion in the Common Ground, the Speaker effectively assures the Addressee of their own sincerity and commitment to this assertion, which is precisely what an oath does (Conklin 2011: 2).

Conklin's explanation for the use of *kī* to mark oaths is reminiscent of Ross's (1970) performative hypothesis: *kī* would be a remnant of an originally longer formula (*I swear that ...*) after elision of the predicate (2011: 59). There are well-known problems with this approach (see Speas & Tenny 2003: 338 for discussion), but even if we were to accept it, some questions remain. For example, it is unclear why the complementizer would not have been elided together with the predicate in oath formulas, with only intonation serving to distinguish the exclamative from a declarative (as in some rhetorical questions, like *I said something funny?*, and interrogatives more generally in languages like Italian). The theory proposed in the present article provides an explanation why the complementizer was retained: it is crucial to oaths that they impose information on the Common Ground, and this aspect is marked by the [+distal] complementizer.

[42] 1 Sam. 20:13; 25:34ab; 29:6a; 2 Sam. 2:27a; Ruth 1:17.
[43] 1 Sam. 14:39b; 20:3b; 20:12; 26:10, 16; 2 Sam. 3:9ab, 35; 12:5; 15:21ab.

## 7.2 Conducive and rhetorical questions

There are five instances in my corpus of conducive and rhetorical questions using the polar interrogative marker הֲ *hă* followed by *kī*, two of which are negated (הֲלֹוא כִּי *hă-lō' kī*).[44] In one instance (2 Sam. 9:1), *hă-k̲ī* introduces a regular question which happens to nominalize a clause of which the content is under discussion in the Common Ground;[45] this instance is excluded here and classified as a subject clause. I will rely on Moshavi (2009) for my analysis of the five instances under discussion here; see there for more background and references on these types of questions.

A rhetorical question has the form of an interrogative but is, at the discursive level, an implicit assertion rather than a request for information (Moshavi 2009: 32). The implicit assertion contributed by a rhetorical polar question is the negation of its propositional content: *Are you the president?* implies you are not the president (Moshavi 2009: 33). A conducive question is similar to a rhetorical question in that the Speaker has a certain prior belief regarding the correct answer, and may not expect an answer, but do not function as implicit assertions; for example, *Is that you, Henry?* does not imply that you are Henry but merely conveys an expectation (Moshavi 2009: 38). Moshavi describes the discursive functions of conducive questions in Biblical Hebrew as (a) confirming a belief of the Speaker, (b) expressing surprise, (c) showing the Addressee that the Speaker knows something to be true, and (d) drawing attention to a fact (2009: 38 n. 38).

The questions with *hă-k̲ī* 'is [it] that' are conducive, implying that the information content of the *kī*-clause is true:

(50) Gen. 27:36: הֲכִי֙ קָרָ֣א שְׁמֹ֔ו יַעֲקֹ֖ב וַיַּעְקְבֵ֑נִי זֶ֚ה פַּעֲמַ֔יִם

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***hă*=*k̲ī*** | *qārā'-Ø* | *šəm-ō* | *ya'ăqōḇ* | *way-y-a'qəḇ-Ø-ēnī* | *zɛ* |
| **Q=COMP** | call\PFV-3M.SG | name(M)-his | Jacob | and.PRET-3M-deceive-SG-me | this |
| *pā'ăm-ayim* | | | | | |
| time-DU | | | | | |

'*Isn't* his name Jacob?[46] He has deceived me these two times!'

In the case of conducive questions with *kī*, the information content is not only implied but also well-known to be true, and thus in the Common Ground. Compared to conducive questions without *kī*, the questions with *kī* convey a much stronger belief with respect to the expected answer. In (51) without *kī* the Speaker is much less certain that Saul should now be considered a prophet than that the Speaker in (50) is certain about Jacob's name. This explains why *kī* can be used in (50) but not (51): only in (50) can the propositional content be assumed to be in the Common Ground. In (51), the Speaker does not even want to impose it on the Common Ground.

[44] Without negation: Gen. 27:36; 29:15; 2 Sam. 23:19. With negation: 1 Sam. 10:1; 2 Sam. 13:28.

[45] Similar to one more example outside my corpus, Job 6:22.

[46] The name Jacob translates as 'he-will-deceive'. Note that my translation uses a rhetorical question, and thus adds negation. Another option is "No wonder his name is Jacob" (NLT; cf. also NET). One can also take this *kī* as causal ('Is it *because* his name is Jacob that …'), which is also possible in Gen. 29:15 but not in 2 Sam. 23:19.

(51) 1 Sam. 10:11: וַיְהִי כָּל־יוֹדְעוֹ מֵאִתְמוֹל שִׁלְשׁוֹם וַיִּרְאוּ וְהִנֵּה עִם־נְבִאִים נִבָּא וַיֹּאמֶר הָעָם אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ מַה־זֶּה הָיָה לִבֶן־קִישׁ הֲגַם שָׁאוּל בַּנְּבִיאִים׃

*wa-y-əhī-Ø* *kål* *yōḏə'-Ø-ō* *mē='ittəmōl šilšōm*
and.PRET-3M-be-SG all.of know\PTCP-M.SG-him from=before

*way-y-ir'-ū* *wə=hinnē* *'im* *nəḇi'-īm* *nibbå̄'-Ø*
and.PRET-3M-see-PL and=behold with prophet-PL prophesy\PTCP-M.SG

*way-y-ō'mɛr-Ø* *hå̄='å̄m* *'īš* *'ɛl* *rē'-ēhū* *mah* *zɛ*
and.PRET-3M-say-SG the=people(M) one to companion-his what this

*hå̄yå̄-Ø* *lə=ḇɛn* *qīš* ***hă***=*gām* *šå̄'ūl* *b=an=nəḇi'-īm*
be\PFV-3M.SG to=son.of Kish **Q**=also Saul in=the=prophet-PL

'And when all who knew [Saul] from before saw how he prophesied with prophets, the people said to each other: "What happened to the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets?"'

The questions with *hă-lō' kī* 'isn't [it] that' are rhetorical. Due to double negation (once for *lō'* 'not' and once for the rhetorical question), these questions also imply that the information content of the *kī*-clause is true:

(52) 1 Sam. 10:1: וַיִּקַּח שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת־פַּךְ הַשֶּׁמֶן וַיִּצֹק עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלוֹא כִּי־מְשָׁחֲךָ יְהוָה עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְנָגִיד׃

*way-y-iqqaḥ-Ø* *šəmū'ēl* *'ɛṯ* *paḵ* *haš=šɛmɛn* *way-y-iṣōq-Ø*
and.PRET-3M-take-SG Samuel OBJ flask.of the=oil and.PRET-3M-pour-SG

*'al* *rō'š-ō* *way-y-iššå̄q-Ø-ēhū* *way-y-ō'mɛr-Ø* ***hă***=***lō'*** ***kī***
on head-his and.PRET-3M-kiss-SG-him and.PRET-3M-say-SG **Q**=**not** **COMP**

*məšå̄ḥ-Ø-ăḵå̄* *yhwh* *'al* *naḥălå̄ṯ-ō* *lə=nå̄gīḏ*
anoint\PFV-3M.SG-you.OBJ Yahweh over inheritance-his for=leader

'Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on [Saul]'s head, and he kissed him and said: "*Has* Yahweh *not* anointed you as leader over his inheritance?"'

In the other rhetorical question, Common Ground is imposed by making an implicit assertion (2 Sam. 13:28). A rhetorical question does not leave room for the Addressee to reject the implied assertion, which has the effect of imposing it on the Common Ground. Though the use of *kī* is not necessary to form these types of questions (see Moshavi 2009 for many examples without *kī*), it is still well-suited because of this interaction with the Common Ground.

## 7.3 Exclamatives

The third way in which standalone *kī* is used is to form exclamatives. Exclamatives are sentences that "express the speaker's affective response to a situation" (Michaelis 2001: 1039).

As with conducive and rhetorical questions, a proposition can be recovered from an exclamative: *How nice weather it is!* implies that it is nice weather. Crucially, the Speaker of an exclamative assumes this propositional content to be in the Common Ground (Zanuttini & Portner 2003): *How nice weather it is!* cannot be used to convince the addressee that it is nice weather. This distinguishes exclamatives from both declarative sentences, which make no such assumption, and rhetorical questions, which impose information on the Common Ground rather than assuming it is already shared with the Addressee. Nevertheless, this reference to Common Ground makes *kī* a natural element to mark exclamatives (cf. Staps & Rooryck 2023: 10–12).

In the examples found in the Hebrew Bible, exclamatives with *kī* express shock/outrage (53),[47] remorse (54), or commitment (1 Sam. 10:24) with respect to the recoverable proposition, though there is no reason to think other emotions could not be expressed this way as well.

(53) Gen. 18:20ab: זַעֲקַ֥ת סְדֹ֖ם וַעֲמֹרָ֑ה כִּי־רַבָּ֕ה וְחַטָּאתָ֖ם כִּ֥י כָבְדָ֖ה מְאֹֽד׃

*za'ăqa-ṯ* *sədōm* *wa='ămōrå̄* ***kī*** *råbb-å̄* *wə=ḥaṭṭå̄'ṯ-å̄m*
outcry(F)-of Sodom and=Gomorrah **COMP** be_great\PFV-3F.SG and=sin(F)-theirs

***kī*** *k̲å̄b̲əḏ-å̄* *mə'ōḏ*
**COMP** be_heavy\PFV-3F.SG very

'*That* the outcry of/concerning Sodom and Gomorrah is so great! And *that* their sin is so heavy!'

(54) Jdg. 10:10: וַיִּזְעֲק֣וּ בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֣ל אֶל־יְהוָ֔ה לֵאמֹ֖ר חָטָ֣אנוּ לָ֑ךְ וְכִ֤י עָזַ֙בְנוּ֙ אֶת־אֱלֹהֵ֔ינוּ

*way-y-iz'ăq-ū* *bən-ē* *yiśrå̄'ēl* *'ɛl* *yhwh* *lē='mōr* *ḥå̄ṭå̄'-nū*
and.PRET-3M-call_out-PL son-PL.of Israel to Yahweh to=say\INF sin\PFV-1PL

*l-å̄k̲* *wə=**k̲ī*** *'å̄zaḇ-nū* *'ɛṯ* *'ĕlōhē-nū*
to-you and=**COMP** abandon\PFV-1PL OBJ God-ours

'And the Israelites called out to Yahweh, saying: "We have sinned! And *that* we have abandoned our God!"'

These examples refer to Common Ground in the following way. In (53), God speaks to Abraham. Abraham has already had previous contact with Sodom in Genesis 13–14, where he has been able to see that the Sodomites are wicked sinners (Gen. 13:13). This allows the Speaker to presuppose this information, and thus permits the interpretation as an exclamative. The use of Common Ground is even clearer in (54), where the Addressee (Yahweh) must know that the Israelites have abandoned him.

It is also possible to express commitment towards a wish, which has the effect of strengthening a wish (55).[48] It should be noted that in these cases the fact that the Speaker has a certain desire is discourse-old: in (55), it is already clear to the Addressee that the

[47] Also 1 Sam. 17:28. We can also include Gen. 45:26a here, if we assume that the brothers are in part speaking to each other. This explanation is not ideal, but I have no better alternative at this point.

[48] Also 1 Sam. 8:9; 14:44 (if not an oath); 25:28a.

Speaker wants the spoil to be divided equally. It thus does not appear to be possible to strengthen just any wish with *kī*.

(55) 1 Sam. 30:24: כִּ֣י כְחֵ֣לֶק | הַיֹּרֵ֣ד בַּמִּלְחָמָ֗ה וּכְחֵ֛לֶק הַיֹּשֵׁ֥ב עַל־הַכֵּלִ֖ים יַחְדָּ֣ו יַחֲלֹֽקוּ׃

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***kī*** | *kə=ḥēlɛq* | *hay=yōrēḏ-Ø* | *b=am=milḥåmå̊* | *ū=ḵə=ḥēlɛq* |
| COMP | like=part.of | the=go_down\PTCP-M.SG | in=the=battle | and=like=part.of |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *hay=yōšēḇ-Ø* | *ʿal* | *hak=kēl-īm* | *yaḥdå̄w* | *y-aḥălōq-ū* |
| the=sit\PTCP-M.SG | on | the=item-PL | together | 3M-divide\IPFV-PL |

‘(“Since they didn’t go with me, we will not give them from the spoil. …” But David said: “No! …) *That* as the part of he who goes down in battle, so be the part of he who remains with the equipment! Together they shall divide it.”’

Exclamatives are clearly emphatic, but it is a much narrower category than “emphatic” or “asseverative” *kī*. Before classifying an instance of *kī* as an exclamative it must be shown that the propositional content is in the Common Ground or easily accommodated by the Addressee. This more precise description of the function of *kī* can thus help prevent overly liberal use of the notion of “emphatic” *kī*.

# 8 Conclusion

The primary function of *kī* is to mark reference to Common Ground, which includes reference to easily accommodated and imposed information content. Deviations from this general pattern mostly occur in the most common function, causal *kī* (section 4). I therefore conclude that some lexicalization must have occurred here, which subsequently transferred to the categories of causal-adversative and adversative *kī* (section 5). In all other functions, the vast majority of instances refer to the Common Ground. Though grammaticalization is required to account for the use of *kī* to introduce subject and object clauses (section 3), we do not need to assume lexicalization to account for the various adverbial uses of *kī* (section 6; contra e.g. Locatell 2017, 2020). These are more economically described as pragmatically inferred uses based on the general function of marking Common Ground; since some of these functions are very infrequent, assuming semantic shifts for which we do not have evidence is problematic. Taking all of this into account, I propose a description of *kī* with only three distinct functions:

1. Referring to Common Ground (including easily accommodated and imposed information content)
   (a) As a complementizer introducing subject and object clauses
   (b) When connecting two clauses: introducing adverbials (adversative, causal, causal-adversative, concessive, conditional, resultative, temporal)[49]

[49] Given that some of these types are very infrequent, it is conceivable that there are still other types of adverbials that could be marked by *kī*, which have not made their way into the corpus. This is fine, as long as the information content is in the Common Ground and the discursive function can be inferred from context.

(c) When standalone: introducing oaths, conducive and rhetorical questions (with הֲ *hă*), and exclamatives

2. Lexicalized causal meaning ('because', 'for', etc.)
3. Lexicalized adversative meaning ('but'), developed from causal via causal-adversative ('not X, *but*/*because* Y')

Some authors, Aejmelaeus (1986: 193–194) most verbosely, have wondered how native speakers could have distinguished the many uses of *kī*. My answer to this question is as follows. The most common and default function of *kī* is to mark Common Ground. When the Addressee cannot accommodate the information content of a *kī*-clause, this triggers them to use one of the lexicalized meanings instead; choosing between causal and adversative is possible based on context. In its default function of marking Common Ground, one of the three subfunctions can be selected based on simple cues: the existence of a matrix predicate or the place of the *kī*-clause in subject position for complementizer *kī*, authenticating elements for oaths, the interrogative particle for questions, and intonation for exclamatives; anything else is adverbial. The appropriate kind of adverbial meaning can be selected based on context.

The function of marking Common Ground is expected in the framework of Staps & Rooryck (2023). In their model, information content is conceptualized as located in an abstract space, in which it can be "near" or "far from" Speaker and Addressee. I have argued that the Biblical Hebrew particle *kī* has inherited a [+distal] feature, which on the discourse level positions information content "far" from the Speaker, and therefore "near" the Addressee. The effect is that it marks Common Ground, which consists of information content known to the Addressee. The analysis presented here thus lends further support to the idea that information content is conceptualized as positioned in an abstract space (Staps & Rooryck 2023), and that highly grammaticalized function words like complementizers can retain features like [+distal] that receive a new interpretation in this abstract context.

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