

THE FUNCTIONS OF *AND* AND *WA* IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC WRITTEN DISCOURSE

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1. Introduction

Over the past three decades there has been an upsurge of interest in the study of spoken and written discourse, but for various reasons little has been done cross-linguistically. Gleason (1968) voiced a call to expand the scope of contrastive studies which were, then, conducted at the microlinguistic level to include comparisons and contrasts at the macro-linguistic level. Most of these studies compared and contrasted various aspects of the language code at the phonological, morphological or syntactic levels. He states:

... We now have a framework that provides a better starting point than any we have had before for systematic contrastive work. It allows us to focus on what may well prove to be the most interesting of all contrastive problems, the differences in the way connected discourse is organized and the way that organization is signaled to the hearer or reader. (Gleason 1968: 58)

The dearth of contrastive studies was later observed by James (1980: 140) when he stated that there was little published on discourse and textual contrastive analysis. Furthermore, the need to study the functions of connectives was emphasized by Stubbs (1983) when he said that "another set of items which have not received any natural treatment within grammar are items known variously as conjunctions, connectives or connectors and in particular the coordinating conjunction 'and'" (Stubbs 1983: 72).

Such a study may fill a gap in a somewhat ignored area of linguistic investigation in general and between Arabic and English in particular.

2. Purpose of the study

This study is an attempt to compare and contrast the various functions that the English connective *and* and the Arabic *wa* may signal in both English and Arabic

written discourses. Stated more specifically, the study aims at answering the following questions:

- What roles do *and* and *wa* play in creating cohesive discourse in both English and Arabic?
- What are the similarities and differences between the functions that each of these connectives may signal?
- What implications to the process of translating may be obtained from this comparison and contrast?

3. Related literature

One of the problems of studying the functions of connectives in natural language is the multiplicity of their meanings. This means that a connective may signal various relations between sentences, and a particular function may be realized by more than one connective.

Many difficulties may arise from such a situation especially in translating from one language into another. This problem is usually aggravated by the high frequency of connectives in discourse. Therefore, connectives have received much attention in the study of cohesion, coherence and text structure as can be observed in the works of Halliday and Hassan (1976), de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), Chafe (1982), Quirk et al. (1986), and Schiffrin (1987).

Halliday and Hassan (1976) provided a thorough investigation of the devices employed in creating text cohesion. These text-building devices are reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. In their book *Cohesion in English* (1976), they maintain that these five devices fit into the lexicogrammatical system of the language. In other words reference, substitution and ellipsis are grammatical, whereas lexical cohesion, as its name indicates, is lexical since it involves the selection of a lexical item that stands in a certain relation to another preceding one (Halliday and Hassan 1976: 5-6). They also maintain that conjunction is “on the borderline of the grammatical and the lexical levels since some conjunctives can be interpreted grammatically whereas others involve lexical choices” (Halliday and Hassan 1976: 303).

In the framework of cohesion and text formation, conjunction, as viewed by Halliday and Hassan, is different in nature from the other devices of cohesion. They state that “conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meanings...they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse” (Halliday and Hassan 1976: 226). The same view was reiterated by McCarthy (1981) who states that a conjunction is not used to indicate any anaphoric or cataphoric reference, but it “presupposes a textual sequence and signals a relationship between segments of a discourse” (Halliday and Hassan 1976: 46).

Halliday and Hassan distinguish between coordinate *and* and conjunctive or additive *and*. Coordinate *and* links two or more structurally parallel clauses that have the same status. Conjunctive *and*, on the other hand, functions as a cohesive adjunct

between clauses where structural parallelism or equal status between these clauses is not a must (Halliday and Hassan 1976: 233-238).

However, in this study, the term “connective” is used in lieu of “conjunction” as has been suggested by Dijk (1977) and Schiffrin (1987). According to Dijk, the rationale for preferring “connective” to “conjunction” is that logical relations between propositions are usually signaled by a variety of linguistic forms belonging to different syntactic categories of which conjunction is a major one (Dijk 1977: 14). Furthermore, Arabic *wa* does not always function as a conjunction in the proper syntactic sense. It can actually be used to serve many other functions in discourse as will be explained later.

The functions of *and* in written discourse have been identified and discussed by many linguists (see for example, Halliday and Hassan 1976: 226-273, Dijk 1977: 58, and Stubbs 1985: 77-80, de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981: 71-81, Quirk, et al. 1986: 930-4, and McCarthy 1991: 48-9). These scholars seem to agree, with slight differences in terminology, on the major functions of *and* in English written discourse. They maintain that *and* can be used to signal the functions of: consequence, sequence, contrast, concession, condition, addition, explanation, similarity and simultaneity.

Furthermore, Schiffrin (1987) investigated the discourse functions of *and* in conversational English. She concluded that *and* plays two major roles. It coordinates “idea units” and it continues a speaker’s action as well. She also observed that *and* is the most frequently used connective since it can occur in other environments shared by other connectives such as *but* and *so*.

This result was later corroborated by Lazaraton (1992). In her analysis of the semantic, syntactic, and discourse properties of *and* in a sample of spoken and written discourse elicited from eight native speakers of English, she found that *and* was much more frequent in speech than in writing. It was also found that the most frequent function of *and* was the additive.

The functions of the English *and* will be illustrated, compared and contrasted with those of the Arabic connective *wa* in the section that follows.

In Arabic linguistics, connectives have been primarily investigated from a structural perspective. Arab grammarians have been concerned with classifying particles (*adawat*) into classes in accordance with their syntactic properties. They paid little attention to the discourse functions of these connectives and to the role they play as text-building devices (Abdel Hameed 1965, Anees 1966, Ansari 1979, Hamad 1984).

However, Arab rhetoricians examined the role of particles in connecting clauses. Like English *and*, Arabic *wa* is the most frequently used connective. The meanings of *wa* have been discussed by many grammarians and rhetoricians (see for example, Ansari 1964, Abdel-Hameed 1965, Kamal 1971, Ansari 1979, Muzni 1983, Hamad 1984, Zajjaji 1984).

4. Functions of *and*

Quirk et al. (1986: 930-934) provide a detailed analysis of the major functions of *and*. These functions were further supported by Schiffrin (1987), McCarthy (1991), and Lazaraton (1992). Illustrative examples are provided to clarify each function.

4.1. Consequence

In this function, the connective *and* introduces the second clause which is a consequence or result of the first:

- (1) I felt a severe headache *and* I went to see a doctor.

In this example *and* has the meaning of 'therefore'. The translation equivalent of *and* in Arabic is *Fa* or *lithaalik* and not *wa* since the former imply cause-effect relationship between the clauses they connect. The Arabic *wa* does not have this consequential or resultative function, and thus it cannot be the translation equivalent of *and* in such a context.

4.2. Sequence

The event of the second clause is chronologically sequent to the action in the preceding clause, but without implying any cause-effect relationship:

- (2) John peeled off the orange *and* ate it.

In example (2), *and* may be replaced by *then* which signals temporal succession. This *and* can be translated into Arabic *wa* which can indicate, in its coordinate use, that the second event either immediately succeeded the first one or was slightly delayed.

In such a case *wa* can be preferably substituted by *thumma*. Therefore, the Arabic translation of the preceding example becomes vague if *wa* is used as an equivalent of *and*.

4.3. Contrast

The second clause which is introduced by *and* provides information that stands in contrast with the meaning of the first clause. Contrastive *and* can be replaced by *but* as can be noticed in example (3) below:

- (3) John is an extrovert *and* Mary is an introvert.

This *and* can be safely translated into *wa* because *wa* has the same function in Arabic discourse. However, when *wa* is used to signal contrast, it is often followed by the particle *laakinna* to show more emphasis on the meaning of contrast:

- (4) Ali shujaaʿun *wa* Zaydun jabaan.
'Ali is brave and/but Zayd is a coward.'

4.4. Simultaneity

The two clauses linked by *and* have two simultaneous events:

- (5) I am eating *and* my brother is reading.

No problem emerges from equating *and* with *wa* in this context since the latter has the same meaning in Arabic as in example (6) below:

- (6) ?ana aktubu *wa* ?axi: yaqra?
'I am writing *and* my brother is reading.'

4.5. Concession

The second clause which is introduced by *and* presents an element of surprise in view of the first:

- (7) She studied hard *and* she failed.

In this example *and* has the meaning of *but* and it can be better rendered in Arabic by using *laakinna* 'but' or *maʿi thaalika* 'although'. It may also be replaced by *wa* which can be used to mean 'but' in Arabic discourse.

The Arabic *wa* can also be used to signal a concessive function as in (8) below:

- (8) bathala qusaara jahdih *wa* lam yanjah.
'He did his best *and/but* he did not make it.'

4.6. Condition

The first clause is a condition of the second:

- (9) Help me solve this problem *and* I will reward you.

This *and* can be translated into Arabic conditional *?in* or *wa* since the latter can be used to connect two clauses in which the first is a condition for the second:

- (10) saaʿidni: *wa* sa?ukaafi?uka.
'Help me *and* I will reward you.'

Quirk et al. (1986) maintain that this function is usually associated with threats and promises (Quirk 1986: 931).

4.7. Addition

And is commonly used to serve this function provided that the two clauses connected by *and* are congruent in meaning:

- (11) She is pretty *and* she usually puts on attractive clothes.

In such a context *and* can be replaced by other connectives such as: *in addition*, *furthermore*, and *moreover*.

In translating this sentence into Arabic, *and* can be replaced by *wa*.

4.8. Explanation

The second clause which is introduced by *and* serves the function of explaining something in the first part of the sentence as in example (12) below:

- (12) We are left with one option *and* that is to fight.
'baqija ladayna xijaarun waahidun huwa alqitaal.'

As it can be noticed from the Arabic translation of sentence (12), no Arabic connective is used to replace the English *and*. However, for the sake of placing more emphasis on the second clause, the connective *ala wa huwa* 'which is' may be used in Arabic.

4.9. Comment

And may be used to introduce a clause that functions as a comment on the content of the preceding one as in (13) below:

- (13) Tempted by the five-hundred dollar prize, John drank 10 cans of pepsi.....*and* that can be dangerous.

The nearest Arabic equivalent of the English *and* in this sentence is the Arabic *wa*. This means that this function is common to both *and* and *wa*.

Example (14) below shows how *wa* signals the function of adding a comment on a preceding clause:

- (14) aqlaqat alhukumatu dakakiin almuxaalifiin ... *wa* haatha xajr.
'The government closed down the shops of the violators ... *and* this is good.'

5. Functions of *wa*

The above-mentioned functions of *and* are shared by *wa* except the consequential function. In what follows, the functions of *wa* which are not shared by *and* will be illustrated. Arab grammarians distinguish between coordinate *wa* which links two parallel constituents in a sentence, and other types of *wa* which have other semantic functions. The following are the most common functions of *wa* as has been indicated by Arab grammarians and rhetoricians (Ansari 1964, Abdel-Hameed 1965, Zajjaji 1984).

5.1. Resumption

Arabic connective *wa* is very frequently used at the beginning of sentences and paragraphs but not the first. In such cases, it serves either the additive function or the presumptive function where it is used to indicate topic continuity. Unlike *wa*, English *and* is rarely used to introduce sentences and paragraphs in written English discourse. Therefore, in translating from Arabic into English many of the instances of *wa* will be replaced by nothing, or by connectives other than *and*.

The translation of the following Arabic paragraphs shows how *wa* can be dispensed with in the English translation. These paragraphs are quoted from a short story written by Zakariya Tamer entitled *Al-jareema* 'The Crime'. Some words are deleted from the original text because we are mainly interested in the occurrence of *wa* and how it can be rendered in English.

- (15) Kaana Sulayman al halabi yamshi fi: shaariif Wa Kaanat yadaahu fi: jaybih. Wa hi:na tawaqqafa qali:lan li yushfila si:jaratan, danaa minhu rajulaan Wa talabaa minhu bitaaqat al huwiyya Wa- rtabak sulayman— Wa ?iqtaadahu ?arrajulaan ?ila maxfarin qari:b. Wa adxalaahu fi: ðurfah... Wa kaana yajlisu fi:ha rajulan lahu shawarib sawdaa??. Wa qaala sulayman linafsih...
'Suleimaan Al Halabi was once walking along a street with his hands in his pockets when he stopped for a while to light up a cigarette... He became confused when ... They gave him back his identity card. The two men led him to a near by police station where they sent him into a room... in which a man with black mustaches was sitting. Suleiman said to himself...'

The original Arabic paragraphs have ten occurrences of *wa* at the beginning of sentences and paragraphs. But the English translation contains no *and* at all. Arabic *wa* was replaced by zero or by some adverbial expressions such as *where*, and *when*, that were used to link two sentences together. This example shows that sentential relations and sense continuity in this Arabic text are overtly signaled by the use of connectives that may not need to be translated into English.

5.2. Waw al-haal: adverbial *wa*

This *wa* can be used to introduce an adverbial clause of manner as in (16).

- (16) daxala Zaydun *wa* huwa yabtasim.
'Zaid came in smiling.'

In translating this sentence into English, no equivalent of *wa* is used. This *wa* is often referred to as the circumstantial *wa*. It should also be observed that in translating the English version of (16) into Arabic, we need to add the connective *wa*.

5.3. *Wa* indicating an oath

Wa can preface clauses indicating an oath:

- (17) *Wa* - *llahi la?usaa?idannak.*
 'I swear that I will help you.'

This type of *wa* does not have an equivalent in English. Therefore, *wa* has to be translated into English by using an appropriate lexical item. The use of *wa* to introduce oaths is very common in the Quranic verses:

- (18) a. "Wal- *fasr*" 'By Time.'
 b. "Wal- *layl*" 'By Night.'

In these verses *wa* is better translated into English *by*.

5.4. *Wa* in the meaning of *by*, *along*

Wa may express the meaning of the prepositional phrases *by* or *along* (*waw ?al-ma?iyyah*):

- (19) *sirtu wal-jabal*
 'I walked by the mountain.'
 (20) *sirtu wa-nnahr*
 'I walked along the river.'

The use of *wa* to indicate an oath as in example (17), (18) above and its use in the meaning of a prepositional phrase (19), (20) cannot be translated into English *and*. Therefore translators have to be careful in translating these special types of *wa*.

5.5. *Wa* to offer a choice

Wa may be used to offer choice.

- (21) *Kul maa shi?ta min ?inabin wa mawzin wa burtuqaal.*
 'Eat whatever you want: grapes, bananas or oranges.'

The translation equivalent of *wa* in this case is English *or*.

5.6. Redundant *wa*

Sometimes *wa* is redundant. This means that it can be deleted without affecting the meaning of the sentence:

- (22) *maa ra?aytu ?ahadan ?illaa Wa huwa yabtasim.*
 'Everyone I saw was smiling.'

In such a context *wa* does not need to be translated into English.

5.7. *Wa* to introduce praise or admiration

Wa may introduce clauses that imply praise or admiration:

- (23) *zaarani: ?axuuka Wa ?ayyu rajul!*
 'Your brother visited me. What a man he is!'

Example (23) may be better translated into English without using any connective.

5.8. *Wa* to introduce threat, underestimation, contempt

Wa may be used to introduce clauses that imply threat, underestimation or contempt.

- (24) ... *wa* *man huwa Ahmad!*
 '... and who is Ahmad!'

The meaning of *wa* in such an example is context-dependent. It may be better rendered in English without a connective or by using certain lexical items to convey the same function.

6. Conclusion

The semantic relations that both *and* and *wa* signal in English and Arabic discourses have been identified. The similarities and differences have also been highlighted and their implications to the process of translating from one language into the other have been pinpointed. However, the following table sums up the functions of *and* and *wa* and clearly shows the differences between them.

Table 6.1. Functions of *and* and *wa*

Function	AND	WA
1. Consequence	+	-
2. Sequence	+	+
3. Contrast	+	+
4. Simultaneity	+	+
5. Concession	+	+
6. Condition	+	+
7. Addition	+	+
8. Explanation	+	-
9. Comment	+	+
10. Resumption	+	+
11. Manner	-	+
12. Oath	-	+
13. Adverbial (by, along)	-	+
14. Option	-	+
15. Redundance	-	+
16. Praise/admiration	-	+
17. Threat/underestimation	-	+

This table and the preceding discussion indicate that the relationship between the functions of *and* and *wa* is not always direct or one-to-one. It has been shown that *wa* may be replaced by more than one English connective and can sometimes be ignored, or else the English translation will sound awkward. On the other hand, when we translate from English into Arabic, we have to add Arabic connectives to join sentences together or else Arabic sentences will sound tilted and unnatural. The frequent use of connectives, especially *wa*, seems to be a stylistic requirement in Arabic texts. This conclusion agrees with what Arab grammarians usually claim that Arabic is a syndetic language in which almost every sentence is linked to the preceding one with a connective (Anees 1966: 312).

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