

Some remarks on bare coordination

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1 Introduction to bare coordination

(1) *Introducing the phenomenon*

- a. He used fork and knife ← BARE COORDINATION
- b. He used a fork and a knife
- c. He used a fork and knife
- d. *He used fork

(2) *Definition of BARE COORDINATION*

In this paper, the term bare coordination will be used for a coordination of two or more determinerless noun phrases, the first of which is headed by a singular count noun.

(3) *More examples*

brother and sister, father and mother, husband and wife, bow and arrows, trial and error, night and day, needle and thread, house and garden, pen and paper, mother and children, neither son nor daughter, either hand or foot

(4) *Earlier discussions*

- a. (BARE) BINOMIALS (Malkiel 1959, Lambrecht 1984)
- b. COORDINATED BARE DEFINITES (Heycock and Zamparelli 2003, Roodenburg 2004)
- c. NATURAL/TIGHT COORDINATION (Wälchli 2005, Haspelmath 2007)
- d. BARE COORDINATION (De Swart and Zwarts 2007)

(5) *Semantic effects*

- a. ?He used fork and handkerchief (CLOSENESS)
- b. *There were goblet and spoon on the table (DEFINITENESS)
- c. Mother and child stay at the hospital for four days (STEREOTYPICALITY)

(6) *One of the questions*

How does bareness in coordination lead to such semantic effects?

2 Approaches to bare coordination

(7) *Iconicity approach* (Haiman 1983, Wälchli 2005)

Linguistic distance mirrors conceptual distance.

(8) *Raising approach* (Heycock and Zamparelli 2003)

Bare coordinations are definite because they involve raising of coordinated NPs to the Spec of an empty D (cf. *John's book*).

a. [DP [CoorP [NP fork] and [NP knife]]_i [D' D^e ... t_i]]

b. [DP [DP John's] [D' D^e [NP book]]]

(9) *Economy and frequency approach* (Haspelmath 2007)

Natural coordination is more frequent than accidental coordination, so it is more economical to use less explicit encoding.

(10) *Strongest meaning approach* (De Swart and Zwarts 2007)

Unmarked bare forms are linked to unmarked *strong* (enriched, stereotypical) interpretations in a bidirectionally optimal way.

3 Problems with the iconicity approach

(11) *Missing article*

a. He used fork and knife

b. He used a/the [fork and knife]

⇒ There is no iconic motivation for dropping the first article.

(12) *Definiteness effects*

a. *There were goblet and spoon on the table (H&Z 2003:446)

b. He gave me a key, a letter for the landlord and some instructions. I have to give key and letter to the tenant (H&Z 2003:443)

⇒ It is not clear how definiteness relates to conceptual closeness.

4 Problems with the syntactic raising approach

(13) *Problem with naturalness (frame property) of bare coordination*

How does raising exclude unnatural combinations (e.g. *man and snake*)?

(14) *Problems with definiteness with and*

- a. You come against me with sword and spear and javelin (unclear)
- b. I would weep day and night (universal)
- c. They are husband and wife (reciprocal)
- d. He was chained hand and foot (possessive)
- e. Ik ben docent en onderzoeker (Dutch) (non-unique)
I am lecturer and researcher

(15) *Problems with definiteness of other coordinators*

- a. He had neither son nor daughter (indefinite)
- b. ... dat er mens noch dier meer leeft (Dutch) (indefinite)
... that there man nor animal anymore lives
- c. Is there rhyme or reason to this? (indefinite)

(16) *Definiteness is also favoured with non-bare coordination*

(the/a) landlord and (the/a) tenant in BNC

	<i>0&0</i>	<i>a(n)&0</i>	<i>the&0</i>	<i>a(n)&a(n)</i>	<i>the&the</i>
or	3	1	0	1	15
and	30*	3	12	1	30

(* not including 94 tokens of the *landlord and tenant + N* pattern, with N = *act* (89), N = *law* (2), N = *system* (2), N = *work* (1), N = *legislation* (1), N = *relationship* (1), N = *bar* (1))

5 Problems with the frequency approach

(17) *Haspelmath's frequency hypothesis*

'[...] it seems plausible that for noun phrases, too, it will be possible to show that coordinations of the type 'brother and sister' will turn out to be more frequent than coordinations of the type 'the man and the snake'.' (Haspelmath 2007)

(24) *No clear dominance of bare coordination with natural combinations*
See (16).

(25) *Conclusions*

Frequency (i.e. usage) can not (entirely) motivate the syntax and semantics of bare coordination.

6 Strongest meaning approach

(26) *(Un)marked forms with (un)marked meanings* (De Swart and Zwarts 2007)

FORM-MEANING-PAIR	*FUNCTION WORD	STRENGTH
☞ <i>mother and child</i> possession		
<i>mother and child</i> no possession		*
<i>the mother and the child</i> possession	*	
☞ <i>the mother and the child</i> no possession	*	*

(27) *Strength*

A stronger (richer, more typical) interpretation is better than a weaker interpretation, as long as this does not conflict with the meaning of the nouns, the coordinator or the wider linguistic and non-linguistic context.

(cf. *Strongest Meaning Hypothesis*, Dalrympe et al. 1994, Winter 2001)

(28) *Strengthening effects*

a. *goblet and spoon*

the goblet and the spoon > 'a goblet and a spoon'

a'. *neither son nor daughter*

'neither the son nor the daughter' > neither a son nor a daughter

a''. *Ik ben docent en onderzoeker*

I am lecturer and researcher

'the lecturer and the researcher' > a lecturer and a researcher

b. *mother and child*

the mother and her child > 'the mother and the child'

b'. *goblet and spoon*

'the goblet and its spoon' > the goblet and the spoon

b''. *They are husband and wife*

'the husb. and his wife' > a husb. and his wife > 'a husb. and a wife'

- c. *day and night*
 [every day and every night] > 'a day and a night'
- c'. *with fork and knife*
 'every fork and every knife' > [a fork and a knife]

(29) How does the naturalness (frame) effect come about?

Compare ?*man and snake* with *man and horse*.

(BNC: much more easy both to man and horse 'his horse')

FORM-MEANING-PAIR	*FUNCTION WORD	STRENGTH
☞ <i>man and snake</i> 'the man and <u>his</u> snake'		
<i>man and snake</i> 'the man and <u>the</u> snake'		*
<i>the man and the snake</i> 'the man and <u>his</u> snake'	*	
☞ <i>the man and the snake</i> 'the man and <u>the</u> snake'	*	*

Man and snake becomes fully acceptable once a frame or context is provided which licenses a stronger interpretation than the simple definite one (snake charmer).

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