

9 **Disjunction and Conjunction** **(*faṣl wa waṣl*)**

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9.1 **Disjunction and Conjunction**

The chapter on *faṣl wa waṣl* ‘disjunction and conjunction’ examines the reasons why a linker (*ḥarf-i 'atf*), which is generally the and-conjunction, is required between utterances. A first dichotomy distinguishes between connected and disconnected discourse. A linker may or may not appear between a segment and the following one. The term *waṣl* defines the former state, as in, for example, *bahārān raft wa gul az būstān raft* ‘Springtime was over, and the flowers disappeared from the garden’. The term *faṣl* defines the latter, that is the absence of any conjunction between two utterances, as in *Bahrām ba man goft biyā* ‘Bahrām said to me: “Come!”’.

There are many factors involved in the decision to use a conjunctive linker. Connected and disconnected discourse are analysed in terms of semantic congruence and syntactic contiguity. Other criteria, such as the risk of misunderstanding, guide the speaker in

making the most appropriate linguistic choice. This chapter considers only matters of coordinated predicates and clause sequences. The use of conjunctive or adverbial linkers between nouns or noun phrases has already been examined (see § 4.9) and falls outside the scope of this unit.

9.2 The Conjunctive Linker *wa*

The chapter on disjunction and conjunction introduces the properties of the conjunctive linker *wa* ‘and’ (also pronounced *u*, *w-*, *wu*).¹ The manuals assign to *wa* the basic sense of *tašrīk* (or *širkat*) ‘association, associating’. Thus, the primary function of the and-conjunction is to emphasise a certain correspondence between two elements. More specifically, the two elements should be either syntactically equivalent predicates or parallel clauses. Syntactic equivalence occurs when the two elements are different predicates referring to the same predicand, as is the case with the verbs *biḥandīd* ‘laughed’ and *big(i)rīst* ‘wept’ in the following line:

*biḥandīd u bigrīst mard-i ḥudāy*²

The man of God laughed and wept.

The other case occurs when the linking device connects independent clauses which have a parallel structure. The coordination of two *ḥabar*-type utterances or, alternatively, of two *inšā*-type utterances, especially if they belong to the same subcategory of the performative, would fit this case. In other words, the two utterances should be of the same type. For example, the two imperative clauses below are connected by the and-conjunction:

*giriḥ zi dil bigušā w-az sipihr yād makun*³

Relax the knot of the heart and ponder not on the heavens.

The science of meanings holds that there should be a semantic relationship between the conjuncts. Technically, the manuals call this

¹ For phonetic reasons, the coordinative conjunction in Persian is realised in a variety of ways: in addition to *wa*, possible realisations are also *u*, *w-* and *wu*. Such variance does not imply any change in function or meaning. Thus, although I will generally refer to *wa* in the following paragraphs, different spellings will appear in the examples.

² Quoted in Šamīsā 1994, 170. Sa’dī 1937a, 44. Clarke 1879, 86.

³ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 250. Ḥāfiẓ 1983, 210, *ġazal* 97, v. 2. Avery 2007, 139.

ḡihat-i ḡāmi ‘point of contact, common factor’. That is, the conjunction should be motivated in terms of semantic congruence between the elements it links. In the examples above, the predicates ‘laughed’ and ‘wept’ support the and-conjunction because they are semantically antonyms, while ‘relax’ and ‘ponder not’ do so because they are close in meaning. Semantic incongruence, on the other hand, is detrimental to eloquence. Therefore, even if it does not affect grammatical correctness, linking two elements without a common factor should generally be avoided.

Some manuals, such as Āhanī 1978, have also considered connectives other than *wa* ‘and’. Words whose function goes beyond simply joining utterances, such as *pas* ‘so’ and *az in pas* ‘after that’, are considered useful for ordering events one after another (*tartīb*) or adding the idea of mediation or a time gap between two actions (*tarāhī*). Scholars seem to have followed the Arabic model more closely in this case, by looking for the Persian equivalents of the Arabic *fa-* ‘and so, subsequently’ and *ṭumma* ‘afterwards, later’.⁴ However, Persian manuals generally concentrate on the role of the conjunction *wa* and leave limited or no space for different linkers.

9.3 The Taxonomy of Connected and Disconnected Discourse

The science of meanings has introduced a detailed taxonomy of various cases of disjunction and conjunction. Technically, it distinguishes six possible situations (*mawārid*) in which the and-conjunction between two utterances does or does not occur. The first four involve the absence of the conjunction word and are considered cases of *faṣl* ‘disjunction’. The remaining two are cases of *waṣl* ‘conjunction’. Each of the six is motivated and intended in a different way, as I will describe below.

9.3.1 Unambiguous Complete Separation

The first situation of the absence of an and-conjunction is the complete separation without any ambiguity that could lead to misunderstanding (*kamāl-i inqiṭāʾ bidūn-i ihām-i ḥilāf-i maqṣūd*). It consists in the mere juxtaposition of two utterances which have nothing in common. The condition that there should be no ambiguity is necessary to distinguish this situation from another one in which, although the utterances have nothing in common, the and-conjunction is required

⁴ On *fa-* and *ṭumma* in the Arabic science of meanings, see al-Taftāzānī 1911, 248-50; Bohas, Guillaume, Kouloughli 1990, 134; Jenssen 1998, 118.

for the sake of disambiguation. The latter case will be the subject of a later discussion in § 9.3.5.

The basic situation of complete separation is two-fold. Either the combined utterances are of different types, one informative (*ḥabar*) and the other performative (*inšā*),⁵ or they are two parallel utterances without any semantic point of contact. An example of the first type appears in the following line. The first half-line contains a statement, while the second is a question. Since the former is informative and the latter performative, there is no and-conjunction between them:

dūš az masǧid sūy-i mayḥāna āmad pīr-i mā
*čīst yārān-i ʔarīqat baʔd az īn tadbīr-i mā?*⁶

Last night our Elder went out of the mosque to the wine-shop,
[So] now, comrades of the Way, what must be our strategy?

As for the second type, the absence of a semantic linkage justifies the lack of the and-conjunction between two utterances, even if they have a parallel structure. Unless there is a risk of misunderstanding, the science of meanings suggests keeping sentences apart. Below is an example of juxtaposition of two informative utterances with a great semantic distance:

Qārūn gūyand ganǧ dāšt nihānī
*Šāh bulandaḥtar ast u saḥtkamān ast*⁷

Korah, they say, possessed a hidden treasure.
The King is born under a lucky star and is a high-strength archer.

I found that the same line also appears in Rādūyānī's *Tarǧumān al-balāga*, an early Persian manual of *badīʔ* written around 1088-1114. Rādūyānī (1949, 135) quotes the line to illustrate a fault of semantic distance called *mutanāfir* or *tanāfur*. Interestingly, while Rādūyānī caught a mistake in this line, Aḥmadniżād (2003, 146) considers it best practice. Such a different evaluation does not only depend on the centuries that have passed from Rādūyānī's time to the present. Rather, different branches of rhetoric focus on different aspects of

⁵ More precisely, the phenomenon occurs when one of the two sentences is an utterance with constative meaning and the other is an utterance with performative meaning. The case described can occur between two utterances, one of which is *ḥabar* and the other *inšā* in form and meaning; or between two utterances both of which are *ḥabar* (or both *inšā*) in form, but one of which is *ḥabar* and the other *inšā* in meaning.

⁶ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 241. Ḥāfiż 1983, 36, *ǧazal* 10, v. 1. Avery 2007, 33 (square brackets added).

⁷ Quoted in Aḥmadniżād 2003, 146.

speech formulation and evaluate lines of poetry accordingly. Here, the oddity resulting from the absence of a point of contact is the ultimate reason that justifies the asyndeton. On the whole, the lack of a conjunction here is a response to the requirements of the situation, which is the primary concern of the science of meanings.

9.3.2 Complete Connectedness

Complete connectedness (*kamāl-i ittiṣāl*) occurs between two utterances that are close in meaning. This happens when the utterances are alternative formulations of the same concept. An example is when the second utterance has the value of explanatory apposition (*ʿaṭf-i bayān*), is permutational (*badal*), or emphasises (*taʿkīd*) the first. In these cases, it is self-evident that the two utterances have something to do with each other. Since there is no possibility to misunderstand the relationship between the two, there is no need for a conjunction. An example is:

*yak-ī zindagānī talaf karda būd
ba ġahl u ḡalālat sar āwarda būd*⁸

A certain one had squandered his life;
Had passed it in ignorance and error.

9.3.3 Near-Complete Separation

In cases of near-complete separation (*šibh-i kamāl-i inqitāʿ*), the disjunction prevents a possible misunderstanding. Here the manuals mainly discuss examples of ambiguity in the sentence chain. Consider, for example, a sequence of a main clause, a subordinate clause, and another clause. If the speaker's intention is to coordinate the last clause with the main one, a conjunction immediately after the first subordinate clause is not desirable. In fact, there is a risk that the coordinated clause will be considered on the same level as the subordinate clause. How then is the speaker supposed to deal with the conjunction? Interestingly, although the conjunction would almost fit after the subordinate clause, leaving it out is the best choice. In the same way, the coordinated clause occurs in asyndeton in:

⁸ Quoted in Aḥmadniżād 2003, 146. Sa'dī 1937a, 124. Clarke 1879, 217.

yār pindāšt ki man dil ba digar yār diham
*āhir īn dil ba yak-ī yār-i wafādār diham*⁹

The friend thought: “I will give my heart to someone else”.
 Eventually, I will give this heart to a faithful friend.

In the example, disjunction allows eschewing a possible misunderstanding. A main clause and a reported clause appear in the first half-line, while another clause follows in asyndeton in the second half-line. In the hypothesis that the conjunctive linker had occurred, the second half-line would have shifted from reporting the poet’s thoughts to reporting the friend’s speech (‘I will give my heart to someone else and, eventually, I will give this heart to a faithful friend’). The lack of conjunction clarifies that the last clause of the line is parallel to the main clause and not a part of the reported speech.

9.3.4 Near-Complete Connectedness

Utterances that are related but have different meanings need no linker between them. These are cases of near-complete connectedness (*šibh-i kamāl-i ittiṣāl*). The typical example is the juxtaposition of question and answer, where the semantic relationship between the utterances overrides the need for conjunction. However, in order to reproduce a question-answer pattern, it is not necessary to ask a direct question. As the manuals state, it is enough that the first utterance logically leads to a question. For example, the second half-line below answers the unspoken question, ‘Does stone indeed turn to ruby?’:

gūyand sang la’l šawad dar maqām-i šabr
*ārī šawad wa līk ba hūn-i ġigar šawad*¹⁰

They say that in being resigned to patience stone turns to ruby.
 Yes, it does, but it does so with the blood of the liver.

9.3.5 Ambiguous Complete Separation

The first situation of *waṣl* ‘conjunction’ to be discussed is the complete separation with the risk of misunderstanding (*kamāl-i inqitā’ bā ihām-i ḥilāf-i maqṣūd*). As mentioned in § 9.3.1, the speaker should avoid conjunction between utterances that differ because one is *ḥabar*

⁹ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 247.

¹⁰ Quoted in Aḥmadnižād 2003, 146. Ḥāfiż 1983, 458, *ġazal* 221, v. 2. Avery 2007, 286.

and the other *inšā* or if they have no common factor. Sometimes, however, the use of the conjunction is preferred. This happens when the absence of the conjunction would allow a reading other than that intended by the speaker. Ambiguity (*ihām* ‘double-entendre’) can lead to *ḥilāf-i maqṣūd* ‘something contrary to the intended purpose’. In these cases, the linker between the two utterances is considered necessary to avoid a possible misinterpretation, as in: [Speaker-A] *Fulān-ī az bīmārī-yi saraṭān nağāt yāft?* ‘Has So-and-so recovered from cancer?’ | [Speaker-B] *Na wa ḥudāy-aš bihbūd diḥād*¹¹ ‘No, and may God bless him with good health!’.

In the example in prose above, the conjunctive linker *wa* connects two utterances that have little in common. The negation *na* answers the previous question, and an exclamative clause follows. In these two utterances we should recognise an informative (*ḥabar*) followed by a performative (*inšā*). By default, there should be no conjunction between the two. However, had it not been in conjunction, it would have grown a risk of misunderstanding. The following rewording better explains the unintended result: [Speaker-A] *Fūlān-ī az bīmārī-yi saraṭān nağāt yāft?* ‘Has So-and-so recovered from cancer?’ | [Speaker-B] *Na ḥudāy-aš bihbūd diḥād* ‘May God not bless him with good health!’. Meaning and tone change radically. It is essential to express the linker *wa*, for its avoidance turns the blessing into a curse. Eloquent speakers should avoid any utterance that does not clearly express their intention. The use of the conjunction sometimes becomes the preferred means of avoiding conveying an unintended meaning.¹²

9.3.6 Intermediate State Between Complete Separation and Complete Connectedness

The last case of conjunction identified by the manuals occurs in the intermediate state between complete separation and complete connectedness (*tawassuṭ bayn-i kamāl-i inqitā’ wa kamāl-i ittishāl*). It corresponds to the most trivial case of coordination in terms of *tašrīk* ‘association’. When two elements occupy the same syntactic positions or have a parallel structure, but do not meet the conditions of complete connectedness, the and-conjunction occurs between them. For example, the conjunction connects the coordinated imperatives *yād gīr* ‘remember!’ and *dar ‘amal ār* ‘apply!’ in:

¹¹ Quoted in Riḍānizād 1988, 443.

¹² Riḍānizād (1988, 444) suggests that in speech this can be remedied by inserting a pause between the two sentences. Attention to prosodic phenomena, such as pauses, is a recent addition to the science of meanings and goes beyond the old boundaries of the discipline.

*naṣīḥat-ī kunam-at yād gīr u dar ‘amal ār*¹³

I will give you a piece of advice. Remember and apply it.

In search of the reason behind a linker, the science of meanings analyses utterances in terms of common semantic factors and parallelism in structure and syntactical function. It seems that the science of meanings assumes that disjunction is preferred whenever possible, whereas conjunction requires a specific reason to occur. Conjunction thus presupposes a kind of markedness. Moreover, in one of the most remarkable outcomes of the science of meanings, the discipline also assigns a disambiguating function to the use or lack of the and-conjunction. Counterintuitively, disambiguation leads to the creation of non-standard utterances that distance themselves from the default syntax generally suggested in grammar textbooks.

In this chapter, some examples, especially those used to illustrate the complete separation with the risk of misunderstanding, seem to have been purpose-built. Apparently, it was difficult to find examples in Persian poetry. Classical poetry, with its regular metrical scansion, caesura and pause rarely uses conjunction between utterances. The urge to divide words into sentences and clauses without ambiguities, which may have been a concern of the poets, found in meter and rhyme allies in marking the boundaries of each line and, thus, of each conceptual unit. Some Iranian scholars have questioned the significance of the chapter on conjunction and disjunction in Persian. Šamīsā (1994, 167-8) and his followers relegate it to a mere appendix of their manuals. In Šamīsā's view, the use of punctuation marks, a twentieth-century innovation in Persian writing, now supersedes the need for a theory of conjunction such as that previously established in the science of meanings.

¹³ Quoted in Aḥmadnižād 2003, 147. Ḥāfiż 1983, 90, *ğazal* 37, v. 6. Avery 2007, 68.