

64. Nominal and Verbal Conjunction

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1. Defining the values

In the European languages, the same marker is used both for **conjunction of noun phrases** and for **conjunction of verb phrases and clauses**, as illustrated in (1) for Hungarian (and for English in the translation). Thus, Hungarian *és* and English *and* can conjoin both nominal and verbal/clausal constituents.

(1) Hungarian (Kenesei et al. 1998: 102, 106)

- | | | | | |
|----|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|
| a. | <i>Anna</i> | <i>és</i> | <i>Péter</i> | |
| | Anna | and | Péter | |
| b. | <i>Péter</i> | <i>olvas</i> | <i>és</i> | <i>tanul.</i> |
| | Péter | reads | and | studies |
| c. | <i>Péter</i> | <i>olvas</i> | <i>és</i> | <i>Anna tanul.</i> |
| | Péter | reads | and | Anna studies |

But in many non-European languages, different conjunction markers are used for different constituent types. An example comes from Dagbani (Gur, Niger-Congo; Ghana), where *mini* conjoins noun phrases (cf. 2a) and *ka* conjoins verb phrases (cf. 2b) and clauses (cf. 2c).

(2) Dagbani (Olawsky 1999: 44, 51)

- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|
| a. | <i>doo</i> | <i>ɲɔ</i> | <i>mini</i> | <i>m</i> | <i>ba</i> |
| | man | this | and | my | father |
| | 'this man and my father' | | | | |
| b. | <i>O</i> | <i>biɛ</i> | <i>ka</i> | <i>kɔyisi.</i> | |
| | he | be.bad | and | be.thin | |
| | 'He is bad and thin.' | | | | |
| c. | <i>Gbuyima</i> | <i>ɲubiri</i> | <i>nimdi</i> | | |
| | lion.PL | chew.IMPF | meat | | |

ka jansi diri kɔdu.
 and monkey.PL eat.IMPF banana
 'Lions eat meat and monkeys eat bananas.'

Since clauses generally contain a verb phrase, I simply use the term *verbal conjunction* for both conjunction of verb phrases and conjunction of clauses.

The main contrast is thus between **identity** and **differentiation** of nominal and verbal conjunction. However, it seems useful to single out one further type: languages in which there is no overt marker either for nominal or for verbal conjunction, so that conjunction is expressed exclusively by **juxtaposition**. Strictly speaking, this is a subtype of the first type, but it is treated separately here because of its interesting geographical distribution. Example (3) is from Nhanda (Kardu, Pama-Nyungan; Western Australia).

(3) Nhanda (Blevins 2001: 134)

- a. *acijadi-wana mirla-wana*
 clothes-1 PL rug-1 PL
 'our clothes and our rugs'
- b. *Nyini yatka-da mutha=ngga ngayi urndu=galu.*
 you go-IMPF nose=LOC I back=PATH
 'You go in the front and I'll go behind.'

However, when just one of the two constituent types can be conjoined by juxtaposition, the language is classified as differentiating. This is actually quite common. In particular, many languages have an overt conjunction marker for nominal conjunction but use juxtaposition for verbal conjunction (e.g. Hausa).

Thus, the map shows the distribution of the following three language types:

| | |
|---|-----|
| @ 1. Nominal and verbal conjunction are | 161 |
|---|-----|

| | | |
|---|--|-----|
| | largely identical | |
| @ | 2. Nominal and verbal conjunction are different | 125 |
| @ | 3. Nominal and verbal conjunction are primarily expressed by juxtaposition | 15 |
| | total | 301 |

In illustrating conjunction markers, I will sometimes use the variables *A*, *B*, etc. for nominal conjuncts, and the variables *P*, *Q*, etc. for verbal conjuncts (including clauses). For instance, Dagbani is said to have the markers *A mini B* and *P ka Q*.

2. Multiple marking strategies

It is of course not uncommon for languages to possess several ways of conjoining noun phrases, and/or several ways of conjoining verb phrases and clauses. This is unproblematic when the competing markers have exactly the same range of uses. For instance, Madurese (Sundic, Austronesian; Java, Indonesia) has the two conjunction markers *ban* and *biq*, and both of these are used for nominal and for verbal conjunction (*A ban B*, *A biq B*, *P ban Q*, *P biq Q*; Davies 1999: 25). Another example is Wardaman (Yangmanic; Northern Territory, Australia), where there are two different markers for nominal conjunction (*A warrma B*, and *A B wayana*) and one marker for verbal conjunction (*P gabani Q*) (Merlan 1994: 68, 87, 89). In contrast to Madurese, where there is complete overlap between nominal and verbal conjunction markers, Wardaman shows no overlap at all; hence Madurese is classified as "largely identical", and Wardaman is classified as "different".

But quite a few languages show **partial overlap** of their nominal and verbal conjunction markers. In such cases, the language is generally classified as "largely identical". For example, Southeastern Tepehuan (Southern Uto–Aztecan; Durango, Mexico) has two conjunction markers, *gam* and *guio*.

Gam only links noun phrases describing entities of a similar nature, while *guio* links both noun phrases and clauses (Willett 1991: 216–217). And in Tinrin (Oceanic; New Caledonia), *mwâ* only conjoins clauses (verb phrases cannot be conjoined in Tinrin), whereas *mê* conjoins both clauses and phrases. The difference between *mwâ* and *mê* in clause conjunction is that *mê* is used when the two clauses are parallel and *mwâ* is used when they contrast in some way (Osumi 1995: 258).

However, cases of partial overlap are classified as "different" under two circumstances: (i) if the overlap concerns a marker which is a clearly minor alternative for at least one of the constituent types, and (ii) if the overlap concerns the juxtaposition strategy. Thus, Koromfe (Gur, Niger–Congo; Burkina Faso and Mali) was classified as showing different conjunction markers, although its nominal marker *la* (*A la B*) can also be used for verbal conjunction (*P la Q*). However, juxtaposition is by far the more common means of verbal conjunction in the language, and when it combines two clauses, *la* mostly means 'but' rather than 'and' (Rennison 1997: 88, 92). Thus, *la* was judged to be a minor alternative for verbal conjunction. Similarly, in Imonda (Border family; Papua New Guinea), the major alternatives for nominal conjunction are *A-i B-i* (for human conjuncts, e.g. *ehe-i ka-i* 'he and I') and *A-na B-na* (e.g. *sa-na fo-na* 'coconut and banana'). For verbal conjunction, the major alternative is juxtaposition, and there are two other markers: *P-ie Q-ie*, and *P-mo Q*. The element *-mo* also occurs in a minor nominal conjunction type, *A-mo B-mo C-mo ...*, which is used for enumeration (Seiler 1985: 68–70, 102, 196–197). Thus, *-mo* occurs both in nominal and in verbal conjunction, but not as a major option in either, so it was disregarded.

Juxtaposition is extremely common as an alternative option, especially for clausal conjunction, but also for nominal conjunction. It is therefore not very telling if a language uses it for both constituent types; hence if there are also overt

conjunction markers, only these were taken into account. For example, in Trumai (isolate; Mato Grosso, Brazil), juxtaposition is a possible means of conjoining both noun phrases and verb phrases/clauses, but there are two other nominal conjunction markers (*A B a*, *A B tam*) and several other verbal conjunction markers (e.g. *P inis Q*) (Guirardello 1999: 19–21, 367–370), so Trumai was classified as "different".

3. Identifying conjunction

Conjunction is a subtype of **coordination**. We are dealing with a coordinating construction when there are two identifiable constituents which have the same semantic role and together form a larger constituent (Haspelmath 2005). Conjunction is the type of coordination that is translated by 'and', as opposed to **disjunction** ('or') and **adversative coordination** ('but').

There are usually few problems in recognizing nominal conjunction. Difficulties may arise when the conjunction marker is the same as the **comitative** adposition (or case affix) 'with', as is the case in a great many languages (see chapter 63). Consider, for instance, the case of Babungo (Grassfields Bantoid, Niger–Congo; Cameroon), where *nə* is translated as 'and' or 'with'. However, it is quite clear that *nə* in (4) is a conjunction marker:

(4) Babungo (Schaub 1985: 84–85)

Lámbí nə Ndúlà nə Kòmətá gə táa yiwìŋ.
 Lambi and Ndula and Kometa go–PFV to market
 'Lambi, Ndula, and Kometa went to the market.'

There are four reasons here why *nə* 'and' cannot be simply identical with *nə* 'with': It occurs within the subject noun phrase rather than after the verb (as adverbial prepositions do); it occurs twice and links three NPs to each other; it need not imply that the referents carried out the action jointly; and finally, *nə*

'with' no longer has the comitative meaning which must have been the original source of the conjunction meaning – it is now confined to the instrumental meaning 'with' (e.g. *nə fəntɪ* 'with a stick'; Schaub 1985: 145). Although conjunction markers are often similar to comitative adpositions because they tend to develop from them diachronically, the two are in general fairly easy to tell apart. Whenever a marker is part of a noun phrase and is systematically translated as 'and' or described as a coordinating conjunction, it is regarded as a conjunction marker here.

Conjunction of clauses is more difficult to identify. On the one hand, it is not always clear whether we are dealing with a sequence of separate sentences or a complex sentence consisting of two conjuncts. If there are no overt markers, the best general criterion for recognizing conjunction is intonation, but since this is not described systematically in grammars, it is sometimes necessary to rely on the translation: When a clause-combining strategy is systematically rendered by 'and', then it is regarded as conjunction.

On the other hand, it is often difficult to distinguish between verbal/clausal conjunction and verbal/clausal **subordination**. In many languages, the most natural translation of 'A did X and B did Y' is by means of a special **dependent verb form** (sometimes called **converb** or **medial verb**) in one of the clauses. Examples come from Japanese and Tauya (Madang, Trans-New Guinea; Papua New Guinea).

(5) Japanese (Kuno 1978: 123–124)

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| <i>Taroo</i> | <i>ga</i> | <i>Amerika</i> | <i>ni</i> | <i>ik-i,</i> | <i>Hanako</i> | <i>ga</i> |
| Taro | NOM | America | DAT | go-CONV | Hanako | NOM |
| <i>Furansu</i> | <i>ni</i> | <i>it-ta.</i> | | | | |
| France | DAT | go-PST | | | | |

'Taro went to America, and Hanako went to France.'

(6) Tauya (MacDonald 1990: 219)

Yate-e-te ni-a-?a.
 go-1-MED eat-3SG-IND
 'I went and he ate.'

The verb forms marked by *-i* in Japanese and *-te* in Tauya do not occur in independent clauses, so in that sense the first clauses in (5–6) could be regarded as subordinate, and one could claim that a more literal translation of (5) would be 'Taro having gone to America, Hanako went to France'. However, when other criteria for the subordination distinction are taken into account, these sentences do not come out consistently as subordinate (see Haspelmath 1995 for general discussion, and Alpatov and Podlesskaya 1995 for Japanese). They thus show that the subordination/coordination distinction cannot be drawn in a straightforward way.

For the purposes of this chapter, a clause-combining strategy is regarded as a type of conjunctive strategy if it is consistently translated by 'and' and not by more concrete adverbial markers (such as 'after', 'while', or 'and then'). This is again a fairly crude criterion, but many grammars do not provide much more information. For a number of languages, no information about conjunction of verb phrases and clauses was available, but the nominal conjunction markers are described as "confined to noun phrase conjunction", so that it could be inferred that the nominal and verbal conjunction markers must be "different". Note that I assume that all languages have some way of expressing both nominal and verbal conjunction.

4. Verb phrase conjunction vs. clause conjunction

Some languages use different markers for verb phrase conjunction and clause conjunction. For instance, Somali has three different markers: *A iyo B* for nominal conjunction, *P oo Q* for verb phrase conjunction, and *P Q-na* for clause conjunction:

(7) Somali (Berchem 1991: 324–27)

- a. *rooti iyo khudrat*
bread and fruit
'bread and fruit'
- b. *Wuu cunay oo cabbay.*
FOC.3M.SG eat and drink
'He ate and drank.'
- c. *Macallin-ku wuxuu joogaa dugsi-ga,*
teacher-ART FOC.3M.SG be school-ART
carruur-ta-na waxay ku cayaarayaan
children-ART-and FOC.3PL PREV play
dibed-da.
outside-ART
'The teacher is in the school, and the children are playing outside.'

Somali is straightforwardly classified as showing "different" nominal and verbal conjunction. But in a few languages, the marker for verb phrase conjunction is identical to the nominal conjunction marker, but different from the clausal marker. Such a language is Chamorro (Western Malayo-Polynesian; Guam).

(8) Chamorro (Topping 1973: 146)

- a. *si Juan yan si Maria*
ART Juan and ART Maria
'Juan and Maria'
- b. *Kumakati yan chumachalek i palao'an.*
cry and laugh ART woman
'The woman is crying and laughing.'
- c. *Malago' yo' ni lepblo ya hu fahan.*
want I ART book and I buy
'I wanted the book and I bought it.'

In such cases (which are quite rare), nominal conjunction is compared with clausal conjunction, so that these languages are classified as "different".

5. Geographical distribution

Differentiation of nominal and verbal conjunction markers is particularly widespread in African languages (as was noted by Welmers 1973: 305), but it is also found in many other parts of the world. Identity of the two markers is particularly common in Europe and Mesoamerica, but it is also found widely in the rest of the world. Juxtaposition is particularly common in Australia and South America.