CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Connectives play a large role in the process of communication.[[1]](#footnote-2) They act as a sort of linguistic glue, sticking clauses, sentences, and paragraphs together into a unified, meaningful discourse. This is true of languages in general and of Koine Greek in particular. A. T. Robertson notes how fond of connectives the Greeks were, “We moderns do not feel the same need for connecting-particles between independent sentences. The ancient Greeks loved to point out these delicate *nuances*.”[[2]](#footnote-3) How we understand connectives has a considerable impact on how we understand the message of the New Testament.

The importance of connectives is especially apparent when the NT is translated into other languages, particularly those not found in the Indo-European family. This is likely the reason that much of the current research done on connectives comes from

the field of Bible translation.[[3]](#footnote-4) Indeed, it is my own personal involvement in that field that has motivated me to research Greek connectives.[[4]](#footnote-5)

*Two Primary Approaches to Connectives*

Stephen Levinsohn describes two primary approaches to connectives: (1) to describe the connective “in terms of the different ‘senses’ in which it is employed,” or (2) in terms of a “constraint that it places on the way the sentence concerned is to be processed.”[[5]](#footnote-6) These approaches will be referred to as meaning-based and constraint-based, respectively.[[6]](#footnote-7) The following discussion will briefly describe each approach, including how each describes the function of οὖν.[[7]](#footnote-8) This will provide an adequate background against which the research topic of this thesis can be presented.

Meaning-Based Approach

The meaning-based approach has been the predominant approach utilized by grammars and lexicons in their treatment of Koine Greek connectives. In this approach, a connective is described primarily in terms of the different senses or meanings that it has. This is normally accomplished by listing a mixture of English glosses and the different senses behind those glosses. For example, Dana and Mantey discuss δέ as follows; “It is commonly used as an *adversative* particle, when it is translatable *but*, *however*, *yet*, *on the other hand*, etc.”[[8]](#footnote-9) Δέ is identified as having an adversative sense and then the appropriate glosses are given. The various senses assigned to a connective are based mainly on how it can be translated into other languages, most commonly English.

Translation, however, is often an inadequate means of describing a connective. Steven Runge illustrates this point well using the connective καί. Two of the senses commonly attributed to καί are actually derived from the English conjunctions *and* and *but*. Καί is normally said to have an adversative and a connective sense. But these terms actually refer to semantic continuity and semantic discontinuity, neither of which is marked by καί. Runge concludes, “To ascribe this semantic quality to these Greek connectives is to force them into the descriptive box of English, whether it fits well or not. The labels *adversative* and *connective* may be helpful in determining an English translation, but they cause confusion when it comes to understanding the function of καί in Greek.”[[9]](#footnote-10)

Generally speaking, meaning-based descriptions of οὖν have given it two primary senses. The first and most common sense of οὖν is the inferential one, which is regularly translated as “therefore.” Second, in places where inference seems to be absent, it is considered to have a continuative sense, where it is usually translated as “then.” While not consistently endorsed, some have suggested that οὖν can exhibit two additional senses: (1) emphatic and (2) adversative.[[10]](#footnote-11)

Constraint-Based Approach

Robert Funk described Greek connectives as “*function words* or *structure* *signaling words*.” He explains, “The point of these labels is that such words are nearly lexically empty, i.e. they have little or no dictionary meaning of their own. However, they are grammatically significant in indicating the structure of sentences and parts of sentences.”[[11]](#footnote-12) In keeping with Funk’s observation, a constraint-based approach to connectives describes them in terms of what they *do*, rather than trying to determine what they *mean*.

Applying conclusions from the research of Diane Blakemore,[[12]](#footnote-13) Levinsohn has argued that Greek connectives serve as a guide to the reader, an aid to help understand “the

way the sentence concerned is to be processed with reference to its context.”[[13]](#footnote-14) The concept of guiding a reader in such a manner is referred to as *constraint*, because the connective restricts or constrains how the reader can understand the new information being presented. If no connective is used, the reader has to sort through all possible ways the statements concerned could be related. When a connective is used, it serves to speed up comprehension by reducing the number of options the reader must choose from to make sense of the information.

Two clarifications must be made concerning a constraint-based approach to connectives. First, each connective signals a unique constraint and is distinct from every other connective.[[14]](#footnote-15) Second, the same connective always signals the same constraint. There may appear to be different uses of a connective but “the different senses … are produced by the same constraint being applied in different contexts.”[[15]](#footnote-16)

*Research Topic*

Operating within a constraint-based approach, Levinsohn claims that οὖν is +Distinctive +Inferential.[[16]](#footnote-17) Οὖν constrains what follows “to be interpreted as a distinct point that advances an argument in an inferential way.”[[17]](#footnote-18) For example, in Rom 6:1 οὖν “introduces a distinct point that arises from the final verses of chapter 5.” [[18]](#footnote-19) It introduces content that is inferentially *connected to* but *distinct from* previous material. This thesis will test the accuracy of this claim within the text of Paul’s Epistles. Does this constraint-based description account for Paul’s usage of οὖν better than the typical meaning-based explanation? The theoretical framework of Levinsohn will be assumed in order to test its results.[[19]](#footnote-20)

*Methodology*

The study will begin in chapter 2 by considering how others describe οὖν. The first half of the chapter surveys the traditional grammarians; the last half gives an overview of the more recent linguistic approaches. Chapter 3 explains Levinsohn’s description of οὖν as +Inferential +Distinctive, including an explanation of the resumptive use of οὖν.

Chapter 4 tests the accuracy of +Inferential +Distinctive within the text of Paul’s epistles. This will be accomplished by demonstrating that Levinsohn’s description of οὖν is superior to a meaning-based, where οὖν is considered to be either inferential or continuative, but not both.

BDAG exemplifies a meaning-basedanalysis of οὖν by identifying two primary senses of the connective: inferential and continuative.[[20]](#footnote-21) The Lexham Syntactic NT (LSNT) and the NA27 with Gramcord Morphology (Gramcord) label every οὖν in Paul’s epistles with one of these two senses.[[21]](#footnote-22) BDAG comments on 55 Pauline examples, also labeling each one as either inferential or continuative. A synthesis of these three sources was used to divide the majority of occurrences into three groups: (1) those labeled inferential (unanimous), (2) those labeled continuative (unanimous), and (3) those about which the sources disagree. A fourth group contains eight occurrences that some grammarians have argued exhibit senses other than inferential or continuative.

Group 1 consists of 83 occurrences that the LSNT, Gramcord, and BDAG (where applicable) agree are inferential. Levinsohn claims that οὖν is not only +Inferential, but also +Distinctive. Therefore it will be demonstrated in these instances that οὖν also introduces a distinct element of the discourse that advances or develops the author’s argument. Group 2 contains nine occurrences that the sources agree are continuative. It will be demonstrated that οὖν is also +Inferential in each case.[[22]](#footnote-23)

Group 3 consists of 11 occurrences where the sources do not agree on whether οὖν is inferential or continuative. It will be demonstrated that this disagreement confirms that οὖν is +Inferential +Distinctive. In the case of Rom 14:8, the LSNT and Gramcord agree that οὖν is inferential while BDAG claim that it is continuative. The sources have effectively identified the +Inferential (inferential) and +Distinctive (continuative) aspects of οὖν, thereby confirming Levinsohn’s claim.

Group 4 is made of eight occurrences that some claim are neither inferential nor continuative.[[23]](#footnote-24) Instead, it is claimed that four of these are emphatic and four are adversative.[[24]](#footnote-25) It will be demonstrated that all eight occurrences exhibit the constraint +inferential +distinctive and that the emphasis or contrast arises from the context, not the presence of οὖν.

In addition to οὖν being +Inferential +Distinctive, Levinsohn claims that it is used in two different contexts: (1) following strengthening material introduced by γάρ, and (2) when such material does not precede it. Based on this, all 111 occurrences will be categorized as belonging to one of these two contexts.

In order to demonstrate the exegetical significance of this approach to οὖν, chapter 5 will look more intensely at this connective in the epistle to the Romans, where nearly half of the occurrences of οὖν in Paul occur. The view of οὖν as signaling +Inferential +Distinctive will be integrated into discussions that involve its presence. For example, what does the presence of οὖν in Ro 4:1 say about the relationship between the example of Abraham and Paul’s discussion in chapter 3? Questions like this will be addressed by interacting with discussions in commentaries from a constraint-based perspective of οὖν.

Chapter 6 will explain how the results of this constraint-based study compare with works that evidence either a meaning-based approach or a mixture of the two. This will include both similarities of and differences between the two approaches. Finally, a summary of the findings of this study will be presented in the conclusion.

1. I have chosen to follow Steven Runge in using the term *connective* instead of *conjunction* in order to have one term broad enough to cover traditional conjunctions as well as other parts of speech, such as διὰ τοῦτο, that serve to connect statements. Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010), 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 1192. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The initial burst of interest in Greek connectives came in the form of several articles in the late 1970s and early 1980s written by those participating in Bible translation with SIL. While several who are currently researching Greek connectives are not Bible translators, to date, much of the research has been done by those involved in translation. Stephen Levinsohn, Randall Buth, Iver Larsen, Regina Blass, Cathleen Callow, and Margaret Sim are some Bible translators who have contributed to research on Greek connectives. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. I currently work as an Exegetical Consultant for Bible Translators for New Tribes Mission. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Stephen Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of New Testament Greek,* 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 69. Levinsohn uses the term *conjunction* instead of *connective* in his discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. It must be noted that many who have written on connectives cannot be categorized as completely meaning-based or constraint-based in their approach; their writings evidence a mixture of the two. That said, the two approaches will be presented as distinct views and the constraint-based approach will be adopted as the starting point for research in this thesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Chapter 2 will present an overview of the various descriptions of οὖν in more detail therefore the discussion here will be a brief generalization of a meaning-based and constraint-based view of οὖν. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament,* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957), 244. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Runge, 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Dana and Mantey, 255-258; Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 214-215; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 666-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Robert Funk, *A Beginning-Intermediate Grammar of Hellenistic Greek* (Missoula: Scholar’s Press, 1977) 475-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Diane Blakemore, *Sematic Constraints on Relevance* (Worcester: Billings & Son Ltd., 1987). While Blakemore’s research concerns English connectives, Levinsohn has applied the same approach to connectives in Greek. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Levinsohn, *Features,* 69. While Levinsohn has written the most material in favor of a *constraint-based* approach, several others argue for a similar approach, see Randall Buth, “Οὗν, Δέ, Καί, and Asyndeton in John’s Gospel,” in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis*, ed. David Alan Black, Katharine Barnwell, and Stephen Levinsohn (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 144-161; Jakob A. Heckert, *Discourse Conjoiners in the Pastoral Epistles* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1996), 10-11; Stephanie L. Black, *Sentence Conjunctions in the Gospel of Matthew: KAI, DE, TOTE, GAR, OUN and Asyndeton in Narrative Discourse*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 216 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) ,41-71; and Runge, 16-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. “Each connective brings to bear a unique constraint upon the connected elements.” Runge, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Levinsohn, *Features*, 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. The meaning of the description +Inferential +Distinctive, including the example of Rom 6:1, will be explained more fully in chapter 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Stephen Levinsohn, “’Therefore or Wherefore’: What’s the Difference?” (paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Francisco, CA, November, 2011), 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Stephen Levinsohn, “A Holistic Approach to the Argument Structure of Romans 6” [paper presented at the International Conference of the Society of Biblical Literature, London, England, July, 2011], 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. At a theoretical level, no attempt will be made to establish the superiority of a function-based approach to οὖν over a meaning-based one. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 736-737. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Lukaszewski, Albert L., Mark Dubis, and J. Ted Blakley, *The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament* (Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2010); Aland, Barbara, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed. (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, 1994), Gramcord edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Since the sources have labeled these occurrences as continuative, we will not attempt to demonstrate their +Distinctive nature. Since *continuative* is similar to *+Distinctive* I have chosen to focus on the +Inferential aspect of group two as the primary point to be established. The degree of similarity between these two descriptions depends on what definition of continuative is used. See discussion in chapter three. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. For works that make such claims, see W. F. Moulton, A. S. Geden, and H. K. Moulton, Concordance to the Greek New Testament (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1978); Dana and Mantey, 252-258; and Porter, 214-215. BDAG mentions both but seems to doubt the validity of either, BDAG, 737. Daniel Wallace lists οὖν as being emphatic, but does not say it is adversative, Wallace, 666-678. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Those claimed emphatic are Rom 4:10, 5:9, 11:13, and 1 Cor 6:7; those claimed adversative are Rom 2:21; 10:14; 11:1; 1 Cor 11:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)