

# Disjunction under single referent: voiding the ban on clitic coordination

Irene Amato<sup>1</sup> & Adrian Stegovec<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

<sup>2</sup>University of Connecticut

Manuscript: January 9, 2025

The inability of clitic pronouns to be coordinated is often taken to be one of their defining properties (Kayne 1975; Cardinaletti and Starke 1994; i.a.). This is observed with both conjunction and disjunction, and regardless of clitic host and placement requirements. Clitic pronouns cannot be coordinated in Italian, where they are verbal proclitics (cf. (1-a)), as well as in Slovenian, where they are second position clitics (cf. (2-a)),<sup>1</sup> but coordination of strong pronouns is allowed in both (cf. (1-b), (2-b)).

- |     |    |   |    |  |
|-----|----|---|----|--|
| (1) | a. | * <b>Lo</b> e/o <b>la</b> chiamo.<br>him <sub>cl</sub> and/or her <sub>cl</sub> call.1SG                                | b. | Chiamo <b>lui</b> e/o <b>lei</b> .<br>call.1SG him <sub>st</sub> and/or her <sub>st</sub>                                  |
| (2) | a. | *Kličem <b>ga</b> in/ali <b>jo</b> .<br>call.1SG him <sub>cl</sub> and/or her <sub>cl</sub><br>'I call him and/or her.' | b. | Kličem <b>njega</b> in/ali <b>njo</b> .<br>call.1SG him <sub>st</sub> and/or her <sub>st</sub><br>'I call him and/or her.' |

Based on new data from Italian and Slovenian, we will show that the ban on coordination of clitic pronouns is not absolute. Namely, the ban is lifted when the following three conditions are met: (i) the coordination is a *disjunction*, (ii) the clitic pronouns share a referent, and (iii) some  $\phi$ -features on the clitic pronouns have contrasting values. We argue that the restriction in (1) and (2), and the aforementioned

---

1. The glosses follow the *Leipzig glossing rules*. In addition, we use the notations 'st' and 'cl' in the glosses to indicate strong and clitic pronouns, respectively. Italian data in the paper come from 10 speakers from the province of Lucca, Tuscany (including one of the authors), and Slovenian data come from 4 speakers from the Gorica/Karst region (including one of the authors).

exception to it, are tied to the different internal structure of clitic and strong pronouns and how it interacts with the interpretation of conjunction vs. disjunction in relation to the creation of plural discourse referents from coordinated pronouns.

## 1 Voiding the coordination ban

Contrary to the consensus view, clitic pronouns can in fact be coordinated, but the conditions that make this possible are very specific. The relevant examples are (3) for Italian, and (4) for Slovenian. What is crucial here is that: (i) the coordination is a disjunction and (ii) the entire disjunction (‘him or her’) refers to a single discourse referent (‘the winner’); this is possible with (3) and (4) in a context where the gender of the winner of the competition is unknown at the time when the sentence is uttered.<sup>2</sup>

- (3) Quando decideranno chi è il vincitore, **lo o la** chiameranno.  
 when decide.FUT.3PL who is the winner, him<sub>cl</sub> or her<sub>cl</sub> call.FUT.3PL  
 ‘When they decide who the winner is, they will call him or her.’
- (4) Ko bo zmagovalec določen, naj **ga ali jo** pokličejo na oder.  
 when will winner determined SBJV him<sub>cl</sub> or her<sub>cl</sub> call.3PL on stage  
 ‘When the winner is determined, they should call him or her on stage.’

To be more precise, the entire disjunction in (3) and (4), and both pronouns in it must have the same referent. For example, in the context of a competition, it may be that several competitors of different genders are still competing and we do not know which of them will be the winner, or it may be that a single competitor is left after the elimination of other candidates, but their gender is unknown. Clitic pronoun disjunction is possible under either of these “single referent” interpretations.

For reasons of space, we only present Italian examples below, as the two languages pattern in the same way regarding the phenomenon in question. However, note that the different placement requirements of Italian and Slovenian clitic pronouns tell us that the coordination ban has nothing to do with the prosodic/host requirements of clitics, as both show the same restriction and circumvent it under the same conditions.

---

2. Miller and Monachesi (2003, 19n24) also note clitics can be coordinated in similar environments in French, Italian, Spanish and Catalan, attributing this possibility to a “metalinguistic” avoidance strategy employed to avoid stating the gender of the referent (cf. also Abeillé 2006, 9). However, we show below that the possibility of clitic pronoun coordination is more pervasive, highly systematic, and a bona fide grammatical phenomenon (see also Section 2 on the metalinguistic analysis).

To further illustrate the relevance of the single referent reading in (3) and (4), note that it disappears when the clitic pronouns are replaced with strong pronouns:

- (5) Quando decideranno chi e' il vincitore, chiameranno **lui o lei**.  
 when decide.FUT.3PL who is the winner, call.FUT.3PL him<sub>st</sub> or her<sub>st</sub>  
 'When they decide which one is the winner, they will call him or her.'

Sentence (5) is felicitous only if the context imposes two distinct referents (e.g. a male and a female competitor in a fencing match), where each pronoun refers to a distinct individual. This reading requires strong pronouns, so the use of clitics, as in (3) or (4), is highly degraded. The single/distinct referent contrast between clitic and strong pronouns is also observed if the referents are explicitly established, as in (6).<sup>3</sup>

- (6) Quando Albano e Romina dovranno ritirare il premio, ...  
 when Albano and Romina have.FUT.3PL pick.up the prize  
 'When Albano and Romina have to pick up the prize, ...'  
 a. ... ??**lo o la** chiameranno sul palco.  
     him<sub>cl</sub> or her<sub>cl</sub> call.FUT.3PL on.the stage  
 b. ... chiameranno **lui o lei** sul palco.  
     call.FUT.3PL him<sub>st</sub> or her<sub>st</sub> on.the stage  
 '... they will call him or her on stage.'

An additional piece of evidence for the single referent interpretation is the impossibility of referring back to the disjunction of clitics with a plural pronoun, as shown in (7) (a plural pronoun can refer back to the disjunction of strong pronouns in (5)).

- (7) ... **lo o la** chiameranno. \*Entrambi però riceveranno un premio.  
 ... him<sub>cl</sub> or her<sub>cl</sub> call.FUT.3PL they.both though get.FUT.3PL a prize  
 '... they call him or her. Both of them, though, will get a prize.'

So far, we considered examples where the unknown property of the discourse referent is their gender. But similar examples can be constructed where a different property is unknown or undetermined, and crucially the ban on coordination is lifted in these cases too. Thus, in (8), the number of individuals that will be 'the winner' is unknown (either an individual or a team can win) and disjunction of clitic pronouns is allowed.

---

3. The marginal acceptability of disjoined clitic pronouns in this context is briefly addressed in footnote 12 in relation to the analysis introduced in Section 3.

- (8) Quando determineranno se i vincitori sono molti o uno  
 when determine.FUT.3PL if the winners be.PRS.3PL many or one  
 soltanto, **lo o li** chiameranno sul palco.  
 only, him<sub>cl</sub> or them<sub>cl</sub> call.FUT.3PL on.the stage  
 ‘When they determine if the winners are many or only one, they will call him or them on stage.’

A referent’s person can also be undetermined, as in (9), where either *the speaker’s* or *the addressee’s* team can be ‘the winner’. Clitic pronouns can be disjoined here too.<sup>4</sup>

- (9) Quando la nostra o la vostra squadra vincerà’, **ci o vi**  
 when the our or the your team win.FUT.3SG, us<sub>cl</sub> or you<sub>cl</sub>  
 chiameranno sul palco.  
 call.FUT.3PL on.the stage  
 ‘When our team or your team wins, they will call us or you on stage.’

To sum up, the factors crucial for allowing the coordination of clitic pronouns are: **type of coordinator** (*and/or*), and **distinct/single referent** interpretation. The (im)possible coordinations are summarized in Table 1 (CL = clitic, ST = strong).

	distinct referents		single referent	
	CONJUNCTION	DISJUNCTION	CONJUNCTION	DISJUNCTION
CL	✗	✗	✗	✓
ST	✓	✓	✗	✗

Table 1: Coordination of pronouns with distinct/single referents

In short, clitic pronoun coordination is only allowed with disjunction, and only under the single referent reading, while strong pronouns refer to distinct referents regardless

4. Note though that not all combinations are possible. Specifically, 1st/2nd clitics can not be coordinated with 3rd clitics even with the appropriate context, as shown in (i).

- (i) \*Quando determineranno se hai vinto tu o ha vinto  
 when determine.FUT.3PL if have.PRS.2SG win.PRTC you<sub>st</sub> or have.PRS.3SG win.PRTC  
 lui, **ti o lo** chiameranno.  
 he<sub>st</sub> you<sub>cl</sub> or him<sub>cl</sub> call.FUT.3PL  
 ‘When they determine if you won or he won, they will call **you or him**.’

This additional restriction provides further evidence against the metalinguistic and ellipsis analyses discussed in Section 2, since neither metalinguistic coordination nor ellipsis can be constrained based on this specific person contrast. See footnote 11 for two possible explanations for this gap.

of the type of coordination.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, single referent readings are impossible with conjunction regardless of pronoun type. In Section 3 we will argue that the pattern in Table 1 in fact follows the distinct ways in which disjunction and conjunction as well as clitic and strong pronouns can relate to discourse referents.

## 2 Against ellipsis and metalinguistic coordination

Before introducing our analysis, we will consider two alternative analyses of the exceptional clitic coordination cases: ellipsis and metalinguistic coordination.

Strings where clitic pronouns are separated by a coordinator could in principle be obtained via ellipsis by coordinating two verbs hosting object clitics, and then eliding the verb in the first conjunct: e.g. *lo chiamo o la chiamo*. However, there is no obvious reason why ellipsis of the verb should be limited to disjunction (*\*lo chiamo e la chiamo*), or why it should only be possible under the single referent reading of the clitic pronouns. Most importantly, verbal ellipsis with clitic stranding is usually impossible in Italian (as expected for verbal proclitics; Kayne 1975; van Riemsdijk 1999), so it is unclear why the cases in question should be an exception to this general prohibition.<sup>6</sup>

Another option is metalinguistic coordination, which allows for the coordination of sub-word units, as in *ortho- and periodontists* or *re- or deceive* (Selkirk 1984; Rochemont 1986; Artstein 2004; 2005; i.a.). This analysis runs into the same problems as the ellipsis analysis. Namely, metalinguistic coordination can not be limited to disjunction under the single referent reading, since metalinguistic coordination is unconstrained regarding coordinator type and the interpretation of the coordinated sub-word units, which can even lack an independent meaning (e.g. *de-* in *deceive*).

---

5. Although the single referent reading can be marginally available with disjunction of strong pronouns; see footnote 10 for some discussion on why this might be the case.

6. There is more (indirect) evidence against an ellipsis analysis from Slovenian, where clitics can seemingly be conjoined, although this forces a pause before the coordinator and after the second conjunct (cf. (ii)), and is more acceptable when an auxiliary clitic is included (cf. (iii)).

- |      |   |       |   |
|------|---|-------|---|
| (ii) | ?On <b>ga</b>    in <b>jo</b>    obiskuje.<br>he him <sub>cl</sub> and her <sub>cl</sub> visiting.M<br>'He is visiting him and (visiting) her.' | (iii) | On <b>ga je</b>    in <b>jo je</b>    obiskal.<br>he him <sub>cl</sub> is and her <sub>cl</sub> is visit.M<br>'He visited him and (visited) her.' |
|------|---|-------|---|

Under a direct clitic conjunction analysis, (iii) requires coordination of non-constituents, which suggests an ellipsis or right node raising derivation is more appropriate for the examples in (ii) and (iii). In contrast, the examples with disjunction do not force similar pauses under the single referent reading, which tells us that this ellipsis/right node raising derivation is not required in that case.

Furthermore, the free conjunct (the one preceding the coordinator) in true cases of metalinguistic coordination has to form a prosodic word (Artstein 2004, 2005), but clitics can never project a prosodic word (Selkirk 1984; Anderson 2005; i.a.).

An analysis based on ellipsis or metalinguistic coordination would thus require positing ad hoc restrictions uncharacteristic of either phenomenon.

### 3 Towards an explanation: Coordination and plural referents

We argue that the possible and impossible clitic pronoun coordinations can be derived in a principled way, using regular coordination. A key observation our analysis builds on is that conjunction must create new plural discourse referents, whereas disjunction does not have to.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in (10) ‘they’ refers to the plural discourse referent created by the conjunction of DPs, whereas ‘she’ can only refer to either DP conjunct, resulting in a pragmatically odd use of the singular pronoun. In contrast, singular pronouns can refer back to a disjunction of DPs (Stone 1992; Simons 2000), as in (11-a), but only if the DPs are not identified as distinct individuals, as in (11-b).

- (10) The soprano<sub>*i*</sub> and the alto<sub>*j*</sub> will sing. They<sub>*i+j*</sub>/#She<sub>*i/j*</sub> will perform Mozart.
- (11) a. The soprano<sub>*i*</sub> or the alto<sub>*i*</sub> will sing. She<sub>*i*</sub> will perform Mozart.  
 b. Jane<sub>*i*</sub> or Maud<sub>*j*</sub> will sing. #She<sub>*i/j*</sub> will perform Mozart. (Simons 2000)

Note that (11-a) is essentially a flipped version of examples like (3), where a singular DP (‘the winner’) is the antecedent of a disjunction of clitic pronouns. Furthermore, (11-b) is reminiscent of examples like (6), where conjoined proper nouns (‘Albano and Romina’) require the disjoined pronouns referring to them to be strong pronouns.

It is well established that clitic and strong pronouns, in languages that have both, differ in terms of possible referents. Strong pronouns are semantically more rigid than clitic pronouns: they require human referents, they cannot be bound variables, and they require salient antecedents (see e.g. Cardinaletti and Starke 1994).

Another way in which strong pronouns are semantically more rigid concerns the availability of strict and sloppy identity readings. As shown in (12), overt pronouns in

---

7. This is true of pronouns, but not necessarily lexical nouns, where we can get so called *joint reading* conjunctions like “*That sailor and soldier is my friend*” (see e.g. Heycock and Zamparelli 2005). However, those involve conjunction of NPs inside a single DP (cf. “\**That sailor and that soldier is my friend*”), whereas pronouns behave like full DPs.

English do not allow sloppy identity readings. However, in a number of languages—including Italian and Slovenian—*clitic* pronouns allow both strict and sloppy readings, while *strong* pronouns still resist sloppy readings; shown for Italian in (13).<sup>8</sup>

- (12) John<sub>i</sub> scratched his<sub>i</sub> arm and Mary scratched **it** too. (Ross 1967: 348)
- a. ✓ ... and Mary scratched [John’s arm] too STRICT IDENTITY
- b. ✗ ... and Mary<sub>i</sub> scratched [her<sub>i</sub> arm] too SLOPPY IDENTITY
- (13) Paolo ha guardato [suo fratello]<sub>i</sub> e anche Eva<sub>j</sub> ...  
 Paolo have.PRS.3SG look.PRTC his brother and also Eva  
 ‘Paolo has looked at [his brother]<sub>i</sub> and Eva<sub>j</sub> also ...’
- a. ... **I**=ha guardato.  
 him<sub>cl</sub>=have.PRS.3SG look.PRTC  
 ‘... has looked at **him<sub>i</sub>/her<sub>j</sub> brother** too.’ STRICT & SLOPPY
- b. ... ha guardato **lui**.  
 have.PRS.3SG look.PRTC him<sub>st</sub>  
 ‘... has looked at **him<sub>i</sub>** too.’ STRICT ONLY

We assume that the semantic asymmetries between clitic and strong pronouns follow from a structural difference between them, building on the insights of Cardinaletti and Starke (1994). Specifically, we suggest that the structural source of the sloppy reading asymmetry is the key to deriving the ban on the coordination of clitic pronouns and its exceptions in a principled way. The gist of the analysis we present below is that the ban arises due to the interaction of the following conditions: (i) for conjunction to create a new plural discourse referent, all conjuncts must have distinct discourse referents, (ii) the creation of plural discourse referents occurs in the syntax, and (iii) strong but not clitic pronouns have the structure necessary for the syntactic encoding of discourse referents. The exceptional behavior of pronoun disjunction then follows solely from disjunction not having to create new plural discourse referents.

### 3.1 The syntactic source of semantic asymmetries between pronouns

We propose that the syntactic locus of most semantic asymmetries between clitic and strong pronouns is an *index head*, or *idx* (Patel-Grosz and Grosz 2017; Hanink 2018), which is present in strong but absent in clitic pronouns. We assume *idx* has the

8. See Ippolito (2017), Alexopoulou and Folli (2019), and Oda (2022) on Italian; Stegovec (2019a, b) on Slovenian; Runić (2014) and Bošković (2018) on Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian.

denotation in (14): an identity function that limits the referents of the pronoun to established human discourse referents with the appropriate index ( $k$ ). In other words, *idx* makes strong pronouns only pick out salient human linguistic antecedents.

$$(14) \quad \llbracket \text{idx}_k \rrbracket^g = \lambda x . [\text{human}(x) \ \& \ x = g(k)] \quad (\text{adopted from Stegovec 2019a})$$

Recall also that clitic pronouns in Italian and Slovenian allow sloppy identity readings (cf. (13)), which we take to mean that they can denote properties/relations, not just individuals, following Tomioka’s (2003) analysis of sloppy readings (a version of the E-type analysis of donkey anaphora; Cooper 1979; Heim and Kratzer 1998). We assume this follows from clitic pronouns consisting of only interpretable  $\phi$ -features (cf. Déchaine and Wiltschko 2002) and thus no *idx* head. Following Stegovec (2019a), this means that such a clitic pronoun—comprised only of interpretable  $\phi$ -features—may be mapped in LF to either an individual variable or a property variable. This is the reason why it may pick out either a salient discourse referent ( $x$ ) or a salient property/relation (e.g.  $x$ ’s brother in (13-a)). In contrast, strong pronouns only pick out individuals due to the *idx* head, which blocks mapping to a property variable by limiting reference to individuals that are salient discourse antecedents.

Returning to coordinated pronouns, we argue that *idx* is also a prerequisite for creating plural discourse referents from pronouns inside an  $\&P$ : the distinct indices of the *idxs* combine into a composite plural index (cf.  $k + j$  in (15-a)). In Italian and Slovenian, this occurs only with strong pronouns, as the lack of *idxP* in clitic pronouns prevents creation of plural discourse referents via coordination (cf. (15-b)).

$$(15) \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{a.} \quad \llbracket \&P_{k+j} \llbracket \text{idXP}_k \text{idX}_k [\phi_P \phi \dots] \llbracket \&' \ \& \llbracket \text{idXP}_j \text{idX}_j [\phi_P \phi \dots] \rrbracket \rrbracket \\ \text{b.} \quad \llbracket \&P_i [\phi_M] \llbracket \&' \ \& \llbracket \phi_F \rrbracket \rrbracket \end{array}$$

Crucially, we assume that the plural index must be created in the syntax.<sup>9</sup> Equally as important is that the lack of *idxP* in clitic pronouns does not mean that they cannot refer to individuals, but merely that they can also receive other interpretations.

All the pieces are now in place to derive the ban on the coordination of clitic

---

9. This is independently necessary to explain why number agreement with coordinated DPs can be affected by conjunction vs. disjunction, the interpretation of disjunction (Smith et al. 2018), and the number of referents inside the coordination (Harbour 2020). Whether agreement results from a narrow syntactic operation (Chomsky 2000, 2001), a PF operation (Bobaljik 2008), or both (Bhatt and Walkow 2013), such contrasts can feed agreement only if they originate in narrow syntax.



pronouns, as well as its exceptions observed in the case of disjunction.

### 3.2 *Deriving the coordination ban and its exceptions*

Only strong pronouns can be conjoined because: (i) conjunction of pronouns *must* create a plural discourse referent with a composite index, and (ii) in order to create a composite index, *idxP*—limited to strong pronouns—*must* be present in all conjuncts. Since clitic pronouns lack *idxP*, which is necessary to feed the obligatory creation of a composite index, the result is that clitic pronouns cannot be conjoined.

Unlike conjunction, disjunction does not force the creation of plural discourse referents, as evidenced by the single referent reading. This is, crucially, what allows clitic pronouns to occur in a disjunction despite lacking *idxP*. We tentatively propose that the single referent reading arises when the whole &P with both sets of interpretable  $\phi$ -features maps to a property variable at LF (see Section 3.1). Disjunction thus allows alternatives of a salient property centered on a single individual ( $x$ ) to be contrasted (e.g.  $x$  is a winner and masculine vs.  $x$  is a winner and feminine).

The last open question is why disjunction requires contrasting the gender, number, or person of the pronouns, but not the referents of the pronouns themselves. We relate this to the focus-related semantics of disjunction (Simons 2000; Alonso-Ovalle 2006; i.a.), and the requirement that the domain of focus is established *based on syntactic constituents* (Rooth 1985; 1992; i.a.). With strong pronouns, the whole pronoun including *idxP* is in the domain of contrastive focus induced by the disjunction. The *idx* heads can be contrasted with respect to the only property in which they can differ: the value of their index. Thus, the referents of strong pronouns are distinct even with disjunction.<sup>10</sup> Clitic pronouns, on the other hand, are composed entirely from  $\phi$ -features, so only their  $\phi$ -feature values can be contrasted.<sup>11</sup> The contrast-

---

10. In principle, the focus domain could also be smaller than *idxP*, which means that the availability of clitic pronouns with a single referent reading must be blocking the smaller “ $\phi$ -features only” focus domain with strong pronouns, which makes the absence of this reading with strong pronouns a competition effect like the *Montalbetti Effect* (Montalbetti 1984; Despić 2011). This predicts that single referent readings should become possible when there are no clitic counterparts, which is borne out with strong subject pronouns (coordinating *pro* is not an option due to it being null). This could also be why the single referent reading with strong object pronouns is marginally acceptable.

11. Recall from footnote 4 that it is impossible to have a 1st/2nd person clitic and a 3rd person clitic in a disjunction. One possible explanation for this restriction is that the two clitic pronouns have distinct enough semantics to not be viable semantic alternatives under focus, which is required with disjunction: i.e. the semantic value of 1st and 2nd person (indexical) features is not a presupposition (Sudo 2012), whereas the semantic value of other  $\phi$ -features is (Cooper 1983). The other option

ing of referents is impossible due to the lack of a syntactic element associated with referential indices that could put referents in the domain of focus. With clitics, the mapping to either a property or individual variable happens in LF, after the domain of focus is established in narrow syntax over the sets of  $\phi$ -features present there.<sup>12</sup>

The possible coordinations of pronouns with respect to pronoun type, coordination type, and the distinct or single referent reading in our proposed analysis are summarized in Table 2 (cf. Table 1). Importantly, the complete pattern emerges from independent syntactic and semantic factors concerning the difference between clitic and strong pronouns and conjunction and disjunction.

		<b>distinct referents</b>	
		CONJUNCTION	DISJUNCTION
CL	<b>X</b> [ $\&P_{i+k}$ [ $\phi_M$ ] [ $\&$ ' <i>and</i> [ $\phi_F$ ]]]	<b>X</b> [ $\&P_{i+k}$ [ $\phi_M$ ] [ $\&$ ' <i>or</i> [ $\phi_F$ ]]]	
ST	<b>✓</b> [ $\&P_{i+k}$ [ $\text{idx}P_i \dots$ ] [ $\&$ ' <i>and</i> [ $\text{idx}P_k \dots$ ]]]	<b>✓</b> [ $\&P_{i+k}$ [ $\text{idx}P_i \dots$ ] [ $\&$ ' <i>or</i> [ $\text{idx}P_k \dots$ ]]]	
		<b>single referent</b>	
		CONJUNCTION	DISJUNCTION
CL	<b>X</b> [ $\&P_i$ [ $\phi_M$ ] [ $\&$ ' <i>and</i> [ $\phi_F$ ]]]	<b>✓</b> [ $\&P_i$ [ $\phi_M$ ] [ $\&$ ' <i>or</i> [ $\phi_F$ ]]]	
ST	<b>X</b> [ $\&P_i$ [ $\text{idx}P_i \dots$ ] [ $\&$ ' <i>and</i> [ $\text{idx}P_i \dots$ ]]]	<b>X</b> [ $\&P_i$ [ $\text{idx}P_i \dots$ ] [ $\&$ ' <i>or</i> [ $\text{idx}P_i \dots$ ]]]	

Table 2: Coordination of pronouns with a distinct vs. single referents

## 4 Discussion

As mentioned in the introduction, the ban on the coordination of clitic pronouns has in the past been taken to be absolute and a defining property of clitic pronouns (Kayne 1975; 1994; Cardinaletti and Starke 1994; van Riemsdijk 1999; i.a.). In fact, Kayne (1994, §6.2) even uses the ban to substantiate the claim that coordination of heads is universally disallowed. In light of this, it is quite striking that no previous analysis of the ban has been completely successful or widely adopted.

---

is that 1st/2nd person clitics simply have more structure than 3rd person ones (Kayne 2000). In this case, any coordination of 1st/2nd and 3rd person clitics is excluded for the same reason as the coordination of a clitic and a strong pronoun is: they are not of the same category.

12. The marginal acceptability of disjoined clitic pronouns with distinct referents noted in (6) could be due to distinct ways of mapping the clitic pronouns to variables in LF: either each individual clitic is mapped to a property variable, or  $\&P$  as a whole is mapped, with a preference for the latter. We leave working out the details and implications of this possibility for future research.

Crucially, no previous analysis can explain our new data, but even if we set that aside, all the analyses have independent issues. For example, it has been shown, based on a number of phenomena, that heads can in fact be coordinated (Borsley 2005; de Vries 2005; Zhang 2010; Petzell 2017; i.a.), so the coordination of clitic pronouns cannot be excluded due to a universal ban on the coordination of heads. Similarly, the coordination ban cannot be attributed to the host requirements of clitic pronouns: the ban occurs in both Italian and Slovenian, and clitic pronouns have distinct host requirements in the two languages; see also Cardinaletti and Starke (1994) on this point based on further examples from other languages.

The two tentative analyses offered by Cardinaletti and Starke (1994) are also somewhat problematic. One suggestion is that only complete extended projections (e.g. only CPs and DPs) can be coordinated—and clitic pronouns are not complete DPs, while the other suggestion is that &P makes clitic pronouns inaccessible for Case-licensing. Note that this necessitates either adopting a rather radical approach to coordination, or adopting two distinct mechanisms for Case-licensing/assignment: one for clitic pronouns, which &P blocks, and one for strong pronouns and lexical DPs, which &P does not block. Our proposal, based on core assumptions similar to Cardinaletti and Starke’s, instead derives the ban—and the exceptions to it—from independently motivated syntax-semantics interface assumptions about clitic vs. strong pronouns on one hand and conjunction vs. disjunction on the other.

Our findings have further implications for the analysis of clitic pronouns. Consider the widely held view that clitic pronouns are incompatible with contrastive focus (Kayne 1975, among many others). While this holds in the general case, recall that Italian and Slovenian clitic pronouns in disjunctions *must be* contrasted with respect to the values of their interpretable  $\phi$ -features. Cardinaletti and Starke (1994) have previously noted that clitic pronouns can be contrastively focused in certain environments. We can now add disjunction of clitic pronouns with a shared single referent to the list of those environments, which should be taken into consideration in future research on the relationship between focus and clitic pronouns.

Another issue to consider is how cliticization takes place in the case of coordinated clitic pronouns. Our tentative proposal is that clitic coordination forms a complex head [ $\& \phi$  [ $\& \& \phi$ ]] that can move and cliticize together, where the *or* head itself is a clitic. In other words, a coordination structure containing clitic pronouns behaves as a cluster of three clitics individually capable of cliticization.

As a final note, we find it unlikely that Italian and Slovenian are unique in constraining the coordination of clitic pronouns in the specific way established above. Our hope, now that its universality has been challenged, is that the ban on the coordination of clitic pronouns can be reevaluated in a wider range of languages, leading to a better understanding of the phenomenon and clitic pronouns in general.

## References

- Abeillé, Anne. 2006. In defense of lexical coordination. *Empirical issues in syntax and semantics* 6:7–36.
- Alexopoulou, Theodora and Raffaella Folli. 2019. Topic Strategies and the Internal Structure of Nominal Arguments in Greek and Italian. *Linguistic Inquiry* 50 (3): 439–486.
- Alonso-Ovalle, Luis. 2006. Disjunction in alternative semantics. PhD diss., UMass.
- Anderson, Stephen R. 2005. *Aspects of the theory of clitics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Artstein, Ron. 2004. Focus below the word level. *Natural Language Semantics* 12 (1): 1–22.
- Artstein, Ron. 2005. Coordination of parts of words. *Lingua* 115 (4): 359–393.
- Bhatt, Rajesh and Martin Walkow. 2013. Locating agreement in grammar: an argument from agreement in conjunctions. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 31 (4): 951–1013.
- Bobaljik, Jonathan David. 2008. Where’s Phi? Agreement as a post-syntactic operation. In *Phi-theory: phi features across interfaces and modules*, edited by Daniel Harbour, David Adger, and Susana Béjar, 295–328. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Borsley, Robert D. 2005. Against ConjP. Coordination: Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics, *Lingua* 115 (4): 461–482.

- Bošković, Željko. 2018. On clitic doubling and argument ellipsis: argument ellipsis as predicate ellipsis. Edited by Myriam Dali, Eric Mathieu, and Gita Zareikar. *English Linguistics* 35:1–37.
- Cardinaletti, Anna and Michal Starke. 1994. The typology of structural deficiency: On the three grammatical classes. University of Venice, *Working Papers in Linguistics* 4 (2): 41–109.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2000. Minimalist inquiries: The framework. In *Step by step: Essays on minimalism in honor of Howard Lasnik*, edited by R. Martin, D. Michaels, and J. Uriagereka, 89–155. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2001. Derivation by phase. In *Ken Hale: A life in language*, edited by Michael Kenstowicz, 1–52. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Cooper, Robin. 1979. The interpretation of pronouns. In *Syntax and semantics 10*, edited by Frank Heny and Helmut Schnelle, 61–92. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
- Cooper, Robin. 1983. *Quantification and semantic theory*. Dordrecht: Riedel.
- de Vries, Mark. 2005. Coordination and syntactic hierarchy. *Studia Linguistica* 59 (1): 83–105.
- Déchaine, Rose-Marie and Martina Wiltschko. 2002. Decomposing pronouns. *Linguistic Inquiry* 33 (3): 409–442.
- Despić, Miloje. 2011. Syntax in the absence of determiner phrase. PhD diss., UConn.
- Hanink, Emily. 2018. Structural sources of anaphora and sameness. PhD diss., University of Chicago.
- Harbour, Daniel. 2020. Conjunction resolution is nonsyntactic, say paucals. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 5 (1): 18: 1–4.
- Heim, Irene and Angelika Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in generative grammar*. Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Heycock, Caroline and Roberto Zamparelli. 2005. Friends and colleagues: Plurality, coordination, and the structure of DP. *Natural Language Semantics* 13:201–270.

- Ippolito, Michela. 2017. Indefinite pronouns. In *Proceedings of NELS 47*, edited by Andrew Lamont and Katerina A. Tetzlof, 99–108. Amherst, MA: GLSA.
- Kayne, Richard S. 1975. *French syntax: The transformational cycle*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Kayne, Richard S. 1994. *The antisymmetry of syntax*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Kayne, Richard S. 2000. *Parameters and universals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, Philip and Paola Monachesi. 2003. Les pronoms clitiques dans les langues romanes. In *Les langues romanes: problèmes de la phrase simple*, edited by Danièle Godard, 67–123. Paris: Éditions du CNRS.
- Montalbetti, Mario. 1984. After binding: On the interpretation of pronouns. PhD diss., MIT.
- Oda, Hiromune. 2022. The NP/DP-language distinction as a scale and parameters in minimalism. PhD, UConn.
- Patel-Grosz, Pritty and Patrick G. Grosz. 2017. Revisiting pronominal typology. *Linguistic Inquiry* 48 (2): 259–297.
- Petzell, Erik M. 2017. Head conjuncts: evidence from Old Swedish. *Linguistic Inquiry* 48 (1): 129–157.
- van Riemsdijk, Henk. 1999. Clitics: a state-of-the-art report. In *Clitics in the languages of Europe*, edited by Henk van Riemsdijk, 1–30. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Rochemont, Michael S. 1986. *Focus in generative grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Rooth, Mats. 1985. Association with focus. PhD diss., UMass, Amherst.
- Rooth, Mats. 1992. A theory of focus interpretation. *Natural Language Semantics* 1 (1): 75–116.
- Ross, John Robert ‘Haj’. 1967. Constraints on variables in syntax. PhD diss., MIT.

- Runić, Jelena. 2014. A new look at clitics, clitic doubling, and argument ellipsis. PhD diss., UConn.
- Selkirk, Elisabeth. 1984. *Phonology and syntax: the relation between sound and structure*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Simons, Mandy. 2000. *Issues in the semantics and pragmatics of disjunction*. New York: Garland.
- Smith, Peter W, Beata Moskal, Katharina Hartmann, and Zheng Shen. 2018. Feature conflicts, feature resolution, and the structure of either ... or. *Jezikoslovje* 19 (3): 457–480.
- Stegovec, Adrian. 2019a. *Crop to fit: pronoun size and its relation to strict/sloppy identity and animacy*. Talk given at LSA 93, New York.
- Stegovec, Adrian. 2019b. Person on the edge: lessons from crosslinguistic variation in syntactic person restrictions. PhD diss., UConn.
- Stone, Matthew D. 1992. ‘Or’ and anaphora. In *Proceedings of SALT 2*, edited by Chris Barker and David Dowty, 367–386. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Department of Linguistics.
- Sudo, Yasutada. 2012. On the semantics of phi features on pronouns. PhD diss., MIT.
- Tomioka, Satoshi. 2003. The semantics of Japanese null arguments and its cross-linguistic investigations. In *The interfaces: deriving and interpreting omitted structures*, edited by Kerstin Schwabe and Susanne Winkler, 321–339. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Zhang, Niina Ning. 2010. *Coordination in syntax*. Cambridge: CUP.