

Supra-Coordinators in Mosuli Arabic

Dr. Shifaa' Hadi Al-Hamandi^(*)

& Dr. Yasir A. Sheet Al-Khattabi^(**)

Abstract

Supra-coordinators are items used to connect fragments of discourse to each other so as to construct a unified and coherent discourse. The two related fragments may be uttered by two different participants or by one participant. The presence of the marker indicates the presence of some shared topic (or some relatively related topics) in the two discursal fragments. The change of the marker, further, may change the relation exhibits between the two related parts affecting in turn the coherence of discourse. More than one factor have been found to be effective in the use of specific marker rather than another. Those factors include: formality, politeness, sex, religion, social status, age, intonation, stress and some pragmalinguistic cues like facial expressions, gestures and head movements. In general, the paper

(*) Dept. of Translation - College of Arts / University of Mosul.

(**) Dept. of Translation - College of Arts / University of Mosul.

seeks to affirm the claim that supra-coordinators are context-dependent items.

1. Introduction

Supra-coordinators (as a term used interchangeably with the term connectives with the first being wider than the second) have been studied widely in English under different terminologies. Van Dijk (1977a and 1979), for whole set of semantic relations present among sequence proposition in general (see Van Dijk 1977a, 1977b and 1979); and Halliday and Hassan, 1976). In this paper, however the term is used in a rather restricted way to refer to some items that have a specific discourse structure function (viz discursive-organizational-function)⁽¹⁾.

These items are context dependent to the extent that they can be considered intertextuality-based element. They are linguistically intertextual elements that they are interpreted via prior co-text . And they are cognitively intertextual elements that they are interpreted via mental models (see Van Dijk 1995c) (for the term intertextuality as it is used here see Al-Hamandi, 2002, Al-Hiyali, 2003 and Turski, 2001).

2. Discussion

It would worth checking some of the basic characteristics of Arabic “wa” (=and). It is probably always to see “wa” accompanying some other elements as in 1,2,5,8,10,11,12,15,& 16. In such cases it, syntactically, functions as premodifier for the preceding gambit. Semantically, and pragmatically, “wa” functions as a confirmation for the meaning of the other related gambit being used. In the case of omitting “wa” the message is still well-connected even though the style may relatively change. This case is quite frequent when “wa” is related to another connective in case it is related to a word in a message like fragment 2, the situation might be different (see blow) The same can be true for example 1 if we consider “wuzi’il” (=and he became angry). Here, we must differentiate between a grammatical connective which can be found for instance, in 7 a wherein two processes by the same agent are related by the grammatical connective “wa”. As a discursal connective, “wa” relates two fragments of discourse about the same topic. In 10, “wa” in “wudarab” is a grammatical connective. Whereas “wa” in “wibimatija” is a discursal connective.

Consider the following example:

- ?abū hā aymūt wihiyya attitfattal.
- “her father -is dying -and she – going – wandering about”.
- (=Her father is dying and she is wandering about).

The two propositions connected by 'wa' are both known to the hearer. But what is unknown to him is the new ideological subframe the speaker is trying to construct. The hearer is not able to construct the frame which says that "this girl is bad since she is violating the rules of common sense". So, he needs the speaker to give him such a combination of propositions to reconstruct this frame. The speaker is demonstrating his critical stance towards the current issue and thus uttering his rejection depending on some non-verbal cues. When the connective is changed into "walihadha" (=for this reason), the relation will be changed into that of cause-effect relation, i.e. an organizational function.

In this sense, two types of functions can be established. The first is organizational function in which fragments of discourse are related to each other. The second is the ideological function in which new ideologies are activated within the hearer's memory. The last two examples show an ideological function, while the preceding 17 fragments show some organizational functions.

Having a cursory look at the examples stated above, we find it more profitable to make the following discourse said by the same speaker as in example 1,2,3,5,8,10,11,12,14,15,16, and 17. Secondly, there are those connectives concerned exclusively with relating fragments of discourse about the same topic said by two different speakers involved in the piece of conversation; as in

4,6,7,9 and 13. Thirdly, the markers which can be used to relate the present message (said by partner x for instance) to a previous (unmentioned) message (told by partner z) provided that both x and z are in agreement with each other to convince the hearer of something as in example 15 and 18. Fourthly, there is a group of connectives which exhibits two directions of nexus; some relate the following to the preceding as in example 1, 2, 3 and 4 , and others conjoin the preceding to the following as in 14 since “bilbidāya” should be related to the (unmentioned but expected) “wiba’din” and “wulshi thani” if there are (and must be) other things to talk about when the first is overtly signaled, the second is expected; otherwise the speaker should not bother mention (initially).

It is worth noting that the usage of any gambit should accompany some other cues to transfer the message to the hearer. For instance, the falling intonation used in example 1, the emphatic stress, different tone levels, short pause after the connective, as well as some pragma-linguistic cues like facial expressions, gestures and head movement all help the use of the gambit and the transformation of the message as a whole. By putting an emphatic stress on “huwwa” obliges the speaker to reduce the stress on the connective and shorten pause between it and the rest of the message. The emphatic stress can be transmitted to the connective itself and in this case is the tone would be rising rather than falling and the

pause would be longer. The speaker intends here to tell his listener that the person involved, although mistaken, is angry. The speaker thus, is reflecting his rejection in this way. Using two emphatic stresses on both the connective and “huwwa” is impossible since then the hearer would not be able to grasp the intended meaning of the message as a whole.

The speaker in example 7 wants to stress the contradiction of the two messages about the same person. So we expect to find out that impressions of surprise are clear on the speaker’s face. His hands, as well, are moved near his face (specifically his mouth) to confirm that he is saying. These movements are culturally specific since it is rare to find a native speaker of English moving his hands in the same exaggerated way.

In example 1, however, religion, and the social status are not really involved while degree of formality is operative instead. Here, the connective “wilmusiba” is an informal marker. Also it is more likely to be used to express moderate polite (but not impolite) speech act.

Let’s now turn to example 2. One of the most important gambits in Mosuli Arabic is “ya’ni” since it is really cultural bound and has more than one function. “ya’ni” is either a content word or

function word (here gambit). If it is a content word or function word, it is a verb which can be translated as (mean), as in:

“?ilmujrim ya’ni kil wahid yit’adda ‘annas” .

(= the criminal means everyone who does wrong to people).

“yacni” as a gambit cannot be translated literally but depending on function either as a connective as in fragment 2 or as a gap – filler in which the speaker tries to take his breath or to get a feedback (for himself and for the hearer (s)). A literal translation of this word can not be provided. Thus, I think /?∂m/ "well" is often used. Yet it is always frowned upon in formal and in scientific contexts.

If one looks at example 3, the religious influence becomes quite evident in every-day language. The word “walla”, here can not be claimed to have the function of “swearing” as is in the case of “by God” since the speaker does not intend to swear at all. He just intends to relate the two fragments in a rather acceptable or appropriate way. This item may also have a function of emphasis since the speakers wants to ensure his tiredness by relating these two messages in this particular manner. If he intends to swear, he would use the item “walla” using an emphatic stress on the second syllable and by mentioning a fact after it since Muslims do not use the Holy Name of God to swear for fakes An emphatic swear with a

great effect could be achieved by prolonging the /h/ sound and putting /i:/ sound after it and further by adding “wabillahi” (=By the name of God) to the previous – mentioned item

Examples 4, 6 and 7 have something in common, the effect of social relation upon language. In the context of native speaker, there is a general tendency for families to be extremely integrated, thus, the delinquents seldom leave their parents. So, instead of using normal connectives, the speaker uses the items (mother, father) to relate two messages uttered by two different participants. The relation between the speaker and the hearer is mere friendship. Such items are used to show the intimate relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

Example 4 is characterized by a rising intonation. The message, nevertheless, is not a question. It is a mere remembering of a piece of information known to both hearer and speaker. The speaker is trying to remind the hearer of this piece of information. An answer, thus, is not expected and will not be appropriate at all. So the information being transferred to the hearer (after the connective) can be defined as known (given).

In examples 4, 6 and 7 the factor of formality plays a crucial role. In a formal situation, a speaker would not use such an informal item “yam awwad”, but to a very limited extent he may use “yaba”

and “yumma”., these vocatives can not be easily translated into English because they are culture – specific. For convenience, they are translated as “dear”. The scope of first word, “yam awwad”, however, cannot be translated as “dear” because of the limited use of the word itself in every -day conversation.

In example 9, the speaker combines a whole conversation about Ali to the present message by the connective shown in the appendix. What the participant does is that he specifies the most important thing from the whole conversation and assigns a message to this piece of information signalling it by a marker. This marker can be called a ‘general marker’ it can be used formally and informally. Its formality, it is worth noting, depends on the facial expressions which accompany. If the speaker laughs or smiles, we expect the situation to be informal and vice versa. This marker is also used by the both sexes of different ages and of different social backgrounds.

In example 10, we notice that the gambit used is somehow similar to a grammatical connective. Two stages of the same person being talked about have been presented, an old stage in the history of the person and a new stage. The current message is a result of the old stage which becomes the cause. In this sense, the connective used is a discourse connective which creates a cause–effect relation. If this marker is omitted altogether leaving “wa” alone as a

connective, the relation would be that of coordination (= and) instead of cause – effect relation. Even a native speaker would find it difficult to understand the relation of cause–effect held by the marker. However, the use of the marker facilitates and fastens the comprehension of the messages. The same tone of intonation and stress are used in both examples 10 and 11. However, the two markers cannot be used interchangeably. “walihadha” can be used instead of “wubinnatija” but not vice versa since they denote non-interchangeable-directions of meaning. Still the usage of “walihadha” instead of “wubinnatija” is theoretically acceptable. The native speaker of Mosuli Arabic accepts this use but he never uses it himself since he is used to specific items in specific situations. Thus, it may be said that these two items again are culturally–inherited or culturally determined.

The marker used in example 12 creates a relation of condition. The first part is a condition for the second part. In other words The speaker is saying ‘Only under one condition ...’. The change of this marker into “walihadha”, “wubinnatija” or even just “wa” for instance, may change the meaning of the whole message since the relation held between the two parts will be changed.

The marker underlined in example 13 shows the relation between the message before the marker and the message after it. Both of the messages talk about ‘bringing something to the speaker

in b'. The speaker in 'b' had his memory activated by the keyword "jibitli" 'bring' mentioned in (a)'s speech so, he tried to utter the message in 'b'. Furthermore, the shift of stress from 'qabil' to 'ma?nasa" or vice versa makes no difference at all.

Fragments 14 and 15 are somehow similar. These two items may be called openers since they start a new (related) topic. When the speaker says "bilbidāya" a related topic is expected then. Also, Abu Aziz should be involved in the coming discussion and so he is introduced at the beginning. For this reason, we consider the item to be a discursal connective. In 15, the same is true since what follows "wushshi ththani" (=the other second thing) should be related to the thing preceding. The whole conversation is about some reasons for the girl's rejection of the man's proposal of marriage. Those two markers can be said to have a formal impression and a less formal marker can be expressed by "hassa?ta" (= now) and "?ishshī llākh" (= the other thing).

The two underlined words in example 16 are often used almost together as an idiom to connect fragments of discourse related to the same topic. In this case the information is given but the speaker is trying to activate something in the hearer's mind to proceed according to the context.

The last point to be mentioned here is the ideological function of connectives. Connectives may be responsible for the generation of ideological frames. When two or more positions, which are supposed to be known or given for both the speaker and the hearer, are connected, then such connective is an indication of the process of formulating these frames (cf Kitis 1995:12). In other words, a new sub frame may be added to the cognitive set of the partner and thus the connective used may have a key-word function (for the term cognitive see Van Dijk, 1980 and 1977b). Belief–systems may be changed, enhanced, enlarged and restructured by the use of connectives (cf Jassim & Hussein: Forthcoming)⁽⁶⁾.

4. Conclusion

As it has been illustrated in the previous sections, connectives are a special set of gambits that have discourse– function. Their uses rely heavily on the speaker, the hearer and the context of situation.

Some of these items illustrated before have more than one function, each determined by the context of use. For instance, in fragment 1, the marker used has the function of ‘Rejection’; the speaker wants to make sure that he is rejecting the whole situation. In example 3, the marker utilized has two functions: as an emphasis marker and as a connective. On the contrary, the function of attention-getting and emphasis can be found in fragment 4

(see Jassim and Hussein, 1997). In 6, turn - taking function and attention – getting function `appear clearly. As members of Mosuli culture we believe that individuals always act in a self –conscious, and goal– directed fashion. If this proves to be true, many individual personality traits which characterize Mosuli dialect would be explored in future research. It would also reveal many social norms, values, attitudes, ideologies, individual mind on the one hand and the (sub-) cultural mind on the other hand.

There is a strong tendency for gambits in general and connectives in particular to be culture specific. We have found out that the connectives are difficult (if not impossible) to be translated literally.

A somehow close equivalent could be produced but it never conveys the intended force of the original marker. A native speaker of Mosuli Arabic would not intuitively reject the substitution. However, the same substitution is considered a gaffe in performance. This is very clear in fragment 11. However, substitution is not legitimate since sometimes the change may affect the whole meaning of the message. This change may affect the coherence–relation which occurs among the fragments as in 12. So it seems that the speaker held a specific item in specific situation and even if the substitution was acceptable, the speaker would not use it. The use of a particular marker rather than another is

determined by some criteria like politeness, formality, religion, sex, social status intonation, stress,, rhythm, facial expressions, gesture and head movement. It has been found out that any change of connectives may change the meaning of the message intended as in example 1.

The degree of politeness in a message has been determined by the use of a specific marker. It is also found out that there is a propositional relation between politeness and formality to the use of some connectives. This discussion provides some support for the findings of Critical Discourse Analysis, as it pays adequate attention to the dialectic relationship between social structure, and is at the same time influenced or determined by them. Furthermore, the kinesic features that accompany the use of a gambit seems to be since any change would also affect the intended meaning of the message.

Connectives are realized as either specific or general. If the marker is used in both formal and informal situations, by two sexes, or by people of different ages and social status, then it is called a general marker. Otherwise, it is specific. The general marker seems to have a wide scope one which was stated in fragment 9.

Connectives, furthermore, are found to be either grammatical or discursal. If the marker is used to connect two phrases or

clauses; it will be considered a grammatical connective. It is found out that connectives may create coherence within the stretch of talk used. Unlike the English texts, texts in Mosuli Arabic may lose their unity in the case of omitting the marker (See Jassim and Hussein, 1997).

Notes

1. The term connective used here is a discourse–connective since it has the function of gambits. It differs from Halliday and Hassan’s conjunctive (1976), but approximates Van Dijk’s (1977a) use of the term.
2. Two ways of translation have been adopted to specify the difference between the literal translation which sometimes shows vacuu of sense and the free (target-meaning) translation which depends on the native use, the culture and the context of the item. Some items cannot be translated at all and have no equivalence and if translated, stressed word is marked by (‘); or sometimes by (“) if stressed one by. (see Gimson: 1970). While optionality is marked as usual by brackets (). The process of assimilation is marked by the message is introduced first in translation, then literal and free translation are offered.

3. The term of Topic, here, can be defined as the theme talked about in the message, i.e. it is the discourse topic not the grammatical topic (Cf Hamandi, 1996).
4. In general, messages are taken to be fragments of discourse that may have the quality of coherence to avoid using some other technical terms which may raise some theoretical problems like the use of speech acts.
5. This single study, we believe, yields only tentative generalizations.
6. For another perspective in ideology, see Van Dijk, 1995a & b.

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Appendix one

1. wuzi'l wutabaqlbab wara wulmusiba. ?innu huwwa" lxiltān.

“ and – he – angry- slammed- the door- behind – him – and – the trouble – that – he – was – mistaken”.

(= he become angry and slammed the door behind him. What is sorrowful is that he was mistaken).

2. wukilūm ‘alā halhāl). Ya’ni labah. bzi’tu minilpasāt killa.

“and everyday – like – this- case – which – means-yesterday – I became sick- of buses – all”

(= And everyday we have the routine. Yesterday, I became sick of the whole buses).

3. ?anā ?aruh xādi. walla makān min hina lixāi mā?atiq ?amshi.

“I – go – there –God – destination – from – here – to there – I cannot – tolerate” .

(=Do you want me to go there ? No, I cannot tolerate walking that distance).

4. a. ?abū mahammad mat wuhuwwa ‘aysali.

“Mohammed’s father -died – while – he – was – praying”

(= Abu Mohammed died while he was praying)

b. lish yumma ('it'ajjabti) . ?abū 'ali mārāh 'assuq wumāt.

“why –mother – Ali’s father – did-go – to- market- and – died”.

5. ?lrāyil 'mawuslit ba'id. Wuba'din ?inta rāh truh 'al?ardun. lish
halmalaha 'arrasāyl ?

“letters – not arrived – yet – and then – you – will – go to –
Jordan – why – this insistence – on – letters.

(= The letters did not arrive yet. As far as you are going to Jordan
yourself, there is no need to insist on letters).

6. a. walla ?inhad hili bissafar.

“ by -God – I am – exhausted – in travelling”

(= I am very tired because of travelling)

b. yimma - ? lsafar mashaqa.

“mother – travelling – is- tiresome”

(Yes, travelling is very tiresome)

c. “yam'wwada safar hassa'ta 'māmithil safar qabil.

“ guy – travelling – at present – not - like – travelling – at past.

(= Come on, travelling nowadays is not the same as before).

7. a. rihtu wutwarrattu.

“I went – and involved”.

(= I went and I am sorry for that).

b. yābā - ?anā māqutulak lātruh.

“father – I did- not – tell –you – not – to –go”

(= Didn't I advise you not to go , dear).

8. wuqi'd yihki nis'ssa'a – wulxariba - ?innu miotin'bissalfa.

“and – he – sat – and – talked – half – an hour – what – is –
strange – he is convinced – of – the matter”.

9. ?lshilmuhim. (?innu) 'ali rah yiruh.

“the important – thing – that – Ali - will – go”.

(=The important thing is that Ali will go).

10. 't'adda 'ala hada wudarab hādā wubinaija. ?inqatal.

“did-harm – to –this – and beat – that – and –as- a result – he-
was-killed

(= He hurt this and that and as a result he was killed)

11. ?abuk rah yiruh ‘alsuq. Walihādā. lāzim thaddir nafsak min hassa’ta.

“your father –will- go- to the market- so have to- prepare- yourself- from now”

(= Your father will go to the market. So, you have to prepare yourself from this moment).

12. lazim ninqulu lilmustashfa. Wubhadhilhāla. lāzim b?ibnu.

“we – have – to – take him to- hospital – in-this – case – we have to -call his son”.

(= We have to take him to the hospital and call his son).

13. a. ?ashun jibtūlak kitāb yikhabil.

“what – I – brought you – a book – make crazy”.

(= I brought you a wonderful book).

b. daqiqa qabil mā?ansa – jibitli ?ilqalam lwassituk ‘ali.

“just a moment – before I – forget- have- you- brought- me the pen -I asked you- for”.

14. bilbidāya. arid arahib b?abū ‘aziz.

“at the beginning – I want – to welcome – Aziz’s father”.

(= First, I would like to welcome Abu Aziz)

15. wulshiththani. ?abūya marah yiqbal.

“the other – thing – my father would not accept”

(= Secondly, my father would not accept”).

16. wuba’din ‘latinsa. abu ‘ali ham māyi’rif.

“and -then -do not forget – Ali’s – father – also – does not – know.

(= Please bear in your mind that Abu Ali also doesn’t aware).

17. sār ‘idna hassa’ta. ?arba’ mashakil.

“have-we-now -four-problems”. (= Now we encountered four problems).

ملخص

الروابط الكبرى في اللهجة الموصلية العربية

د. شفاء هادي (*)

د. ياسر أحمد شيت (**)

تعرف الروابط الكبرى على أنها تلك الروابط (الكلمات) التي تستخدم لربط أجزاء الخطاب مع بعضها البعض لبناء نص خطابي موحد متماسك يستخدم الجزأين المرتبطين بوساطة إحدى هذه الروابط متحدثين مختلفين أو متحدث واحد. ويشير وجود هذه العلامات أو الروابط إلى وجود موضوع مشترك كلياً أو جزئياً في الجزأين المرتبطين من الحديث. وقد يغير استعمال رابطة مختلفة على العلاقة الموجودة بين الأجزاء المرتبطة مؤثراً بدوره على تماسك الخطاب منطقياً. وقد وجد تأثير أكثر من عامل واحد على استخدام رابط معين دون سواه. تشمل تلك العوامل: الرسمية، التأدب، الجنس، الدين، الحالة الاجتماعية، العمر، التنعيم، التشديد، وبعض العوامل اللغوية البراغماطيقية مثل: التعابير الوجهية، الإيماءات وحركات الرأس. وعلى العموم فالبحث يسعى إلى إثبات الادعاء الذي يقول بأن الروابط الكبرى هي كلمات ذات صلة وثيقة بسياق النص.

(*) أستاذ مساعد – قسم الترجمة – كلية الآداب / جامعة الموصل.

(**) مدرس مساعد / جامعة الموصل.