

Understanding Kazakh *Men*: Comitatives Revisited

Nofar Rimon

Abstract

Comitatives are ‘with’ phrases that include an animate individual and are typically analyzed as adding a participant to the event (e.g., *Alex danced with Sam*). A longstanding debate concerns whether comitatives are DP-conjuncts, DP-adjuncts or VP-adjuncts, focusing mainly on Russian data. I present novel data from Kazakh involving the comitative marker *men* and revisit data from Russian and English, showing that all three analyses are necessary. I further show that comitatives may describe 4 distinct scenarios: collective, proximate-distributive, accomplice and distal-distributive. Curiously, only DP-conjuncts may describe distal-distributive scenarios and only VP-adjuncts may describe accomplice scenarios. I argue that contrasts between symmetric and asymmetric comitatives pose a challenge for a uniform semantics.

1 Introduction

Comitatives are ‘with’ phrases that include an animate individual and are typically analyzed as adding a participant to the event (1). Comitative *with* is often paraphrasable as ‘together with’. This paper does not discuss the *with*-phrases in the (a) sentences in (2-4), which are not considered comitatives, as they serve different functions (and are not paraphrasable as ‘together with’). In (2), *with* introduces a relative clause and can be paraphrased as ‘who has’. In (3), *with* has an instrumental use, paraphrasable as ‘using’. In (4), it expresses a containment relation, paraphrasable as ‘that contains’.

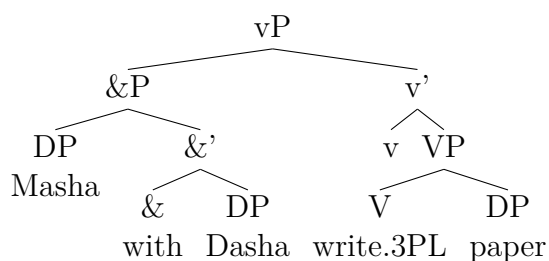
- (1) a. Sam wrote a paper *with Alex*.
b. Alex saw Sam *with Taylor*.
- (2) a. A woman *with a green hat* walked down the street.
b. A woman *who has/wears/*together with* a green hat walked down the street.
- (3) a. Sam hit the wall *with a hammer*.
b. Sam hit the wall *using/*together with* a hammer.
- (4) a. I ate a cheeseburger *with bacon*.
b. I ate a cheeseburger *that contains/*together with* bacon.

There are relatively few formal discussions of comitatives in both the syntax and the semantics literature, and there is ample room to understand more about their functions, licensing conditions, and entailment patterns. This paper revisits existing syntactic and semantic analyses of comitatives while considering novel data from Kazakh alongside data from Russian and English.

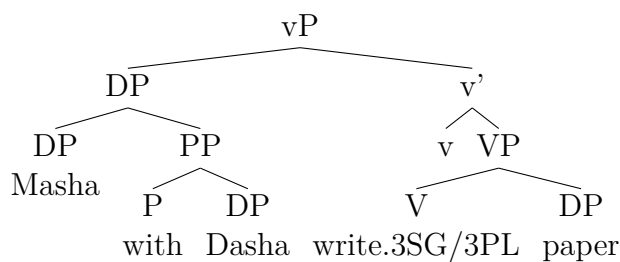
A longstanding debate, focusing mainly on the agreement pattern of Russian comitatives exhibited in (5), concerns whether comitatives are DP-conjuncts (6a), DP-adjuncts (6b), or VP-adjuncts (6c).

- (5) a. Maša s Dašej pišet/pišut statju.
 Masha with Dasha.INST write.3SG/3PL paper
 ‘Masha and Dasha are writing a paper.’
- b. Maša pišet/*pišut statju s Dašej.
 Masha write.3SG/*3PL paper with Dasha
 ‘Masha is writing a paper with Dasha.’
- c. My s Dašej pišem statju.
 We with Dasha.INST write.1PL paper
 ‘Dasha and I are writing the paper.’/ ‘We and Dasha are writing the paper with Dasha.’
- d. *Ja s Dašej pišem statju.
 I with Dasha.INST write.1PL paper.ACC
 Int: ‘Dasha and I are writing the paper.’

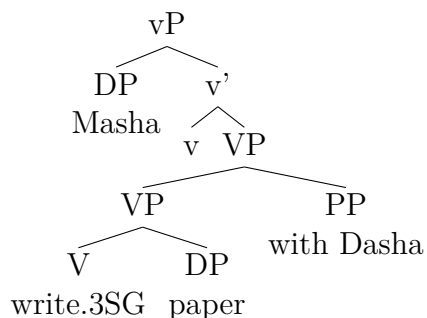
- (6) a. Conjunction:



- b. DP-adjunction:



- c. VP-adjunction:



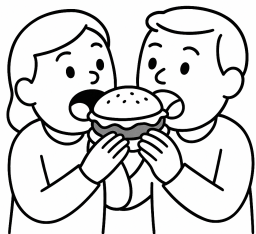
I suggest that all three constructions are needed. However, none of the languages investigated seems to have more than two different structures for comitatives. I show that while Russian has both DP (conjunctive) and VP¹ (adjunctive) comitatives, Kazakh only has DP comitatives (conjunctive and adjunctive), and English only has VP (adjunctive) comitatives.

These syntactic differences are correlated with semantic contrasts. Comitatives, I argue, may have 4 verifying scenarios. I call the scenario where the individual denoted by the comitative NP ($NP_{\{+C\}}$) and the individual denoted by the (non-comitative) subject NP ($NP_{\{-C\}}$) jointly perform an action (possibly on a shared object) the “collective” scenario (7a). A “proximate-distributive” scenario is such where $NP_{\{+C\}}$ and $NP_{\{-C\}}$ each perform the same action while remaining in proximity to one another (7b). I use the term “accomplice” for scenarios where the non-comitative performs the action and $NP_{\{+C\}}$ is merely required to be present in the non-comitative’s proximity (7c). Finally, a “distal-distributive” scenario describes situations where $NP_{\{+C\}}$ and $NP_{\{-C\}}$ each perform the action separately with no requirement for proximity (7d).

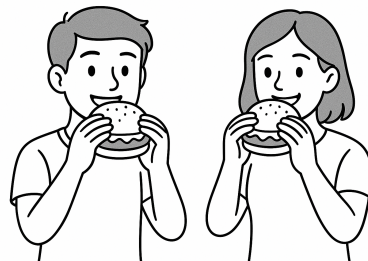
In principle, one could come up with different paraphrases for comitatives, but it is unclear if these are distinct readings. Here are the 4 interpretations I discuss: (1) Collective: an object is shared by the comitative and the non-comitative, only true in scenario (7a); (2) Accomplice: the non-comitative performs the action and the comitative is present, true in both scenarios (7b) and (7c); (3) Proximate-distributive: the comitative and non-comitative perform the action separately at the same time and place, true in scenario (7b); (4) Distal-distributive: the comitative and non-comitative perform the action separately, true in both scenarios (7b) and (7d). If so, there is a lack of one-to-one correspondence between interpretations and scenarios. The question arises whether 4 different interpretations are needed, or perhaps less than that is sufficient. The typology examined in this paper suggests that there are at least 4 different interpretations, since the comitatives in each language can describe most or all scenarios, yet not the same ones. Kazakh comitatives cannot describe scenario (7c), English comitatives cannot describe scenario (7d), and Russian comitatives do not distinguish between scenarios (7b) and (7d). From now on I will talk about verifying scenarios, and whether these 4 scenarios correspond to 4 different interpretations requires further investigation.

(7) Scenarios:

a. Collective:



b. Proximate-distributive:



¹In this paper I use the term *VP adjunct comitative* to refer to a comitative phrase that attaches higher up in the structure, since this is the common term in the literature. However, this terminology does not reflect its actual locus of attachment. VP adjunct comitatives can also attach above the VP, i.e., at the v' , vP and perhaps even TP levels.

c. Accomplice:



d. Distal-distributive:



Interestingly, only VP-adjuncts can describe accomplice scenarios, and only conjuncts can describe distal-distributive scenarios. English comitatives can only be VP-adjuncts [A V with B]. This is evidenced by the ungrammaticality of [A with B V] (e.g., **Alex with Sam danced*). The VP-adjunct structure is also confirmed by several other diagnostics, which will be discussed in detail in sections 2 and 3: agreement, extraction and lack of iterativity. In terms of verifying scenarios, English exhibits an interesting pattern. Comitatives can only be VP-adjuncts, yet they may have both symmetric (collective and proximate-distributive) and asymmetric (accomplice) interpretations:

- (8) English: Alex ate a burger with Sam.
- (i) Collective: Alex and Sam jointly ate a burger.
 - (ii) Proximate-distributive: Alex ate a burger and Sam ate a burger at the same location and time.
 - (iii) Accomplice: Alex ate a burger and Sam was present at the same location and time.

Considering these facts, one might conclude that across languages comitatives are VP-adjuncts and that distal-distributivity is expressed with conjunctions, and see the matter as resolved. Russian shows us that this is not the case. Russian comitatives appear in both [A V with B] and [A with B V] configurations. Unlike English, Russian comitatives allow distal-distributivity, yet only with the [A with B V] configuration that is unavailable for English.

(9) Russian:

- a. Maša s Dašej napisali dve statji.
 Masha with Dasha.INST wrote.3PL two.ACC papers.ACC
 ‘Masha and Dasha wrote two papers.’
- (i) Collective: There are two papers such that Masha and Dasha wrote both of them.
 - (ii) Distal-distributive: There are two papers such that Masha wrote them by herself and there are other two papers such that Dasha wrote them by herself.
- b. Maša napisala dve statji s Dašej.
 Masha wrote.3SG two.ACC papers.ACC with Dasha.INST
 ‘Masha wrote two papers with Dasha.’
- (i) Collective: There are two papers such that Masha and Dasha wrote both of them.

- (ii) Accomplice: There are two papers such that Masha wrote them and Dasha somehow contributed to the writing.

Kazakh is a verb-final language and its comitatives differ from one another in a distinct way – the comitative marker can be freestanding, yielding [A with B V], or a suffix, yielding [A B-with V]. Here too, different structures have different verifying scenarios (10). Distal-distributivity can be expressed with DP-conjuncts but not with DP-adjuncts. Accomplicity cannot be expressed with comitatives at all.

(10) Kazakh:

- a. *ajgøł fatima-men samsa že-dı.*
Aygul Fatima-with Samsa eat-3PST
'Aygul ate Samsa with Fatima'
 - (i) Collective: Aygul and Fatima jointly participated in Samsa eating.
 - (ii) Proximate-distributive: Aygul participated in Samsa eating and Fatima participated in Samsa eating at the same location and time.
- b. *ajgøł men fatima samsa že-dı.*
Aygul with Fatima Samsa eat-3PST
'Aygul and Fatima ate Samsa'
 - (i) Collective: Aygul and Fatima jointly participated in Samsa eating.
 - (ii) Proximate-distributive: Aygul participated in Samsa eating and Fatima participated in Samsa eating at the same location and time.
 - (iii) Distal-distributive: Aygul participated in Samsa eating at some location and time and Fatima participated in Samsa eating at some other location and time.

Since whenever distal-distributive scenarios are true proximate-distributive scenarios are also true (but not vice versa), I adopt here a “weak” interpretation of distal-distributivity in which the locations of (sub)events e and e' are not explicitly distinguished.

In what follows, I will discuss the structures and the verifying scenarios of comitatives and the relations between them in Kazakh, Russian and English. I will argue that the contrast between DP comitatives, which allow only symmetric interpretations, and VP comitatives, which allow both symmetric and asymmetric interpretations poses a challenge for a uniform semantics. I will propose a semantics for symmetric comitatives and another for asymmetric ones. DP comitatives combine directly with the subject DP and form a plurality. With DP adjuncts the plurality is related to the event. Symmetric VP comitatives do the same thing that DP adjuncts do but in the opposite order, i.e., first relate a plurality with an event and only later combine with the subject DP. Asymmetric VP comitatives add to the event the thematic role WITH which relates the comitative individual NP_{+C} to the event. Under this analysis, comitatives serve two functions: (i) forming a plurality (symmetric); and (ii) adding an accomplice to an event (asymmetric). However, there is no one-to-one mapping between function and structure. I am going to assume that different operators interact with the comitative to drive distributivity from the symmetric lexical entry I provide for comitatives and show that distributivity cannot be derived from the asymmetric lexical entry.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 1 sets the stage. Sections 2 and 3 discuss Kazakh and Russian comitatives, respectively. Section 4 discusses the different verifying

scenarios and interpretations associated with comitatives, Section 5 presents previous analyses, and Section 6 presents my proposal. Section 7 presents open questions left for future research, and section 8 concludes.

2 Kazakh *men* and comitative constructions

The Kazakh morpheme *men* is used to express ‘with’, and as it appears, it can only conjoin noun phrases, as opposed to the general coordinator *žæne* ‘and’ (11). *men* can be either an independent word (12a), in which case it has to appear between the nouns, or a suffix (12b-12c). As a suffix, it naturally attaches to the second noun (12b). Cases where it attaches to the first noun (12c) are considered to be an instance of topicalization (Ren, 2024).

- (11) a. fatima žæne/men ali keš-ke kel-dı.
 Fatima and/with Ali party-LOC come-3PST
 ‘Fatima and Ali came to the party.’
 b. fatima sənəp-qa (kel-dı) žæne/*men ali keš-ke kel-dı.
 Fatima class-LOC (come-3PST) and/*with Ali party-LOC come-3PST
 ‘Fatima came to class and Ali (came) to the party.’
- (12) a. fatima men ali
 Fatima with Ali
 ‘Fatima and Ali’
 b. fatima ali-men
 Fatima Ali-with
 ‘Fatima with Ali’
 c. fatima-men ali
 Fatima-with Ali
 ‘Ali with Fatima’

Whether it is a suffix or an independent word, *men* has two allomorphs - *ben* and *pen*, which assimilate in voice to the preceding consonant (Mukhamedova, 2015).

- (13) a. kəz(-)ben/*men ali
 girl(-)with Ali
 ‘A girl and Ali’
 b. kətap(-)pen/*men dapter
 book(-)with notebook
 ‘Book and notebook’

The suffixal *-men*, as stated in grammar books, is also the instrumental case marker (Dotton & Wagner, 2018; Mukhamedova, 2015). It is a common pattern cross-linguistically that instrumental case marking is syncretic with comitative marking (Seiler, 1974; Stolz, 1997; Zhou, 2022). This pattern has even been claimed to be a universal by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 135): “With few exceptions, the following principle holds in all languages of the world: The word or grammatical device that indicates ACCOMPANIMENT also indicates INSTRUMENTALITY”. In what follows in this section, I will show the differences between *men* as an independent word and as a suffix, and argue that the former is a coordinator and the latter is a comitative marker.

2.1 Freestanding *men* and suffixal *-men*

2.1.1 Agreement

DPs combined with *men* as an independent word yield plural agreement (14a). In contrast, when the suffixal *-men* attaches to the DP, the non-suffixed DP is the one controlling agreement (14b-14c). This pattern is expected if *men* is a coordinator, as it exhibits the same pattern as the general coordinator *žæne* (15). If *-men* is a comitative marker and the comitative phrase is an adjunct, it should not affect agreement.

- (14) a. fatima men men sajabaq-qa bar-də-q/*bar-də.
Fatima with I park-DAT go-PST-1PL/*go-3PST
'Fatima and I went to the park.'
- b. fatima me-men sajabaq-qa bar-də/*bar-də-q.
Fatima I-with park-DAT go-3PST/*go-PST-1PL
'Fatima went to the park with me.'
- c. men fatima-men sajabaq-qa bar-də-m/*bar-də-q.
I Fatima-with park-DAT go-PST-1SG/*go-PST-1PL
'I went to the park with Fatima.'
- (15) fatima žæne men sajabaq-qa bar-də-q/*bar-də.
Fatima and I park-DAT go-PST-1PL/*go-3PST
'Fatima and I went to the park.'

2.1.2 Extraction

On the assumption that plural agreement indicates conjunction and singular agreement indicates adjunction, the prediction is that comitatives yielding singular agreement should permit extraction, while conjuncts should not, due to a violation of the Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC). This prediction is borne out.²

- (16) a. <kim-men> sen dyken-ge <kim-men> bar-a-səŋ?
<who-with> you store-DAT <who-with> go-FUT-2SG
'With whom are you going to the store?'
- b. *sen men kim dyken-ge bar-a-səŋ-dar?
you with who store-DAT go-FUT-2-PL
- c. *kim men sen dyken-ge bar-a-səŋ-dar?
who with you store-DAT go-FUT-2-PL

Moreover, freestanding *men* must appear between, and directly adjacent to, the DPs it combines, a typical behavior for coordinators (17). A *-men* phrase can appear anywhere in the sentence, as long as it precedes the verb (Kazakh is verb-final) (18).

- (17) a. ajgøl men fatima sajabaq-qa bar-də.
Aygul with Fatima park-DAT go-PST
'Aygul and Fatima went to the park.'

²In (16b-16c) the assumption is that wh-in-situ undergoes covert extraction, and that this extraction is subject to the CSC. Independent evidence supports this assumption, as wh-in-situ has been shown to obey the CSC (Oda, 2017; Park & Dubinsky, 2022).

- b. *ajgøł sajabaq-qa men fatima bar-də.
Aygul park-DAT with Fatima go-PST
- (18) a. ajgøł fatima-men sajabaq-qa bar-də.
Aygul Fatima-with park-DAT go-PST
'Aygul went to the park with Fatima.'
- b. ajgøł sajabaq-qa fatima-men bar-də.
Aygul park-DAT Fatima-with go-PST

2.1.3 Case marking

Freestanding *men* and suffixal *-men* interact differently with case marking. Since nominative is not morphologically marked in Kazakh, let us look at the accusative case. In a regular *žæne* coordination, case marking is obligatory on the second noun and optional on the first (19).

- (19) men ajgøł(-də) žæne ali-də qyr-dı-m.
I Aygul(-ACC) and Ali-ACC see-PST-1SG
'I saw Aygul and Ali.'

With freestanding *men*, however, case marking can only appear on the second noun (20). This may be a restriction on the categories that *men* can combine (perhaps case-bearing DPs are KPs and *men* can only combine caseless DPs), or simply a restriction on some coordinators where the case of the entire coordination must be marked only on the last noun.

- (20) a. men ajgøł men ali-də qyr-dı-m.
I Aygul with Ali-ACC see-PST-1SG
'I saw [Aygul with Ali].'
- b. *men ajgøł-də men ali-də qyr-dı-m.
I Aygul-ACC with Ali-ACC see-PST-1SG

Suffixal *-men* is nothing like that. Case marking appears on the head noun, and *-men* cannot co-occur with it (21).³ In general, Kazakh does not allow case stacking (22). The impossibility of case marking co-occurring with the suffixal *-men* is consistent with the assumption that *-men* is originally a case marker.

- (21) a. men [ajgøł-men ali-də] qyr-dı-m.
I Aygul-with Ali-ACC see-PST-1SG
- b. men [ajgøł-də ali-men] qyr-dı-m.
I Aygul-ACC Ali-with see-PST-1SG
- c. *men ajgøł-də ali-də-men qyr-dı-m.
I Aygul-ACC Ali-ACC-with see-PST-1SG

³Prosody is rather crucial in these examples and the translation is true to the prosody marked with brackets. The following examples would translate as "I saw Ali and Aygul saw Ali with me" and "I saw Aygul and Ali saw Aygul with me" respectively":

- (i) [men ajgøł-men] ali-də qyr-dı-m.
(ii) men [ajgøł-də] [ali-men qyr-dı-m].

- d. *men ajgøl-də ali-men-də qyr-dı-m.
 I Aygul-ACC Ali-with-ACC see-PST-1SG
- (22) men ana-sı-n bala-sı-nı(*-də) qyr-dı-m
 I mother-3POSS-ACC child-3POSS-GEN(*-ACC) see-PST-1SG
 ‘I saw the mother of the child’

2.1.4 Iterativity

Freestanding *men* can be iterated, in the sense that it can add participants to the event, or in other words, it can add arbitrarily many parts to a plurality, a property characteristic of standard coordinators (Weisser, 2015). In (23), Aygul, Fatima and Aizhan all danced together, and potentially more participants could be added. As expected, the same pattern is attested with the general coordinator *žæne* (24). Suffixal *-men* does not create such cumulativity when iterated. In (25a) there are two dancing events, one in which Aygul danced with Fatima, and another in which Aygul danced with Aizhan.⁴ (25b) shows that suffixal *-men* cannot be omitted, even in what may seem like an iterative context.

- (23) a. ajgøl men fatima men aızan bile-dı.
 Aygul with Fatima with Aizhan dance-3PST
 ‘Aygul and Fatima and Aizhan danced.’
 b. ajgøl, fatima men aızan bile-dı.
 Aygul, Fatima with Aizhan dance-3PST
- (24) a. ajgøl žæne fatima žæne aızan bile-dı.
 Aygul and Fatima and Aizhan dance-3PST
 ‘Aygul and Fatima and Aizhan danced.’
 b. ajgøl, fatima žæne aızan bile-dı.
 Aygul, Fatima and Aizhan dance-3PST
- (25) a. ajgøl fatima-men aızan-men bile-dı.
 Aygul Fatima-with Aizhan-with dance-3PST
 ‘Aygul danced with Fatima, then with Aizhan.’
 b. *ajgøl fatima aızan-men bile-dı.
 Aygul Fatima Aizhan-with dance-3PST
 ‘Aygul danced with Fatima, then with Aizhan.’

2.1.5 Summary

The characteristics of freestanding *men* and suffixal *-men* are summarized in Table 1.

	men	-men
Agreement control	Both nouns	Non-comitative
Extraction	No	Yes
Case marking	Yes, on 2nd NP	No
Iterativity	Yes	No

Table 1: The characteristics of *men* and *-men*.

⁴I believe that such sentences involve ellipsis.

We have seen good reasons to assume that freestanding *men* is a coordinator and suffixal *-men* is a comitative marker. The instrumental case marker in Kazakh is syncretic with the comitative marker, as is the case in many languages (Stolz, 1997). This marker is also syncretic with the separate morpheme that functions as a coordinator, a phenomenon also observed in Japanese with the morpheme *to* (Taylor, 1972), in West African languages such as Saramaccan, Hausa, Fongbe, and others (see Haspelmath (2006); Stassen (2000)). Taking into account this state of affairs, a unified semantics for *men* and *-men* is desirable. The next section discusses the structures of Kazakh comitatives and their respective verifying scenarios.

2.2 Structures and verifying scenarios

As mentioned above, Kazakh seems to have two different types of comitative constructions: conjunction and DP-adjunction. The novel data presented here provides evidence that both analyses are required, while the lack of an accomplice interpretation suggests that a VP-adjunction analysis is unavailable.

2.2.1 Conjunction

As we have seen in the previous section, there are good reasons to assume that freestanding *men* is a coordinator. It triggers plural agreement, it does not allow extraction, it must appear between the DPs it combines, and it can be iterated. In addition, the distribution of *men* is a subset of that of the general coordinator *žæne* (26), as it only combines DPs. Moreover, *men* also licenses ellipsis (27). Therefore, *men* must have a conjunction analysis.

- (26) ajgøł (men/žæne) fatima men/žæne aižan bile-dı.
 Aygul (with/and) Fatima with/and Aizhan dance-3PST
 ‘Aygul (and) Fatima and Aizhan danced.’
- (27) [_{DP} vj sat-u] men/žæne [_{DP} vj sat-əp ał-u].
 [_{DP} house sell-INF] with/and [_{DP} house sell-CNV take-INF]
 ‘House selling and buying’

2.2.2 DP-adjunction

As previously mentioned, the coordinator *men* can only conjoin DPs. If so, (28) provides evidence for a DP-adjunction analysis of suffixal *-men*. The fact that the two phrases in brackets can be conjoined by *men* indicates that they are DPs and thus the comitative phrases inside them must be DP-internal, and not, e.g., VP-adjuncts. Since these comitative phrases are extractable, they must be adjuncts and not conjuncts.

- (28) [ajgøł ɤalija-men] men [fatima aižan-men] tas-tə køter-dı.
 [Aygul Raliya-with] with [Fatima Aizhan-with] rock-ACC lift-3PST
 ‘Aygul lifted the Rock with Raliya, and Fatima lifted the rock with Aizhan.’

2.2.3 VP-adjunction

Since *men* is syncretic with the instrumental case in Kazakh, we would expect a VP-adjunction⁵ analysis to be available for comitatives. While this requires further investigation, I will, for now, propose that Kazakh comitatives do not have a VP analysis, due to their semantics. An accomplice interpretation, which seems to be available for both Russian and English VP comitatives, as will be further discussed below, is unavailable for Kazakh comitatives. If so, comitatives that are marked with suffixal *-men* and are not adjacent to the subject DP are in fact scrambled DP-adjunct comitatives.

2.2.4 Verifying scenarios

As shown in (10), repeated below as (29), both DP-adjunctive and DP-conjunctive comitatives may describe collective and proximate-distributive scenarios, while conjunctions may also describe distal-distributive scenarios. The scenario described in (30), which correspond to the accomplice scenario of the comitative in English and Russian, can only be expressed by the light verb ‘walk’. Another way to express distal-distributivity is by using *žane* (31) or an overt distributivity marker like ‘each’.

(29) Kazakh:

a. ajgøł fatima-men samsa že-dı.

Aygul Fatima-with Samsa eat-3PST

‘Aygul ate Samsa with Fatima.’

(i) Collective: There is a location and a time such that Aygul and Fatima jointly participated in Samsa eating at this location and time.

(ii) Proximate-distributive: There is a location and a time such that Aygul participated in Samsa eating at this location and time, and Fatima participated in Samsa eating at this location and time.

b. ajgøł men fatima samsa že-dı.

Aygul with Fatima Samsa eat-3PST

‘Aygul and Fatima ate Samsa.’

(i) Collective: There is a location and a time such that Aygul and Fatima jointly participated in Samsa eating at this location and time.

(ii) Proximate-distributive: There is a location and a time such that Aygul participated in Samsa eating at this location and time, and Fatima participated in Samsa eating at this location and time.

(iii) Distal-distributive: There is a location and a time such that Aygul participated in Samsa eating at this location and time, and there is a location and a time such that Fatima participated in Samsa eating at this location and time.

(30) ajgøł [~~ajgøł~~ fatima-men žyr-gen-de] samsa že-dı.

Aygul [~~Aygul~~ Fatima-with walk-PTCP-LOC] Samsa eat-3PST

‘Aygul ate Samsa with Fatima.’

⁵As noted above, VP-adjunct comitatives need not attach directly at the VP level, but may also adjoin higher in the structure. In Kazakh, a verb-final language, identifying the attachment site of such adjuncts is particularly challenging, since it is often unclear where TP begins and where vP or VP ends (Julien, 2001; Manetta, 2020).

Accomplice: There is a location and a time such that Aygul participated in Samsa eating at this location and time, and Fatima was present at this location and time.

- (31) *ajgøl žæne fatima samsa že-dı.*
 Aygul and Fatima Samsa eat-3PST
 ‘Aygul and Fatima ate Samsa.’

Distal-distributive: There is a location and a time such that Aygul participated in Samsa eating at this location and time, and there is a location and a time such that Fatima participated in Samsa eating at this location and time.

However, note that all above examples include the caseless object *samsa*. This is in fact an instance of pseudo-incorporation, as is attested in Turkish (Dayal, 2015; Öztürk, 2005; Sağ, 2022). Such constructions are most adequately paraphrased as ‘X participated in Samsa eating’, rather than ‘X ate a Samsa’. To avoid pseudo-incorporation and examine the interpretation of regular objects, I used quantified objects, with and without case marking (32). Such sentences have different verifying scenarios, as detailed in (33) and summarized in the Table 2.

- (32) a. *ajgøl fatima-men jekə samsa(-nə)/samsa-dan že-dı.*
 Aygul Fatima-with two Samsa(-ACC)/Samsa-ABL eat-3PST
 ‘Aygul and Fatima ate (the) 2 Samsas/2 Samsas each.’
 b. *ajgøl men fatima jekə samsa(-nə)/samsa-dan že-dı.*
 Aygul with Fatima two Samsa(-ACC)/Samsa-ABL eat-3PST
 c. *ajgøl žæne fatima jekə samsa(-nə)/samsa-dan že-dı.*
 Aygul and Fatima two Samsa(-ACC)/Samsa-ABL eat-3PST
 ‘Aygul and Fatima ate (the) 2 Samsas/2 Samsas each.’

	Aygul Fatima-men	Aygul men Fatima	Aygul žæne Fatima
jekə samsa two Samsa	Proximate-cumulative , Collective	Proximate-cumulative , Collective , Distal-cumulative	Distal-cumulative , (Proximate-cumulative)
jekə samsa-nə two Samsa-ACC	Proximate-cumulative , Collective	Proximate-cumulative , Collective , Distal-cumulative	Distal-cumulative , (Proximate-cumulative)
jekə samsa-dan two Samsa-ABL	Proximate-distributive	Proximate-distributive , Distal-distributive	Distal-distributive , (Proximate-distributive)

Table 2: The interactions of suffixal *-men*, freestanding *men* and *žæne* with caseless and case-marked quantified objects.

- (33) Scenario descriptions:

Collective: There is a location and a time and 2 Samsas such that Aygul and Fatima jointly ate these 2 Samsas at this location and time.

Proximate-distributive: There is a location and a time such that Aygul ate 2 Samsas at this location and time and Fatima ate 2 Samsas at this location and time.

Proximate-cumulative: There is a location and a time such that Aygul ate 1 Samsa at this location and time and Fatima ate 1 Samsa at this location and time.

Distal-distributive: There is a location and a time such that Aygul ate 2 Samsas at this location and time, and there is another location and another time such that Fatima ate 2 Samsas at this location and time.

Distal-cumulative: There is a location and a time such that Aygul ate 1 Samsa at this location and time, and there is another location and another time such that Fatima ate 1 Samsa at this location and time.

Note that plural expressions in Kazakh (34) behave exactly like freestanding *men* expressions.

- (34) bala-lar jekə samsa(-nə)/samsa-dan že-dı.
 kid-PL two Samsa(-ACC)/Samsa-ABL eat-3PST
 ‘The kids ate (the) 2 Samsas/2 Samsas each.’

	bala-lar kid-PL
jekə samsa two Samsa	Proximate-cumulative, Collective, Distal-cumulative
jekə samsa-nə two Samsa-ACC	Proximate-cumulative, Collective, Distal-cumulative
jekə samsa-dan two Samsa-ABL	Proximate-distributive, Distal-distributive

Table 3: The interaction of a plural expression with caseless and case-marked quantified objects.

- (35) Scenario descriptions:⁶

Collective: There is a location, a time and 2 Samsas such that each Samsa was shared by the children at this location and time.

Proximate-cumulative: There is a location, a time and 2 Samsas such that for each Samsa it was eaten by one of the children at this location and time.

Proximate-distributive: There is a location and a time such that for each x among the children, x ate 2 Samsas at this location and time.

Distal-cumulative: There are 2 Samsas such that for each Samsa there is a different location and a different time such that (some of) it was eaten by one of the children at this location and time.

Distal-distributive: For each x among the children there is a different location, a different time and 2 different Samsas such that x ate these 2 Samsas at this location and time.

⁶Both proximate- and distal-cumulative situations were depicted as non-maximal in the sense that some but not all of the children ate a Samsa.

What can be concluded from these data is the following:

- Freestanding *men* allows distal readings, but proximity is preferred.
- *žæne* yields distal readings, but proximity is allowed.
- Suffixal *-men* requires proximity.
- Ablative marking diistributes over the object.

It is important, however, to take these conclusions with a grain of salt, as they are based on the predicate ‘eat’ only. These interactions should be examined for additional predicates and objects to reach conclusiveness.

For expressions where the proximate reading is preferred/required, it is worth noting that there is some overlap between the collective and the proximate-cumulative interpretations. In a situation where all kids or Aygul and Fatima shared 2 Samsas, it is also true that they cumulatively ate 2 Samsas at the same location and time. This overlap may point at a weak proximate-cumulative reading.

2.2.5 Summary

We have seen evidence that Kazakh comitatives can be DP-adjuncts and conjuncts, but not direct evidence for the existence of VP-adjuncts. In fact, we have seen indirect evidence suggesting that a VP analysis is unavailable. The characteristics of Kazakh comitatives are summarized in Table 4. The next section discusses Russian comitatives, which can be both DP- and VP-internal.

	Conjunction	DP-adjunction
Agreement control	Both conjuncts	Non-comitative
Wh-extraction	No	Yes
Case marking	Yes	No
Discontinuity	No	Yes
Iterativity	Yes	No
Verifying scenarios	Collective, Proximate-distributive, Distal-distributive	Collective, Proximate-distributive

Table 4: The characteristics of Kazakh comitatives.

3 Russian comitatives

The widely discussed agreement pattern of Russian comitatives illustrated in (5) and repeated below as (36) has motivated DP-conjunction, and VP- and DP-adjunction analyses (Burukina, 2024; Dalrymple, Hayrapetian, & Holloway King, 1998; Dyl a & Feldman, 2008; Feldman, 2002; Ionin & Matushansky, 2003; Kasyanenko, 2018b; Larson, 2014; Vassilieva & Larson, 2005).

- (36) a. Maša s Dašej pišet/pišut statju.
 Masha with Dasha.INST write.3SG/3PL paper
 ‘Masha and Dasha are writing the paper.’

- b. Maša pišet/*pišut statju s Dašej.
Masha write.3SG/*3PL paper with Dasha
'Masha is writing the paper with Dasha.'
- c. My s Dašej pišem statju.
We with Dasha.INST write.1PL paper
'Dasha and I are writing the paper.'/ 'We and Dasha are writing the paper.'
- d. *Ja s Dašej pišem statju.
I with Dasha.INST write.1PL paper.ACC
Int: 'Dasha and I are writing the paper.'

In this section I will show that Russian comitatives can either be DP- or VP-internal. For simplicity, I will assume that DP comitatives are DP-conjuncts, and I will show where this analysis encounters challenges. (36a) with plural agreement and (36c) will be analyzed as DP conjunction, and (36a) with singular agreement and (36b) as VP-adjunction.

- (37) a. Conjunction (36a): [_{vP} [_{DP} Masha with Dasha] [_{VP} write.PL [_{DP} paper]]]
 b. VP-adjunction (36b): [_{vP} [_{DP} Masha] [_{VP} [_{VP} write.SG [_{DP} paper]]][_{PP} with Dasha]]

3.1 Conjunction

3.1.1 Agreement

Russian conjunctive comitatives will always trigger plural agreement (38a), as both conjuncts are equal arguments of the verb, like in *i* conjunctions (38b). Cases where both NPs are adjacent and the verb is singular, as in (36a), are an instance of a scrambled VP-adjunct.

- (38) a. Maša s Dašej pišut statju.
Masha with Dasha.INST write.3PL paper.ACC
'Masha and Dasha are writing the paper.'
- b. Maša i Daša pišut statju.
Masha and Dasha write.3PL paper.ACC

A DP-adjunct, like a VP-adjunct, should yield singular agreement, since the internal PP adjunct cannot contribute its ϕ -features. Hence, a classic DP-adjunct analysis is incompatible with these constructions.

Another construction that has been previously analyzed as a DP-adjunction is the Plural Pronoun Construction (PPC) (39) (Burukina, 2024; Vassilieva & Larson, 2005). This is a case where NP_{-C} is a plural pronoun and together with NP_{+C} it is ambiguous between plural and singular.

- (39) My s Dašej pišem statju.
We with Dasha.INST write.1PL paper.ACC
'Dasha and I are writing the paper.'/ 'We and Dasha are writing the paper.'

In this case it is harder to tell whether NP_{-C} and NP_{+C} form a conjunction or a DP-adjunction, since both *My* alone and *My s Dašej* would yield 1PL agreement. In this subsection I will provide observations that challenge a DP-adjunction analysis, and in the

next subsection I will provide observations that challenge a DP-conjunction analysis, yet for simplicity I will assume that both (38a) and (39) are cases of DP-conjunction. I will further argue that cases where the PPC is unambiguous and the pronoun is interpreted as plural only are instances of VP-adjunction.

3.1.2 Wh-extraction

Comitatives that exhibit plural agreement, like regular *i* coordinations, do not allow wh-extraction, as indicated by the impossibility of plural agreement in (40).

- (40) S kem Maša napisala/*napisali statju?
 with whom Masha wrote.3F.SG/3PL paper.ACC
 ‘With whom did Masha write the paper?’

With the PPC, wh-extraction is possible only when the pronoun denotes a plural entity in addition to the comitative, and not a singular one. This suggests that a singularity-denoting PPC gives rise to a conjunction analysis, while a plurality-denoting PPC patterns with VP-adjuncts, as will be further exemplified below.

- (41) S kem vy pojděte v kino?
 with whom you.PL go.2PL to cinema
 ‘With whom do you (PL/*SG) go to the movies?’

This again challenges a DP-adjunct analysis. PP extraction out of subject DPs is possible in Russian (42). If there were a DP-adjunct analysis for (41), we would expect both meanings to be available.

- (42) [Na kakuju temu]_i včera [doklad t_i] vsech porazil?
 [on which topic]_i yesterday [presentation.NOM t_i] everyone.ACC shocked?
 ‘A presentation **on which topic** shocked everyone?’

3.1.3 Discontinuity

The comitative phrase must be adjacent to the non-comitative argument, like in a regular *i* coordination.

- (43) a. *Maša pišut statju s Dašej.
 Masha write.3PL paper.ACC with Dasha
 Int: ‘Masha and Dasha are writing the paper’
 b. *Maša pišut statju i Daša.
 Masha write.3PL paper.ACC with Dasha

When a PPC is discontinuous, the ‘with’ phrase is no longer DP-internal, but rather a VP-adjunct. Evidence for that comes from the impossibility of the singular pronoun interpretation and from PRO interpretation with control verbs.

- (44) a. [My s Vanej]_i napisali statju, čtoby PRO_i stat’
 we with Vanya.INST wrote.PL paper.ACC, in.order.to PRO become.INF
 znamenitými
 famous.PL.INST
 ‘We and Vanya wrote the paper to become famous’/‘Vanya and I wrote the paper to become famous’

- b. My_i napisali statju [s Vanej] $_j$, čtoby PRO $_{i/*i+j}$
 we wrote.PL paper.ACC with Vanya.INST, in.order.to PRO
 stat' znamenitymi
 become.INF famous.PL.INST
 'We wrote the paper with Vanya to become famous'/*'We and Vanya wrote the
 paper to become famous'/*'I wrote the paper with Vanya to become famous'

3.1.4 Verifying scenarios

Russian conjunctive comitatives may describe at least two scenarios: collective (45a, 46a) and distal-distributive (45b, 46b). Proximate- and distal-distributivity are not clearly distinguished truth-conditionally in Russian. I will treat both as verifying scenarios for Russian DP comitatives, yet this lack of distinction may also have implications for the encoding of time and location in the semantics of comitatives. This remains to be investigated.

- (45) a. Maša s Dašej sjeli burger.
 Masha with Dasha.INST ate.3PL burger
 'Masha and Dasha ate the burger.'
 Collective: There is a burger such that Masha and Dasha jointly ate that burger.
- b. Šarapova s Rybakinoj vyigrali Uimblon.
 Sharapova with Rybakina.INST won.PL Wimbledon
 'Sharapova and Rybakina won Wimbledon.'
 Collective: Sharapova and Rybakina won Wimbledon together as a double.
 Distal-distributive: There was a winning Wimbledon event whose agent was Sharapova, and there was a winning Wimbledon event whose agent was Rybakina.
- (46) a. My s Vanej napisali statju.
 we with Vanya.INST wrote.PL paper.ACC
 'Vanya and I wrote the paper.'/'We and Vanya wrote the paper.'
 Collective: There is a paper such that Vanya and I/we jointly wrote this paper.
- b. My s rodstvennikami snimaem tapočki pered vxodom v
 we with relatives.INST take.off.1PL house.slippers before entering in
 spal'nju.
 bedroom
 'My relatives and I take off our house slippers before entering the bedroom.'/'We and our relatives take off our house slippers before entering the bedroom.'
 Distributive: In every event in which I/we enter the bedroom, I/we take off my/our house slippers, and in every event in which my/our relatives enter the bedroom, they take off their house slippers.

While (45a) cannot describe a distal-distributive scenario and (45b) cannot describe

a proximate-distributive scenario⁷, these scenarios can be described when the object is pluralized, as in (9a), repeated below as (47). This matter requires further investigation, possibly drawing on an analysis along the lines of Bar-Lev (2025).

- (47) Maša s Dašej napisali dve statji.
 Masha with Dasha.INST wrote.3PL two.ACC papers.ACC
 ‘Masha and Dasha wrote two papers’

Collective: There are two papers such that Masha and Dasha wrote both of them.

Proximate-distributive: There is a location and a time and there are two papers such that Masha wrote these papers by herself at this location and time, and there are other two papers such that Dasha wrote these papers by herself at this location and time.

Distal-distributive: There is a location and a time and there are two papers such that Masha wrote these papers by herself at this location and time, and there is another location and another time and other two papers such that Dasha wrote these papers by herself at this location and time.

At first glance, it may seem odd that conjunctive comitatives can describe distal-distributive scenarios, since comitative phrases typically introduce a participant who is understood to act (spatiotemporally) together with $NP_{\{-C\}}$. This is also attested in Kazakh for conjunctive but not adjunctive comitatives. According to Kasyanenko (2018a), What licenses ‘with’ in these cases is the “relatedness constraint”. The individuals combined by the conjunctive comitative marker in these cases are perceived as groupable in some way. In (45b), Sharapova and Rybakina form a group of “Russian tennis players”, and in (46b) the relatives and I/we are clearly related. In contrast, (48) is judged as infelicitous, as David Bowie and I are not related and thus cannot form a group.

- (48) #My s Devidom Boui dvaždy pobyvali v Berline.
 we with David.INST Bowie twice visited.1PL in Berlin.LOC
 Int: ‘David Bowie and I visited Berlin twice.’

3.2 DP-adjunction

It seems like the agreement, extraction and continuity patterns of subject-adjacent, plural-agreement-yielding comitatives are consistent with a DP-conjunction analysis. However, the case assignment and iterativity patterns of these comitatives suggest otherwise.

3.2.1 Case

Russian comitatives are assigned instrumental case, suggesting that *s* is a P head, rather than a coordinator, as coordinators do not assign case. This asymmetry between the case of the subject (NOM in all the above examples) and the comitative (INST) is not characteristic of regular coordinations, where even if only the last conjunct is marked for case, it reflects the case that each of the conjuncts bears. A DP-adjunction analysis would posit that *s* is a P head that can assign (instrumental) case.

⁷It is unclear how a proximate-distributive scenario would differ from a distal-distributive one in this case.

3.2.2 Iterativity

Russian comitatives, unlike coordinations, are not iterative:

- (49) a. *Maša s Dašej s Vanej pišut statju.
 Masha with Dasha.INST with Vanya.INST write.3PL paper.ACC
 Int: ‘Masha and Dasha and Vanya are writing the paper.’
 b. *My s Dašej s Vanej pišem statju.
 I/we with Dasha.INST with Vanya.INST write.1PL paper.ACC
 Int: ‘I/We and Dasha and Vanya are writing the paper.’
- (50) Maša i Daša i Vanja pišut statju.
 Masha with Dash with Vanya write.3PL paper.ACC
 ‘Masha and Dasha and Vanya are writing the paper.’

Under a DP-adjunction analysis, it would be possible to assume that this iteration restriction stems from a limitation on thematic/predicational uniqueness. According to Paillé (2025), there is a general constraint against co-predicating similar predicates (51a). This “uniqueness violation” disappears when the predicates are separated by ‘and’ (51b).

- (51) a. #I ate with a fork with a knife.
 b. I ate with a fork and with a knife.

Paillé (2025) argues that this contrast is the result of different predicate-exhaustification domains. In (51a), the exhaustification domain is the instrumental PP, and in (51b), it is the entire PP conjunction:

- (52) a. #I ate [Pred-Exh_{ALT} with a fork] [Pred-Exh_{ALT} with a knife].
 = 1 iff I ate (with a fork & not with a knife & not with a spoon) (with a knife & not with a fork & not with a spoon).
 ⇒ contradiction
 b. I ate [Pred-Exh_{ALT} with a fork and with a knife].
 = 1 iff I ate (with a fork and a knife & not with a fork and a spoon & not with a spoon and a knife).
 ⇒ no contradiction

Uniqueness violations are therefore expected to emerge in iterations of adjunctive but not conjunctive comitatives.

- (53) a. [Pred-Exh_{ALT} Masha with Dasha with Vanya] are writing a paper.
 = 1 iff (Masha with Dasha with Vanya & not Masha with Dasha with Sasha & not Masha with Natasha with Vanya...) are writing a paper.
 ⇒ no contradiction
 b. Masha [Pred-Exh_{ALT} with Dasha] [Pred-Exh_{ALT} with Vanya] are writing a paper.
 = 1 iff Masha (with Dasha & not with Vanya & not with Natasha...) (with Vanya & not with Dasha & not with Sasha...) are writing a paper.
 ⇒ contradiction

If so, it seems that Russian comitatives require some sort of a hybrid of a conjunction and an adjunction, such that allows agreement with both DPs and assigning case to the comitative, yet bans extraction/discontinuity and iterativity. As I mentioned, in this paper I assume that Russian DP comitatives are DP-conjuncts, yet this issue requires further investigation in the future.

3.3 VP-adjunction

3.3.1 Agreement

In VP-adjunctions, the non-comitative argument ($NP_{\{-C\}}$) controls agreement. Since the comitative phrase is an adjunct, it cannot contribute its ϕ -features to the agreement process.

- (54) Maša pišet/*pišut statju s Dašej.
Masha write.3SG/*3PL paper.ACC with Dasha
'Masha is writing the paper with Dasha.'

3.3.2 Wh-extraction

As we have seen in Section 3.1.2, VP-adjuncts allow wh-extraction, as indicated by the possibility of singular agreement.

3.3.3 Discontinuity

When singular agreement is exhibited, the arguments need not be adjacent.

- (55) a. Maša s Dašej pišet statju.
Masha with Dasha.INST write.3SG paper.ACC
'Masha and Dasha are writing the paper.'
b. Maša pišet statju s Dašej.
Masha write.3SG paper.ACC with Dasha
'Masha is writing the paper with Dasha.'

3.3.4 Iterativity

Like DP comitatives, Russian VP comitatives are not iterative:

- (56) *Maša pišet statju s Dašej s Vanej.
Masha write.3SG paper.ACC with Dasha.INST with Vanya.INST
Int: 'Masha is writing the paper with Dasha and with Vanya.'

3.3.5 Verifying scenarios

Russian VP-adjunct comitatives exhibit an asymmetry with the non-comitative. While the latter is always the agent of the event, the former is typically interpreted as an accomplice. Exceptions to that are situations where the action is collective but there is a pragmatic motivation to create an asymmetry between $NP_{\{+C\}}$ and $NP_{\{-C\}}$:

- (57) Kto napisal statju s Mašej?
who wrote.3M.SG paper.ACC with Masha.INST
'Who wrote the paper with Masha?'
- Daša napisala statju s Mašej.
Dasha wrote.3F.SG paper.ACC with Masha.INST
'Dasha wrote the paper with Masha.'

Crucially, VP-adjuncts do not allow distributivity, as demonstrated by the ungrammaticality of the distributor PO (58).

- (58) Maša <s Dašej> napisala (*po) statje <s Dašej>.
 Masha <with Dasha> wrote.3F.SG (*PO) paper.DAT <with Dasha>
 ‘Masha and Dasha (*each) wrote papers.’

4 Verifying scenarios and interpretations

Table 5 summarizes the properties of both Russian and Kazakh comitatives.

	Russian		Kazakh	
	DP-conjunction	VP-adjunction	DP-conjunction	DP-adjunction
Agreement controller	Both conjuncts	Non-comitative	Both conjuncts	Non-comitative
Extraction	No	Yes	No	Yes
Discontinuity	No	Yes	No	Yes
Iterativity	No	No	Yes	No
Verifying scenarios	Collective, Proximate-distributive, Distal-distributive	Collective, Accomplice	Collective, Proximate-distributive, Distal-distributive	Collective, Proximate-distributive

Table 5: The characteristics of Russian and Kazakh comitatives.

We have seen that in Kazakh, comitatives can be DP-conjuncts or DP-adjuncts, in Russian they can be DP-conjuncts or VP-adjuncts, and in English only VP-adjuncts. These syntactic differences are correlated with semantic contrasts: only VP-adjuncts can describe accomplice scenarios, and only conjuncts can describe distal-distributive scenarios. I found that while the string in (59) can describe the 3 scenarios in (62a-62c) in English, it can describe the 2 scenarios in (62a) and (62c) in Russian.⁸ The parallel in Kazakh would be the string in (60), which can describe the 2 scenarios in (62a-62b). The string in (61) is not possible in English, yet in Kazakh it can describe the same 2 scenarios (62a-62b) as well as scenario (62d), and in Russian it can describe the 3 scenarios in (62a-62b) and (62d).

- (59) a. Alex ate a burger with Sam.
 b. Aleks sjel burger s Semom.
 Alex ate.3SG burger with Sam.INST
- (60) aleks børger sem-men že-dı.
 Alex burger Sam-with eat-3PST
- (61) a. *Alex with Sam ate a burger.
 b. aleks men sem børger že-dı.
 Alex with Sam burger eat-3PST
 c. Aleks s Semom sjeli burger.
 Alex with Sam.INST ate.3PL burger
- (62) Verifying scenarios:

⁸These interpretations are relevant to the predicate ‘eat’ yet other types of predicates may not have the same interpretations (e.g., not every predicate allows distributing over an object).

- a. Collective: There is a location and a time and there is a burger such that Alex and Sam jointly ate that burger at this location and time.
- b. Proximate-distributive: There is a location and a time such that Alex ate a burger at this location and time, and Sam ate a burger at this location and time.
- c. Accomplice: There is a location and a time such that Alex ate a burger at this location and time, and Sam was present at this location and time.
- d. Distal-distributive: There is a location and a time such that Alex ate a burger at this location and time, and there is a location and a time such that Sam ate a burger at this location and time.

	A V with B	A with B V	A B-with V
English	Collective, Proximate-distributive, Accomplice	-	-
Russian	Collective, Accomplice	Collective, Proximate-distributive Distal-distributive	-
Kazakh	-	Collective, Proximate-distributive, Distal-distributive	Collective, Proximate-distributive

Table 6: The correspondence between structure and verifying scenarios across the examined languages.

The scenarios in (62a), (62b) and (62d) are distinguished following Wehbe’s (2024) work on *Together*, where its different interpretations arise from the scopal interaction of time and location quantifiers with distributivity and plurality operators. Wehbe shows that ‘together’ may have 3 readings: collective, simultaneous, and proximate. These readings do not arise from 3 different meanings for ‘together’, but rather from a single lexical meaning (63) whose interpretation is determined by its scope relative to other semantic operators. For the collective reading, ‘together’ and the entire vP must scope below the pluralization operator (64). To get the simultaneous reading, ‘together’ must scope above the lower *, which is above the vP, and above T. For the proximate reading, ‘together’ must scope above * and the vP, but below T and \exists -LOC, an existential quantifier over locations (65).

(63) Wehbe’s (2024) semantics for ‘together’:
 $\llbracket \text{together} \rrbracket = \lambda P. \lambda x. P(x) \ x \notin AT$, where $AT = \{x : |\{y : y \ x\}| = 1\}$

(64) Link’s (1983) pluralization operator:
 $\llbracket * \rrbracket = \lambda f_{\langle e,t \rangle}. \lambda x. \exists g_{\langle e,t \rangle} [\forall y [g(y) = 1 \rightarrow f(y) = 1] \wedge x = \oplus g]$

(65) $\llbracket \exists\text{-LOC} \rrbracket = \lambda P. \exists l : P(l) = 1$

4.1 Symmetry vs. asymmetry

The interpretations of the scenarios in (62) can be distinguished by their symmetry. Collective and (both) distributive interpretations are symmetric while accomplice interpretations are asymmetric. In symmetric interpretations, $NP_{\{-C\}}$ and $NP_{\{+C\}}$ share the same agentive (or thematic) status, yet in asymmetric interpretations, $NP_{\{-C\}}$ is more

agentive than $\text{NP}_{\{+C\}}$. In a scenario where Alex eats the burger, whether Sam eats the burger as well or not does not affect the truth conditions of accomplicity. However, if Alex does not eat the burger, (62c) is necessarily false. This, however, is not the case with the corresponding conjunction.

The corresponding conjunction “Alex and Sam ate a burger” can describe scenarios (62a), (62b), and (62d), but not (62c) except in “team credit” scenarios (see Brisson (1998, 51)). In such scenarios either Sam or Alex can be the one eating the burger and the other one will be the companion. In other words, both are as likely to be the agents of the event, a meaning that is unavailable for VP-comitatives due to the asymmetry between the comitative and the subject DP. A definite plural in English like “The kids ate a burger” behaves like a conjunction. It can be the case that all kids shared a burger, that the kids were together and each ate a burger, or that only some of the kids ate a burger and the rest of the kids were in their presence.

	Kazakh	Russian	English
Collective	DP-conjunction DP-adjunctions	DP-conjunction VP-adjunction	VP-adjunction
Proximate distributive	DP-conjunction DP-adjunctions	?	VP-adjunction
Accomplice	X	VP-adjunction	VP-adjunction
Distal-distributive	DP-conjunction	DP-conjunction	X

Table 7: The verifying scenarios of comitatives in Kazakh, Russian and English by structure.

4.2 The empirical generalization

As previously mentioned, only VP-adjuncts may describe accomplice scenarios. These seem to always go hand by hand with collective scenarios. In languages like English, where comitatives have only one structure and the proximate-distributive reading is distinguished from the distal one, they can also describe proximate-distributivity. This is attested in Spanish (66), Portuguese, Italian, German, and Hebrew (67).

- (66) a. Ana comió una hamburguesa con Pedro.
 Anna ate.3SG a.F.SG burger.F.SG with Pedro
 ‘Anna ate a burger with Pedro.’
 b. *Ana con Pedro comieron una hamburguesa.
 Anna with Pedro ate.3PL a.F.SG burger.F.SG
- (67) a. dana axla hamburger im rani.
 Dana ate.3F.SG burger with Rani
 ‘Dana ate a burger with Rani.’
 b. *dana im rani axlu hamburger.
 Dana with Rani ate.3PL burger

On top of that, only DP-conjuncts may describe distal-distributive scenarios. These too seem to go hand by hand with collective scenarios, and with proximate-distributive scenarios when those are distinguished from distal ones. If so, the attested pattern is the following:

- (68) Implicational relations among verifying scenarios:
- a. Accomplice \rightarrow Collective \rightarrow Proximate-distributive
 - b. Distal-distributive \rightarrow Collective \rightarrow Proximate-distributive

The compatibility of accomplice interpretations with collective interpretations is unexpected. While DP comitatives allow only symmetric interpretations, VP comitatives permit both symmetric and asymmetric ones. If the accomplice interpretation is taken to be basic for VP comitatives, it is unclear how the symmetric interpretations could be derived from it. This contrast, together with the complementary distribution between accomplice and distal-distributive interpretations, challenge a uniform semantics for comitatives. This is, it is unclear how a single semantics could derive both, as these interpretations pull in opposite directions.

The contrast between symmetric and asymmetric interpretations raises further questions: (i) if VP comitatives may have symmetric readings, why may DP comitatives not have asymmetric (accomplice) readings?; and (ii) what blocks distal-distributivity in DP-adjunctions but allows it in DP-conjunctions?

	VP-comitatives	DP-comitatives
Symmetric interpretations (collective, distributive)	✓	✓
Asymmetric interpretations (accomplice)	✓	X

Table 8: VP- and DP-comitative interpretation asymmetry

5 Previous semantic analyses

5.1 Kasyanenko 2018

For sentences such as (5a) in Russian where the verb exhibits plural agreement, repeated below as (69), Kasyanenko (2018a) proposes a plural-individual/sum analysis, where the individuals are required to be related, i.e., they are ‘groupable’ in some intuitive way (70). This requirement is referred to as the “relatedness constraint”. The individuals in the plurality are related by $R1$ and $R2$ which are supplied by the context (e.g., $R1 = R2 = \text{sister}$). Relatedness can be licensed by performing a collective action, by natural relations (e.g., sisterhood, friendship), by event spatiotemporal identity (i.e., being present at the same place and time), or by contrastivity where the sum performed an action as opposed to another participant who did not. While the relatedness constraint seems to be relevant for Russian and Kazakh DP-conjuncts, its role in Kazakh DP-adjuncts remains unclear and may in fact be redundant. In the absence of concrete evidence, extending this semantics to all DP comitatives may be problematic. Furthermore, it is unclear that this constraint is truth-conditional, as discussed below.

- (69) Maša s Dašej pišut statju.
 Masha with Dasha.INST write.3PL paper
 ‘Masha and Dasha are writing a paper.’

- (70) $\llbracket \text{Maša s Dašej} \rrbracket = \lambda X.X = m \oplus d \wedge R_1(m)(d) \wedge R_2(d)(m)$

5.2 Schein 2002

Schein (2002), interprets ‘with’ as introducing an accomplice whose participation is essential to the agent’s completion of the action. He gives as an example the sentence in (71) which introduces a result state to which $NP_{\{+C\}}$ is argued to contribute. For this sentence, he provides the semantics in (72), according to which there is an event e whose agent is Nora, and an event e' which is with Willy Wonka and somehow related to e . Event e' causes event e'' which is a melting event whose patient is chocolate. Under this analysis, the $NP_{\{+C\}}$ ’s participation is entailed, which seems to be an undesirable result for a sentence like (71). There is a scenario where Nora melted the chocolate all by herself, in the presence of Willy Wonka, who contributed nothing to the chocolate melting. In this case, the sentence is still true, and so the $NP_{\{+C\}}$ ’s participation in the event is not truth-conditional. Moreover, aside from the lack of clarity regarding the role of ‘With’, which Schein does not explicitly define, it is clear how his analysis captures an asymmetric interpretation that adds a participant to the event. However, it is less clear how this analysis could be extended to derive symmetric/plurality-forming interpretations (i.e., collective and distributive).

(71) Nora melted the chocolate with Willy Wonka.

(72) $\exists e \exists e' \exists e'' (\text{Agent}(e, \text{Nora}) \wedge \text{With}(e, e', \text{WillyWonka}) \wedge \text{Cause}(e', e'') \wedge \text{melt}(e'') \wedge \text{Patient}(e'', \text{chocolate}))$

5.3 McNally 1993

McNally (1993) proposes that the denotation of comitatives is a group (Landman, 1989), a singleton set comprising a set of individuals, and that the denotation of regular coordinations is a sum, a set of individuals. The denotation of the comitative construction in (38a), repeated below as (73a), is demonstrated in (74a) and the denotation of the coordination in (38b), repeated below as (73b), is demonstrated in (74b). The notation ‘ $\langle \rangle$ ’ stands for a function that maps sums into a group or an impure atom (Link, 1983). The distributivity (D) operator distributes only over the atoms of a sum and not on an impure atom/group. Therefore, it will not distribute over comitatives, and the result would be that the group consisting of Masha and Dasha wrote the paper (74a). In (74b), the operator would distribute over the atoms of the sum, resulting in Masha writing a paper and Dasha writing a paper. The impossibility of distributing over comitatives is in fact an undesirable result for Russian DP comitatives, which (at least sometimes) allow distal-distributivity, as well as for Kazakh DP comitatives, which also allow proximate-distributivity. McNally further argues that the “relatedness constraint” is an implicature and is not truth-conditional in nature. I will go back to this point in my proposal.

(73) a. Maša s Dašej pišut statju.
Masha with Dasha.INST write.3PL paper.ACC
‘Masha and Dasha are writing the paper.’

b. Maša i Daša pišut statju.
Masha and Dasha write.3PL paper.ACC

(74) a. D write-paper($\langle m \oplus d \rangle$)

b. D write-paper($m \oplus d$) \models write-paper(m) \wedge write-paper(d)

6 Proposal

To bridge the gaps presented above, I propose the semantics in (75-77). (75a) and (75b) provide the semantics of conjunctive and adjunctive DP comitatives, respectively, which involves plurality formation. (75b) is a type-shifted version of (75a), adjusted to match its adjunct syntax. (76) provides the semantics of VP comitatives, which adds to the event the thematic role WITH (77). It relates $NP_{\{+C\}}$ to the agent, capturing the observed asymmetry whereby $NP_{\{+C\}}$ is an accomplice whose participation is possible but not entailed.

(75) DP comitatives:

- a. Conjunction: $\llbracket \text{with Sam} \rrbracket = \lambda x.(x \oplus s)$
- b. Adjunction: $\llbracket \text{with Sam} \rrbracket = \lambda x \lambda P \langle e, \langle v, t \rangle \rangle \lambda e.P(x \oplus s)(e)$

(76) VP comitatives:

- a. Symmetric: $\llbracket \text{with Sam} \rrbracket = \lambda P \langle e, \langle v, t \rangle \rangle \lambda x.\lambda e.P(x \oplus s)(e)$
- b. Asymmetric: $\llbracket \text{with Sam} \rrbracket = \lambda P \langle e, \langle v, t \rangle \rangle \lambda x.\lambda e.P(x)(e) \wedge \text{WITH}(e)(x)(s)$

(77) $\text{WITH}(e)(x)(y) = y$ is present at the same location and time as individual x at some point(s) of the runtime of event e

Under my analysis, comitatives serve two functions: (i) forming a plural individual (symmetric); and (ii) adding an accomplice to an event (asymmetric).

Note that the semantics I provided for WITH in (77) makes reference to time and location but not to $NP_{\{+C\}}$'s agentivity. Therefore, it is compatible with accomplicity as in accompanying someone who is eating (59). For Russian, it is unclear that the constraint of being at the same location and time exists at all due to the lack of truth-conditional distinction between proximate- and distal-distributivity. As of now, for simplicity, I will assume the semantics in (77) for WITH, yet this should be revised in the future.

The semantics I gave for DP comitatives (75) differs from that of Kasyanenko (70) in that it does not make reference to the relatedness constraint. I follow McNally's observation that this constraint is not truth-conditional in nature. However, as of now, it is unclear whether the relatedness constraint is a presupposition or an implicature. In (78), Masha and Dasha are still understood to be related under negation, questions and conditionals, the common diagnostics for presuppositions. In (79), the relatedness is denied and the sentence is non contradictory, a common diagnostic for implicatures.

- (78) a. Maša s Dašej n'je ušli.
Masha with Dasha.INST NEG left.3PL
'Masha and Dasha did not leave.'
- b. počemu Maša s Dašej ušli?
why Masha with Dasha.INST left.3PL
'Why did Masha and Dasha leave?'
- c. jesli Maša s Dašej ušli, ja n'je pridu.
if Masha with Dasha.INST left.3PL, I NEG come.1SG
'If Masha and Dasha left, I'm not coming.'

(79) Maša s Dašej ušli, na samom djele oni n'je svjazany.
Masha with Dasha.INST left.3PL, on itself case they NEG connected.PL
'Masha and Dasha left, actually they are not related.'

In what follows, I provide derivations of different sentences using the semantics above. I adopt Wehbe’s (2024) idea that the different symmetric uses are a result of scopal interactions of plurality with location and time operators. I leave open the question whether it is possible to derive the symmetric interpretations of VP comitatives from the asymmetric lexical entry. The cross-linguistic pattern attested for VP comitatives suggests that whenever an accomplice interpretation is available, a collective one is too.

6.1 Symmetric comitatives

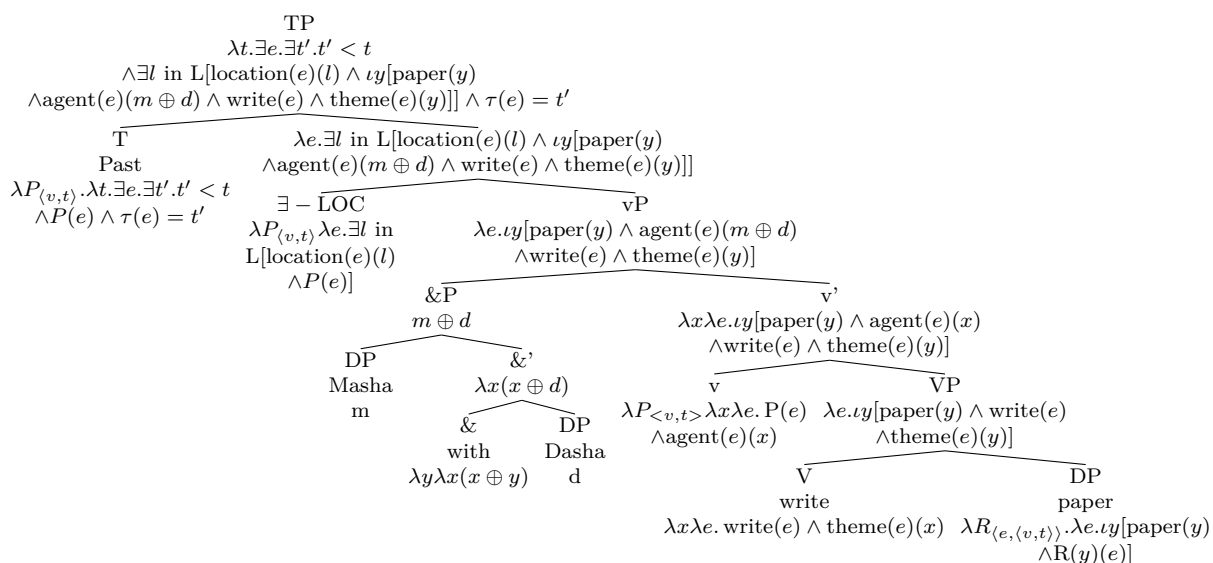
In this subsection I will show the derivations of sentences (80-81) which involve DP comitatives and the symmetric interpretations of sentence (82):

- (80) a. *ajgøł fatima-men jekə samsa že-dı.*
Aygul Fatima-with two Samsa eat-3PST
‘Aygul ate two Samsas with Fatima’
b. *ajgøł men fatima jekə samsa že-dı.*
Aygul with Fatima two Samsa eat-3PST
‘Aygul and Fatima ate two Samsas’
- (81) a. *Maša s Dašej pišut statju.*
Masha with Dasha.INST write.3PL paper.ACC
‘Masha and Dasha are writing the paper.’
b. *Maša s Dašej napisali dve statji.*
Masha with Dasha.INST wrote.3PL two.ACC papers.ACC
‘Masha and Dasha wrote two papers.’
- (82) Alex ate a burger with Sam.

6.1.1 Collectivity

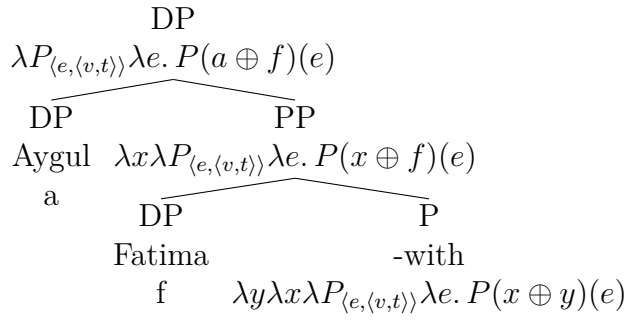
In a collective interpretation, all arguments are interpreted in their position, no movements or operations are required. I treat unmarked objects in Russian as definite for simplicity.

- (83) Collective interpretation of (81a) – DP-conjunction

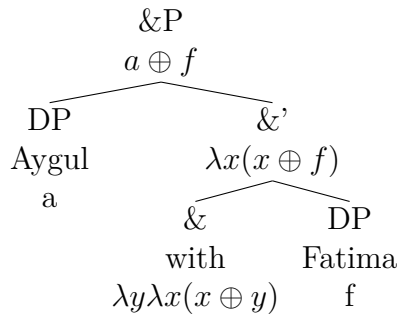


In Kazakh there are also DP-adjuncts (84), which differ in structure from DP-conjuncts (85) and require the type-shifting in (75b).

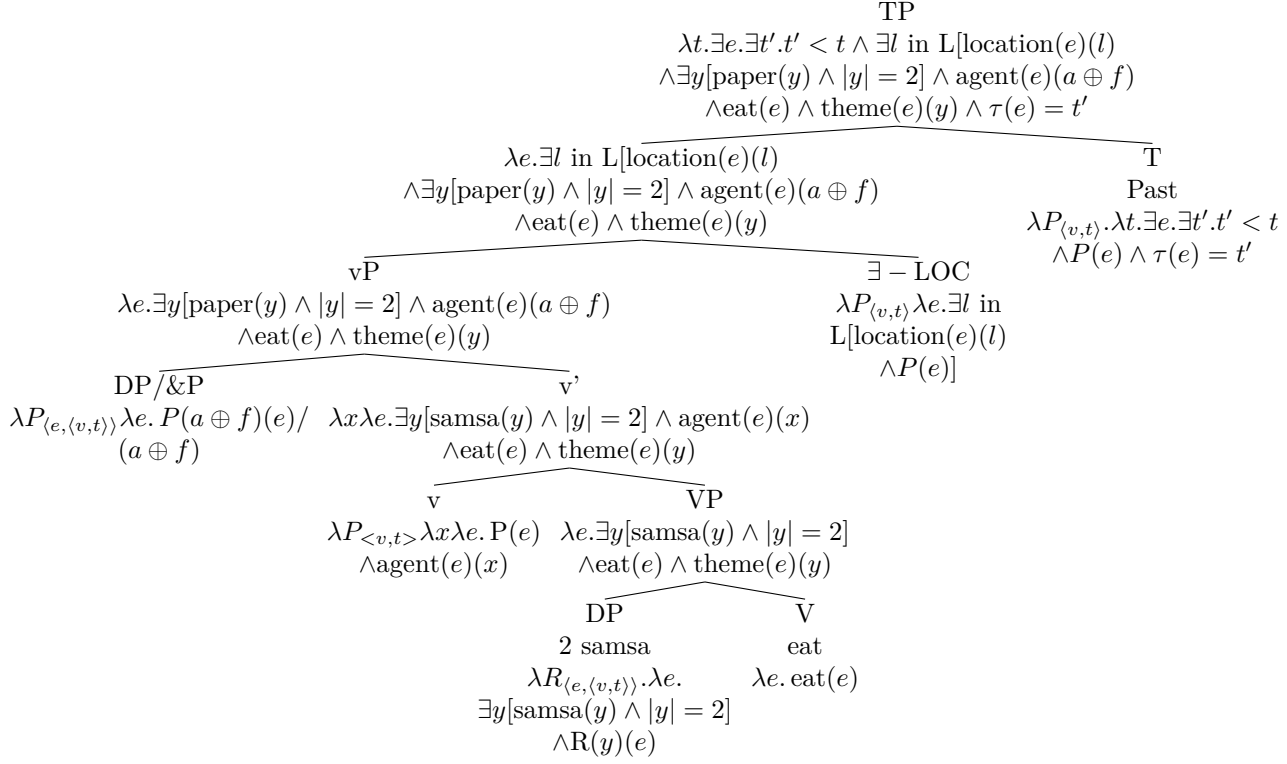
(84) DP-adjunction



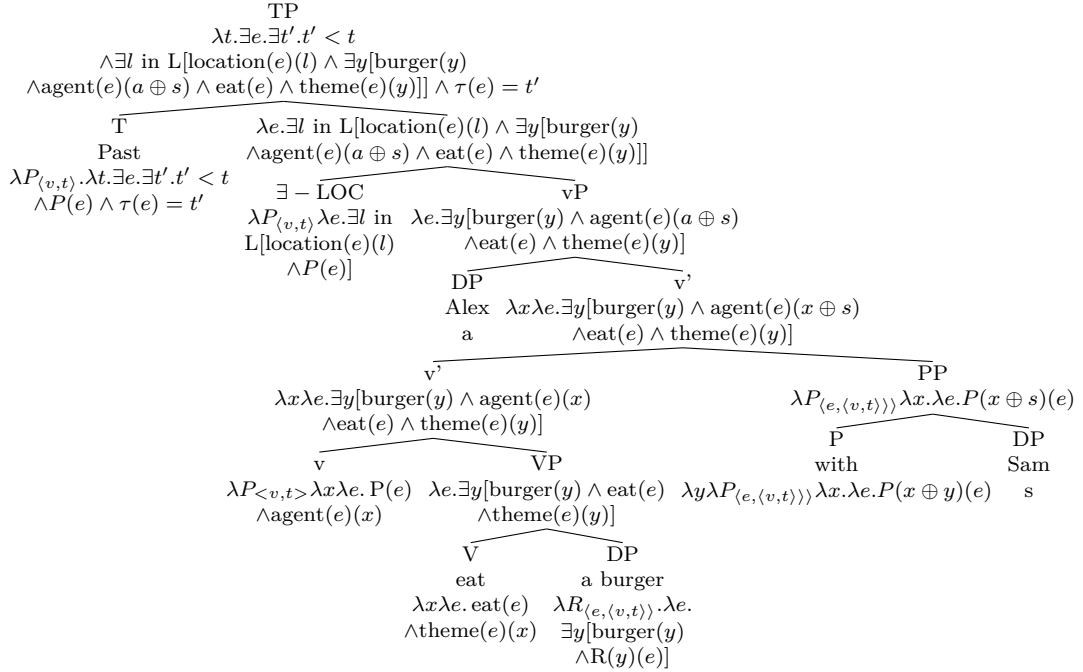
(85) DP-conjunction



(86) Collective interpretation of (80) – DP-conjunction/adjunction



(87) Collective interpretation of (82) – VP-adjunction



6.1.2 Proximate-distributivity

To derive proximate-distributivity from collectivity, I follow [Wehbe \(2024\)](#) and change the scope of the comitative phrase relative to the distributivity operator, T and the existential quantifier over locations \exists –LOC. I used Lasersohn’s distributivity operator (88), as given

in Champollion (2016). This operator takes a predicate of type $\langle e, \langle v, t \rangle \rangle$, a plurality and an event, such that for every atom of this plurality, there is a sub-event of e whose agent is that atom. For proximate-distributivity, the distributivity operator scopes below the subject, the comitative, $\exists - \text{LOC}$ and T (89). The result is paraphrasable as “There is a location and a time such that x did something and y did the same thing at this location and time”.

(88) Lasersohn’s distributivity operator over events:

$$[[*]] = \lambda P_{\langle e, \langle v, t \rangle \rangle} \lambda x \lambda e \forall y [y \sqsubseteq_{\text{Atom}} x \rightarrow \exists e_0 [e_0 \sqsubseteq e \wedge P(y)(e_0)]]$$

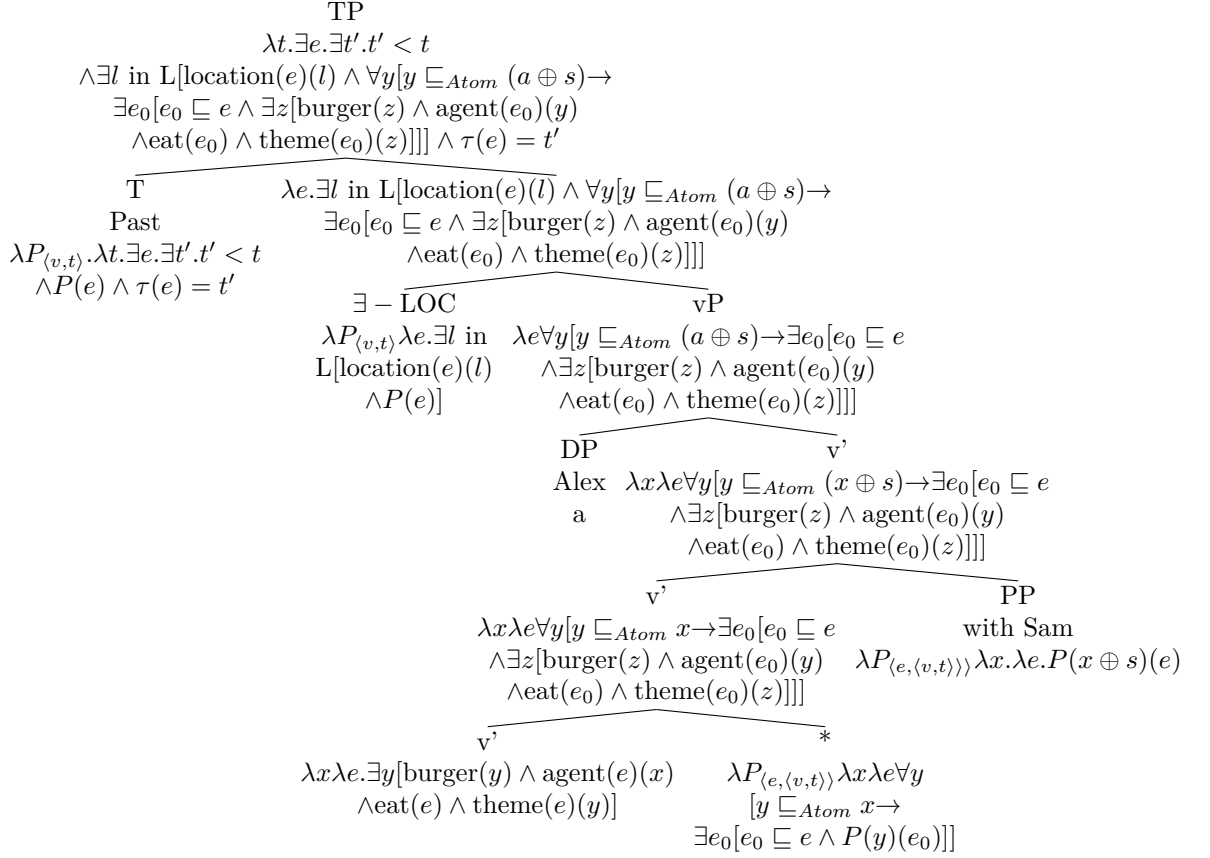
(89) a. $[_T \text{ } [_{\exists - \text{Loc}} \text{ } [\text{Aygul} \text{ } [\text{<with> Fatima} \text{ } \text{<-with>}]] * [[2 \text{ Samsa} \text{ } \text{ate}]]]]]$

b. $[_T \text{ } [_{\exists - \text{Loc}} \text{ } [\text{Alex} \text{ } [\text{with Sam}] * [\text{ate} \text{ } [\text{a burger}]]]]]]]$

(90) Proximate-distributive interpretation of (80) – DP-conjunction/adjunction

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{TP} \\
 \lambda t. \exists e. \exists t'. t' < t \\
 \wedge \exists l \text{ in } L[\text{location}(e)(l) \wedge \forall y [y \sqsubseteq_{\text{Atom}} (a \oplus f) \rightarrow \\
 \exists e_0 [e_0 \sqsubseteq e \wedge \exists z [\text{samsa}(z) \wedge |z| = 2] \wedge \text{agent}(e_0)(y) \\
 \wedge \text{eat}(e_0) \wedge \text{theme}(e_0)(z)]]] \wedge \tau(e) = t' \\
 \lambda e. \exists l \text{ in } L[\text{location}(e)(l) \wedge \forall y [y \sqsubseteq_{\text{Atom}} (a \oplus f) \rightarrow \\
 \exists e_0 [e_0 \sqsubseteq e \wedge \exists z [\text{samsa}(z) \wedge |z| = 2] \\
 \wedge \text{agent}(e_0)(y) \wedge \text{eat}(e_0) \wedge \text{theme}(e_0)(z)]]] \quad \text{T} \\
 \text{Past} \\
 \lambda P_{\langle v, t \rangle}. \lambda t. \exists e. \exists t'. t' < t \\
 \wedge P(e) \wedge \tau(e) = t' \\
 \text{vP} \quad \exists - \text{LOC} \\
 \lambda e \forall y [y \sqsubseteq_{\text{Atom}} (a \oplus f) \rightarrow \exists e_0 [e_0 \sqsubseteq e \quad \lambda P_{\langle v, t \rangle} \lambda e. \exists l \text{ in} \\
 \wedge \exists z [\text{samsa}(z) \wedge |z| = 2] \wedge \text{agent}(e_0)(y) \quad L[\text{location}(e)(l) \\
 \wedge \text{eat}(e_0) \wedge \text{theme}(e_0)(z)]] \quad \wedge P(e)] \\
 \text{DP/\&P} \quad \lambda x \lambda e \forall y [y \sqsubseteq_{\text{Atom}} x \rightarrow \exists e_0 [e_0 \sqsubseteq e \\
 \wedge \exists z [\text{samsa}(z) \wedge |z| = 2] \wedge \text{agent}(e_0)(y) \\
 \wedge \text{eat}(e_0) \wedge \text{theme}(e_0)(z)]] \\
 \lambda P_{\langle e, \langle v, t \rangle \rangle} \lambda e. P(a \oplus f)(e) / (a \oplus f) \\
 \text{v}' \quad * \\
 \lambda x \lambda e. \exists y [\text{samsa}(y) \wedge |y| = 2] \wedge \text{agent}(e)(x) \quad \lambda P_{\langle e, \langle v, t \rangle \rangle} \lambda x \lambda e \forall y \\
 \wedge \text{eat}(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e)(y) \quad [y \sqsubseteq_{\text{Atom}} x \rightarrow \\
 \exists e_0 [e_0 \sqsubseteq e \wedge P(y)(e_0)]]
 \end{array}$$

(91) Proximate-distributive interpretation of (82) – VP-adjunction



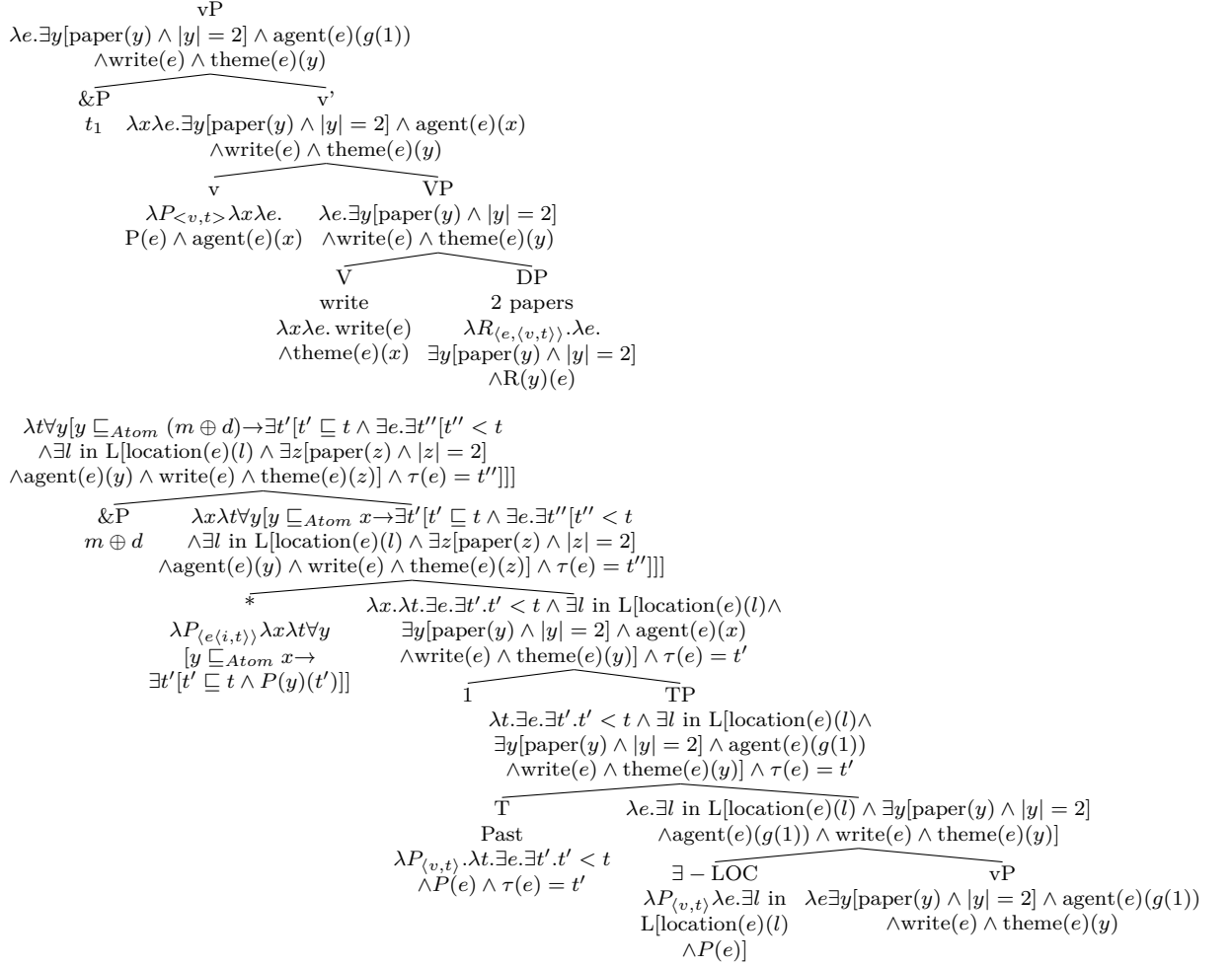
6.1.3 Distal-distributivity

We have seen that only DP conjunctions allow distal-distributivity. For this interpretation, the operator must scope below the subject and the comitative, but above the existential quantifier over locations \exists -LOC and T (92). The result is paraphrasable as “For x, there is a location and a time such that x did something at this location and time, and for y there is a location and a time such that y did the same thing at this location and time”. This is again a ‘weak’ interpretation, as nothing in it prevents the location and the time of each of the events from being identical, making it compatible with describing proximate-distributive scenarios.

A possible explanation for the absence of distal-distributivity with DP-adjuncts is their event-relatedness. If their semantics is that of event modifiers (75b), they are expected to scope below T, which blocks the relevant configuration. For VP-adjuncts, the restriction appears to be primarily syntactic: although they are also event modifiers, their position in the structure prevents them from scoping high enough to outscope T and \exists -LOC. I leave a more detailed investigation of these constraints for future work.

(92) [Masha [with Dasha]] * [1 [T [t₁ [\exists -Loc [t₁ [wrote [2 papers]]]]]]]

(93) Distal-distributive reading of (81a) – DP-conjunction



6.1.4 Cumulativity

As shown in Table 3, a sentence like (94) may describe collective, and proximate- and distal-cumulative scenarios.

- (94) bala-lar jekə samsa(-nə) že-dī.
kid-PL two Samsa(-ACC) eat-3PST
‘The kids ate (the) two Samsas.’

Given the fact that whenever a sentence can describe a collective scenario it can also describe a proximate-cumulative scenario but not vice-versa, we may assume that the collective interpretation is weak in a way that is compatible with proximate-cumulativity.

I leave for future research the full derivations of the cumulative interpretations and the weak collective interpretation, as well as an adaption of Nouwen’s (2016) analysis of cumulativity to event semantics.

6.2 Asymmetric comitatives

Accomplice VP comitatives are asymmetric. They do not form a plurality with another DP but rather add a participant to the event. In this subsection I will show the derivations of the English sentence (82), yet a similar analysis would apply to Russian VP adjuncts,

cost of moving further away from a uniform analysis. The other is to interpret WITH as semantically underspecified between an accomplice and a co-agent. I intend to pursue the latter approach in future work.

6.3 Summary

In this section I have sketched my current analysis. I have provided one semantics for symmetric comitatives (involving type-shifting) and another for asymmetric ones, arguing that, at present, they do not appear to be unifiable. I have shown that the distributivity could be derived from the collectivity, but not from the accomplicity. Future work will aim to unify the semantics of symmetric and asymmetric comitatives in a way that symmetry will be derivable from asymmetry. The following section outlines the remaining open question.

7 Future research

This paper attempted to capture the attested syntactic and semantic patterns of comitatives, yet it is far from being conclusive or comprehensive. Much work is needed to answer the following open questions, some of which have already been mentioned above:

1. Do comitatives really require 4 different lexical entries?
2. How do we block distal- but not proximate-distributivity for DP adjuncts?
3. What is the real nature of Russian DP comitatives? Are they conjuncts, adjuncts or some sort of a hybrid of the two?
4. How exactly do comitatives differ from regular conjunctions and pluralities?
5. Must ‘with’ semantics make reference to time and location?
6. Does the accomplice reading require a separate lexical entry, or can it be derived from the plural-based meaning as a form of secondary predication ([van Craenenbroeck & Johnson, 2025](#))?
7. What is the relation between ‘with’ and ‘together’, and what does ‘together with’ mean?
8. What is the relation between comitatives and instrumental case? Do comitatives in languages where the comitative and the instrumental markers are syncretic exhibit different characteristics compared to comitatives in languages where this is not the case?
9. Why may VP-comitatives have both symmetric and asymmetric interpretations yet DP-comitatives only have symmetric ones?
10. How do comitatives interact with different classes of predicates?
11. How do comitatives differ from other ‘with’ phrases?
12. Why does no language seem to have all 3 comitative structures? Is this a UG restriction?

This and many more questions are left for future research.

8 Conclusion

This paper revisited the syntactic and semantic analyses of comitatives by examining novel data from Kazakh alongside data from English and Russian. I showed that comitatives have different structures both within and across these languages, and argued that these structural differences correlate with semantic contrasts.

The Kazakh comitative morpheme *men* may appear as an independent word or as a suffix: the former gives rise to a DP-conjunction analysis, and the latter to a DP-adjunction analysis. The Russian comitative morpheme *s* can appear adjacent to the subject DP and trigger plural agreement, yielding a DP comitative, or appear non-adjacent and trigger singular agreement, yielding a VP comitative. In English, *with* only allows a VP analysis, as the comitative argument and the subject DP cannot be adjacent. I showed that comitatives may describe collective and proximate-distributive scenarios, while only VP-adjuncts may describe accomplice scenarios, and only DP-conjuncts may describe distal-distributive scenarios.

To account for these patterns, I proposed that comitatives serve two functions: (i) forming a plurality (symmetric); and (ii) adding an accomplice into an event (asymmetric). However, I showed that there is no one-to-one mapping between function and structure. I proposed one analysis for symmetric comitatives and another for asymmetric comitatives, and derived distributivity from collectivity via scopal interactions, showing that the same derivation is not available for accomplicity.

The broader implication is that comitatives cannot be reduced to a single entity with a uniform syntax or semantics. Understanding comitatives may deepen our understanding of argument structure, distributivity, and the semantics of coordinations and plural expressions. The open questions identified in this paper pave the way for further investigation into the typology and formal analysis of *with*-phrases.

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