

# We ...with Anna: the Inclusive Plural Pronominal Construction in Finnish and Fenno-Swedish

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This article provides a syntactic analysis of the inclusive plural pronominal construction in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish. In this construction, a plural pronoun has a singular reading: *vi ...med Anna* (literally “we ...with Anna”) means ‘Anna and I’. In addition to the plural pronoun, the construction includes a comitative PP. In both Fenno-Swedish and Finnish, the PP can be placed rather flexibly. This article discusses the resulting variety of outcomes and what they indicate about the syntactic nature of the construction. At the same time, the singular reading is unavailable in almost all scenarios including an expanded pronoun: *vi lingvister ...med Anna* (literally “we linguists ...with Anna”). Similar constructions can be found in several other languages, especially in the eastern parts of Europe which suggests it is an areal feature. The diversity of the acceptable syntactic compositions in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish seems to require an analysis that differs from previous analyses of other languages. Instead of a derivation involving movements, the study suggests that the analysis must employ an unvalued feature. In some compositions, the necessary movements would be far too complex for an appealing explanation.

## 1 Introduction

The Fenno-Swedish expression in (1), which is widely used in colloquial language, is ambiguous as to what the pronoun *vi* ‘we’ is referring to. The combination of a plural pronoun and DP denoting one of the participants can refer either to a scenario with more than two people or only two people. The plural pronoun ‘we’ can thus have a singular reading in some cases. The same applies to the plural pronouns corresponding to ‘you(PL)’ and ‘they’.

- (1) **Vi** for **med Anna** till stan.  
we went with Anna to town.DEF  
‘Anna and I went into town.’/‘We went into town with Anna.’

A corresponding expression can, as seen in (2), be found in Finnish, with which Fenno-Swedish shares a long geographical history.

- (2) **Me** mentiin **Annan kanssa** kaupunkiin.  
we went Anna.GEN with town.ILL  
‘Anna and I went into town.’/‘We went into town with Anna.’

The structural similarity is obvious. In Finnish, the expression is used in more formal registers as well. In (1) as well as (2) the expression includes a comitative adposition connecting a plural pronoun with another DP. The expected reading, based on what the pronoun ‘we’ usually means, would include a group of at least three people, the one denoted by the DP component and at least two denoted by the plural pronoun. However, the expression often refers to a group

of two, ‘DP and I’. A similar construction is found in a variety of languages in eastern parts of Europe.<sup>1</sup> It may be a very old phenomenon, which has spread over a long time among Slavic, Baltic, and Uralic speakers in Europe. The construction is absent from other Scandinavian languages, though Icelandic and Faroese exhibit a slightly different structure that seems to share the core mechanism with the Fenno-Swedish and Finnish expressions, namely the ability to refer to a scenario with only two people. The Icelandic counterpart is shown in (3) (Sigurðsson & Wood 2020).

- (3) **Við** **María** fórum.  
 we.NOM María.NOM went.1PL  
 ‘Mary and I went/left.’

The construction we are dealing with is familiar from the literature, and is sometimes called *inclusory construction* or *inclusory coordination*, as it considers the reference of the DP as a part of the reference of the plural pronoun. The term is imprecise, as it does not capture the crucial singular interpretation of the plural pronoun. The plural pronouns *vi* and *me* seem to mean ‘I’ instead of ‘we’ in (1) and (2). In Dékány’s (2009) terms, the interpretation picks out the focal referent of the plural pronoun, combining it with the referent of the DP in the comitative PP. The focal referent of ‘we’ is ‘I’, the speaker. In spite of our misgivings, the reading that includes the singular interpretation of the plural pronoun is called *the singular reading* in this article. The two elements of the expression are referred to as *Pro* and *the annex PP* or simply *the annex* (following Sigurðsson & Wood 2020). In this paper, the combination of the elements is called *inclusory plural pronominal construction*, abbreviated to IPPC.

The aim of this paper is to show how structural factors are linked to the availability of the singular reading. In the case of the IPPC in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish, the two syntactic questions are as follows: How can the annex PP be placed in sentences containing the IPPC and what kind of analysis will account for all possible options? In our proposition, adopting Vassilieva & Larson’s (2005) analysis similarly to Sigurðsson & Wood (2020) is considered to be an insufficient solution as it fails to predict some grammatical constructions correctly while it strongly depends on a structural composition that seems to be marginal in Fenno-Swedish and at least partially atypical in Finnish. Instead of a specific composition, we suggest that the analysis must employ a special plural pronoun with an unvalued feature.

The article is organised as follows. In Section 2, we introduce the overall picture of how the construction is structured in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish. In Section 3, we will discuss the known properties of the IPPC. In Section 4, we display how the data for this paper has been collected. A grammaticality judgment test has a pivotal role as it sets out the overall view of the research questions. While many of them can be answered by examining the data, the dispreference of the contiguous compositions requires additional means. In Section 5, we will

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<sup>1</sup> Russian (Vassilieva & Larson 2005), Estonian (Erelt 2008), Latvian (Schwartz 1988), Polish (Cable 2017) and Hungarian (Dékány 2009). In addition, the following linguists have provided data by personal communication from the following languages, all of which have a similar construction: Hanna Danbolt Ajer (Lule Sami), Sirkka Saarinen (Northern Sami), Marija Girulienė (Lithuanian), Lena Borise (Belarusian), Ludmila Veselovská (Czech), Michal Starke (Slovak), Adrian Stegovec (Slovenian), Dalina Kallulli (Albanian), Iliyana Krapova (Bulgarian), Georg Höhn (Greek) and Kadri Kuram (Turkish).

present an analysis aiming to satisfy the questions raised by the data. In Section 6, we will discuss the question of what is the parameter resulting in the availability of the IPPC. Section 7 concludes the article.

## 2 The structure of the IPPC

The IPPC can occur in different structural compositions. The placement of the PP is quite flexible, as both pre-verbal and predicate-internal positions are available. However, the contiguous composition of Pro and annex seems to be somewhat dispreferred in Finnish and more clearly so in Fenno-Swedish. Consider first the examples in (4); the translations indicate the preferred reading.

- (4) a. **Vi** har **med Anna** aldrig varit till Rhodos.  
we have with Anna never been to Rhodes  
'Anna and I have never been to Rhodes.'
- b. **Vi** har aldrig **med Anna** varit till Rhodos.  
we have never with Anna been to Rhodes  
'Anna and I have never been to Rhodes.'
- c. **Vi** har aldrig varit **med Anna** till Rhodos.  
we have never been with Anna to Rhodes  
'We have never been to Rhodes with Anna.'  
'Anna and I have never been to Rhodes.'
- d. **Vi** har aldrig varit till Rhodos **med Anna**.  
we have never been to Rhodes with Anna  
'We have never been to Rhodes with Anna.'
- e. ?**Vi med Anna** har aldrig varit till Rhodos.  
we with Anna have never been to Rhodes  
'Anna and I have never been to Rhodes.'

The placement of the annex PP seems to have a certain effect on the preference of the interpretations. The further away the annex is, the more likely is the plural reading of the pronoun. Due to this, the singular reading is preferred in (4a,b) but in (4c,d) the plural reading becomes gradually more prominent. Example (4e) is less grammatical than (4a,b,c,d), regardless of the intended interpretation. The placement of the annex has a similar effect in Finnish as displayed in (5).

- (5) a. **Me Annan kanssa** ei olla koskaan käyty Rodoksella.  
we Anna.GEN with not have ever been Rhodes.ADE  
'Anna and I have never been to Rhodes.'

- b. **Me ei Annan kanssa** olla koskaan käyty Rodoksella.  
we not Anna.GEN with have ever been Rhodes.ADE  
'Anna and I have never been to Rhodes.'
- c. **Me ei olla Annan kanssa** koskaan käyty Rodoksella.  
we not have Anna.GEN with ever been Rhodes.ADE  
'Anna and I have never been to Rhodes.'
- d. **Me ei olla** koskaan **Annan kanssa** käyty Rodoksella.  
we not have ever Anna.GEN with been Rhodes.ADE  
'Anna and I have never been to Rhodes.'  
(‘We have never been to Rhodes with Anna.’)
- e. **Me ei olla** koskaan käyty **Annan kanssa** Rodoksella.  
we not have ever been Anna.GEN with Rhodes.ADE  
'We have never been to Rhodes with Anna.'  
'Anna and I have never been to Rhodes.'
- f. **Me ei olla** koskaan käyty Rodoksella **Annan kanssa**.  
we not have ever been Rhodes.ADE Anna.GEN with  
'We have never been to Rhodes with Anna.'

In (5a,b,c) the singular reading is preferred. In (5d,e,f) the plural reading becomes more prominent. The distance between the components seems to emphasise the plural reading. The same effect is reported by our informants to be found in other languages that have the IPPC (Ludmila Veselovská, personal communication; Iliyana Krapova, personal communication). The readings do not rule out each other, though, and different contexts can favour one of them over the other.

The pattern illustrated in (4) and (5) above is exceptional, as the contiguous compositions are the most prototypical composition cross-linguistically and the analytical approaches are designed accordingly (Vassilieva & Larson 2005, Sigurðsson & Wood 2020). This results in a superficially contradictory situation in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish, as discussed in Section 5. However, if the pronoun has a complement, the singular reading of the plural pronoun is excluded, regardless of the position of the PP (6). Here and in the following # signifies that the sentence is grammatical but lacks the singular reading.

- (6) #**Me kielitieteilijät** mentiin **Annan kanssa** kaupunkiin.  
we linguists went Anna.GEN with town.ILL  
'We linguists went into town with Anna.'

The same applies to adjuncts of the pronoun (7).

- (7) #**Vi från Finland** ska **med Anna** bo på hotellet  
we from Finland shall with Anna live on hotel.DEF  
'We who are from Finland will stay at the hotel with Anna.'

Thus (6) cannot mean ‘Anna and I, who are linguists, went into town’ and (7) cannot mean ‘Anna and I who are from Finland, will stay at the hotel’. This fact indicates that the pronoun and the annex PP of the IPPC have a special relation that cannot hold in (6) and (7). The nature of the relation is one of the questions dealt with in Section 5.

The construction has been discussed by Vassilieva & Larson (2005), Dékány (2009), Cable (2017) and Sigurðsson & Wood (2020) but they have not examined discontinuous placements of Pro and the annex in a way that would provide a deeper understanding of the syntactic relation between these two components.<sup>2</sup> An incomplete analysis of the relation has been presented by Holmberg & Kurki (2019). The details of it are reviewed in Section 3. A key question is what is the parameter that makes the IPPC available only in some languages.

### 3 Defining properties

An attempt to account for the grammatical properties of the inclusory pronominal construction in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish was done by Holmberg & Kurki (2019). This paper included observations on apparent syntactic restrictions on the usage of the expression, similar to related articles on comparable constructions in other languages (e.g. Vassilieva & Larson 2005, Dékány 2009, Sigurðsson & Wood 2020). However, as no comprehensive empirical data were available at that point, the exact nature of the relationship could not be determined. The most important observation considers expanding Pro (Section 3.3). The significance of this restriction is explained in 3.3.

#### 3.1 Properties of the pronoun

As discussed in Holmberg & Kurki (2019), the most common setting of the IPPC is with ‘we’, but the pronoun can also be ‘you.PL’ (8), (9) or, slightly more marginally, ‘they’ (10), (11).

- (8) När var **ni** sist **med Anna** till Berlin?  
 when were you.PL last with Anna to Berlin  
 ‘When were you.SG and Anna in Berlin the last time?’
- (9) Milloin **te** viimeksi olitte **Annan kanssa** Berliinissä?  
 when you.PL last were Anna.GEN with Berlin.INE  
 ‘When were you.SG and Anna in Berlin the last time?’
- (10) Question: Var är Hasse?  
 where is Hasse  
 ‘Where is Hasse?’  
 Answer: **De** for **med Anna** till stan.  
 they went with Anna to town.DEF  
 ‘He and Anna went into town.’

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<sup>2</sup> Discontinuous versions of the construction are not available in all languages, e.g. Icelandic only permits the adjacent placement of the components (Sigurðsson & Wood 2020).

- (11) Question: Missä Hasse on?  
 where Hasse is  
 ‘Where is Hasse?’  
 Answer: Ne meni **Annan kanssa** kaupungille.  
 they went Anna.GEN with town.ALL  
 ‘He and Anna went into town.’

This property in Russian and Icelandic has been discussed by Vassilieva & Larson (2005) and Sigurðsson & Wood (2020). Additionally, Finnish is a pro drop language, with optional pro drop of the 1st and 2nd person pronouns (see Vainikka & Levy 1998; Holmberg 2005, 2010). In Finnish, pro drop can be applied in the IPPC as seen in (12).

- (12) (**Me**) mennään<sup>3</sup> **Pyryn kanssa** mökille.  
 (we) go Pyry.GEN with cottage.ALL  
 ‘Pyry and I are going to the cottage.’

Swedish has topic-drop and diary-drop (Haegeman 2013, see also Haegeman 1990, Holmberg 2003, Sigurðsson 2011) under similar conditions as other Germanic languages (Mörnsjö 2002). However, since Swedish entirely lacks subject-verb agreement it is impossible to distinguish a topic or diary drop of ‘we’ from a drop of ‘I’ which makes it impossible to identify the topic or diary drop taking place in the IPPC.

### 3.2 Properties of the annex

The annex consists of a preposition and a DP-complement. The latter is called *the annex DP* (following Sigurðsson & Wood 2020).<sup>4</sup> In Fenno-Swedish, the preposition is *med*, ‘with’. The Finnish construction has the postposition *kanssa*, correspondingly meaning ‘with’.<sup>5</sup> As discussed by Holmberg & Kurki (2019), the annex DP of the Fenno-Swedish and Finnish IPPC can be plural as in (13) (14).

- (13) **Vi** for **med kusinerna** till stan.  
 we went with cousins.DEF to town.DEF  
 ‘The cousins and I went to the town.’  
 (14) **Me** mentiin **serkkujen kanssa** kaupunkiin.  
 we went cousins.GEN with town.ILL  
 ‘The cousins and I went to the town.’

<sup>3</sup> The verb form *mennään* is an impersonal passive form commonly used as 1PL in colloquial Finnish. In standard Finnish the 1PL form of the verb has a suffix *-mme*. Pro drop can take place in the IPPC with the standard form too.

<sup>4</sup> The annex examined by Sigurðsson & Wood (2020) consists of the DP only as Icelandic does not employ any preposition in the construction. Due to this, it is necessary to apply dedicated terms for the whole annex PP and the DP placed in it.

<sup>5</sup> Marginally, the synonym *kera* and the Finnish comitative case (see Sirola-Belliard 2016) are viable alternatives.

Typically, the annex DP consists of a proper name or a kinship term.<sup>6</sup> An indefinite DP is also possible if it is specific.<sup>7</sup> Even pronouns can be considered under some specific conditions. However, the ‘me and you’ interpretation is rather exceptional for a construction with a second person pronoun as its annex DP (15), (16). This can be explained as a redundancy effect: in many contexts the meaning will be unambiguously ‘me and you’ even without the annex. A 3rd person pronoun is also quite unusual, but conventional contexts can be constructed (17), (18) (Holmberg & Kurki 2019).

(15) ?#Jag kommer ihåg när vi var **med dig** på teater.

I come in.mind when we were with you on theatre  
‘I remember when we went with you to the theatre.’

(16) ?#Mä muistan sen kun **me** oltiin **sun** **kanssa** teatterissa.

I remember it when we were you.SG.GEN with theatre.INE  
‘I remember when we went with you to the theatre.’

(17) Vet du Hasse?

know you Hasse

**Vi** var en gång **med honom** helt ensamma på bussen till Helsingfors.

we were one time with him totally alone on bus.DEF to Helsinki

‘You know Hasse, right? We were once all alone, him and me, on the bus to Helsinki.’

(18) Sä tiedät Hassen?

you know Hasse

**Me** oltiin kerran **hänen kanssa** kahdestaan Helsingin bussissa.

we were once he.GEN with two.of Helsinki.GEN bus.INE

‘You know Hasse, right? We were once all alone, him and me, on the bus to Helsinki.’

In addition to the properties discussed by Holmberg & Kurki (2019), there seem to be some semantic requirements for the choice of DP. For example, (19) cannot have the singular reading, because an injury is not an entity that has an ability of going somewhere by itself. The reading is odd for the same reason as ‘Me and my hand injury went to the doctor’ sounds odd.

(19) #**Me** mentiin **mun käsivammani** kanssa lääkäriin.

we went my hand.injury.GEN.1SG.POSS with doctor.ILL

‘We went to the doctor due to my hand injury.’

However, inanimate objects can be given human-like properties for various rhetorical purposes, for example humor, as in (20). The IPPC is available in such contexts.

<sup>6</sup> This is similar to the Icelandic construction (Sigurðsson & Wood 2020) and proper names seem to make typical examples in other languages too (see e.g. Vassilieva & Larson 2005, Dékány 2009, Cable 2017).

<sup>7</sup> (i) Vi stod med en annan passagerare och väntade på stationen.  
we stood with one other passenger and waited on station.DEF  
‘Me and another passenger stood and waited at the station.’

- (20) **Me** ollaan **tämän talon** **kanssa** yhtä vanhoja.  
 we are this house.GEN with as old  
 ‘This house is as old as I am.’

Lastly, if the annex DP is a pronoun, as displayed in (15)–(18), a specific interplay takes place between the two pronouns in the construction. Similar to Russian (Vassilieva & Larson 2005), the person in the annex pronoun must be higher on the person-hierarchy (Silverstein 1976) than the person in the main pronoun of the IPPC. For example, a composition including a third person plural pronoun cannot have a second person pronoun as the annex DP. The singular reading in (21) is unavailable because the person in the annex is higher in (21) than that of the initial pronoun. This applies to both Fenno-Swedish and Finnish.

- (21) #**He** menivät **sinun** **kanssa** silloin kauppahalliin.  
 they went you.SG.GEN with then market.hall.ILL  
 ‘They went to the market hall with you then.’

We will not discuss this issue further in this paper.

### 3.3 No expansion of the pronoun

As displayed in Section 2, the availability of the singular reading appears to require that Pro is not expanded. A similar constraint holds true in Icelandic (Sigurðsson & Wood 2020). If Pro is expanded, the plural reading is the only possible interpretation (Holmberg & Kurki 2019).

- (22) #**Vi** **lingvister** ska **med Anna** fara till Berlin.  
 we linguists shall with Anna go to Berlin  
 ‘We, who are linguists, are going to Berlin with Anna.’
- (23) #**Me** **kielitieteilijät** ollaan **Annan kanssa** menossa Berliiniin.  
 we linguists are Anna with going Berlin.ILL  
 ‘We, who are linguists, are going to Berlin with Anna.’

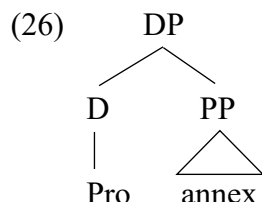
Following Postal (1969), the standard analysis of expressions like *we linguists*, is that the pronoun is the head, a determiner, taking the NP *linguists* as a complement: [DP we [NP linguists]]. This analysis has recently received strong support by the comparative investigation reported in Höhn (2017).

However, the singular reading is equally unavailable in if the expansion is an adjunct, as in (24), (25), rather than a complement.

- (24) #**Vi från Finland** kan **med Anna** bo på hotellet.  
 we from Finland can with Anna live on hotel.DEF  
 ‘We, who come from Finland, can stay at the hotel with Anna.’
- (25) #**Me, jotka** ollaan **Suomesta**, voidaan **Annan kanssa** olla hotellissa.  
 we who are Finland.ELA can Anna.GEN with be hotel.INE  
 ‘We, who come from Finland, can stay at the hotel with Anna.’



These observed restrictions indicate a structural conflict between the expansion of Pro and the annex of the IPPC. The availability of a position for possible expansions seems to be a requirement of the IPPC. A reasonable conclusion is that the structure of the IPPC must be the following: Pro is the head of the constituent, taking the annex PP as complement, and the core structure is a constituent:



The analysis in (26) immediately excludes a singular reading of ‘we’ in (22) and (23), as the NP excludes the PP from the complement position. It excludes a singular reading in (24), (25) as well, if the PP in (24) and the relative clause in (25) are adjuncts to an NP with a null head.

The analysis also supports the analysis of the Russian IPPC presented by Vassilieva & Larson (2005) who discuss the structural role of the annex PP by comparing its adjunct and complement positions. In general, comitative PPs can occur in different positions as adjuncts in Russian, and the position of the PP affects the interpretation. A DP-adjunct (27a) and a VP-adjunct (27b) will be interpreted differently as seen in (27).

(27) a. **Malčik s koškoj** ušel domoj.  
 boy.NOM with cat.INSTR went.SG home  
 ‘The boy with the cat went home.’

b. **Malčik** ušel **s koškoj** domoj.  
 boy.NOM went.SG with cat.INSTR home  
 ‘The boy went home together with the cat.’

In (28), the examples include the Russian IPPC. In this case the contiguous and the discontiguous version both have the same meaning.

(28) a. **My s Petej** ušli domoj.  
 we with Petja.INSTR went home  
 ‘Me and Petja went home.’

b. **My** ušli **s Petej** domoj.  
 we went with Petja.INSTR home  
 ‘Me and Petja went home.’

The comparison indicates that the PP combined with the plural pronoun is not an adjunct, so it must be a complement. Vassilieva & Larson consider this structure to be the general condition for the IPPC and the reason for its singular reading. Outside of these requirements, the structural variants can very well be grammatical, but they do not have a singular reading. This is the

prediction derived from Vassilieva & Larson analysis. At the same time, the existence of the singular reading does not eliminate the other possible reading.

However, there is at least one recognisable exception in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish. If the expansion is a numeral stating the number of participants, the singular reading is allowed.

- (29) **Vi två ska med Anna** fara till Berlin.  
 vi two shall with Anna go to Berlin  
 ‘The two of us, Anna and I, are going to Berlin.’  
 ‘The two of us are going to Berlin with Anna.’

- (30) **Me kaksi ollaan Annan kanssa** menossa Berliiniin.  
 we two are Anna.GEN with going Berlin.ILL  
 ‘The two of us, Anna and I, are going to Berlin.’  
 ‘The two of us are going to Berlin with Anna.’

The significance of the exception in (29), (30) will be discussed in Section 5.

## 4 Data-driven approach

### 4.1 A grammaticality judgement experiment

In order to observe actual language user data, an experimental investigation of acceptability judgments of a large cohort of Finnish and Fenno-Swedish speakers was carried out in 2019. The data resulting from this online experiment consists of answers given by 618 speakers of Fenno-Swedish and 810 speakers of Finnish. The informants were asked initially if the examples represent something they would say themselves. While judging the grammaticality of the examples, they were allowed to modify the phonological form so that it would fit the way they speak. Only those informants who confirmed that they would use the example themselves and those who were not sure about this, were asked to judge the possible readings. The informants who answered *no* to the very first question were not asked to judge the readings.

The Fenno-Swedish survey included 14 example sentences. Due to its syntactic properties, Finnish includes some additional test conditions and the Finnish version of the survey included 17 example sentences to cover these.<sup>8</sup> Some of the example sentences were purposely marginal as the goal of the survey was to discover the grammatical constraints of the IPPC.

The results reveal that the Finnish informants were more prone to accept the example sentences, regardless of the reading, than the Fenno-Swedish group. On average, the Finnish sentences were accepted by 63.4 % of the informant group while the Fenno-Swedish sentences were accepted by 36.3 %.

The informants that accepted the examples as such were asked to judge which readings were acceptable. Among these groups, the singular reading was accepted by 67.9 % of the

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<sup>8</sup> For example, in (5), the negation allows a slightly more versatile word order than in (4).

Fenno-Swedish informants and 79.3 % of the Finnish informants.<sup>9</sup> The result is slightly skewed by the larger number of Finnish example sentences but direct comparison between the most uncontroversial examples reveals that the IPPC is more widely accepted in Finnish. There are specific conditions affecting the acceptance. The results reveal two clear structural factors that lessen the acceptability of a singular reading: i) the contiguous placement of the pro and the annex, and ii) the function of the IPPC as the object of the sentence<sup>10</sup>. There are, however, slight differences in this respect between the languages.

Most Fenno-Swedish informants in the dataset rejected the contiguous example in (31) as something they would say (83.2 %). However, of the rather small number of informants that accepted the example in (31), the majority of them (87.5 %) also accepted the singular reading.

(31) ?**Vi med Anna** ska fara på semester.  
 we with Anna will go on holiday  
 ‘Anna and I are going on a holiday.’

Contiguous IPPC constructions could, at least hypothetically, also occur as objects. However, the Fenno-Swedish example in (32) was unconditionally accepted by only 1.3 % of the informants (8 individuals). Additionally, 2.8 % (17 individuals) were not sure. Of these 25 informants, the majority (64.0 %, 16 individuals) stated that the singular reading is possible.

(32) \***De känner inte oss med Anna.**<sup>11</sup>  
 they know not us with Anna  
 ‘They do not know me and Anna.’

In contrast, Finnish informants accepted the contiguous version to a much higher degree. The example in (33) is adequately (59.8 %) accepted by the informants as something they could possibly say themselves. The example also successfully represents the singular reading, as 97.4 % of the informants that got to judge the meaning expressed that it can refer to ‘Anna and I’.

(33) **Me Annan kanssa** lähdetään lomamatkalle.  
 we Anna.GEN with go holiday.trip.ALL  
 ‘Anna and I are going on a holiday.’

On the other hand, the Finnish version of the object setting in (34) was accepted by 14.6 % (118 individuals) which is among the lowest scores in the experiment. The singular reading was, however, widely accepted (80.2 %) by those who could use the expression or stated that they were not sure. At the same time, there are examples of the setting occurring in Finnish, as discussed in the next section.

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<sup>9</sup> All percentages concerning readings are percent of informants that either could use the example as such or have announced that they are not sure.

<sup>10</sup> The subject position is the typical placement of the IPPC (Holmberg & Kurki 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Test sentences accepted by less than 5 % are considered ungrammatical in this paper.

- (34) ?He eivät tunne **meitä Annan kanssa**.  
 they not know us Anna.GENwith  
 ‘They do not know me and Anna.’

## 4.2 Unresolved questions raised by the data

In the following, we briefly explain why questions concerning the dispreference of the contiguous IPPC are difficult to examine and why they do not necessarily concern the IPPC alone in Fenno-Swedish. Even though the issue ultimately remains unresolved, the observation as such shapes the research problem of the IPPC in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish and forces us to consider discontinuous compositions; these compositions have largely been ignored in the cross-linguistic perspective on inclusory constructions even though discontinuous placements occur in several other languages too.

It is practically impossible to find Fenno-Swedish evidence of sentences like (31) and (32) being used by searching corpora or scanning the internet.<sup>12</sup> In combination with the low acceptability rating, this fact further strengthens the claim that both settings are strongly dispreferred. Due to the lack of extensive corpus material, it is not possible to make further observations. As a consequence, it remains unclear whether the examples in (31) and (32) are dispreferred as a result of the contiguous version of the IPPC or if the dispreference of (32) includes factors concerning the object position of the construction. However, a relevant question concerns the acceptability of Fenno-Swedish [Pro with XP] structures in general. The example in (35a) seems to be acceptable as subject and the example in (35b) can be a grammatical object.

- (35) a. pojken med katten  
 boy.DEF with cat.DEF  
 ‘the boy who was with the cat’
- b. oss utan pengar  
 us without money  
 ‘us who do not have money’

The case of the parallel Finnish settings can be discussed utilising additional material. In order to examine the contiguous version, we have collected an additional corpus of examples like (33) from a Finnish family-oriented internet forum.<sup>13</sup> This collection consists of 265 contiguous occurrences of the contiguous expression in (36) appearing in different sentences and discussions.

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<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, there are not many websites with strictly Fenno-Swedish content, although corresponding Finnish examples can be found online.

<sup>13</sup> Vauva.fi, a Finnish family-oriented internet forum, is one of the most visited websites in Finland. A wide variety of topics, of which many are not family-related at all, is discussed on the forum daily.

- (36) me miehen kanssa  
 we man.GEN with  
 ‘my husband and I’

The number of examples found in the first collection shows that the contiguous placement of the components is sufficiently common in Finnish. The case of objects is slightly more complicated. The example in (37) is a headline on a Finnish news site and the IPPC seems to occur as the object.

- (37) Hometalosotku lähensi **meitä vaimon kanssa.**  
 mould.house.mess brought.closer.together us.PTV wife.GEN with  
 ‘The mess caused by the mould-damaged house brought me and my wife closer together.’

How does the acceptable example (37) differ from the largely dispreferred one in (34)? We leave this question unresolved, pending more research.

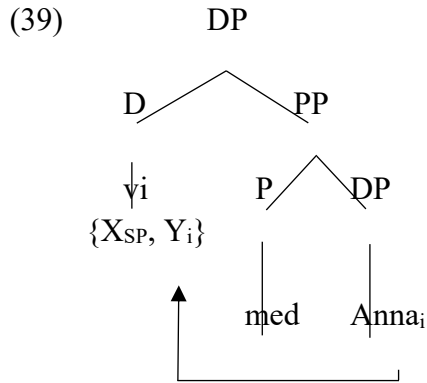
## 5 Analysis

The ambiguity of the inclusory pronominal construction requires a specific understanding of the general composition of plural pronouns. A customary way to describe ‘we’ is something like this: “‘We’ refers to the speaker plus some other individuals.” (Vassilieva & Larson 2005). Following Sigurðsson & Wood (2020) this can be described in terms of two variables {X,Y} (38). The first variable ranges over the focal referents of the pronoun. In the case of ‘we’, the first variable has the value ‘speaker’. In the case of ‘you.pl’, the first variable has the value ‘addressee’. In the case of ‘they’ it can be ‘he’ or ‘she’. The second variable is normally context-dependent. It obtains its value from the situational context.

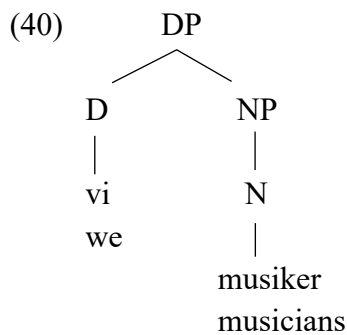
- (38)
- $$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{DP} \\
 \diagup \quad \diagdown \\
 \text{D} \quad \dots \\
 | \\
 \{X_{SP}, Y\}
 \end{array}$$

In the case of the IPPC, the value of the second variable can, however, be assigned by the DP in the comitative phrase, the annex. The Y-variable gets its value sentence-internally, in the syntactic derivation, rather than from the situational context. This makes it possible for *vi ...med Anna* to denote ‘me and Anna’. The variable set here is {speaker, Anna}.

Adopting Vassilieva and Larson’s (2005) analysis of the IPPC, the structure of ‘we with Anna’ would be (39): The PP is, and has to be, a complement of the plural pronominal D. As observed in the previous section, the structure (39) is not the typical composition of the IPPC in Fenno-Swedish, which will be discussed in this section.

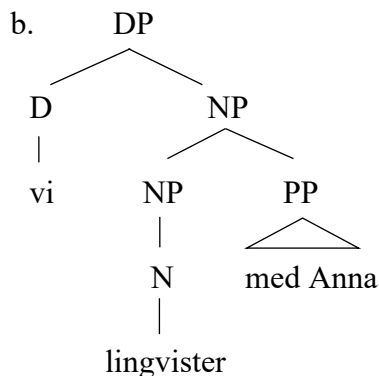


As discussed earlier, this analysis is strongly supported by the observation that the pronoun of the IPPC cannot be expanded, if we assume that the structure of expanded pronouns like *we musicians* is (40), following Postal (1969) and Höhn (2017).



For example, *vi lingvister med Anna* in (41a) does not meet the required structural description in (39), and consequently cannot mean ‘me and Anna, who are linguists’. It would have the structure (41b). There are no obvious semantic reasons explaining why the interpretation is unavailable here which suggests that the reason has to be a strictly syntactic matter.

- (41) a. #Vi lingvister med Anna.  
           we linguists with Anna  
           ‘We who are linguists and Anna.’



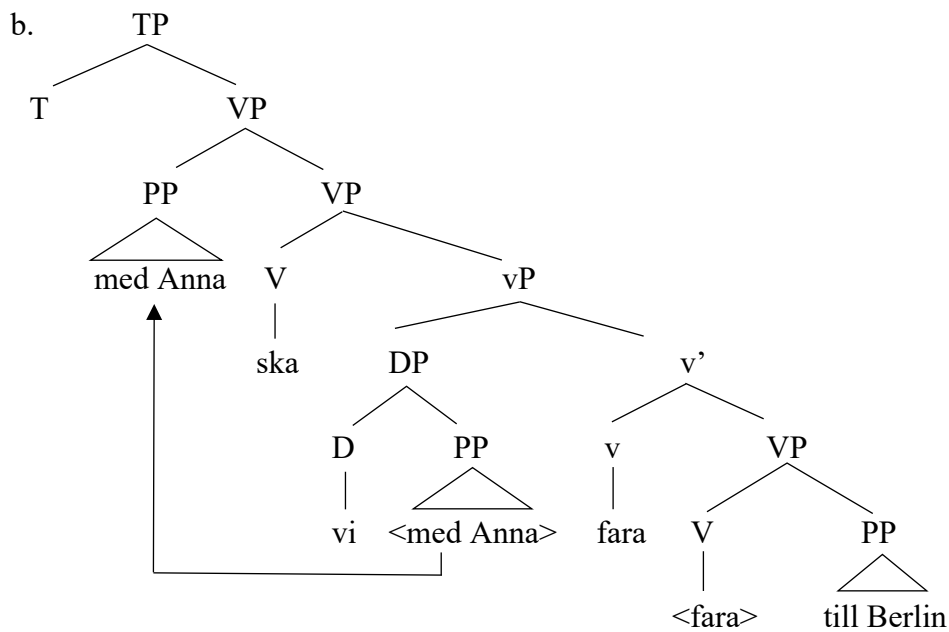
At this point, two crucial questions remain unresolved. The first one concerns the discontinuous occurrences of the IPPC. The question is recognised but not discussed further by Vassilieva and Larson (2005). The second question concerns the fact that there is at least one exceptional

scenario where the we-DP can, in fact, be expanded as seen in (29), (30). The questions will be discussed in this order.

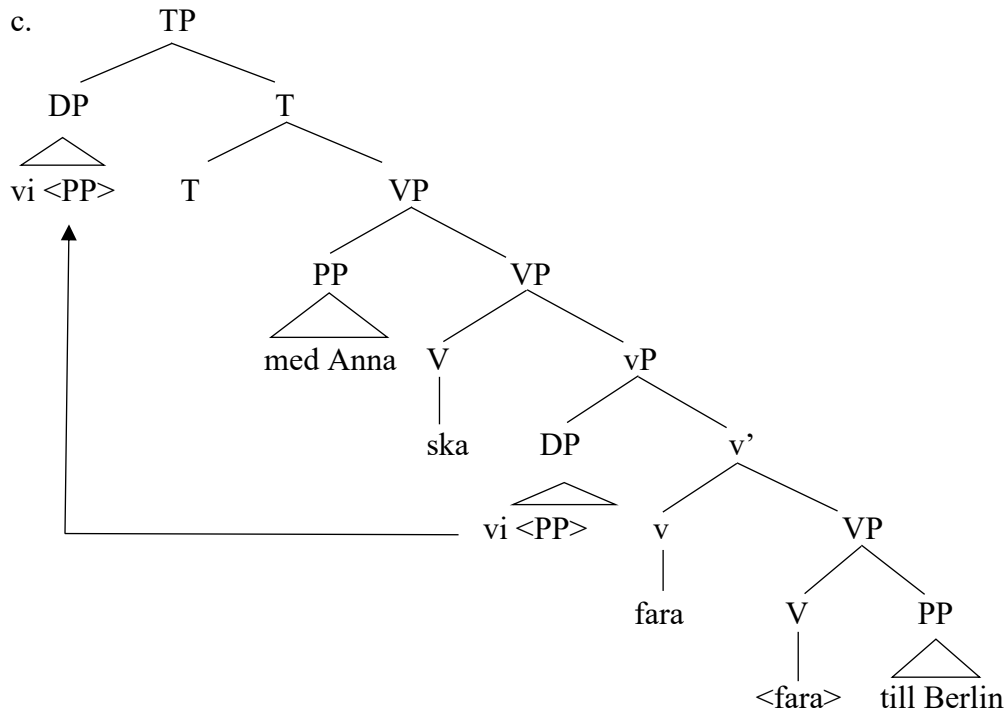
An important matter is to decide how discontinuous occurrences of the IPPC should be analysed. Vassilieva and Larson (2005) point out that the annex PP can be extraposed from the subject in Russian, as it can in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish. Plausibly the separation of the PP and the pronoun would be derived by movement from the complement position of the pronominal D. Wherever the inclusory PP is, when separate from the pronoun, the complement position of D has to be empty, explained if there is a copy (or trace) there. The discontinuous placement is common in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish as well as in many languages in the eastern parts of Europe, according to data from our contacts (see footnote 1).

The following would be a movement analysis of a discontinuous IPPC in the case when the PP can be analysed as predicate-external (Holmberg & Kurki 2019):<sup>14</sup>

- (42) a. **Vi ska med Anna** fara till Berlin.  
 we shall with Anna go to Berlin  
 ‘Anna and I are going to Berlin.’



<sup>14</sup> Copies of moved constituents are represented within angle brackets.



The movements derive the most common word order of the IPPC by first extracting the PP from the DP, followed by remnant movement of the DP to spec-TP. The placement of the PP is free in relation to any adverbs in the clausal middle field (see 4a,b). A couple of additional movements will be necessary to derive the verb-second order in (42): The finite auxiliary verb *ska* ‘will’ moves (through T) to C, and the subject moves to spec-CP (according to a widely accepted analysis of V2 in Germanic; Holmberg 2015, Woods & Wolfe 2022: 2–4). The resulting structure is roughly (43).

- (43) [<sub>CP</sub> vi [<sub>C</sub> ska+C [<sub>IP</sub> <vi> ... [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> med Anna] [<sub>VP</sub> <ska> [<sub>vP</sub> <vi med Anna> fara till Berlin]]]]]]]

However, the analysis (42) includes movement out of DP, which is generally restricted (Davies & Dubinsky 2003). Another, and more damaging argument against this analysis is that it cannot derive the orders where the PP follows the main verb, as in (44) and (45).

- (44) **Vi** ska fara på semester **med Anna**.  
 we shall go on holiday with Anna  
 ‘We will go on a holiday with Anna.’  
 ‘Anna and I will go on a holiday.’
- (45) **Me** lähdetään lomamatkalle **Annan kanssa**.  
 we go holiday.trip.ALL Anna.GEN with  
 ‘We will go on a holiday with Anna.’  
 ‘Anna and I will go on a holiday.’



The Fenno-Swedish example in (44) was accepted by 84.5 % of the informants in the grammaticality judgment experiment and its singular reading was accepted by 58.3 %. The plural reading was slightly more popular as the acceptance rose due to the distance to the Pro. It was accepted by 78.5 %. Nevertheless, the singular reading was clearly available and this cannot be ignored.

The Finnish example in (45) was accepted by 92.2 % of the informants and its singular reading was accepted by 70.0 %. Again, the plural reading is slightly more popular. It was accepted by 79.5 %. Also here, the singular reading was clearly available.

This is significant in the following way: deriving the postverbal annex PP under the analysis (39), based on Vassilieva and Larson (2005), will require very complex movements. The movement would appear to be rightwards and downwards. While the possibility of rightwards movement is controversial (Kayne 1994, Abels & Neeleman 2012), downwards movement is rejected by virtually all versions of generative syntactic theory. Note that the postverbal annex PP can be followed by VP adverbs, ruling out the possibility that it would be a case of rightwards upwards movement, adjoining the PP to vP or higher.<sup>15</sup> This is shown in (46), where other possible placements of the annex PP are placed in parentheses.

- (46) **Vi** har (med Anna) övat **med Anna** varje dag (med Anna).  
 we have (with Anna) trained with Anna every day (with Anna)  
 ‘Anna and I have trained every day.’  
 ‘We have trained every day with Anna.’

The relation between the PP and the pronoun in the IPPC is subject to locality, though. The IPPC crossing a CP or a DP boundary is out of the question.

- (47) a. **Vi** trodde [att du skulle fara **med Anna** till Berlin].  
 we believed [that you would go with Anna to Berlin].  
 ‘We thought you would go to Berlin with Anna.’
- b. **Vi** avbokade[resan **med Anna** till Berlin].  
 we cancelled [trip.DEF with Anna to Berlin].  
 ‘We cancelled the trip to Berlin with Anna.’

The last substantial problem is indicated by the exception introduced by the example in (29), (30), repeated here as (48), (49). The we-DP can be expanded by a number expression even though other expansions (50), (51) are out of the question, and adopting Vassilieva and Larson’s (2005) analysis seems to exclude the whole idea of expanding the we-DP (see 3.3 for the discussion).

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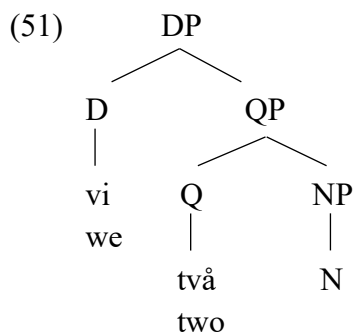
<sup>15</sup> It is thus different from the case of exception extraction, discussed by Vassilieva & Larson (2005), where ordinary VP-adverbials cannot be placed after the exception phrase.

- (48) **Vi två ska med Anna** fara till Berlin.  
 we two shall with Anna go to Berlin  
 ‘The two of us, Anna and I, are going to Berlin.’  
 ‘The two of us are going to Berlin with Anna.’
- (49) **Me kaksi ollaan Annan kanssa** menossa Berliiniin.  
 we two are Anna.GEN with going Berlin.ILL  
 ‘The two of us, Anna and I, are going to Berlin.’  
 ‘The two of us are going to Berlin with Anna.’

At the same time, examples expanded by NPs (50a) or adjectives (50b) fail to include the singular reading, (similarly to 22), (23), (24) and (25).

- (50) a. **#Vi artister ska med Anna** fara till Berlin  
 we artists shall with Anna go to Berlin  
 ‘We, who are artists, will go to Berlin with Anna.’
- b. **#Vi unga ska med Anna** fara till Berlin  
 we young.PL shall with Anna go to Berlin  
 ‘We, who are young, will go to Berlin with Anna.’

The difference between numeral expansions (48,49) and (50a,b) cannot be explained by movements. This leads to the conclusion that the singular reading of the plural pronoun is not blocked by the mere existence of any expansion. The observation suggests that the IPPC might not require the very structure in (39), predicted by Vassilieva and Larson (2005). The number expression in (48,49) is, most plausibly, a complement of the pronominal D, made up of a numeral quantifier head, itself having an NP complement with minimal content, as depicted in (51):



This analysis cannot be combined with Vassilieva and Larson’s analysis of the IPPC where the PP is a complement of the pronoun. So, ‘we two’ seems to be different from ‘we linguists’. However, if ‘we two ...with DP’ in (48) is expanded by an additional NP, the singular reading of the plural pronoun will become unavailable again (52).

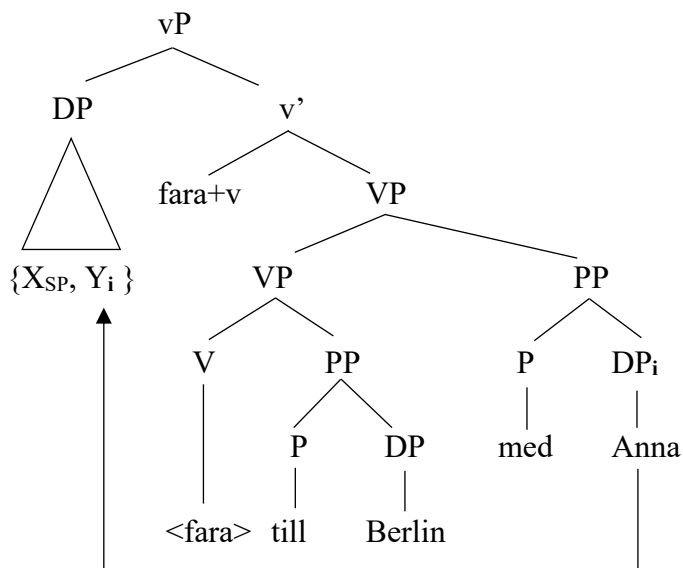
- (52) #Vi två lingvister ska med Anna fara till Berlin.  
 we two linguists shall with Anna go to Berlin  
 ‘We two linguists are going to Berlin with Anna.’

The example in (52) cannot mean ‘the two linguists, me and Anna, are going to Berlin’. The illustrated difference between different expansions does not support adopting Vassilieva and Larson’s (2005) analysis here. In addition, in both Finnish and Fenno-Swedish the annex PP does not typically surface in the complement position of the pronoun (see 4.2), which is the assumed position of the PP in (39). Adopting Vassilieva and Larson’s (2005) analysis seems to result in a paradox.

Thus, the viable approach is to assume an analysis in which the separation of the PP from the pronoun is not derived by movement. The we-DP in the discontinuous IPPC consists of the pronoun, an optional quantifier that defines the cardinality and a N with minimal content.

A semantic difference between ‘we (two) linguists’ and ‘we two’, is that the complement defines the quality of the entities represented by the X and Y-variables in the first case, restricting their value to linguists, but not in the second case. In (51), neither the quantifier nor the minimal N define the quality of entities represented by the variables X and Y. Under this condition, the Y-variable can be assigned a value ‘at a distance’, by an adjunct to the VP whose subject is the DP. But if the quality is defined/restricted by any expansion, this syntactic assignment cannot take place and the Y-variable will be defined by the context instead. When there are no obstacles for the variable Y to obtain its value assigned by the DP of the comitative phrase, the derivation is as follows:

(53)



Again, the Y-variable of the pronoun obtains its value sentence-internally, in the syntactic derivation, rather than from the situational context. The explanation provided in this paper concerns the parameter distinguishing the IPPC languages. It is discussed in the following section.

## 6 What is the parameter?

An important question is how languages with an IPPC differ from languages without an IPPC. Two alternatives will be discussed: One is that the IPPC languages have a special comitative marker, the other is that they have a special plural pronoun.

The first alternative concerns the similarities between the IPPC and with-coordination, that is, the use of a comitative adposition as a conjunction; these two phenomena result in similar semantic relations, utilising similar grammatical components (Stassen 2000). Vassilieva & Larson (2005) point out the differences between the IPPC and the with-coordination in Russian. In the IPPC, the annex PP can occur as disjoint from Pro while the with-coordination is contiguous, similar to true conjunctions (54).<sup>16</sup>

- (54) Mal'čiki s devočkami tancevali.  
 boys.NOM with girls.INSTR danced  
 'The boys and the girls danced.'

At the same time, typological reviews (Stassen 2000, Haspelmath 2004) seem to present the IPPC as a nuance in the overall view of with-coordination, stating that 'with' is being used as a coordinator meaning 'and' in the IPPC. The similarity of the semantic outcome is true, but does it indicate that the special comitative marker is crucial for the IPPC?

As some well-known IPPC languages (e.g. Russian, Lithuanian) also have with-coordination, it makes sense that there would be a correlation. There are, however, relevant counterarguments. The Finno-Ugric language family includes examples of the IPPC and with-coordination occurring with no correlation. Hungarian (Dékány 2009) and Northern Sami have the IPPC while with-coordination is not available. Mari has with-coordination but the IPPC is not available (Sirikka Saarinen, personal communication).

No special comitative marker is necessary in the Icelandic construction either (Sigurðsson & Wood 2020). Fenno-Swedish has with-coordination only in very limited contexts. Interestingly, the rare Fenno-Swedish with-coordination only takes place in contiguous expressions,<sup>17</sup> which is the setting dispreferred by the IPPC. In Finnish, with-coordination is almost non-existent. This strongly suggests that the availability of the IPPC does not depend on the availability of with-coordination in general in the same language.

The second alternative is that languages with the IPPC have a special plural pronoun. Once again, it can be described with the variables X and Y. The value of Y is assigned as displayed in (53). Along the lines of Chomskyan feature theory, this can be formally expressed

<sup>16</sup> There are languages with discontinuous with-coordination, though: Stassen (2000) mentions Tera, Acholi, and Tolai.

<sup>17</sup> An example would be (i).

- (i) **Jag med min fru** var glada att vara tillbaka.  
 I with my wife were happy.PL to be back  
 'My wife and I were happy to be back.'

Note the plural agreement on the predicative adjective, showing that this is indeed coordination.

as an unvalued feature which needs valuation from the local syntactic context (Chomsky 2001). The value it wants is a referential index. This can be formally expressed as follows: There are two pronouns ‘we’, ‘you.PL’ and ‘they’ in languages that have the IPPC. For example:

- (55) *we*1: {X<sub>SP</sub>, Y}  
       *we*2: {X<sub>SP</sub>, uD}

In the previous section, we stated that the IPPC is excluded when the reference of the Y-variable is restricted by a noun or adjective internally by the DP. We can now explain this. The reason is that this requires the presence of a variable to restrict. The pronoun *we*2 has no Y-variable, but an unvalued feature. Once the pronominal DP contains a noun, adjective, or relative clause, this excludes the analysis of the pronoun as *we*2. The same holds true for the other plural pronouns.

The feature uD seeks a nominal argument in the local syntactic context. It probes the c-command domain of D, and finding a DP, copies its index. The result is the inclusory interpretation of ‘we’.<sup>18</sup>

This analysis also entails a specification of the parameter distinguishing languages that have the IPPC from languages that do not: The former languages have a variety of plural pronouns absent in the latter, the *we*2 variety in (55).

How the variation regarding the contiguous occurrences of the IPPC should be explained within this theory is still a matter for discussion. Even though contiguous occurrences are dispreferred in general, especially by Fenno-Swedish informants, the singular reading is quite well accepted by those who would use the expression themselves.

This question seems to be relevant only for the case of Fenno-Swedish and Finnish as, according to informants contacted (see footnote 1), there is no observable dispreference with the IPPC concerning contiguous compositions in other European languages. However, no exhaustive research on the matter exists at the moment.

## 7 Concluding words

The present study provides a thorough analysis of the IPPC in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish. To our knowledge, this paper constitutes the first detailed investigation of the placement of the annex phrase of the inclusory constructions. We argue that the findings suggest an analysis that differs from prior work on similar constructions in other languages.

Adopting an analysis along the lines of Vassilieva & Larson (2005) seems appealing. Vassilieva & Larson argue that the syntactic structure of the IPPC is [D PP], where D is the plural pronoun. We present evidence of an extremely free placement of the annex PP in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish. Separate placement of D and PP is preferred in Finnish and almost compulsory in Fenno-Swedish. Explaining this property is problematic if Vassilieva & Larson’s analysis is the only one possible. While the Fenno-Swedish pattern displayed by this paper is

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<sup>18</sup> See Tsoulas (2016) on referential indices in syntactic theory. Chomsky (2000, 2001) famously rejects the employment of indices as a syntactic device. See, however, Tsoulas (2016) for arguments that referential indices can be and need to be assumed as a syntactic device in minimalist theory. See also Arregi & Hanink (2022) for arguments that referential indices indeed are a grammatic category.

rather uniform, the case of contiguous constructions is more complex in Finnish (see 4.2) and further research is needed.

The fact that an expanded pronoun as in Fenno-Swedish *vi lingvister* ‘we linguists’ and *vi från Finland* ‘we (who are) from Finland’ is incompatible with an inclusory reading of a following comitative PP seems to support Vassilieva & Larson’s (2005) analysis as the underlying syntactic structure of the IPPC. If this was the case, then the non-contiguous IPPC with a postverbal PP in Fenno-Swedish and Finnish would be the result of movement to the right of and lower than the putative first-merged copy which is incompatible with the standard restrictive theory of movement.

Additional observations indicate that Pro of the IPPC can have numeral complements as in *vi två* ‘we two’ without distracting the singular reading. This contradicts the underlying structure [D PP].

Due to these findings, we propose an alternative analysis that includes a special plural pronoun consisting of a variable being given the value of the speaker, addressee, or third person and an unvalued feature seeking a nominal argument in the syntactic context. A special comitative marker is also discussed briefly to demonstrate why it is not a serious alternative.

The findings of the present research contribute to the cross-linguistic understanding of inclusory constructions. Investigating the placement of the annex phrase in relevant languages is a matter of future work that may introduce additional questions with significance for Fenno-Swedish and Finnish.

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