

DPs with a twist: A unified analysis of Russian comitatives

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Russian possesses three types of *comitative constructions*: clauses involving a *with*-phrase and the interpretation of, roughly, “joint participation in the action.” They can be descriptively defined as follows. First, the *singular comitative* involves singular agreement on the verb, as in (1a); the singular comitative is also available in English. Second, the *plural comitative* is a comitative with plural agreement on the verb, as in (1b), absent in English. And finally, the *pronoun comitative* is a comitative where the associate of the *with*-phrase is a pronoun, as in (1c).

1. a) Aleksandra tancevala s Borisom.
 Alexandra-Nom danced-Fsg with Boris-Instr
 ‘Alexandra danced with Boris.’
- b) Aleksandra s Borisom tancevali.
 Alexandra-Nom with Boris-Instr danced-pl
 ‘Alexandra and Boris danced.’
- c) My s Borisom tancevali.
 1pl-Nom with Boris-Instr danced-pl
 ‘We (=I and Boris) danced.’

Previous analyses of the Russian comitative include McNally 1988, 1993; Camacho 1996, 2000; Progovac 1997; Dalrymple et al. 1998; Vassilieva 2001; Vassilieva and Larson 2001; and Feldman 2001, among others. While the details of these analyses differ, they generally agree that singular and plural comitatives are

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inherently different constructions. Those analyses that consider pronoun comitatives (Vassilieva 2001, Vassilieva and Larson 2001, and Feldman 2001) argue further that pronoun comitatives are inherently different from other comitatives. In this paper, we will argue, contrary to previous claims, that the three comitative constructions exemplified in (1) have the same base structure.

Importantly, none of the analyses cited above propose any kind of semantics for the comitative *with*. Unified semantics for *with* is proposed by Schein (1999); however, he does not deal with syntactic differences between different comitative constructions.

This paper is organized as follows. In Section 1, we provide evidence that plural pronoun comitatives and plural comitatives not involving pronouns are the same construction; apparent differences between them are attributable mainly to idiosyncrasies of the pronoun system. In Section 2, we provide evidence that plural and singular comitatives stem from the same underlying structure. In Section 3, we briefly discuss the interaction of comitatives and information structure. Finally, Section 4 concludes the paper.

1. Plural (Pronoun) Comitatives

Previous analyses have argued that plural pronoun comitatives, exemplified in (1c), involve a different syntactic structure than do regular plural comitatives (1b). Vassilieva (2001) and Vassilieva and Larson (2001) argue that plural comitatives involve conjunction, while plural pronoun comitatives involve complementation. We will show that the two constructions have the same syntax – that of DP-complementation.

1.1. Before we start...

One of the reasons for the special status proposed for the plural pronoun comitative (by Vassilieva 2001 and Vassilieva and Larson 2001, i.a.) is its idiosyncratic behavior. We will briefly summarize the two morphological idiosyncrasies that set the plural pronoun comitative apart from other comitatives.

The first idiosyncrasy is *pronoun plurality*: if the associate of *with* is a pronoun and the agreement is plural, the pronoun must be plural. This is shown in (2). If *carevna* in (2a) is replaced by a

singular pronoun, as in (2b), the sentence is ungrammatical. The pronoun must be plural, as in (2c); *oni s žar-Pticej* “they with the Firebird” refers to only two entities: the Princess and the Firebird.¹

2. a) Carevna s žar-Pticej peli.
princess-Nom with Firebird-Instr sang-pl
‘The Princess and the Firebird sang.’
b)* Ona s žar-Pticej peli.
3sg-Nom with Firebird-Instr sang-pl
c) Oni s žar-Pticej peli.
3pl-Nom with Firebird-Instr sang-pl
‘They sang (=She and the Firebird sang).’

The second idiosyncrasy of the plural pronoun comitative is the *pronoun hierarchy*.

3. a) my s toboj/nim
we-Nom with you/him-Instr
1st person > 2nd person > 3rd person
b) vy s nim/*mnoj
you-pl-Nom with him/me-Instr
2nd person > 3rd person, * > 1st person
c)* oni s toboj/mnoj
they-Nom with you/me-Instr
3rd person, * > 1st person, 2nd person

As (3) shows, the person of the pronoun cannot be lower than the person of the complement of *with*.

1.2. Similarities with...

Though having the idiosyncrasies described above, plural pronoun comitatives also *share certain properties* with plural comitatives (which singular comitatives, to be discussed later, do not have).

Two of these properties are *equal participation* and *agreement*: in both plural comitatives (4a) and pronoun comitatives (4b), agreement on the verb is plural, and the nominal complement of

¹ There is an additional reading on which the plural pronoun comitative refers to more than two entities: the Princess, the Firebird and some other contextually salient person/people. The availability of this reading is irrelevant here.

with is interpreted as an equal participant in the action: for (4) to be true, the Firebird must have sung along with the Princess, as opposed to, for instance, simply witnessing the Princess singing.

4. a) Carevna s žar-Pticej peli/*pela
princess-Nom with Firebird-Instr sang-pl/Fsg
'The Princess and the Firebird sang.'
- b) Oni s žar-Pticej peli/*pela
3pl-Nom with Firebird-Instr sang-pl/Fsg
'They sang (=She and the Firebird sang).'

Next, the complement of *with* in plural (pronoun) comitatives participates in *reflexive binding* (McNally 1993, Vassilieva 2001). Both sentences in (5) are grammatical only in the (pragmatically odd) situation in which Prince Ivan and the wolf have the same father.

5. a)# Ivan-carevič s Volkom spasli svoego otca.
Ivan-prince with wolf saved-pl self's father
'Prince Ivan and the wolf saved their father.'
- b)# Oni s Volkom spasli svoego otca.
3pl-Nom with wolf saved-pl self's father
'They(=Prince Ivan and the wolf) saved their father.'

The next shared property is *distributivity*. Vassilieva (2001) noted that certain non-agentive verbs are compatible with plural (pronoun) comitatives, but not with singular comitatives, as in (6).

6. a) Pelagija s Mitrofaniem znali/*znala, kto ubijca.
Pelagia with Mitrofaniij knew-pl/sg who murderer
'Pelagia and Mitrofaniij knew who was the murderer.'
- b) Oni s Mitrofaniem znali, kto ubijca.
3pl with Mitrofaniij knew-pl who murderer
'She and Mitrofaniij knew who was the murderer.'

We interpret this fact as follows. Verbs like *know* do not allow collective readings. In plural (pronoun) comitatives (but not, as we will later argue, in singular comitatives), the nominal complement of *with* can be quantified over by a *distributive operator*.

We propose the following analysis of the facts noted so far in this section. The standard assumption is that verbal agreement and

reflexive binding are associated with the subject. We formalize this as association with [Spec, IP] and propose that distributivity is also associated with this position. We further suggest that the *with*-phrase is in [Spec, IP] in both plural pronoun comitatives and plural comitatives. This analysis leads us to make Prediction A in (7). We will come back to this prediction.

7. Prediction A:

If the *with*-phrase is not part of [Spec, IP], it cannot participate in verbal agreement, bind a reflexive, or be distributed over.

Another fact noted by McNally (1993) and Vassilieva (2001) is that wh-extraction out of a plural (pronoun) comitative is impossible. Thus, while the declarative sentences in (8) are fully grammatical, the corresponding wh-questions in (9) are not.

8. a) Vasilisa s Ivanuškoj (nakonec) poženilis'.
 Vasilisa with Ivan (finally) married-refl-pl
 'Vasilisa and Ivan (finally) got married.'
 b) Oni s Ivanuškoj (nakonec) poženilis'.
 3pl-Nom with Ivan (finally) married-refl-pl
 'She and Ivan (finally) got married.'
9. a)* S kem Vasilisa (nakonec) poženilis'?
 with who Vasilisa (finally) married-refl-pl
 b)* S kem oni (nakonec) poženilis'?
 with who 3pl-Nom (finally) married-refl-pl

We suggest that the ungrammaticality of (9) is due to the fact that the subject position is an island for extraction. This analysis leads to the two related predictions in (10), which we will return to shortly. For now, given the similarities between plural comitatives and plural pronoun comitatives, we will make the hypothesis that *plural pronoun comitatives are just plural comitatives*.

10. Prediction B:

A *with*-phrase not in the subject position can be extracted:

1. Extraction out of a non-subject position is possible.
2. Extraction out of a stranded *with*-phrase is possible.

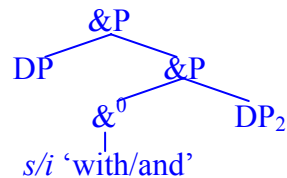
1.3. But... stranding

A potential problem for our hypothesis is the following. Vassilieva (2001) noted that while plural comitatives do not allow the *with*-phrase to be stranded below the verb, as in (11a), this stranding is allowed with pronoun comitatives, as in (11b).

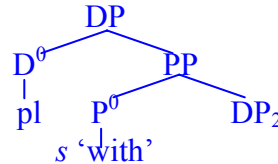
11. a)* Pelagija znali s Mitrofaniem, kto prestupnik.
 Pelagia knew-pl with Mitrofaniĭ who criminal
 b) Oni znali s Mitrofaniem, kto prestupnik.
 3pl knew-pl with Mitrofaniĭ who criminal
 ‘She and Mitrofaniĭ knew who was the criminal.’

This difference, along with the idiosyncrasies described in Section 1.1, led Vassilieva (2001), as well as Vassilieva and Larson (2001), to argue that plural pronoun comitatives and regular plural comitatives have different syntax, as given in (12).

12. a) Plural comitatives:
 coordination



- b) Plural pronoun comitatives:
 complementation



Since we have argued that plural comitatives and plural pronoun comitatives have the same syntax, what can we say about the difference in stranding shown in (11)?

We propose that Russian verbal agreement, reflexive binding and distributive interpretation are all associated with [Spec, IP], which contains the plural pronoun in the case of a plural pronoun comitative. Thus *it is unnecessary for the with-phrase to raise to [Spec, IP] to trigger plural agreement, force reflexive binding and allow distributive interpretation, and it can be stranded, as in (13).*

13. Oni_{i+j} znajut s Afonej_i svoi_{i+j} uroki.
 3pl-Nom know-pl with Afonja-Instr self's lessons-Acc
 ‘S/he and Afonja know their lessons.’

(13) doesn't contradict our Prediction A in (7) because verbal agreement, reflexive binding and the distributive reading come not from the nominal complement of *with* but from the plural pronoun.

This possibility of stranding brings us to Prediction B2 in (10): extraction of a stranded *with*-phrase should be possible. We turn to this prediction next.

1.4. Relative clauses... and focus!

McNally 1993 and Vassilieva 2001 showed that wh-extraction out of plural (pronoun) comitatives in (9) is impossible. This seems to contradict our Prediction B2: since the *with*-phrase can be stranded in a plural pronoun comitative, it should be possible to then extract the stranded *with*-phrase, deriving (9b). Yet this is impossible

However, it turns out that *relativization* out of a plural pronoun comitative in (14a) is possible. Conversely, relativization out of a plural comitative, as in (14b), is not:

14. a) Vot tot princ, s kotorym oni poženilis'.
here that prince with which-Instr 3pl-Nom married-refl-pl
'This is the prince whom she married.'
b)* Vot tot princ, s kotorym Zoludka poženilis'.
here that prince with which-Instr Cinderella married-refl-pl

Thus, we have a puzzle: relativization out of a plural pronoun comitative is possible, but wh-extraction in questions is not. The possibility of relativization is fully consistent with our Prediction B2. On the other hand, the ungrammaticality of wh-extraction, illustrated again in (15), is a problem for our analysis. Why can't a stranded *with*-phrase be extracted by wh-movement?

15. *S kem oni (nakonec) poženilis'?
with who 3pl-Nom (finally) married-refl-pl

We analyze this puzzle as follows: interrogative wh-phrases must be focalized, but pronouns presuppose that their antecedents are old information. The problem with (15) is a conflict in informational status. This brings us to the prediction in (16).

16. Prediction C

The *with*-phrase in a plural pronoun comitative cannot be focalized.

This prediction holds, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (17), where the *with*-phrase carries contrastive focus.

17. * Oni s VASILISOJ poženilis', a ne s Zoluškoj.
3pl with Vasilisa married-refl-pland not with Cinderella

(17) is grammatical only under the polyandrous interpretation: *They married Vasilisa and not Cinderella*. On this interpretation, *Vasilisa* is not part of the referent of the pronoun.

To summarize: relativization/wh-extraction of the *with*-phrase out of a regular plural comitative is disallowed because in order to be extracted the *with*-phrase has to be stranded (no extraction out of the subject position). If it is stranded, it does not trigger plural agreement, and cannot bind a reflexive or be scoped over by a distributive operator. This is consistent with Prediction A in (7), since a stranded *with*-phrase is not in [Spec, IP].

On the other hand, the *with*-phrase in a plural pronoun comitative can be stranded (see the discussion in Section 1.3), and can therefore be extracted, except when this creates a conflict of information structure, as in the case of question formation.

1.5. And finally...

We now turn briefly to the semantics of pronouns, which we adopt from Schlenker 2002. The semantics of *we* is given in (18).

18. *we* = [+speaker][+participant][+pl]

[[+speaker]] = $\lambda x \in D_e : x$ contains the speaker . x

[[+participant]] = $\lambda x \in D_e : x$ contains a participant of the discourse . x

[[+pl]] = $\lambda x \in D_e : \text{the cardinality of } x \text{ is more than } 1$. x

We suggest that the plural pronoun in pronoun comitatives is just a plural pronoun, with the *with*-phrase providing an additional specification on its referent. Nothing special has to be said about plural pronoun comitatives, except for the idiosyncrasies discussed in Section 1.1, which we will turn to now.

First, recall the obligatory plurality of the pronoun in a pronoun comitative in (2). This pronoun plurality turns out to be a non-fact in positions other than the subject position, e.g., possessives:²

19. ?Tvoj s Kostej salat gostjam očē ponravilsja.
your-sg with Kostja-Instr salad guests-Dat very appealed
'The guests very much liked Kostja's and your salad.'³

In other words the condition on pronoun plurality may be just a quirk of the subject position.⁴

Next, we must address the question of the pronoun hierarchy in (3). First, it should be noted that this hierarchy exists outside of comitative constructions, in English as well as Russian. This is shown in (20): since the speaker is included in the referent of the plural pronoun, *we* rather than *they* must be used.

20. Lucinda and I (Florinda) do not like our stepsister Cinderella.
We/*they envy her good fortune.

We analyze this as follows. First, there is the *vocabulary insertion* rule: if a functional node contains features $F_1 \dots F_n$, what will be inserted is the lexical item containing the maximal subset of $F_1 \dots F_n$.

If there is a presupposition that the contextually relevant pronoun contains the speaker, only a first person pronoun can be used (as in 20): first person pronouns are more specified than second person pronouns, which in turn are more specified than third person pronouns. This is shown in (21).⁵

² Third person pronouns, either singular or plural, are somewhat degraded here, probably due to the fact that they are true Genitives rather than adjectives.

³ As Wayles Browne points out to us, the plural pronoun variant (e.g., *vaš s Kostej*) is more frequent than the singular in possessive comitative constructions. We have no explanation for this effect, nor any idea whether it holds for other non-subject positions. The important point is that pronoun plurality is not *obligatory* in non-subject positions.

⁴ Nominative-case pronouns exhibit another quirk – they are suppletive, differing from the rest of the paradigm (*ja* '1sg-Nom', *menja* '1sg-Gen', *mne* '1sg-Dat'...). We leave open the question of whether the two quirks are related.

⁵ Featural composition of pronouns is not restricted to person features – there is also a definiteness feature (see Postal 1966).

21. $I = [+speaker][+participant]$ $we = [+speaker][+participant][+pl]$
 $you = [+participant]$ $you = [+participant][+pl]$
 $s/he = \emptyset$ $they = [+pl]$

1.6. Summary

In this section, we compared regular plural comitatives and plural pronoun comitatives. The two constructions exhibit a number of similarities, including plural verbal agreement, reflexive binding, equal participation, and distributivity. These similarities led us to argue that the two types of comitatives are syntactically the same.

There is only one syntactic difference between plural pronoun comitatives and plural comitatives: stranding of the *with*-phrase is allowed only in the plural pronoun comitatives. This is easily explained. The “plural” properties of the comitative listed above are dependent on whether what is in [Spec, IP] is plural, and can be triggered by a plural pronoun; thus, the *with*-phrase of a plural pronoun comitative may be stranded.

We further showed that wh-extraction is possible only when two conditions are met: (1) the *with*-phrase is stranded (possible only in plural pronoun comitatives); and (2) the *with*-phrase is not focalized (i.e., in relativization).

And finally, we argued that the idiosyncratic behavior of pronouns in plural pronoun comitatives follows from the nature of pronouns rather than from differences in syntactic structure.

2. Plural vs. singular comitatives

In the previous section, we argued for a unified analysis of plural pronoun comitatives and plural comitatives. We will now argue that, despite apparent differences, plural and singular comitatives also stem from the same underlying syntactic structure.

First, recall Prediction A in (7), which said that a *with*-phrase that is not part of [Spec, IP] cannot participate in verbal agreement, bind a reflexive, or be distributed over. This is precisely the case in singular comitatives.

2.1. Dissimilarities with...

In accordance with Prediction A in (7), singular comitatives differ from plural comitatives in a variety of ways. The most obvious of these is that in singular comitatives, the *with*-phrase (which is not in [Spec, IP]) does not trigger plural marking on the verb.

Another difference is that in singular comitatives (unlike plural comitatives), the *with*-phrase does not participate in *reflexive binding* (McNally 1993). This is shown in (22).

22. a) [Faina_i s Grigoriem_j]_[i+j]delali svoi_{i/*j/*[i+j]}uroki.
 Faina-Nom withGregory-Instr did-pl self's lessons-Acc
 'Faina and Gregory did **their** homework.' [plural]
 b) Faina_i delala svoi_{i/*j/*[i+j]}uroki s Grigoriem_j.
 Faina-Nom did-Fsg self's lessons-Acc withGregory
 'Faina did **her** homework with Gregory.' [singular]

This is fully consistent with Prediction A under our assumption that Russian reflexive-binding is [Spec, IP]-oriented.

Next, we can address distributivity. As previously discussed, certain *non-agentive predicates*, such as *know*, disallow singular comitatives (Vassilieva 2001), as shown in (23).

23. a) Daša s Elenoj znajut matematiku
 Dasha-Nom with Elena-Instr know-3pl mathematics-Acc
 'Dasha and Elena know mathematics.'
 b)* Daša znaet matematiku s Elenoj
 Dasha-Nom know-3sg mathematics-Acc with Elena-Instr

This is also consistent with Prediction A, since the stranded *with*-phrase is not in the scope of the distributive operator. Other predicates forcing a distributive interpretation show the same effect. (24a), a plural comitative, allows distribution either over time or over the participants in the event (Ginger and Fred). However, in (24b), with a singular comitative, only distribution over time is possible: distribution over participants is ruled out since the *with*-phrase is not in [Spec, IP].

24. a) Džindžer s Fredom tancevali v raznyx komnatax.
 Ginger-Nom withFred-Instr danced-pl in different rooms
 1) Ginger and Fred danced in different rooms (separately).

- 2) Ginger and Fred danced together in different rooms
(one room after another).
- b) Džindžer tancevala s Fredom v raznyx komnatax.
Ginger-Nom danced-Fsg with Fred-Instr in different rooms
1) #Ginger and Fred danced in different rooms (separately).
2) Ginger and Fred danced together in different rooms
(one room after another).

Finally, (wh) extraction of the *with*-phrase is impossible out of a plural comitative (25a) but possible out of a singular comitative (25b) (McNally 1993):

25. a)* S kem Xana tancevali?
with who-Instr Hanna dance-pl
* 'Hana and who danced?'
- b) S kem Xana tancevala?
with who-Instr Hanna dance-sg
'With who did Hana dance?'

This is fully consistent with Prediction B1 in (10a), according to which extraction of a stranded *with*-phrase should be possible. The logic is as follows: if a questioned *with*-phrase is stranded, it cannot form a constituent with the Nominative subject (or with whatever argument it is associated with). Therefore, it cannot raise to [Spec, IP] with the Nominative DP and trigger plural agreement. Therefore, wh-extraction out of a singular comitative is possible.

2.2. Were you born stupid or did your mother drop you?

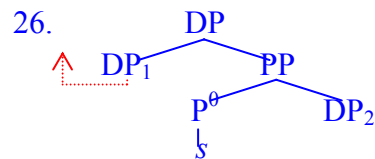
We now move on to a discussion of the underlying syntax of Russian comitatives: the question of nature vs. nurture.

We have shown that the syntactic differences between plural and singular comitatives are due to whether the *with*-phrase has moved to [Spec, IP] or not. There are two possible explanations for this correlation:

- (a) The genetic explanation: The two *with*-phrases are syntactically different at birth (e.g., base-generation as a DP-conjunct vs. base-generation as a VP-adjunct – the analysis of Vassilieva 2001).

- (b) The behaviorist explanation: The *with*-phrase is always base-generated in the same position, *as a DP-adjunct*. It has different properties depending on whether it raises to [Spec, IP] or is stranded.

We are behaviorists: we argue that in both types of comitatives, the *with*-phrase originates as a DP-adjunct, as shown in (26). The Nominative DP subsequently moves out to [Spec, IP]; the *with*-phrase can either move with it (as in the plural comitative) or be stranded/extraposed (as in the singular comitative).



This brings us to the question of equal participation. As previously stated, a plural comitative implies that the referent of the complement of *with* takes an equal part in the event described by the main predicate. Thus, in (27a), the hero as well as the sorcerer must actually be flying. On the other hand, a singular comitative imposes no such restriction: in (27b), the hero may be flying on his own (equal participation) or may be carried by the sorcerer (unequal participation).

27. a) Koldun s bogatyrem leteli po nebu.
 sorcerer-Nom with hero-Instr flew-Msg across sky
 'The sorcerer and the hero flew across the sky.'
- b) Koldun leteli po nebu s bogatyrem.
 sorcerer-Nom flew-Msg across sky with hero-Instr
 'The sorcerer flew across the sky with the hero.'

How can we account for this difference, given our unified analysis of singular and plural comitatives? We capture it by underspecifying the vocabulary item *with* for (un)equal participation: *with/s* is used whenever the presupposition [perceived as a unit] (28) is satisfied.

28. $\llbracket \text{perceived as a unit} \rrbracket = \lambda x \in D_e . \lambda y \in D_e : x \text{ and } y \text{ are perceived as a unit. the individual consisting of } x \text{ and } y$

Conditions on which readings are available where will be specified later. It is important to remember that the functional node hosting *with/s* is not underspecified: only the lexical item is.

2.3. Arguments against VP-adjunction

In this section, we provide evidence that in singular comitatives the *with*-phrase is associated with a DP and not with the VP.

First of all, a *with*-phrase does not have to be associated with subjects. It can be associated with direct objects (29a), indirect objects (29b), or possessives (29c).

29. a) Ja priglasila Ceciliju s Annabelloj
 1sg-Nom invited-Fsg Cecilia-Acc with Annabella
 ‘I invited Cecilia and Annabella/?Cecilia with Annabella’
 b) Korol’ otdal korolevstvo princu s Zoluškoj.
 king gave kingdom-Acc prince-Dat with Cinderella
 ‘The king gave the kingdom to the prince and Cinderella.’
 c)? Dašin s Mašej portret nam očen' ponravilsja.
 Dasha-poss with Masha-Instr portrait us very appealed
 ? ‘We liked Dasha and Masha’s portrait a lot.’

It follows from compositional semantics that if a VP-adjunct is to be associated with the subject, this adjunct must be base-generated in a specific position inside a VP. But if this VP-adjunct can also be interpreted as associated with a non-subject, (as in (29)), then a VP-adjunction analysis (e.g., Vassilieva 2001) would need to say something additional about its base-generation site. It is unclear how a VP-internal adjunct can be interpreted to modify a possessive or how a high VP-adjunct can modify an object or an indirect object.

A possible solution may be to say that the cases in (29) do not involve VP-adjunction at all, but are all cases of DP-coordination (i.e., plural comitatives). However, the *with*-phrase associated with a non-subject position can be extracted, as in (30), which is a problem for the coordination analysis (violation of the Coordinate Structure Constraint (Ross 1967))⁶. The possibility of wh-

⁶ This argument crucially depends on the analysis of *Eleni s Parisom* in (30) as a comitative construction. See the discussion concerning examples (31-32) for why this

extraction out of a non-subject position is in fact our Prediction B1 in (10).

30. a) Afrodita poznamomila Elenu s Parisom
 Aphrodite acquainted Helen-Acc with Paris-Instr
 ‘Aphrodite introduced Helen to Paris.’
 b) S kem Afrodita poznamomila Elenu?
 With who Aphrodite acquainted Helen-Acc
 ‘To whom did Aphrodite introduce Helen?’

Another problem for the VP-adjunction analysis concerns optionality. Adjuncts cannot influence argument structure. However, *with*-phrases can be obligatory, in singular comitatives (31a) as well as in plural comitatives (31b).

31. a) Nina vstretilas’ *(s učitelem).
 Nina-Nom met-Fsg-refl with teacher-Instr
 ‘Nina met (with) the teacher.’
 b) Nina *(s učitelem) vstretilis’.
 Nina-Nom with teacher-Instr met-pl-refl
 ‘Nina and the teacher met.’

Here, the *with*-phrase is used to satisfy the restriction imposed by the verb *meet* that its argument be plural. Such an effect is not restricted to the subject position, but can also be seen with *with*-phrases which are associated with direct objects, as in (32).

32. Zina poznamomila Stepana *(s učitelem).
 Zina-Nom acquainted-Fsg Stepan-Acc with teacher-Instr
 ‘Zina introduced Stephen to the teacher.’

In (31a) as well as in (32), the *with*-phrase is interpreted as an argument. Moreover, it is associated with a specific argument, which means that it cannot be a VP-adjunct, unless some modification to the theory (e.g., multiple adjunction sites) is proposed.

Moreover, our DP-adjunction analysis permits us to avoid the systematic ambiguity associated with such collective verbs as

analysis is preferable to the more traditional analysis which treats *Elenu* and *s Parisom* are two separate arguments of the verb *acquaint*.

collide, acquaint, meet, etc., which take either singular arguments associated with a *with*-phrase or plural arguments. Instead, we simply say that these verbs semantically require plural arguments, and that a *with*-phrase can contribute to the plurality of the argument that it is associated with.

Another problem for the VP-adjunction analysis concerns the interpretation of plural vs. singular comitatives. As already noted, plural comitatives in the subject position always imply/presuppose that the referent of the DP complement of *with* takes equal part in the action depicted by the main predicate. On the other hand, singular comitatives in Russian as well as in English do not force unequal participation. In (33) (ex. (iii) from Schein 1999, modeled after an example due to Lasersohn (1995:70)), *Whitehead* may be an equal participant in the event.

33. a) Russell wrote the whole of *Principia Mathematica* with Whitehead.
b) Russell, with Whitehead, wrote the whole of *Principia Mathematica*.

Proposals that posit two different lexical entries for *with* have to explain why they have such similar semantics: why the referent of the complement of *with* in singular as well as plural comitatives may be an equal participant in the event.

Finally, consider Spanish and French, which have plural pronoun comitatives but not plural comitatives. The plural pronoun comitative is illustrated in (34a) for French (Philippe Schlenker, p.c.) and in (34b) for Spanish (Camacho 2000:366, ex. (1)).

34. a) Avec mon père nous discutons souvent de la politique.
with my father 1pl discuss-1pl often politics
'My father and I often argue about politics.'
b) Con Juan pro vamos al cine.
With Juan go-1pl to-the movies
'Juan and I are going to the movies.'

The only way of formalizing the existence of plural pronoun but not regular plural comitatives is obligatory extraposition of the *with*-phrase in languages like Spanish. However, if the obligatory

extraposition option exists, there is no problem using it in English also, and then the VP-adjunction option becomes redundant.⁷

2.4. English singular comitatives

Finally, let us consider the case of English. English has no plural comitatives in the subject position. Does this mean that all English *with*-phrases are VP-adjuncts? This would be a contradiction: if the English *with*-phrase is a VP-adjunct in a specific position, how is it associated with a specific argument such as subject, object, etc.?

Suppose the English *with*-phrase is sometimes a VP-adjunct, and sometimes an argument, like the locative *on the table*. However, such PP arguments can never be associated with more than a single theta-role (cf. *to the enemy* (goal), *on the table* (locative)). English *with*-phrases behave differently from other PPs that can sometimes appear in argument positions. It is unlikely that the two *with*-phrases in (35) have the same theta role. A *with*-phrase receives the theta-role of the argument it is associated with, while other PP arguments have their own theta-role (e.g., goal).

35. a) *Livingston met with Stanley.*

b) *Nobel mixed nitroglycerine with a neutral substance.*

Thus the VP-adjunct analysis doesn't work for English either.

2.5. Summary

In this section, we have shown that the syntactic differences between singular and plural comitatives follow from the fact that the *with*-phrase raises to [Spec, IP] in plural comitatives, but is stranded in singular comitatives.

We have argued that the VP-adjunction analysis is untenable because the *with*-phrase can function as an argument and can be associated with different argument positions. Furthermore, the interpretation of *with* in singular vs. plural comitatives is very similar. The slight difference concerning (un)equal participation can be captured through underspecification (see also the next section).

⁷ The lack of a plural pronoun comitative in English is immaterial for the argument.

All of these factors lead us to conclude that the analysis of DP-adjunction is preferable to that of VP-adjunction, and that singular and plural comitatives have the same underlying syntax.

3. Information structure

If singular and plural comitatives arise from the same underlying structure, as we have argued, then why can't the complement of *with* in a plural (pronoun) comitative be interpreted as an unequal participant in the event (ex. (27))? The answer that we would like to suggest has to do with information structure.

Plural verbal agreement in a comitative is only possible if the Nominative and Instrumental DPs have the same information status – when neither is focalized (36a). Singular agreement is obligatory when either the *with*-phrase is focalized (36b) or the Nominative DP is focalized (36c).

36. a) Zoluška_i s princem_j ✓tancevali/*tancevala.
Cinderella-Nom with prince-Instr danced-pl/Fsg
'Cinderella and Prince Charming danced.'
- b) Zoluška_i S PRINCEM_j *tancevali/✓tancevala.
Cinderella-Nom with prince-Instr danced-pl/Fsg
'Cinderella danced with PRINCE CHARMING.'
- c) ZOLUŠKA_i s princem_j *tancevali/✓tancevala.
Cinderella-Nom with prince-Instr danced-pl/Fsg
'CINDERELLA danced with Prince Charming.'

This effect can be replicated with reflexive binding (37): only the nominative DP can bind the reflexive if either DP is focused.

37. a) Faina_i s GRIŠEJ_j delala svoi_i/*j/*[i+j] uroki.
Faina-Nom with Greg-Instr did-Fsg self's lessons-Acc
'Faina did **her** homework with GREG.'
- b) FAINA_i s Grišej_j delala svoi_i/*j/*[i+j] uroki.
Faina-Nom with Greg-Instr did-Fsg self's lessons-Acc
'FAINA did **her** homework with Greg.'

Thus, there is a correlation between the two DPs having the same informational status (focus/salience), and the ability of the *with*-phrase to trigger plural agreement on the verb and to participate in reflexive binding. We capture this through the

following generalization: *the with-phrase must be stranded or extraposed if its informational status is different from that of its associate*.⁸

Why should this be the case? Our hypothesis is that in Russian, two phrases in one syntactic position should have the same information status. Supporting evidence for this comes from violations of the Left Branch Condition in Russian, which are associated with the remnant having a different information status from the extracted wh-phrase.

We further suggest that elements with the same information status and assigned the same theta-role must be equal participants in the event – hence the requirement of equal participation on plural (pronoun) comitatives.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that there is only one comitative lexical item *with*, which is underspecified for vocabulary insertion. We have proposed that effects such as the participation of the *with*-phrase in collective/distributive readings, verbal agreement and reflexive binding follow from independent factors, which include: equal/non-equal participation in the event (plural individual formation); stranding/extraposition of the *with*-phrase vs. absence thereof; and same/different informational status of the main DP and the *with*-phrase. All comitative *with*-phrases are base-generated as adjuncts to their main DPs.

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⁸ In the absence of contrastive focus, the right edge of the clause is a focus position in Russian (Junghanns and Zybatow 1997). This means that in all singular comitatives the *with*-phrase bears focus.

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