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 Schiff (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 lthaalik 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 lathomna to show more emphasis on the meaning of contrast:

(4) Ali shujaatun 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 lathomna ‘but’ or ma? lthaalik ‘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) bawala qasaara jahidi 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:

   ‘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 ladayn xijaraan 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) aqhiqaat alhukumatu dakakiin almuxaadifiin ... wa haatha xajir.
‘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 Zakarya 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.

‘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 yachtsim.
‘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*- illahi la?usaaYidannak.
    ‘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:


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* (*wa* *al-ma?yjah*):

(19) sirtu *wa-l-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 Jabin wa mawzin wa burtuaal.
    ‘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 yachtsim.
    ‘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.

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<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>AND</th>
<th>WA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Consequence</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Sequence</td>
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<td>7. Addition</td>
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<td>8. Explanation</td>
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<td>9. Comment</td>
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<td>10. Resumption</td>
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<td>11. Manner</td>
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<td>12. Oath</td>
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<td>13. Adverbial (by, along)</td>
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<td>14. Option</td>
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<td>15. Redundance</td>
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<td>16. Praise/admiration</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Threat/underestimation</td>
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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 form 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 (Anes 1966: 312).

REFERENCES

Gleason, H. A. 1968. “Contrastive analysis in discourse structure”. In Alais, J.E. ed. 36-64.