Conjunctions: Joining Like Elements

Conjunctions—words like and, but, or and so—are to the English language, what the best piece of lego is to toys: they let you join all sorts of things together: you put all kinds of things together:

adjPs with *adjPs*,

It was a dark and stormy night.

advPs and *advPs*,

She spoke quietly and persuasively.

NPs and *NPs*,

I ate a balony sandwich, two piece of pizza and an apple

Ns and *Ns*,

The apples, oranges and avocados were all in the same bowl.

VPs and VPs,

I ran to the bus, hopped on quickly, and sat at the back.

Ss and Ss

You can conjoin sentences but when doing so It's a bit like perfume in that a little is good, and a lot is a lot so if you are wise you'll use your conjunctions carefully.

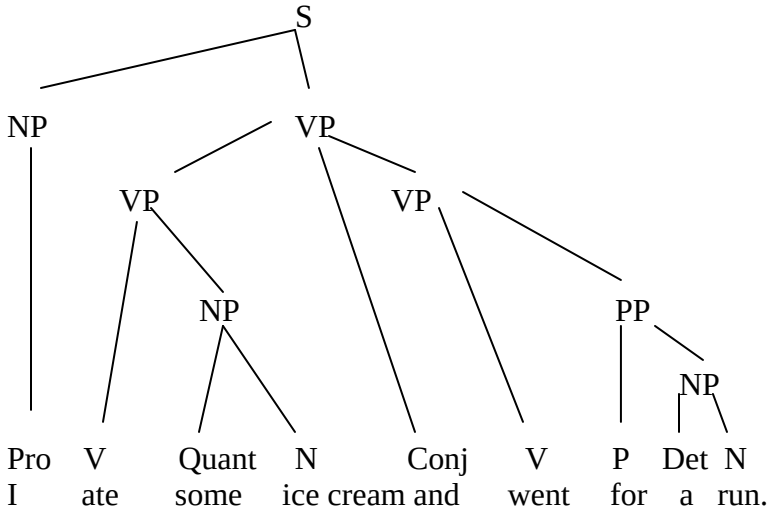
This last item shows how conjunctions can be used to make up some great sentences, but at the same time, as the sentence points out: too much is too much. With this in mind we'll first learn how to recognize the way that conjunctions are used, and then, as we make our way into the remainder of the course, we'll work on using them well.

Conjunctions join like categories. The syntax for the diagramming conjunction is as follows:

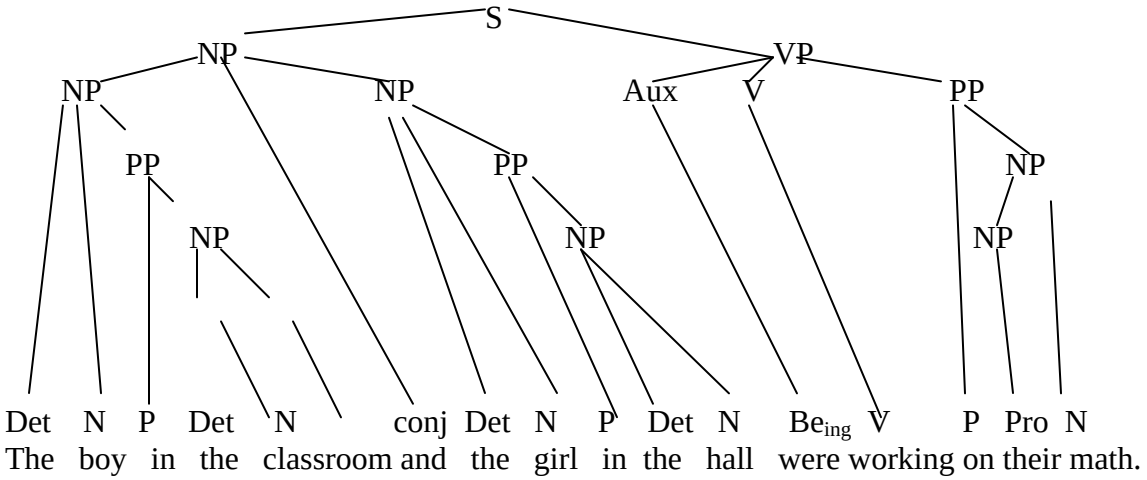
C → C (conj C)*

where C is some phrasal or lexical category. And note that our star (means can be repeated) shows up again. When being diagrammed, the conjunction itself is not marked as any lexical category. Instead the fact that two nodes are identical and the child of a like category, indicates that two items are being conjoined and but then the conjunction that is being used is marked as follows.

(This sentence has two conjoined verb phrases.)



Here's another one with two conjoined subject noun phrases.



In class we'll add a few more with some other categories conjoined. I'd add a couple more here but it takes quite a bit more time to diagram them than it does on the board so we'll do them in class.

Lets try a few out:

Complete these to be submitted as a hand in exercise tomorrow.

1. My cat ran away and I got frustrated
2. I looked for it in the yard, in the garage, and in the basement.
3. It was cold and rainy and dark.
4. The cat eventually zipped in the house, and snuggled on her blanket.
5. The grammar exercise, my math homework and a lack of chocolate chip cookies in the house made the evening a long one.
6. The kids on the bus and the old people on the street went into the theatre.
7. This exercise is finally over and I'm happy to see the end of it.