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The Speech Act of Naming in Context: A Linguistic Study of Naming in the Old Testament

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Abstract

This research sought to study the act of naming in the context of the Old Testament using speech act theory. To analyze naming as presented in the Old Testament, I first studied the Hebrew words *qārā ʾ* and *šēm*, creating from my findings the following extended definition: (naming is) the act of giving a name within particular specified circumstances by one with authority over the name-receiver, whose authority is respected by others such that the name spoken is hence used to identify and represent the receiver. This, along with an understanding of Alston (2000) and the example of Arcadi (2013), shaped a schema of illocutionary rules and conditions that I then tested in nine case studies of naming throughout the Old Testament. Key components include particular circumstances, necessary conditions and authority, and the occurrence within a community. Ultimately, I conclude naming as presented in the Old Testament is in fact a speech act that is subject to particular rules and carries great importance.

Keywords
speech acts, naming, Old Testament, illocutionary act, names

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Introduction

Naming is a reoccurring and significant theme throughout Scripture, particularly in the Old Testament. Because of this, scholars should discuss and study it more in depth. The philosophical linguistic speech act theory provides one framework for analyzing naming. Ultimately, naming as presented in the Old Testament is in fact a speech act that is subject to specific rules and carries great importance. I will begin by providing an overview of speech acts and the study of them as applied to Scripture, as well as names and their historical and cultural significance. After this, I will display the framework of my study and then present my findings, followed by a brief discussion.

Literature Review

Scholars have not studied the speech act of naming much, let alone within biblical texts. And while speech acts have been studied within Scripture to some degree, it is more often applied as a hermeneutic approach, Scripture as being a speech act in and of itself. Because of this, my overview will begin by providing a basic framework of primarily speech act theory and secondly names as reference, which will serve as a foundation for the rest of my study. Next, I will provide a few examples of this kind of study as well as a brief look at God's own ability to perform speech acts. Lastly, as biblical texts are deeply rooted in history and culture, I will address in this overview various historical and cultural factors that play into the act of naming.

Speech Acts and Names (Semantics and Pragmatics)

It is not possible within the scope of this study to provide a full coverage and analysis of all that has been said on the topic of speech acts. For my present purpose, then, I will provide a basic overview, which comes mainly from Cruse's *Meaning in Language* (2011), a great overview with multiple sources and theories. Two other helpful works I chose to include as supplements are Alston's *Illocutionary Acts & Sentence Meaning* (2000) and Korta & Perry's *Critical Pragmatics* (2011). I will start by addressing the main focus of my study, speech acts, looking also to the idea of reference under which names typically fall.

Speech Acts

The main premise of any theory of speech acts is that humans are able to use words in ways that go beyond their simple linguistic content. This is an idea mainly originating with Austin (1975) and continually developed by Searle (1999) and others, more recently by Alston (2000). Speech acts, as pointed out by Cruse (2011), dwell in both semantic and pragmatic study, though he groups them with other pragmatic topics as is conventional. While Korta and Perry's brief address of speech acts is from a more pragmatic angle (2011), Alston takes them in a more semantic direction by looking ultimately at meaning.

The term *speech act* is used mostly as a topical term covering three specific kinds of acts: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts (Cruse, 2011). At the base, a locutionary act is simply an utterance. Cruse includes that it has a "certain sense and certain reference" (p. 363). Alston (2000) calls this level a sentential act, focusing mainly on the utterance itself. A perlocutionary act looks to the result of an utterance, either the completed performance of an act (Cruse) or the effect on an audience (Alston). Occurring somewhere in between, an illocutionary act is much more difficult to clearly define, though people often include the idea of the speaker's intention. Cruse and Alston both acknowledge that an illocutionary act is an utterance containing a particular action. Alston, however, spends a solid portion of his book laying out exactly how that works, which I will touch on later. In demonstrating the connection between the three kinds of acts, Wolterstorff (1995) writes, "Illocutionary acts are related to locutionary acts by way of the counting as relation; perlocutionary acts are related to illocutionary acts by causality" (p. 33). Although Alston uses different language and recognizes periodic exceptions, he would likely agree.

In a discussion of speech acts, one is likely to hear the term "performative verb." These kinds of verbs "function specifically to encode illocutionary force" (Cruse, 2011, p. 365), with illocutionary force being the "act aimed at by producing an utterance" (p. 365). While these explicit verbs are useful for identifying speech acts, they are not needed for a successful act and are actually quite limited in their usability. This connects also to the performative hypothesis, which asserts, "There are certain types of utterance whose properties seem to suggest that even implicit performatives have a 'hidden' or underlying explicit performative verb" (Cruse, 2011, p. 373). In other words, one could reimagine the sentence with the same general content and force with an added explicit performative verb. Cruse gives the following formula with everything in italics as optional: *I (hereby) Vp you (that) S*. Though this hypothesis may not be as accepted as others, Alston (2000) appears to agree at least with the basic idea.

Generally, illocutionary acts are divided further into five categories, though terminology occasionally differs. Here, they are listed with examples from Cruse (2011) and Arcadi (2013):

1. *assertives*: stating, asserting, reporting, acknowledging
2. *directives*: ordering, requesting, suggesting, commanding
3. *commissives*: promising, betting, threatening, vowing
4. *expressives*: thanking, forgiving, congratulating, praising

5. *declaratives/exercitives*: appointing, naming, consecrating, sentencing (in a court)

The final category is called "declaratives" by Cruse (2011) and "exercitives" by Alston (2000). As a note, from here on I will use the term *declarative* as it is used more frequently and is more quickly understood. The act of naming, as shown above, is a declarative. Cruse points out that these are "said to bring about a change in reality" (p. 375), highlighted by the examples. Naming in Scripture, however, is often initiated by a command or a directive. This particular category of illocutionary acts Cruse defines as having "the intention of eliciting some sort of action on the part of the hearer" (p. 374). My study will mainly focus on the declarative act of naming but may include some aspects of directives as necessary.

So how does an illocutionary act work? Simply stating the proper arrangement of words does not constitute an illocutionary act. Wolterstorff (1995) touches on this matter when he writes, "To institute an arrangement for the performance of speech actions is to institute a way of acquiring rights and responsibilities" (p. 84), which he considers to be moral ones. Korta and Perry (2011) instead emphasize the speaker's plan or intentions as central to an act but mention the need for conditions. Alston (2000) recognizes the existence of intentions. But more similarly to Wolterstorff, he sees the particular conditions for which the speaker takes responsibility as being integral to an illocutionary act. Alston calls these conditions *illocutionary rules,* or *I-rules,* and spends a large portion of his book demonstrating and proving how they work using a particular model. As I will be using his model within my own study of naming, I will present the basic framework for a declarative here (Alston): (U stands for the utterer or speaker, *S* stands for the sentence, and *R* stands for taking responsibility.)

EXER. U O'd in uttering S (where 'O' is a term for purporting to be producing a particular conventional effect, E) = df. In uttering S, U R'd that:

1. Conceptually necessary conditions for E.
2. U has the authority to produce E.
3. Conditions are appropriate for the exercise of that authority.
4. By uttering S, U is bringing about E. (2000, p. 93)

To put this more clearly, a speaker intends to produce a conventional effect (a speech act) in uttering a sentence, when in uttering that sentence the speaker takes responsibility for certain things being true. This includes the conceptually necessary conditions for the effect being met, the speaker having the authority to produce the effect, the conditions being appropriate for the exercise of that authority, and that by uttering the sentence, the speaker brings about the effect (Alston, 2000).

Further conditions contained in these I-rules can be categorized as follows:

*   preparatory conditions: the necessary context
*   sincerity conditions: dealing with the appropriate beliefs or feelings of the speaker
*   essential conditions: define the act and address the idea of speaker's intentions
*   uptake: dealing with the hearer's reception (Cruse, 2011).

These rules and conditions are the infrastructure that allow illocutionary acts to work.

In my research, Ward (2002) presents Wolterstorff (1995) as disagreeing with the existence of the five categories of illocutionary acts. This was not evident in Wolterstorff's writing, at least when he addresses and defines speech. However, in revealing rather than speaking, he believes that not all the same actions can be performed. Perhaps one might think he is in disagreement as Wolterstorff does not see rules as constituting speech acts. However, Wolterstorff also recognizes the existence of contextual conditions necessary for the categorizations. Even in the case that he does disagree, the category framework seems to be the more legitimate and widely held theoretical framework, which I will use in my study.

Names

As mentioned earlier, the concept of names is typically addressed in a study of reference having to do "with designating entities in the world by linguistic means" (Cruse, 2011, p. 381). As names designate people, they are most appropriately addressed here. Cruse, like Searle (1999), would further say reference is a speech act itself, but I will not expand on that idea.

The topic of reference in dealing with the nature of reality is one of controversy, and the subject of names within the topic does not escape controversy either. Most often, there are two main views of names. The first is that they are ultimately meaningless, nothing more than an assigned label. However, we clearly associate particular qualities with names in order to identify and conceptualize (Cruse, 2011). The other view of names is that they "function as abbreviated descriptions" (Cruse, 2011, p. 394), with meaning coming through association. However, one might object that a person's name does not change when the understanding of that same person does (Cruse, 2011). Schneider (2009) also addresses two similar views of names, though from a more philosophical and somewhat sociological perspective. Here, names are either viewed as carriers of identity or arbitrary labels. I will explain this more later. Bardis (1972), citing Hertzler, views names more in light of their various functions, writing:

> First, they identify, signify, or denote something; second, they assign the named entity to a meaningful classification; third, they become part of a person in all cultures; and fourth, they facilitate the named entity's manipulation, since the entity is no longer secret or fugitive. (p. 101)

While it is easy to identify that important role names serve in communication, they are much more difficult to analyze and classify.

Names are then, as Korta and Perry (2011) coined, "nambiguous." Cruse (2011) points out that in order for a name to be used, it "must be associated with a set of properties" (p. 396), but at the same time they are "liable to modification at any time" (p. 396). Additionally, a particular name does not refer to the same individual in each instance that it is used (Korta & Perry, 2011). Even so, we do not seem to have difficulty with this reality as we might with other words. Korta and Perry put forth a possible solution to this puzzling phenomenon with what they call a *name-notion network*. A network is formed when multiple people co-refer to the same individual at different instances with a particular name. Other people later conditionally co-refer (or coco-refer) to that individual in

referring to a co-reference. This may happen explicitly, as in naming a child, or implicitly, and it allows for both an individual to be referred to with multiple names as well as one name to refer to any number of individuals. Additionally, though names are attached to people and not roles, the way names are used in utterances is related to roles as names link the roles contained in utterances (Korta & Perry, 2011).

Speech Acts in Scripture

The majority of study relating speech act theory and Scripture consists of analyzing and/or justifying the application of speech act theory as a hermeneutical approach. However interesting, this is not the focus of my research. Instead, I seek to study speech acts as recorded in Scripture. Though scholars don't give as much attention to this, there is still a precedent for identifying and analyzing speech acts found in biblical texts. A few noteworthy studies include Mann's (2013) book and his later (2017) article as well as Arcadi's (2013) article, whose study I use as a model for some of my own.

Also important to note is that there are various instances recorded of God performing speech acts, either himself or through another means. While a number of philosophers and theologians have given the matter thought, Wolterstorff (1995) presents a more comprehensive analysis. He recognizes that speech acts cannot be performed through revealing but makes the case that God speaks and therefore can perform speech acts. He distinguishes between speaking and revealing. Wolterstorff claims that a person cannot perform acts through revealing, but only through speech. On the other side, "asserting, commanding, promising, and asking do not *consist in* the transmission of knowledge" (p. 33), but revealing does, wich distinguishes it from speaking. He also presents the idea of *double agency* to help the reader understand just how God might speak, rather than reveal, if he does not have the vocal mechanisms or writing capabilities to produce an utterance. Some helpful imagery here is the idea of a deputy or a secretary. As speech acts require some form of obligation, the question is raised whether God can be obligated. However, Wolterstorff finds "no reason to conclude that God cannot have the rights and duties… necessary for participating fully in the community of discoursers" (p. 112).

Historical and Cultural Factors

Many authors quickly point out the differences in the significance of names and naming across cultures. Wilson (2017) and Bardis (1972) acknowledge the casual stance taken by the modern Western world, contrasted with other ancient and modern cultures who put more weight on names. In his article, Schneider (2009) takes a philosophical look into these differences by dividing them into two main positions: the anthroponomastic realist and the nominalist. He writes that "names are viewed… in mutually contradictory ways: a name can either carry… the freight of one's unique identity, or it can be seen as contingent, accidental, fundamentally meaningless" (para. 2). The first position is that of the anthroponomastic realist, which would include Judeo-Christian peoples, who believe that names are significant and "arise from and reflect essential being" (Schneider, 2009, para. 10). The second position is that of the nominalist where one believes that "names are nothing more than arbitrary labels" (Schneider, 2009, para. 9), which leades to ultimate self-determination (Schneider, 2009).

While the accuracy of the two positions is debatable, it is clear that "the ancient Hebrew considered his name exceedingly important" (Bardis, 1972, p. 101). Davids (n.d., para. 10; citing Speiser 1964) writes, "Names were regarded not only as labels but also as symbols, magical keys, as it were, to the nature and essence of the given being or thing," and Bardis writes, "Even mere knowledge of a man's name includes a strange power over its bearer" (1972, p. 102).

The Hebrew Perspective

It is widely accepted that naming occurs most often as an act of a mother in the biblical Hebrew context (Davids, n.d.; Teubal, 1995; Bridge, 2014; Bardis, 1972). Teubal suggests that this is because "in biblical times… children were named the moment they were born – by mothers and midwives who chose names appropriate to the conditions, or their perceptions, of appearance as they are born" (1995, para. 17). Bridge (2014) notes that this connection may be due to the narrative style, but support seems to be evident, nonetheless. Bardis (1972) affirms that the act was one held most often by parents as those superior to the one being named. An exception might be names given later in life at significant moments of change. This practice is suggested primarily by Wilson (2017) and Bardis.

Teubal (1995) suggests, "Naming implies creation, the act of bringing into existence" (para. 18). Bardis (1972) similarly points out that "a name did not only distinguish its bearer, but it also indicated his essence, thus creating a name-existence identity. In other words, namelessness implied nonexistence" (Bardis, 1972, p. 102). The act of naming, then, is very significant, and both Davids (n.d.) and Teubal connect it to God's own divine creative nature using naming as a way of bringing order (Davids, n.d.). Davids further states, "God gave human beings the ability and power to name" (n.d., para. 18). It is, in fact, a power as "the act of naming… places the name-*giver* in authority over the name-*bearer*" (Teubal, 1995, para. 3). As an interesting side note, Teubal and Bardis use this all as evidence pointing to the authority and power held by women in this patriarchal society.

Scripture also points to the significance of names in Hebrew culture. Often, a name was given in connection with prophecy either by a mother (Davids, n.d.), a prophet with his own children (Bardis, 1972), or a "divine announcements to a barren woman conceiving" (Bridge, 2014, p. 396-397). Symbolism was also sometimes involved in these names (Bardis, 1972). At times, God himself named a person. Bardis (1972) points out that he carefully named those he chose, and when he changed a person's name, "the metamorphosis was cataclysmic" (p. 108), whether positively or negatively. Schneider (2009), however, in quoting the author of the article *Science and Faith,* argues that God reveals in his own name for himself "the irrelevance of all divine names" (para. 12). As this is not the majority opinion, I will work from the assumption that names were meaningful and important in Hebrew culture.

Based on this literature, I still assert that naming presented in the Old Testament is a speech act that is subject to specific rules and carries great importance. Now, I will add my own contribution to this discussion.

Methods

Instrument Design

Before I could analyze the act of naming in the Old Testament, I first needed to design the schema that I would test. This consisted of an in-depth study of the Hebrew words used in the phenomenon of naming in the original text, which I then used to create an extended definition, identify variables, and formulate a schema to test.

Defining Naming

To conduct my word studies, I used Accordance software to search for all occurrences of the English word *name* in the Old Testament, particularly for its use in the act of naming and utilizing a parallel Hebrew text to find the original word. Similarly, I searched the English word *call* and determined to focus my study on the Hebrew equivalent *qārāʾ*. Having decided to study the word *qārāʾ*, I utilized Hebrew concordances, lexicons, and theological dictionaries (see References page) to more fully understand the usage of the word in its original language, specifically the meaning "to name."

The Hebrew word *qārāʾ* occurs 700-900[1] times in the Old Testament. It occurs in the Qal stem 661 times, at least twice as often in Genesis than nearly any other book of the Old Testament. The next highest stem use is 62 occurrences in the Niphal stem, mostly in the prophets (Labuschagne, 1997). The Qal stem conveys a simple action in the active voice while the Niphal stem conveys a simple action in the passive voice (Van Pelt).

Ultimately, *qārāʾ* is a word of communication that "often precedes a verb of speech" (Labuschagne, 1997, p. 1160). It involves sounds produced by the voice (Coppes, 1980; Labuschagne, 1997) "to draw attention to oneself… in order to establish contact with someone else" (Jonker, 1997, p. 971). Coppes' definition brings in the additional idea of a carried message (1980). The word *qārāʾ* is "only rarely used of animals… and almost never in a figurative sense" (Labuschagne, 1997, p. 1159). Additionally, the word is similar to the same verb in other Semitic languages (Jonker, 1997).

While *qārāʾ* is such a basic, foundational word, it has a wide range of meanings in its various usages. The following list demonstrates many of the possible translations, as consolidated from translations given by Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius, & Robinson (1979), Wigram (1984), and Köhler et al. (2001):

announce	call together	declaim	name
appoint	create	invite	preach
call	crow	invoke	proclaim
call on	cry	mention	pronounce

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[1] I found conflicting numbers here, hence the range. This is perhaps due to different original manuscripts chosen and counted.

publish   say   spout

read   shout   summon

With the multitude of occurrences and meanings, it is impossible to fully cover them all within this one study. From here, I present only the usage meaning "to name," which is the technical term used for naming throughout the Old Testament (Schauerte, Hossfeld, Lamberty-Zielinski, Dahmen, & Kindl, 2004; Labuschagne, 1997). Most often, this particular meaning is constructed in one of the following ways: *qrʾ šēm* + acc. of the name; *qrʾ šēm lᵉ/ʾel*; *qrʾ lᵉ/ʾel*; or *qrʾ bᵉšēm* (Labuschagne, 1997; Jonker, 1997; Schauerte, et al., 2004). Additionally, these are all used in the Qal stem when presenting a specific act of naming. This occurs most frequently in the earlier books of the Old Testament. However, the Niphal stem is also sometimes used to demonstrate a name as a durative characteristic (Schauerte, et al., 2004).

Looking to the more cultural, contextual usage, *qārāʾ* when meaning "to name" frequently involves a "demonstration of authority" (Jonker, 1997, p. 972) or "assertion of sovereignty" (Coppes, 1980, p. 810) over the name-receiver. A mother is the one frequently showing this authority, often naming immediately after birth. Examples contrary to this would be due to literary narrative purposes or the foreign status of a mother (Schauerte, Hossfeld, Lamberty-Zielinski, Dahmen, & Kindl, 2004).

Jonker (1997), in quoting Ramsey's 1988 study of name-giving constructions with *qrʾ*, states, "The OT narratives report that circumstances frequently influence the way people name individuals and places, but it is very difficult to identify a passage where the narrator suggests that the name given is intended to shape the character of the recipient (34)" (p. 973). In other words, Hebrews did not see naming as forming the identity of the receiver, but rather was shaped by the surrounding circumstances and events. Coppes (1980) points out that a name may in fact "[indicate] a primary characteristic of the thing named" (p. 810), but this is a description rather than a determiner. While Schauerte, Hossfeld, Lamberty-Zielinski, Dahmen, & Kindl (2004) presents Fichtner's theory that "a name serves to define the nature of the entity named" (p. 127), Schauerte, et al. seem to take a more moderate stance saying, "a name does far more than simply label and distinguish different entities" (2004, p. 127), highlighting the significance if not the power. Other formations of names include a play on words, a confession, a personal evaluation, or even a recognition of an eternal truth (Coppes, 1980).

Schauerte, Hossfeld, Lamberty-Zielinski, Dahmen, & Kindl (2004) also discuss the occurrence of renaming. Using the same word *qārāʾ*, we see theologically significant, central figures renamed. Most often, it is God who initiates this change. Other renamings, however, occur for symbolic purposes or cultural reasons (Schauerte, et al., 2004).

To further understand *qārāʾ*, I also looked at *šēm*, the Hebrew word for "name". They occur together 86 times in the Old Testament and together convey the act of naming. As written by Kaiser (1980), W. R. Smith thinks *šēm* is perhaps derived from an Arabic root meaning "to mark or brand," ultimately a way of distinguishing one person from another. Bietenhard echoes this as restated by Ross (1997). While this is the base understanding, Ross also points out that culturally, a name was not only simply a means of identification, but "was

considered to be a description of character or conditions" (1997, p. 147). Ross later cautions against the tendency to equate a name describing personality to a person's very soul and suggests that narrators analyzed names "in such a way as to unlock the meaning of the event" (1997, p. 149) rather than the meanings we read being inherent to the names.

Kaiser (1980), Ross (1997), and Reiterer, Ringgren, & Fabry (2006) all highlight the connection of a name to reputation, identity, and existence. Names could then represent a person and his existence (Ross, 1997) and Kaiser goes so far as to write "'to cut off the name' was equal to liquidating the person himself" (1980, p. 934).

From these studies, my extended definition of naming conveyed by *qārāʾ* with *šēm* is the act of giving a name within specific circumstances by one with authority over the name-receiver, whose authority is respected by others such that the name spoken identifies and represents the receiver.

First Draft of Schema

From my extended definition, study of Alston (2000), and example of Arcadi (2013), the following variables were found in the act of naming:

> U – a name-giver
>
> O – intends to name
>
> X – name-receiver
>
> C – community
>
> E – naming

While not always recorded in Scripture, the following is also implied and necessary:

> S – a naming sentence

I then drafted the following schema of illocutionary rules for the act of naming:

> A speaker intends to name while uttering a naming sentence. If the speaker takes responsibility for the conceptually necessary conditions, and if they are in place for naming, the speaker has the authority within the community to name. However, the conditions must be appropriate for the exercise of that authority, and by uttering the naming sentence, the speaker can name the name-receiver.

In Alston's (2000) format, this is written as follows:

> **U O'd in uttering S *iff* in uttering S, U R'd that:**
>
> 1. Conceptually necessary conditions for E.
> 2. U has the authority within C to produce E.
> 3. Conditions are appropriate for the exercise of that authority.
> 4. By uttering S, U is bringing about E of X.

I will now expand each rule of the schema to further clarify and lay out the conditions within the I-rules.

1. Conceptually necessary conditions for E.

As explained by Arcadi (2013), these are conditions necessary within the act itself. For example, X needs to be identifiable by means of a name. If this were not necessary, naming would not be needed. Related, if X is to be distinguished from others, X must be a singular entity.

2. U has the authority within C to produce E.

C must recognize and ascribe authority to U or E will not hold. C would simply disregard the attempt. This authority comes from social conventions most often, but at times it is divine authorization.

3. Conditions are appropriate for the exercise of that authority.

Arcadi (2013) explains these as the conditions external to the act, or in other words the contextual circumstances. Here, I say someone must hear U O, otherwise the name will not be put into use. Additionally, the circumstances should expose the need for E. Most frequently this is because a new baby has entered the world, however, in cases of renaming, it might be due to a new position whether in role or identity.

4. By uttering S, U is bringing about E of X.

Based on the above conditions, U now expects the name to hold. Because of the authority of U within C, this is perhaps socially enforced.

Case Studies

After I designed the schema through extended word study, definition, and analysis, I began testing. I chose nine instances of naming in the Old Testament that included the presence of both *qārāʾ* and *šēm* to serve as case studies in which I could test my schema. I looked for instances of each of the following categories: naming instituted by a human (Genesis 29:32-30:24; Exodus 2:22; 1 Samuel 1:20), naming instituted by God (Genesis 17:19; 2 Samuel 12:25, Hosea 1:4, 6, and 9), renaming instituted by a human (Genesis 41:45; Numbers 13:16[2]), and renaming instituted by God (Genesis 32:28, 35:10). While many acts of naming occur in the book of Genesis, I intentionally chose an example for each category from other books of the Old Testament when possible to offer a fuller representation. Commentaries looking at the act of naming involved in each passage helped me test my schema in each context for its variables and conditions.

Results

I tested the schema in nine different passages which served as case studies. Genesis 29:32-30:24 records a series of acts of naming the children of Jacob. While I looked at each instance individually, this passage served as one case study. In Exodus 2:22, Moses names his first son, and 1 Samuel 1:20 records Hannah naming Samuel, for whom she prayed. These three passages serve as examples of naming instituted by a human. Genesis 17:19 records God's promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah, who was to be named Isaac. 2 Samuel 12:25 provides an interesting account of God giving a second name to David's son, Solomon, through his prophet, Nathan. In Hosea 1:4, 6, and 9, God commands Hosea to give names to each of his three children. These three passages serve as examples of naming instituted by God. Genesis 41:45 records Pharaoh giving Joseph a new name and in Numbers 13:16, Moses renames Joshua. These both serve as examples of renaming instituted by a human. Finally, Genesis 32:28 and 35:10 record the renaming of Jacob as instituted by God. While this is not the only occurrence of God renaming, I chose to focus on just one as the others occur in Genesis as well.

In testing the variables in these passages, I found the recorded presence of a name-giver (U) and a community (C) in all nine. A name-receiver (X) and the actual effect of naming (E) were present in all but Genesis 17:19, where X was promised to come and therefore the act could not be fully completed. Interestingly, a naming sentence (S) is only recorded when God is the U. However, as all examples demonstrate the eventual and successful act of naming, S is implied. If S were not present, E would not have occurred. Related, the intention of naming (O) is only explicit in Hosea 1 and Genesis 32 and 35. This is deeply connected to the presence of S, so it is similarly implied in the other passages. In the remaining case of Genesis 17:19, the intent is present but is for the future, which makes it not as explicit as the other two. This information can be found in Table 1 in the appendices.

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[2] Numbers 13:16 does not in fact use the word *šēm* like the other eight passages, but the act was clear enough and interesting enough that I still included it.

Following this, I tested the various I-rules and subsequent conditions in the nine case studies. Here, I found that both of the conceptually necessary conditions were met in all nine passages. Additionally, U always had the authority within C to name, and successful naming occurred each time. However, as S was only recorded in three instances (see above), it could only be recorded as heard in those instances. As S was implied in the other instances though, I would again conclude that S was heard based on the success of the act. In all but two instances (2 Samuel 12:25 and Numbers 13:16), the circumstances exposed the need for E. While some commentaries offer potential explanations for this instance of naming by God and renaming by Moses, I did not see them directly in Scripture and therefore cannot confirm their presence. Nevertheless, based on the importance placed on names in the culture, the act would not have occurred without reason. This information can be found in Table 2 in the appendices.

Discussion

Based on my case studies, I stand by my initial schema of illocutionary rules, restated below. The conditions within the I-rules are included for easier reading.

> **U O'd in uttering S *iff* in uttering S, U R'd that:**

1. Conceptually necessary conditions for E.
   - X needs to be identifiable by means of a name
   - X must be a singular entity
2. U has the authority within C to produce E.
3. Conditions are appropriate for the exercise of that authority.
   - Someone must hear U O
   - The circumstances expose the need for E
4. By uttering S, U is bringing about E of X.

The research I present here fits well within the current conversation as laid out in my literature review. Admittedly, I started from Alston's framework (2000), but my own analysis proved to have result in the same understanding. One difference I noticed and think to be important is the presence of the community. While Arcadi (2013) mentions this as the source of authority, the act of naming that intends the henceforth use of the name requires a community to a greater degree. This fits with Korta and Perry's (2011) theory of coco-referring. The community, then, is necessary for both the authority to name and the association of a name with a person.

Additionally, in working with narrative, not every detail was recorded. However, I found it interesting to see that God's speech was considered important enough to record, even in an act more regularly performed by humans. Walton (2001) similarly acknowledges God's act of naming has greater power, even to determine the future. Perhaps this, along with the fact that he is God and not a man, accounts for the recorded presence of a naming sentence.

While I did not focus on name meanings and reasons in my research, I still noticed some common threads. As mentioned in my literature review, some believe that names carry identity. However, I saw that while they do often offer at least a description of the receiver,

naming more often shows the faith of the parents or their perspectives of the circumstances (Reiterer, Ringgren, & Fabry, 2006; Enns, 2000; Arnold, 2003; Walton, 2001). This second part was supported by my initial research. Additionally, I have to acknowledge the meanings or reasons sometimes given at the time of naming. While Ross (1997) suggests the narrator added this later, Walton (2001) and Arnold (2003) posit instead that these are examples of word play of similar sounds connecting a name and its given explanation. In light of all this, it is clear names were not regarded as arbitrary labels but rather carried with them significance and a story. This was no casual act.

All of this is fairly broad and may not appear to have any immediate application. However, this study not only confirms what appears to be true culturally, it helps us to better understand ourselves, our God, and the power of our words. As little that has been studied in this topic, I would encourage continued research on the act of naming and its significance, while also expanding to other speech acts recorded in Scripture. Still, some potential avenues of future study appeared as I studied. To begin, I personally would have enjoyed looking more into the effects or the perlocutionary act of naming. Naming also sometimes occurred as the result of a command (another kind of speech act) so it would be interesting to look specifically at those instances. Though I studied examples from God and humans together, the power in naming is clearly different between the two entities, and so I would enjoy comparing the two. Additionally, the current study could be extended to the New Testament, or even the Catholic tradition of giving a Christian name to a child as connected to patterns set in Scripture. It also might be interesting to compare naming in this particular context with naming in the modern, Western world or perhaps another culture at another point in history.

Limitations

In a study of speech acts, narrative provides a unique challenge in analysis. I could only study and analyze what the authors included in their writing, so some of my conclusion is founded on assumptions of implied presence. Examples of unsuccessful attempts at naming would have also been beneficial. Unfortunately, I am not well versed in the Hebrew language. Though I did consult references to assist me, my study was limited by my inability to study the original text as it was intended. Additionally, I only tested my schema in nine different passages. While this covered about 10% of the uses of *qārāʾ* with *šēm*, further testing could reveal flaws or additions to my schema.

Recognitions

Conclusion

Clearly, the naming that occurs in the Old Testament is a significant act. In using speech act theory and Alston's framework of illocutionary rules (2000) as a tool for analysis, I have shown that Old Testament naming is subject to certain rules with necessary circumstances, conditions, and authority occurring within a community. Because this is a complex, important act that appears throughout all of Scripture, Christians and scholars should bring the act of naming to theological conversations more regularly and continue to study for a more thorough understanding.

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Appendices

	Genesis 29:32–30:24	Exodus 2:22	1 Samuel 1:20	Genesis 17:19	2 Samuel 12:25	Hosea 1:4, 6, 9	Genesis 41:45	Numbers 13:16	Genesis 32:28, 35:10
U – a name-giver	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
O – intends to name	\	\	\	>	\	X	\	\	X
X – name-receiver	X	X	X	>	X	X	X	X	X
C – community	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E – naming	X	X	X	>	X	X	X	X	X
S – a naming sentence	\	\	\	X	\	X	\	\	X

Table 1. The presence of variables in nine case study passages, with *x* denoting the recorded presence, \ denoting the implied presence, and > denoting a future fulfillment.

		Genesis 29:32–30:24	Exodus 2:22	1 Samuel 1:20	Genesis 17:19	2 Samuel 12:25	Hosea 1:4, 6, 9	Genesis 41:45	Numbers 13:16	Genesis 32:28, 35:10
Conceptually necessary conditions for E.	X needs to be identifiable by means of a name	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X must be a singular entity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
U has the authority within C to produce E.		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Conditions are appropriate for the exercise of that authority.	Someone must hear U O	\	\	\	X	\	X	\	\	X
	The circumstances expose the need for E	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
By uttering S, U is bringing about E of X.		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 2. The satisfaction of illocutionary rules in nine case study passages, with *x* denoting the recorded presence and \ denoting the implied presence.