

## NOMINAL COORDINATION IN SERI<sup>1</sup>

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One coordinator: **xah** (sometimes **xaha**)

Two interpretations: (universal) *and* and (existential) *or*

### A. May coordinate names, determiner phrases, pronouns, or deverbal nouns.

There is no coordinator meaning *and* for finite clauses.

### B. The coordination is typically POLYSYNDETTIC, the coordinator is ENCLITIC, and the coordinated structure typically determines plural inflection (if subject)<sup>2</sup>

(1) Names

Andrés **xah**, Pedro **xah** quih mos, taa ano coii ha.  
CRD CRD the.FL also DDP 3P.in SN-be.PL DCL

*Andrew and also Peter lived there.*

(2) Pronouns

Me **xah**, he **xah**, he smalx caha.  
2PRO CRD 1PRO CRD 1PRO IR.ID-N-go.PL AUX-DCL

*You (sg. or pl.) and I/we will not go.*

### C. The coordinated phrases are often in initial position and followed by a focal demonstrative pronoun or the quantifying pronoun *coox* all.

(3) Comítin **xah**, haas **xah**, taax ah iti hamom.

ironwood CRD mesquite CRD DDP FOC 3P-on 1SS-PX-lie

*I am on the IRONWOOD tree and the MESQUITE tree. (Iagartijas 28)*

(4) ... hantíp **xah**, icáaix **xah**, taax mos tom cah cōhamáaipt.

salt CRD soap CRD DDP also money the.FL-FOC 3IO-1pS-PX-pay-PL

*... we also pay for SALT and SOAP with money.*

(5) Xaasj **xah**, ool **xah**, coox oo cmiique ha.

sahueso CRD pitaya CRD all DL person DCL

*The sahueso cactus and the pitaya cactus, they were all people. (Hipopampo 22)*

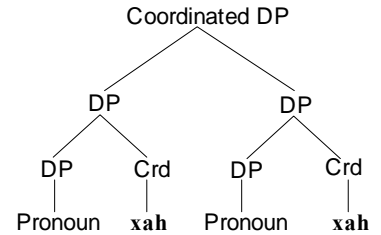
### D. The coordinated nominal may be right-dislocated.

(6) Ano siizcam aha, zixcám cacōla **xah**, caanleca **xah**.

3P.in IR.ID-arrive.PL AUX-DCL totoaba-PL CRD Gulf.grouper-PL CRD

*Totoabas and Gulf groupers will arrive among them (other fish).*

Figure 1: Coordinated Pronouns



<sup>1</sup> Seri is a language isolate spoken in northwestern Mexico. For a general perspective, see S. Marlett (2005) A typological overview of the Seri language, *Linguistic Discovery* 3.1: 54-73. Relevant to this presentation is the strong head-final syntax of the language. Many thanks to René Montaña, Xavier Moreno and Lorenzo Herrera for their generous help. Grateful acknowledgment also to the NEH for the fellowship (FN-50007-06) that has greatly facilitated this research.

Abbreviations: AON action/oblique nominalizer, ATTN attenuator, AUX auxiliary, AW motion away, CM compact, CRD coordinator, D determiner, DCL declarative, DL delimiter, DDP distal plural demonstrative, DL delimiter, DP determiner phrase, DS different subject, DT distal, FL flexible, FOC focus, HZ horizontal, IM imperative, IR.DP dependent irrealis, IR.ID independent irrealis, LC location, MD medial, MLT multiple, N negative, PL plural, PV passive, PX proximal, RL realis, QM question marker, SN subject nominalizer, TR transitive, US unspecified subject, UT unspecified time, VT vertical, 1PRO first person pronoun, 2P second person possessor, 2PRO second person pronoun, 2SS second person singular subject, 3P third person possessor, 1SS.IN intransitive first person singular subject, 3IO third person indirect/oblique object, 1pS first person plural subject, 3:3 third person on third person.

<sup>2</sup> Leon Stassen's article on noun phrase coordination (in Martin Haspelmath et al, eds, 2001, *Language typology and language universals: An international handbook*, New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, p.1107) indicates that polysyndeton is attested only by isolated examples in the Americas. According to Leon Stassen (2000, AND-languages and WITH-languages, *Linguistic Typology* 4-1: 1-54), there is a correlation between a postposed coordination marker and verb-final word order.

- (7) **Heecot hatíihtoj, toc conthámat,**  
 desert 1PS-RL-be-MLT there 3IO-AW-1PS-PX-go-PL
- cmiique Roberto xah, Pedro xah, Juan xah, he xah.**  
 person CRD CRD CRD 1PRO CRD

*We were going along in the desert — Roberto, Pedro, Juan, and I.*

No examples of only part of the Coordinated Phrase being moved.

#### E. Pragmatic non-universal interpretation, disjunctive interpretation

On a non-universal interpretation, see (3).

Example (8) illustrates that the coordinated phrases may relate to a negative verb and then actually be a disjunctive set rather than a conjunctive set.

- (8) **Zixcám cheel xah, zixcám coospoj xah, caanj xah, taax immís iha, ...**  
 red.snapper CRD spotted.cabrilla CRD Gulf.grouper CRD DDP SN-TR-N-resemble DCL  
*... it does not resemble the RED SNAPPER, the SPOTTED CABRILLA or the GULF GROUPEr.* (ES2007, xpeezoj)

#### F. Indefinite phrases cannot be coordinated — a biclausal construction with a presentational clause is required<sup>3</sup>

- (9) \* **Miist xah zo haxz xah zo toc cōtoi, ...**  
 cat CRD a dog CRD a there 3IO-RL-be.PL  
*(There was a cat and a dog, ...)*
- (10) **Haxz heeque zo ziix canaao heeque zo cōtiih (\*ma),**  
 dog juvenile a cat juvenile a 3IO-RL-be DS
- hehe zamij com án hac ano moii.**  
 box the.HZ 3P.interior the.LC 3P.in Px-be.PL

*A puppy and a kitten are in the box. More literally, A puppy is with a cat, they are in the box.*

This biclausal construction is also sometimes used with the coordinator **xah** and definite nominals.

- (11) **Canóaa xah com cyaa quih cōtiih, Xnapófc ano moii.**  
 boat CRD the.HZ SN-TR-OWN the.FL 3IO-RL-be 3P.in Px-be.PL  
*The boat and its owner are at Xnapófc.*
- (12) **He xah Pedro quij iiqui cohpiih, hasáanipxat aha.**  
 1PRO CRD the.CM 3P-toward 3IO-1SS.IN-IR.DP-be 1PS-IR.ID-return.home AUX-DCL  
*Pedro and I will return home.*

#### G. The coordinator obligatorily occurs to the left of the article

- (13) **Xiica quih quiistox quih hantx mocat xah,**  
 person-PL the.FL ancestor-PL CRD
- xiica quih quiistox quih cmaa quiih quih chaa xah com, ...**  
 person-PL the.FL SN-new the.FL SN-be CRD the.HZ

*The ancestors and the current generation ...* (ES 2007, xpeezoj 11)

<sup>3</sup> This is a variation on the Comitative Strategy mentioned in Haspelmath, et al (2001: 1106).

**H. When the determiner is a complex demonstrative, the coordinator obligatorily intervenes between the two parts of the demonstrative**

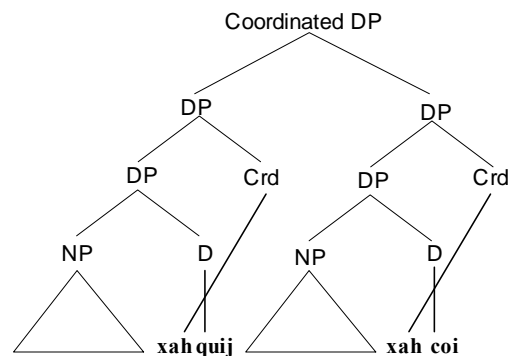
Complex demonstratives have a locative part (**hip** — proximal, **ti** — medial, **him** — distal, etc.) and a definite article (**cop** — vertical, **com** — horizontal, **quij** — compact, **quih** — soft or out of sight or default, etc.).

- (14) **Cmiique Roberto himxahquij, cmiique Martín xah quij, coox oo cöicáaitoj hac ...**  
 person DT-CRD-CM person CRD the.CM all DL 3IO-3P-AON-US-fish-PL the.LC  
*Both Roberto and Martin, with respect to fishing ...*
- (15) **zixquisiil tixahcom cmaam ata xah quij iiqui cötiih ma, ...**  
 child MD-CRD-HZ woman 3P-mother CRD the.CM 3P-toward 3IO-RL-be DS  
*... that child and his mother ...*

**I. Existential interpretation — still typically polysyndetic**

- (16) **Zaah hipxahcop, hant ifii xah cop, hant z iic hapitöoj, ...**  
 sun/day PX-CRD-VT tomorrow CRD the.VT place a 3P-toward 1PS-IR.DP-go.PL  
*Today or tomorrow we will travel somewhere, ...*
- (17) **¿Háqui quij me siihit quee -ya? — ¿Sahméés xah quij, xonj itáast cmis xah com?**  
 which? the.CM 2PRO IR.ID-eat AUX QM orange CRD the.CM banana CRD the.HZ  
*Which are you going to eat? — The orange or the banana?*
- (18) **... ixáap capxa xah, ixáap czooxöc xah, taax ...**  
 days SN-three CRD days SN-four CRD DDP  
*... for three or four days, ... (ES 2007, oot hant imáxquim 01)*
- (19) **Xiica quih quiistox quih hantx mocat xah,**  
 persons-PL the.FL ancestor-PL CRD  
**xiica quih quiistox quih cmaa quih quih chaa xah com**  
 persons-PL the.FL SN-new the.FL SN-be CRD the.HZ  
**cöpaticpan, ipóocötoj, cöimitalháajö iha.**  
 3IO-IR.DP-work 3:3-IR.DP-kill-PL 3IO-SN-N-sell-PL DCL  
*Neither the ancestors nor the people of the present generation fish for it, kill it or sell it. (xpeezoj 11)*
- (20) **¿Sahméés quih coocj xah capxa xah, taax camjc!**  
 orange(s) the.FL SN-two CRD SN-three CRD DDP IM-bring  
*Bring two, or three, oranges!*

**Figure 2: Coordinated DP**



**J. Inexactitude — the last coordinator is omitted<sup>4</sup>**

- (21) **¡Sahméés quih coocj xah capxa [ ] camje!**  
 orange(s) the.FL SN-two CRD SN-three IM-bring  
*Bring two or three (viz., a few) oranges!*
- (22) **Hasáamile czooxöc xah cooitom xah isnáap cazoj [ ] quih tpazyax, ...**  
 limberbush.roll-PL SN-four CRD SN-five CRD SN-six the.FL RL-PV-cut.MLT  
*When four, five, or six bundles (or so) of limberbush have been cut, ...*
- (23) **... hant tazo xah hant coocj [ ] itáao ma, ...**  
 year one CRD year SN-two 3:3-RL-pass DS  
*...he traveled for one or two years (or so), ... (unpublished text)*

**K. (Nominal) modifiers of a noun may be coordinated.**

See (21).

**L. Coordination inside the possessor phrase**

- (24) **[ Tosni xah honc (\*xah) ] ina quih ano cõtahníp ma x, ...**  
 pelican CRD gull CRD 3P-feather the.FL 3P.in 3IO-RL-PV-hit DS UT  
*A pelican or gull feather was put into it, ... (unpublished text)*

**M. Clarification between ‘and’ and ‘or’ interpretation with zo a/one and singular verb for existential**

- (25) **Xavier xah, Pedro xah, zo Hezitmísoj syaai caha.**  
 CRD CRD a/one Hermosillo IR.ID-travel.to AUX-DCL  
*Either Xavier or Pedro will travel to Hermosillo.*
- (26) **Zixcám xah, ziix ipxási xah, zo nsiihit poho.**  
 CRD thing 3P-flesh CRD a/one 2S-IR.ID-eat DOUBT  
*Maybe you will eat fish, or maybe you will eat meat.*

**N. Common use of multiple clauses rather than coordination of the nominals, both for effect and for disambiguation**

- (27) **Hant tintica cõmiháait hac,**  
 land MD-Aw 3IO-2P-AON-pass.PL the.LC  
**tom cooxp zo mapomóonec,**  
 money SN-white a 2PS-IR.DP-N-carry-PL  
**hooro zo mapomóonec, tom cheel zo mascmóonec aha.**  
 gold a 2PS-IR.DP-N-carry-PL money SN-red a 2PS-IR.ID-N-carry-PL AUX-DCL  
*When you (pl.) travel, don't carry any silver or gold or copper.*
- (28) **Miist zo toc cõtiiij, haxz mos zo toc cõtiiij, yoque.**  
 cat a there 3IO-RL-sit dog also a there 3IO-RL-sit DT-US-say  
*There once was a cat and a dog, it is said.*

**O. Etymological relationship with adverb xah? Certainly similar syntax and phonetics.<sup>5</sup>**

- (29) **Ziix hipxahcop haa poho — ox tee, yoque.**  
 thing PX-? -VT SN.be DOUBT thus RL-say DT-US-say  
*“Might this be him/her/it?” s/he asked.*
- (30) **... zaah xah zo toc cõtáp, ...**  
 day ? a there 3IO-RL-stand  
*... one day, ... (more literally, a day was there ... )*

<sup>4</sup> This might be analogous to the enumerative “etcetera” reading mentioned in Haspelmath, et al (2001: 1105).

<sup>5</sup> Note that this adverb may occur with an indefinite nominal, as in (30), unlike the coordinator.