

FANBOYS in linking two or more language structures in English language

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Abstract

The problem of linking two or more language structures in English by using single words that will be discussed in this paper seems simple at first, particularly from the theoretical point of view. However, in practice, when meaning is the most important, a lot of different situations and issues may occur. The basic aim of this paper is to provide a brief overview of FANBOYS (the seven conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so), as these are the linkers of language structures such as words, phrases and sentences conveying different ideas. Their identification, classification and grammatical characteristics will be mentioned in the paper to provide a better understanding of their role in the English language. The paper will also analyze them in a selected text in order to discuss different situations and possible issues. According to their structures, linkers can be divided into single, complex and compound words; some other members of the word classes (prepositions, adverbs) depending on the meaning to be expressed, can serve as those structures as well. FANBOYS belong to the closed class items because they can be counted, they exclude each other, and they do not express the basic meaning in language. They usually express their meaning when they appear in the text. That is why the analysis of the text in the paper would be important for English language learners, particularly as they play the role of conveying the exact meaning between the speaker and the listener and vice versa. The findings of this paper could be used to improve English speaking and writing skills, as coherence and cohesion are vital for the smooth flow of language structures and the ideas they convey.

Keywords: language structures, conjunctions, FANBOYS, speaking skills, writing skills

Introduction

This paper deals with a specific small group of words that basically serves to link two or more language structures in order to enable the speaker to express her/his thoughts in the best possible way. In this research, a combination of several methods (synchronic, diachronic, etc.) is used in order to help solve the problem of better understanding of FANBOYS. Result of the research would help students of all levels of language learning to be as prompt as possible when they want to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions in English.

The special attention will be paid to the three most often used linkers – *and*, *or*, *but* – and their role will be analyzed in the corpus. The rules would be recommended as well.

Words represent one of the most important language structures. Studying them is equally fulfilling and fascinating. The total number of words cannot be determined and they represent the scope of vocabulary of every person (Crystal, 2007). As almost all words in IE languages, English words are characterized by structure, meaning and function, but they are not the smallest meaningful units in language. The smallest units that express either lexical or grammatical meaning are morphemes that are sometimes equal to words, and other times smaller than a word (*book* – *books*, *happy* – *unhappy*).

According to the structure, English words can be simple - consisting of only one morpheme (*sun*); complex – consisting of two or more morphemes (*wonder-ful-ly*); compound – a combination of usually two and sometimes more than two words (*arm-chair*); and finally complex-compound – consisting of two or more words, whereas one word is a complex one (*wash-ing-machine-s*).

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The most important role of words is that they express meaning. Since morphemes are the smallest units, they express the basic meaning in language, and as such, they are units of lexicology and semantics – lexemes, at the same time. When attached to a word (base) just a small number of morphemes do not influence the meaning. They are used only to denote a certain grammatical characteristic (-s in *books*, -ed in *worked*, -ing in *working*, -er in *greater*, -est in *smallest*). Such morphemes are called inflectional.

All other morphemes that influence the meaning of the base are the derivational ones. As such, words play the most important role in language, particularly when they are combined to form structures like phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, headings in books (M. Frank CITAT).

For presenting such a complex issue for investigation, linguists (Crystal, 2007) try to divide them into two groups/classes – those that carry the meaning, cannot be counted, do not exclude each other belong to the open class items. A smaller number of them that can be counted, get their real meaning only when combined with other structures, and exclude each other belong to the closed class items.

2. Theoretical background

FUNBOYS are words that, according to their basic characteristics, belong to closed-class items or minor categories (K. Borjars & K. Burridge, CITAT), known in linguistics and grammar as conjunctions. It is evident that they can be counted—there are seven of them—they are represented by a simple structure consisting of one morpheme, and they function as connectors between other language structures, such as words, phrases, clauses, and sentences (Spasić, 2010). These structures may consist of individual words, as in *Bill and Mary*, or phrases, as in *young and handsome boy*.

The most important language units, such as clauses and sentences, can also be linked through conjunctions in order to express ideas, thoughts, processes, and sensations more effectively. If a conjunction links two units of equal rank, the process is referred to as coordination, as in *I drink coffee and he drinks tea*. If a conjunction links two or more units of unequal status (one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses), the process is referred to as subordination, as in *I drink coffee whereas he drinks tea*.

However, the primary aim of this paper is to present a set of conjunctions that link two or more independent units—coordinating conjunctions. The most important among them are *and*, *or*, and *but*. While *and* functions as a coordinating conjunction expressing addition, *or* expresses disjunction, whereas *but* functions as an adversative conjunction. The semantic role of conjunctions is highly significant in both written and oral communication.

The process of coordination can be syndetic when *and*, *or*, and *but* are used as connectors. When conjunctions are omitted and the units are separated by commas, the coordination is called asyndetic. Finally, when the same conjunction is repeated for emphasis or stylistic effect, the coordination is referred to as polysyndetic.

Coordination may also be quasi-coordination, pseudo-coordination, or, in informal speech, appended coordination. Furthermore, it can be simple or complex, although these forms require additional investigation.

The conjunction *and* expresses several meanings by indicating different types of relationships between two or more events. These meanings primarily include addition, comment, condition, similarity, contrast, result, chronological sequence, and concessive meaning. Examples include:

- *My daughter has curly hair and she also plays the guitar.* (addition)
- *There is only one thing to do, and that's to apologize.* (comment)
- *Give him some ideas and he'll do the writing.* (condition)
- *The agreement should be useful, and similarly the sharing of assets could be easily arranged.* (similarity)
- *My mother is open, and in contrast my father is secretive.* (contrast)
- *Mary heard the news and she called Peter.* (result)
- *He got up and then had breakfast.* (chronological sequence)
- *I tried hard, and yet I failed the most important exam.* (concessive meaning)

Another basic conjunction is *or*, which excludes the possibility that the contents of the linked structures are simultaneously true or fulfilled, as illustrated in the sentence *Should I stay or should I go?*

This conjunction may also express alternatives or reinforce exclusiveness. In the example *We can make pasta or we can order some food*, the conjunction *or* is inclusive because an additional clause could also be added.

The conjunction *or* may also function to correct or modify the meaning expressed in the first clause, as in *They like their new teacher, or at least they appear to like him*. In addition, *or* can express a negative condition: *Study harder or you will fail your exams*.

The conjunction *but* primarily expresses contrast, particularly when the content of the second clause is unexpected in relation to the first clause, or when a negation implied in the first clause is expressed positively in the second clause. Examples include:

- *My son is lazy, but he can work hard if needed.*
- *I wanted to go for a long walk, but it started raining heavily.*
- *They like chocolates, but yet they do not eat them.*
-

The conjunction *nor* (along with *neither*) expresses negation and is often considered equivalent to *and + not* or *or + not*:

- *She did not receive any assistance from the head office, neither did she believe their assurance that action would be taken.*

The conjunction *for* is generally treated as a subordinating conjunction expressing reason or explanation:

- *Peter stayed up all night, for he had an important event the next day.*

The use of conjunctions in written texts is closely connected with the use of commas. In oral communication, however, a speaker may indicate a comma through a short pause. This is particularly recommended when *but* and *yet* are used.

When the coordinated structures are not independent, commas are generally omitted, as in:

- *Peter likes to eat chocolate and drink coffee.*
- *Monkeys like apples and bananas.*

The use of commas becomes optional when more than two structures are linked together:

- *Mary is preparing a simple meal with beans, potatoes, and chicken.*
- *Mary is preparing beans, potatoes and chicken.*

Regarding these simple conjunctions, comma usage may often represent a difficulty, and several recommendations have therefore been proposed. In oral communication, if a comma is required, it is usually indicated through intonation or a brief pause. Generally, commas are recommended before *but* and *yet*.

All of the above highlights the importance of simple conjunctions, particularly with regard to the meanings they express and the functions they perform within language structures.

3. FUNBOYS in practice

In scientific texts, papers and books related to language, law, business, medicine, etc., that the authors of this paper had the chance to study in the course of their education and professional engagement, there are numerous conjunctions complementing the meaning of the text.

The authors also had the chance to draft texts in both languages and translate them from English into Serbian and vice versa. In the course of teaching, translation (and interpretation) from Serbian into English, the authors of this paper also faced issues regarding the use of conjunctions in English, like the exact conjunction to use to preserve the original meaning, whether to use comma or not, or whether to use the conjunction at all.

The following examples from the two project documents related to the activities funded by international donors (both drafted in English, and translated from Serbian) will try to solve the above problems in order to facilitate further processes of language learning in a broader sense, and translation (interpretation). The importance of simple coordinated conjunctions is obvious, not only regarding structures, but considering meaning as well. Incorporating conjunctions into language adds clarity, logic, and purpose to written or spoken words.

Out of numerous examples found, the authors analyzed 70, some of the most typical are presented below. All these examples get their real meaning in context which is very important for understanding the function and meaning of FUNBOYS.

As it has already been noted in this paper, *and* can link two or more events with different meanings, but somehow related – primarily addition, comment, condition, similarity, contrast, result, chronological sequence, and chronological sequence.

The collection and analysis of information about competitors is presented below.

The future events and circumstances were not known on the date of preparation of this document.

We cannot guarantee that the projected values, objectives and results contained herein will actually be achieved.

This landscape is famous for its beauty and is characterized by aesthetic values for tourism.

The author based this Report on data, estimates, and on available information collected through various sources.

It is important understand and manage the interdependencies between human activities and the natural environment.

*We would like to thank the professionals who have taken the time to participate and share their views.
Knowledge exchange and dissemination of information are very important.
The staff collected the information and prepared the summary.
All stakeholders leverage the distinctive natural and cultural assets of the mentioned areas to foster economic development.
Certain results of this study are very useful, and a few of them are inconclusive.*

The examples above indicate that although *and* expresses different meanings like similarity, contrast and result, it is most frequently used to express addition of two or more units (like in the first few examples).

Or excludes the possibility that the contents of the linked structures are true or that are to be fulfilled. It is also used in some cases to strengthen the exclusive meaning, with *else* and *alternatively*. The conjunction *or* can be inclusive as well, and could correct the meaning expressed in the first clause or imply negative condition.

Everything that was left out has been beyond the concern of the investor or the bank financing the project.

The water spring was described as the "gift of God" or a "real blessing".

Mountain centres are the second most visited category, with 1.6 million overnight stays, or 25.6% of the total.

This project schedule needs to be complied with or the deadlines will not be met.

The water from this spring can be used both for drinking and for therapeutic purposes at the spring itself, or it can be bottled and supplied to the market.

They want to achieve a set of policy objectives or other goals over a specified period.

Connection with a value chain can be a source of wealth for a specific area or a source of degradation.

The local authorities have legislative or programming powers.

What are the options that reduce can reduce the burden or extend the period of return on investment?

Mountain centres are the second most visited category, with 1.6 million overnight stays, or 25.6% of the total.

The phone in the room, which none of the guests use anymore to make calls to the outside world, order a wake-up call, or order room service, as there are other options today.

This is not the case in cities and tourist centres, where participants can quickly find an option to "escape" for an hour or two

What are the options that reduce the burden on SMEs or extend the period of return on investment?

The examples above show that all four meanings of *or* are equally used.

As it has already been explained in this paper, the basic meaning of *but* is to express contrast.

Those apartments can be unified or completely individual, having its function in both cases, but with a difference in structure.

Why is it not a typical feasibility study, but the feasibility analysis?

Many other segments provide certain information, but are never essential for the donor's decision.

This is a general issue but is particularly relevant for this kind of regions.

The mountain is sparsely populated, but that does not diminish its importance and beauty.

New trends are emerging, but this service has its own place in hotel industry.

These products played an important part in global trade history but also in innovation exchanges.

This framework is not static but continues to evolve and be applied as a diagnostic tool.

Some banquets will be organized during conferences, but most of them will be connected to the tradition of celebrating important events like weddings.

This area is famous in the country for its exceptional landscapes, but it is not recognized outside the country's borders.

This selected form of funding attracts a large base of investors, but also requires a more complex management.

...neither do they exist in isolation but are commonly linked with other chains

Some communities have high demands for finance but limited budgets.

The scale of projects varies, but they usually involve numerous partners and sectors within a defined region.

It is obvious from the above examples that *but* is a frequently used conjunction with the meaning that has already been mentioned above.

It is worth mentioning that *for*, although not one of the most used conjunctions, is rather treated as subordinator than a correlator. As a conjunction, it is rare, and used in formal, and often literary, contexts, which is why there are just two examples below, found in corpus.

The investor established another legal entity, for he wanted to engage in another line of business.

Choosing the right franchise is only a small part of the job, for it enables getting the right guidelines and standards.

4. Results and conclusion

The results of the research show that the correct use of conjunctions is very important in both written and spoken language. Although they are small in structure, they influence the meaning in English language. They get their meaning in the context, even if sometimes they are not actually present.

The use of comma is optional, but it is recommended before *but*. In oral communication, comma is denoted by the speaker's pause. The results also confirm that conjunctions are important in conveying the exact meaning between the writer (speaker) and the reader (listener) and vice versa, and that the correct use of conjunctions in language adds clarity, logic and purpose to written or spoken words.

The results of this paper could be used to improve English speaking and writing skills, which are of particular importance in the process of teaching and learning, as well as translating and interpreting, since coherence and cohesion are very important for the smooth flow of language structures and the ideas they convey.

Language teachers should pay more attention to these words in the process of teaching and language learners should practice them more frequently in order to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions in English more clearly and accurately. In the course of further research, it is recommended to investigate simple correlated conjunctions in other scientific or literary texts to show either their frequency in use or their meaning.

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