

Coordinated Bare Definites in Romanian

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1. Introduction

‘**Coordinated bare definites**’ (Heycock & Zamparelli 2003) = coordinated bare singular nouns with a definite interpretation, of the type **N and N**

(1) a. Interesante sunt dialogurile băiatului cu taică-său. Spre deosebire de dialogul de teatru, unde fiecare erou vorbește limba caracterului său, a mentalității personajului, aici, în filmul nostru, **tată și fiu** gândesc la fel. Totuși se ceartă la fiecare frază. (<http://aarc.ro/>, in RoTenTen)

‘The boy’s dialogues with his father are interesting. Unlike the theater dialogue, where each hero speaks the language of his character, the mentality of the character, here, in our film, **father and son** think alike. However, they argue with every sentence.’

b. *Interesante sunt dialogurile băiatului cu taică-său. **Tată** gândește la fel ca fiul.

Similar structures are found in several Romance and Germanic languages (Zwarts 2008; Heycock & Zamparelli 2003; Märzhäuser 2013; le Bruyn & de Swart 2014; Cheng, Heycock & Zamparelli 2017 a.o.):

English:

(2) A black cat and a brown dog were fighting in the street.

a. **Cat and dog** were equally filthy.

b. ***Cat** was filthy. (Heycock & Zamparelli 2003)

Italian:

(3) Un gatto nero ed un cane scuro si azzuffavano per strada.

a cat black and a dog dark were fighting in street.

a. **Cane e gatto** erano ugualmente luridi.

dog and cat were equally filthy.

b. ***Gatto** era lurido. (Heycock & Zamparelli 2003)

cat was filthy

French:

(4) Un chien noir et un chat gras se battaient fougueusement dans notre jardin.

a dog black and a cat fat REFL fight.IMPF furiously in our garden

a. **Chien et chat** avaient tous les deux l’air très sale.

dog and cat have.IMPF all the two the air very dirty

‘Dog and cat appeared to be very dirty.’

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- b. ***Chien** avait l'air très sale. (Heycock & Zamparelli 2003)
 dog have.IMPF the air very dirty
 'Dog and cat appeared to be very dirty.'
- (5) **Père et fils** s'entendaient bien. (Abeillé 2022)
 father and son REFL get along well
 'Father and son got along well.'

Spanish

- (6) a. **Perro y gato** andaban sueltos. (Abeillé 2022)
 dog and cat roam.PST loose.PL
 'Dog and cat roamed freely.'
- b. ***Perro** andaba suelto.
 'Dog roamed freely.'

This topic is interesting because

- ▶ a single bare noun would not be acceptable in this structure, in the same context – see examples *b.* above
- ▶ a bare plural noun is also excluded in the similar context (with an anaphoric reading), despite the fact that the referent of *N and N* is plural – see (7)
- ▶ the interpretation of *N and N* is definite (the interpretation is anaphoric)
- ▶ the structure seems to be more acceptable in some context than in others, depending on the nouns that are coordinated – see below *mamă și fiică, tată și fiu* vs *pisică și câine*
- ▶ more than syntax, it is a question of semantics and even idiomaticity (see Märzhäuser 2013)

- (7) Două pisici albe se băteau pe stradă. (Ro.)
 two cat.PL white.PL REFL fight on street
 'Two white cats were fighting in the street.'
- a. ***Pisici** erau murdare.
 cat.PL were filthy.PL 'Cats were filthy.'
- b. **Pisicile** erau murdare.
 cat. PL.DEF were filthy.PL 'The cats were filthy.'

2. Properties of the *N and N* construction in Romanian

2.1. The distribution

Bare nouns occur in various contexts in Romanian: predicates, subjects in existential sentences (if preverbal, it's topicalized), direct objects:

- (8) a. George este **tată / doctor**.
 George is father / doctor. 'George is a father / a doctor.'
- b. Ei sunt **bunici / ingineri**.
 they are grandparent.PL engineer.PL 'They are grandparents / engineers.'
- (9) a. **Mătură** e în debara, dacă vrei să faci curățenie.
 broom is in closet if want.2SG SUBJ make cleaning
 'There is a broom in the closet, if you want to clean.'
- b. **Mături** sunt în debara.
 broom.PL are in closet 'There are brooms in the closet.'
- (10) a. Am cumpărat **canapea** din Ikea.
 aux.1SG bought sofa from Ikea 'I bought a sofa from Ikea.'
- b. Am luat **scaune** de pe internet.
 aux.1SG taken chair.PL from internet 'I bought chairs on the Internet.'

They are excluded from subject position in non-existential contexts:

- (11) a. ***Balenă** este un mamifer. (generic)
whale is a mammal 'The whale is a mammal.'
b. ***Câini** sunt animale inteligente. (Ro.)
dog.PL are animal.PL intelligent.PL 'Dogs are intelligent animals.'

- compare to other languages:

- (12) a. **Dogs** are intelligent animals. (Eng.)
b. *Cani sono animali intelligenti. (It.)
c. *Chiens sont des animaux intelligents. (Fr.)

- (13) a. O pisică neagră și un câine maro se băteau pe stradă.
a cat black and a dog brown REFL fight.IMPF on street.
***Pisică** era murdară. (anaphoric)
cat was dirty
'A black cat and a brown dog were fighting in the street. The cat was dirty.'
b. Patru pisici și câini erau în curte. ***Pisici** erau murdare.
four cat.PL and dog.PL were in yard cat.PL were dirty
'Four cats and dogs were in the yard. The cats were dirty.'
→ similarly to other languages, where anaphora requires +def nouns

• In contrast with the above sentences, *N and N* constructions can appear in subject positions in generic and anaphoric contexts; see (1)a above for the anaphoric context.

In the following examples the reading is generic:

- (14) În acest hotel, **bogat și sărac** sunt tratați la fel.
in this hotel rich.SG and poor.SG are treated similarly
'In this hotel the rich and the poor are treated the same.'
(15) a. **Mamă și fiică** nu pot lucra în același departament, e conflict de interes.
mother and daughter not can work in same department is conflict of interest.PL
'A mother and her daughter cannot work in the same department, it is a conflict of interests.'
b. ***Mamă** nu poate lucra în același departament cu fiica / fiică e conflict de
mother not can work in same department with daughter.def / daughter is conflict of
interes.
interest.PL
'A mother cannot work in the same department as her daughter, it is a conflict of interests.'

In (15)a the bare noun is equivalent to an indefinite noun (*o mamă și o fiică* 'a mother and a daughter') in the restriction of a generic operator. The definite article is not ungrammatical, but the indefinite article would be the preferred use in (15)a for the generic reading:

- (16) **O mamă și o fiică** nu pot lucra în același departament, e conflict de interes.
a mother and a daughter not can work in same department is conflict of interest.PL
'A mother and her daughter cannot work in the same department, it is a conflict of interests.'

The difference of interpretation between (15)a and (16) is that in (15)a the two individuals must be in a mother-daughter relation, whereas a coordination of indefinites may refer to persons that are in a motherhood or filiation relation to other individuals:

(17) Au angajat o mamă și o fiică. ‘They hired a mother and a daughter’: can mean ‘the mother of somebody in the administration/company and the daughter of somebody in the administration/company’

=> the referents of the nouns must stay in a mutual relation denoted by the two Ns: x is y 's N_1 and y is x 's N_2

(e.g. in (15) x is y 's mother and y is x 's daughter)

Let us call such pairs of nouns **‘reciprocal pairs’**.

If the two nouns are not reciprocal, bare coordination with a generic interpretation is disallowed in Romanian:

(18) a. ***Istorie și istoriografie** sunt importante. (Ro.)

history and historiography are important.

b. Storia e storiografia sono importanti. (It.)

history and historiography are important. (Heycock and Zamparelli 2003)

• In the corpus, *N and N* constructions with reciprocal nouns appear frequently in appositive contexts, but here the interpretation is predicative (property-denoting) and the bare use is expected:

(19) Da, mi se pare foarte important exercițiul acesta pedagogic ... Înveți despre Sadoveanu și te duci la Casa Sadoveanu; înveți despre Blaga și te duci în Lancrăm; înveți despre Rebreanu și *te deplasezi*, **profesor și elev**, la Târlășua, Maieru, Prislop, Valea Mare... (RoTenTen)

‘Yes, I think this pedagogical exercise is very important... You learn about Sadoveanu and you go to Casa Sadoveanu; you learn about Blaga and you go to Lancrăm; you learn about Rebreanu and you go, *teacher and student*, to Târlășua, Maieru, Prislop, Valea Mare...’

(20) *Cei doi tineri* arestați odată cu Alexandru Uioreanu, **soră și frate**, aduceau droguri din Ungaria, se arată în dosarul întocmit de DIICOT Cluj după o muncă de peste o jumătate de an. (RoTenTen)

‘The *two young persons* arrested together with Alexandru Uioreanu, *sister and brother*, were bringing drugs from Hungary, according to the file prepared by DIICOT Cluj after more than half a year of work.’

In (21), as a ‘predicative’ argument of the verb *ați jucat* ‘(you) played (a role)’, coordination seems to license the bare N:

(21) Mihaela Arsenescu Werner a fost profesorul care a mizat pe talentul studentului Ionuț Cornilă. *Ați jucat* împreună în „Fluturi, Fluturi...”, **profesor și student**.

– Poate că aceasta a fost cea mai importantă întâlnire din cariera mea.

‘Mihaela Arsenescu Werner was the teacher who bet on the talent of the student Ionuț Cornilă. You played together in "Butterflies, Butterflies..." , teacher and student.

– Perhaps this was the most important meeting in my career.’

• In written press, headlines and subtitles often display a ‘telegraphic’ style (the information is packed into a small number of words), where reciprocal pairs *N and N* are more frequent. Note that the interpretation of these nouns is indefinite, as they appear at the beginning of the news:

(22) **Mamă și fiică** din Victoria, infectate cu COVID-19, nu au bani pentru tratamentul prescris de medici

O femeie de 56 de ani și fiica acesteia de 16 ani din orașul Victoria au fost diagnosticate cu COVID-19 miercuri, 4 noiembrie a.c., iar de atunci sunt izolate la domiciliul lor de pe strada Salcânilor. (RoTenTen)

‘**Mother and daughter** from Victoria, infected with COVID-19, do not have money for the treatment prescribed by doctors

A 56-year-old woman and her 16-year-old daughter from the city of Victoria were diagnosed with COVID-19 on Wednesday, November 4 this year, and since then they have been isolated at their home on Salcânilor Street.’

(23) **Soră și frate**, luptă în instanță pentru două locuri de veci: Să stea liniștită, că are unde s-o îngroape, are cavou făcut de trei locuri în jos

Doi frați își caută dreptatea prin instanțele de judecată din cauza a două locuri de veci. Sora spune că fratele său a dat declarație mincinoasă că este unic moștenitor, deși nu este unicul, deoarece ea și încă o soră mai trăiesc, în timp ce bărbatul susține că, în baza certificatului de unic moștenitor, pe care îl posedă, surorile sale i-au lăsat lui totul. (RoTenTen)

‘**Sister and brother**, fighting in court for two places at the cemetery: She should stay calm, because they have a place to bury her, she has a tomb three places down

Two brothers are seeking justice through the courts because of two lifetimes. The sister says that his brother has made a false declaration that he is the sole heir, although he is not the only one, as she and one other sister are still living, while the man claims that, based on the sole heir certificate, which he possesses, his sisters left everything to him.’

(24) VIOLENȚĂ RARĂ la Racovița: **Tată și fiu**, ruși în bătaie de o gașcă de interlopi! (RoTenTen)
‘RARE VIOLENCE in Racovița: Father and son, beaten by a gang of thugs!’

This context is not necessarily relevant for the difference in distribution between *N and N* vs. bare nouns, because bare nouns are found in this type of structure as well:

(25) a. Accident de muncă la Cluj: **Mecanic** care lucra la o firmă de întreținere a lifturilor, rănit grav (www.hotnews.ro, 16.04.2011)

‘Work accident in Cluj: **Mechanic** who worked for an elevator maintenance company, seriously injured’

b. **Tânăr** din Mărăcineni, baricadat în casă cu două butelii (www.reporterbuzoian.ro, 8.01.2016)

‘**Youngster** from Mărăcineni, barricaded in the house with two cylinders of gas’

► The appositive contexts and headlines or subtitles are less relevant for our topic.

2.2. The verbs with bare definites

In some contexts, the *N and N* construction can be replaced by *both N and N*:

(26) Și ca student, și ca preot, fusese văzut la treburile casei ori la câmp ani buni, până îi murise mama, iar *tată*-său se mutase cu el în Capitală. **Și tată, și fiu** renunțaseră la tot, vânduseră pământul și casa, când înțeleseseră că la sat era instaurată definitiv așa-zisa proprietate socialistă. (CoRoLa)

‘Both as a student and as a priest, he had been seen at home or in the fields for many years, until his mother died and his *father* moved with him to the capital. **Both father and son** had given up everything, sold the land and the house, when they understood that the so-called socialist property was definitively established in the village.’

However, *N and N* can combine with collective predicates as well, unlike *both N and N*:

(27) a. A fost o sesiune de filmare extraordinară. *Marin Cazacu* a venit însoțit de *fiul său*, Ștefan, pe care l-am ascultat prima dată la Selecția Națională pentru Eurovision Young Musicians acum câțiva ani. Când am intrat în curte, la Verona, am văzut în fața mea două siluete ce purtau, fiecare, în spate, un instrument impunător. Nu se distingeau silueta umană, doar conturul unor cutii cu... niște picioare care tropoteau grăbite să nu întârzie. A fost o reîntâlnire mai mult decât călduroasă. **Tată și fiu** se înțelegeau din priviri. Organizați, au venit cu repertoriul pregătit și repetat. Și-au acordat instrumentele. (http://tvr2.tvr.ro, in RoTenTen)

‘It was an amazing filming session. *Marin Cazacu* came accompanied by *his son*, Ștefan, whom I heard for the first time at the National Selection for Eurovision Young Musicians a few years ago. When

I entered the courtyard, at Verona, I saw in front of me two figures carrying, each, an imposing instrument. No human figure could be distinguished, only the outline of some boxes with... some legs that were clattering in a hurry not to be late. It was a more than warm reunion. **Father and son** understood each other with their eyes. Organized, they had prepared and rehearsed the repertoire. They tuned their instruments.'

b. ***Și tată, și fiu** se înțelegeau din priviri.

both father and son REFL understood from looks

'Father and son understood each other with their eyes.'

(28) **Père et fils** s'entendaient bien. (Abeillé 2022)

'Father and son got along well.'

2.3. Establishing the set

• Unlike in English, the definite bare coordination must be strictly anaphoric; associative (bridging) anaphora is not allowed:

(29) a. ??În această companie, **președinte și vicepreședinte** sunt corupți / aleși de consiliul de administrație.

'In this company, the president and vice president are corrupt / elected by the board of directors'

b. At the company meeting, president and vice-president gave an optimistic speech. (Heycock and Zamparelli 2003)

The fact that in (29)b the interpretation is definite is shown by the uniqueness requirement:

(30) ??At the company meeting, **employee and inspector** talked about their colleagues' motivation. (Heycock & Zamparelli 2003) (OK if they were mentioned before)

• The anaphoric relation of *N and N* must be established with the whole set mentioned in the previous text, unlike in English:

(31) We had to set the table for the queen. We arranged one crystal goblet_n, one silver spoon_i, and two antique gold forks_j.

Goblet_n and spoon_i were set on the right of the plate. (Heycock & Zamparelli 2003)

(32) Am pus masa pentru regină. Am așezat un *pocal* de cristal, o *lingură* de argint și două *furculițe* de aur vechi.

a. ***Pocal și lingură** erau așezate în partea dreaptă a farfuriei.

b. **Pocalul și lingura** erau așezate în partea dreaptă a farfuriei. → selecting anaphora requires the definite article

(33) La petrecere au venit un *tată* în vârstă, un *fiu* plăpând și o *bunică* veselă.

at party AUX come a father in age a son feeble and a grandmother cheerful

'An elderly father, a feeble son and a cheerful grandmother came to the party.'

a. ***Tată și fiu** se înțelegeau din priviri.

father and son REFL understood from looks

b. **Tatăl și fiul** se înțelegeau din priviri.

father.DEF and son.DEF REFL understood from looks

'Father and son understood each other with their eyes.'

→ selecting anaphora requires the definite article

- *N and N* requires uniqueness:

- (34) Am văzut doi *câini* și trei *pisici* prin curte.
 AUX.1SG seen two dog.PL and three cat.PL in yard
 ‘I saw two dogs and three cats in the yard.’
- a. ***Câine și pisică** se băteau pe o bucată de pâine.
 dog and cat REFL fight.IMPF on a piece of bread
 ‘Dog and cat were fighting on a piece of bread.’
- b. ***Câinele și pisica** se băteau pe o bucată de pâine.
 dog.DEF and cat.DEF REFL fight.IMPF on a piece of bread
 ‘The dog and the cat were fighting on a piece of bread.’
- c. **Un câine și o pisică** se băteau pe o bucată de pâine.
 a dog and a cat REFL fight.IMPF on a piece of bread
 ‘A dog and a cat were fighting on a piece of bread.’

→ this contrast is relevant for the fact that the interpretation is *definite*

- The nouns are not modified (but non-restrictive modifiers are OK)

(35) La întâlnire au participat ministrul de externe George Popescu și ministrul afacerilor interne Cătălin Predoiu.

***Ministru de externe și ministru de interne** au discutat ore întregi.

‘The meeting was attended by the minister of foreign affairs George Popescu and the minister of internal affairs Cătălin Predoiu.

*Minister of foreign affairs and minister of internal affairs discussed for hours.’

2.4. The nouns

In Romanian, not all nouns / combinations of nouns are equally acceptable in this structure. Only some speakers accept the equivalent of the English example in (2), translated below. However, they accept example (1), with reciprocal pairs such as *tată și fiu* ‘father and son’.

- (36) O pisică neagră și un câine maro se băteau pe stradă.
 a cat black and a dog brown REFL fight.IMPF on street
 ‘A black cat and a brown dog were fighting in the street.’
- a. %**Pisică și câine** erau la fel de murdari.
 cat and dog were equally filthy.PL
 ‘Cat and dog were equally filthy.’
- b. ***Pisică** era murdară.
 cat was filthy
 ‘The cat was filthy.’

As there is speaker variation with respect to the acceptability of some structures, I performed corpus research with the help of RoTenTen (a large collection of texts from the internet, 2.7 billion words) and Corola (around 1.2 billion words, but mostly law: around 0,9 bill.).

I didn’t find any relevant example with *pisică și câine* (in RoTenTen there are 19, all of them in contexts where the use of a bare noun is the norm; in CoRoLa only 1), nor with *câine și pisică*. Therefore, I searched for more common collocations (with referents that are frequently associated in real life or form a reciprocal pair):

tată și fiu ‘father and son’ ✓

mamă și fiică ‘mother and daughter’ ✓

mamă și fiu ‘mother and son’ ✓

mamă și tată ‘mother and father’ ✓
frate și soră ‘brother and sister’ ✓
soră și frate ‘sister and brother’ ✓
bogat și sărac ‘rich and poor’ ✓
mic și mare ‘young and old’ ✓
profesor și student ‘teacher and student’ ✓
soț și soție ‘husband and wife’ X
profesor și elev ‘teacher and pupil’ X
doctor și pacient ‘doctor and patient’ X
iubit și iubită ‘lover and lover’ X
președinte și vicepreședinte ‘president and vice president’ X
casă și mașină ‘house and car’ X
cuțit și furculiță ‘knife and fork’ X
autor și narator ‘author and narrator’ X

The data show that this type of examples does occur in written language (see also (1) above):

✓ marks the constructions which are attested with this use in the corpus.

(37) „*Despina*, femeie harnică și muncitoare și-a crescut fata, pe *Margareta*, cu greu în lipsa bărbatului care o părăsise imediat după nuntă. Rămasă însărcinată, s-a dedicat trup și suflet creșterii boțului de carne care a devenit o frumoasă fată de le fugeau bărbaților ochii după ea. De parcă fusese blestemată, biata fată a căzut în mrejele unui bărbat care a momit-o cu promisiuni până s-a văzut „călare pe situație”, apoi dus a fost! Înghițindu-și lacrimile, **mamă și fiică** au luat-o ca pe un dat și au crescut pruncul care se născuse, tot o fată, căreia i-au pus numele Virginia.” (blog, roTenTen)

‘*Despina*, a hardworking woman, raised her daughter, *Margareta*, with difficulty in the absence of the husband, who left her immediately after the wedding. Pregnant, she dedicated herself body and soul to raising the little child who became a beautiful girl every man looked at. As if she was cursed, the poor girl was seduced by a man who lured her with promises until he saw himself „riding the situation”, then he was gone! Swallowing back tears, **mother and daughter** took it as such and raised the baby that was born, also a girl, whom they named Virginia.’

(38) „Confruntându-se atât cu propriile sale limite cât și cu elementele de neprevăzut și necontrolabile ale naturii, *Peter* își riscă viața, pentru a o salva pe sora sa *Annie* (Robin Tunney) și echipa de alpinști dispărută, într-o cursă contra cronometru. Cu ani în urmă, **frate și soră** au fost afectați psihic de un oribil accident alpin în care participau alături de părintele lor. Peter s-a hotărât să taie funia tatălui său pentru a-și salva sora și pe sine.” (RoTenTen)

‘Facing both his own limits and the unpredictable and uncontrollable elements of nature, *Peter* risks his life to save *his sister* Annie (Robin Tunney) and the missing climbing team in a race against time. Years ago, **brother and sister** were mentally affected by a horrible alpine accident in which they were participating with their father. Peter decided to cut his father's rope to save his sister and himself.’

(39) „Simbolic însă, când „o istorie frauduloasă” invadează viețile oamenilor, pierduta unitate a familiei se reface și fiii redescoperă valorile tatălui și frumusețea lăuntrică a bătrânului țăran. Nu întâmplător, în visul lui *Niculae* (la un an după moartea lui *Moromete*), **tată și fiu** sunt din nou împreună, în lumina veșniciei zile de vară care scâldea băătăura și salcâmi de acasă.” (*Și tu poți lua 10 la BAC! Ghid complet pentru probele de limbă, comunicare și literatură română* by M. Baciu Got, R. Lungu, I. Dănețiu, 2014, Corola)

‘Symbolically, however, when "a fraudulent history" invades people's lives, the lost family unity is restored and the sons rediscover the values of the father and the inner beauty of the old peasant. Not by chance, in *Niculae*'s dream (a year after *Moromete*'s death), **father and son** are together again, in the light of the eternal summer day that bathes the yard and the acacias at home.’

(40) Înc-un pic și totu-i gata, vor avea căminul lor, și-n curând **mamă și tată** vor da hrană puilor.
(literature, from RoTenTen)

‘A little more and everything’s ready, they will have a home, and soon **mother and father** will be feeding the chicks.’

The structure seems to be characteristic for written language (press, literature, blogs etc.), not for colloquial Romanian (which is typically more precise and rather redundant in marking syntactic relations).

In our brief research, it would appear that the construction is mostly found with reciprocal pairs (based on family relations: mother – daughter, father – son etc.) However, based on the corpus, we can say that this construction is not very rare.

3. Semantic aspects

If the referents of this set are not mentioned before, the structure is ungrammatical (or possible only in generic contexts, where the interpretation is indefinite, as in (15)a).

In (41) the context is out of the blue:

(41) a. *Când am intrat în sufragerie, **mamă și fiică** stăteau pe canapea.
when AUX.1SG entered in living room mother and daughter sit.IMPF.PL on sofa
‘When I entered the living room, mother and daughter were sitting on the sofa.’

OK: b. Când am intrat în sufragerie, **o mamă și o fiică** stăteau pe canapea.
when AUX.1SG entered in living room a mother and a daughter sit.IMPF.PL on sofa

c. *Când am intrat în sufragerie, **mama și fiica** stăteau pe canapea. (*for the out of the blue context)
when AUX.1SG entered in living room mother.def and daughter.def sit.IMPF.PL on sofa

Example (41)a is perfectly OK in anaphoric contexts (see also (37)):

(42) *Despina*, femeie harnică și muncitoare, a venit la petrecere cu *fiica* ei, Margareta, recent întoarsă din străinătate. Când am intrat în cameră, **mamă și fiică** stăteau pe canapea.

‘*Despina*, a diligent and hardworking woman, came to the party with her *daughter*, Margareta, recently returned from abroad. When I entered the room, **mother and daughter** were sitting on the sofa.’

This is a clear indication that the reading of bare coordinates is definite. (41)a pairs with (41)c, not with (41)b.

However, even if we provide a context in which the coordination of definite nouns is possible, the coordination of bare nouns is infelicitous/ungrammatical:

(43) a. OK: Am avut ieri ca invitați la cină pe familia Popescu: părinții și cei doi copii, George și sora lui Maria. I-am poftit înăuntru și m-am dus să bag mașina în garaj. Când am intrat în sufragerie, **mama și fiica** stăteau pe canapea.

‘Yesterday we had the Popescu family as guests for dinner: the parents and the two children, George and his sister Maria. I invited them in and went to put the car in the garage. When I entered the living room, **the mother and the daughter** were sitting on the sofa.’

b. *Am avut ieri ca invitați la cină pe familia Popescu: părinții și cei doi copii, George și sora lui Maria. I-am poftit înăuntru și m-am dus să bag mașina în garaj. Când am intrat în sufragerie, **mamă și fiică** stăteau pe canapea.

‘... When I entered the living room, **mother and daughter** were sitting on the sofa.’

This contrast suggests that anaphoric bare coordination involves a ‘totality’ meaning: ‘both *x* and *y*’ => they require a salient plural referent and insist on the fact that all its members satisfy the predicate; in (43)a, the only salient plural referent comprises the entire Popescu family.

⇒ Bare coordination is different from definite coordination, even though the anaphoric interpretation of bare coordinates is definite.

● **natural coordination** vs. accidental coordination (Wälchli 2005): in natural coordination ‘a salient close relation holds between the conjuncts’ (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2006), ‘the two conjuncts habitually go together and form some kind of conceptual unit’ (Haspelmath 2007); usually consists of two members, hence the term ● **binomial coordination** (Malkiel 1959, Lambrecht 1984) and also irreversible binomial coordination (a pair of words used together in fixed order as an idiomatic expression or collocation)

→ *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* (Zwarts 2008)

Haspelmath 2007: The conjuncts in natural conjunction may be so tightly linked that the construction can be regarded as a single compound word, i.e. a coordinative compound (cf. Wälchli 2005)

(44) a. ’et’at-avat (Erzya Mordvin, a Finno-Ugrian language of Russia, Wälchli 2005)

father.pl.-mother.pl

‘parents’

b. punct și virgulă (Ro.)

dot and comma ‘semicolon’

→ Conditions for bare coordination in Romanian:

(i) previously established set (necessary condition)

(ii) reciprocal pairs are preferable, even obligatory for some speakers (see the contrast in acceptability between *mamă și fiică* ‘mother and daughter’ vs. *pisică și câine* ‘cat and dog’).

(iii) uniqueness (necessary condition)

According to Märzhäuser (2013: 295): coordinated bare nouns share *a semantic frame*, which can be ontologically given (= stereotypical) or created in discourse. “A frame semantics approach and an analysis of the semantic traits of the coordinated bare Ns help explain the stereotypicality effects in bare coordination. With most bare coordinations, both nouns belong to the same semantic noun category (abstract/ concrete-count/ mass) and they share essential semantic traits, for example [+animate], [+human] in *sister and brother* or *mother and daughter, father and mother, boys and girls, children and elderly*. Inanimate objects [–animate] are coordinated in *school and well, floor and roof* and *house and car*. Often both referents can be traced back to a common hyperonym: for example, in *forks and knives* and *spoon and fork* both elements belong to the category *cutlery*; in *enfants et vieillards* the term *générations* serves as hyperonym and establishes the reference for the CBNs. For both stereotypical and new coordinations, the frame restriction applies: bare coordination is only possible with nouns within one semantic frame.”

In Romanian, the fact that the referents form a special type of set allows for the use of a single indefinite article before the nouns, instead of two²:

(45) a. Da, este comun să vezi **o mamă și fiică**, care au aceeași problemă cu celulita în aceleași zone ale corpului, dar acest lucru nu înseamnă că celulita este genetică – aceasta înseamnă pur și simplu că cele două femei nu au găsit o modalitate de a ridica tonusul și a da fermitate straturilor musculare de sub piele. (target-info.ro, RoTenTen)

² The contexts clearly involve two referents, not one as in „Mary is a good mother and daughter.”

‘Yes, it is common to see *a mother and daughter* who have the same problem with cellulite in the same areas of the body, but this does not mean that cellulite is genetic – it simply means that the two women have not found a way to tone and firm the muscle layers under the skin.’

b. Aparent posedă know-how-ul unui Casanova modern, capabil să gestioneze jocul seducției cu **o mamă și fiică** simultan. (marelecran.net, RoTenTen)

‘He apparently possesses the know-how of a modern-day Casanova, able to handle the game of seduction with *a mother and daughter* simultaneously.’

(46) **Un soț și soție** au vrut să schimbe parola computerului lor. (forum, RoTenTen)

‘*A husband and wife* wanted to change the password to their computer.’

(47) Luați mâncarea din recipient cu o lingură și mâncați-o cu **un cuțit și furculiță** – nu cu degetele. (RoTenTen)

‘Take the food from the container with a spoon and eat it with *a knife and fork* – not with your fingers.’

(48) Eu sper că până la sfârșitul lunii iunie noi să avem **un președinte și vicepreședinte** desemnați sau deja care au trecut proba de concurs. (RoTenTen) (by contrast, the adjective agrees in the plural, with both nouns)

‘I hope that by the end of June we will have *a president and a vice president* appointed or who have already passed the competition test.’

For human referents, in some contexts they both have to have the same gender (**o mamă_F și fiu_M* ‘a mother and son’; vs. *un_M soț_M și soție_F* ‘a husband and wife’). This condition doesn’t apply to inanimates (*un cuțit_M și furculiță_F* ‘a knife and spoon’).

In other contexts, the use of only one article would be less acceptable, at least for some speakers, even with the same nouns:

(49) a. **O mamă și fiică** au sărit de la geam după ce soțul celei din urmă le-a amenințat cu un topor.

late CL=AUX threatened with a axe

‘A mother and daughter jumped from the window after the latter's husband threatened them with an axe.’

b. **O mamă și o fiică** au sărit de la geam după ce soțul celei din urmă le-a amenințat cu un topor. (press, RoTenTen)

a mother and a daughter AUX.PL jumped ...

‘A mother and a daughter jumped from the window after the latter's husband threatened them with an axe.’

Note that the coordinated pair must behave as a single object, its members cannot be accessed by distributive operations associated to the predicate – thus, in (50) the fork and knife cannot be related each to the adverbials *to the left* and *to the right*:

(50) a. *Am pus în stânga și în dreapta farfuriei **un cuțit și furculiță**.

AUX.ISG put in left and in right plate.GEN a knife and fork

‘I put a knife and fork on the left and right of the plate.’

b. Am pus în stânga și în dreapta farfuriei **un cuțit și o furculiță**.

AUX.ISG put in left and in right plate.GEN a knife and a fork

‘I put a knife and a fork on the left and right of the plate.’

(51) a. ??**O mamă și fiică** au ieșit pe primele două locuri la maraton.
a mother and daughter AUX came out on first two places at marathon
'A mother and daughter came out on the first two places in the marathon.'

b. **O mamă și o fiică** au ieșit pe primele două locuri la maraton.
a mother and a daughter AUX came out on first two places at marathon
'A mother and a daughter came out on the first two places in the marathon.'

Demonstrative determiners behave similarly:

(52) Cum au ajuns **această mamă și fiică** în ipostaza asta (digi-sport.ro, in RoTenTen)
'How did *this mother and daughter* end up in this situation'

Notice that the definite article is enclitic and must be attached to all nouns in the coordinated set, irrespective of the context (even for joint readings: *profesorul și scriitorul Ion Popescu* professor.DEF and writer.DEF Ion Popescu).

In English: one definite article for natural conjunction (*the house and garden*), but not in accidental conjunction (**the house and stamp collection*) – see Haspelmath 2007.

4. Syntactic aspects

We have seen that coordination contributes to making these examples grammatical. According to Heycock & Zamparelli 2003, this structure involves the coordination of NPs, below the DP level, with the coordinated structure subsequently raising to [Spec,DP], due to a [+Qu] feature introduced by the conjunction *and* (the head of CoordP). Placement in SpecDP licenses a null D with a definite interpretation. Heycock & Zamparelli are not explicit about the [+Qu] feature. The totality effects found in Romanian might provide a semantic support for such a feature (but note that the totality effects are not found in English, see (31)).

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