Conjunctions in English: Meaning, Types and Uses

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Abraham Sunday Unubi
Kogi State University
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CONJUNCTIONS IN ENGLISH: MEANING, TYPES AND USES

ABRAHAM SUNDAY UNUBI

Department Of Igala Language And Culture, School Of Languages, Kogi State College Of Education, P. M. B. 1033, Ankpa, Kogi State, Nigeria

Abstract: **This paper contains an in-depth study of conjunctions, including their meaning, types as well as uses or functions in English. Conjunctions are words that link or connect two words, phrases, clauses or sentences together, either in speech or in writing. Conjunctions are one of the eight parts of speech in English, according to the traditional grammar. Apart from the coordinating, subordinating and correlative types, the author has also researched into other kinds of conjunctions that can be of great interest to the reader. The author deemed it necessary to carry out a study of this kind because over the years, this important area of language study has received less attention from language scholars and students of English/linguistics in comparison with other parts of speech like nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions. As this paper had unveiled, the author had not only conceived of conjunctions as one of the eight parts of speech in English, as upheld in traditional grammar, but also went beyond to examine the meaning and uses of conjunctions semantically and pragmatically as well as in propositional logic. This study is very significant, as it provides an impetus for those who hitherto have not thought of researching into this area of language study. Furthermore, the paper has presented before the reader a myriad of sentential examples for easy understanding or comprehension.**

Keywords: **Conjunctions, Coordinating, Subordinating, Correlative.**

1.   INTRODUCTION

This paper is a descriptive form of qualitative research, as it carries out a panoramic description and explanation of conjunctions by stating clearly their meaning, types and uses or functions in English. The use of conjunctions in English is obvious, perspicuous and well defined, as one of the core grammatical classes, popularly known as parts of speech in the language. It is true that there exists a lot of literature already on conjunctions, and the researcher has been able to draw and garner insights from them, alongside his own input or contribution, which has given quality and worth to this paper. The paper has contributed immensely to knowledge in language study because it has brought home to the reader the basic information he/she needs, at least, to some extent, as far as conjunctions in English are concerned. This, indeed, is the main purpose of this research.

2.   DEFINITIONS

Traditionally, the conjunction is one of the eight parts of speech in English. A conjunction, as reported by Malmkjær (478), is defined as an indeclinable part of speech that links other parts of speech, in company with which it has significance, by classifying their meaning or relations. According to Leung (11), conjunctions have been studied under various labels and have drawn much attention from various scholars in the field of English/Linguistics over time: Halliday and Hasan (13) treat them as "linguistic devices that create cohesion", while Sanders and Maat describe them as a "semantic relation that is explicitly marked" (1-2). According to Er, as cited by Aidinlou and Reshadi (611), conjunctions are a "semantic connection between two clauses". Furthermore, Leung (11) cites four scholars in this regard. These are: Schiffrin, who treats conjunctions as "discourse markers", Fraser considers them as a "pragmatic class of lexical expressions", or simply, "pragmatic markers", while Rouchota states that conjunctions "encode different meanings, and

that they can be a procedural device", and lastly, Caron conceives conjunctions simply as being used "to express various kinds of relations between utterances".

Aside from the scholars mentioned above, others most generally conceive conjunctions as linkers or connectors that join two words, phrases, clauses or sentences together, either in speech or in writing. To this end, Leech and Svartvik note, "Clauses or phrases may be linked together (coordinated) by conjunctions" (203-204). They further state that conjunction or coordination can also link two words of the same word class. Aarts says, "Conjunctions belong to a closed class of words that have a linking function" (45). (Closed class here means that we cannot derive another word class from conjunctions the same way we do with others such as nouns, verbs and adjectives). According to Roberts (258), conjunctions perform the function of joining any two or more sentences together to form another coordinate sentence. Speaking from the same viewpoint, Lester (63) states that conjunctions join words or groups of words. In the words of Eckhard-Black, "A conjunction stands between two words, phrases or clauses and links them" (97). Similarly, Carnie says that "Coordinate structures are constituents linked by conjunctions like *and* or *or*" (90). In addition, Kirkpatrick states that "A conjunction is a linking word used to join words, word groups or clauses" (173). Again, a conjunction, in the words of Murthy, is "A word which joins together sentences or words and clauses" (212). Furthermore, Baskervill and Sewel say that "Unlike adverbs, conjunctions do not modify but they are just solely for the purpose of connecting" (1). As noted by Kirksten, "Conjunction is an indeclinable part of speech that links other parts of speech, in company with which it has significance, by classifying their meaning or relations" (478). In a similar fashion, Crystal says that conjunctions are "A term used in the GRAMMATICAL classification of words to refer to an ITEM or a process whose primary function is to connect words or other CONSTUCTIONS in which the conjoined elements may be referred to as **conjuncts**" (73). Also, McArthur (235) says that a conjunction is a part of speech or word class used to connect words or constructions, adding that the linked units that result are said to be coordinated or coordinate.

All these scholars, as we have seen, are unanimous in echoing the fact that conjunctions are words that link, connect or join two words, phrases, clauses and sentences together. This is absolutely true because whenever the word conjunction, being a part of speech in a language, is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind traditionally is that it is a linker, a connector or a joinder.

3. TYPES OF CONJUNCTIONS

Language scholars have divergent views on the types of conjunction. For instance, Baskervill and Sewell (1), Arthur (235), Lester (63) and Eckhard-Black (97) divide conjunctions into two classes: coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. These scholars (including others not mentioned here) leave out correlative conjunctions because, according to them (e.g. Lester (65)), correlative conjunctions are similar to coordinating conjunctions. However, there are traditionally basically three types of conjunctions, which are: coordinating, subordinating, and correlative conjunctions. In a different development, Halliday and Hasan (242-267) on their part, propose four types of conjunction that ensure cohesion in English generally: (1) *Additive Conjunctions* act to structurally coordinate or link by adding to proposed item and are signalled by *and, also, furthermore, in addition,* etc. Additive conjunctions may also act to negate the proposed item and are signalled by *nor, and … no, neither*. Kinds of additive include: **alternative**, e.g. *or, or else, alternatively;* **after-thought (or conjunct)**, e.g. *incidentally, by the way;* **expository**, e.g. *that is, I mean, in other words;* **exemplificatory**, e.g. *for instance, thus;* **comparing similarity**, e.g. *likewise, similarly, in the same way* (or *in the same vein);* and **comparing dissimilarity**, e.g. *on the other hand, by contrast, on the contrary*. (ii) *Adversative Conjunctions* are used to express comparison or contrast between sentences and they include *but, on the other hand, however, yet, though, only*. Kinds of adversative include: **emphatic**, e.g. *nevertheless, despite this;* **contrastive avowal**, e.g. *in fact, actually, as a matter of fact;* **correction of meaning**, e.g. *instead, rather, at least;* **closed dismissal**, e.g. *in any case, in eithercase, whichever way it is;* and **open-ended dismissal**, e.g. *any how, at any rate, however it is*.

(iii) *Causal Conjunctions* express the cause or reason of what is being stated. They include: *then, so, hence, therefore*. Kinds of clausal conjunction include: **specific causal**. It is divided into three – (a) **reason**, e.g. *for this reason, on account of this, on this basis, it follows;* (b) **result**, e.g. *as a result, in consequence, arising out of this* and (c) **purpose**, e.g. *for this purpose, with this in mind, to this end;* **simple emphatic**, e.g. *in that case, in such an event, that being so;* **direct respective**, e.g. *in this respect, in this regard, with reference to this;* **reversed polarity**, e.g. *otherwise, under other circumstances, in other respects, aside from this*. (iv) *Temporal conjunctions* represent sequence relationships between clauses and they include: *next, secondly, then, in the end*. Kinds of temporal conjunction include: **simultaneous**, e.g. *just then, at the same time;* **preceding**, e.g. *previously, formerly, before that;* **conclusive**, e.g. *finally, at last, in conclusion;*

immediate, e.g. *at once, thereupon, forthwith;* **repetitive**, e.g. *next time, on another occasion, later;* **specific**, e.g. *next day, an hour later;* **durative**, e.g. *meanwhile, in the interim, for the time being;* **here and now**. This is divided into three – (a) **past**, e.g. *up to now, last time;* (b) **present**, e.g. *at this point, here, now* and (c) **future**, e.g. *from now on, henceforth (*or *henceforward); summarizing,* e.g. *to sum up, in short, briefly;* **resumptive**, e.g. *to resume, to return to the point.* Moreover, Halliday, as cited by Saya and Fatemi (135), further classifies conjunction into three more abstract types: **elaboration, extension** and **enhancement**. **Elaboration** includes apposition like *in other words* and clarification like *rather.* **Extension** includes addition and variation like *alternatively.* **Enhancement** includes spatial-temporal like *there, previously* and causal-conditional like *consequently* and *in that case.* We deem it necessary to comment here that the above taxonomy by Halliday and their examples are more of adverbs than conjunctions. Also on his part, Murthy (212) outlines four types of conjunctions which are: coordinating, subordinating, correlative and compound conjunctions. We will consider them one after the other.

3.1 Coordinating Conjunctions

These are used to link words, phrases and clauses. They are conjunctions which are used to join together clauses of equal rank. In other words, they generally connect sentence elements of the same grammatical class such as nouns with nouns, adverbs with adverbs, phrases with phrases and clauses with clauses. They also link two sentences that do not depend on each other for meaning. They are simply referred to as coordinators, and the art of joining two words, phrases, clauses or sentences using coordinators is known as *coordination.* Huddleston (194) divides coordination into two - **basic coordination,** which can be described directly, e.g.

(1) Her daughter is a dentist *and* her son is studying law;

and **non-basic coordination,** which can be described indirectly, in terms of its relation to the more elementary type.

(2) Okosun says he is innocent *and* she is a disinterested witness.

According to Aarts (45-6), we treat coordination as an instance of *parataxis,* a term derived from Greek, meaning 'syntactic side-by-side arrangement'. Furthermore, all cases of coordination that involve an overt coordinator are referred to as *syndetic coordination.* Where there is no overt coordinator, it is referred to as *asyndetic coordination*. Asyndetic coordination is exemplified as follows:

(3) (a) She is honest, hard working, intelligent.

   (b) We need bananas, apples, oranges, pears.

   (c) Abu laughed, Jummai chuckled, Ojo grinned.

Coordinating conjunctions include: *and, nor, but,* and *or.* Sentential examples:

(4) (a) I bought a computer *and* a keyboard.

   (b) When his wife left him, he did not bother *nor* went to plead for her return.

   (c) She is poor *but* she is happy.

   (d) The books are on the table *or* in the cupboard.

According to Murthy (215), coordinating conjunctions are divided into three kinds. They are:

- Cumulative or Copulative Conjunctions
- Adversative Conjunctions and
- Disjunctive or Alternative Conjunctions

Also, we will consider them one after the other:

(i) Cumulative or Copulative Conjunctions

These are used to join statements, or they add one statement to another. They include: *and, so, both … and, as well as, not only … but also, no less than,* etc. Sentential examples:

(5) (a) He looked *and* smiled at me.

(b) He is my father *so* I respect him.

(c) They *both* gave me money *and* stood by me in my trouble.

(d) *As well as* writing the letter for me, he posted it.

(e) She, *no less than* her friend, tried to cheat me.

(ii) Adversative Conjunctions

According to Halliday and Hasan (250), the meaning of the adversative relation is 'contrary to expectation'. The expectation may be derived from the content of what is being said, or from the communication process, in a speaker-hearer situation. They include: *but, still, only,* etc. Sentential examples:

(6) (a) She is beautiful *but* poor.

 (b) You are intelligent *still* you have to work hard.

(c) He is a good servant *only* he has greed for food.

(iii) Disjunctive or Alternative Conjunctions

These are used to express a choice between two alternatives. They include: *or, nor, either…or, neither…nor, else, whether…or, otherwise,* etc. Sentential examples:

(7) (a) You must tell me the truth *or* I cannot help you.

(b) She is not a teacher *nor* a typist.

(c) You must *either* return my money *or* sell your house to me.

(d) She *neither* loved him *nor* liked to marry him.

(e) You must do the work sincerely *else* you will lose the job.

3.2 Subordinating Conjunction

Subordinating conjunctions are words which are used to link subordinate clauses with the main clauses in a complex sentence. They are conjunctions used to join clauses of unequal rank. In other words, they are used to join an independent or main (principal) clause with a dependent (subordinate) one that relies on the main clause for meaning and relevance. This means that main clauses can stand alone and do not depend on subordinate clauses while subordinate clauses cannot stand alone. As Aarts (46) notes, "another way of putting this is to say that subordination is a type of *hypotaxis,* a Greek term that means originally 'syntactic underneath arrangement'. This means that a subordinating conjunction causes the clause it appears in to become dependent, and that it will only be a sentence fragment unless it is joined to an independent clause. Simply, subordinating conjunctions are called subordinators and the art of using a subordinator to join two clauses together is referred to as *subordination*. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (309), subordination is a non-symmetrical relation, holding between two clauses in such a way that one is a constituent or part of the other. Also according to Huddleston (194), subordination in contrast with coordination, involves inequality, that is, a relation between a dependent (the subordinate element) and a head (the superordinate one). A subordinating conjunction can appear at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. According to Sahebkeir & Aidinlou (125), subordinating conjunctions are also known as *transitional conjunctions*.

They include: *after, because, if, that, though, although, till, before, unless, as, when, where, while, than, whether, in order that, nevertheless,* etc. Sentential examples:

(8) (a) He came *after* I had finished my work.

(b) He was sacked from office *because* of his stance against corruption.

(c) I wonder *if* he will ever change.

(d) He thinks *that* we will agree.

(e) *Though* he is your brother, you should not trouble him like that.

(f) We waited *till* the President arrived.

(g) The plane was hijacked *before* it arrived at the airport.

(h) *Unless* I marry Mary, I will never be happy in life.

(i) Do *as* I said and nothing more!

(j) John came *when* I was writing my dissertation, etc.

According to Baskervill and Sewell (3), subordinating conjunctions are divided into eight classes. They include: time, cause or reason, purpose, result or consequence, condition, circumstance, concession and comparison We will consider them one after another:

(i) Time

These are subordinators that express consequence in time or succession in time between clauses. Examples include: *before, after, till, since, when, while,* etc. Sentential examples:

(9) (a) Mary had left *before* my arrival.

(b) I began my work *after* they had gone.

(c) I have not seen Mercy *since* she was married.

(d) She will be happy *when* her mother returns from the market.

(e) He was speaking with his friends *while* I was trying to sleep.

(ii) Cause or Reason

These are subordinators that express causal relations in the simplest form that mean 'as a result of this' or 'because of this'. Examples include: *because, since, as,* and *for.* Sentential examples:

(10) (a) He travelled home *because* of the death of his mother.

(b) *Since* it is dark, take the torch with you.

(c) *As* she is my sister, I like her.

(iii) Result or Consequence

Result/consequence and cause/reason are closely related but the main subordinator here is *so* and *that*. These have the relation that is expressed to mean 'for this reason' which leads to something else. Sentential examples:

(11) (a) He talked *so* fast that I could not understand him.

(b) I was so tired *that* I could not eat after cooking.

(iv) Purpose

Purpose and cause/reason are closely related and the subordinators involved have the sense of 'for this reason' or 'for this purpose'. They include: *that, so that, in order that, lest,* etc. Sentential examples:

(12) (a) We eat *that* we may live.

(b) I will help him now *so that* he can help me tomorrow.

(c) Emeka travelled to Abuja *in order that* he could see his brother.

(d) He walked quietly *lest* he should wake the child.

(v) Condition

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (323), conditional subordinators state the dependence of one circumstance or set of circumstances on another. The main subordinators in English are *if* and *unless.* The *if*-clause could either be a positive or a negative condition while the *unless*-clause is a negative one. For example:

(13) (a) *If* you do the job well, I will pay you.

(b) *If* you do not do the job well, I will not pay you.

(c) *Unless* the strike is called off, there will be no lecture tomorrow.

The latter (c) roughly means '*If* the strike has not been called off …'. But there is a slight difference between an *unless*-clause and a negative *if*-clause in that *unless* has the more exclusive meaning of 'only if … not' or 'except on condition that …'. It is thus the opposite of the compound conjunction *provided (that)* or *providing (that)*, which means 'if and only if':

(14) *Provided that* no objection is raised, we will hold the retreat there.

Other compound conditional conjunctions approximately synonymous with *provided (that)* are *as long as, so long as,* and *on condition that.* Also, *if* and *unless* clauses often introduce non-finite and verbless clauses, e.g.: *if ready…, unless expressly forbidden,* etc. In addition, clauses beginning with *unless* lay stress on the excluded positive option, and so normally contain assertive forms. For example:

(15) I will not phone you, *unless* something unforeseen happens. (The meaning of this is: 'I will phone you when something unforeseen happens' but we can exclude this as unlikely).

According to Silva (1), there are three types of *if*-clauses. These are as follows:

- **Type 1:** The type 1 of the *if*-clause refers to the condition possible to fulfil. The *if*-clause appears in the simple present tense, and the main clause has the pattern: will-future (or modal + infinitive). For example:

(16) *If* I study, I will pass the exam.

- **Type 2:** This refers to the condition in theory possible to fulfil. Here, the *if*-clause appears in the simple past tense. The pattern of the main clause is as follows: would + infinitive; e.g.:

(17) *If* I studied, I would pass the exam.

- **Type 3:** The type 3 of the *if*-clause refers to the condition not possible to fulfil. In other words, the condition is too late to fulfil. The *if*-clause here appears in the past perfect tense, and the main clause has the pattern: would + have + past participle. For example:

(18) *If* I had studied, I would have passed the exam.

Real and unreal conditions: Similar to type 1-3 of the *if*-clause is what Quirk and Greenbaum (324-25) call real and unreal conditions. According to them, a 'real' condition leaves unresolved the question of the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of the condition, and hence also, the truth of the proposition expressed by the main clause. For example:

(19) (a) *If* he comes, I will see him.

(b) *If* she was awake, she certainly heard the noise.

In an 'unreal' condition, on the other hand, it is clearly expected that the condition will not be fulfilled. For example:

(20) (a) *If* he came, I would see him.

(b) *If* she had been awake, she would have heard the noise.

(vi) Circumstance

These subordinators express a fulfilled condition, or to put differently, a relation between a premise in the subordinate clause and the conclusion drawn from it in the main clause. An example of this is a special circumstantial compound conjunction: *seeing that.* Sentential example:

(21) *Seeing that* the weather has improved, we shall enjoy our game.

(vii) Concession

These are subordinators that express the sense of 'reluctant yielding'. They are usually introduced by *though* and its more formal variant *although, even if* and occasionally *if*. Others include *however, whereas*, etc. Sentential examples:

(22) (a) No goals were scored, *though* it was an exciting game.

(b) *Although* I enjoyed myself, I was glad to come here

(c) *However* hard he tried, he failed the exam

(d) *Whereas* Sule seems rather stupid, his brother is clever.

(e) *Even if* you dislike music, you would enjoy this concert.

(viii) Comparison

These are subordinators that express comparison between dependent and independent clauses. They are introduced by *than, as-as, as,* etc. Sentential examples:

(23) (a) She respected me more *than* I thought.

(b) Uchendu walks *as* beautifully *as* a film star.

(c) *As* sugar attracts ants, John is attracted by Mary.

3.3 Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are link words that consist of two parts and are used to give emphasis to the combinations of two structures that are balanced (Sahebkeir & Aidinlou, 125). They are regarded as team conjunctions because they are used in pairs. They get their name from the fact that they work together (co-) and relate one sentence element to another. Correlative conjunctions are more similar to coordinating conjunctions in that the sentence fragments they connect are fairly equal. Lester (65) notes that correlative conjunctions are very similar to coordinating conjunctions except that they are two-part conjunctions. They include: *either…or, neither…nor, both…and, as many…as, whether…or, not only…but also, such…that, so…that, hardly…when, scarcely…when, no sooner…than, not…but,* etc. Sentential examples:

(24) (a) I want *either* eba *or* amala.

(b) *Neither* a borrower *nor* a lender be.

(c) I have *both* eba *and* amala.

(d) There are *as many* curtains *as* there are windows.

(e) He was not sure *whether* he was losing *or* winning.

(f) She was *not only* mean *but also* rude.

(g) *Such* was the nature of their relationship *that* they never would have made it even if they wanted to.

(h) I had *scarcely* walked in the door *when* I got the call and had to run back.

(i) I had *no sooner* finished my studies *than* I got a job.

3.4 Compound Conjunctions

These are groups of words that are used as conjunctions. Quirk and Greenbaum (313) regard such groups of words as compound subordinators. They are compound items which act, to various degrees, like a single conjunction. Such groups of words end with obligatory 'that', e.g. *in order that, in that, except that, on condition that, so that, such that,* etc. while some others have optional 'that', e.g. *now (that), provided (that), supposing (that), seeing (that), considering (that),* etc. Furthermore, Omosowone and Akindolire (36) regard compound conjunctions as semi-coordinating conjunctions because they link elements together. More examples are: *as well as, as much as, rather than,* etc. Other examples include: *as though, in as much as, as soon as,* etc. Sentential examples:

(25) (a) He applied for the job *in order that* he might help his father.

(b) I can lend you the money *on condition that* you repay me next month.

(c) I shall give you the job *provided that* you know how to type.

(d) The pastor *as well as* his members received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(e) He buries himself in the things of this world *as though* he will not die.

(f) *In as much as* he remains President, things will never work in that country.

(g) Please, appear *as soon as* he calls you.

4.   STRUCTURE OF CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions are a grammatical resource for indicating links within texts (Schleppegrell, 272). This is because they join similar grammatical elements: noun or pronoun to noun or pronoun, verb to verb, adjective to adjective, adverb to adverb, preposition to preposition, phrase to phrase and clause to clause. Like prepositions, conjunctions do not have inflection because they belong to the closed class, that is, they are not expandable. This means that they cannot be inflected through suffixation (prefixes and suffixes) to make them change from one grammatical class to the other like nouns, verbs and adjectives. In other words, nouns, verbs and adjectives can generate more grammatical classes when inflected through suffixation but that is not applicable to conjunctions. In this regard, conjunctions are like prepositions, as both of them belong to the closed class. This implies that prepositions too are not expandable, or cannot be inflected through suffixation to generate more grammatical classes.

5.   USES/FUNCTIONS OF CONJUNCTION

Generally, conjunctions perform linking functions. To this end, Leung (14-15) says that conjunctions perform the following functions: to link two or more words, groups or clauses, to link two clauses especially the main or independent and the dependent or subordinate, to link two identical words or phrases in order to emphasise the degree of something or to suggest that something continues or increases over a period of time (e.g. *Day by day I am getting better and better*), to introduce a question which follows logically from what somebody has just said, to link two or more alternatives, to be used between numbers to give estimation (e.g *We will stay there a day or two*), to introduce a comment for correction, to introduce something for explanation or justification, to show contrast, for adding, to change a subject in a discussion, to be used as a condition in conditional statements, to be used for warning (e.g. *or* else), etc.

Since English language involves both speaking and writing, it is important to know and understand conjunctions well, so that effective and good flow of communication may be maintained in an efficient manner. Conjunctions when used properly, allow for more natural flow and rhythm in speech and writing, whereas the improper use of them often results in writing that sounds abrupt and disjointed. Consider the following sentences, for example:

(26) "I went to the shop. They didn't have *egusi* (melons). They also didn't have *dawa-dawa* (local magi)".

(27) "Ojo saw the dog on the road. He decided to adopt the dog. Ojo brought the dog home".

While technically not incorrect, however, these sentences would sound much better as separate sentences joined together by conjunctions:

"I went to the shop, **but** they had **neither** *egusi* **nor** *dawa-dawa*"

"Ojo saw a dog on the road **and** decided to adopt the dog, **so** he brought the dog home".

6.   THE SEMANTIC USE OF CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions contribute to discourse structure by indicating the semantic meaning or relationship between what has been said and what is to come. As reported by Schleppegrell (280), this they do by creating cohesion in texts, either spoken or written, by indicating linkages across varying spans of discourse, and by signalling transitions and displaying the purpose or direction of development of the discourse.

 Note that there are instances where, though a conjunction 'stands' between two words, phrases, clauses or sentences, it is strikingly and unusually far from being used as performing a linking function. Such an instance involves the most frequently used conjunction (or coordinator) *and*. According to Lang, as cited by Hertwig, Benz and Krauss (740), its commonness and plainness as the most general connective in English language do not mean that it lacks the ability to convey a wider range of relationships between the state of affairs described by the conjuncts. In fact, one reason for linguists' enduring fascination with *and* is that among all coordinating conjunctions, e.g. *or, but;* it has the least semantic

and syntactic limits, the least specific meaning, and the highest context dependency. Consider the following sentence, for example:

(28) Her husband is in the hospital **and** she is seeing other men.

As Kitis, also cited by Hertwig, Benz and Krauss (740) points out, the conjunction *and* in this sentence does much more than conjoin, connect or link the two clauses. Rather, it functions as an "emotional device" that communicates the speaker's emotional attitude, surprise, or even outrage

7.   THE PRAGMATIC USE OF CONJUNCTION

According to Schleppegrell (280), in speech and writing, the interactional and discourse structuring role of conjunctions is often emphasized, and the pragmatic rather than the semantic meaning of them (conjunctions) is foregrounded. In a paper titled *The Pragmatics of and-conjunctions: The non-narrative cases*, Blackemore and Carston (1) cite some examples and here are few of them:

(29) a. He gave up Semantics *and* felt much happier.

   b. He felt much happier *and* gave up Semantics.

They report that the above example consists of how the non-truth functional suggestions which are conveyed by utterances containing the expression in question are in fact due to principles which are about general properties of discourse or communication – the maxims of conversation in Grice's case. But how general is the particular maxim which accounts for the suggestion of temporal sequence conveyed by *and*-conjunctions? Referring to Grice, they say that this maxim, a sub-maxim of the category of manner, requires that speakers present their material in an orderly fashion, which in the case of narrative means that their utterances should match the chronology of the events being described. Furthermore, consider the example of the *and*-conjunction below and its pragmatic value:

(30) a. Bukola is a linguist *and* he cannot spell.

   b. Bukola cannot spell *and* he is a linguist.

It might be argued that (30a) is just the sort of example that we do not need to be worried about. After all, it is equivalent to (30b), which suggests that this is a use of *and* in which it is equivalent to the logical operator &. However, this is to assume that an account of the interpretation of *and*-conjunctions should be limited to the explanation of temporal relations. It should be noted that *and*-conjunctions like (30) communicate suggestions over and above the truth of their conjuncts. So, if the arguments for minimal semantics are to be maintained, we need to be able to show that these effects can be accommodated in the pragmatic theory.

One solution might be to retain the special-purpose sequencing principle, like Grice's sub-maxim of manner, for discourse sequences which do present events in chronological order and to regard other sequences as exception to this principle. As reported by Blackemore & Carston (2), this seems to be the approach of Dowty who opposes a temporal discourse principle to account for the effects which are sometimes attributed to the semantics of a narrative past tense; he suggests that it only applies to cases in which time moves forward, and not to sequences in which the second segment describes a state.

8.   THE USE OF CONJUNCTIONS IN LOGIC

One of the most basic semantic roles of conjunctions, especially coordinators, is to express the logical relations of conjunction and disjunction, corresponding approximately to English *and* and *or* respectively. According to Lyons (143), the conjunction of *p* and *q* by means of the conjunctive (or conjoining) connective is the conjunction, *p*-and-*q* or *p* & *q*. Another commonly used symbol for conjunctive connective is $\wedge$. Thus, $p \wedge q$ and *p* & *q* are equivalent or similar. A conjunction is true if (and only if) the component propositions, the conjuncts, are both true: otherwise it is false. Similarly, according to Huddleston (195), if we join two propositions "p" and "q" by conjunction, the resultant compound proposition "p and q" will be true if both component propositions are true, otherwise is false. For example: (31) "Her daughter was a dentist *and* her son was studying law" is true provided "Her daughter was a dentist" and "Her son was studying law" are both true: if either is false (or if both are), then the compound proposition is false. In addition, the order of elements can be changed without affecting the propositional meaning of the sentence. This reflects the facts of the

logical conjunction of equivalence: "p and q" is equivalent to "q and p" and the logical disjunction "p or q" to "q or p". An equivalence is a bilateral implication whose connective is ≡ (or →). It is defined as the conjunction of two implications: i.e. $p \equiv q$ is by definition itself equivalent to $((p \rightarrow q) \& (q \rightarrow p))$. Thus the above example is equivalent to *Her son was studying law and her daughter was a dentist*. In the same vein, if we change the order of this sentence: (32) "The President, the Governor *or* the Minister could open the Exhibition" is equivalent to *The Minister, the Governor or the President could open the Exhibition*.

Conversely, we can also join "p" and "q" by disjunction using the coordinator *or* ("p or q"), symbolised as $p \vee q$. As explained by Huddleston (195), if we join "p" and "q" by disjunction, the resultant "p or q" will be true if either component proposition is true, and false if both of them are false. This is thus exemplified as follows: (33) "Amadi has missed the train *or* the train is late" is true if either of "Amadi has missed the train" and "The train is late" is true, but false if both are false. In other words, consider the meaning of *or* in terms of the logical disjunction above: the compound proposition expressed by, say, *Amadi has missed the train or the train is late* is true if either of the component propositions (the 'disjuncts') "Jackson has missed the train" and "The train is late" is true. In fact, the coordinators *and* and *or* correspond most closely to these logical links when they join (declarative main) clauses, but coordination of smaller units than clauses is very often logically equivalent to conjunctive or disjunctive coordination of clauses. For example: (34) *Negedu and Nneka know the answer* is logically equivalent to *Negedu knows the answer and Nneka knows the answer*, while *She told Negedu or Nneka* is logically equivalent to *She told Negedu or she told Nneka*.

Lyons (144) and Huddleston (198-199) distinguish two kinds of logical disjunction, namely, exclusive disjunction and inclusive disjunction. An exclusive disjunction is defined to be true if either *p* (but not *q*) or *q* (but not *p*) is true, otherwise is false. On the other hand, an inclusive disjunction is true if *p* is true, or *q* is true or both are true; otherwise is false. Exclusive disjunction excludes the possibility of more than one disjunct being true, while inclusive disjunction allows it. Examine the salient interpretations of the following sentences, for example:

(35) (i) You can have the *eba* with *egusi or* you can have the *amala* with *ewedu*.

(ii) You can get one from Nicon Hilton's *or* you can get one from Mr. Bigg's.

They are respectively exclusive and inclusive. Thus (i) is likely to be construed exclusively – i.e. as excluding the possibility of your being able to have both *eba* with *egusi* and *amala* with *ewedu* (the context here is that you are not allowed to have the two at a time). On the other hand, (ii) is likely to be construed inclusively – i.e. as allowing that the item in question is obtainable both from Nicon Hilton's and from Mr. Bigg's (here the context is that you are allowed to choose which restaurant to get it from). Furthermore, the choice between exclusive and inclusive interpretations depends on the semantic content of the disjuncts together with background knowledge and context. Similarly, the sentence: *The letter was posted on Tuesday or Wednesday* will normally be interpreted exclusively because letters are usually posted only once in a week, either Tuesday or Wednesday and not both days; the same also goes for our earlier example, *Jackson has missed the train or the train is late.*

Moreover, phrasal coordination with *or,* as with *and,* is often equivalent to clausal coordination but not always. *Or* does not yield the combinatory interpretation in a sentence such as: (36) *Musa and Hassan are a pair of crooks,* but the scope factor may apply with *or* as much as with *and* to block equivalence between clausal and phrasal coordination. For example, (37) *Most of them were from Abuja or Lagos,* where the coordination is within the scope of quantifier *most,* is clearly not equivalent to *Most of them were from Abuja or most of them were from Lagos.* Similarly, (38) *He had not seen Tope or Bala* is not equivalent to *He had not seen Tope or he had not seen Bala.* The disjunction in the above sentence is within the scope of the negative: it is the negative of *He had seen Tope or Bala* (which is equivalent to *He had seen Tope or he had seen Bala*). A disjunction within the scope of negation is normally interpreted inclusively, so that the negative denies the possibility of both disjuncts being true, as well as that of either one alone being true. In this interpretation, the sentence above is equivalent to *He had not seen Tope and he had not seen Bala*: a negated inclusive disjunction is logically equivalent to a conjunction of negatives.

Lastly, *and* and *or* can both be used with an implied conditional relation between elements. In the implication, $p \rightarrow q$ (which may be read as *"p implies q"* or *"if p, then q"*); *p* is the antecedent and *q* the consequent in the implication of *p* by *q*. Consider the following sentences: (39) *Come early and you will be able to see the Vice Chancellor* implies ("if you come early you will be able to see the Vice Chancellor"); and *Come early or you will not be able to see the Vice*

Chancellor implies ("if you do not come early you will not be able to see the Vice Chancellor", or "Come early or otherwise you will not be able to see the Vice Chancellor"). Besides conditional implication, there is an implication that the events occurred in the order in which they are expressed, has the implication of "then" or "in that case" in the second element. Thus the above example *Come early and you will be able to see the Vice Chancellor* implies "Come early and then/in that case you will be able to see the Vice Chancellor".

9. IMPORTANCE OF CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions are important tools both in speech and in writing. In effect, Siddiqui (1) says a conjunction is one of the most important parts of a sentence and helps in maintenance of a strong flow of communication in any language. A good knowledge and understanding of various conjunctions enable us to maintain both ways of communication (that is, verbal and written) conveniently. It is important to note here that ability to use conjunctions appropriately will aid one greatly in speaking in a confident manner. In addition, conjunctions breathe creative life into one's writing by allowing one to combine ideas and compare clauses without having to break up sentences into abrupt fragments. That is why Leung notes, "Conjunctions contribute to a better understanding of the use of discourse and they affect the way texts are perceived" (4). In the words of McClure and Steffensen (3), conjunctions act as clues drawing attention to and making explicit the logical relationship between propositions. In oral discourse, these relationships may be made clear by context. However, in the written mode, conjunctions are extremely important. This is because readers who fail to note a conjunction or who misunderstand it may interpret the proposition it connects as either totally unrelated, or related in ways unintended by the author. Thus, they may comprehend each sentence or clause but fail to understand the passage as a whole. Conversely, authors who fail to make judicious use of conjunctions leave their readers guessing about the connections between ideas they have presented. Halliday and Hasan (226-227) note that one important linguistic resource in communicating information is its conjunctive relation. It is a "specification of the way in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before".

10. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, conjunctions are very important in English, and that is the main reason why we have taken time to discuss them widely in this paper, with a special focus on their meaning, types and uses or functions in the language. In doing this, many simple but straightforward sentential examples have been provided for easy comprehension. The major advantage of this article is that it has succeeded in making an attempt to present before the reader the basic information he/she needs as far as conjunctions in English are concerned. No doubt, this paper will continue to be of immense and invaluable value or use to the students and scholars in the fields of English and Linguistics any time anywhere both in this generation and generations yet unborn.

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