

Linguistic Insights

Studies in Language and Communication

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Part I:
Diachronic studies

and all this/that (bit/sort/kind/type of) {business/crap/thing/jazz/nonsense/shit/stuff/bullshit} and (all) this, that and the other (thing) and blah blah blah and {business/crap/things/junk/shit/stuff} of this/that {kind/sort/ilk/nature} and everybody and everything (like that) (else) and (other) {stuff/junk/crap/shit} (like that/this) and people (like that/this) and so forth (and so on) and so on (and so forth) (and so on) and such (places) (and such) and that/those (lot/sort) and that there and that/this {kind/sort/type} of {thing/stuff} and the like and the rest of it and the whole (kit and caboodle) (nine yards) (bit/thing) and thing(s) (like that/this) and things of that kind and this and that and whatever and what have you and whatnot and you name it et cetera
--

Table 1b: Inventory of Present-day English disjunctive extender tags.

OR
or anybody (like that) or anyone (like that) or anything (like that) (else) or anything of that {kind/sort} or anywhere (like that) or a whole range of things or nothing or owt (like that) or so or so forth or somebody (like that) or someone (like that)

or someplace (like that)
or something (or other) (like that/this)
or something of that/this {kind/sort}
or something to that effect
or somewhere (like that)
or sommat
or {stuff/things} (like that)
or the odd thing
or (all) that (there)
or what
or whatever
or what have you
or whatnot
or wherever
or whoever

Table 1c: Inventory of Present-day English extender tags with no overt connector.

No overt connector
anything (like that)
blah blah blah
{kind/type} of {stuff/thing}
(people) like that
something like that/this
somewhere (like that)
sommat (like that)
(sort of) thing(s) (like that)
(that/this) sort of thing
the whole bit
things of that sort
whatever
what have you

Extender tags in Present-day English have attracted the attention of many researchers (Ball and Ariel 1978; Aijmer 1985; Overstreet 1999; Cheshire 2007; Tagliamonte and Denis 2010, among many others). By contrast, only Carroll (2007, 2008) has addressed the status of extenders in earlier stages of the language. Table 2 provides the inventory of extender tags for Middle and Early Modern English based on Carroll’s (2007, 2008) findings for these two periods.

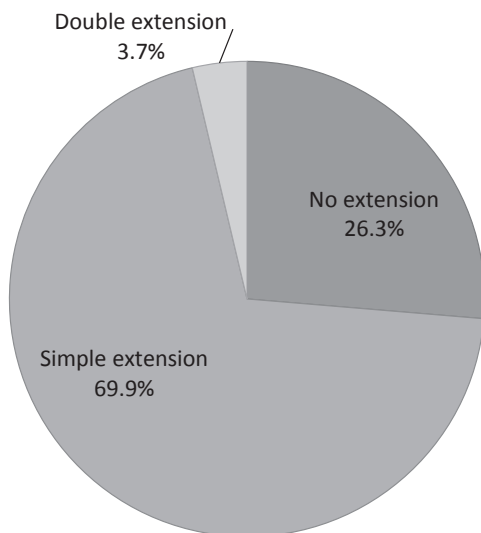


Figure 1: Form of the extender tag *or something* in the ECF and NCF in percentages.

In what follows, I consider in more detail the different types of extensions which can follow the extender tag *or something*.

2.1.1 Simple extensions

My categorization of the different types of simple extensions of *or something* in the material is arranged following a cline from the more general to the more specific extensions, based on Overstreet's distinction between “‘general extenders’ (e.g. *and all that stuff*) and what might be called ‘specific extenders’ (e.g. *and all that stupid bureaucratic stuff*), in which there is more specific lexical material used within the phrase” (1999: 12). The extensions of *or something* can be described as different types of post-modifiers of the pronoun *something*:

- A. The first type involves similatives. Two different types of similatives have been found: (i) prepositional similatives, introduced by the preposition *like*, as in (9), or by other prepositions, as is the case of *of that sort* in (10), and (ii) non-prepositional similatives,

as exemplified by (11), where the meaning of similarity is carried out by the noun phrase *that way*.

- (9) She now finding all was over, and seized with a sudden fit of frenzy, *or something like it*, ran to his sword, which he had pulled off, and laid it in the window, and was about to plunge it in her breast. (Eliza Haywood Fowler, 1751, *Betsy Thoughtless* 250)
- (10) “Day after day I used to be counting for when he would come to tell me he’d got a place at court, *or something of that sort*, for I never could tell what it would be.” (Fanny Burney, 1782, *Cecilia* 257, Vol. 2)
- (11) [A]nd they say, it’s all on account of something that Miss Clemmey Ormsby told, that Lady Geraldine said about my Lord O’Toole’s being no better than a cat’s paw, *or something that way*, which made his lordship quite mad. (Maria Edgeworth, 1809, *Ennui* 216)

B. The second type of simple extension corresponds to a post-modifier in the form of an adverbial phrase with the adverb *else*, as shown in (12).

- (12) “Humph! I thought so.” He looked contemplatively at his horse’s mane, as if he had some serious cause of dissatisfaction with it, *or something else*. (Anne Brontë, 1848, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* 104, Vol. 1)

C. A further type of extension involves comparatives, as is the case of *more* in *or something more* in (13).

- (13) She lov’d him tenderly, as a Benefactor, a Father, *or something more*; that she had been us’d to love without that severe mixture of Fear that mingles in the love we bear to Parents. (Mary de la Rivière Manley, 1709, *The New Atalantis* 60)

D. The fourth type of extension is performed by an adjective phrase, as illustrated in (14) by *or something good*, where the adjective *good* extends the tag.

- (14) “Moore eats like three men: they are always making sago or tapioca, *or something good* for him: I never go into the kitchen but there is a saucepan on the fire, cooking him some dainty.” (Charlotte Brontë, 1849, *Shirley* 213, Vol. 3)

E. The data also contains non-similative prepositional phrases post-modifying the extender tag, as is the case of *between both* in (15).

- (15) “Your authority, Mr. Jacob, is the best in the world, certainly. Nevertheless, there are many who on such an occasion might suspect you of partiality.”
“Then they would do me great injustice, Miss Torrington. I am a man, or a boy, *or something between both*: take me for all in all, it is five

2.1.2 Double extensions

Double extensions have been subdivided according to the specificity of each of the extensions being combined, thus leaving three categories: general extension + specific extension, specific extension + general extension, and the combination of two specific extensions.

- H. The first type of double extension is the combination of a general extension with a specific extension. The only type of extension with general meaning that can happen before a specific one is the adverb *else*, as is the case of (18) below, where the extender tag *or something* is post-modified by the adverb *else* and the adjective *geographical*.

(18) “That is a beautiful mysticism – It is a –“

“Please do not call it by any name,” said Dorothea, putting out her hands entreatingly. “You will say it is Persian, *or something else geographical*. It is my life. I have found it and cannot part with it.” (George Elliot, 1872, *Middlemarch* 290)

- I. The second type of double extension involves the combination of a specific extension followed by a general extension of the similitive type. As an illustration, consider (19), where the extensions of the tag are the comparative *better* and the prepositional similitive *of the same sort*.

(19) Well, well, we must bide our time. Life isn’t all beer and skittles, – but beer and skittles, *or something better of the same sort*, must form a good part of every Englishman’s education. (Thomas Hughes, 1857, *Tom Brown’s School Days* 46)

- J. The remaining possible combination of extensions is the one where the two extensions are specific as regards their meaning. (20) is an example of this pattern, since the extender tag is post-modified by the adjective phrase *animate or inanimate* and the relative clause *that he thought would be the better for the air*.

(20) If a gleam of sun shone out of the dark sky, down Mark tumbled into the cabin, and presently up he came again with a woman in his arms, or half-a-dozen children, or a man, or a bed, or a saucepan, or a basket, *or something animate or inanimate, that he thought would be the better for the air*. (Charles Dickens, 1844, *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* 190)