



Humor in Structure: An Analysis of Coordinating Conjunctions in Compound sentences from Adam Sandler's Best of The Sandman

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Abstract

This study examines the syntactic function of coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences within the transcript of Adam Sandler's stand-up comedy video *Best of The Sandman*. It focuses on syndetic coordination and the constituent structure of compound sentences, illustrated through tree diagrams. The data were collected through observation by transcribing and analyzing the comedic monologue. This qualitative study draws on three linguistic frameworks: Oshima & Hogue (2007) for sentence type classification, Aarts et al. (2006) for coordination theory, and Brown & Miller (2020) for syntactic structure analysis. The findings reveal that only four of the seven FANBOYS coordinating conjunctions were used in the transcript *and*, *but*, *or*, and *so* with *and* being the most frequent, appearing in 67 out of 81 compound sentences (82.72%). Coordinating conjunctions are shown to play a crucial role in shaping humor and maintaining coherence throughout the performance. The tree diagram analysis further clarifies the syntactic relationships within compound sentences, underscoring the value of syntax in understanding spoken discourse in comedic contexts.

Keywords: Coordinating Conjunction, Compound Sentence, Syndetic Coordination, Stand-Up Comedy

Introduction

Language is an essential aspect of human life, serving as a medium for interaction, idea expression, and information exchange. Each language possesses unique sentence structures shaped by its grammatical system. According to Chomsky, (1957) Language consists of a set of sentences constructed from systematic elements.

The term syntax, derived from the Greek *syntaxis*, refers to the orderly

arrangement of words to form meaningful structures. As Matthews (1981) defines it, syntax is the branch of grammar that focuses on sentence structure. Understanding syntax is key to comprehending how sentences are constructed and how meaning is conveyed through form.

A sentence is the highest grammatical unit, consisting of at least one subject and one verb, and expressing a complete thought (Oshima & Hogue 2007). English sentences are categorized into four types: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. This study emphasizes compound sentences, which are composed of two or more independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions (Miller, 2001; Oshima & Hogue, 2007).

Miller, (2001) in his book titled “An Introduction to English Syntax” stated compound sentences consist of two or more clauses joined by conjunctions. Similarly, Oshima & Hogue (2007) emphasize that a compound sentence consists of at least two simple sentences joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction. Coordinating conjunctions serve a crucial syntactic function by linking grammatically equivalent elements. There are seven coordinating conjunctions in English *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so* collectively remembered using the acronym FANBOYS (Aarts et al., 2006). This research investigates compound sentences, particularly those with syndetic coordination, and explores their constituent structures through tree diagram analysis. The aim is to identify the types of coordinating conjunctions used and analyze the syntactic structure of the clauses. The theoretical foundation is based on Brown & Miller (2020), who offer detailed guidance on constituent analysis.

The data are drawn from the transcript of *Best of The Sandman*, a stand-up comedy performance by Adam Sandler uploaded on YouTube. This video was chosen due to its rich use of compound sentences in humorous contexts, which provides an interesting case for examining how syntax contributes to spoken discourse and comedic effect.

Several prior studies serve as references. Hidayah et al. (2024) entitled “*Analysis of Sentence Types in Affecting College Students’ Writing Skill*.” analyzed sentence types in academic writing; Safitri & Utami (2023) entitled “*The Study of the Compound Sentence Structure in The Ephemeral: Breeder*.” examined compound sentences in Wattpad fiction; and Dirga Sari et al. (2019) entitled “*An Analysis of Compound Sentences in Students’ Writing*.” focused on student writing errors. Meanwhile, Putu et al. (2024) entitled “*Syndetic Coordination Analysis in Compound Sentence: Case Study – The Bucket List Story*.” and Riadi et al., (2023) entitled “*Types of Sentences Used in Michelle Obama’s Speech: A Content Analysis*.” Analyzed coordination in narratives and political speeches.

Unlike those, this study centers on compound sentences in comedic spoken discourse an area that remains underexplored.

Method

This study employed a qualitative method consisting of four main stages: data source, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings. The data were sourced from a stand-up comedy video titled *Best of The Sandman* by Adam Sandler, uploaded on the YouTube platform. This video was selected because it contains numerous compound sentences with coordinating conjunctions, making it relevant to the objectives of the study. The observation method was employed during data collection.

Several steps were taken: the video was watched and transcribed, the transcript was carefully read, and compound sentences containing coordinating conjunctions were identified and classified based on the theories proposed by Aarts et al., (2006) and Oshima & Hogue (2007). For data analysis, a qualitative approach was used to address the research questions. This included identifying the types of coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences and analyzing their constituent structures using tree diagrams, following the framework by Brown & Miller (2020).

In presenting the findings, both formal and informal methods were used. The formal method involved presenting the data in a table, while the informal method provided descriptive explanations of the results.

Result and Discussion

This section presents the findings related to the use of coordinating conjunctions in compound sentences, as observed in the transcript of *15 Minutes of Adam Sandler: Best of The Sandman*. Coordinating conjunctions are commonly remembered using the acronym FANBOYS, which includes: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*. Interestingly, only four of these conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, and *so* appear in the transcript.

Table 1. The Total Coordination Conjunction in Adam Sandler's Stand-Up

Coordinator	Data	Percentage
and	67	82.72%
but	1	1.23%
or	1	1.23%
so	12	14.81%
Total	81	100%

Based on the analysis, a total of 81 instances of syndetic coordination were identified. Among these, *and* was by far the most frequently used coordinating conjunction, appearing 67 times (82.72%). It was followed by *so* with 12 occurrences (14.81%), while *but* and *or* each appeared only once (1.23%).

These findings, summarized in Table 1, indicate a strong preference for the

conjunction *and* in this comedic performance. Its frequent use suggests a tendency to link ideas fluidly, contributing to the rhythm and flow of the monologue. The conjunction *so*, though used less often, functions to express cause-and-effect relationships, which are also common in comedic storytelling. In contrast, *but* and *or* were rarely used, possibly reflecting the performer's style of building rather than contrasting ideas.

Overall, the dominance of *and* highlights how coordination in spoken comedy often leans toward additive structures that maintain momentum and continuity in delivery.

Discussion

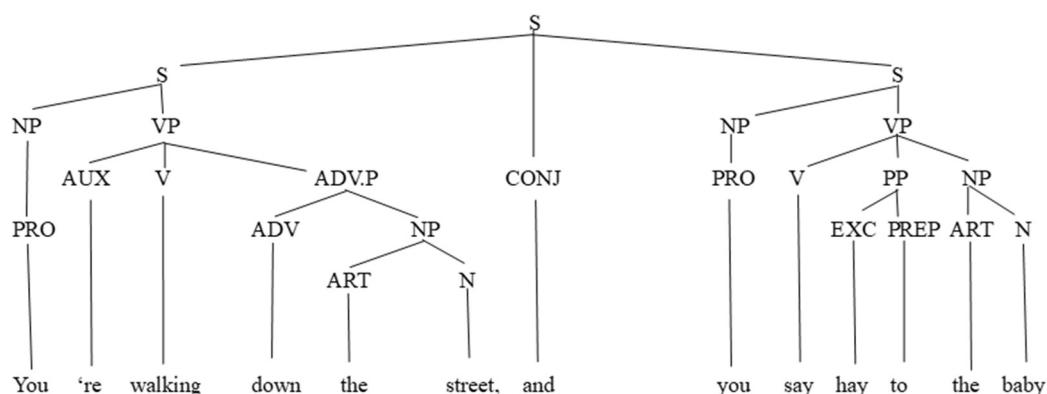
In this section, the discussion is carried out based on the data and the theories used in this study. The analysis focuses on compound sentences, particularly on the use of coordinating conjunctions in syndetic coordination as explained by Oshima & Hogue (2007) and Miller (2001). The next step is analyzing the constituent structure of compound sentences through tree diagrams based on the hierarchical structure proposed by Brown & Miller (2020). The data in this study is taken from the transcript of a stand-up comedy video by Adam Sandler, which contains various forms of compound sentences suitable for syntactic analysis.

Coordinating Conjunction "and" in Compound Sentence

Data 1

"You're walking down the street, and you say hi to a baby."

This sentence is classified as a compound sentence because it consists of two independent clauses: *You're walking down the street* and *you say hi to a baby*. These two clauses are linked by the coordinating conjunction *and*, which functions to connect grammatical units of equal status. The use of *and* indicates syndetic coordination, where the conjunction is explicitly stated between clauses. As defined by Oshima & Hogue (2007), a compound sentence joins at least two independent clauses using a coordinating conjunction, which is clearly demonstrated in this example:



The syntactic structure of this sentence can be represented using a tree diagram, where the top node S branches into three components: the left clause, the conjunction, and the right clause. In the left clause, the subject is the noun phrase (NP) *you*, while the predicate is the verb phrase (VP) *'re walking down the street*. The VP contains three elements: *'re* as the auxiliary verb, *walking* as the main verb, and *down the street* as an adverbial phrase. This adverbial phrase is made up of *down* as the preposition and *the street* as a noun phrase, in which *the* is the determiner/article and *street* is the noun.

The right clause also consists of an NP and VP structure. The subject is again *you*, and the VP is *say hi to a baby*. This phrase includes *say* as the main verb, *hi* as an exclamation, and the prepositional phrase *to a baby*. The prepositional phrase is composed of *to* as the preposition and *a baby* as the noun phrase, where *a* is the article and *baby* is the noun.

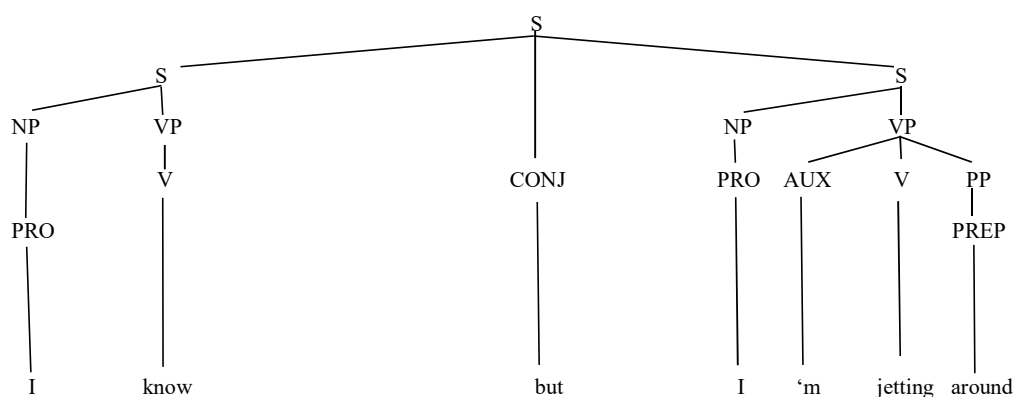
This structure confirms that both clauses are independent in meaning and grammatical construction. Their connection through the conjunction *and* exemplifies syndetic coordination, supporting the classification of the sentence as a compound sentence.

Coordinating Conjunction "but" in Compound Sentence

Data 2

"I know, but I'm jetting around."

From the data, it can be seen that there is a compound sentence that contains two independent clauses and is connected with the coordinating conjunction *but*. The first clause is *"I know"*, and the second clause is *"I'm jetting around"*. The form of the tree diagram of this data is as follows:



This sentence illustrates a compound structure, consisting of two independent clauses connected by the coordinating conjunction *but*. The first clause, *I know*, includes the subject *I* and the verb *know*, forming a complete and self-contained idea.

The second clause, *I'm jetting around*, also stands independently. In this clause, *I* function as the subject, *'m* serves as the auxiliary verb, *jetting* is the main verb, and *around* functions as a prepositional phrase that provides additional detail to the action.

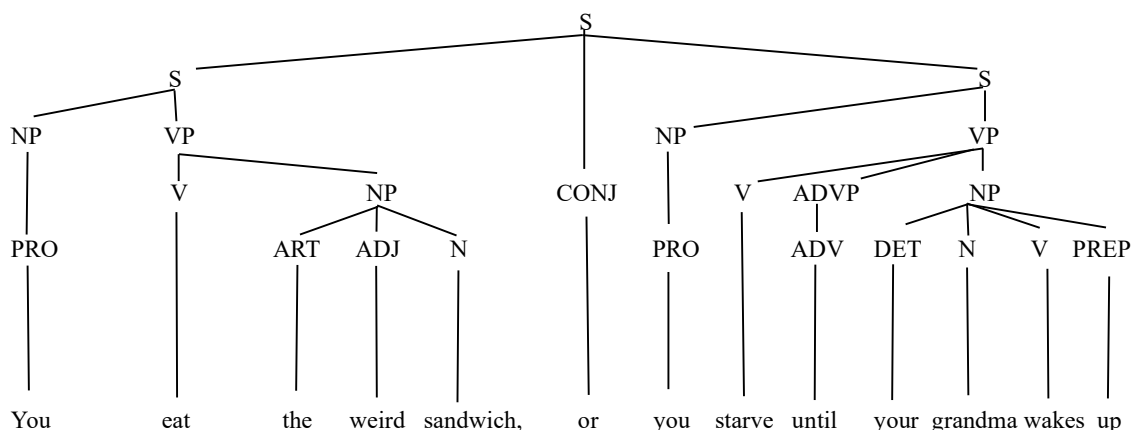
Both clauses are grammatically complete and convey distinct ideas. The use of the coordinating conjunction *but* links these clauses in a contrasting relationship, demonstrating syndetic coordination. This confirms that the sentence qualifies as a compound sentence according to syntactic criteria.

Coordinating Conjunction “or” in Compound Sentence

Data 3

"You eat the weird sandwich, or you starve until grandma wakes up."

This is an example of a compound sentence formed by connecting two independent clauses with the coordinating conjunction *or*. The first independent clause is *"You eat the weird sandwich,"* and the second is *"you starve until grandma wakes up."* Each clause can stand alone as a complete sentence and expresses a complete idea. The form of the tree diagram of this data is as follows:



This sentence exemplifies a compound sentence constructed by linking two independent clauses with the coordinating conjunction *or*. The first clause, *You eat the weird sandwich*, consists of the noun phrase (NP) *you* as the subject and the verb phrase (VP) *eat the weird sandwich* as the predicate. The VP includes the main verb *eat* and the object *the weird sandwich*, which is a noun phrase composed of *the* (determiner/article), *weird* (adjective), and *sandwich* (noun).

The second clause, *you starve until grandma wakes up*, mirrors the same structure. It has the NP *you* as the subject and the VP *starve until grandma wakes up* as the predicate. The verb *starve* is followed by a temporal adverbial clause *until grandma wakes up*, which provides additional information about time. Within this embedded clause, *grandma* functions as the subject, and *wakes up* is the verb phrase. Here, *wakes* is the main verb, and *up* is a particle that forms a phrasal verb with it.

At the sentence level, the structure is divided into three components: the first clause (S), the coordinating conjunction *or*, and the second clause (S). This configuration represents syndetic coordination, where the two independent clauses each capable of standing alone are explicitly joined by a coordinating conjunction.

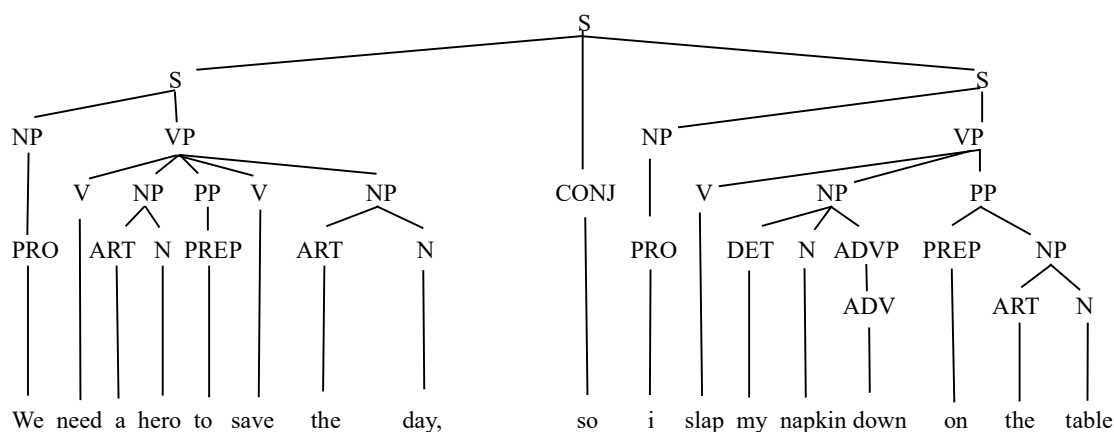
Coordinating Conjunction “so” in Compound Sentence

Data 4

“We need a hero to save the day, so I slap my napkin down on the table.”

This sentence is classified as a compound sentence because it consists of two independent clauses joined by the coordinating conjunction *so*. Each clause contains its own subject and predicate, and both are able to stand alone as complete sentences. The conjunction *so* in this context serves not only to connect two grammatical units of equal status, but also to indicate a cause-and-effect relationship between them. According to Oshima & Hogue (2007), a compound

sentence links two or more independent clauses using a coordinating conjunction, a structure clearly evident in this example:



Syntactically, the sentence can be divided into three main components: the first clause, the coordinating conjunction *so*, and the second clause. In the first clause, *We need a hero to save the day*, the noun phrase (NP) *we* functions as the subject, while the verb phrase (VP) *need a hero to save the day* serves as the predicate. The verb *need* acts as the main verb, followed by the object noun phrase *a hero to save the day*. Within this object, *a* is the determiner/article, *hero* is the head noun, and *to save the day* is an infinitival phrase expressing the intended purpose. This infinitival phrase contains *to save* as the verb and *the day* as a noun phrase, where *the* is the determiner/article and *day* is the noun.

In the second clause, *I slap my napkin down on the table*, the subject is the NP *I*, and the predicate is the VP *slap my napkin down on the table*. Here, *slap* is the main verb, followed by the noun phrase *my napkin* as the direct object, where *my* is a possessive determiner and *napkin* is the noun. The phrase *down on the table* provides additional information about the location and manner of the action. In this segment, *down* is an adverb, and *on the table* is a prepositional phrase, with *on* as the preposition and *the table* as the noun phrase *the* as determiner, *table* as noun.

The conjunction *so* not only performs a coordinating function but also carries semantic weight by indicating that the action in the second clause is a consequence of the situation presented in the first. This integration of syntactic coordination and causal meaning exemplifies syndetic coordination with a clear logical connection between the two independent clauses.

Conclusion

The analysis of compound sentences in the transcript of *Best of The Sandman* by Adam Sandler reveals that syndetic coordination is frequently employed to support both the humorous tone and the continuity of the performance. A total of

81 instances of coordinating conjunctions were identified, with *and* emerging as the most dominant, followed by *so*. In contrast, *but* and *or* appeared only once, indicating a stylistic preference for additive and causal coordination over contrastive or alternative forms.

The consistent presence of two or more independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions confirms the use of compound sentence structures throughout the transcript. These structures contribute not only to the grammatical organization of the performance but also to its comedic rhythm and narrative progression. The application of tree diagrams further clarified the internal structure of each sentence, in line with the syntactic framework of Brown & Miller (2020), allowing for a visual representation of constituent relationships.

Overall, this study highlights the significant role of syntax in shaping spoken discourse, particularly in performance-based genres such as stand-up comedy. The integration of syntactic analysis with discourse function demonstrates that compound sentences and their coordination patterns are not merely structural features but also serve communicative and stylistic purposes in spoken language.

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