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Ela Krejčová

## “That’s an Interesting Question, Indeed, not Only for You and I”: A (Non-Systematic) Fluctuation of Personal Pronoun Forms

### Abstract

This article deals with the fluctuation of subjective and objective pronominal forms in a specific type of constructions, namely in coordinated phrases. The analysis will demonstrate that the behaviour of the first person singular pronoun goes against all the general trends in the usage of pronominal forms. Subsequently, alternative approaches towards the idiosyncrasies of the first person singular pronoun will be presented.

The analysis is based on the data taken from the Corpus of Contemporary American English and from surveys distributed among 209 native speakers of American English, from the age of 18 up to the age of 75. The data from both sources show that there is no systemic fluctuation in the environment of postverbal coordinated phrases as the variation between the two case forms does not affect the whole paradigm of personal pronouns, and is not induced proportionally after the analyzed heading prepositions.

### Key words

*Subjective and objective pronoun forms; coordinated phrases; case variation; the modesty principle; fossilization*

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### 1. Introduction

The use of subjective and objective pronominal forms is determined by the functions the pronouns have in the constructions and positions they occupy. Nominative forms are required for pronouns functioning as subjects in preverbal positions, as shown in example (1).

- (1) **I** can't believe they just left this out here. (Corpus of Contemporary American English, SPOK ABC Primetime 2009)

Objective pronominal forms, on the other hand, immediately follow the verb, as illustrated in (2), or are part of prepositional phrases (3).

- (2) I'm glad Oprah threw **me** a bone. (COCA, SPOK ABC\_GMA 2009)
- (3) She started speaking French to **me** right away, which always terrifies me. (COCA, SPOK NBC\_Today 2009)

However, these rules are in some environments violated and the subject/object distinctions are neutralized. One of such settings is represented by coordinated constructions. The following examples (4) to (9) demonstrate that both forms are used regardless of their syntactic functions and positions in the sentence. Examples (4) and (5) show the fluctuation of the two forms in subject position, then examples (6) and (7) illustrate the usage of both forms in object position. Finally, the alternation of the subjective and objective forms is also induced in coordinated phrases functioning as complements of a preposition, as in (8) and (9).

- (4) So **you and he** are on an agreement on that. (COCA, SPOK NPR\_TalkNation 2007)
- (5) **You and him** went over there and he murdered your roommate! (COCA, SPOK CBS\_48Hours 2008)
- (6) How many different companies are trying to sell **you and me** that ice cream cone? (COCA, SPOK NPR\_ATC 2002)
- (7) Well, as much as that may upset **you and I**, I'm sure... (COCA, SPOK FOX\_HC 1999)
- (8) What does it mean for **you and me**? (COCA, SPOK CNN\_YourHealth 2000)
- (9) That's an interesting question, indeed, not only **for you and I**, but for the lawyers (COCA, SPOK NPR\_FreshAir 2003)

This article summarizes results obtained from the statistical analysis of pronouns in coordinated phrases. It shows that the fluctuation of both pronominal forms is not systematic as the alternations do not affect the whole paradigm of personal pronouns. Furthermore, all the generalizations related to the usage of pronominal forms reveal morpho-syntactic peculiarities of the first person singular pronoun. Hence, this article gives an in-depth analysis of the behaviour of this pronoun in coordinated phrases and presents some alternative approaches for dealing with its idiosyncrasies.

## 2. Methodology and survey

The data used in this article are taken from two sources. The first is the spoken section of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) available online ([www.americancorpus.org](http://www.americancorpus.org)). This corpus is being constantly updated and new

samples are being added. The second source of data was a survey distributed to 209 people in three age groups. The first age group was composed of speakers younger than 25, the second was represented by people from the age of 26 up to 50, and the last group involved respondents older than 51. Age was not included as a sociolinguistic variable, but mainly as an indicator of recent diachronic developments and changes in the usage of pronouns.

The survey was based on two types of tasks. Their formats followed Quinn’s (2005) survey related to the usage of pronouns in New Zealand English. The first task type consisted of a list of sentences with coordinated phrases in subject position. These coordinations involved pronouns when conjoined either to noun phrases, as in (10), or to another pronoun, as demonstrated in (11). Respondents were supposed to mark preferences for individual constructions, with number 1 standing for the best option and number 4 for the least preferable choice.

(10) He hasn’t talked to his brothers for several years.

- A. His brothers and he have never been close
- B. His brothers and him have never been close.
- C. Him and his brothers have never been close.
- D. He and his brothers have never been close.

(11) I saw my best friend last night.

- A. He and I took kung fu classes together when we were in high school.
- B. He and me took kung fu classes together when we were in high school.
- C. Him and me took kung fu classes together when we were in high school.
- D. Him and I took kung fu classes together when we were in high school.

The second type of tasks was in the form of a cloze test with options. Respondents were asked to fill in the gaps, choosing both the form of a pronoun and its order in the phrase. This task type diagnosed preferences for the usage of subjective or objective pronoun forms in coordinated phrases in object position (12) and coordinated phrases complementing a preposition (13), as well as preferences for the ordering of conjuncts. The goal of this data analysis was to show whether subjective or objective forms exhibit any consistent preferences in their ordering within the coordinate phrases.

(12) She, her, her husband

Amanda Houston is moving out of her flat next week. We will pick \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ up from the airport.

(13) He, him, his colleagues

Hugh Flemming is retiring next week. The head of the department is holding a party for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ next Friday.

The results obtained from the statistical analysis will be briefly generalized below to prepare a solid theoretical background for the discussion of the idiosyncratic behaviour of the first person singular (1SG) pronoun.

### 3. Data analysis

#### 3.1 Coordinated phrases in subject position

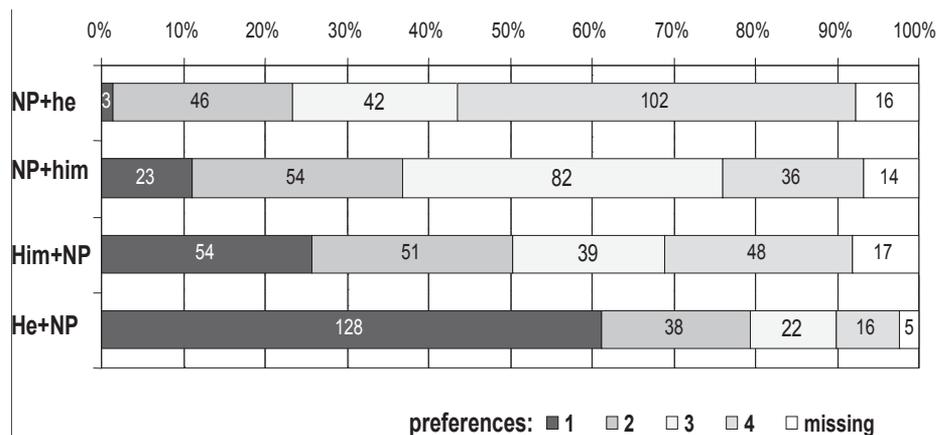
Based on the data analysis of coordinated phrases (CoPs) in subject position, there are two generalizations to be made (see also Quinn 2005):

- (i) In coordinated constructions in subject position subjective pronominal forms tend to occur as first conjuncts of the coordinated phrase.
- (ii) Subjective pronominal forms are rare as final conjuncts.

Both generalizations will be related to the example (10) which will be taken as representative of all survey samples.

The statistical analysis shows that structures involving the order *subjective pronoun + NP* (i.e., *He and his brothers have never been close*) represent the most preferable options. On the other hand, constructions with *NP + subjective pronoun* (i.e., *His brothers and he have never been close*) are avoided in the usage. The exact figures for preferences of individual survey items are presented in the graph below

**Graph 1.** Respondents' preferences for item (10) – "He hasn't talked to his brothers for several years."



Each line in the graph demonstrates the usage of one survey item (for example *NP + he* in the first line) and shows figures, representing the number of preferences for the item on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 is best, 4 is worst). Finally, the blank field stands for answers which were for various reasons left out (labelled as “missing” in the graph). This type of graph presents data irrespective of the age factor.

Following the explanation of how to interpret the graph, it is possible to state that the first option (*His brothers and he*) is represented only peripherally as best (only 3 respondents ranked it as 1, thus giving it the best evaluation). On the other hand, one hundred and two speakers strongly disfavoured the placement of the pronoun in the final position of the coordinated phrase and evaluated it as the worst option. The data, therefore, demonstrate that the usage of the subjective pronominal form *he* is avoided when functioning as a final conjunct.

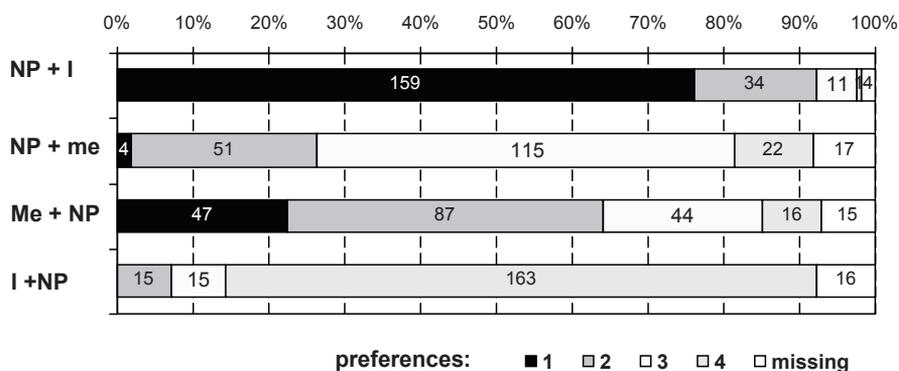
However, the figures change dramatically when the same pronominal form functions as the first conjunct, conjoined to a noun phrase. In such a syntactic environment, the pronoun *he* is by more than a half of the speakers (128 in total) favoured in the initial position of the coordinated phrase. Similarly, the figures of respondents, choosing this ordering of the pronoun as the worst, are significantly low (only 16 people considered it the worst offered option and ranked it 4). Therefore, the placement of the pronoun is a relevant factor conditioning case variation in this environment. Whenever the position of a pronoun changes within the coordinate phrase, the preferences for its usage differ dramatically.

Whilst the ordering of a pronoun conditions the usage of a subjective form in coordinated phrases, the placement of the objective form *him* is somewhat flexible (compare *NP + him*, *Him + NP*). The form *him* is preferred as a first conjunct, however, it does occur in final position as well. It does not exhibit any clear-cut pattern in its distribution within the coordinated phrase as the figures for preferences for this form are represented evenly on the scale from 1 to 4. In other words, there is no sharp difference in the number of respondents who favour objective forms as first or final conjuncts and in the number of speakers who dislike them. Figures in the graph (23 preferences for *NP + him* and 54 preferences for *him + NP*) show that objective forms function variably as first or final conjuncts of the coordinated phrase and there is not such a significant discrepancy in their ordering within the CoP.

As fitting as these generalizations are for the fluctuation of the both forms in the CoPs in subject position, they are not valid for the 1SG pronoun. The subjective form *I* hardly ever occurs as the first conjunct of the CoP; however, its occurrence in the final position of the CoP is very common. In other words, the behaviour of the pronoun *I* violates both generalizations made above (see also Quinn 2005). For illustration, specific results obtained from the statistical data analysis are given below.

- (14) A. My sister and I are coming to Paris for Christmas.  
B. My sister and me are coming to Paris for Christmas.  
C. Me and my sister are coming to Paris for Christmas.  
D. I and my sister are coming to Paris for Christmas.

**Graph 2.** Respondents' preferences for item (14) – “My sister and I are coming to Paris for Christmas.”



As the graph shows, the 1SG pronoun exhibits a mirror-image patterning in the fluctuation of the pronominal forms when compared to general tendencies of other pronominal paradigms. While other subjective pronominal forms are disfavoured in final positions of CoPs, the first person singular form *I* is clearly most preferred as a final conjunct. This tendency is clearly visualized by the figures in the graph depicting that 159 respondents chose it as the best option, whereas only one speaker considered it the worst (see the first line in Graph 2).

Not only is the mirror-image patterning of the usage of the 1SG pronoun reflected in final positions of CoPs but also in initial positions. In contrast to other subjective pronominal forms, the pronoun *I* is excluded from being placed at the beginning of the CoP (for similar results see also Quinn 2005). The data illustrate that the option *I and my friends* was never ranked as the best option. On the other hand, the majority of respondents (163 in total) evaluated it as the worst option. These results lead to a conclusion that the pronoun *I* shows peculiarities in both positions within the coordinated phrases in subject position.

The exclusive behaviour of the 1SG pronoun is not limited to the subjective form *I*. Interesting insights are also brought forth when analyzing the usage of the objective form *me*. While other objective pronominal forms are variably used as first or final conjuncts (see values for items *NP + him* and *Him + NP* in Graph 1), the pronominal form *me* shows an asymmetry in preferences for its placement in first and final positions of CoPs. This tendency is, again, captured by the data in Graph 2. When placed in the final position of the CoP, the objective form *me* is chosen as the best option only marginally, with 4 speakers evaluating it as 1 (see the figures for *NP + me*). However, the preferences rise when this pronoun is used as an initial conjunct (see *me + NP*). In this position, 47 speakers rank it as the most preferable option.

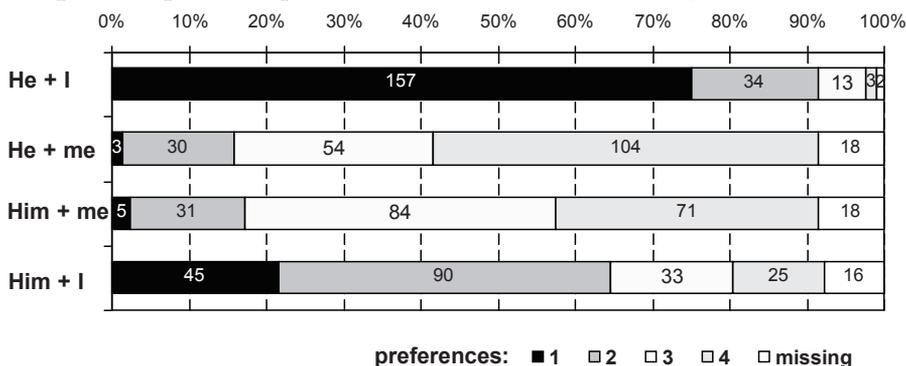
Another piece of supporting evidence of the exclusive usage of the first person singular pronoun may be found in the CoPs involving two pronouns. The following survey item, shown in (15), demonstrates the difference in preferences for the

1SG subjective and objective forms in final positions.

(15) I saw my best friend last night.

- A. He and I took kung fu classes together when we were in high school.
- B. He and me took kung fu classes together when we were in high school.
- C. Him and me took kung fu classes together when we were in high school.
- D. Him and I took kung fu classes together when we were in high school.

**Graph 3.** Respondents’ preferences for item (15) – “I saw my best friend last night.”



The graph shows that the first option (*He and I*), the standard one, is definitely the most preferred variant. Also, it reflects that the combination *Him + I* is generally popular, being chosen as the best or second best option by 135 speakers.

The figures dramatically change, however, when the final position is occupied by the objective form *me*. In the two cases where this pronominal form was placed at the end of the CoP, preferences for such usage were rather low (see *He and me* and *Him and me*). Respondents clearly disfavoured this ordering, no matter whether the pronoun *me* was conjoined to the subjective or objective form. The asymmetry in the patterning of the subjective and objective form of the first person singular pronoun is reminiscent of the behaviour of this pronoun in the phrases where the pronoun is conjoined to a noun phrase.

Hence, summarizing the data related to the usage of the first person singular pronoun, it is possible to say that

- (i) the subjective form *I* is disfavoured as an initial conjunct
- (ii) the subjective form *I* is strongly favoured as a final conjunct
- (iii) the objective form *me* is NOT used variably as both conjuncts, it is avoided in the final position.

At this point, it is inevitable to question how to deal with the anomalous behaviour of the 1SG pronoun. One explanation steps out of the system of language in-

ternal rules and attributes the peculiarities of the pronoun *I* to extralinguistic factors. One of the rules operating outside the language system is visualized by “the modesty principle” (Wales 1996: 103) or “polite order” (Angermeyer, Singler 2003: 178). Being exposed to the tenets of prescriptivism, represented in the form of textbooks, high school grammar books, etc. (Emonds 1986), speakers place the singular form *I* in the final position of the coordinated phrase (Krejčová 2009).

However, it is hard to apply extralinguistic principles in cases where the first person singular pronoun is used in the objective form. If the modesty rule operated in the CoPs involving the objective form *me*, the preferences for the usage of this pronoun form as a final conjunct should have been higher. Such a conclusion is not, however, confirmed by the data. As shown in Graphs 2 and 3, the objective form is preferred in the initial position, violating the modesty principle postulated above.

The discrepancy in the usage of the subjective and objective pronominal forms may be captured by the difference in the level of formality of both forms. As suggested by numerous linguists and grammarians (Biber 1999, Dekeyser 1975, Quirk et al 1985), the subjective form *I* is generally perceived as formal, whereas the objective form *me* is connected with familiar usage. Therefore, being consistent with the formal or informal character of the discourse, speakers are either more aware of prescriptive rules and choose the subjective form, or use spontaneously the non-standard objective form (Krejčová 2009).

Unfortunately, such an explanation cannot be either proved or refuted by the survey and corpus data. Therefore, I will turn to an alternative solution, reevaluating the status of the subjective form *I* in coordinated phrases. Evidence supporting the reanalysis of the form *I* is found not only in the environment of coordinations in subject position, but also in CoPs in object position and CoPs complementing a preposition. Thus, the fully developed discussion can be carried out only after the data from all the types of CoPs are analyzed and presented. Therefore, I will postpone developing the arguments supporting the reevaluation of the status of this pronoun until the end of the following chapter.

### ***3.2 Coordinated phrases in object position and CoPs that are part of prepositional phrases***

Based on the data analysis of coordinated phrases in object position and CoPs complementing a preposition, there are two generalizations to be made (see also Biber 1999):

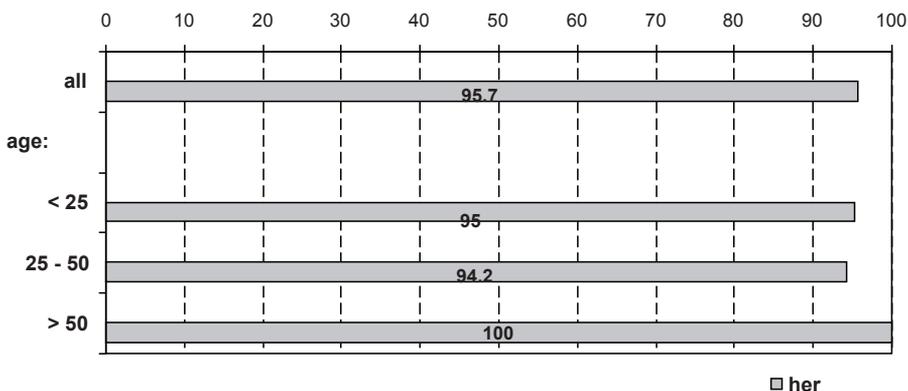
- (i) In both types of CoPs subjective pronominal forms rarely occur as first conjuncts.
- (ii) In both types of CoPs subjective pronominal forms are also rare as final conjuncts.

These generalizations are concisely visualized in Graph 4 below. This graph presents figures for preferences for the objective form *her* in example (16) illustrating tendencies in pronominal variation in all tested survey items in coordinated phrases in object position.

(16) She, her, her husband

Amanda Houston is moving out of her flat next week. We will pick \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ up from the airport.

**Graph 4.** Respondents’ answers to item (16) – “Amanda Houston is moving out of her flat next week.”



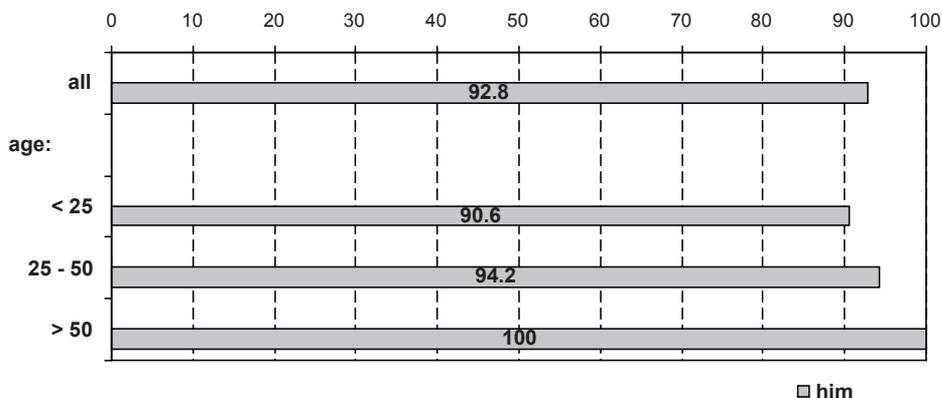
Obviously, the graph yields transparent results. The figures reach 94% and higher values within the usage of the three age groups. The results of the data analysis show that objective forms are indisputably defending the postverbal territory. Subjective forms occur only in random instances. Therefore, it is possible to say that in the environment of coordinated phrases in object position there is no real fluctuation as the alternation of the subjective and objective forms is induced only marginally.

Similarly, lack of fluctuation may also be seen in coordinated phrases that are part of prepositional phrases. The figures reflecting the general tendencies of the pronominal usage in CoPs that are part of prepositional phrases, as in (17), are presented in Graph 5 below.

(17) He, him, his colleagues

Hugh Flemming is retiring next week. The head of the department is holding a party for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ next Friday.

**Graph 5.** Respondents' preferences for item (17) – “Hugh Flemming is retiring next week”.



Again, the figures reach between 90% and 100%. They show that subjective forms penetrate to the prepositional phrases infrequently and that objective forms represent the majority of preferences of speakers across all age groups. In other words, generalizations drawn for the (non-existing) pronominal alternations in CoPs in object position may also be extended to the environment of CoPs that are part of prepositional phrases (PPs).

However, these generalizations cannot be applied to the usage of the 1SG pronoun. Unlike other pronouns, the 1SG pronoun exhibits a considerable fluctuation of subjective and objective forms when occurring in the CoPs following a verb or a preposition. Therefore, I will explore another potential alternative conception that gently resolves the idiosyncrasies of the 1SG pronoun in all types of coordinated phrases.

Based on the data analysis, I propose that the first person singular subjective form should not be treated as a variable conjunct of the coordinated phrase. Instead, it forms a fixed unit with the coordinator *and* (for similar conceptions see also Fowler 1965 qtd. in Angermeyer and Singler 2003: 175) acquiring specific grammatical features. Building on the idea that the subjective form *I* is fossilized within the coordinated phrase, it is necessary to determine in which type of coordinated phrases the process of fossilization occurs and to which part exactly this pronoun is fixed. In the environment of CoPs in object position and CoPs complementing a preposition, discussed in this section, there are several options.

One possibility is to consider the subjective form *I* fixed only to the coordinator (*and I*). The second option is that the sequence *and I* is also fixed to the first conjunct with which it occurs in the CoP (*X/XP and I*). Furthermore, another option is that fossilization occurs only in a certain type of a coordinated phrase (for example only in CoPs complementing a preposition). The final option is a combination of the two previous possibilities. To put it directly, the process of fossilization can appear only with a specific first conjunct in a specific type of coordinated phrases.

In my analysis, I will proceed from the longest candidate for fossilization to the shortest one. The longest sequence that could be fixed involves *a preposition + first conjunct + and + I*. Based on frequency, COCA demonstrates that the form *I* occurs mainly with the second singular pronoun *you*. Therefore, our analysis will be directed towards showing whether the usage of *you and I* is fixed to a certain preposition or not. The data search in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), visualized in Table 1, clearly refutes such an assumption.

**Table 1.** Preferences for coordinated phrases occurring with selected prepositions

Preposition + you	<i>and I</i>	<i>and me</i>
like you	<b>31</b>	58
between you	<b>13</b>	33
for you	<b>10</b>	37
from you	2	6
by you	2	5
at you	1	0
of you	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	60	149

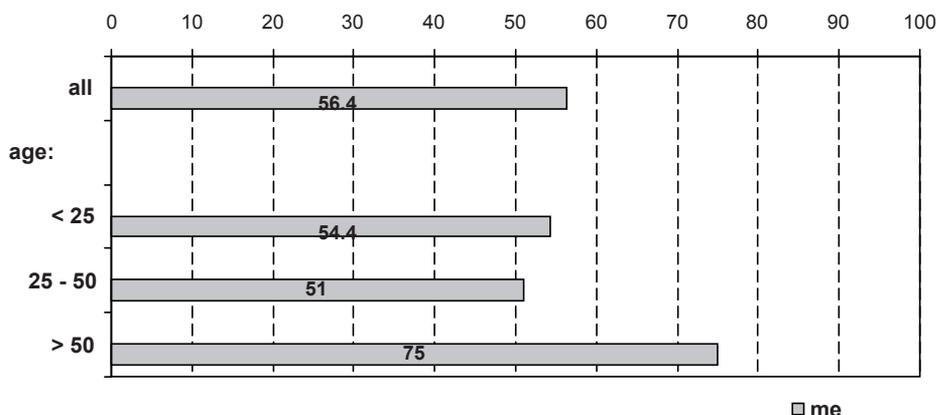
Table 1 demonstrates the preferences for the coordinated phrases *you and I* versus *you and me* after seven prepositions with which these coordinations occurred most frequently. The rightmost column shows that the prescribed versions, with the objective form *me*, are preferred over the phrases with the form *I* in all cases. However, the three figures written in bold reflect that the CoPs with the 1SG subjective form do exist, and these forms are represented in relevant ratios. The most frequent usage of this form is documented with the preposition *like*<sup>1</sup>, as in (18).

(18) Now he’s just basically a civilian, a regular guy **like you and I**. (COCA, SPOK NPR\_ATCW 2006).

The usage with the third highest frequency in Table 1, namely the combination *for you and I*, was also documented in the survey analysis. Here, the coordinated phrase involving the subjective form *I* functioned as a complement of a preposition as well as subject of an embedded clause (*to leave*), as illustrated in (19). The results of the statistical analysis show that 56.4% of speakers chose the standard option, leaving a significant percentage of preferences for the non-standard form *I*.

(19) You, I, me

When I noticed that people started getting passionate about their opinions, I thought it was high time for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to leave.

**Graph 6.** Respondents' preferences for item (19) – “When I noticed”

Thus, the data analysis illustrates that the fluctuation of the first person objective and subjective pronoun forms is not a marginal phenomenon. Moreover, the data show the compatibility of the coordinated phrase with a range of prepositions. Therefore, the process of fossilization cannot extend beyond the coordinated phrase itself.

Another candidate for the fossilized unit is exclusively the coordination *you and I*, as suggested in Honey (1995). Such a proposal has been also made by Poldauf (1972). He states that this unit became a new inclusive pronoun, “not a mere coordination of two pronouns” (1972: 88)<sup>2</sup>. Such an interpretation is supported by the following example (20) from COCA, showing that *you and I* behaves like a unit rather than a phrase involving two pronouns.

- (20) [...] that I got **for you and I** a little damp [...] RUBY BRIDGES OK. 13  
 [...] clean, of course, clean little napkin right here, or a little towel (COCA, Emeril’s Crusted Fish, SPOK ABC\_GMA 1998)

There are two clues that lead to the conception of *you and I* as a fixed unit acquiring new grammatical features. First, the subjective form occurs in the environment where prescriptive grammar calls for the objective form *me* (see also in Poldauf 1972). Second, this phrase is found in the sentence with the 1SG pronoun subject. Such a usage, again, clashes with the rules of prescriptive grammar, requiring the reflexive form *myself* in cases where the object is co-referential with the subject (Dušková 1994: 109). Undoubtedly, considering *I* a part of a fixed unit is a more elegant way to resolve its problematic usage in (20) than taking it as a coordinated pronoun violating two rules of grammar at one time.

If we accept the phrase *you and I* to be a fixed unit, then it follows that *I* should not occur in coordination with any other pronoun. Such a statement can again be confirmed or refuted by empirical evidence. For this purpose, our survey data will be used to find (counter) evidence for considering *you and I* a fixed unit.

The possibility of using the 1SG pronoun with other pronouns than *you* was tested in two survey tasks. The first one is illustrated in (21).

- (21) she, her, I, me  
 I haven’t seen Carol for a long time. Last time we saw each other, her brother Nick drove \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to their cottage in the mountains.

This survey item diagnosed whether the subjective form *I* can appear with the third person singular pronoun *her/she*. Elaborating on the argumentation presented above, it is possible to make the following hypothesis: If the phrase *you and I* were fixed, then the 1SG subjective form should occur only with the 2SG pronoun. However, this hypothesis is not confirmed by the survey data. The graph below brings forth counter-evident results.

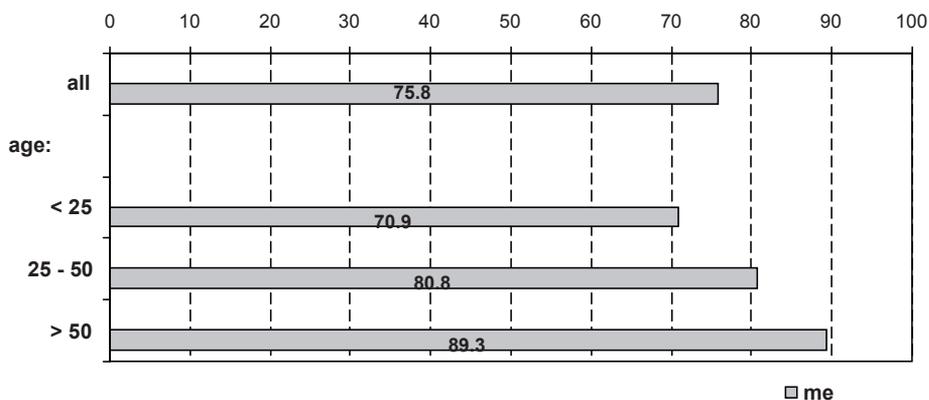
**Table 2.** Preferences for subjective vs. objective pronoun forms according to age

	<b>subjective (<i>I</i>)</b>	<b>objective (<i>me</i>)</b>
Age group <25	57%	43%
Age group 25–50	38.50%	61.50%
Age group >50	21.40%	78.60%

The figures in Table 2 show that the subjective form *I* is not limited only to the coordinations with the 2SG pronoun *you* but it also occurs with the third person singular pronoun *she/her*. Furthermore, the graph illustrates that the preferences for the prescribed form are influenced by age. The subjective form *I* is most popular with the speakers under the age of 25. Interestingly, they even favour its usage over the objective variant *me*. Despite the fact that the preferences for the subjective form *I* are dropping in the second and third age groups, the figures still prove its usage in this environment.

Once shown that the subjective form *I* extends into the territory of coordinated phrases not involving the 2SG pronoun, it becomes clear that the phrase *you and I* is not a fixed unit. This claim is also supported by other data from the survey. In the following graph, I will demonstrate that the occurrence of the 1SG subjective form is also common when conjoined to the whole noun phrase. First, the survey task is illustrated in (22), and then Graph 7 follows.

- (22) I, me, my parents  
 My neighbors invited \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for drinks last night. We drank two bottles of wine and had a good sleep.

**Graph 7.** Respondents' preferences for item (22) – “My neighbors invited...”

Indisputably, the results related to the survey item (22) fit into the repetitive patterning exhibited by the fluctuating 1SG pronoun. Despite the figures for the objective form *me* being higher than in Graph 6, still, there is a significant percentage of cases in which the subjective form was favoured. The pattern is also repetitive when age is considered. Again, the frequency of standard forms rises with the age of the respondents. The older the speakers are, the higher preferences for the standard forms are exhibited (from 70.9% with the first group up to 89.3% with the third group).

All in all, the results obtained from the statistical analysis and the data from COCA are aiming towards the conclusion that the fossilization process involves only the conjunction *and* followed by the form *I*. To confirm this hypothesis, it is necessary to demonstrate whether *I* is fixed to the final position even in CoPs in object position and CoPs complementing PPs (for CoPs in subject position see Graphs 2 and 3). Naturally, if its position is free within the coordinated phrase, then the idea of fossilization does not hold. However, the survey data are convincing enough to prove that the occurrence of *I* is limited to the final position within the CoPs.

**Table 3.** Occurrences of pronouns in coordinated phrases

Coordinated phrase	Number of occurrences
<i>drove her and I</i>	99
<i>drove I and her</i>	0
<i>invited my friends and I</i>	50
<i>invited I and my friends</i>	0

Table 3 shows that in no cases does this pronoun occur in the first position of the coordinated phrase. Therefore, it may be concluded that the data strongly support the idea of a fossilization of the coordinator and the form *I*.

#### 4. Conclusions

The data presented in this article have demonstrated that the conjunction *and* together with the subjective pronoun *I* behaves more like a fossilized unit rather than a combination of a coordinator and a freely variable pronoun. The conception of fossilization of the coordinator and the form *I* is associated with several advantages.

Firstly, considering *and I* a fixed unit elegantly resolves why extralinguistic principles (like the modesty rule) do not affect the placement of the objective form *me* but they systematically determine the ordering of the 1SG subjective form. Viewing this discrepancy from the angle of this alternative analysis, it is possible to state that the fossilized unit *and I* takes over the potential preferences for the objective form *me* in the final position. The first position within the CoP, on the other hand, remains available for the objective form without any competition with the subjective form. Therefore, the pronoun *me* exhibits significant preferences when used as a first conjunct.

Secondly, the concept of fossilization proves helpful in capturing the differences in the behaviour of the 1SG pronoun when compared to the paradigms of other pronouns. While the form *I* is located exclusively at the end of the CoP, other pronouns are not fixed to one position. Their forms variably fluctuate, with certain tendencies determining the variability (as shown in detail in Graph 1). Furthermore, no other subjective pronoun form is used systematically in postverbal position as well as with a range of prepositions (as illustrated in detail in section 3.2).

Hence, for all the reasons presented here, the best way to deal with the specific distribution and grammatical peculiarities of the 1SG subjective pronominal form is to treat it as a fossilized unit with the coordinator of the CoP.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> All the cases in which *like* functions as a conjunction (i.e., *It looks like you and I are friends*) are excluded from the analysis.
- <sup>2</sup> In the original, Poldauf (1972: 88) states: “Že jde o nové zájmeno, nikoli snad jen o pouhé souřadné spojení dvou zájmen, je patrné z toho, že tu v hovorovém jazyce nenastává obvyklá změna *I v me*.” [That this is a new pronoun rather than a mere coordination of two pronouns is apparent from the fact that the usual change of *I* to *me* does not occur in colloquial language.]

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