

# Adjunctive Coordination: The case of German *samt*

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ELM 4, June 10, 2026

# Coordination vs. DP-comitatives

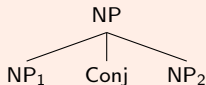
- (1) a. **Coordination:** The mother **and her child** \*has/have arrived  
b. **Comitative:** The mother **along with her child** has/have arrived

**Note:** I use *comitative* broadly, encompassing things like *with*, *along with*, *included*, *together with*, ... (English) and *samt*, *mitsamt*, *nebst*, *zusammen/gemeinsam mit*, *inklusive*, *einschließlich*, *unter Einschluss von* *unter Hinzuziehung von...* (German), even though their precise meanings vary **Terminology:** I will call structure of form *x comitative y* a *comitative-modified DP*

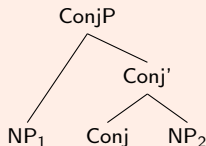
- Comitative-modified DPs can convey similar meanings to coordinated DPs
- Comitative-modified singular DPs are sometimes compatible with plural verb inflection (unlike VP-comitatives, not discussed here, see [Rimon 2026](#) for discussion of the differences)
- Coordination remains controversial, but comitatives are clearly adjunctive (2c):

Nevens and Weisser (2019): Three potential structures for coordination

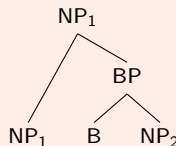
a. Flat



b. Projective



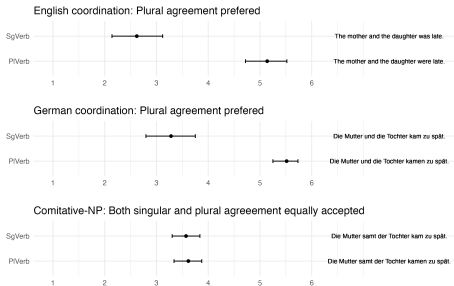
c. Adjunctive



# Plural or singular agreement?

- Quirk et al. (1985, 761): 'quasi-coordinators' like *along with*, ... generally require singular agreement but sometimes allow for 'notional' plural agreement
- McNally (1993): Comitatives in Russian can create a structured **group** individual (or 'impure atom') licensing plural agreement. What about *samt*?

(2) Der Vater samt (dem) Sohn war/waren...  
the.nominative father.nominative along.with (the.dative) son was/were...

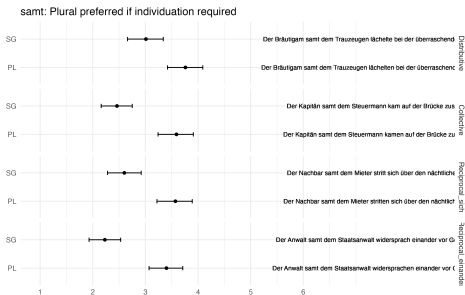


- *samt* compatible with either agreement, while coordination clearly prefers plural  
Note also that ratings of *samt* are always overall lower, maybe because its infrequent and informal, maybe some would prefer *mitsamt*, maybe because its meaning requires more context (see below)

# Can comitative-modified DPs create true plurals?

McNally (1993) are not like plurals, and e.g. incompatible with distributive readings.

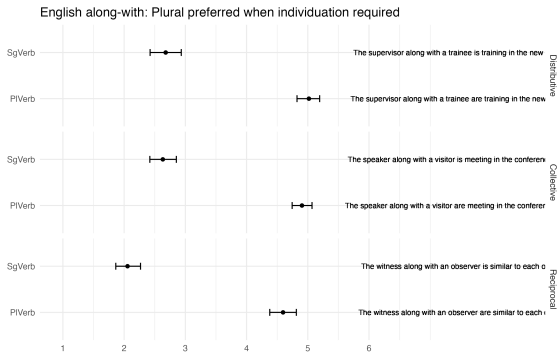
What about *samt*?



- *samt* appears compatible with obligatorily distributive, collective, and reciprocal predication, **but only if verb has plural agreement**
- This suggests that *samt* can create a true plural meaning—as also argued in Dalrymple et al. (1998) for Russian comitatives
- Subject-verb appears to be semantic and tracks the subject's denotation
- That predicate-type can favor plural agreement is also observed in Burukina (2024) for Russian

# Can comitative-modified DPs create true plurals?

English *along with* is similar to *samt* in this regard:

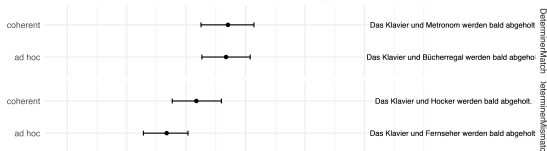


- Comitative-modified singular DPs are compatible with plural-requiring predicates—but only with plural agreement on the verb
- Verbal agreement tracks number of the subject denotation

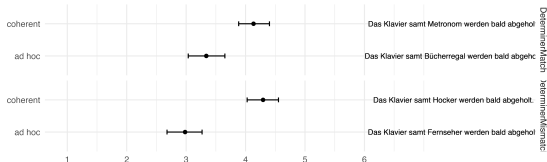
# Comitatives still differ in meaning from Coordination

- Comitative-modified DPs denote a coherent whole: *x samt y*, e.g., lumps *x* and *y* together ('the lot!')
- Out of context, *piano along with violin* or *metronome* is somehow 'coherent', *piano along with TV* less so

Und-coordination: Coherent vs. ad hoc NPs \* matching vs. mismatching determiner



Samt-adjuncts: Coherent vs. ad hoc NPs \* matching vs. mismatching determiner



This recalls the relatedness condition observed for Russian comitatives in McNally (1993); Dalrymple et al. (1998); Kasyanenko (2018); Rimon (2026).

# How can we reconcile these effects with plural denotation?

## Proposal:

- Comitative-modified singular DPs can be interpreted in two ways, as denoting a singular or a plural
- In both cases, they come with the conventional implicature (cf. McNally, 1993) (or presupposition?) that the modified individual(s) form a coherent whole with the accessory/tag-along individual(s)
- **Singular reading:** Leaves the denotation of the host DP unaffected
- **Plural reading:** Returns union of denotation of host and modifier DP
- **The role of agreement:** Subject-verb agreement is semantic and tracks the denotation of the subject (here it reveals how comitative was interpreted)

There are then two ways to create plural denotation: Coordination or a comitative. **How do speakers choose?**

# Choosing between different structures

- **Coordination vs, comitative choice:** Comitative not possible if no asymmetry between individuals (pragmatic: why center plurality around host?); or individuals don't form a coherent whole (presupposition failure)
- **Competition?** It might also be that adjunction is more costly than coordination and needs a pragmatic motivation (maybe by way of Grice's Manner maxims) **Note on typology:** Competition with coordination is compatible with observation that comitatives usurp the role of coordination in languages that don't have lexicalized coordinators (cf. [Stassen, 2003](#), on 'comitative strategy').

# Pragmatic choice between comitatives and coordination

- German *samt* and English *along with* pattern in ways compatible with assuming that they can create true plurals, as argued for Russian in Dalrymple et al. (1998), in addition to a singular accessory/tag-along reading
- *samt* also imposes a relatedness condition (McNally, 1993)
- Verbal agreement seems to reliably track the denotation of the subject, suggesting subject-verb agreement is semantic
- One interesting twist of *samt*—that I don't have time to talk about today—is that its complement does not need a determiner, creating the appearance of agreement of the determiner with the first conjunct

Thanks for helpful comments to ELM reviewers, and for funding from the SSHRC Insight grant program

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