

The Four Syntactic Roles of 'And'

(A Proposal Concerning the Multiple Functions of 'And')

Ahmad El-Bakri*

* Ph.D. Linguistics, University of London, 1974.

– Lecturer of General Linguistics, English Department, Kuwait University.

Abstract

This paper aims at presenting the reader with a syntactic analysis of the different roles played by the conjunction 'and' in English. It proposes to establish four distinct grammatical functions, each constituting a separate category, each having its own markers.

These four functions are the 'coordinating', the 'sequential', the 'conditional', and the 'juxtaposing'. An attempt is made here to specify the criteria which govern the classification distribution, and generation of the types of structure that manifest these four functions. The premises underlying the proposal of this paper, be they logical, syntactic, or semantic, are, here, briefly expounded.

This paper proposes to isolate four distinct syntactic functions of the English Conjunction **And**. Further, it tries to describe the transformational processes underlying the surface structures of these four functional entities (without going into too many technical details). These four **And**'s, regarded here as separate grammatical elements, we will choose to call **And1**, **And2**, **And3**, and **And4**. The following four pairs of examples are illustrative of these four specific functional categories. They are then followed by an exposition of the logical and syntactic premises underlying the proposal of this paper: first in brief terms, then in some detail – each of the four functions being allotted a separate section.

And 1 : – Take one orange and two bananas.
 – Take the boys and the girls upstairs.

And 2 : – Take nine steps and turn right.
 – Take your books and go home.

And 3 : – Take one step and I'll kill you.
 – Take one step and I'll take two.

And 4 : – Take Carter and unemployment.
 – Take Watergate and American democracy.

The first pair of sentences manifests the syntactic relationship of 'coordination'. **And**, here, can easily be substituted by various other linguistic markers. Logically speaking, it can be equated with the mathematical sign '+', or the typographical mark '&'. There is no significant semantic difference between, for example, **I'll have two sandwiches and one cola**, and **I'll have two sandwiches plus one cola**⁽¹⁾.

The second pair of sentences represents 'sequential coordination': the two coordinated elements must follow a certain temporal order. **And**, here, can be replaced by the conjunction **then**. Obviously, **And2** connects only sentences (i.e., at the deep-structure level). **And1**, On the other hand, can connect noun phrases (as is shown above) as well as all other syntactic units, without necessarily adhering to the aspect of temporal sequence. For example, the sentence **The boys sang and the girls danced** can also be generated as **The girls danced and the boys sang**. (In other words, the two actions might be said to be simultaneous rather than consecutive or sequential).

The third pair of sentences manifests the syntactic relationship of 'condition'. A sentence with **And3**, is a transformed variant of a sentence with the conjunction **if**. But it is not a simple process of substitution, as in the case of **And2**. The generation of a sentence with **And3** involves, together with other transformations, two additional process, viz. a 'rearrangement' transformation and a 'deletion' transformation (as is shown in 'Section III', below).

The fourth pair of sentences exhibits a relationship of 'juxtaposition'. **And**, here,

can be replaced by the preposition 'vs.' In this sense, **And4** connects only units – noun phrases, mostly – that are “compared to, contrasted with, or set against, each other”. In some cases, however, the borderline between the roles of **And1** and **And4** might seem to be a little obscure or indecisive, e.g., **Last night we were talking about John and Mary**. But such sentences are, in fact, mere instances of syntactic ambiguity.⁽²⁾

It must also be added, here, that this distribution is exclusive. The substitution tests mentioned above are restrictive; they cannot be stretched in any direction to embrace more than one function.⁽³⁾

I. And1: the Coordinating:

Coordinating **And** joins all kinds of structures; subject, of course, to the restrictions related to the syntactic homogeneity of the conjoined units.⁽⁴⁾

A coordinated structure is derived from two, or more, basic structures. Thus: **They have invited all friends and neighbours** has the underlying structure:

they (present) (have+en) invite all friend (p1).
they (present) (have+en) invite all neighbour (p1).⁽⁵⁾

The conjoining transformational process, then, takes place at a very early stage (at a very high level, that is) in the generation process.⁽⁶⁾

In some cases, however, we are not very clear about the semantic identity of the conjoined units. The classic examples of 'bread and butter', 'fish and chips', etc., lie at one end of the scale, denoting what we might call 'illusory coordination'; whereas obvious examples like **This morning, we bought some pens, pads, envelopes, and notebooks** lie at the other end. In the middle of the scale, we often come across sentences like: **On our way home this afternoon, we ran into John and Mary**; and the question arises as to whether this is derived from two underlying structures, or just one ('did we run into them each separately, or as a unified body').⁽⁷⁾

The semantic perspective offers, yet, more insight into the nature of expressive relationships. **And1** can be said to express relations of 'simple' **addition**, 'delayed' ('thoughtful') **addition**, or 'contrastive' **addition** (the 'contrast' being of a positive or a negative nature). The following four examples illustrate these four cases in their respective order, viz-simple 'mathematical' addition, thoughtful 'considered' addition, positive contrastive and negative contrastive additions:

- She works as a typist and takes shorthand lessons.
- He is not very successful as a businessman, and that can be explained.
- The man is very rich and his wife is very charming.
- He studies very hard and gets very low grades.⁽⁸⁾

II. And2: the Sequential:

And2, a substitute for the conjunction **then**, occurs only in texts where the sequential contextual process is more immediate or more direct. **Then**, on the other hand, occurs in texts where the sequential contextual process is more remote or more formal.

For this purpose, a new transformational rule has to be devised, in order to account for sequential conjoining. Compare, for instance, the following two sentences:

- Finish your dinner, then go to bed.
- Finish your dinner and go to bed.

The second sentence (whether or not it has a comma in the middle) sounds:

- i) more informal
- ii) like involving more immediate action.

Then, is, also, more final than **And2**, it blocks any further conjoining; compare the following two examples:

- He had a bath and went out shopping, then he met his old friend.
- He had a bath then went out shopping, and he met his old friend.

The new transformational rule that needs to be applied here must be a context-sensitive one. It should single out contexts of more immediate and more informal sequence, in order to be conjoined by **And2** rather than by **then**, e.g.,

- (1) – She washed her face.
- She combed her hair.
- (2) – He worked hard all day.
- He tried to get some sleep.

(And2)

(then)⁽⁹⁾

III. And3: The Conditional:

As mentioned earlier ('Section O'), the position taken here is that sentences with **And3** are derived from deep-structure 'conditional' conjoined units. Sentences with **And3**, however, sound more intimate and more urgent than sentences with **if**, e.g.

- If you open that window, I will leave the room.
- Open that window, and I will leave the room.

The generation process for the derivation of sentences like the second one above, is something like the following:

Deep Structure: (Conditional) you open that window + I will leave the room.

Rearrangement Trans: You open that window + (Conditional) + I will leave the room.

Deletion Trans: Open that window + (Conditional) + I will leave the room.

Then follows the 'substitution' transformation, which must be predictable in our case: "by virtue of the application of the first two transformations, the sentence-modifier **Conditional** is substituted by **And**". If, on the other hand, the two context-sensitive transformations of 'rearrangement' and 'deletion' have not been applied, then the predictable substitute is **if**.

IV. **And4**: the Juxtaposing:

Compared with the other three **And**'s, the role of **And4** is a unique one: the first three are conjunctive, this one is prepositional. As equated with such a preposition as **versus**, its functional status is different from all the other three, because prepositions can only relate noun phrases -- not deep-structure sentences -- to each other.

Moreover, it is this **And4** that has mostly been relatively neglected by researchers and grammarians, in spite of its familiarity in common everyday usage.⁽¹⁰⁾ We often come across instances of **And4**, not only in newspaper headlines (in articles, mostly), book titles, and the like, but in everyday conversational utterances, as well.

The following observations, however, can be made about the lexical features of each of the two noun phrases related together by **And4**:

- 1) The two nouns are (-concrete), e.g.
 - Last time, we discussed capitalism and individual labour.
 - Or simply:
 - Capitalism and individual labour.⁽¹¹⁾
- 2) Only one of the two nouns is (- concrete), e.g.,
 - What do you think of Reagan and the American dream?
 - or simply:
 - Reagan and the American dream.
- 3) The two nouns are (+ concrete) -- which is not very common, compared with the first two cases, e.g.,
 - Let's forget all about Jane and her husband.
 - Or simply:
 - Jane and her husband.

It is this last case that can pose some problems for the researcher: without a contextual clue, this utterance can be ambiguous. What we have here is either **And1** or **And4**. A situational context is indispensable for resolving such ambiguity. As an

illustration, we will cite the title of a very well-known novel: **The Old Man and the Sea**.⁽¹²⁾ The casual reader may at first glance take this **And** to be **And1**; but only after reading the novel does the learned reader gain access to the deeper, hidden **And4**.

As a concluding note to this paper, reference must be made to the phonological aspect of spoken utterances.

In the rapid flow of speech, some forms - - articles, demonstratives, some prepositions, pronouns, modals, and conjunctions - - may undergo a process of 'weakening'. Such forms are, then, referred to as 'weak or 'shortened' forms, e.g.,

- have 'n' apple.
- give 'im' the tickets
- they must 'v' seen us
- he 'z' a man 'v' business
- etc...

It is only **And1** that can very freely undergo this 'weakening' transformation, e.g.,

- We have had some eggs 'n' cheese.
- He plays golf 'n' tennis.

And2 can undergo this transformation, only to a lesser degree; **And3** to a much lesser degree. **And4**, on the other hand, lies at the other end of the scale. Not only is it averse to such weakening, it is even 'stressed' in those utterances where a straight-forward **And1** may get 'weakened'. **And**, in the following sentence, for example, is either **And4** or **And1**, depending on whether one stresses or weakens it, respectively;

- Scientists, at present, are occupied with energy sources **and** the nuclear power.

NOTES:

1. Contextual and/or pragmatic variables are not taken into consideration here.
2. I.e., either we talked about each of them separately (a 'plus' - relationship), or we discussed the relation holding between them (a 'versus' - relationship).
3. It might be argued, however, that in a very broad sense, the substitution test for the second pair of sentences can be applied to the first pair of sentences. Yet, in this paper, we are not concerned with the very broad plane (i.e., the too abstract level).
4. Cf. Simon Dick, **Coordination**.
5. For terminology and notation, cf. Liles, **An Introductory Transformational Grammar**.
6. It is the first transformational process that takes place, unless there are modifiers that act on the sentence as a whole, like for instance, time adverbials.
7. This is what R. Quirk and S. Rosenbaum refer to as "Combinatory and segregatory coordination" (1973: P. 273).
8. Reference can be made, here, to the inventory of "semantic implications" presented by Quirk and Rosenbaum (1973: P. 257), where the following terms are used: "consequence or result", "chronologically sequent", "in contrast", "comment", "element of surprise", "a condition", "similarity", and "pure addition". Obviously, this inventory covers the range of the first three conjunctive functions proposed here, 'the first three **And's**'; it does not deal with the finer distinctions obtaining between them. However, with regard to the broader issues and controversies related to the syntactic/semantic dichotomy, specific reference can be made to:

- a) Carlota S. Smith, 'Ambiguous Sentences with And'.
 b) James McCawley, 'The Role of Semantics in a Grammar'.
9. If the process is reversed, conjoined 'sentence 1' will sound more stilted and unnatural, conjoined 'sentence 2' will sound more random and unacceptable.
 10. It is, furthermore, this peculiar and curious function of **And** that has originally instigated this investigation.
 11. Note that the relationship holding between the two noun phrases connected by **And** can be interpreted as "the subject of, the topic of, etc.,"
 12. By Ernest Hemingway.

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