

Kazakh comitative and conjunction constructions

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Abstract. Kazakh has a marker *men* which can be used to express conjunctive and comitative interpretations. Some previous studies on similar phenomena in other languages try to provide a unified analysis of the conjunctive use and the comitative use of the same particle. By investigating data on Kazakh particle *men* ‘with/and’, this paper argues that two types of construction containing the particle *men* have different structures. Evidence on agreement, plural interpretation, predicate selection, and extractions show that in one type of construction *men* serves as the conjunction coordinator, in the other type of construction *men* is a comitative postposition.

Keywords. Comitative; Conjunction; Kazakh

1. Introduction. Kazakh has a marker *men* which can be used to express conjunctive and comitative interpretations. The constructions in question are as illustrated below.¹

- (1) a. Alihan men Arujan ūrysty
 Alihan men Arujan argue-3-PST
 ‘Alihan and Arujan argued (with each other).’
 b. Arujan Alihan men ūrysty
 Arujan Alihan men argue-3-PST
 ‘Alihan and Arujan argued (with each other).’

In the two examples, the noun immediately preceding *men* and the other noun in the clause are in a relationship of togetherness.² For example, in (1a) and (1b), Alihan and Arujan are collectively involved in an event. The two examples differ in their word order. In (1a), *Arujan* is in the subject position, in (1b) the noun follows *men*.³ For convenience in illustration, I refer to the structure exemplified in (1a) as the conjunction construction and the structure exemplified in (1b) as the comitative construction.

Although few studies are conducted on these data in Kazakh, similar phenomena have been studied in Russian (McNally 1993; Dalrymple et al. 1998; Ionin & Matushansky 2002; Vassilieva & Larson 2005), Turkish (Kornfilt 2015), Mandarin (Zhang 2009), Japanese (Tatsumi & Fujiwara 2018), Paiwan (Tang 2011), Q’anjobal (Paperno 2012), and English (Kayne 1994; Zhang 2007), to name a few. In the remaining section, two proposals on the relation between the conjunction construction and the comitative construction will be reviewed. Kayne (1994) proposes that both

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¹ According to the reviewer and the consultants, there are no phonological (stress etc.) differences between *men* in the constructions; besides the syllable contact law (Gouskova 2004) in the onset consonant /m/ pertains to both uses (1a) and (1b). In this paper *men* is always spelled separately.

² The togetherness relation is required for both (1a) and (1b). In (1a), if Alihan and Arujan are not contextually provided as a group, the use of *men* will be infelicitous. The conjunction coordinator *jäne* will be preferred. In (1b), Arujan and Alihan must be agents of the same event, as explained further in Section 2.2.

³ There is another interpretation of (1a), in which *Alihan men* has a special prosody and is topicalized. Here, I focus on the default interpretation of the sentence, where no special context or prosody is required.

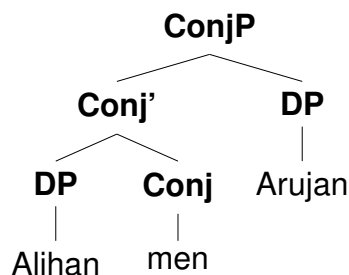
constructions have the conjunction structure. Ionin & Matushansky (2002) propose that both constructions have the comitative adjunction structure.

Kayne (1994) studies the following pair of sentences in English, and proposes that the comitative construction in English, as the conjunction construction, has the coordination structure.

- (2) a. John and Bill collided.
 b. John collided with Bill.

Lakoff & Peters (1969) propose that (2b) should be derived from (2a) by movement. Following the idea that the conjunction construction (2a) and the comitative construction (2b) are related, Kayne (1994) proposes that *John with Bill* is generated as a conjunction construction. The crucial difference between (2a) and (2b) is that the first conjunct *John* can be case licensed in (2a) when the whole phrase is in a case license position, but cannot be case licensed under the same condition in (2b). Thus, the first conjunct must move to the specifier position of IP to receive the case. The proposal, if applied to Kazakh, will predict that (1a) and (1b) have the same underlying conjunction structure, as shown below.

(3)



In both (1a) and (1b), the agent of *argue* is the conjunction phrase *Alihan men Arujan*. The difference in word order between (1a) and (1b) is caused by the case-driven movement of *Arujan* in (1b). A problem with this proposal is why movement is not required for (1a). More explanations are needed, as the same marker *men* is used in (1a) and (1b).

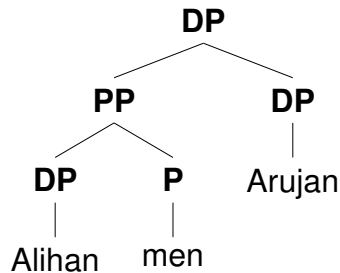
Ionin & Matushansky (2002) study the following constructions in Russian. The constructions are similar to the Kazakh *men* constructions.

- (4) a. Aleksandra s Borisom tancevali.
 Alexandra-NOM s Boris-INS dance-PL-PST
 ‘Alexandra and Boris danced.’
 b. Aleksandra tancevala s Borisom
 Alexandra-NOM dance-SG-PST s Boris-INS
 ‘Alexandra danced with Boris.’

Kayne (1994) propose that both (2a) and (2b) involve conjunctions. Ionin & Matushansky (2002) propose a different analysis for (4a) and (4b). According to Ionin & Matushansky (2002), *with*-phrases are DP adjuncts in both (4a) and (4b). The word order difference comes from whether

the *with*-phrase raises to the subject position or is stranded. The proposal, if applied to Kazakh, will predict that (1a) and (1b) have the same underlying complex structure as shown below.

(5)



In both (1a) and (1b), *men*-phrases are adjuncts. In (1a), the entire complex DP is raised to the IP specifier. In (1b), the specifier DP *Arujan* moves to the IP specifier, the PP is stranded.

This paper shows that neither analysis applies to the comitative and conjunctive constructions in Kazakh. In Section 2, based on evidence on agreement, plural interpretation, predicate selection, and extractions, it is shown that the two constructions require different analyses. There are still problems with the current proposal. In Section 3, the conjunctive construction and the comitative construction are similar in their case markings and categorical selection. These similarities are left for further analysis.

2. Against a unified analysis. As mentioned above, there have been attempts to provide a unified analysis for the conjunction and the comitative constructions. Unified analyses assume that, in the base position, the two constructions have the same structure. In this section, evidence showing the two constructions require different analyses are presented.

2.1. AGREEMENT. The first piece of evidence is that the conjunction *men* construction and the comitative *men* construction show different number agreements. In Kornfilt (2015), Kornfilt presents the following Turkish data. *La* can be used in both conjunctive and comitative constructions, as in Kazakh. The two constructions are different in many ways. For example, scrambling is allowed in (6a) but not in (6b). In addition, (6a) shows plural agreement, while (6b) shows singular agreement. The author proposes that in (6a), *la* is a conjunction coordinator, while in (6b) *la* is a postposition.

- (6) a. Hasan'la ben sinema-ya git-ti-k.
 Hasan-LA I cinema-DAT go-PAST-1.PL
 'Hasan and I went to the movies.'
- b. Hasan'la ben sinema-ya git-ti-m.
 Hasan-LA I cinema-DAT go-PAST-1.SG
 'Hasan and I went to the movies.'

Similarly, in the conjunction *men* construction in Kazakh, when both DPs are singular, the verbs show plural agreement. Examples (7) and (9) are provided by the reviewer.

- (7) Sen men Alihan süistındı.
 2.SG men Alihan kiss-PST-2.PL
 ‘You and Alihan kissed.’

Sentences with coordinator *jäne* conjunctions also show plural agreement.

- (8) Sen jäne Alihan süistındı.
 2.SG and Alihan kiss-PST-2.PL
 ‘You and Alihan kissed.’

However, in comitative *men* constructions, the verb agrees in number with the subject. When the subject is singular, singular agreement is observed.

- (9) Sen Alihan men süistın.
 2.SG Alihan men kiss-PST-2.SG
 ‘You and Alihan kissed.’

The agreement difference challenges unified analyses that treat both constructions as conjunctions (Kayne 1994) or adjuncts (Ionin & Matushansky 2002).

2.2. PLURAL FORMATION. In this section, it is shown that the conjunction and comitative constructions have different semantics. In the conjunctive use of *men*, the two conjuncts taken by *men* form a semantic plurality. In the comitative use of *men*, the subject and the DP preceding *men* do not form a plural. Two diagnostics will be used, that is, the availability of distributive readings and the ability to bind reciprocal pronouns.

In (10), the comitative *men* construction is used. The sentence only has the interpretation *Alihan came separately from Aigul*. The sentence lacks the interpretation in which Alihan and Aigul are treated as a plural whole, and this group came separately from other people.

- (10) Alihan Aigül men bölek keldı
 Alihan Aigül men separate come-PST-3
 ‘Alihan and Aigül came separately (from each other).’
 * ‘Alihan and Aigül came separately (as opposed to others).’

(11) is ambiguous between two possible readings. The first reading describes a collective event. The sentence interprets as Alihan and Aigul came separately from each other. The other reading is the one available in (10), in which Alihan and Aigul are treated as a plural group, they came separately from other people.

- (11) Alihan men Aigül bölek keldı
 Alihan men Aigül separate come-PST-3
 ‘Alihan and Aigül came separately (from each other).’
 ‘Alihan and Aigül came separately (as opposed to others).’

Plural sentences are typically ambiguous between the distributive and collective interpretations (Scha 1984). Comitative constructions only allow for the collective interpretation, and disallow the

distributive interpretation. (McNally 1993) The generalization applies to the comitative use of *men* in Kazakh. When *men* is in the comitative use instead of the conjunction use, only the collective interpretation is available.

- (12) Alihan Aigül men Aktöbege ekı ret barty
 Alihan Aigül men Aktöbe-DAT two time go-PST-3
 * ‘Alihan and Aigül each visited Aktöbe twice.’
 ‘Alihan and Aigül together visited Aktöbe twice.’

In contrast, (13) is ambiguous between the distributive and collective interpretations. Under the distributive interpretation, the sentence interprets as Alihan and Aigul each made two visits to Aktobe. A total of four visits were done. Under the collective interpretation, Alihan and Aigul made two visits to Aktobe together. A total of two visits were made.

- (13) Alihan men Aigül Aktöbege ekı ret barty
 Alihan men Aigül Aktöbe-DAT two time go-PST-3
 ‘Alihan and Aigül each visited Aktöbe twice.’
 ‘Alihan and Aigül together visited Aktöbe twice.’

These examples show that in the conjunction use, the DP *men* cluster forms a plural with the other DP. In the comitative use, the DP *men* cluster does not form a plural with the subject DP. A similar argument can be constructed with reciprocal constructions in Kazakh.

- (14) Alihan men Aigül bır-bırn süıtı
 Alihan men Aigül each other kiss-PST-3
 ‘Alihan and Aigül kissed each other.’
- (15) * Alihan Aigül men bır-bırn süıtı
 Alihan Aigül men each other kiss-PST-3
 Intended: ‘Alihan and Aigül kissed each other.’

In (14), the *men* conjunction can be the antecedent of the reciprocal pronoun *бір-бірн*. In (15), the comitative *men* construction is used. The use of reciprocal pronoun becomes ungrammatical, implying that a plural antecedent is not available.

2.3. PREDICATES SELECTION. There are predicates which can only occur with the conjunction *men* construction, but not the comitative *men* construction.

For lexically distributive predicates, conjunction constructions are allowed. The following example uses the lexically distributive predicate *like*, which expresses attitudes and is distributive in nature. The predicate can co-occur with the conjunction *men*, the sentence interprets as both Alihan and Arujan like Alihan.

- (16) Aigul men Arujan Alihandı jaqsy köredı
 Aigul men Arujan Alihan-ACC good see-PST-3
 ‘Aigul and Arujan liked Alihan.’

The same predicate is incompatible with the comitative construction. This is not predicted if one assumes a unified analysis of the conjunction and comitative constructions.

- (17) * Alihan Arujan men Alihandı jaqsy köredı
 Alihan Arujan men Alihan-ACC good see-PST-3
 Intended interpretation: ‘Alihan and Arujan liked Alihan.’

2.4. EXTRACTION. Extraction is possible for the comitative *men* construction, but not the conjunction *men* construction. In the previous section, it is shown that in the conjunction construction, the two DPs taken by *men* form a plural. The construction thus allows for distributive interpretations which are absent in the comitative constructions. In this section, the distributive interpretation is used as the diagnostics for the availability of the conjunction *men* construction. When the DP *men* clusters are separated from the other DP, the sentence obligatorily interprets as the comitative construction. The finding shows that the conjunction *men* construction does not allow extraction, while the comitative construction does.

As mentioned in the previous section, the following example with the conjunction *men* construction allows for two interpretations. The first is a distributive interpretation, in which Aigul and Alihan each visited Aktobe twice. The second is a collective interpretation, in which Aigul and Alihan visited Aktobe twice together. The distributive interpretation is unique to the conjunction *men* construction, the collective interpretation is shared between the two *men* constructions.

- (18) Aigül men Alihan Aktöbege ekı ret barty
 Aigül men Alihan Aktöbe-DAT two time go-PST-3
 ‘Aigül and Alihan visited Aktöbe twice.’

When the cluster DP-*men* is topicalized, as shown in the example below, the sentence no longer has the distributive interpretation. Only the collective interpretation is available. The sentence interprets as it is with Aigul that Alihan went to Aktobe twice together with her.

- (19) Aigül men keşe Alihan Aktöbege ekı ret barty
 Aigül men yesterday Alihan Aktöbe-DAT two time go-PST-3
 ‘Alihan, together with Aigul, visited Aktobe twice.’

The unavailability of the distributive interpretation shows that only the comitative construction, not the conjunction construction, allows for the extraction. A similar observation is made in the example below, where instead of the cluster DP *men*, the other DP is topicalized. The sentence again has only a collective interpretation in which Aigul and Alihan went to Aktobe twice together.

- (20) Alihan keşe Aigül men Aktöbege ekı ret barty
 Alihan yesterday Aigül men Aktöbe-DAT two time go-PST-3
 ‘Aigül and Alihan visited Aktöbe twice.’

The contrast challenges unified analyses.

3. Remaining issues. Despite the differences, the conjunctive *men* constructions and the comitative *men* constructions are similar in their case markings and categorical selections, which can potentially support a unified analysis of the constructions. We leave these similarities to future studies.

3.1. CASE MARKING. *Case suspension* is a phenomenon where the case marking of one of the conjuncts can be suspended (Payne 1995; Orgun 1996; Kabak 2007; Weisser 2020). In this paper, it refers to the phenomenon in which the case marking of one of the conjuncts can be suspended. In Kazakh, *jäne* conjunction and the *men* conjunction show different suspension patterns. In the former configuration, case suspension is allowed for all preceding case-marked conjuncts as long as the conjuncts do not contain a pronoun. The dative case is used as an example, but the generalization applies to other types of case markings.

- (21) Alihan Madina(-ğa) jäne Aigül-*(ge) qarap jatyr
Alihan Madina(-dat) and Aigül-dat look aux
'Alihan is looking at Madina and Aigül.'

In (21), *jäne* conjunction is used. For the following conjunct *Aigül*, the case marking is obligatory. For the preceding conjunct *Madina*, the case marking is optional. *Men* conjunctions show a different pattern. For the DP immediately preceding *men*, case marking is strictly prohibited.

- (22) Alihan Madina(*-ä) men Aigül-ge qarap jatyr
Alihan Madina(*-dat) men Aigül-dat look aux
'Alihan is looking at Madina and Aigül.'

(22) is exactly like (21), except that the coordinator changes from *jäne* to *men*. The availability of case marking for the DP immediately preceding *jäne* and the inaccessibility of case marking for the DP immediately preceding *men* can be naturally explained if one assumes *men* in (22) is a postposition, as in the comitative use. The case suspension data can be explained if one assumes that *men* always assigns case to the noun linearly preceding it. The case of the whole conjunction is marked on the following conjunct. It should be noted that the case mismatch between the preceding and following conjuncts in *men* conjunction constructions do not preclude the possibility that *men* is a conjunction coordinator in the conjunction constructions. Based on previous studies, Al Khalaf (2018) shows that case parallelism is not required in coordination.

3.2. CATEGORICAL SELECTION. Both *men* and *jäne* can coordinate phrases, yet the phrases they select are different. *Men* has categorical selection restrictions which are absent in the use of *jäne*. As in the comitative use of *men*, the conjunction *men* can only link noun phrases, but not phrases of the other types.

- (23) * Myna men ana jent jaqsy.
this and that jent good
Intended: 'This and that jent are good.'

- (24) * Alihan Aigül-ge qarap jatyr men Aigül Alihan-ge qarap jatyr
 alihan aigul-DAT look aux conj aigul alihan-DAT look aux
 Intended: ‘Alihan is looking at Aigul and Aigul is looking at Alihan.’

4. Conclusion. In this paper, data on the Kazakh conjunction and comitative *men* constructions are presented. Preliminary evidence based on number agreement, semantic interpretations, predicate selection and extraction challenge unified analyses of the two constructions. There are still problems that are left for more studies on the syntax and semantics of these constructions.

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