

## All shapes and sizes: Towards a more fine-grained approach to pronoun typology and competition effects

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Perlmutter (1968, 1970) identified what we today call *competition effects* in the distribution of clitic and strong pronouns. For example, in French, when either a clitic or strong pronoun is grammatical in a particular syntactic context, like (1), the strong pronoun gets a marked interpretation (e.g. a contrastive focus interpretation). However, if only the clitic version of the pronoun is for some reason ungrammatical, as in (2), the strong pronoun can occur without the marked interpretation.

- (1) a. Roger **vous les** avait recommandés.  
Roger 2PL 3PL.ACC has recommended  
'Roger had recommended them to you.'  
b. Roger **les** avait recommandés à vous, pas à Jean.  
Roger 3PL had recommended to you not to Jean  
'Roger had recommended them to you, not to Jean.'

- (2) a. \*Roger **vous m'** avait recommandé.  
Roger 2PL 1SG had recommended  
b. Roger **m'** avait recommandé à vous.  
Roger 1SG had recommended to you  
'Roger had recommended me to you.'

(Perlmutter 1970, 222–3)

The marked interpretation of strong pronouns is contingent on the availability of grammatical clitic pronoun competitors. Otherwise they are interpreted just like the clitic pronoun would be.

Pronoun typology and competition effects have since become very productive areas of research in generative syntax (see, among many others, Cardinaletti and Starke 1994; Déchaine and Wiltschko 2002; Despić 2011; Franks 2016). What has been largely left unexplored though is the possibility that not all contexts where clitic pronouns are impossible bring about competition effects. In this talk I examine this issue with Slovenian as a case study. Slovenian is ideal in this case because of the three-way distinction between ① *clitic pronouns*, ② *strong pronouns*, and clitic-like pronouns that occur inside some prepositional phrases: ③ *P-pronouns*. Their different distributional requirements make it possible to examine different ways in which competitor forms can be excluded.

I will compare three main contexts where competition effects are expected to arise: (i) pronouns inside PPs, (ii) pronouns under focus-sensitive particles, and (iii) coordinated pronouns. Interestingly, the classic competition effect only arises with the first two contexts. For example, only clitic pronouns can normally pick out inanimate referents, as shown in (3), but inside an instrumental PP, where no clitic pronoun is possible, the strong pronoun may have an inanimate referent, as in (4).

- (3) Marko pospravlja svojo sobo, in Maja { **jo** ① / **#njo** ② } tudi pospravlja  
Marko tidy.up self'S.F.ACC room.F.ACC and Maja 3.F.ACC her.ACC also tidy.up  
'Marko is tidying up his room and Maja is tidying **it** up too.' (① inan. vs. ② #inan.)  
(4) Marko se igra s svojimi Lego kockami in Maja se tudi igra z **njimi** ②  
Marko SE play with self'S.PL.INST Lego bricks.INST and Maja SE also play with them.INST  
'Marko is playing with his Legos and Maja is playing with **them** too.'

P-pronouns pattern with clitic pronouns in that with PPs where they are possible their strong pronoun counterpart cannot have an inanimate referent in spite of being a string pronoun inside a PP (cf. (4)):

- (5) Marko je padel na svojo roko, in Maja je tudi padla { **nánjo** ③ / na #**njó** ② }  
Marko is fell on self's.F.ACC arm.F.ACC and Maja is also fell.F on.her.ACC on her.ACC  
'Marko fell on his arm and Maja also fell on it.' (③ inan. vs. ② #inan.)

Compare this pattern to what we observe with coordinated pronouns. The coordination of clitic pronouns is impossible (cf. (6a)), but in spite of that strong pronouns retain their inability to pick out inanimate referents (cf. (6b)), so there is no competition effect observed.

- (6) Vzdrževanje tako avta<sub>i</sub> kot jadrnice<sub>j</sub> stane preveč.  
maintainance so car.M.GEN AS sailboat.F.GEN costs too.much  
'It costs too much to maintain both the car and the sailboat.'  
a. \*Prodati **ga**<sub>i</sub> ali **jo**<sub>j</sub> bo treba.  
sell.INF 3.M.ACC OR 3.F.ACC FUT.3SG must  
b. #Prodati bo treba **njega**<sub>i</sub> ali **njo**<sub>j</sub>.  
sell.INF FUT.3SG must him.ACC OR her.ACC  
'We'll have to sell one of them / #**him** or **her**.'

In the spirit of Franks (2016, 2017), I will argue that the familiar clitic/weak/strong distinction is not fine-grained enough to capture all the attested deficient pronoun types, and that deficiency of pronouns is multi-faceted, in that it may be observed either in the syntax, in PF, or in LF, which in turn means that mismatches between the three types of deficiency are possible.

I propose that when strong pronouns assume the interpretation normally associated with their excluded clitic counterparts we are in fact dealing with syncretism: both the rich and the deficient pronominal structures are underlyingly available, but they realize identically at PF (a refinement of Despić's *clitic camouflage* idea). This is possible because the clitic/P-pronoun forms are excluded in either for morphological reasons or the PF correlates of focus marking. Conversely, in the case of coordination—where I will argue the restriction is syntactic and semantic in nature—the deficient pronominal structure can never occur. This view of the ban on the coordination of clitic pronouns will be further supported by previously undiscussed case where the coordination of clitic pronouns can be lifted, as well as by the peculiar semantic restrictions on coordinated P-pronouns.

## References

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