

GUIDE TO CRITICAL TERMINOLOGY

BETHEL SEMINARY



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Allomorph – one of the various forms of a single morpheme. E.g., םי, י' and תי are all allomorphs of the plural morpheme.

Apodosis – the main clause which expresses the conclusion or consequence of a conditional sentence.
E.g., *I will not destroy [it] if I find forty-five there.* (See protasis)

Binyan – (Heb.) “form, structure” refers to the particular form of a word in a textual context. E.g the binyan of שׁוּׁל is Qal imperfect 3ms

Cognate – fr. Lat. meaning “having common ancestor” refers to languages or linguistic elements that share a common source. For example, Hebrew and Ugaritic are cognate languages; Hebrew “shalom” and Arabic “salam” are cognates.

Colon, (pl. cola) – a line comprised of a single clause; also referred to as a stich or hemistich.

Diachronic – lit. “through time,” generally refers to usage as it relates to antecedents; it is a “developmental” approach. (See “synchronic”)

Dittography – a copyist error in which a a word is accidentally duplicated.

Etymology – the historical derivation of a word; the study of derivation of words. James Barr argues that it is important to distinguish popular etymology from technical etymology.

Fission – a copyist error of dividing a single word into two.

Fusion – a copyist error of joining two words to make one.

Genre – a distinguishable class or type, used generally of visual, literary or musical art forms. Poetry and narrative are examples of more general categories of genre. Hymn, lament, speech, records, historical narrative, etc. are more specific categories of genre.

Gloss – definition or synonym. In textual criticism it refers to a definition, explanation or synonym written interlinear or in the margin of a text.

Hapax legomenon – fr. Gk. “said once,” usually referring to a word that appears only once in the Hebrew Bible (or Greek N.T.).

Haplography – copyist error where a term that should have been written twice appears only once.

Homoarchton – fr. Gk. “same beginning,” a copyist error where an intervening passage is accidentally omitted because the copyist’s eye went back to the second of two lines which begin the same.

Homoeoteleuton – fr. Gk “same ending,” a copyist error where an intervening passage is accidentally omitted because the copyist’s eye went back to the second of two lines which end the same.

Homophony – a copyist error of replacing one homonym for another. E.g. אָל for לוֹ

Idiom – an expression that means more or other than the “dictionary definitions” of the components and so cannot be translated “literally.”

Inclusio – a literary device that “bookends” a literary unit. E.g. Psa 4:1a < > 3b.

Kethiv – (Aram.) “what is written”; a unit in the consonantal text that the Masoretes leave as is although they question the extant form and offer an alternative in the margin (*masorah parva*) which they refer to as the *qere’* (s.v.). The consonants of the *kethiv* are vocalized according to the *qere’*.

Lacuna – a gap or “hole” in a text; a unit is obviously missing. E.g 1 Sam 13:1

Lexeme – a word stem; the most elemental form of the word.

Matres lectionis – lit. “mother of reading” refers to the use of consonants (א ה ו י) to indicate the presence of certain vowels. This presented a problem when the “vowel letter” was read as a consonant. Würthwein suggests Amos 2:7 as an example of the MT’s הַשֹּׁאֲפִימִים (“who trample on”) replaced an original הַשֹּׁפִימִים (“those who bruise”).

Mechanical layout – *See syntactical layout.*

Metathesis – copyist error of reversing the proper order of letters (ti happens to typists too!)

Morpheme – the most basic unit of speech that carries meaning. E.g. “bird”, but also the “-s” in “birds”. In these examples “bird” is a “free morpheme” (it communicates an idea on its own) and “-s” is a “bound morpheme” (it does not communicate an idea on its own).

Phoneme – a unit of sound that helps distinguish meaning.

Polysemy – refers to the versatility of language to be able to express an unlimited range of ideas by means of a limited amount of “code.” When one “sign” is used for more than one meaning it is polysemous. E.g. the Hebrew sound /l^o/ means *to, of, by, for, with respect to*; the Hebrew sound /l^o/ has at least two major meanings which are distinguished by spelling – אָל לוֹ .

Protasis – the subordinate clause of a conditional sentence, usually beginning with “if.” E.g., I will not destroy [it] *if I find forty-five there.* (See protasis)

Qere’ – (Aram.) “read!”; the marginal masoretic annotation which they intended to be read in correction of what they understood to be an erroneous written form in the text. *See kethiv.*

Semantic – refers to meaning, the meaning of linguistic signs.

Semantic domain – refers to the grouping of words that share a common element of meaning.

Shoresh – (Heb.) “root”

Strophe – refers generally to one of two or more lines of metric poetry. Since metrics is still a debated issue in Hebrew poetry, it technically does not apply. However, the term is used in a non-technical sense to refer to a “paragraph” of (Heb.) poetry.

Synchronic – in this context refers to the treatment of language or text as static, without regard to process or development.

Syntactical layout – a “block diagram” of a paragraph. Each clause has its own line and is indented according to its function (main clause, coordinate clause, dependent clause) in order to visualize the author’s development of the idea of the paragraph.

Syntax – the way words are put together to form phrases, phrases to form clauses, and clauses to form sentences.

Syntagm – is a unit comprised of words or word parts arranged in a linear speech pattern, e.g. a phrase, clause, sentence, etc. E.g. “Abram went” (noun + verb), “beautiful woman” (noun + adjectival phrase). Phrase-level syntagms are used to construct clause-, sentence-, and paragraph-level syntagms.

Textus receptus – lit. “received text” normally refers to the Greek edition which, up to the 19th cent. was considered the “authoritative” edition (in Britain the 1550 Stephanus edition, on the Continent the 1633 Elsevir edition). By extension, it can also refer to the “authoritative” edition of the Hebrew Bible. Since 1929 the “authoritative” text which lies behind the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (and BHK before it) is the Leningradensis Codex B19^A (dated 1010 A.D. when it was copied from a 980 A.D. MS) which perpetuates the Tiberian school’s ben-Asher text.

Variant – refers to a difference between a text in one manuscript compared with another manuscript or version.

Vorlage – (Germ.) “copy, model” refers to a specific source document that was copied.