

## 'And' and 'Wa': A Contrastive Study

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### ملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى مقارنة الوظائف النصية لكل من الواو العربية ونظيرتها في اللغة الانجليزية، ووجد أن هاتين الأداةين تشتركان في عدد من الوظائف وتختلفان في وظائف أخرى. كما وجد أن الواو العربية تدل على وظائف بلاغية أكثر مما تدل عليه نظيرتها في اللغة الانجليزية مما يؤدي إلى صعوبات في الترجمة من إحدى اللغتين إلى الأخرى.

### ABSTRACT:

This paper aimed at comparing and contrasting the discourse functions of the connectives And and Wa in both English and Arabic written discourses. Both of these connectives share certain functions but differ in others. There is no one-to-one relationship between And and Wa since the latter can be used to signal more semantic relations in Arabic discourse. This lack of correspondence between And and Wa creates problems in translating from one language into the other.

### *Introduction:*

In 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. 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 signalled to the hearer or reader (p. 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'". (p. 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.

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

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

### ***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 Lexicogramma-

tical 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 (pp. 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" (p. 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" (226). This agrees with McCarthy's (1981) view about the function of conjunctions in discourse when he 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" (46).

Halliday and Hassan distinguish between 'coordinate' And and 'conjunctive' or additive And. Coordinate And links two or more items together into a larger unit whereas conjunctive or cohesive And links two sentences together (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 (p. 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), Stubbs (1985: 77-80), de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981: 71-81), Quirk, et al. (1986: 930-4), and Mc Carthy (1991: 84-9). 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 found 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 conclusion agrees with what Lazaraton (1992) found in her analysis of the functions of And in both spoken and written narrative texts. In her study, Lazaraton adopted the semantic framework proposed by Quirk et al. (1986: 930-934) for classifying the functions of And in connecting clauses.

These functions 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 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.

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).

### ***Functions of And:***

The following are the semantic relations that *And* can signal in English discourse:

#### **1. Consequence:**

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

**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* is Arabic connective "*Fa*" and not *Wa* since the former implies cause-effect relationship between the clauses it connects. Arabic *Wa* does not have this consequential or resultative function, and thus it cannot be the translation equivalent of *And* in such a context.

#### **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:

**John peeled off the orange and ate it.**

In this sentence, And can 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.

### **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 this example:

**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:

**Ali shuja'un Wa Zaydun jabaan.**

**(Ali is brave and/but Zayd is a coward).**

**4. Simultaneity:**

The two clauses linked by And have two simultaneous events:

**I am eating And my brother is reading.**

No problem emerges from equating And with Wa since the latter has the same meaning.

**?ana aktubu Wa ?xi: yaqra?**

**(I am writing and my brother is reading).**

**5. Concession:**

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

**She studied hard and she failed.**

In this example And has the meaning of "but" and can be translated into Arabic Wa or Walaakin (but).

Arabic Wa can also be used to signal a concessive function:

**bathala qusaara jahdih Wa lam yanjah.**

**(He did his best And "but" he did not make it).**

**6. Condition:**

The first clause is a condition of the second:

**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:

**saa'idni: 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 (p. 931).

### **7. Addition:**

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

**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.

### **8. Explanation or Comment:**

The second clause adds a comment on, or explains the first clause:

**We are left with one option.... and that is to fight.**

This sentence is best rendered in Arabic without using any connective:

**baqiya ladayna xiyaarun waahidum... huwa alqitaal**

Arabic Wa may be used to introduce a clause that provides a comment on the preceding one:

ʔaghlaqat al-wazaaratu mataajir al-muxaalifi:n .... wa haatha xayr.(The Ministry closed down the shops of the violators .... and that is great).

### *Functions of Wa:*

The above-mentioned functions of And are shared by Wa except the consequential and the explanatory functions. 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).

#### **1. Resumption:**

Arabic onnective Wa is very frequently used at the beginning of sentences and paragraphs. 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 other connectives rather than And.

The translation of the folowing 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.

Kaana Sulayman al halabi yamshi fi: shaari<sup>c</sup> Wa Kaanat yadaahu fi: jaybih. Wa hi:na tawaqqafa qali:lan li yushcila si:jaratan, danaa minhu rajulaan Wa talabaa minhu bitaaqat al huwiyya. Wa rtabak sulayman... Wa ?iqtaadahu ?arrajulaan ?ila maxfarin qari:b. Wa adxalaahu fi: ghurfah... Wa kaana yajlisu fi:ha rajulan lahu shawarib sawda?. 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 moustaches 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.

2. Wa (Waw al-haal) can be used to introduce an adverbial clause of manner:

**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

3. Wa can preface clauses indicating an oath:

**Wa - llahi la?usaa'idak.**

**(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:

**"Wal- ?asr" (By Time).**

**"Wal-layl" (By Night).**

In these verses Wa is better translated into English "by".

4. Wa may express the meaning of the prepositional phrases 'by' or 'along' (waw ?al-ma'iyah):

**sirt wal-jabal = (I walked by the mountain).**

**sirtu wa-nnahr = (I walked along the river).**

In this function Wa cannot be translated into English And.

5. Wa may be used to offer choice:

**Kul maa si?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'.

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

**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.

7. Wa may introduce clauses that imply praise or admiration:

**zaarani: ?axuuka Wa ?ayya rajul!**

**(Your brother visited me and what a man he is!)**

In such a context, the English equivalent of Wa is And.

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

**..... wa man huwa Ahmad!**

**(..... and who is Ahmad!)**

It is clear that both Wa and And can be used to indicate this function.

### **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.

*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 use Arabic connectives to join sentences together. 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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