Spurious coordination in Vlach multiple *wh*-fronting

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1 The phenomenon

Many (perhaps all?) multiple *wh*-fronting languages allow for what I will call a ‘spurious coordinator’ to appear between fronted *wh*-items:

(1) Vlach

   a. acari či ari vijutu?  
      *who what has seen* ‘Who saw what?’
   b. acari s či ari vijutu?  
      *who and what has seen* ‘Who saw something and what did they see?’

(2) Russian (Kazenin 2002, Grebenyova 2004, Gribanova 2007)

   a. Kto začem przydidil?  
      *who why came* ‘Who came for what reason?’
   b. Kto i začem przydidil?  
      *who and why came* ‘Who came and for what reason?’

(3) Hungarian (Lipták 2003)

   a. Ki mikor láttta Mari?  
      *who when saw Mari* ‘Who saw Mari when?’
   b. Ki és mikor láttta Mari?  
      *who and when saw Mari* ‘Who saw Mari and when?’

• Also found in Serbo-Croatian (Browne 1972), Romanian (Comorovski 1996, Gribanova 2007), Czech (Skrabalova 2006) and perhaps Turkish (Merchant 2001)

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1Vlach (or Vlah, Greek βλαχικά) is an endangered minority Romance language (whose two main variants are Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian) spoken in parts of Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and northern Greece by 50,000 people by some estimates; see Friedman 2001 for ethnographic discussion. All Vlach data not otherwise sourced come from my fieldwork in Katerini, Greece in August 2007; many thanks to Sakis Gaitanis, my primary informant (a 40-year-old Greek-Vlach bilingual male).
2 Main properties

2.1 Single-pair answers required

Spurious coordinated questions only allow single pair answers, not the pair-list answers that are usually required in multiple wh-questions in these languages (Wachowicz 1974, Rudin 1988, 2007, Kazenin 2002, Bošković 2002):

(4) a. Q: Who brought what to the potluck?
   A: Abby brought the hotdogs, Ben brought the beer, and Cherlynn brought the dessert.

b. ‘pair-list’: What are the pairs \(< x, y >\) such that \(x \in \{abby, ben, cherlynn\}\) and \(y \in \{hotdogs, beer, dessert\}\) and \([brought(x, y)]\) is true?

c. \([bring] = \{< abby, hotdogs >, < ben, beer >, < cherlynn, dessert >\}\)

d. presupposition: there is more than one pair \(< x, y > \in [bring]^M\)

(5) a. Q: Who did you see, and where?
   A: I saw Mr. Plum in the library.

b. Q: Who hit who first?
   A: Sheila hit Rex first.

(c) ‘single-pair’: What is the unique pair \(< x, y >\) such that \(x \in \{sheila, rex\}\) and \(y \in \{sheila, rex\}\) and \([hit.first(x, y)]\) is true?

d. \([hit.first] = \{< sheila, rex >\}\)

e. presupposition: there is a unique pair \(< x, y > \in [bring]^M\)

(6) Acari #( s ) kundu ari vatimatwo muma-t?
   who and when has killed mother-your
‘Who killed your mother, and when?’ (cf. #Who killed your mother when?)

• Without the conjunction \(s\) ‘and’, the question is infelicitous, due to the one-time-only nature of the predicate.

2.2 Superiority effects are maintained

In multiple wh-fronting languages with superiority effects (Hungarian, Macedonian), these effects persist in spurious coordinated questions (Lipták 2003).

(7) Hungarian

a. Ki és kiről beszélt?
   who and who.ABOUT talked
‘Who talked and about whom?’

b. ??? Kiről és ki beszélt?
   who.ABOUT and who talked
2.3 Spurious *wh*-coordination involves conjunction

Only conjunctions show this behavior, not disjunctions

(9) * Acari i kundu arī vatinatō muma-ts?
   * who or when has killed mother-your

2.4 Spurious *wh*-coordination is always ‘unbalanced’

The ‘coordinated’ *wh*-phrases cannot occur in ‘balanced’ coordinations:

(10) a. * S acari s ċi ar ī vijutų?
      and who and what has seen (intended =(1b))

    b. cf. S fičorlų s fiata anu vijutų muma-ts.
      and the.boy and the.girl have seen mother-your

      ‘Both the boy and the girl saw your mother.’

2.5 Spurious *wh*-coordination only occurs in multiple *wh*-fronting languages

These structures only occur in languages that allow multiple fronting of *wh*-elements already (whether such fronting is obligatory, as in Russian, or optional, as in Hungarian and Vlach).

(11) * Who and when did you see?

(12) * Wie en wanneer heb je gezien? (Dutch)
      who and when have you seen

(13) * Pjon ke pote idhes? (Greek)
      whom and when saw.2s

3 Previous analyses

3.1 Previous strategy 1: Backwards sluicing

Spurious *wh*-coordination involves coordinated CPs with a backwards ellipsis operation (like sluicing) that reduces the first conjunct to just a *wh*-phrase (variously Bánréti 1992, Giannakidou and Merchant 1998, and Camacho 2003):
Advantages
1. Gets the restriction to single-pair answers for free

Problems
1. Not all the predicates that can occur in spurious coordinations allow for indefinite null arguments (Kazenin 2002, Lipták 2003, Gribanova 2007):

(15) a. Kto i kakoj gorod zaxvatił?
   who.NOM and which city.ACC conquered.3s
   ‘Who conquered which city?’

b. [cp Kto1 [cp | zaxvatił | čež | katoj gorod | tp pro1 zaxvatił t2 ]] i [cp | kakoj gorod | tp pro1 zaxvatił t2 ]]
c. * Kto zaxvatił i kakoj gorod zaxvatił?
   who.NOM conquered.3s and which city.ACC conquered.3s

2. Hungarian definiteness agreement (object agreement on the verb) should be obligatory, and is in fact disallowed (Lipták 2003):

(16) a. Érdekel (hogy) mit csnálsz és hogyan csnál-od/*-sz.
   interest.3s (that) what.ACC do.2s.INDEF and how do.2s.DEF/*INDEF
   ‘I care about what you do and how.’

b. Érdekel (hogy) mit és hogyan csnál-*/od/-sz.
   interest.3s (that) what.ACC and how do.2s.*DEF/INDEF
   ‘I care about what you do and how.’

3. Backwards sluicing obeys the Backwards Anaphora Constraint (Ross 1969):

(17) a. Although I don’t know who, I know he wants to see someone.
b. Although I know he wants to see someone, I don’t know who.
c. I know he wants to see someone, although I don’t know who.
d. ?*I don’t know who, although I know that he wants to see someone.
4. In Vlach, the otherwise obligatory clitic in the second conjunct (cf. (18b)) cannot appear:

\[(18) \begin{align*}
&\text{a. Acari s } kundù *(\text{\&u}) \text{ ai vijutù?} \\
&\text{who} \text{ and when (him) have.2s seen} \quad \text{‘Who did you see, and when?’} \\
&\text{b. Acari ai vijutù s } kundù *(\text{\&u}) \text{ ai vijutù?} \\
&\text{who} \text{ have.2s seen} \text{ and when (him) have.2s seen}
\end{align*}\]

3.2 Previous strategy 2: Coordination of the wh-phrases

The second general strategy (Kazenin, Lipták, Gribanova) has been to claim that the wh-phrases are themselves coordinated:

\[(19)\]

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Advantages} \\

1. \text{Gribanova 2007: Can capture the lack of pair-list readings, by assuming a strict structural locality condition on Quantifier Absorption, an operation that takes } n \text{ adjacent unary quantifiers and returns a single } n\text{-ary quantifier (Higginbotham and May 1981)}:

\[(20) \begin{align*}
&\text{a. Which man admires which woman?} \\
&[\text{WH}_x : x \text{ a man}][\text{WH}_y : y \text{ a woman}]x \text{ admires } y \rightarrow [\text{WH}_2^{1,2}x, y : x \text{ a man } \& y \text{ a woman} ] \text{ x admires } y \\
&\text{b. Assumption: “In order to undergo QA [Quantifier Absorption], … quantifiers … must be structurally adjacent” (Q1 c-commands Q2 and no head c-commands Q2 but not Q1) (similar to May’s 1985 condition on } \Sigma\text{-sequence formation)}
\end{align*}\]

2. Captures some similar effects in Serbo-Croatian, where a li C intervening between two wh-phrases forces a single-pair answer (Grebenyova 2004, Gribanova 2007)

Problems

1. Movement to a non-c-commanding position (of the noninitial wh-phrase(s))
2. How to stop balanced coordinations from occurring?
3. No way to capture the correlation between spurious coordinations and multiple wh-fronting
4. Why should Superiority effects persist? (Grewendorf 2001 ‘cluster’-formation?)
4 Analysis

(21) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{WH}_1 \\
\& \\
\text{WH}_2 \\
\text{C} \\
\text{TP}
\end{array}
\]

(\[t_1 \ldots t_2\])

(22) ‘&’ (s, i, és) is spurious, used as a discourse marker, not meaning $\lambda p \lambda q [p \land q]$

Advantages

1. Piggybacks on wh-movements independently attested in the language: therefore only languages that multiply front wh-elements will have this

2. Whatever constraints operate on multiple wh-movements—such as Superiority—will continue to apply

3. Only conjunctive morphemes, not disjunctive ones, grammaticalize such discourse marker status

4. Left bracket coordinators don’t occur in spurious uses:

(23) (*Both) one more step and I’ll shoot you.

(*Both) Two more beers and we’re outta here. (Culicover and Jackendoff 1997)

5. Same account of lack of pair-list reading as on strategy 2: Assume that Quantifier Absorption is contingent on structural adjacency (à la Gribanova 2007 or Dayal 2002:513). Then the intervening conjunction will block QA.

(24) Another possibility: the conjunction itself imposes the presupposition for a single pair answer (implemented as a partial identity function over partial question meanings)


a. Which philosopher likes which linguist?

b. \[\text{[which linguist}_j \text{[which philosopher}_i \text{[t}_i \text{likes } t_j]]}\]

c. $Q = \lambda p \exists f_{<e,e>} [\text{Dom}(f) = \text{philosopher}' \land \text{Range}(f) = \text{linguist}' \land p = \land \lambda p' \exists x [p' = x \text{likes } f(x)]]$

d. For example, if philosopher' = \{a, c\}, linguist' = \{b, d\}, then

e. $Q = \{a \text{ likes } b \text{ and } c \text{ likes } d, a \text{ and } c \text{ both like } b, a \text{ and } c \text{ both like } d, a \text{ likes } d, c \text{ likes } b\}$

f. $Ans(Q) = \wp[\forall p \land p \in Q \land \forall p' \in Q[\forall p' \rightarrow (p \subseteq p')]]$
4.1 A menagerie of nonconjunctive uses of conjunction morphemes

(26) a. shi ashi foglich [sic] ‘therefore’ (Boiagi 1915:127)
b. shi seste că wenn auch ‘even if’ (Boiagi 1915:127)

(27) Greek
a. K’ omos (erxete), (‘verum focus’)
   and however come.3s
   ‘He IS coming. Er kommt DOCH. Si, il vient.’
b. An ke kseri, fevgi.
   if and know.3s leave.3s
   ‘Even though he knows, he’s leaving.’
c. Oti ke na pis, fevgo.
   whatever and subj say.2s leave.1s
   ‘No matter what you say, I’m leaving.’

(28) Russian
a. Ja daže i ne znal!
   I even and not knew
   ‘I didn’t even know!’
b. On predskazal, čto my proigraem, čto i proizošlo.
   he predicted that we lose which and happened
   ‘He predicted that we would win, which indeed happened.’

Questions

1. How plausible is it to find independent, parallel grammaticalizations of conjunctive morphemes away from conjunctive semantics to focus, additive particles?

2. Could the regular conjunctive semantics with two CPs involving ellipsis be a source for such a path? Can we spot languages in intermediate stages? (‘Reverse sluicing’ in Greek a candidate?)

5 Conclusions and consequences

1. No movement to a non-c-commanding position is necessary

2. Conjunctive morphemes have more, and more puzzling, usages than classical logic leads us to expect

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²From community.livejournal.com/terra_linguarum/413531.html; thanks to V. Gribanova for the pointer.
References


Gribanova, Vera. 2007. Structural adjacency and the typology of interrogative interpretations. ms., UCSC. (Hopefully to appear in Linguistic Inquiry.)


