

Contrast in Russian and English

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The functional space covered by the conjunctions *and* and *but* in English is divided between three conjunctions in Russian: *i* ‘and,’ *a* ‘and, but’ and *no* ‘but.’ We analyse these markers as imposing different constraints on the discourse topics (questions under discussion) addressed by their conjuncts. The proposed classification of questions neatly fits the additive/adversative marking systems of both languages and predicts the usage of the markers.

Distribution: The Russian conjunction *i*, like *and*, is used to conjoin smaller constituents (e.g. DPs, PPs), VPs, as well as full sentences, however if the sentences have parallel structure as in (1) and topic-focus accentuation as if answering the question *Who likes what?*, then normally *a* is used instead of *i* (Kreidlin and Paducheva, 1974).

- (1) OLEG ljubit FUTBOL #i / a / #no ROMA BASKETBOL
Oleg likes football Roma basketball
Oleg likes football, and Roma likes basketball.

In English, both *and* and *but* can be used here. *But* in cases like (1) is said to emphasise the *dissimilarity* between the conjoined propositions (Asher and Lascarides, 2003, pp. 17, 168); it is particularly appropriate when there is a natural opposition between the contrasted elements: *John is tall, but Bill is small; John likes football, but Bill doesn't*. In all such cases, the Russian *a* is still more appropriate than *no*:

- (2) OLEG LJUBIT futbol #i / a / #no ROMA ne LJUBIT
Oleg likes football Roma not likes
Oleg likes football, but Roma doesn't.

But is translated as *no* into Russian only when the second conjunct denies an expectation triggered by the first, or the conjuncts are understood as an argument and a counterargument for the same claim or suggestion:

- (3) Èto kol'co krasivoe ??a / no dorogoe
this ring beautiful but expensive
This ring is beautiful, but expensive.

Analysis: Our proposal is based on the assumption that discourse normally sticks to the same subject (*NEW in Zeevat, 2006; *Topic Continuity* in Jasinskaja, 2007) which creates a default bias for such relations as *Repair*, *Reformulation*, *Elaboration*, *Explanation* and *Justification*. Forward movement and change must therefore be marked, at least by rising continuation intonation (*Narration* in spoken language), or by discourse markers. Following Zeevat and Jasinskaja (2007),

the role of the English *and* and the Russian *i* in this picture is to work against this default by establishing an *additive* (**ADD**) relation between its conjuncts *p* and *q*, i.e.: *p* and *q* serve as *distinct* answers to the same topic question. The Russian *a* is also additive, but imposes an additional restriction that the question addressed by its conjuncts be a double (or multiple) (*wh*)-question like *Who likes what?*, *Who did what?*, i.e. *a* marks **2WH**: *p* and *q* are doubly distinct answers to a double (*wh*) question. Crucial to our analysis of the relationship between the Russian *a* and the English *but* is the observation that a special case of double questions is constituted by what we call *wh-whether*-questions (**WH-Y/N**), i.e. double questions whose one variable functions like a normal *wh*-variable and the other one ranges over polarities as in a *yes/no*-question. E.g. *Who “whether” likes football? — John does, but Bill doesn’t.* Thus we propose that *but* marks **WH-Y/N**: *p* and *q* are doubly distinct answers to a *wh-whether*-question. Our analysis of *but* is therefore close to Umbach’s (2004) where *but* marks a CONFIRM-DENY relation: *Do John and Bill like football? — [Yes] John does, but [no] Bill doesn’t.* In our proposal, the switch of polarity follows from distinctness of answers to the *yes/no*-part of the question. Finally, the more restricted distribution of the Russian *no* as compared to the English *but* is explained by assuming that it marks doubly distinct answers to a *why-whether*-question (**WHY-Y/N**), a special case of **WH-Y/N**. E.g. *Why “whether” should you buy this ring? — [Why should you buy this ring?] It is beautiful, but [why shouldn’t you buy this ring?] it is expensive.* The implicational hierarchy constituted by the four additive/adversative relations and the relation with the English and Russian markers is shown in (4).

$$(4) \quad \begin{array}{ccccccc} & & \textit{but} & & \textit{and} & & \\ & & \Rightarrow & & \Rightarrow & & \\ \textit{no} & \text{WHY-Y/N} & \Rightarrow & \text{WH-Y/N} & \Rightarrow & \text{2WH} & \Rightarrow & \text{ADD} \\ & \textit{no} & & \textit{a} & & \textit{i} & & \end{array}$$

This does not explain yet, why *i* is not appropriate with **2WH**-topics, cf. (1) and (2), since *i* expresses a less specific relation than *a*. This must be explained by blocking, i.e. *i* is bad in (1) because the point of the utterance is addressing a **2WH**-topic which *must* be marked by the Russian marker *a*, if this is possible. (*and* is not blocked in these cases because there is no English **2WH**-marker.) There are some apparent counterexamples, where the parallel structure of the conjuncts licenses a **2WH** topic, like *Who did what?* in (5), but nevertheless *i* is possible. We claim that in such cases, *i* (+ blocking by *a*) forces a **ADD** question (1wh) as topic, e.g. *What happened?* This excludes all contrastive relations between the conjuncts. Since relations like *Reformulation*, *Elaboration*, *Explanation*, etc. are excluded by additivity, a small selection remains: *Narration*, *Result*, and *List*. *i* is always appropriate with temporal and causal progression, cf. (5); replacing it by *a* in (5) would suggest that one did not know what caused Roma’s falling.

- (5) Oleg vystrelil i / ??a Roma upal
Oleg shot and Roma fell

This is similar to the phenomenon in (6), where gapping in (6b) removes the narrative and result readings that are possible in (6a) (Kehler, 2002; Hendriks, 2004). In our terminology gapping forces **2WH**, whereas in (6a) only **ADD** applies.

- (6) a. Sue became upset and Nan became downright angry.
 b. Sue became upset and Nan \emptyset downright angry.

Blocking is also operative with *a* and *no*, i.e. *no* marks **WHY-Y/N** connections and normally *must* be used there. However, it is still possible to use *a* in some cases. The subtle difference in meaning may be due to the fact that *no* is often read as deciding the argument: the second

conjunct gives the conclusion as in (7). This is the same in the *no*-version of (3), but the *a*-version typically keeps the issue open: the ring is both nice and expensive, what shall we do? The **WHY-Y/N** connection is now an ordinary **2WH** in which both conjuncts are equal.

- (7) a. The ring is expensive, but it is very beautiful. (We will buy it)
b. The ring is very beautiful, but quite expensive. (We will not buy it)

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