

Explaining Additive, Adversative and Contrast Marking in Russian and English

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Abstract

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 *topic management devices*, i.e. they impose different kinds of constraints on the discourse topics (questions under discussion) addressed by their conjuncts. This paper gives a detailed review of the observations from descriptive literature on the distribution of these markers in light of the proposed underlying classification of questions, and shows that our theoretical approach provides a uniform explanation to a large variety of their uses, as well as to the existing equivalences and non-equivalences between the Russian and the English counterparts.

1 Introduction

This paper presents a contrastive analysis of the English and the Russian systems of additive and adversative conjunctions. What makes this task interesting is the fact that the functional space covered by two conjunctions in English *and* and *but* is divided between three conjunctions in Russian: *i* ‘and,’ *a* ‘and, but’ and *no* ‘but’—the intermediate character of the conjunction *a* is particularly intriguing. This puzzle is subject of a substantial body of descriptive literature which abounds in sharp observations and deep insights (e.g. Kreidlin and Paducheva, 1974a,b; Sannikov, 1989; Uryson, 2000, 2002). However, little attempt has been made so far to review those descriptions in light of a general pragmatic theory of additivity and contrast. In Jasinskaja and Zeevat (2008) we develop such a theory, which unlike its predecessors provides a uniform treatment of additive,

adversative and contrast marking in terms of the discourse topics addressed by the conjuncts. Discourse topics are viewed as explicit or implicit questions under discussion in the spirit of the proposals by Klein and von Stutterheim (1987); van Kuppevelt (1995); Ginzburg (1996); Roberts (1996); Büring (2003). The differences between the conjunctions within and across languages are expressed primarily in terms of the form of that question, such as a single *wh*-question (*Who did John kiss?*, *What happened?*), a double *wh*-question (*Who kissed whom?*), and other subtypes. A brief recapitulation of our proposal is given in section 2.

The main goal of this paper, however, is to apply that approach to a comparative analysis of the English and Russian systems of additive and adversative conjunctions. That is, rather than being driven by observations towards a description (as most of the studies on especially the Russian conjunctions are), we start with a set of theoretically motivated expectations and see how they fit the established facts. Our goal is to capture the variety of ‘meanings’ assigned to these conjunctions in the literature just in terms of their topic management function. This part is done in section 3. For reasons of space we have to confine our attention to coordinations of *and* in declarative sentences.¹ Finally, section 4 summarizes and discusses the achieved results.

2 Sketch of the theory

The first assumption underlying the theory developed in Jasinskaja and Zeevat (2008) is that discourse normally sticks to the same topic, tends to continue talking about the same objects and events.² The introduction of new referents, all kinds of forward movement and change must therefore be marked. Additivity is one of the linguistic categories that serve this purpose. Following Zeevat and Jasinskaja (2007), additive markers, such as *also* and *and* in English, signal that the semantic objects they connect pertain to the same discourse topic, i.e. the same question under discussion, but give *distinct* answers to that question.³ Thinking of questions in terms of Hamblin alternatives (Hamblin, 1973), the answers *John snores* and *Mary snores* to a question like *Who snores?*—{John snores, Mary snores, Bill snores, ...}—are distinct, whereas *John snores* and *John and Mary snore*, or *Mary snores* and *my sister snores*, if Mary happens to be my sister, are not. Distinctness of question alternatives also plays a central role in the definitions of information-

¹Especially the usage of the Russian conjunction *a* in questions deserves special attention. See e.g. Fougeron (1990) for a collection of relevant observations.

²See e.g. Givón (1983), as well as Zeevat (2006) and Jasinskaja (2007) for an application of this idea to discourse relations.

³This is an implementation of the old idea that the structural and/or semantic similarity and relatedness of the conjuncts of *and* has to do with them sharing a topic (e.g. Lakoff, 1971).

structural contrast (e.g. Rooth, 1992), and as will be shown, of contrast as a discourse relation, as well.

Second, the central claim of our proposal is that various additive, adversative and contrast markers can also indicate the *type of question* that their conjuncts give distinct answers to. The question types relevant for the description of the English and Russian conjunction systems differ according to two main parameters: the number and the type of question variables. In terms of the number of variables, the most important distinction is between single and multiple variable questions, which corresponds to the number of dimensions in which the question alternatives differ. The canonical cases are single (*Who snores?*, cf. above) vs. multiple *wh*-questions, e.g. *Who likes what?*, *Who gave what to whom?*, etc., respectively.⁴ In the most general form, the x notation is used to refer to a single variable, \vec{x} for an unspecified number of variables (a tuple of one or more), and $\langle \vec{x}, y \rangle$ for multiple variables (a tuple of two or more). Variable types can be thought of in montagovian terms: t for truth value, e for entity, plus various compound types, including propositions— p , or $\langle s, t \rangle$. In natural language, single variable questions of type t (x_t -questions) are the normal *y/n*-questions like *Does John snore?*, represented by two alternatives which differ in polarity {John snores, John doesn't snore}. What we usually refer to as *wh*-questions, are questions over variables of types other than t . For certain *wh*-words these types can be more closely specified, e.g. *why*-questions ask for propositions (x_p) or event descriptions ($x_{\langle E, t \rangle}$, assuming that E stands for eventuality as a subsort of entity). Finally, certain *wh*-words can also specify a third parameter—the relation in which the variable stands to the rest of the question, e.g. for *why* this is a causal relation in a broad sense including causality at the level of events, relations between a statement and a supporting argument, as well as between a speech act and a justification for performing it (Sweetser, 1990). The x_{why} notation will be used to indicate both the variable type and the relation specified by *why*.

The classical additive conjunctions like the English *and* and the Russian *i* express additivity with respect to some unspecified kind of question, $\text{ADD}(\vec{x})$. The Russian *a* is also additive, but imposes an additional restriction that the question addressed by its conjuncts be a multiple variable question, $\text{ADD}(\langle \vec{x}, y \rangle)$. In this case additivity implies distinct instantiations of *all* the variables, e.g. to double *wh*-questions (*Who likes what?*) the conjuncts must give doubly distinct answers e.g. *John likes football* vs. *Bill likes basketball*, cf. figure 1.

Crucial to our analysis of the relationship between the Russian *a* and the English *but* is the fact that a special case of $\langle \vec{x}, y \rangle$ -questions is constituted by $\langle \vec{x}, y_t \rangle$ -

⁴The term ‘multiple (variable) question’ is not intended to refer to arbitrary conjunctions of questions, e.g. *What did you buy and is it edible?* Although multiple variable questions can normally be represented as a conjunction of single variable questions (see examples below), the reverse does not generally hold.

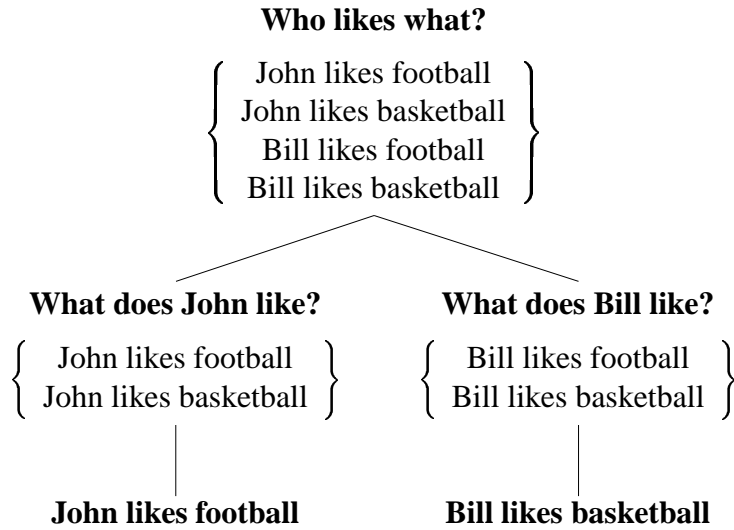


Figure 1: A $\langle \vec{x}, y \rangle$ -question

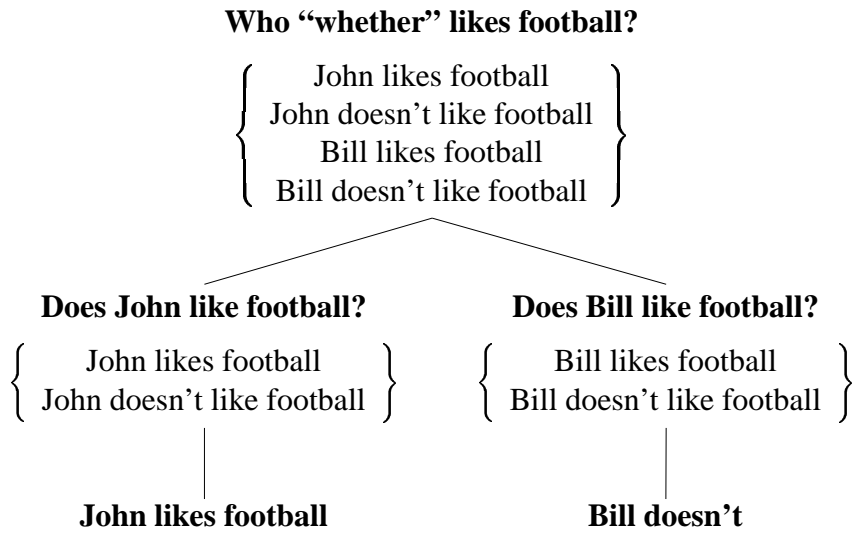


Figure 2: A $\langle \vec{x}, y_t \rangle$ -question

questions, i.e. multiple variable questions whose one variable ranges over truth values as in a *y/n*-question, see figure 2.⁵ English and Russian (probably as well as other natural languages) cannot express this type of question by a simple interrogative sentence, the best gloss one could give to the set of alternatives shown in figure 2, is *Who “whether” likes football?* In English, one can express this question either by conjoining a number of *y/n*-questions, as in figure 2, or by conjoining two *wh*-questions *Who does and who doesn’t like football?* For the rest, the analogy between $\langle \vec{x}, y_t \rangle$ -questions and standard multiple *wh*-questions is obvious, cf. figures 1 and 2. We propose that the English *but* conjoins distinct answers to a $\langle \vec{x}, y_t \rangle$ -question, $\text{ADD}(\langle \vec{x}, y_t \rangle)$. Previous accounts of contrast as a discourse relation (and *but* as its marker) have introduced negation as an essential part of its definition (e.g. Knott and Sanders, 1998; Kehler, 2002). Umbach (2004, 2005) has formulated this generalization in terms of (implicit) question answering: one conjunct of *but* has to *confirm* and the other has to *deny* a related contextually salient question, cf. (1a) and (1b).

- (1) **A:** Does John like football and does Bill like football, too?
B: a. [Yes] John likes football, *but* [no] Bill doesn’t.
b. [Yes] John likes football, *and* [yes] Bill does, too.

Our analysis is just a further generalization of Umbach’s. The two *y/n*-questions answered by the conjuncts of *but* in (1a) are the result of splitting a double $\langle x, y_t \rangle$ -question, where the *x*-variable ranges over John and Bill, cf. figure 2. The switch in polarity is once again a consequence of the distinctness of answers to the yes/no part of the question.

In turn, a special case of $\langle \vec{x}, y_t \rangle$ -questions is constituted by *why-y/n*-questions, $\langle x_{why}, y_t \rangle$ in terms of variable types. E.g. *Why “whether” should we buy this ring? — [Why should we buy this ring?] It is beautiful, but [why shouldn’t we buy this ring?] it is expensive.* This question type is signalled in Russian by the conjunction *no*, $\text{ADD}(\langle x_{why}, y_t \rangle)$. English does not have a special marker, so the less specific marker *but* is normally used.

In sum, both proper additive and contrast markers in Russian and English express an additive relation between their conjuncts, i.e. distinctness of answers to a question, while the question types they associate with constitute an implicational hierarchy, each of the relevant types discussed is a special case of another type:

$$(2) \quad \underset{\text{no}}{\text{ADD}(x_{why}, y_t)} \Rightarrow \overset{\text{but}}{\text{ADD}(\vec{x}, y_t)} \Rightarrow \underset{\text{a}}{\text{ADD}(\vec{x}, y)} \Rightarrow \overset{\text{and}}{\text{ADD}(\vec{x})}$$

⁵We take it as a fact that a question can have at most one variable of type *t*, so $\langle \vec{x}, y_t \rangle$ means in practice that all the variables except *y_t* are normal *wh*.

For the sake of readability, less technical terminology will be used in the rest of the paper. We will refer to $\langle \vec{x}, y_t \rangle$ -questions as *wh-y/n* and use the term ‘double *wh*’ for double variable questions that do not have a *t*-type variable. Double (variable) questions are thus a supertype of double *wh* and double *wh-y/n*. We will mainly talk about double questions assuming that the extension to multiple questions in general is trivial.

The third assumption of our theory is that all the features listed in (2) must be marked (in one way or another) whenever possible. This leads to the effect known as *blocking*. For instance, *and* does not specify the question type, so in principle it should be possible to use it with *wh-y/n*-topics. However, since marking the topic type is obligatory, one is forced to use *but* whenever a *wh-y/n*-topic is addressed. This means that in practice *and* can only be used with non-*wh-yn* topics, or otherwise, the use of *and* with *wh-yn* topics is *blocked* by *but*.

Finally, the fourth assumption concerns the function of *no* and *but* in answers to *why-y/n*-questions. Distinct answers to a *why-y/n*-question give an argument and a counterargument for a claim or suggestion, but it is always the one expressed by the second conjunct that wins (Anscombe and Ducrot, 1977). Thus *no*- and *but*-conjunctions do not only resolve a *why-y/n*-question *Why “whether” should we buy this ring?* but also the single *y/n*-question, whether we should buy it:

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

The last terminological remark concerns the various uses of the term *topic*. *Discourse topics* are explicit or implicit questions addressed by utterances in discourse. We will also use the term *contrastive*, or *sentence topic* to refer to a designated constituent of a sentence which can be marked in a number of standard ways such as fronting and prosodic prominence. We largely adopt Büring’s (2003) view on the relationship between contrastive and discourse topics. First of all, contrastive topics come into play when some kind of double variable question is under discussion. Which of the variables gets instantiated in the answer by the contrastive topic and which by the focus depends on how the double question is split into single variable questions. The focus is the instantiation of the variable that remains a variable in both the double question and its single variable subquestion, e.g. *what* in figure 1, and the *y/n*-variable in figure 2. The contrastive topic corresponds to a variable in the double question, but gets instantiated in the subquestion, e.g. *who* in both figure 1 and figure 2, i.e. *John* and *Bill* are the contrastive topics.

3 Russian and English conjunctions in contrast

3.1 Additive conjunctions: *and* vs. *i*

The theory presented in the previous section assigns the same semantics to the English conjunction *and* and the Russian conjunction *i*. They are both additive, in the sense that their conjuncts give distinct answers to the same *wh*-question. The form of that question is, in principle, not specified. However, they are part of two different conjunction systems. Whereas the use of *and* is limited by the availability of *but*, the use of *i* is limited by *a*. Those conjunctions have different semantics: whereas *a* marks any kind of double question, *but* specializes on double *wh-y/n*-questions. Because of blocking, i.e. because marking the discourse topic type is obligatory whenever possible, these question types are excluded for *i* and *and*, respectively. This amounts to saying that *i* can only be used when the discourse topic is a *single wh*-question. In contrast, *and* can go with double *wh*-questions in the classical sense, but it cannot with *wh-y/n*-questions.⁶ Thus answers to single *wh*-questions is the area where *and* and *i* are predicted to behave alike, whereas the main differences should lie in the domain of double questions as topics.

Single *wh*-questions can be about constituents of all types: DPs, PPs, VPs, as well as full clauses, so it is not surprising that both the English *and* and the Russian *i* can be used to conjoin all those types of constituents: e.g. (4) Who did Vera congratulate?; (5) What was Vera doing?; (6) What kind of weather is there in X?

(4) Vera pozdravila Olega *i* /**a* Romu
Vera congratulated Oleg:ACC and Roma:ACC

(5) Vera prinimala vannu *i* / ??*a* razgovarivala po telefonu
Vera was taking bath and was talking over phone
Vera was taking a bath and talking on the phone.

(6) Idet sneg *i* / ??*a* duet veter
go snow and blow wind

It is snowing and the wind is blowing.

However, if the structure and the semantics of the conjuncts supports a parallel construal with a contrastive topic (*T*) and a contrastive focus (*F*) suggesting a double question as discourse topic, e.g. *Who did what?* in (7) and *What kind of weather is where?* in (8), the use of *i* is awkward and *a* is generally preferred. In English, *and* would still be the standard choice here.

⁶One class of exceptions to this generalization will be discussed in section 3.3.3.

- (7) [Vera]_T [prinimala vannu]_F
Vera was taking bath
 ??*i/a* [Lena]_T [razgovarivala po telefonu]_F
and Lena was talking over phone
 Vera was taking a bath and Lena was talking on the phone.

- (8) [V Moskve]_T [idet sneg]_F
in Moscow go snow
 ??*i/a* [v Amsterdame]_T [duet veter]_F
and in Amsterdam blow wind
 It's snowing in Moscow and it's windy in Amsterdam.

Whether the conjuncts are likely to answer a double question depends on a number of factors, which can be phonological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic in nature. The main phonological factor is the presence of contrastive topic and focus accentuation on the respective constituents (*theme* and *rheme* intonation in Kreidlin and Paducheva, 1974a,b).⁷ The syntax should at least allow for a topic-focus articulation. First of all, this excludes *a* between one-word conjuncts, as in (4) where *i* has no competitors. Second, contrastive topics are usually introduced at clause level, so *a* is not likely to appear between any non-clausal constituents. This is in contrast with Kreidlin and Paducheva's (1974b, p. 33) assumptions. However, in most cases what appears to be non-clauses conjoined by *a* are in fact elliptic clauses, whereas cases like (9), where a syntactic reconstruction to a clause is not possible, are definitely marginal and allow for if not prefer *i* in place of *a*. Here the double question answered by the DPs conjoined by *a* would be *In what kind of relationship does A. I. Krjukov stand to whom?*⁸

⁷To license a double question topic and the conjunction *a*, the prosodic structure of the second conjunct should at the very least not exclude a contrastive topic e.g. by a focus accent on the first word of the conjunct.

⁸The fact that the syntactic structure of the conjuncts (DPs in the genitive case) does not match this question (clauses expected) surely works against assuming this question as topic. In any case, it can only be a topic of the side remark taken up in the parenthetical *and your neighbour*, while the sentence as a whole presumably addresses a question like *Why did I arrive?* In general, it is not unusual that one sentence addresses more than one topic question. This assumption is in fact unavoidable to account for the uses of *i* or *and* with conjuncts not in focus:

- (i) John and Bill invited [MARY]_F

Here the accentuation of the answer suggests the question *Who did John and Bill invite?*, but the conjuncts of *and* give distinct answers to a different question (which could be e.g. *Who invited Mary?*). Without this assumption *and*-conjunctions would always have to be focused. The same applies to second occurrence foci with the particle *only* (Zeevat, 2008). This still leaves open the question why the inference of topic questions that do not match the overall structure of the sentence happens routinely with *i*, *and* and *only*, but is very unusual with *a*. One of the possible

- (9) Priexal ja po poručeniju moego kuzena,
arrived i upon request my cousin
 i / a [vašego]_T [soseda]_F, Alekseja Ivanoviča Krjukova.
and your neighbour Aleksej Ivanovich Krjukov
 I arrived upon request of my cousin, and your neighbour, Aleksej Ivanovich Krjukov.

Perfect syntactic parallelism as in (7) and (8), topic fronting (10), as well as gapping background material (11) present additional “syntactic evidence” that a double-*wh* topic is addressed.

- (10) [Olegu]_T otec podaril [velosiped]_F
Oleg:DAT father:NOM gave bicycle:ACC
 ??i / a [Roma]_T polučil v podarok [palatku]_F
and Roma:NOM got in present tent:ACC
 To Oleg, father gave a bicycle, and Roma got a camping tent as a present.

- (11) [OLEG]_T ljubiti [FUTBOL]_F
Oleg likes football
 ??i / a [ROMA]_T [BASKETBOL]_F
and Roma basketball
 Oleg likes football, and Roma likes basketball.

In the domain of semantics and pragmatics, a workable test is whether we get meaningful and pragmatically sensible question alternatives if we substitute the topics or the foci of the conjuncts for one another. This works, for instance, in (7): Vera could be talking on the phone and Lena could be taking a bath instead.⁹ In contrast, in Uryson’s (2000, p. 101) example (12), it is not a plausible alternative that e.g. the instructor would be taking French lessons, that is why despite the syntactic parallelism it is not a likely answer to a *Who did what?* question, so the use of *i* is not blocked by *a* here.¹⁰

causes could be the degree of grammaticalization, but this issue must be put aside in this paper.

⁹Kreidlin and Paducheva (1974a) discuss a whole range of more specific constraints on how the topics and the foci of the clauses connected by *a* could be related. It seems that most of those constraints can be covered by the proposed test plus the assumption of distinctness of both members of the contrasted pairs.

¹⁰This example is nevertheless felicitous with *a*, see section 3.3 for further discussion.

- (12) Otec zanimal'sja togda francuzskim
father occupied himself then with french
 i / a prepodavatel' xodil k nemu na dom
and instructor went to him at home
 Father was taking French lessons in those days,
 and the instructor was visiting him at home.

In sum, these factors contribute to the evidence that the conjuncts address an implicit double *wh*-question. These constraints need not be met all at once, but if all or most of them are met, the case for a double-*wh* topic is so strong that the use of *a* is almost obligatory, and the use of *i* is marked. Cases where only few of these constraints are met, like (9) and (12), make up a grey area where both a single and a double-*wh* topic can be construed, so both *i* and *a* are generally possible. The choice between them is associated with subtle pragmatic effects, and these effects, we claim, can be explained just in terms of the form of the topic question. We come back to the really subtle cases in section 3.3, while now we turn to some marked occurrences of *i* where it has to stand fierce competition from *a*.

Early descriptive literature on the conjunction *i* assigns it, next to a purely additive meaning, a range of other “meanings” which include e.g. temporal and cause-effect. Two kinds of situations should be distinguished here. In part of the cases *i* just exhibits its additive function, while the temporal and causal effects come from the order and the semantics of the conjuncts, as well as the associated world knowledge. E.g. (13a) and (13b) only differ in the verbal aspect: a sequence of two perfectives results in a temporal sequential interpretation, and a sequence of two imperfectives suggests temporal overlap (example discussed in Sannikov, 1989, p. 185). In (14) it's the world knowledge that suggests a cause-effect relationship. Obviously, it is not the semantics of *i* that is responsible for these effects, so these uses are not different from their English counterparts with *and* (cf. Posner, 1980; Hinrichs, 1986).

- (13) a. On sel i zapel.
he sat.PERF and sang.PERF
 He sat down and (then) started singing.
 b. On sidel i pel.
he sat.IMPERF and sang.IMPERF
 He was sitting and singing (at the same time).
- (14) Oleg podskol'znulsja i upal
Oleg slipped and fell

However, Sannikov (1989, pp. 185–187) has argued on the basis of the min-

imal pairs as in (15) that, in addition to the “pure conjunction” meaning, *i* also has an “optional semantic component” of cause-effect. Here the versions with *a* (15a) and without any connective (15b) present the events as independent, whereas (15c) with *i* (by comparison) clearly conveys a cause-effect relation: Petja must have known that Kolja left, and this made him stay at school. Notice that there is no general world knowledge that would support this causal interpretation.

- (15) a. Kolja ušel domoj, a Petja ostalsja v škole.
Kolja went home and Petja stayed in school
- b. Kolja ušel domoj, Petja ostalsja v škole.
Kolja went home Petja stayed in school
 Kolja went home (and) Petja stayed at school.
- c. Kolja ušel domoj, i Petja ostalsja v škole.
Kolja went home and Petja stayed in school
 Kolja went home and so Petja stayed at school.

Our explanation of this effect is as follows. It is essential that the conjoined clauses in (15) have parallel syntactic structure and give rise to sensible question alternatives (Kolja could have stayed at school, and Petja could have gone home instead), which strongly suggests a double-*wh* topic like *Who did what?* This creates a preference for using *a*.¹¹ However, whenever the conjuncts can be construed as answers to a double *wh*-question, they can also be construed as answers to a “broader” single *wh*-question such as *What happened?*, thus the use of *i* instead of *a* can be a signal to the hearer that a single-*wh* topic should be assumed. But more specific topics (double-*wh* in this case) should always be preferred to less specific ones (e.g. Asher, 2004), so there must be a really good reason to assume a less specific single-*wh* topic instead. What could be such a reason?

First of all, it should be noted that the parallel construal generally defies asymmetric readings, i.e. the temporal sequential and the cause-effect reading. In English, as well as in French, and presumably a whole range of other languages, if the clauses exhibit parallel structure and are interpreted as answers to a double *wh*-question, the temporal relationship between the events described remains unspecified regardless of the order of the clauses (Kamp and Rohrer, 1983; Kehler,

¹¹In fact, unprepared native speakers usually reject sentences like (15c) when presented out of context, and suggest that *a* should be used instead (cf. the discussion in Mendoza, 1996, pp. 106–107). Only when you set up the context in the right way, or adjust the second clause, e.g. by introducing a modality ‘Petja *had to* stay at school’ or inserting causal or temporal adverbs like *poètomu* ‘that’s why’, *togda* ‘then’, the informants can get at the causal interpretation and agree that *i* can be used there. This suggests that the cause-effect relation is not directly signalled by *i*, but it is rather a question of how well the hearer is able to accommodate a set of assumptions that support a causal interpretation.

2002). The use of gapping as well as contrastive topic-focus accentuation has been observed to exclude otherwise possible cause-effect interpretations, e.g. (16a), but not (16b), can be understood as ‘Nan got angry *because* Sue got upset’ (Kehler, 2002; Hendriks, 2004). The reasons for this phenomenon are still not entirely understood, but it remains a robust cross-linguistic generalization.

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

It seems that temporal sequential and cause-effect relationships are only compatible with broad discourse topics of *What happened?* or *What did X do?* type. Thus since *a* indicates a double-*wh* topic one has no other choice than to use *i* if one of these asymmetric relations is intended. If the semantics of the conjuncts does not provide a bias for a temporal or a causal interpretation, the causal one is probably preferred because this is the one that is properly excluded by the parallel construal (whereas the temporal one is simply underspecified), so *i* has no competitors in that function. In other words, the causal effect does not have to be encoded in the semantics of *i*, but is another consequence of the competition with *a*.

This analysis makes a couple of interesting predictions. First, *i* is expected to show the causal effect only between conjuncts with parallel structure that call for a double-*wh* topic construal such as (15) where otherwise *a* would be appropriate. It will not happen between, let’s say, conjoined VPs (unless independently suggested by world knowledge) since *i* meets no competition from *a* there, cf. (14) vs. (5). As far as we can see, this prediction is borne out. The second prediction is that any language that has a general conjunction like *and* and an obligatory marker of double-*wh* topics like the Russian *a* should have a similar effect associated with the general conjunction. This is to be checked in typological studies. Conversely, the English *and* does not show a causal effect in similar environments because English does not have an obligatory marker equivalent to the Russian *a*.

Another case in which conjuncts with parallel structure can be interpreted as answers to a single *wh*-question and conjoined by *i* instead of *a* is if they form a list whose elements differ in only one relevant dimension. However, this interpretation must be strongly supported by the context (e.g. an explicit question), the intonation, and the semantics of the conjuncts. One can distinguish two kinds of cases here. The first case is similar to the one described above where the conjuncts are construed as answers to a broader single *wh*-question such as *What happened?* For instance in (17), translated in (18), the two accidents are not being “compared” as to what happened to whom, but it only matters that they each present an instance of an accident, so *i* is appropriate here. Taken out of context, B’s final utterance would sound awkward with *i* or at best be interpreted as a cause-effect relation.

(17) **A:** Skol'ko DTP proizošlo na prošloj nedele?
how many car accidents happened on last week

B: Dva.
two

A: Kakie?
what kind

B: [Gruzovik vrezalsja v derevo]_F
truck bumped in tree
 i [motociklist sbil pešexoda]_F
and motorcyclist ran over pedestrian

(18) **A:** How many car accidents happened last week?

B: Two.

A: What kind of accidents?

B: A truck bumped into a tree, and a motorcyclist ran over a pedestrian.

Second, the single *wh*-question can also be about only one member of the pair (i.e. only the contrastive topic or only the contrastive focus), as in (19). Here speaker B could have just answered *Ivanov i Petrov (polučili premiju)* ‘Ivanov and Petrov (got a bonus)’, but B is overanswering the question by giving the exact amounts. Although the amounts differ, the difference is not essential to A’s question and they just present instances of *some* amount of money. So the use of *i* is licensed here. Interestingly, two intonational patterns are possible in the answer—the contrastive topic-focus accentuation on the subject and the numeral modifier of the object (19a) and narrow focus on the subject (19b). In the first case, the answer can both be interpreted as overanswering A’s explicit single *wh*-question, in which case *i* should be used, or as addressing an implicit double *wh*-question *Who got how much?* which is indicated by *a*. The narrow focus accentuation of (19b) only allows for the single-*wh* construal, so *i* is appropriate, but *a* is not.

(19) **A:** Kto polučil premiju v prošlom mesjace?
Who got bonus in last month

B: a. [IVANOV]_T polučil [DVE]_F tysjači
Ivanov got two thousand

i / a [PETROV]_T [TRI]_F
and Petrov three

b. [IVANOV]_F polučil dve tysjači
Ivanov got two thousand

i / *a [PETROV]_F tri
and Petrov three

(20) **A:** Who got a bonus last month?

B: Ivanov got two thousand, and Petrov got three.

Sannikov (1989, pp. 172–173) and Uryson (2000, pp. 110–111) have discussed similar examples and suggested that in such cases the choice of *i* emphasizes similarity of the properties attributed to the subjects, whereas *a* emphasizes the differences. This intuition can be explained by the fact that these differences are irrelevant to the single-*wh*, but relevant to the double-*wh* topic.

To summarize, it was shown that the Russian conjunction *i* and the English *and* can be assigned the same conventional meaning—they both mark additivity with respect to some, unspecified kind of topic—whereas all the differences in their usage follow from the fact that Russian also has the conjunction *a* that marks additivity with respect to a double-*wh* topic and this marking is obligatory. These differences include the tendency towards infelicity of *i* between conjuncts with parallel structure and contrastive topic-focus accentuation, the causal effect of *i*, as well as the effect of emphasizing similarity. Moreover, our approach allowed us to refine previous observations. We predict and it appears to be the case that the causal effect of *i* only shows up in environments where *i* is in competition with *a*, and not where *i* clearly dominates, as e.g. between non-clausal conjuncts.

3.2 Adversative conjunctions: *but* vs. *no*

The adversative markers *but* and *no* are assigned different conventional meanings in our theory. The English *but* marks doubly distinct answers to what has been called a double *wh-y/n*-question, whereas the Russian *no* marks a special case of that—a double *why-y/n*-question. Thus both connectives are expected to function in the same way between conjuncts that address a *why-y/n*-question, but only the English *but* should be able to connect answers to a *wh-y/n*-question, where the *wh*-slot is other than *why*. It is shown below that this predicts the right pattern.

The adversative function of the English *but* manifests itself in a number of more specific uses, including (a) denial of expectation (Lakoff, 1971); (b) argumentative (Anscombe and Ducrot, 1977); and (c) semantic opposition (Lakoff, 1971) or formal contrast (cf. Malchukov, 2004, pp. 179–181). The denial of expectation function is at work where a normal implication of the first conjunct is denied in the second, e.g. since John is short one would normally expect he would be bad at basketball, nevertheless he is good, cf. (21). The argumentative function is fulfilled where the the conjuncts *A* and *B* present an argument and a counter-argument for a claim *C*. E.g. in (22), the fact that the ring is beautiful normally implies that we should buy it, but the fact that it is expensive implies that we shouldn't.

(21) John is short, but he is good at basketball.

(22) This ring is beautiful, but expensive.

It has been shown before that the argumentative function of *but* is more general, and the denial of expectation function can be derived from it by assuming that the second conjunct *B* is identical with the claim *C* that is subject of the argument (Anscombe and Ducrot, 1977, p. 29). It is easy to see that the argumentative function of *but* in turn can be derived from the assumption that the conjuncts give doubly distinct answers to a *why-y/n*-question. For instance, (22) can be an answer to a *why-y/n*-question *Why should and why shouldn't we buy this ring?* comprising at least the alternatives: (a) we should buy it because it is beautiful; (b) we should buy it because it is expensive; (c) we shouldn't buy it because it is beautiful; (d) we shouldn't buy it because it is expensive. The double distinctness requirement makes sure that the conjuncts of *but* give distinct reasons (thus excluding statements like *it is beautiful but it is beautiful*), as well as distinct answers to the yes/no part of the question, thus giving one reason for a positive and one reason for a negative answer.

Since the argumentative function (as well as denial of expectation as a special case) results from addressing a *why-y/n* topic, this function is shared by the Russian conjunction *no*, cf. (23) and (24).

(23) Roma ne vysokij, no on xorošo igraet v basketbol
Roma short but he well plays in basketball
Roma is short, but he is good at basketball.

(24) Èto kol'co krasivoe, no dorogoe
this ring beautiful but expensive
This ring is beautiful, but expensive.

In contrast, the semantic opposition function of *but*, illustrated in (25) and (26), results from answering a *wh-y/n*-question which is not a *why*-question, that's why it is not shared by the Russian adversative marker. When *but* expresses semantic opposition it looks very much like answering a double *wh*-question, i.e. the conjuncts have parallel structure and contrastive topic-focus accentuation, but there is an additional requirement that the properties in contrast be in a sense "opposite", such as *short* vs. *tall*, *like football* vs. *not like football*.

(25) John is short, but Bill is tall.

(26) John likes football, but Bill doesn't.

This "opposite" nature is accounted for by the switch in polarity, which is a consequence of distinctness with respect to the *y/n* part or the question. This is straightforward in (26), whereas in (25) 'Bill is tall' must be thought of as a way of saying

that he is *not* short (Umbach, 2004, 2005).

Unlike English, Russian has no special marker for *wh-y/n* topics: *no* is more specific since it connects answers to *why-y/n*-questions, whereas *a* is more general as a marker for all kinds of double questions. Therefore it is not surprising that *no* is not appropriate in (27) taken out of context or as an answer to a question like *Do Oleg and Roma like football?*, cf. (1), and *a* should be used instead.

(27) OLEG LJUBIT futbol ??*no* / *a* ROMA ne LJUBIT
Oleg likes football but Roma not likes

Oleg likes football, but Roma doesn't.

The conjunction *no* can, in principle, be used in (27), but only with a denial of expectation or argumentative reading. For instance, it would be felicitous after a question like *Should we take Oleg and Roma to a football match?*, which triggers a *why-y/n*-subquestion *Why should and why shouldn't we take Oleg and Roma to a football match?*, so the conjuncts give arguments for and against this suggestion.

Thus we have shown how the difference in discourse topic types signalled by the English *but* and the Russian *no* accounts for the fact that both can be used in the denial of expectation and the argumentative function, but only the English *but* can mark semantic opposition, whereas in Russian this slot is filled by the conjunction *a*. We will return to the discussion of *but* and *no* in section 3.3.3 in connection with their property of marking the second conjunct as decisive.

3.3 The conjunction *a*

In our theory the Russian conjunction *a* connects doubly distinct answers to a double question. The canonical case of a double question is a double *wh*-question, but it can also be a *wh-y/n*-question, i.e. a question whose one variable is a normal *wh*-variable and the other ranges over polarities. Although *why-y/n* questions are a special case of *wh-y/n*, they normally do not admit *a*, but must be marked by the specialized conjunction *no*. The Russian *a* does not have exact equivalents among English coordinative conjunctions. It can sometimes be translated as *and* and sometimes as *but*, and our prediction is that the translation will depend on whether a double-*wh* or a *wh-y/n* topic is under discussion. In this section we apply our analysis to the main uses of *a* pointed out in previous studies and test the above prediction.

The literature on *a* traditionally distinguishes between three 'meanings' or uses of *a*: (a) parallel/contrast (*sopostavitel'noe*); (b) additive (*prisoedinitel'noe*); and (c) inconsistency (*nesootvetstvija*), see esp. Kreidlin and Paducheva (1974b). The parallel/contrast uses encompass the classical cases of pair list answers to a double question already mentioned in previous sections, cf. the examples (7), (8),

(27), and will be reexamined briefly in section 3.3.1. The so called “additive” uses of *a* introduce background information, topic change, or otherwise signal a digression from the main story line (Uryson, 2002).¹² These cases will be taken up in section 3.3.2. The “inconsistency” uses of *a* (section 3.3.3) are similar to uses of *no* and the English *but* where they signal denial of expectation.

The conjunction *a* can also function in a way similar to the German *sondern*, or the English *but* in *John didn't go to Paris, but to Berlin*, signalling correction. Since the corrective *a* always co-occurs with the negative particle *ne* and exhibits syntactic behaviour rather different from the other uses, it is traditionally viewed as a fixed collocation *a ne* or *ne ... a*. We believe that the correction function of *a* can also be derived from our theory using Umbach's (2004, pp. 171–173) approach to the corrective uses of *but*, but detailed discussion must be skipped for reasons of space.

3.3.1 Parallel and contrast

These cases have already received quite some attention in previous sections, cf. (7)–(11), (15a), (19a) and (27). These are the ones that are covered in the most straightforward way by our analysis. They are characterized by syntactic parallelism of the conjuncts, the contrastive topic-focus accentuation, and the requirement that the reverse mapping of the elements of the pairs make up sensible alternatives to the ones stated, cf. section 3.1. The conjuncts must also normally be clauses, with some marginal exceptions like (9). All these properties follow from the assumption that *a* connects answers to a double question. A couple more remarks are in order to complete the picture.

First, the parallel/contrast uses of *a* correspond to the English *and* or *but* depending on whether it is parallel or contrast (cf. Kehler, 2002), i.e. whether the question under discussion is a double-*wh* or a *wh-y/n*, cf. (28a) and (28b) adapted from Umbach (2005, p. 213):

- (28) a. **A:** What happened (to whom)?
B: Jeffrey is dead, and / ??but Katherine is seriously injured.
- b. **A:** Do Jeffrey and Katherine need a doctor?
(Who does and who doesn't need a doctor?)
B: Jeffrey is dead [he doesn't],
??and / but Katherine is seriously injured [she does].

The distinction in (28) cannot be made in Russian by means of coordinative conjunctions. In line with our proposal, *a* is the preferred choice in both contexts:

¹²Obviously, this use of the term *additive* is rather different from the notion of additivity assumed in this paper, but it is hard to find a better translation to the Russian label *prisoedinitel'noe*.

- (29) **A:** a. Čto (s kem) slučilos’?
what to whom happened
 What happened (to whom)?
 b. Komu nužen a komu ne nužen vrač?
to whom needed and to whom not needed doctor
 Who does and who doesn’t need a doctor?
- B:** Džeffri pogib, a /??i /??no Kètrin ser’ezno ranena.
Jeffrey dead and /but Katherine seriously injured

Second, Kreidlin and Paduceva (1974b, p. 36) discuss uses of *a* where only the second conjunct has the characteristic topic-focus accentuation and its contrastive topic does not seem to have an overt correlate in the first, as in (30). They analyse such cases as a special case of parallel/contrast, where the referent that could be the contrastive topic of the first conjunct remains unexpressed: *[At t₁] he was silent, and then [at t₂, t₁ < t₂] asked*. That proposal can be directly adopted, which would amount to saying that the intonational pattern of the first conjunct is motivated by answering some other question, e.g. *What did he do next?*, whereas the double-*wh* topic *What did he do when?* is assumed *post hoc*.

- (30) On pomolčal, a [potom]_T [sprosíl...]_F
he was briefly silent and then asked

He was silent for a little bit, and then asked...

3.3.2 Topic change

There is a class of uses of the conjunction *a* which have been characterized as introducing background information, topic change, or a digression from the main story line, e.g. (31) and (32), cf. also (12) in section 3.1. These uses do not show parallel structure and accentuation characteristic of the parallel/contrast cases discussed above. The only formal restriction they seem to obey is that the conjunct introduced by *a* must have a contrastive topic which is anaphorically or “by association” related to some element mentioned in the first conjunct (Kreidlin and Paduceva, 1974b, p. 35).¹³ This means in particular that the *a*-conjunct must at least have enough structure to support a sentence topic, i.e. longer than one word, normally a clause, and the main focal stress should not be on the first constituent.

¹³In fact, Kreidlin and Paduceva (1974b, p. 35) suggest that the topic of the second conjunct must be related to the *focus* of the first, but that is probably too strong.

(31) Inspektor molča xodil po klassu, a eto byl durnoj znak.
inspector silently walked over classroom and this was bad sign

The inspector was passing silently up and down the classroom,
and that was a bad sign.

(32) a. Škola stojala na glavnoj ulice,
school stood on main street

b. a ulica eta soedinjala gorod s vokzalom.
and street this connected downtown with railway station

c. I poètomu po nej dva raza v den' proxodil avtobus.
and therefore over it two times in day passed bus

The school was in the main street, and that street connected the downtown
to the railway station, so a bus would drive through it twice a day.

Uryson (2002) characterizes the function of *a* in such examples as signalling topic change, in contrast to *i* which continues the same topic. The notion of topic remains rather vague in that paper, but it can be made more precise within our approach. First of all, one has to assume that the clause introduced by *a* and the preceding context (which can be a longer stretch of discourse in this case) give doubly distinct answers to a double question. We propose that one variable of that double question should range over possible *aboutness topics*, i.e. discourse referents that help maintaining the overall text cohesion—for a longer discourse segment this means constantly recurring referents, main characters, the protagonists, etc.¹⁴—thus this kind of question can be roughly glossed as *What about what?* The *about what* part of the question concerns the aboutness topic, and the *what* part asks for any kind of information that can be predicated of it.

For instance following Uryson's analysis of example (32), the school is the aboutness topic of the first clause (32a),¹⁵ whereas the following clauses (32b) and (32c) share the main street as their aboutness topic. Since (32b) has to give an answer to *What about what?* which is doubly distinct from (32a), the aboutness topic changes and it also becomes the contrastive topic of (32b) in just the same way as the first element of the pair in a pair list answer to a double question always does. Double distinctness also implies that the story told about the street must be different from the story told about the school. But this is probably always fulfilled. Even if the information predicated about the new aboutness topic is superficially similar to that about the old topic, its strategic impact in discourse is presumably

¹⁴In a short discourse segment (one clause) this criterion gives trivial results. The aboutness topic can be, in principle, any referent mentioned in that clause.

¹⁵Strictly speaking, one cannot be sure of that without some more preceding context, but it is a plausible assumption to make and appropriate context can be easily accommodated. Crucially, it is not the main street that the preceding text is about.

never the same, so this should license the use of *a*.

The apparent absence of formal parallelism between the conjuncts connected by *a* in its topic change function can be explained by two factors. First, the *What about what?* question imposes very weak constraints on the semantics and the form of what fills the two *wh*-slots. The aboutness topic, and hence whatever is said about it as well, can generally fill any syntactic position, any thematic role, and it can be of any semantic sort, i.e. in particular, it does not have to be the same sort of object as the old aboutness topic. Second, the aboutness topic of the preceding context can be implicit in the same sense as, for instance, the temporal reference in the parallel/contrast example (30), cf. discussion in section 3.3.1. In fact, the aboutness topic is even quite likely to be expressed by prosodically light material (e.g. pronouns) or zero, especially if it has been maintained for some time. Only new aboutness topics become proper contrastive topics and receive prosodic prominence.

Thus *a* signals a topic change in two ways here: it announces a new aboutness topic, and it indicates a new single-*wh* discourse topic (at the most local level of the discourse structure), e.g. *What about the street?* in (32b), which is distinct from that of (32a)—*What about the school?* However, at a higher level the conjuncts of *a* still share a common double-*wh* discourse topic *What about what?* Since this is a double-*wh* question, rather than *wh-y/n*, these uses of *a* will normally be translated into English by *and* rather than *but*, as in (31) and (32). See also Blakemore and Carston (2005); Blakemore (2005).

3.3.3 Inconsistency

This class of uses of the conjunction *a* is similar to the ‘denial of expectation’ uses of *no* and *but*, usually both *a* and *no* are appropriate in the relevant contexts, cf. (33), though there is a subtle difference in meaning. Sannikov (1989, pp. 169–171) characterizes this difference in terms of (in)dependence of the described situations: *no* indicates that the second conjunct is an abnormal consequence of the first, whereas *a* just indicates inconsistency—the situations should not hold together. Moreover, *no* signals that the situation presented in the second conjunct is decisive for the consequences, so the order of conjuncts cannot be reversed at all or without a considerable difference in meaning, whereas the conjuncts of *a* are on a par and usually can be reversed. The replacement of *no* by *a* also often goes with a *mirative* effect (Malchukov, 2004)—an expression of surprise or outrage about the fact that both situations hold.

(33) Leto, a / no idet sneg.
summer and / but goes snow

It’s summer and/but it’s snowing.

It is one of the assumptions of our theory that both the English *but* and the Russian *no* in addition to their function of marking the topic type also signal that the second argument is conclusive, i.e. if the second conjunct addresses the *why-yes* subquestion of the overarching *why-y/n*-question, the final answer to the *y/n*-question is positive, and negative otherwise. Our proposal is that it is this property of *no* plus the blocking mechanism that are responsible for the mirative effect of *a*. Suppose (33) addresses a *why-y/n*-question like *Why shouldn't and why should it be snowing?: Why shouldn't it? Because it's summer. Why should it? Because it is, I know that for a fact.* Since this is a *why-y/n*-question it must be obligatorily marked by *no*, so although this is a special case of a double question the use of *a* is normally blocked. However, since *no* also signals that the second reason is decisive, the conflict between *it shouldn't be snowing* and *it is snowing* is resolved in favour of the latter. But if you want to communicate that this conflict should remain unresolved, the way to do it is to use *a* instead, i.e. *a* is not blocked in that case. The mirative effect is the consequence of the paradoxality of the situation: it shouldn't be snowing, and it is snowing, this is weird, I don't know what to think and how to act.

This approach has important cross-linguistic consequences. Since both the English *but* and the Russian *no* resolve the conflict between the arguments in favour of the second and blocking is a general pragmatic phenomenon, we expect the same sort of paradoxality effect to appear also in English when *and* appears in an answer to a *why-y/n* question in place of *but*. This is exactly what we find in (34), discussed by Kitis (2000) and Blakemore and Carston (2005). In the version with *and* (regardless of the order of the conjuncts, like in Russian) “the speaker is understood to be communicating an attitude of surprise or outrage at the fact that the two conjuncts are true together,” while in the *but* version the speaker “can only be taken to be suggesting that the inference that one might have drawn from the first segment is illegitimate” (Blakemore and Carston, 2005, p. 581).

(34) Her husband is in hospital and/but she is seeing other men.

It remains perhaps to be explained why both *but* and *no* come to mark the second conjunct as decisive, but given that they do, our approach is more parsimonious than any that would associate the mirative effect with *and* or *a* by convention. In particular, it also explains why that effect appears in Russian with *a* rather than e.g. *i*, namely because *a* is the conjunction that one has to use with a double, in particular, a double *why-y/n*-question, when neither argument is decisive and *no* cannot be used.

Another case where the Russian *a* seems to function like *no* (and *and* like *but*) is illustrated in (35)–(36), but this time without a mirative effect. Also here the assumption that normally $P \rightarrow \neg Q$ (if someone is tired they cannot walk) is

salient, it is held by speaker A, but unlike the previous case, it is not shared by speaker B, who uses the conjunction $P \wedge Q$ to argue against it (cf. the discussion of similar examples by Blakemore and Carston, 2005, pp. 577–579). Obviously, there is no paradoxality effect because the set of public commitments of speaker B remains consistent, the disagreement is *between* the speakers.

(35) **A:** Ja ne mogu bol’še idti. Ja ustal.

I not can anymore walk I tired

B: Nu i čto? Roma tože ustal, a [IDET.]_F

So also what Roma also tired and walks

(36) **A:** I can’t walk anymore. I’m tired.

B: So what? Roma is also tired, and HE keeps walking.

A natural question to ask when you want to dispute an implication $P \rightarrow \neg Q$ is *Which of P and $\neg Q$ is and which is not the case?* The answers are doubly distinct: P (someone, Roma, is tired) receives a positive, and $\neg Q$ (that person cannot walk) receives a negative evaluation (Roma can). Notice that this question is *wh-y/n* that does not involve a *why* question, i.e. it is in the standard marking domain of *a* which does not give more weight to one conjunct over the other. In contrast, by using *no* in place of *a* speaker B would be addressing a *why-y/n* question *Why isn’t and why is one able to walk?* By answering the first part of the question, speaker B would commit to the statement that one might not be able to walk because one is tired, and thus make a concession to speaker A’s position. With *a* no such concession is present.

The final remark concerns the syntax and the information structure of conjuncts of *no* and this type of *a* uses. Unlike the uses of *a* discussed in previous sections, the “inconsistency” uses of *a* do not seem to require the presence of a contrastive sentence topic. The conjunct introduced by *a* can be all focus (33), and even one word (35). The same is true for *no* and *but*. Tentatively, this fact could be explained given the way the double *wh-y/n* question is split up into single subquestions (two *wh*-questions rather than two *y/n*-questions, cf. section 2 on the relationship between contrastive and discourse topics). In Büring’s (2003) sense, the focus is the answer to the *wh*-question, while the contrastive topic would have to be the polarity. Presumably, there are a number of syntactic and semantic constraints that make it difficult for polarity exponents to appear in topic position. This could be the reason why polarity remains unexpressed in the conjuncts, and has to be inferred as part of the implicit question. Interestingly, the English *and* seems less liberal with respect to information structure, e.g. B’s answer in (36) would be less felicitous without prosodic prominence on *he* (cf. related discussion in Blakemore and Carston, 2005), and even less without the pronoun itself, cf. *Roma is also tired and keeps walking*. This is an indication that the discourse

topic in the English example must be construed differently, which is not surprising because the use of *and* with *wh-y/n* topics is blocked by *but*. A detailed analysis of this case must be left for the future.

4 Conclusions

In this paper we have reviewed a wide range of well-known and less well-known observations on the usage of the Russian and English additive and adversative conjunctions in light of a theory that treats them as topic management devices, i.e. their basic function is to signal what the common discourse topic of the conjuncts is like. It was shown that the observed similarities and differences in their usage can all be derived from the differences in the number and type of variables in the questions addressed. In addition, an important role is played by the systemic factor (implemented as the blocking mechanism): in which contexts and in which functions a particular conjunction can be used depends in part on what other conjunctions are available in the system of that language. In particular, this made it possible to give a uniform explanation to the mirative effect of the English *and* and the Russian *a* in contexts where they are used “instead of” a proper adversative conjunction.

Of course, lots of relevant issues still remain open. In terms of data coverage, for reasons of space we had to skip entirely the discussion of conjoined non-declaratives, as well as the corrective uses of the Russian *a* and the English *but*. In terms of theoretical lacunas, the predictive power of the theory (as well as any theory based on the notion of question under discussion) depends very much on whether strong and effective constraints can be offered on when we are entitled to assume what kind of implicit question. We have discussed some phonological, syntactic, and semantic cues that bias the inference of implicit topics, some general constraints can also be found in the literature, however a lot more still remains to be said. In particular, one sometimes has to assume distinct questions under discussion for the same sentence to explain its intonational pattern on the one hand and the use of conjunctions on the other. This needs to be appropriately restricted, see Zeevat (2008) for some preliminary ideas. Finally, because the proposed theory is essentially pragmatic it has cross-linguistic implications that should be tested against a more representative sample than just two languages.

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