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Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay: Uses of the
Archaic, Biblical Yea in the
Book of Mormon

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay: Uses of the
Archaic, Biblical Yea in the
Book of Mormon

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This work examines the word yea in the Book of Mormon, the Earliest Text and enumerates the usages found therein. Already recognized definitions in addition to new definitions are given with examples. Also included are textual variations from the Earliest Text and the current Book of Mormon used generally as scripture in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Keywords: yea, definition, usage, Book of Mormon, Earliest Text

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Intro and Methodology

The objective of this work is to identify the usages of the word *yea* found in the Book of Mormon. In so doing, I cite examples from The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text by Royal Skousen. That text is a monumental reconstruction of the Book of Mormon taken from the original and printer's manuscripts.

First, I will present the 10 usages of *yea* found in the Book of Mormon, dividing them into two groups: 1) those catalogued already in the online Oxford English Dictionary and 2) those that are newly proposed by the author. Second, I will explain each usage and provide examples from the Book of Mormon and the Bible that exemplify its function. Biblical examples are taken from the King James version. Third, textual variations dealing with *yea* that reconcile differences between The Earliest Text and the current 1981 edition generally used by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints are included with their categorical assignments. Last, I discuss further research into and the implications of this work.

For the purposes of this thesis, the Book of Mormon is taken as an English text at its base. Scholarly work in Hebraisms by Matthew Bowen and others are not accounted for. The author makes no attempt to connect *yea* or the Book of Mormon with a possible Semitic origin.

The usages and definitions were developed over more than seven readings of the Book of Mormon, taking note of what *yea* was introducing. In most examples, a clear pattern emerged as to its function (e.g. correcting, explaining, and amplifying). In some cases, an additional word aided in identifying a usage: **yea, and; yea, even; yea, and behold; and yea, insomuch.**

Early on in the research we developed 8 definitions and usages. However, over time and with the difficulty of filing 1258 different examples into the 8 working definitions, two more usages emerged. First, many examples that might have been categorized as Explanatory did not

follow its pattern. Instead of *yea* presenting a definition of a word or phrase, it introduced a narrowing or specifying of an idea or action, giving rise to the category Specify:

1 Nephi 2:1

For behold, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto my father,
yea, even in a dream, and saith unto him:
Blessed art thou Lehi because of the things which thou hast done.

Here Nephi isn't defining how the Lord speaks to His prophets; beginning by using *yea*, he is specifying how He spoke to his father Lehi in this instance. Other scriptural references follow this pattern and thus a ninth category is included.

There are also examples that do not file into any of the nine found definitions:

2 Nephi 1:10-13

...behold, I say, if the day shall come
that they will reject the Holy One of Israel,
the true Messiah, their Redeemer and their God,
behold, the judgments of him that is just shall rest upon them.
Yea (Specify), he will bring other nations unto them,
and he will give unto them power,
and he will take away from them the lands of their possessions,
and he will cause them to be scattered and smitten.
Yea, as one generation passeth to another,
there shall be bloodsheds and great visitations among them.

It is unclear exactly how the phrase after *yea*, "as one generation passeth to another", relates to the one preceding it, "he will cause them to be scattered and smitten". It does not explain, specify, amplify, etc. It seems to be in the middle of a narration, possibly linking or simply serving as a transition from one part of the discourse to the other. This was that greatest commonality between the examples that were categorical-less, a tendency to continue the narrative, thus forming a new category and receiving the name Continuation. Another example:

2 Nephi 29:4

But thus saith the Lord God:

O fools, they shall have a Bible,

and it shall proceed forth from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people.

And what thank they the Jews for the Bible which they receive from them?

Yea, what do the Gentiles mean?

Do they remember the travails and the labors and the pains of the Jews

and their diligence unto me in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles?

O ye Gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people?

Here again it is unclear what purpose *yea* has in this passage. It is not introducing a definition, narrowing a focus, or giving examples. It could possibly have found itself in the middle of a discourse and is simply linking parts of a narrative. Thus this example is filed into the tenth category: Continuation.

Given the difficulty mentioned in accounting for all 1258 tokens of *yea* in the Book of Mormon, the objective of this work is not to give a final categorization of all 1258 but to give definitions found from those instances.

Definitions

Listed in the definitive record of the English language, the Oxford English Dictionary, are four definitions for the adverbial form of the word *yea*:

Definition 1, from OED, definition 1: (Yes) A word used to express affirmation or assent: now ordinarily replaced by YES

Definition 2, from OED, definition 2: (Continuation) Used as an ordinary adv. directly qualifying a clause or word: Even; truly, verily.

Definition 3, from OED, definition 3: (Amplify) Used to introduce a statement, phrase, or word, stronger or more emphatic than that immediately preceding: = ‘indeed’; ‘and more’: = adv

Definition 4, from OED, definition 4: (Correction) Introducing a question or remark in reply to a statement, etc., expressing either vague assent or (more commonly) opposition or objection: = ‘Indeed?’; ‘Well’, ‘well then’.

The Book of Mormon contains examples of each of these, as does the Bible. The Book of Mormon also contains other usages of yea not yet listed in the OED. They are the following:

Definition 5, proposed usage 1: (Specify) Used to specify or narrow focus

Definition 6, proposed usage 2: (Additional) Introducing an additional idea related to the previous statement

Definition 7, proposed usage 3: (Explanatory) Explains a word or phrase in a previous clause.

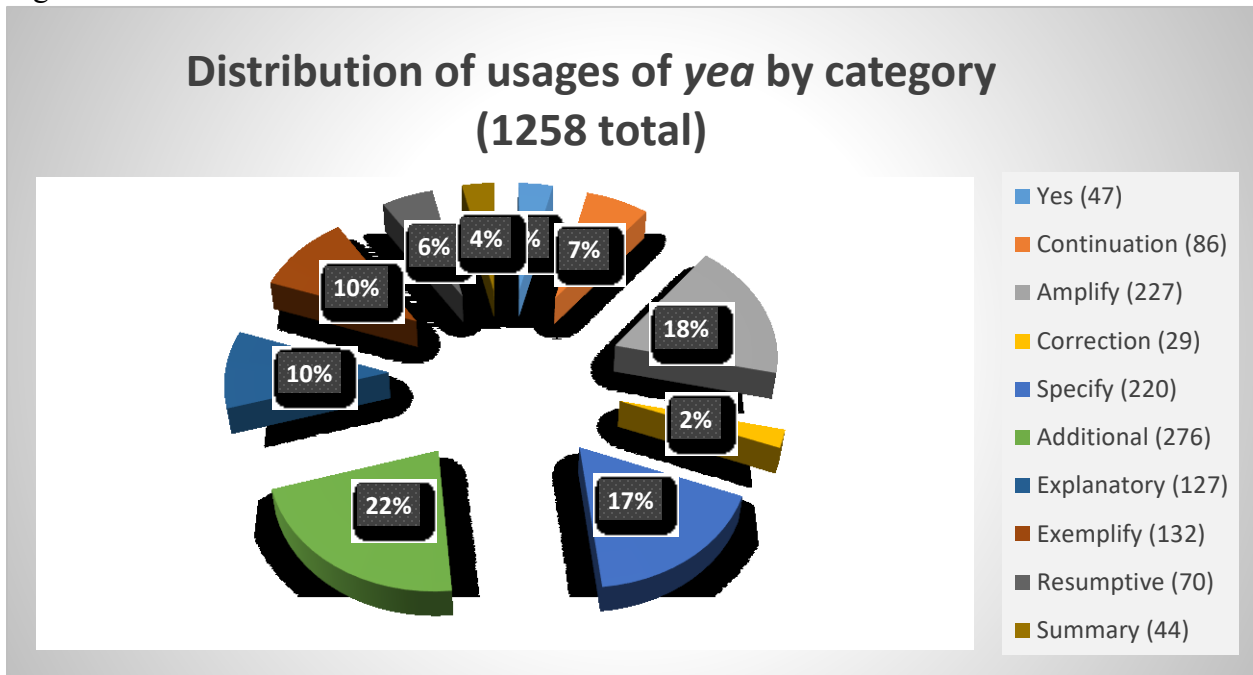
Definition 8, proposed usage 4: (Exemplify) Gives an example or examples of a general statement

Definition 9, proposed usage 5: (Repeat or Resumptive) Repeats a previously used phrase often to resume a former line of thought.

Definition 10, proposed usage 6: (Summary) Summarizes a previous statement, also often used resumptively.

I will now explain each definition and usage while giving examples; Figure 1 below is a distribution of the instances of *yea* as categorized in the appendix (downloadable from <http://linguistics.byu.edu/thesisdata/YeaBookofMormonEarliestText.zip>):

Figure 1



DEFINITION 1

Yes: (From OED) A word used to express affirmation or assent: now ordinarily replaced by “yes”

The most commonly known usage of *yea* is the archaic form of the word “yes”. A few examples from the Bible:

2 Kings 2:3

And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, **Yea**, I know it; hold ye your peace.

Matthew 9:28

And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, **Yea**, Lord.

Though only 47 of the 1258 instances, a relative minority compared to other usages, *yea* as the affirmative response is also found in the Book of Mormon:

1 Nephi 14:8

And it came to pass that when the angel had spoken these words, he saith unto me: Remember thou the covenants of the Father unto the house of Israel? I saith unto him: **Yea**.

Alma 11:32-33

And Zeezrom saith again: Who is he that shall come? Is it the Son of God? And he saith unto him: **Yea**.

In all cases, the use of *yea* as “yes” follows a question or inquiry except for in the following instances. The first:

Jacob 5:50-51

But behold, the servant saith unto the Lord of the vineyard: Spare it a little longer. And the Lord saith: **Yea**, I will spare it a little longer

Even though the punctuation might lead one to think the servant is issuing an order, it is more reasonable to assume here that the servant is suggesting, even requesting, that the Lord of the vineyard stay His hand. In this light, this usage of *yea* follows the correct usage of affirmation.

2 Nephi 31:14-15

But behold, my beloved brethren,
thus came the voice of the Son unto me, saying:
After that ye have repented of your sins and witnessed unto the Father
that ye are willing to keep my commandments by the baptism of water
and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost
and can speak with a new tongue
-- yea (Amplify), even with the tongue of angels --
and after this should deny me,
it would have been better for you that ye had not known me.
And I heard a voice from the Father, saying:
Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful;

Though there is no question posed, here the Father affirms the words of the Son: “*Yea* (Yes), [they] are true and faithful.”

Other scriptures with no question but an affirmation:

Mosiah 5:1-2

And now it came to pass that
when king Benjamin had thus spoken to his people,
he sent among them, desiring to know of his people
if they believed the words which he had spoken unto them.
And they all cried with one voice, saying:
Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us.

Alma 15:8-9

And Alma saith:
If thou believest in the redemption of Christ,
thou canst be healed.
And he saith:
Yea, I believe according to thy words.

Alma 39:3-4

And this is not all, my son.
Thou didst do that which was grievous unto me,
for thou didst forsake the ministry
and did go over into the land of Siron
among the borders of the Lamanites
after the harlot Isabel.

Yea, she did steal away the hearts of many,
but this was no excuse for thee, my son.

Alma 40:15

Now there are some that have understood
that this state of happiness
and this state of misery of the soul before the resurrection
was a first resurrection.

Yea, I admit it may be termed a resurrection

DEFINITION 2

Continuation: (From OED) Used as an ordinary adv. directly qualifying a clause or word: Even; truly, verily.

The function of qualifying a clause resembles a usage in the Book of Mormon which not only connects two phrases, but also continues the narration; it is named Continuation. First, we find some examples in the Bible:

Hosea 8:9-10

For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.

Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.

Acts 20:33-34

I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

The Book of Mormon follows this pattern:

Alma 10:18-19

Ye are laying plans to pervert the ways of the righteous
and to bring down the wrath of God upon your heads,
even to the utter destruction of this people.

Yea, well did Mosiah say, who was our last king,
when he was about to deliver up the kingdom
-- having no one to confer it upon,
causing that this people should be governed by their own voices—
yea (Resumptive), well did he say that
if the time should come that the voice of this people should choose iniquity
--that is, if the time should come that this people should fall into transgression—
they would be ripe for destruction.

Here *yea* acts as a connector, linking warnings given by the speaker, a prophet, to a condemning testimonial given by a previous prophet. It is merely a transition word, continuing the narrative and connecting two ideas. Another example:

3 Nephi 9: 13-14

O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they,
will ye not now return unto me and repent of your sins and be converted,
that I may heal you?

Yea, verily I say unto you:
If ye will come unto me, ye shall have eternal life.
Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you.
And whosoever will come, him will I receive.
And blessed are they which cometh unto me.

Here, too, *yea* connects two ideas: repenting of sins and the blessings that come from repentance. It acts as transition word, continuing the narrative.

A variant of this usage in the Book of Mormon not only connects and gives continuation, but also increases intensity. This usage is accompanied with *and behold*:

Helaman 8:16-18

And now behold, Moses did not only testify of these things,
but also all the holy prophets from his day even to the days of Abraham.

Yea, and behold, Abraham saw of his coming
and was filled with gladness and did rejoice.

Yea, and behold I say unto you that Abraham not only knew of these things,
but there were many before the days of Abraham
which were called by the order of God;

In this example increasing emphasis is given as more examples are cited: all prophets from
Moses to Abraham testified; Abraham also saw; and even many before him also knew. In another
example, Helaman uses *yea, and behold* to emphasize his declaration:

Helaman 12:15

And thus according to his word the earth goeth back,
and it appeareth unto man that the sun standeth still.

Yea, and behold, this is so;
for sure it is the earth that moveth and not the sun.

An additional variant shows not only continuation but also cause and effect. The resultant
clause is proceeded by *yea insomuch*:

1 Nephi 13:29

And after that these plain and precious things were taken away,
it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles.
And after it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles,
yea (Amplify), even across the many waters -- which thou hast seen --
with the Gentiles which have gone forth out of captivity,
and thou seest because of the many plain and precious things
which have been taken out of the book,
which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men
according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God—
and because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb,
an exceedingly great many do stumble,
yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.

Here the taking away of things from the gospel of the Lamb have caused many to stumble,
resulting in Satan having great power over them. And below, many joy in the afflictions of Moroni,
so much so that they have risen in rebellion against their governing official.

Alma 61:3

But behold, there are those who do joy in your afflictions,
yea, insomuch that they have risen up in rebellion against me

DEFINITION 3

Amplify: (From OED) Used to introduce a statement, phrase, or word, stronger or more emphatic than that immediately preceding: = ‘indeed’; ‘and more’: = adv

The usage of *yea* to emphasize or amplify is common in the Bible. It is most often done by the addition of a word or phrase:

Isaiah 24:16

From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; **yea**, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

Pslam 19:10

More to be desired are they than gold, **yea**, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

The Book of Mormon also displays this pattern:

1 Nephi 8:23

And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness, **yea**, even an exceeding great mist of darkness, insomuch that they which had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost.

2 Nephi 27:26

therefore I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people -- **yea**, a marvelous work and a wonder --

Found in the Book of Mormon is also a tendency by the narrator to not only amplify a certain subject or idea but to give an extreme or an extent for emphasis. It is often, though not always, accompanied with *even*:

1 Nephi 1:5

Wherefore it came to pass that
my father Lehi, as he went forth, prayed unto the Lord,
yea, even with all his heart, in behalf of his people.

2 Nephi 29:7

Know ye not that there are more nations than one?
Know ye not that I the Lord your God have created all men
and that I remember they which are upon the isles of the sea
and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath
and I bring forth my word unto the children of men,
yea, even unto all the nations of the earth?

Jacob 5:43

And behold, this last whose branch hath withered away
I did plant in a good spot of ground,
yea, even that which was choice unto me
above all other parts of the land of my vineyard.

Lehi did not just pray unto God, he prayed with all his heart. The Lord sends His word not just to the some of the children of men, but unto all the nations of the earth. And the Lord of the vineyard chose not just a good spot of land, but the choicest. These are all examples of amplification to an extent or extreme.

Though far less common, it is also not without parallel in the Old Testament:

Nehemiah 5:15

But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; **yea, even their servants**
bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.

Psalm 41:7-9

All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.
An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.
Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted
up his heel against me.

DEFINITION 4

Correction: (From OED) Introducing a question or remark in reply to a statement, etc.,
expressing either vague assent or (more commonly) opposition or objection: = ‘Indeed?’; ‘Well’,
‘well then’.

The aspect of objection, or even correction, in the usage of *yea* does occur in the Bible:

2 Samuel 19:29-30

And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and
Ziba divide the land.
And Mephibosheth said unto the king, **Yea**, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is
come again in peace unto his own house.

Here Mephibosheth objects to the king’s suggestion of dividing evenly, saying let him
take it all. And in the following example, Job corrects himself: God doesn’t speak only once, but
(at least) twice.

Job 33:14

For God speaketh once, **yea twice**, yet man perceiveth it not.

The Book of Mormon also contains examples that follow this pattern:

Alma 49:3

Behold, I said that the city of Ammonihah had been rebuilt.
I say unto you, **yea**, that it was in part rebuilt.

Alma overstates the condition of Ammonihah and corrects himself using *yea*. Another example:

Helaman 2:13

And behold, in the end of this book
ye shall see that this Gadianton did prove the overthrow,
yea, almost the entire destruction of the people of Nephi.

Overthrow and *destruction*, as used in the Book of Mormon, have a specific meaning implying a totality. Skousen provides clarification on this distinction:

“The text treats **overthrow** as implying a total or complete destruction:

Alma 58:9

therefore we were grieved and also filled with fear,
lest by any means the judgments of God should come upon our land
to our **overthrow and utter destruction**.

Ether 8:23

yea even the sword of the justice of the Eternal God shall fall upon you
to your **overthrow and destruction**

Ether 8:25

For it cometh to pass that whoso buildeth it up
seeketh to **overthrow** the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries;
and it bringeth to pass the **destruction** of all people

“In Helaman 2:13 the normal use of *overthrow* and *destruction* would give us ‘the overthrow-yea the entire destruction-of the people of Nephi’, without the almost. Thus the use of almost allows the yea-phrase to reverse the normal implications of overthrow.” (The Nature 340)

DEFINITION 5

Specify: (Proposed usage 1) Used to specify or narrow focus.

Employing *yea* to specify or narrow focus is very common in the Book of Mormon:

Mosiah 10:3

And it came to pass that we did inherit the land of our fathers for many years,
yea, for the space of twenty and two years.

Here Zeniff describes the time his people have occupied the land as “for many years” before deciding to more precisely state it as 22 years. Below Moroni describes the difficult state of affairs under the reign of King Riplakish saying that the people were laid with something grievous to be borne. Then Moroni more specifically describes the situation: they were taxed heavily.

Ether 10:5

And it came to pass that Riplakish did not do that
which was right in the sight of the Lord,
for he did have many wives and concubines
and did lay that upon men’s shoulders which was grievous to be borne.
Yea, he did tax them with heavy taxes,
and with the taxes he did build many spacious buildings.

We can also find examples in the Bible. Here Shemaiah specifies exactly when the will come and slay, beginning with *yea*:

Nehmeiah 6:10

Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel,
who was shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and
let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; **yea**, in the night will they
come to slay thee.

DEFINITION 6

Additional: (Proposed usage 2) Introducing an additional idea related to the previous statement

There are 276 instances of *yea* followed by the conjunction *and* in the Book of Mormon, excluding *yea, and behold* (see Definition 2 above). In this usage, the speaker introduces an additional though related example or idea. It is also found in the Old Testament:

Genesis 27:32-33

And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? **yea, and** he shall be blessed.

2 Kings: 16:2-3

Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, **yea, and** made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel.

In the scripture from Genesis, Esau and his father, Isaac, discover that another (Jacob) has received Isaac's first blessing. Isaac says that another was blessed and, in addition, will be blessed. The second scripture recounts the deeds of King Ahaz. Not only did he follow the pattern set by his unrighteous royal forebears, he additionally did child sacrifice by fire, a practice performed by previously conquered people.

And now some examples from the Book of Mormon:

1 Nephi 5:8

And she spake, saying:
Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness;

yea, and I also know of a surety
that the Lord hath protected my sons
and delivered them out of the hands of Laban
and gave them power whereby they could accomplish the thing
which the Lord hath commanded them.
And after this manner of language did she speak.

This declaration by Sarai follows the arrival of her sons from Jerusalem. Previously, she had doubted the legitimacy of her husband's prophetic calling and the subsequent direction given through him for her sons to return to Jerusalem. Upon their safe return to her, however, Sarai's fears are calmed and she is moved to bear witness that she knows the Lord did indeed command her husband.

Additionally, she cites other actions she knows the Lord has taken on their behalf, including: 1) protecting her sons, 2) (specifically) delivering them out of the hands of Laban, and 3) giving her sons power to execute the Lord's commands given to them. These are related to the first assertion, that the Lord had indeed been giving commands to her husband, since the Lord provides, based upon faithfulness, protection and means to accomplish His commands.

Mosiah 17:9-10

Now Abinadi saith unto him:
I say unto you:
I will not recall the words
which I have spoken unto you concerning this people,
for they are true.
And that ye may know of their surety,
I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands.
Yea, and I will suffer even unto death.
And I will not recall my words,
and they shall stand as a testimony against you.
And if ye slay me, ye will shed innocent blood.
And this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day.

Abinadi is a prophet called to denounce the actions of King Noah, his priests, and his people. The King rejects Abinadi's words and commands that he recalls them (recall here meaning

to take the words back). Abinadi explains that, to prove the truthfulness of his words, he has allowed himself to be captured. Additionally, he is willing to suffer more, even unto death, to further attest to their veracity. This addendum is prefaced with *yea*.

DEFINITION 7

Explanatory: (Proposed usage 3) Explains a word or phrase in a previous clause.

That the reader understands certain terms and phrases, the speaker employs the *yea* Explanatory to define them:

1 Nephi 12:18

And the large and spacious building which thy father saw
is vain imaginations and the pride of the children of men.
And a great and a terrible gulf divideth them,
yea, even the sword of the justice of the Eternal God and Jesus Christ,
which is the Lamb of God,
of whom the Holy Ghost beareth record
from the beginning of the world until this time
and from this time henceforth and forever.

Here an angel describes to Nephi the details of the vision of his father, in which is a terrible gulf that divides people. The angel prefaced his explanation with *yea*, and then defines exactly what that gulf is: it is the sword of the justice of the Eternal God.

Alma 5:21

I say unto you:
Ye will know at that day that ye cannot be saved;
for there can no man be saved except his garments are washed white;
yea, his garments must be purified until it is cleansed from all stain
through the blood of him of whom it hath been spoken by our fathers
which should come to redeem his people from their sins.

In this account, Alma declares that, to be saved, one must have his garments washed white. Then, commencing with *yea*, he explains or defines what are garments washed white: they are garments purified until clean through the blood of Christ.

A few examples from the Bible:

Proverbs 7:24-26

Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.
Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.
For she hath cast down many wounded: **yea**, many strong men have been slain by her.
➤ She hath cast down many wounded = many strong men have been slain by her

Isaiah 46:6

They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, **yea**, they worship.
➤ they fall down = they worship

DEFINITION 8

Exemplify: (Proposed usage 4) Gives an example or examples of a general statement

As another instructive tool, the narrators of the Book of Mormon give examples to illustrate what they are teaching, often using *yea*.

2 Nephi 28:8

And there shall also be many which shall say:
Eat, drink, and be merry,
nevertheless fear God.
He will justify in committing a little sin.
Yea, lie a little,
take the advantage of one because of his words,
dig a pit for thy neighbor;
there is no harm in this.
And do all these things, for tomorrow we die.
And if it so be that we are guilty,

God will beat us with a few stripes,
and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God.

In this passage, Nephi is foreseeing what many will be saying in the latter days. including that God will justify them in the committing of sin. After stating this, he gives some examples that are prefaced with *yea*. Surely this is not an exhaustive list but just a few examples. Here we see how Exemplify differs from Specific: Specific narrows the focus and gives the totality of what is being described whereas Exemplify only enumerates a few possibilities.

Alma 4:9

And thus in this eighth year of the reign of the judges there began to be great contentions among the people of the church; **yea**, there was envyings and strifes and malice and persecutions and pride, even to exceed the pride of those who did not belong to the church of God.

Here Mormon recounts the difficulties of the day and gives examples of some, but assumedly not all, of the contentions.

Again some examples from the Bible:

Nehemiah 9:17-19

And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations;

Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness

Isaiah 14:7-8

The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon

In giving examples, the narrator will sometimes introduce the clause with *yea* as we see above. In other instances, *yea* precedes each example:

Alma 37:36

Yea, and (additional) cry unto God for all thy support.

Yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord.

And whithersoever thou goest,
let it be in the Lord.

Yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord.

Yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.

In some examples still, *yea* precedes the final example or item in a list. This happens in two instances when *yea* is found in the phrase “*yea* and in fine” (History 2). This phrase though usually used to summarize (see Proposed Usage 5 below), is employed in the following to add to a list of dates:

Omni 1:3

And it came to pass that two hundred and seventy and six years had passed away;
and we had many seasons of peace,
and we had many seasons of serious war and bloodshed.

Yea, and in fine, two hundred and eighty and two years had passed away;
and I had kept these plates according to the commandments of my fathers,
and I conferred them upon my son Amaron.

And I make an end.

4 Nephi 1:14

And it came to pass that the seventy and first year passed away,
and also the seventy and second year,
yea, and in fine, until the seventy and ninth year had passed away

DEFINITION 9

Repeat or Resumptive: (Proposed usage 5) Repeats a previously used phrase often to resume a former line of thought.

In the Old Testament we find several examples of *yea* in which the preceding word or phrase is simply repeated:

1 Samuel 24:11

Moreover, my father, see, **yea**, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

Psalms 27:6

And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, **yea**, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

We may even presume that the speaker is adding emphasis in their repetition:

Job 6:29

Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; **yea**, return again, my righteousness is in it.

In examples of repeat we also see a resumptive function in which, after additional or even tangential information is given, the *yea* is used to return to and continue a line of thought:

Numbers 10:32

And it shall be, *if thou go with us*, **yea**, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

Genesis 17:16

And I will bless her, *and give thee a son also of her*: **yea**, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

This example also occurs in the Book of Mormon, often with the additional or tangential information being greater:

Omni 1:6

For the Lord would not suffer
after he had led them out of the land of Jerusalem

*and kept and preserved them from falling into the hands of their enemies,
yea, he would not suffer that the words should not be verified
which he spake unto our fathers,
saying that inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments,
ye shall not prosper in the land.*

1 Nephi 14:3

*And that great pit which hath been digged for them
by that great and abominable church,
which was founded by the devil and his children
that he might lead away the souls of men down to hell --
yea, that great pit which hath been digged for the destruction of men
shall be filled by those who digged it,
unto their utter destruction, saith the Lamb of God --
not the destruction of the soul,
save it be the casting of it into that hell which hath no end.*

DEFINITION 10

Summary: (Proposed usage 6) Summarizes a previous statement, also often used resumptively.

In the Old Testament we find examples of *yea* used to summarize a previous statement:

Psalms 83:13-17

O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.
As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;
So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.
Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O Lord.
Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:

Here the Psalmist enumerates several scenarios that he wishes upon his enemies, after which he summaries their essence using *yea*.

Nehemiah 9:20-21

Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

Yea, *forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness*, so that they lacked nothing;

In this passage Nehemiah lists the ways the Lord provided for Israel while in the desert and then summarizes with *yea*, saying that they were sustained in the wilderness.

The Book of Mormon also contains examples of *yea* used to summarize:

2 Nephi 27:3

And all the nations that fight against Zion and that distress her shall be as a dream of a night vision.

Yea (Exemplify), it shall be unto them even as unto a hungry man which dreameth: and behold, he eateth,
but he awaketh and his soul is empty;
or like unto a thirsty man which dreameth: and behold, he drinketh,
but he awaketh and behold, he is faint and his soul hath appetite.
Yea, *even so* shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against mount Zion.

Nephi illustrates examples of the state of nations that fight against Zion after which he summarizes them with *yea* saying “even so”. Then, Nephi continues, drawing his summary to a conclusion. In this, we may say that Summarize is related to Resumptive: the narrator uses *yea* to summarize what has been stated so that he can continue with the narrative.

Mosiah 21:2-4

And it came to pass that after many days the Lamanites began again to be stirred up in anger against the Nephites,
and they began to come into the borders of the land round about.
Now they durst not slay them because of the oath which their king had made unto Limhi,
but they would smite them on their cheeks
and exercise authority over them
and began to put heavy burdens upon their backs
and drive them as they would a dumb ass.
Yea, *all this was done* that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled.

Here is another clear example of a list that is summarized with *yea*. And again we also see this application used resumptively in order to lead to a conclusion: “that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled”.

VARIATIONS IN THE EARLIEST TEXT AND THE 1981 EDITION OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Earliest Text, taken from the original and printer’s manuscripts, contains 1258 instances of the word *yea*. The 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon, used generally in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, contains 1252. This difference of six tokens includes nine examples which should be added to the 1981 edition and three should be deleted. In his publication *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, Skousen recounts the historical proceedings around these errors. I will describe each variance between the two Book of Mormons, citing Skousen’s work and including categorical assignments for the additions to the cache. The first in first Nephi:

1 Nephi 2:20 (delete):

And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments,
ye shall prosper and shall be led to a land of promise,
yea (explanatory), even a land which I have prepared for you,
(**yea** – delete) a land which is choice above all other lands.

Oliver Cowdery added this second *yea* in this verse when copying from the original manuscript to the printer’s manuscript. Skousen concludes that it is not necessary, though it is possible (Analysis 85). Furthermore it would qualify as an example of Explanatory, though it is not added into the inventory.

1 Nephi 4:35 (maintain):

And it came to pass that Zoram did take courage at the words which I spake
-- now Zoram was the name of the servant --
and he promised that he would go down into the wilderness unto our father;
yea, and he also made an oath unto us
that he would tarry with us from that time forth.

In contrast to the previous example, instead of adding, Oliver deletes *yea* from this verse while transferring to the printer's manuscript. Skousen informs us that in the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon, it is appropriately restored (Analysis 122) and it typifies the Additional usage.

1 Nephi 10:3 (add), 4 (add), and 9 (add)

how that after they were destroyed
-- **yea** (amplify-add), even that great city Jerusalem --
and that many were carried away captive into Babylon,
that according to the own due time of the Lord they should return again
-- **yea** (amplify), even be brought back out of captivity --
and after that they are brought back out of captivity,
to possess again their land of inheritance
-- **yea** (specific), even six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem --
a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews,
yea (amplify-add), even a Messiah, or in other words, a Savior of the world.

...

And my father saith that he should baptize in Bethabara beyond Jordan.
And he also spake that he should baptize with water,
yea (amplify-add), even that he should baptize the Messiah with water.

Skousen instructs us that, though found in the original manuscript, these three deleted *yeas* from the 1837 edition were stylistic edits and the only ones made by Joseph Smith (Analysis 201). In each case they amplify the previous statement: in verse 3, showing the extent of the destruction; in verse 4, amplifying the Lord's description from not just a prophet, but a Messiah; and in verse 9, not only would John baptize people with water, but he would even baptize the Messiah with water.

1 Nephi 13:37 (maintain)

And blessed are they which shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day,
for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost.

And if they endure unto the end,
they shall be lifted up at the last day
and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb.

Yea, whoso shall publish peace
-- that shall publish tidings of great joy --
how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be!

This verse was simplified in the 1937 edition of the Book of Mormon (Analysis 301). Here we find Nephi referencing or paraphrasing Isaiah in a somewhat awkward construction. In the Book of Mormon, the Earliest Text, the verse shows an attempt by Nephi to resumptively use *yea*. Though there is no repetition of words, “seek(ing) to bring forth my Zion” equates to “publishing peace”, at least as far as this phrase in scriptural context. Thus, after giving tangential information about those seeking to bring forth Zion having the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost, enduring to the end and being saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb, he continues his narrative saying “how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be”.

Alma 12:14 (maintain)

For our works will condemn us,
yea, all our works will condemn us;
we shall not be found spotless
-- and our thoughts will also condemn us --
and in this awful state we shall not durst look up to our God.
And we would fain be glad
if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us,
to hide us from his presence.

In the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon, the first line of this scripture reads “For our words will condemns us” whereas in the Earliest Text, Skousen proffers the above, “works”. This later rendering seems the most logical (for the complete discussion, see Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, pg 1922-6). In either case, the use of *yea* here amplifies the

previous clause: with “words” being a subset of “works”, or “works” being magnified to “ALL our works”.

Alma 28:12 (add)

while many thousands of others truly mourn for the loss of their kindred,
yet they rejoice and exult in the hope
-- **yea**, and even know according to the promises of the Lord --
that they are raised to dwell at the right hand of God
in a state of never-ending happiness.

Skousen recounts the historical context and the accidental omission of *yea* here in the 1830 edition (Analysis 2276). With it restored, it is a clear example of Additional.

Alma 42:31 (add)

And now my son, ye are called of God to preach the word unto this people.
And now my son, go thy way;
declare the word with truth and soberness,
that thou mayest bring souls unto repentance,
that the great plan of mercy may have claim upon them.
And may God grant unto you, **yea**, even according to my words.
Amen.

Another omission from the original to the printer’s manuscript is restored in the Earliest Text (Analysis 2547). With it in place, we see an example of Amplify with the prophet pleading for a blessing upon his son, and one hopefully to the extent he declared.

Alma 48:21 (delete)

But as I have said, in the latter end of the nineteenth year (was *yea* in the 1981 Edition), notwithstanding their peace amongst themselves, they were compelled reluctantly to contend with their brethren the Lamanites.

When coping to the printer’s manuscript, Oliver Cowdery miswrote *year* for *yea* which found its way into the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon. In a later edition, *year* was (re)placed

and the *yea* was retained (Analysis 2699). The Earliest Text restores what was originally intended, without the presence of *yea*.

Alma 54:9 (add)

And now behold, we are prepared to receive you;
Yea (Additional), and except you withdraw your purposes,
behold, ye will pull down
the wrath of that God whom you have rejected
upon you,
yea (Amplify-add), even to your utter destruction.

When copying from the original to the printer's manuscript, Oliver again omitted the second *yea* (Analysis 2799). With it restored, we see that it amplifies the consequences of the wrath of God to the extent of utter destruction.

Alma 55:31 (add)

But behold, the Nephites were not slow
to remember the Lord their God in this their times of affliction.
They could not be taken in their snares.
Yea (Specific), they would not take of their wine;
Yea (Correction-add), they would not take of wine
save they had firstly given to some of the Lamanite prisoners.

Skousen informs us that the entire fourth line of this passage, "Yea, they would not take of their wine", was omitted in the 1837 edition, ascribing it to probable eye skipping from one line-ending *wine* to another (ATV 2821). It is an example of Correction.

Alma 57:31 (maintain)

And they cried unto us, saying:
Behold, the armies of the Lamanites are a marching towards the city of Cumeni.
And behold, they will fall upon them, yea, and will destroy our people.

Though lost in a later edition, Oliver inserted this *yea* supralinearly in the printer's manuscript, most likely to align it with the original manuscript, Skousen deduces (Analysis 2879).

It follows the Additional pattern.

Helaman 3:3 (delete)

And it came to pass in the forty and sixth year (was *yea*-1981 Edition)
there were much contentions and many dissensions,
in the which there were an exceeding great many
which departed out of the land of Zarahemla
and went forth unto the land northward to inherit the land.

Skousen argues that the *yea* found in this verse (where *year*) in the current LDS Book of Mormon is not an ellipsis but rather a scribal error of the word year that has perpetuated throughout the editions of the Book of Mormon. Truly it is as he says: “A **bizarre** reading” (Analysis 3015).

The narration with the above rendering from the Earliest Text flows naturally.

3 Nephi 3:8 (add)

And behold, I swear unto you:
If ye will do this with an oath, ye shall not be destroyed.
But if ye will not do this, I swear unto you with an oath
that on the morrow month I will command
that my armies shall come down against you,
and they shall not stay their hand and shall spare not,
but shall slay you and shall let fall the sword upon you,
yea, even until ye shall become extinct.

Skousen tells us that though this *yea* appears in the printer's manual, it never made it into the 1830 edition. Apparently it was an error of omission on the part of the compositor (Analysis 3341). Restored, this *yea* is a typical example of Amplify, showing the extent of the fall of the sword of God.

3 Nephi 8:18 (add)

And behold, the rocks were rent in twain;
yea, they were broken up upon the face of the whole earth,
insomuch that they were found in broken fragments
and in seams and in cracks upon all the face of the land.

In both the original and printer's manuscript, you will find *yea* in this verse. Skousen concludes that the typesetter accidentally dropped it before going to press (Analysis 3444). It too is an example of Amplify to an extent.

FURTHER RESEARCH INTO AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS WORK

Looking into discourse analysis might prove profitable. A rudimentary glance at the distributional use of *yea* shows a greater frequency of *yea* in direct quotes versus in narrations. For example, Samuel the Lamanite used *yea* every 1.5 verses while preaching to the people in Zarahemla; and Captain Moroni used *yea* every 1.2 verses while writing Parhoron a scathing letter. But interestingly, in King Benjamin's 3-chapter sermon to his people, he did not once employ *yea*. Also, *yea* was nonexistent in chapters dealing with genealogies (Ether 1), organizations and descriptions of plates (1 Nephi 6 and 9), and policy and ordinances (Moroni 2-6).

Another area for further research involves translations of the Book of Mormon. Of the four initial languages I surveyed (Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and French), all translated *yea* according to the first definition, yes. In Spanish for example, for the definition of correction, the word *sino* could be used instead of its opposite. Or perhaps in place of *si* for Specify, exactamente (exactly) might be used.

Finally, it seems evident that *yea* has undergone some grammaticalization over time. It has gone from a lexical entry, to a grammatical marker, to possible pragmaticization, since it has

moved to discourse. An interesting parallel could be made with what we have seen with *yea* and the contemporary evolution and different usages of the colloquial word “like”.

In conclusion, within the Book of Mormon: the Earliest text, we see 10 clear usages of the word *yea*. There are many examples corroborating the four already existent definitions listed in the Oxford English Dictionary. Also found through passages in the Book of Mormon are six new usages previously not considered. Will they be added to the entry in the OED, *yea* only time will tell...

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