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**Agreement with disjointed subjects in Russian**

**Abstract**

This study investigates agreement patterns in sentences with disjointed subjects, focusing on cases in the Russian language where the disjuncts differ in person. Using acceptability judgment experiments, I analyzed how different agreement patterns are rated by native speakers. The findings confirm that the resolved agreement received the highest ratings, while third-person plural, third-person singular and closest disjunct agreement are also possible patterns. These results align with patterns seen in conjoined subjects but show additional complexities unique to disjointed constructions. The type of conjunction (coordinating *ili* ‘or’ vs. correlative *ili ... ili* ‘either ... or’) did not significantly affect agreement patterns. This may suggest that the semantics of disjunction has little influence on the choice of agreement patterns, despite the correlative conjunction typically indicates an exclusive disjunction. Future research should explore the effects of different word orders and disjunctions with first and second-person pronouns to clarify these findings further.

*Keywords:* disjointed subjects, person agreement, experimental syntax, Russian language

## **1 Introduction**

Agreement in grammar, particularly subject-verb agreement, is a fundamental aspect of syntactic structure. In many languages, including Russian, verbs agree with their subjects in number and person (for Russian, this applies to non-past tenses). However, the rules governing agreement can become complex, especially when subjects involve conjunctions or disjunctions.

This study aims to explore the possible patterns of agreement with disjointed subjects in Russian, providing both theoretical insights and experimental data. By examining these patterns, I seek to understand how Russian speakers resolve agreement in sentences where disjointed subjects differ in person.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Sections 1.1 and 1.2 introduce the topic, encompassing both theoretical and experimental backgrounds on agreement with disjointed subjects, as well as discussion on agreement with coordinated subjects in Russian. Section 2 details the experimental study conducted, while Section 3 offers a discussion of the findings. Finally, Section 4 concludes the paper, summarizing the key points.

### 1.1 Agreement with disjoined subjects: Theoretical vs. experimental background

In the literature, different perspectives arise concerning agreement with disjoined subjects. According to Smith et al. (2018), a resolution strategy for the number agreement with disjoined subjects is impossible, as illustrated in example (1), see also (Morgan 1984).

- (1) *Either an owl or an elephant is / \*are playing with a bee.*

They suggest a potential resolution strategy only when disjunction is interpreted inclusively, see also Ivlieva (2012) and a Russian example in (2). This interpretation entails that the disjunction encompasses not only the options presented individually (A or B) but also allows the possibility of both options being true simultaneously (A and B together).

- (2) *Ya ne dumayu, chto Petya ili Vasya prishli / ?prishyol.*  
 I NEG think.PRS.1SG that Petya or Vasya come.PST.PL come.PST.SG  
 ‘I don’t think Petya or Vasya came’.

While these claims are grounded in the semantic nuances of disjunction, they currently lack empirical support. Below, I will outline several experimental studies that demonstrate a wider range of the resolution strategy for disjunction. I will also provide examples of experimental research showing that the semantics of disjunction does not influence agreement patterns.

I will begin with a description of two important experimental studies on agreement with disjoined subjects – Keung & Staub (2018) and Foppolo & Staub (2020). These studies are significant not only because they demonstrated the possibility of resolved agreement with disjoined subjects, but also because they showed that this agreement cannot be considered an error.

An experimental study by Keung and Staub (2018) explored agreement with disjoined subjects in English. They examine disjunctions involving nouns with matching and mismatching number features. The experiment employed a forced-choice task, where participants were required to select between two agreement options – singular or plural. The findings indicated that in 20% of instances involving disjunctions of two singular nouns, participants opted for plural agreement. This cannot be considered an error, as instances of clearly ungrammatical agreement received lower percentages. Moreover, this pattern cannot be classified as agreement attraction. Agreement attraction refers to a phenomenon in which the agreement between a verb and its subject is influenced by a nearby noun phrase, which may result in incorrect agreement. For example, in a sentence like *The key to the cabinets are on the table*, the plural noun *cabinets* attracts the verb to incorrectly agree in number, despite the singular subject *key*. In the case of the disjunction of two singular nouns, neither acts as an attractor. Additionally, the experiment included sentences with clear cases of attraction, and these also received significantly lower percentages.

Another study, conducted by Foppolo and Staub (2020), also explored agreement patterns in English. This study included the Italian language as well, given its more complex verbal morphology. The researchers investigated instances of disjunction involving two singular nouns. Their methodology included both acceptability judgments and eye-tracking techniques. Interestingly, in Italian, there was not a big difference in how acceptable people found singular and plural agreement. However, in English, although both singular and plural agreement were considered acceptable, there was a slight preference for singular agreement over plural. Eye-

tracking data showed no significant disruptions when participants read sentences with plural agreement.

A recent study by Himmelreich and Hartmann (2023) on the German language also confirms the possibility of resolved agreement with disjunction, aligning with findings from previous research on English and Italian. Using various word orders in their sentences, they employed an acceptability judgment methodology. Similar to previous studies, their findings revealed that when two singular noun phrases are disjoined, both singular and plural agreement are possible. Additionally, unlike the previous two studies, Himmelreich and Hartmann’s research examined cases where the disjuncts differed in person – a scenario similar to my own experiments, which I will describe below (see Section 2). When disjuncts mismatched in person, plural agreement was preferred, particularly in the third-person plural.

I will now turn to experimental studies demonstrating that the semantics of disjunction does not significantly influence the distribution of agreement strategies with disjoined subjects.

The first study to mention is by Marušič and Shen (2021), which focused on Slovenian. They examined agreement patterns with subjects joined by the conjunction *ali ... ali pa* ‘either ... or,’ which typically expresses exclusive disjunction. They investigated how disjuncts with matching and mismatching gender influence agreement. Using a guided elicitation method, participants were first given sentences with non-disjoined subjects, followed by disjunctions, and asked to integrate them into the sentences. Contrary to the theoretical assumptions mentioned earlier, which predicted that resolved agreement would be impossible in such constructions with exclusive disjunction, the study found that resolved agreement is indeed possible.

Two other experimental studies on the influence of disjunction semantics are from the aforementioned works of Foppolo and Staub (2020) and Himmelreich and Hartmann (2023). In these studies, similar experiments were conducted. The researchers compared the agreement patterns of verbs that typically allow only exclusive disjunction (such as “to win” or “to become the next CEO of the company”) with other verbs. However, no significant difference was observed in the behavior of these two types of verbs.

In the study by Foppolo and Staub (2020), an additional experiment was conducted to investigate the influence of disjunction semantics on agreement. The researchers compared contexts that trigger the inclusive interpretation of disjunction with those where such interpretation usually does not arise. The inclusive interpretation of disjunction can occur in contexts like conditional clauses (e.g., “If Chuck meets with Brian or Lyn after lunch, he’ll miss the colloquium” – meaning he might meet both) and negation (e.g., “Chuck won’t meet with Brian or Lyn after lunch” – implying he won’t meet with both). However, the contexts that allowed for the inclusive interpretation of disjunction did not result in the expected increase in ratings for resolved agreement.

These experimental studies demonstrate that agreement with disjoined subjects can follow various agreement patterns and that the impact of disjunction interpretation on agreement is minimal. Although the experiments described above use different methodologies, they all show that a resolution strategy for agreement with disjoined subjects is possible. Additionally, as shown by Keung and Staub (2018) and Foppolo and Staub (2020), such agreement is neither an error nor a case of attraction. Therefore, we can expect this agreement pattern in Russian. Furthermore, several studies I described found that the semantics of disjunction – whether it is exclusive or inclusive – does not significantly influence agreement patterns. This finding is

important for my research, as I will be investigating two types of disjunctive conjunctions: *ili* ‘or’ and *ili ... ili* ‘either ... or’, with the latter generally indicating exclusive disjunction.

## 1.2 Agreement with coordinated subjects with different person features in Russian

In my study, I am focus on constructions where the conjuncts differ in person. Specifically, I examine non-past tenses, as Russian requires agreement in both person and number in these cases. When conjuncts do not match in person, Russian grammars and style guides (Shvedova et al. 1980, Rozental’ et al. 1994) typically prescribe resolved agreement. This means the verb should agree in the plural form, with person determined according to the person hierarchy 1 > 2 > 3 (Zwicky 1977), as illustrated in examples (3)-(4). However, these rules are mainly discussed in the context of conjunctions, and it remains unclear how well they apply to disjunctions.

- (3) *Ya i on pridyom.* (Shvedova et al. 1980: 244)  
 I and he come.FUT.1PL  
 ‘I and he will come’.
- (4) *Ty i tvoi rodnye ne edete.* (Shvedova et al. 1980: 244)  
 you and your relatives NEG go.PRS.2PL  
 ‘You and your family are not going’.

However, even with conjunctions, the situation is not as straightforward. In our previous research (Belova & Davidyuk 2023), we conducted several experimental studies on agreement with conjunctions where the conjuncts differed in person. We manipulated both word order and conjunct order using an acceptability judgment methodology. Our findings revealed that resolved agreement – in our case, the first-person plural agreement, as one of the conjuncts was always the first-person pronoun – received the highest acceptability ratings. However, other agreement patterns were also observed in our studies. In sentences with VS word order, agreement with the closest conjunct was seen as a possible choice. This indicates that word order can influence agreement patterns, making traditional grammar rules more complex. Moreover, we discovered that third-person plural agreement was rated significantly higher than ungrammatical fillers, even in cases where no third-person conjuncts were present (such as in coordinated subjects like *ya i ty* ‘I and you’ / *ty i ya* ‘you and I’). This finding suggests that third-person plural agreement might serve as a default option when the standard computation of person features fails. This third-person plural agreement can be seen as a violation of the person hierarchy in Russian, where the first person is supposed to take precedence over the second, and the second over the third. Notably, a similar violation of the person hierarchy has also been observed in some Germanic languages (Timmermans et al. 2004).

These insights reveal the flexibility and variability in agreement patterns with conjunctions and suggest that the mechanisms behind agreement in Russian are more nuanced and complex than previously thought. This sets the stage for further exploration of disjoined subjects to better understand how these patterns apply and whether similar variability is observed in this context.

Research on agreement with disjoined subjects in Russian is limited. A notable study by Pekelis (2013) explores constructions with the conjunction *ili ... ili* ‘either ... or’. Although this conjunction typically implies an exclusive disjunction, corpus data indicates the possibility of

both singular and plural agreement. However, Pekelis’ study focused on noun coordination and did not address cases of person mismatch.

My research aims to address this gap by examining how disjoined subjects with person mismatches agree with verbs in Russian. I will use experimental methods, specifically the acceptability judgment methodology. This approach is particularly valuable due to the limited corpus data available for these constructions, and it allows for controlled manipulation of variables that may affect agreement patterns.

## 2 Experimental study

This section outlines the design, methodology, hypotheses and results of the experimental study aimed that investigates how verbs agree with disjoined subjects differing in person in Russian.

### 2.1 Design

My study consisted of two experiments in which participants evaluated sentences on a Likert scale from 1 (totally unacceptable) to 7 (totally acceptable). In both experiments, I used subjects with disjuncts differing in person: one disjunct was the first-person singular pronoun *ya* ‘I’, while the other was a masculine proper name. Cases where the disjuncts also differ in number were not included, as this would complicate the experiment and require a separate study. The two experiments differed in the order of the disjuncts: in the first experiment, the personal pronoun was the first disjunct, while in the second experiment, it was the second disjunct.

All experiments had a 2×4 design. The first independent variable had two levels, representing the type of conjunction: a coordinative conjunction *ili* ‘or’ or a correlative conjunction *ili ... ili* ‘either ... or’. The second independent variable had four levels, representing the agreement patterns: first-person singular, first-person plural, third-person singular and third-person plural. Word order was fixed across all sentences, specifically the SV order. This is important because word order is one of the main factors influencing agreement variability with coordinated subjects in Russian: the VS order favors closest conjunct agreement. Transitive perfective verbs in the non-past tense were used in all sentences. I aimed to avoid predicates that only permit an exclusive interpretation of disjunction to minimize the influence of this factor (though, as discussed in other studies outlined in Section 1.1, this could still be a minor influencing factor). Examples of one lexicalization for the first and second experiments are provided in (5) and (6) respectively.

- (5) [Ya ili Vasya / Ili ya, ili Vasya] [vypolnyu / vypolnim /  
 I or Vasya either I or Vasya complete.FUT.1SG complete.FUT.1PL  
 vypolnit / vypolnyat] eto slozhnoe zadanie.  
 complete.FUT.3SG complete.FUT.3PL this difficult task  
 ‘I or Vasya / Either I or Vasya will complete this difficult task’.

- (6) [Vasya ili ya / Ili Vasya, ili ya] [vypolnyu / vypolnim /  
 Vasya or I either Vasya or I complete.FUT.1SG complete.FUT.1PL  
 vypolnit / vypolnyat] eto slozhnoe zadanie.  
 complete.FUT.3SG complete.FUT.3PL this difficult task  
 ‘Vasya or I / Either Vasya or I will complete this difficult task’.

In each experiment, there were 8 conditions, each represented by four different lexicalizations, resulting in a total of 32 experimental sentences. These sentences were mixed with an equal number of filler sentences. The fillers included both grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. To ensure participants’ attention, I included four control questions, each following a grammatical filler sentence. Additionally, three training sentences were presented before the start of the experiment. In total, each experiment consisted of 67 sentences.

I had two types of grammatical fillers. The first type consisted of sentences without any disjunction, while the second type included sentences with disjunction in the direct object position. The ungrammatical fillers were also divided into two types. In the first type, the subject contained a disjunction with disjuncts matching in person features (they were masculine proper nouns), but the agreement was incorrect (first-person plural). The second type of ungrammatical fillers lacked disjunctions but contained an error in the agreement between a demonstrative pronoun, an adjective, and a noun in the direct object group.

The experimental lists were organized using a Latin square design, which helps control for order effects and ensures that each condition appears in each position equally often across participants. The sentences were presented in a randomized sequence, following a pattern of: *experimental sentence – filler – experimental sentence – filler*, and so on.

## 2.2 Hypotheses

Based on previous research, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Resolved agreement – the first-person plural agreement – will be the most acceptable agreement pattern. This is supported by the traditional rules of Russian grammar, which prescribe resolved agreement in cases when conjuncts differ in person. Given the person hierarchy (1 > 2 > 3), where the first person is prioritized, I expect participants to prefer the first-person plural form.

Although resolved agreement is expected to be dominant, other agreement patterns will also be observed.

I expect to observe third-person plural agreement. This hypothesis is based on previous studies (Belova & Davidyuk 2023) that found third-person agreement possible with coordinated subjects differing in person features.

I expect that agreement with the closest disjunct will be possible. This agreement pattern was found acceptable in the experiments conducted by Himmelreich and Hartmann (2023) on disjoined subjects differing in person in German, and in the experiments by Marušič and Shen (2021) on disjoined subjects differing in gender in Slovenian.

Lastly, I hypothesize that the type of conjunction (coordinating *ili* ‘or’ vs. correlative *ili ... ili* ‘either ... or’) will influence agreement patterns. Given that the correlative conjunction may emphasize an exclusive interpretation of disjunction, it is expected to result in lower acceptability for resolved agreement. On the other hand, previous experimental studies on other

languages (see Section 1.1) have not found significant differences in agreement patterns based on the interpretation of disjunction. Therefore, this hypothesis is somewhat weaker compared to others.

### 2.3 Participants

The experiment was conducted using the PCIBex platform (Zehr & Schwarz 2018). Participants were recruited via the Yandex.Toloka crowdsourcing platform. This approach ensured a diverse pool of native Russian speakers.

Before analyzing the ratings, I screened out participants whose responses were unreliable. Exclusions were based on the following criteria: a) significant deviations from expected ratings for grammatical and ungrammatical fillers compared to other participants; b) unusually quick responses (less than 300 milliseconds); c) skipping more than three sentences; d) incorrect answers to half or more of the control questions.

In the first experiment, 84 individuals participated, with 10 of them being discarded from the analysis. Among the participants, 43 were male, 29 were female, and 2 did not respond to the gender question. The average age of participants was 40 years (SD = 14).

In the second experiment, there were 84 participants, with 8 being discarded from the analysis. Among them, 44 were male and 32 were female. The average age of participants was 36 years (SD = 11).

### 2.4 Results

For the statistical analysis, all ratings were z-normalized to address scale bias, which occurs when respondents use rating scales inconsistently. Z-normalization corrects for this by: 1) centering ratings (adjusting ratings based on each respondent's average, accounting for individual rating tendencies); 2) standardizing distance (measuring how each rating deviates from the respondent's mean using the standard deviation). The primary statistical method used was mixed linear modeling, with Tukey post hoc comparisons for pairwise analyses. The maximal model was selected using the `buildmer` package. Random and fixed effects were manually adjusted.

Figure 1 shows the interaction plot for the results of the first experiment. On the left side, ratings for grammatical and ungrammatical fillers are represented by a dotted line. On the right side, ratings for different agreement patterns are depicted: solid lines for constructions with the conjunction *ili* 'or' and dashed lines for constructions with the conjunction *ili ... ili* 'either ... or'.

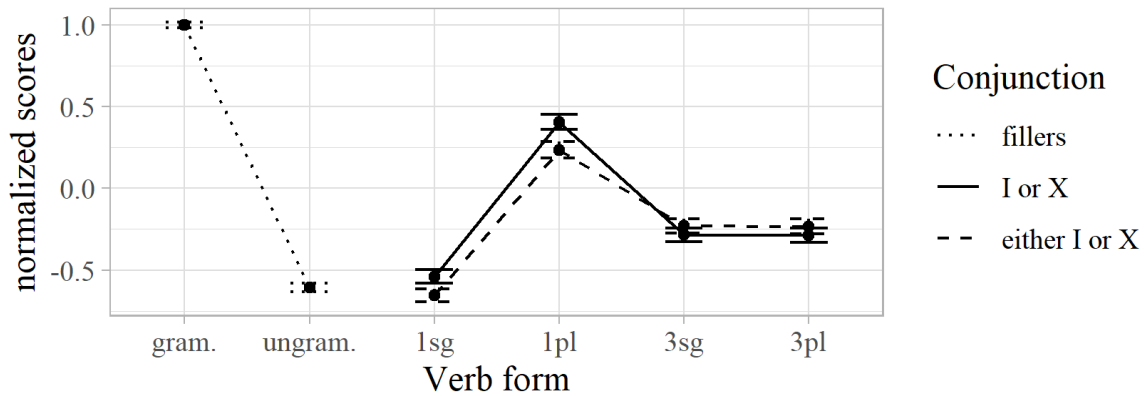


Figure 1. Interaction plot for the first experiment

The formula of the linear mixed model for the results of the first experiment is presented in (7) (where “id” represents the participant’s identification number). This model indicates that the agreement pattern is the only significant factor, while the type of conjunction does not have a significant effect on the agreement patterns.

$$(7) \quad z\text{-scores} \sim 1 + \text{agreement} + (1 + \text{agreement} + \text{conjunction} \mid \text{id})$$

The first-person plural agreement receives the highest ratings. When shifting from the coordinating conjunction *ili* ‘or’ to the correlative conjunction *ili ... ili* ‘either or’, the ratings slightly decrease, but this change is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.93$ ).

Following in the ranking of agreement patterns are the third-person plural and the third-person singular. These two patterns did not significantly differ from each other ( $p$ -value equals 1 or close to 1 for all condition pairs). Both third-person plural and third-person singular agreements were rated significantly higher than ungrammatical fillers, as determined by Welch’s  $t$ -test ( $p = 1.101\text{e-}09$  for 3pl with ‘or’ and ungrammatical fillers;  $p = 2.125\text{e-}12$  for 3pl with ‘either ... or’ and ungrammatical fillers;  $p = 4.474\text{e-}10$  for 3sg with ‘or’ and ungrammatical fillers;  $p = 1.156\text{e-}12$  for 3sg with ‘either ... or’ and ungrammatical fillers).

In contrast, the first-person singular agreement was rated at the level of ungrammatical fillers, and according to Welch’s  $t$ -test, its ratings do not differ from those of ungrammatical fillers ( $p = 0.1793$  for 1sg with ‘or’ and ungrammatical fillers;  $p = 0.326$  for 1sg with ‘either ... or’ and ungrammatical fillers).

Figure 2 illustrates the interaction plot presenting the results of the second experiment.

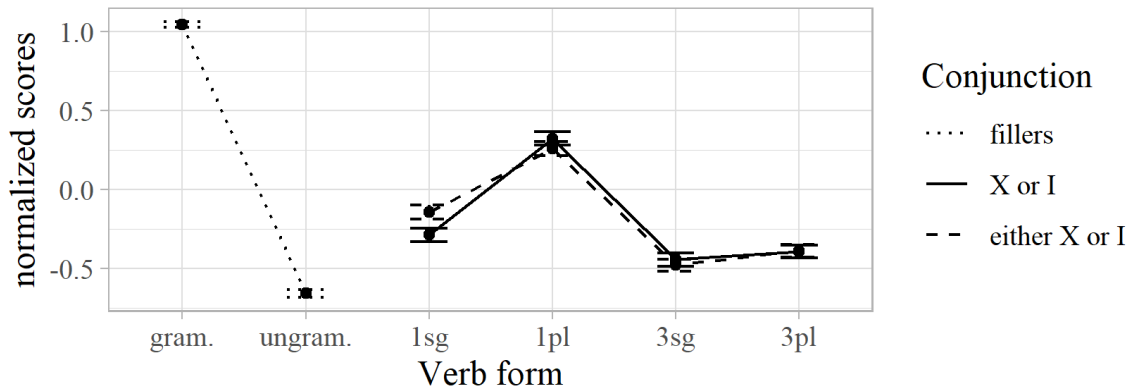


Figure 2. Interaction plot for the second experiment

The formula for the linear mixed model regarding the results of the second experiment is provided in (8) (where “id” represents the participant’s identification number and “sentence\_id” denotes the sentence number). As in the first experiment, the agreement pattern remains the only significant factor.

$$(8) \quad z\text{-scores} \sim 1 + \text{agreement} + (1 + \text{agreement} + \text{conjunction} \mid \text{id}) + (1 \mid \text{sentence\_id})$$

The first-person plural agreement receives the highest ratings. Next comes the first-person singular agreement. Transitioning from the coordinating conjunction to the correlative one resulted in a slight increase in ratings for this agreement pattern, but this change was not significant ( $p = 1$ ).

Similar to the first experiment, there was no significant difference between the ratings for the third-person plural and third-person singular agreement patterns ( $p$ -value equals 1 or is close to 1 for all pairs of conditions). Both third-person plural and third-person singular agreements were rated significantly higher than ungrammatical fillers, as indicated by Welch’s  $t$ -test:  $p = 1.98\text{e-}08$  for 3pl with ‘or’ and ungrammatical fillers;  $p = 5.348\text{e-}08$  for 3pl with ‘or’ and ungrammatical fillers;  $p = 1.614\text{e-}05$  for 3sg with ‘or’ and ungrammatical fillers;  $p = 0.0001167$  for 3sg with ‘either ... or’ and ungrammatical fillers.

### 3 Discussion

In Section 2.2, I outlined the following hypotheses.

1. Resolved agreement will be the most acceptable strategy.
2. Third-person plural agreement will also be observed as acceptable.
3. Closest disjunct agreement will be possible.
4. The use of the correlative conjunction *ili ... ili* ‘either ... or’, which tends to express exclusive disjunction, will lower the acceptability ratings for resolved agreement (a weaker hypothesis).

Not all my hypotheses were confirmed, but several key findings did align with my expectations. Firstly, resolved agreement received the highest ratings, supporting the idea that this pattern is the most acceptable to native Russian speakers when conjuncts or disjuncts differ in person.

This observed possibility of resolved agreement contradicts theoretical expectations about disjunction but aligns with results from other experimental studies in different languages (see Section 1.1).

Additionally, the possibility of third-person plural agreement was confirmed, as well as agreement with the closest disjunct. These results highlight the flexibility in agreement patterns with disjoined subjects in Russian.

However, my hypothesis that the type of conjunction (either the coordinating *ili* ‘or’ or the correlative *ili ... ili* ‘either ... or’) would significantly impact agreement patterns was not supported by the data. Despite the expectation that the correlative conjunction, which emphasizes exclusive disjunction, might lead to lower acceptability of resolved agreement, no significant effect of conjunction type on agreement patterns was found. This result may suggest that the semantics of disjunction has minimal impact on the choice of agreement patterns, a finding also observed in the studies conducted by Foppolo and Staub (2020) and Himmelreich and Hartmann (2023) (see Section 1.1).

Unexpectedly, third-person singular agreement was rated similarly to third-person plural agreement. In the first experiment (with the disjunct order ‘I or Vasya’ / ‘either I or Vasya’), third-person singular agreement corresponds to the closest disjunct agreement, which is why it is rated higher than ungrammatical fillers. However, in the second experiment (with the disjunct order ‘Vasya or I’ / ‘either Vasya or I’), the third-person singular agreement again receives higher ratings than ungrammatical fillers. Notably, in the second experiment, this agreement does not reflect the first disjunct agreement, as the first disjunct agreement in the first experiment (first-person singular agreement with the disjunct order ‘I or Vasya’ / ‘either I or Vasya’) was rated on par with ungrammatical fillers. This pattern suggests that third-person singular agreement may emerge as a default option.

When comparing the agreement strategies for disjunction with those for conjunction (Belova & Davidyuk 2023), we observe both similarities and differences. The possible and impossible agreement strategies for conjoined and disjoined subjects are summarized in Table 1.

| Agreement strategy              | Conjoined subjects | Disjoined subjects |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Resolved agreement (1pl)        | Most acceptable    | Most acceptable    |
| Third-person plural agreement   | Acceptable         | Acceptable         |
| Third-person singular agreement | Unacceptable       | Acceptable         |
| Closest conjunct agreement      | Unacceptable       | Acceptable         |
| First conjunct agreement        | Unacceptable       | Unacceptable       |

Table 1. Agreement strategies with conjoined and disjoined subjects with different person features in Russian  
 (for SV word order)

In both contexts, the most acceptable strategy is the resolved agreement, where the verb agrees in the plural form and follows the person hierarchy rules. It reflects the standard prescriptive rule in Russian grammar. Additionally, third-person plural agreement is also a possible option in both disjunction and conjunction contexts.

However, notable differences emerge in disjunction contexts. With disjoined subjects, other agreement options are possible, such as closest disjunct agreement and third-person singular agreement. These patterns are not typically observed with conjoined subjects.

The unified structural approach (Figure 3) posits that both conjoined and disjoined subjects share a similar syntactic structure. This model is supported by the observation that both types of subject groups can exhibit resolved agreement (where the verb agrees in the plural form, following the person hierarchy rules) and third-person plural agreement.

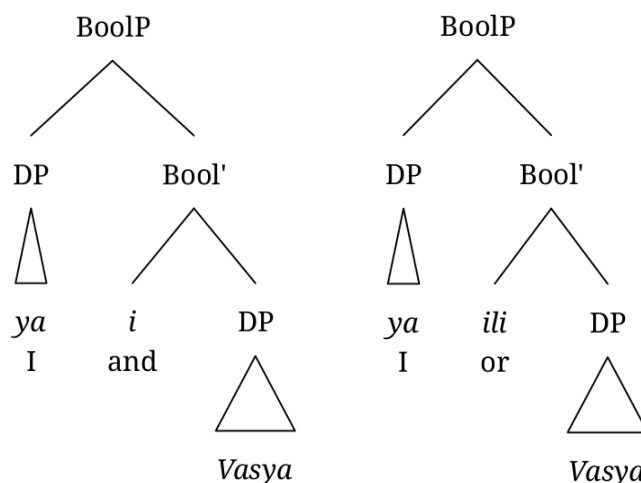


Figure 3. Unified structure for conjoined and disjoined subjects

However, disjunction also allows additional agreement options, such as closest disjunct agreement and third-person singular agreement.

I think that the third-person singular agreement can also be explained through the unified structure for conjoined and disjoined subjects. This can be achieved by adopting the approach of Himmelreich and Hartmann (2023). According to this approach, the disjunction node lacks the plural feature [ind], which is present in the conjunction node. This absence permits variability in agreement patterns, including the possibility of both plural and singular agreement. In Russian, the third-person singular agreement might serve as a default option when the computation of the person feature fails. Instead of selecting the intended value from the person hierarchy (where the first person has the highest precedence), the agreement defaults to the third person, which is considered the default person value.

Regarding agreement with the closest conjunct, it can be explained through ellipsis. For example, the elided part can be restored in Russian without losing grammaticality (9a-b). However, this is not a strong argument for ellipsis, as there is insufficient evidence to suggest that disjunction forms a constituent in some constructions but not in others. Further research on agreement with the closest disjunct or conjunct in Russian is necessary.

- (9) a. *Vasya* ~~*vypolnit*~~ *ili ya* *vypolnyu* *eto slozhnoe zadanie.*  
       *Vasya* complete.FUT.3SG or I complete.FUT.1SG this difficult task
- b. *Vasya* *vypolnit* *ili ya* *vypolnyu* *eto slozhnoe zadanie.*  
       *Vasya* complete.FUT.3SG or I complete.FUT.1SG this difficult task  
       ‘*Vasya* (will complete) or I will complete this difficult task’.

In summary, while the unified structural approach provides a useful framework for understanding agreement patterns in both conjunction and disjunction contexts, the additional variability observed with disjoined subjects calls for further exploration. Specifically, the phenomena of third-person singular agreement and closest disjunct agreement necessitate additional theoretical and empirical investigation to fully understand their mechanisms.

## 4 Conclusion

In this study, I explored the agreement patterns in Russian with disjoined subjects that differ in person. My findings reveal several important insights. Firstly, the resolved agreement, where the verb agrees with the person hierarchy (1 > 2 > 3), received the highest acceptability ratings. Additionally, the third-person plural agreement and the closest disjunct agreement also emerged as possible patterns. Contrary to my expectations, the type of conjunction (coordinating *ili* ‘or’ vs. correlative *ili ... ili* ‘either ... or’) did not significantly affect the agreement patterns. Unexpectedly, third-person singular agreement was rated higher than expected, suggesting it might act as a default option in cases where person feature computation fails.

Comparing agreement patterns for disjunction with those for conjunction reveals both similarities and differences. For both contexts, the resolved agreement strategy is most acceptable, and third-person plural agreement is also possible. However, disjunction allows for additional agreement patterns, such as closest disjunct agreement and third-person singular agreement, which are not typically observed with conjunction.

More research is needed to explore these findings further. Future studies should examine the impact of different word orders on agreement patterns and explore disjunctions involving personal pronouns of the first and second person. Investigating these variables will help determine if the observed agreement patterns hold consistently across different syntactic structures. Additionally, examining disjunctions with first and second-person pronouns will help confirm whether the third-person singular and the third-person plural agreement patterns are indeed default options when person feature computation fails.

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## Abbreviations

1/2/3 — 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> person, FUT: future tense, NEG: negation, PL: plural, PRS: present tense, PST: past tense, SG: singular.

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