Discontinuous sentence connectors come in two complementary parts that may be separated by any amount of text, ranging from a single word to an entire clause. Some connectors are made up of identical (repeated) elements. Others have more than one complementation option.

These connectors fulfill various semantic functions: emphasis, addition, contrast and comparison.

Although in some instances (noted in sections 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 14) complementation is optional, as a rule, when readers encounter the first component of these sentence connectors, they should scan the text forward to locate its mate.

This chapter presents the following fourteen discontinuous sentence connectors and their variants.

Discontinuous sentence connectors

- not . . . but rather; none other than; only; not only . . . but also
- in theory . . . in fact, actually
- although, even though, yet; but
- in the same way as, just as
- the more . . . (the more)
- as well as, both
- on one hand . . . on the other
- in general . . . in particular
- whether . . . or (perhaps?)
- beginning with . . . and ending with
- first(ly), . . . second(ly)

Confusables

- וא/וא; וא/אלא
- לולכלכת/לולכלכת
- וא/אלא
- הקלי
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- ההוד/הו
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא
- וא/אלא

10. DISCONTINUOUS SENTENCE CONNECTORS

כישורים מסורגים
There are three types of sentence connectors made up of a word of negation – לא, אין, or אל – followed by אלא. Their different functions are discussed below.

1.1 לא/אין/אלות only, none other than

ואל כוחו אלא בכפיו (במדבר רבה כ)

His might is only in his mouth (Be-Midbar Rabbah 20)

[The meaning of] old is none other than a sage (Kiddushin 32)

This emphatic structure implicitly rejects one alternative, to explicitly accept and affirm another. The sum of לא/אין is, then, positive.

Both לא (or אין) and אלא may be omitted without altering the meaning of the sentence. For example:

כוחו (הוא) בכפיי-אלא כוחו אלא בכפיו

If אלא alone is omitted, the sentence remains grammatical, but with an opposite intent (e.g., אלא כוחו בכפיו his might is not in his mouth).

1.1.1 The two components, the negating particle לא/אין and אלא, may be adjacent (examples 1–2), or separated (examples 3–4).

1.1.2 In translation, the negating particle is ignored. Whether the translation should be only (to diminish) or none other than (to emphasize) depends on the context.

Locating the route of the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert is only conjectural.

The possibility that the route of the Israelites in the desert is known – rather than conjectural – is implicitly rejected.

With the removal of אלא the sentence retains its meaning:

アイיחר טָרִיר גַּזַּרְוֵס שָל בַּנַּי, יֶשֶרְאֵל בַּמְדָבָר אֲלַא מְשֹעֵר

If אלא is omitted, an opposite meaning is conveyed:

משוער אֲלַא אֵין בַּמְדָבָר יֶשֶרְאֵל בַּנַּי מְשֹעֵר

locating the route of the wanderings in the desert is not conjectural.

The decision of the “friend” to go to the Land of Israel and his leave-taking from the King of Kuzar are none other than the decision of the poet himself and his own leave-taking from his homeland.