

A Dichotomous Comprehension Model of Clausal Conjunctions*

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Abstract: Ariel (2012) proposes a dichotomous account of English *and*-conjunctions with distinct types of inferential processes called relational strategies and independent strategies. She presents these inferences only as pragmatic strategies that depend on context. However, neither this inferential distinction nor its status has been extensively examined in other languages. The Japanese language, for example, has three structures that correspond to English *and*-conjunctions: the *-te*, *-tari*, and *-shi* structures. One of the criteria based on which the structures delimit their interpretation is the distinction between relational and independent inferences. Indeed, the distinction between the *-te* structure and the *-tari* and *-shi* structures is parallel to that between the inferential patterns: the *-te* structure is compatible with relational inferences, and the *-tari* and *-shi* structures are compatible with independent inferences. Given that both English and Japanese share the relational/independent distinction, this distinction is rather a fundamental property that contributes to the interpretation of clausal conjunctions, beyond the distinction between mere pragmatic strategies. Thus, the comprehension mechanisms of clausal conjunctions can be modeled using the distinction between relational and independent inferences.

Key words: clausal conjunction, inferential processing unit, relational inferences, independent inferences

1. Introduction

A variety of pragmatic accounts of English *and*-conjunctions have been offered since Grice (1967, 1975, 1989). Among these major analyses is Ariel (2012), who claims that the interpretation of *and*-conjunctions involves two distinct types of inferences. Nagatsuji's (2018: chapter 2) review of the analyses finds her dichotomous analysis plausible in that it provides an accurate interpretive taxonomy of *and*-conjunctions.

However, this inferential distinction has not been extensively examined in other languages. The Japanese language, for example, has multiple clause-linking structures that correspond to English *and*-conjunctions. Given this fact, how can the interpretation of clausal conjunctions be accounted for cross-linguistically?

This paper proposes, in agreement with Ariel's view, a dichotomous model of the comprehension mechanisms of clausal conjunctions based on Japanese data. I claim that the distinction between relational and independent inferences is a fundamental property that contributes to the dichotomy of clausal conjunctions beyond a distinction between pragmatic strategies in the interpretation.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 outlines Ariel's (2012) dichotomous analysis of English *and*-conjunctions. Section 3 shows that the distinction between relational and independent inferences is one of the criteria based on which Japanese conjunctive structures delimit their interpretation. Section 4 addresses some implications of the dichotomous comprehension model of clausal conjunctions. Section 5 summarizes the argument.

2. The dichotomy of English *and*-conjunctions

Ariel (2012) proposes a dichotomous account of English *and*-conjunctions with two distinct interpretive strategies: (i) a relational strategy by which a relation between the conjuncts is inferred, and a conjoined proposition that consists of the conjuncts and this relation contributes to the discourse topic; and (ii) an independent strategy by which each conjunct makes a separate but parallel contribution to the same discourse topic. For example, the interpretation of (1a) is classified as a relational strategy, and that of (1b) as an independent strategy.

- (1) a. KEN: So I eat the local food, and get deathly ill. (Ariel 2012: 1692)
 b. My client entered ((Israel)) legally and he was born here and you know it is his right to be here.¹⁾
 (*ibid.*: 1697)

In (1a), a cause–consequence relation is recovered between the states of affairs described in the conjuncts through inferences, and the conjoined proposition that consists of the conjuncts and the causal relation between them contributes to the speaker's point in the conversation; here, Ken is understood as explaining why he would not return to Mexico. In (1b), uttered by a lawyer who claims her client's legal immigration into Israel, the conjuncts function as independent pieces of evidence, each one supporting the same conclusion that there are no grounds for a legal case against the client.

Ariel provides tests that distinguish the relational and independent strategies based on contrasts reflected in various phenomena. Those tests include the insertion of a word or phrase with an additive function, such as *what's more*. Relational conjunctions do not allow the addition of the expression, whereas independent ones do.

- (2) a. ?? KEN: So I eat the local food and **what's more**, get deathly ill.

- b. My client entered ((Israel)) legally and he was born here and **what’s more**, you know it is his right to be here.

The *and*-utterance in (2a) is not acceptable in the context; the insertion of *what’s more* prevents the conjunction from functioning as a conjoined proposition with the communication of a causal relation, thereby making it incapable of contributing as a whole to the discourse topic. In contrast, in (2b), the *and*-conjunction co-occurs with the additive expression, since the propositions of the individual conjuncts act as evidence for the speaker’s claim to make direct contributions to the same discourse topic.

This section has provided an overview of the relational/independent dichotomy of English *and*-conjunctions in line with Ariel’s analysis. The next section examines Japanese clausal conjunction systems.

3. The dichotomy of Japanese clausal conjunctions

As noted in section 1, the Japanese language has multiple clause-linking structures that correspond to English *and*-conjunctions: typical examples include the *-te*, *-tari*, and *-shi* structures. While these structures encode inherent meanings, they fall into two types from the perspective of an inferential processing unit, or an information chunk that functions as a premise of an inference or inferences to derive an intended effect in utterance interpretation (Nagatsuji 2014). This section uses insertion and replacement tests to argue that the *-te* structure involves relational inferences, and the *-tari* and *-shi* structures independent ones.

3.1 The *-te* structure and relational inferences

The *-te* structure can communicate a range of relations between the states of affairs described in the clauses connected by *-te*. For example, the interpretations of the *-te* utterances in (3)²⁾ are, respectively, temporal (3a)³⁾, causal (3b), paratactic (3c), and adversative/contrastive (3d):

- (3) a. [A girl is talking to her mother on a pay phone.]

<i>Okāsan</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>koe</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>saegiru</i>	<i>yōni</i> ,	<i>pū</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>ōkiku</i>
mother	GEN	voice	ACC	interfere	as.if	onomatopoeia	QUOT	loudly
<i>buzā</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>nat-te</i> ,	<i>sorekara</i>	<i>denwa</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>kire-ta</i> .		
beep	NOM	make- <i>te</i>	then	phone	TOP	go.dead-PAST		

‘The phone beeped loudly enough to interfere with her mother’s voice, and then the line went dead.’

(BCCWJ)

- b. *Tokyo.to* *de* *wa* *Ishihara* *to.chiji* *ga* *muhōna* *karasu* *ni*
Tokyo in TOP Ishihara governor NOM disorderly crow about

atama.ni.ki-te, karasu o gekitaisuru tameno purojekuto chīmu o
 get.mad-te crow ACC drive.away to project team ACC
hossokusase-mashi-ta.
 set.up-POL-PAST

‘Mr. Ishihara, the governor of Tokyo, got mad at crows that did people harm and set up a task force to drive them away.’ (BCCWJ)

c. [An author describes eyes painted on a ship named *Tatara*.]

Sengan wa “Mata No Tatara” to yobarete-i-te, me no
 eye.of.ship TOP “Mata No Tatara” QUOT be-called-te eye GEN
kōzu ni kyōmibukai tokuchō ga aru.
 composition in interesting feature NOM is

‘The eyes painted on the ship are called “Mata No Tatara,” and their composition has interesting features.’ (BCCWJ)

d. *Kanojo wa koredake idaina koto o shite-i-te, jibun no*
 she TOP such great thing ACC has-done-te oneself GEN
koto o chittomo idaida to wa omottei-nai.
 thing ACC at.all great COMP TOP consider-not

‘She (Mother Teresa) has done such great things, and she does not consider herself a great person at all.’ (BCCWJ)

The point is that the *-te* structure exploits a conjoined proposition that consists of both clauses and an enriched coherence relation between them as an inferential processing unit to contribute to the discourse topic.

This inferential property of the *-te* structure is confirmed by the insertion of an expression that is close in meaning to *what’s more*. Indeed, many *-te* utterances do not co-occur with an additive expression, such as *sono.ue* (‘what’s more’) since the insertion prevents the structure from functioning as a single inferential processing unit.

(4) a. ?? *Okāsan no koe o saegiru yōni, pū to ōkiku buzā ga*
nat-te, sono.ue denwa wa kire-ta.

make-te what’s.more

‘The phone beeped loudly enough to interfere with her mother’s voice and what’s more, the line went dead.’

tabe ni it-tari, shōgun ga Soraya no oshieru jugyō ni
 eat to go-tari general NOM Soraya NOM teach class ACC
de-tari shi-ta.
 attend-tari do-PAST

‘They took walks together and went to lunch on Saturdays, and the general sat in on some of her classes.’
 (*Kimi no tame nara Senkai demo*, p. 303)

The *tari*-marked clauses, their taking walks together and going to lunch on Saturdays and the general’s sitting in on some of his daughter’s classes, are interpreted as concrete instances of the previous sentence: the general’s frailty and time had improved the previously negative circumstances resulting from the bad relationship between him and Soraya. In other words, each *-tari* clause has an illustrative “instance–abstract” relation with the preceding sentence to help the reader understand how the relationship between the general and his daughter has improved. This suggests that the *-tari* structure functions so that the individual clauses contribute to the same discourse topic.

Next, consider the interpretation of the *-shi* structure.

- (6) [A man who has worked on growing organic rice is giving an interview. He says that he tried a variety of means to remove weeds from his paddy, but all of them failed.]

Carp and tadpole shrimp, which I have tried before, are aquatic creatures, and their living conditions are restricted.

Suion ga takai to hataraka-nai-shi, mizu ga
 water.temperature GEN high if work-not-*shi* water GEN
nakunat-tara shinde.shimau.
 is.gone-if die

‘They are not active at high water temperatures, and they cannot live without water.’

(*Professional Shigoto no Ryūgi*, p. 31)

The individual clauses of the *-shi* structure—that carp and tadpole shrimp are not active at high water temperatures and that they cannot live without water—provide evidence for the previous utterance: the living conditions of carp and tadpole shrimp are restricted. The first clause acts as a premise and leads to an implicated conclusion that the aquatic creatures live in limited conditions. The second clause also acts as a premise, deriving the same conclusion. That is, both clauses reinforce the previous utterance, and the second one, in particular, strengthens it by providing evidence beyond that provided in the first clause. In the *-shi* structure, too, the clauses function as distinct inferential processing units to contribute to the

discourse topic, converging on a single effect.

The inferential property of the *-tari* and *-shi* structures is also confirmed by the insertion test, which worked for the *-te* structure. They co-occur with an additive expression since the individual clauses make direct contributions to the same discourse topic.

- (7) *Futari wa isshoni sanposhi-tari, doyōbi ni wa chūshoku*
o tabe ni it-tari, sono.ue shōgun ga Soraya no
go-tari what's.more
oshieru jugyō ni de-tari shi-ta.

‘They took walks together and went to lunch on Saturdays and what’s more, the general sat in on some of her classes.’

- (8) *Suion ga takai to hataraka-nai-shi, sono.ue mizu ga*
work-not-shi what's.more
nakunat-tara shinde.shimau.

‘They are not active at high water temperatures and what’s more, they cannot live without water.’

In (7) and (8), the utterance with the insertion sounds natural in the context in which the original structure is used. The *-tari* clauses with the co-occurrence of the word *sono.ue* (‘what’s more’) in (7) can still function the same, with some effect entailed by the use of the expression. Similarly, the *-shi* structure with the insertion in (8) can also play the same role in the discourse, although the additive expression makes the introduction of another piece of evidence clearer. The insertion test in (7) and (8) supports the inferential property of the *-tari* and *-shi* structures: the individual clauses make direct contributions to the same discourse topic.

Thus, the *-tari* and *-shi* structures exploit the propositions of the individual clauses to contribute to the discourse topic. This property agrees with that assumed by the independent strategy in Ariel’s terms, from which it follows that these structures are compatible with independent inferences.

3.3 The Japanese clausal conjunction systems

Given the arguments so far, the distinction between the *-te* structure and the *-tari* and *-shi* structures should be parallel to that between relational and independent inferences. If this is so, the acceptability of the structures will reflect the distinction between the inferential patterns. Consider cases in which the *-te* structure is replaced with the *-tari* or *-shi* structure:

(9) a. *Tokyo.to de wa Ishihara to.chiji ga muhōna karasu ni*
Tokyo in TOP Ishihara governor NOM disorderly crow about
atama.ni.ki-te, karasu o gekitaisuru tameno purojekuto chīmu o
get.mad-te crow ACC drive.away to project team ACC
hossokusase-mashi-ta.
set.up-POL-PAST

b. ?? *Tokyo.to de wa Ishihara to.chiji ga muhōna karasu ni*
atama.ni.ki-tari, karasu o gekitaisuru tameno purojekuto chīmu o
get.mad-tari
hossokusase-tari shi-mashi-ta.
set.up-tari do-POL-PAST

c. ?? *Tokyo.to de wa Ishihara to.chiji ga muhōna karasu ni*
atama.ni.ki-ta-shi, karasu o gekitaisuru tameno purojekuto chīmu o
get.mad-PAST-shi
hossokusase-mashi-ta.
set.up-POL-PAST

‘Mr. Ishihara, the governor of Tokyo, got mad at crows that did people harm and set up a task force to drive them away.’ (= (3b); (b) and (c) are mine)

(10) [An author describes eyes painted on a ship named *Tatara*.]

a. *Sengan wa “Mata No Tatara” to yobarete-i-te, me no*
eye.of.ship TOP “Mata No Tatara” QUOT is-called-te eye GEN
kōzu ni kyōmibukai tokuchō ga aru.
composition in interesting feature NOM is

b. ?? *Sengan wa “Mata No Tatara” to yobarete-i-tari, me no*
be-called-tari
kōzu ni kyōmibukai tokuchō ga at-tari suru.
be-tari do

c. ?? *Sengan wa “Mata No Tatara” to yobarete-iru-shi, me no*
is-called-shi
kōzu ni kyōmibukai tokuchō ga aru.
is

‘The eyes painted on the ship are called “Mata No Tatara,” and their composition has interesting features.’ (= (3c); (b) and (c) are mine)

In both cases, neither the *-tari* structure nor the *-shi* structure is acceptable: in (9), the *-te* structure (9a) communicates a cause–consequence relation, but the *-tari* (9b) and *-shi* (9c) structures cannot be used instead. In (10), the *-te* structure (10a) communicates a paratactic relation, but the *-tari* (10b) and *-shi* (10c) structures are incompatible with the context. Notice that the *-te* structure cannot be replaced with the *-tari* or *-shi* structure when expressing either an enriched coherence relation, as in (9a), or a mere paratactic relation, as in (10a). This shows that the *-te* structure and the *-tari* and *-shi* structures differ in the inferential pattern, even when a purely paratactic reading is available to all of the structures.

The same holds true for replacement of the *-tari* or *-shi* structure with the *-te* structure:

- (11) [After an Afghan ex-general and his daughter, Soraya, arrive in America as refugees, their relationship gradually changes.]

The general’s frailty—and time—had softened things between him and Soraya too.

- a. *Futari wa isshoni sanposhi-tari, doyōbi ni wa chūshoku*
 two.people TOP together take.a.walk-*tari* Saturday on TOP lunch
o tabe ni it-tari, shōgun ga Soraya no oshieru jugyō
 ACC eat to go-*tari* general NOM Soraya NOM teach class
ni de-tari shi-ta.
 ACC attend-*tari* do-PAST

- b. ?? *Futari wa isshoni sanposhi-te, doyōbi ni wa chūshoku*
 take.a.walk-*te*
o tabe ni it-te, shōgun ga Soraya no oshieru jugyō
 go-*te*
ni de-ta.
 attend-PAST

‘They took walks together and went to lunch on Saturdays, and the general sat in on some of her classes.’ (= (5); (b) is mine)

- (12) [A man who has worked on growing organic rice is giving an interview. He says that he tried a variety of means to remove weeds from his paddy, but all of them failed.]

Carp and tadpole shrimp, which I have tried before, are aquatic creatures, and their living conditions are restricted.

- a. *Suion ga takai to hataraka-nai-shi, mizu ga*
 water.temperature GEN high if work-not-*shi* water GEN
nakunata-tara shinde.shimau.
 is.gone-if die

b. ?? *Suion ga takai to hataraka-naku-te, mizu ga*
 work-not-*te*
nakunat-tara shinde.shimau.

‘They are not active at high water temperatures, and they cannot live without water.’

(= (6); (b) is mine)

In each pair, the *-te* structure is unacceptable: in (11), the *-tari* structure (11a) is understood as providing illustrations of the previous sentence, but the *-te* structure (11b) does not fit the context. In (12), the *-shi* structure (12a) is interpreted as providing independent pieces of evidence for the previous utterance, but the *-te* structure (12b) is not compatible with the context. A stronger argument emerges in cases in which both the *-tari* and *-shi* structures are acceptable, but the *-te* structure is not. Consider (13):

(13) a. *Kinō wa tomodachi ga ki-tari, konpyūtā ga*
 yesterday TOP friend NOM come-*tari* computer NOM
koware-tari shi-ta-node, nani.mo deki-nakat-ta.
 break-*tari* do-PAST-because anything can.do-not-PAST

b. *Kinō wa tomodachi ga ki-ta-shi, konpyūtā ga*
 come-PAST-*shi*
koware-ta-node, nani.mo deki-nakat-ta.
 break-PAST-because

c. ?? *Kinō wa tomodachi ga ki-te, konpyūtā ga*
 come-*te*
koware-ta-node, nani.mo deki-nakat-ta.
 break-PAST-because

‘Yesterday, a friend came over and the computer broke down, so I couldn’t accomplish anything.’

(Hasegawa 1996: 51; (b) and (c) are mine)

The *-tari* (13a) and *-shi* (13b) structures are understood as providing a list of things that caused the speaker to accomplish nothing, with some nuances of meaning. In contrast, the *-te* structure (13c) sounds odd in this context; although a friend’s coming over and the computer’s breaking down are best seen as independent instances that spoiled the speaker’s day, a temporal sequence or a cause–consequence relation can be read into the two events. Here, too, the discrepancies in acceptability between the *-te* structure and the *-tari* or *-shi* structure mark a boundary between relational and independent inferences.

Thus, overall, the replacement tests in (9)–(13) demonstrate that the distinction between the *-te* struc-

ture and the *-tari* and *-shi* structures closely correlates with that between relational and independent inferences.

This section has argued that the Japanese clausal conjunction systems are based (at least partly) on the distinction between the inferential patterns. The next section briefly discusses the implications of this dichotomy of clausal conjunctions.

4. A fundamental property of clausal conjunctions

Both in English and in Japanese, the interpretation of clausal conjunctions involves two inferential patterns: relational and independent inferences. The comprehension mechanisms of clausal conjunctions can, therefore, be depicted as a dichotomous model based on the distinction between the inferential patterns.

This dichotomous comprehension model may lead us to reexamine the status of the inferential distinction. Ariel (2012) presents relational and independent inferences as pragmatic strategies that depend on context. Notice, however, that the distinction is one of the criteria based on which the Japanese *-te*, *-tari*, and *-shi* structures delimit their interpretation. This suggests that the Japanese clausal conjunction systems are sensitive to a property that does not linguistically affect the English systems; *and*-conjunctions are viewed as a single structure, both syntactically and semantically. Thus, the distinction between the inferential patterns lies in the semantic side in the account of the Japanese clausal conjunctions.

Based on my approach, the relational/independent distinction seems to be more than a distinction between pragmatic strategies. Rather, the inferential distinction can be seen as a fundamental property that contributes to the dichotomous comprehension model of clausal conjunctions. This alternative view will still accommodate the fact that the distinction does not semantically define the *and* structure; the property should prompt the pragmatic strategies in the interpretation of *and*-conjunctions.

This section has concluded from the cross-linguistic perspective made possible by the Japanese data that the comprehension mechanisms of clausal conjunctions can be modeled using the distinction between relational and independent inferences. I have also proposed a new status for the inferential distinction as a fundamental property that contributes to the dichotomy of clausal conjunctions, beyond the distinction between mere pragmatic strategies.

5. Concluding remarks

The present paper has presented a dichotomous model of the comprehension mechanisms of clausal conjunctions based on the distinction between relational and independent inferences. The examination of the Japanese structures that correspond to English *and*-conjunctions finds that the inferential pattern divides these structures: the *-te* structure is relational, and the *-tari* and *-shi* structures are independent.

The distinction between the inferential patterns is involved in a semantic dimension of the Japanese clausal conjunction systems. Accordingly, the inferential distinction can be a fundamental property that contributes to the dichotomous comprehension model.

The implications discussed here may be limited and need further examination. However, I hope I have cast light on an important aspect of clausal conjunctions that does not seem to simply follow necessarily from Ariel's analysis of *and*-conjunctions.

Notes

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- 1) The double-bracketed word is added by Ariel.
- 2) The abbreviations used for word-by-word glosses in the present paper are as follows: ACC (accusative), COMP (complementizer), GEN (genitive), NOM (nominative), PAST (past), POL (polite), QUOT (quotative), and TOP (topic).
- 3) The *-te* utterance in (3a) co-occurs with the expression *sorekara* ('then'), which explicitly communicates a sequential relation. However, omitting the word makes little difference to the interpretation. Compare (i):

(i) *Okāsan no koe o saegiru yōni, pū to ōkiku*
 mother GEN voice ACC interfere as.if onomatopoeia QUOT loudly
buzā ga nat-te, denwa wa kire-ta.
 beep NOM make-*te* phone TOP go.dead-PAST

'The phone beeped loudly enough to interfere with her mother's voice, and the line went dead.'

The *-te* structure in (i) also communicates a temporal sequence, much like the original phrasing in (3a): the phone's making a loud beep preceded its going dead. This indicates that the temporal interpretation of (3a) should not be attributed to the use of the sequential expression.

- 4) There may be paratactic *-te* utterances co-occurring with an additive expression. However, they cannot, strictly speaking, be paratactic in the sense that they are not independent. A quantitative analysis provides indirect but important evidence for the view that the *-te* structure cannot be independent. A search of data (2,554,958 words in total) from the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japa-

nese (BCCWJ) found only limited insertion of an additive expression, such as *shikamo* ('furthermore') into *-te* structures (note that I did not examine the data in statistical terms). Among 318 instances of the word, there were 191 usages at the beginning of a sentence (60.1%), 71 insertions into the *ren'yō*-form structure (22.3%), 14 insertions into the *-te* structure (4.4%), and 42 other usages (13.2%). The *ren'yō*-form structure is a type of clause linkage in which the adverbial form, or the *ren'yō* form of a predicate at the end of a clause connects another clause, and it has the same morphosyntactic features as the *-te* structure. Given this fact, the low number of insertions into the *-te* structure suggests that this structure still tends to disallow insertion. If this is so, then the co-occurrence of the *-te* structure with an additive expression can be attributed to other aspects than the key property of the structure—functioning as a single inferential processing unit.

- 5) I use the terms “exemplification” and “illustration” as words that refer to different concepts. The former represents an upper concept that encompasses both providing concrete instances to elucidate an abstract or elusive assumption and providing evidence to strengthen an assumption; conversely, the latter is used to represent only providing concrete instances for an elucidation, to the exclusion of providing evidence for a strengthening effect.

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