# 13

# Agreement

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## 13.1   Agreement in Slavic

Agreement is a syntactic operation whereby features of a nominal element (controller, goal) are copied onto another sentential element (target, probe) with which it stands in a syntactic relation. In Slavic languages, the full set of agreement features are in use: pronominal (person, number and gender), and structural (case);[1] however, which features are copied is contingent on the features of the nominal element and the type of syntactic relation. Copied features are morphologically expressed, and hence can be read from the inflectional agreement morpheme.

The nominal element in the subject position has pronominal features and is assigned nominative case. In subject–verb agreement, the finite verb agrees with the subject *djevojčica* 'girl' in person and number, (1); and the past participle which is used to form past tenses, agrees with the subject in gender and number, (2). Internal to the subject nominal phrase, the adjective modifiers agree with the head noun *djevojčica* in gender, number, and case, (3). A relative pronoun agreeing with the subject *djevojčica* agrees with it in gender and number, (5), but not necessarily in case, (4). And, finally, a personal pronoun agrees with its antecedent *djevojčica* in gender and number, (5).

(1)   Cro.   *Djevojčica*        *ide*       *u šetnju.*
              girl.NOM.FEM.SG     go.3SG      to walk
              'Girl is going for a walk.'

(2)   Cro.   *Djevojčica*        *je*        *otišla*        *u šetnju.*
              girl.NOM.FEM.SG     aux.3SG     go.FEM.SG       to walk
              'Girl went for a walk.'

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[1]  Note that Bulgarian and Macedonian declension is reduced to nominative and vocative case with remnants of dative and accusative for personal pronouns.

(3) Cro. *Ta*           *jedna*          *dobra*
         that.NOM.FEM.SG    one.NOM.FEM.SG    good.NOM.FEM.SG
         *djevojčica*
         girl.NOM.FEM.SG
         *je      otišla*        *u šetnju.*
         aux.3SG go.FEM.SG    to walk
         'That one good girl went for a walk.'

(4) Cro. *Djevojčica*      *koja*            *je      otišla*      *u šetnju.*
         girl.NOM.FEM.SG who.NOM.FEM.SG AUX.3SG go.FEM.SG to walk
         'Girl who went for a walk.'

(5) Cro. *Ona*      *je*      *ubrala*      *cvijeće.*
         she.NOM    AUX.3SG  pick.FEM.SG   flowers
         'She has picked flowers.'

In his seminal work on agreement in Slavic, Corbett (1979, 1983, 1991, 2006) demonstrates that Slavic languages present a prime example of canonical agreement (syntactic agreement) described as redundant rather than informative, syntactically simple and morphologically faithful. That is, the feature values on the agreeing element can be predicted from the feature values on the nominal element, from (1) to (5). In addition to these regular instances of formal agreement, Corbett highlights the conditions that favor alternative agreement based on meaning (semantic agreement) that are specific to a group of controllers intrinsic to Slavic languages.

This chapter builds on Corbett's observations on syntactic and semantic agreement with special focus on agreement features and their values, as well as their interaction relative to the structural and semantic properties of the nominal element when it is placed in subject position. The topics in this chapter naturally extend to pronominal elements in subject position, which can be lexically (null subject or subjectless) and phonologically omitted (pro-dropped), with only the former affecting agreement.[2] Section 13.2 describes regular instances of formal agreement, while Section 13.3 extends the theoretical discussion to agreement alternatives. In conclusion, Section 13.4 highlights directions for further research in Slavic agreement.

## 13.2  Features in Canonical Agreement

### 13.2.1  Pronominal Features

Gender, number, and person are main agreement features (pronominal features) as they denote the subject's referent and as such their value is preserved irrespective of the structural position of the nominal element in the sentence (see also Section 13.3 on semantic agreement). In Slavic languages, pronominal features can agree independently or interact to form a unique set of values,

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[2] The reader is referred to Chapter 20 on null subjects.

as exemplified by default (third person neuter singular) or resolved (third person masculine plural) agreement.

### 13.2.1.1 Gender Agreement

In Slavic languages, gender is commonly assigned to a noun in accordance with a declension class, and by extension can be considered a lexical property of that noun (grammatical gender) (cf. Arsenijević 2021). This arbitrary but predictive nature of gender assignment combined with the morphological requirement to express an inflectional morpheme on the agreeing element allows nouns to undergo syntactic agreement in gender, irrespective of semantic or discourse constraints.[3]

Slavic languages morphologically mark syntactic agreement in three gender feature values – masculine, feminine, and neuter (in singular, and only South Slavic languages also in plural).[4]

Masculine and feminine animate nouns denote male and female referents, while neuter animate nouns denote sentients low on the animacy hierarchy. Inanimate nouns are arbitrarily assigned masculine, feminine, or neuter grammatical gender in line with the corresponding declension class. With no dedicated declension class, animacy and humanness per se are not inherent features of the Slavic gender system. However, their effects can be observed on the agreeing element, showing that these features have important consequences for gender agreement. Cases in point are Polish and Czech with designated inflectional morphology on the finite verb for human animate male subjects (Pol. virile), here exemplified by Polish in (6a) and (6b).[5, 6]

(6) a. Pol. *Chłopcy         złapali        piłkę.*
boy.NOM.VIR.PL    caught.VIR.PL   ball
'The boys caught the ball.'

   b. Pol. *Psy             złapały        piłkę.*
dog.NOM.NVIR.PL   caught.NONVIR.PL   ball
'The dogs caught the ball.'

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[3] Experimental studies on gender agreement in Slavic have confirmed that the predictive nature of gender features combined with inflectional stability reduces the incidence of agreement errors in comparison to other morphologically less rich European languages (Sekerina 2012 for Russian; Akhutina et al. 1999 for Russian; Badecker & Kuminiak 2007 for Slovak).

[4] See Slioussar & Malko (2016) for an experimental study on agreement (attraction) effects in production and comprehension of the gender feature in Russian.

[5] See Swan (2015) for extensive discussion of the Polish gender system.

[6] In Slavic, adjectival and pronominal paradigms for masculine (singular) gender distinguish animacy in the accusative case. Here, exemplified by Croatian, agreement alternations with respect to animacy can be observed with pronominal, (i), in addition to the standardly observed adjectival, (ii), agreeing elements in the direct object position. Note that in (i) the agreement is with the masculine (singular) noun that is inanimate but the relative pronoun can also be interpreted as animate, which is reflected in agreement (alternation).

(i) *Kompjuter                        koji/kojega                     sam        kupio.*
computer.NOM.MASC.SG              that.ACC.MASC.INAN/AN.SG      AUX.1SG   buy.MASC.SG
'The computer that I have bought.'

(ii) *Vidim stari                      grad.*
see.1SG old.ACC.MASC.INAN.SG      town.ACC.MASC.SG
*Vidim starog                     psa.*
see.1SG old.ACC.MASC.SG          dog.ACC.MASC.SG
'I see old town. I see old dog.'

Syntactic agreement in masculine, feminine, and neuter gender occurs primarily with the head noun in the respective gender, (1), and coordination of two nouns matching in gender, (7) (see also Section 13.3.3 on conjunct agreement).

(7) Cro.  *Učitelj*              *i*      *ravnatelj*
         teacher.NOM.MASC.SG  and  headteacher.NOM.MASC.SG
         *su*        *se*      *sreli.*
         AUX.3PL    REFL    meet.MASC.PL
         'The teacher and the headteacher have met each other.'

However, only neuter gender (third person singular) can be morphologically expressed on the agreeing element when the lexical subject is missing, as with null subjects – impersonal verbs, (8), and infinitive and sentential subjects, (9); or, when the subject lacks the relevant structural agreement feature (nominative case), as with oblique subjects, (10), and quantified noun phrases (low and high numerals and uninflecting numeral quantifiers), (11).

(8) Cze.  *Pršelo.*
         rained.NEUT.3SG
         'It rained.' (Kučerová 2018)

(9) Cze.  *Že Petr*   *nepřišel,*   *nebylo*            *dobré.*
         that Peter  NEG.came   NEG.AUX.3SG.NEUT  good.NEUT.SG
         'That Peter didn't come wasn't good.' (Kučerová 2018)

(10) Sln.  *Petru*      *je*       *ugajalo,*          *da je Metka prišla na zabavo.*
          Peter.DAT  AUX.3SG  pleased.NEUT.SG  that AUX Metka came to party
          'It pleased Peter that Metka came to the party.' (Marušič et al. 2015)

(11) Pol.  *Pięć*  *czarownic∅*       *przyjechało.*
          five   witch.GEN.NVIR.PL  arrived.NEUT.SG
          'Five witches arrived.' (Lyskawa 2020)

Similarly, only masculine gender on the agreeing element has semantic implications. Masculine gender extensively occurs with a wide range of subjects implicating its contribution to semantic agreement. In the latter case of agreement, the (animate human) masculine (plural) gender on the agreeing element is used to denote a person or a group of humans of unknown or mixed natural gender, (12), a person of (un)known gender in polite address (honorifics), (13); a male (human) individual denoted by a hybrid noun, (14); quantified noun phrases containing masculine noun (15); and, as a resolution strategy in (non)mixed-gender conjunct agreement to highlight the uniformity of a group reading rather than the conjunction of two sets, (16) and (17) (for details see Section 13.3 on agreement alternations).

(12) Cro. *Oni*            *će*      *doći*    *popodne.*
          They.NOM.MASC   will.3PL   come    in afternoon
          'They will come in the afternoon.'

(13) Cro. *Molim*     *Vas,*     *što*    *biste*      *(Vi)*        *naručili?*
          Please.1SG   you.ACC   what   would.2PL   you.NOM.PL   order.MASC.PL
          'Please, what would you like to order?'

(14) Cro. *Gospoda*            *su*       *pobjegli*      *glavom bez obzira.*
          gentlemen.NOM.FEM.SG   AUX.3PL   run.MASC.PL    frantically
          'Gentlemen frantically ran away.'

(15) Cro. *Pet/mnogo*    *dječaka*         *su*      *se*     *sudarili.*
          Five/many   boy.GEN>MASC.PL    AUX.3PL   REFL   crash.MASC.PL
          'Five/many boys have crashed.'

(16) Cro. *Majke*         *i*     *djeca*          *su*       *otišli*
          mother.NOM.FEM.PL   and   child.NOM.NEUT.PL   AUX.3PL   go.MASC.PL
          'Mothers and children went.'

(17) Cro. *Olovke*        *i*    *ravnala*         *su*      *spremljeni.*
          pencil.NOM.FEM.PL and ruler.NOM.NEUT.PL AUX.3PL put away.MASC.PL
          'Pencils and rulers were put away.'

Finally, it is worth noting that feminine gender on the agreeing element plays no additional role in grammar (in comparison to neuter (3.SG) and masculine (3.PL), neither as a morphological repair strategy, in (8) to (11), nor as a contributor of an additional referent's denotation, in (12) to (17), respectively.

### 13.2.1.2 Number Agreement

In Slavic languages, number does not affect the denotation of a noun, and hence nouns can inflect for any number, with the exception of a small number of nouns for which number is an intrinsic feature (collectives, pluralia tantum).[7]

Slavic languages morphologically mark agreement in two number feature values – singular and plural. Remnants of morphological marking of dual are still preserved in Slovenian and Upper and Lower Sorbian with a complete dual paradigm in declension and conjugation supporting agreement with a bare nominal element. Paucal, the reanalyzed form of dual extended to low numerals *two*, *three*, and *four*, is present in Russian, Ukrainian, and BCS.[8] In Polish, Czech, and Slovak, lower numerals are adjectival in their behavior, and hence agreement is in nominative plural.

Singular agreement on the agreeing element denotes a single entity. Syntactic agreement in singular occurs with a singular head noun, (1),

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[7] See Lorimor et al. (2008) for a production study of number agreement in Russian showing that the morphologically expressed number feature is stable and weakly susceptible to errors.

[8] Paucal is commonly used as a cover term in reference to noun phrases with low numerals and corresponding morphological form on the agreeing element. The morphosyntactic status of paucal is still widely discussed in the theoretical literature (Corbett 1983, 2000, Browne 1993, Franks 1994, Bailyn & Nevins 2008, Madariaga & Igartua 2017, among others), and more recently has been experimentally studied (Ristić et al. 2016 for Serbian).

a singular head noun modified by an adjectival numeral (*one*) or the adjectival quantifier (*some, all*), (18). Quantified noun phrases headed by a nominal quantifier in (nominative) singular (*majority, few, pair*) agree in singular number and the corresponding gender feature, (19). However, as noted in Section 13.2.1.1, singular (third person neuter singular) agreement is obligatory when the subject is lacking either a lexical value or a relevant structural feature, (8)–(11).

(18)  Cro.  *(Jedan/neki)*          *dječak*           *je*        *trčao.*
             one/some.NOM.MASC.SG  boy.NOM.MASC.SG  AUX.3SG  run.MASC.SG
             'One/some boy ran.'

(19)  Cro.  *Većina*               *dječaka*          *je*        *trčala.*
             majority.NOM.FEM.SG  boy.GEN.MASC.SG  AUX.3SG  run.MASC.SG
             'Majority of the boys ran.'

Dual denotes exactly two animate or inanimate individual entities. Agreement in dual is with (bare) dual noun phrases, (20), dual noun phrases modified by the quantifier *oba* 'both', and coordination of two singular conjuncts, (21) (see Section 13.3.4 on conjunct agreement).

(20)  Sln.  *(Ta)*                    *(dva)*              *otroka*             *sta*
             these.NOM.MASC.DU  two.NOM.MASC.DU  child.NOM.MASC.DU  AUX.3.DU
             *se*                      *igrala.*
             REFL                   play.MASC.DU
             'These two children were playing.' (Marušič et al. 2015)

(21)  Sln.  *Steklenica*          *in*    *vrč*               *sta*        *polomljena.*
             bottle.NOM.FEM.SG  and  jug.NOM.MASC.SG  AUX.3.DU  broken.MASC.DU
             'The bottle and the jug were broken.' (Marušič et al. 2015)

Paucal is used to refer to a small number of entities by a nominal element modified by a lower numeral – *two, three* and *four*, (22), or a quantifier, *both*, (23). Lower numeral *two* and quantifier *both* have retained two distinct forms in their inflectional paradigm morphologically differentiating in gender feature masculine and neuter (*dva*) from feminine (*dvije*), compare (22) and (23), respectively.[9]

(22)  Cro.  *(Ova)*                      *dva/tri/četiri*   *automobila/vozila*
             these.MASC/NEUT.PA  two/three/four  car.NOM.MASC.PA/vehicle.
                                                            NOM.NEUT.PA

             *su*        *se*     *sudarila.*
             AUX.3PL  REFL  crash.PA
             'These two/three/four cars/vehicles have crashed.'

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[9] Note that in Croatian, the paucal on neuter nouns is syncretic with the neuter plural (e.g. vozil-a.NOM.NEUT.PL *vehicles*), and the paucal on feminine nouns is syncretic with the feminine plural (e.g. kočij-e.NOM.FEM.PL *chariots*), which is not the case for masculine nouns (e.g. muškarc-i.NOM.MASC.PL *men*, automobile-i.NOM.MASC.PL *cars*), (compare to Polish as described in footnote 10) (see footnote 8).

(23) Cro.   *(Ove)*                         *dvije/tri/ četiri*             *kočije*
                these.NOM.FEM.PA   two.NOM.FEM.PA/three/four   chariot.NOM.
                                                                          FEM.PA

                *su*                        *se*                   *sudarile.*
                AUX.3PL                   REFL             crash.FEM.PL
            'These two/three/four chariots have crashed.'

Plural agreement on the agreeing element is used to denote a plural entity or a collective. Plural agreement occurs with a plural head noun, (24), coordination of two nouns, (16) and (17), and (non)overt honorific, (13). In addition, plural agreement occurs with numeral quantifiers, (18), and low and high adjectival numerals in West Slavic languages, (25) (see Section 13.3.2 on quantified noun phrase agreement).

(24) Cro.   *Automobili*          *su*         *se*       *sudarili.*
                car.NOM.MASC.3PL   AUX.3PL   REFL   crash.MASC.PL
            'Cars have crashed.'

(25) Pol.   *Trzy*              *dziewczyny*        *zdały*        *egzamin.*[10]
                three.NOM.FEM.PL   girls.NOM.FEM.PL   pass.FEM.PL   exam
            'Three girls passed the exam.'

### 13.2.1.3 Person Agreement

Slavic languages morphologically mark agreement in three person feature values – first, second, and third.

Person is an inherent feature of pronouns, hence agreement in all persons occurs with personal pronouns, (26).

(26) Slk.   *Čítam.*     *Čítaš.*       *Číta.*
                I read.1SG   you read.2SG   he read.3SG
            'I read. You read. He reads.'

Across Slavic languages, a second person (masculine) plural pronoun is used to politely address a single (male or female) addressee triggering second person marking and masculine plural form on the agreeing elements, (27).[11] The agreeing elements which do not morphologically encode the gender feature can alternate in number value revealing the natural (number and) gender (male or female) of the subject's referent, (28). Of particular interest is the example (28b) from (non-standard) Slovenian, a Slavic language in which the auxiliary is phonologically expressed in the past tense (the past tense is formed of the auxiliary and the past participle). The example highlights the mismatch in number

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[10] As noted by Stroińska (1992), Polish low numerals display additional complexity related to the gender of the noun. The non-virile gender nouns agree with the adjectival numeral *two* triggering non-virile masculine/neuter (e.g. *dwa* NOM. MASC/NEUT.PL *koła*.NOM.NEUT.PL 'two wheels') and feminine (e.g. *dwie*.NOM.FEM.PL *dziewczynki*.NOM.FEM.PL 'two girls') plural on the agreeing element; while the virile masculine nouns follow the agreement pattern noted for higher numerals triggering agreement in (genitive) neuter plural (e.g. *dwóch*.GEN.PL *studentów*.GEN.PL 'two students') or (nominative) masculine plural (e.g. *dwaj*.NOM.VIR.PL *studenci*.NOM.VIR.PL 'two students') on the agreeing element.

[11] Note that this is to the exclusion of Polish, which has a more elaborate system of honorifics compared to other Slavic languages.

observed between the subject and the agreeing auxiliary – in plural, and the agreeing past participle – in singular. However, once a complete set of agreement features on the agreeing element is considered – second person plural and feminine singular, the contrast becomes one between syntactic and semantic (or discourse) agreement, respectively (see Section 13.3.1). These independent sets of feature values on the agreeing elements – the auxiliary and the past participle, independently contribute to the subject's denotation – honorific and familiar female, respectively.

(27) Bul. *Vie        ste        razbrali        vsičko.* (Corbett 2006)
        You.NOM.PL  AUX.2PL  understand.MASC.PL  everything
        'You have understood everything.'

(28) a. Bul. *Vie        ste        ljuboznatelen/ljuboznatelna.* (Corbett 2006)
        You.NOM.PL  AUX.2PL  inquisitive.MASC/FEM.SG
        'You are inquisitive.'
   b. Sln. *Vi        ste        prišla.*
        You.NOM.PL  AUX.2PL  come.FEM.SG
        'You have come.'

### 13.2.2 Case Agreement

Case is a structural feature with the value assigned relative to the position of the nominal element in the sentence, and, hence, is independent from pronominal features (Franks 1995, Corbett 2006). Lexical subjects with a full set of pronominal agreement features are assigned nominative case in subject position, as are the elements that stand in agreement relation with(in) the nominal element.

Agreement in nominative case occurs between a head noun and its apposition, (29), a head noun and other adjectival (determiner, numeral and attributive adjectives) or nominal elements within the same noun phrase (name and surname, coordinated phrase), (29) and (16), and, between a nominal phrase and a secondary/primary non-verbal predicate, (30).[12]

(29) Cro. *Marija    Matić,    spisateljica,    je    objavila*
        Mary.NOM  Matić.NOM  writer.NOM.FEM.SG  AUX.3SG  publish.FEM.SG
        *novu    knjigu.*
        new    book
        'Mary Matić, the writer, has published a new book.'

(30) Rus. *Ivan   p'janyj.*
        Ivan   drunk.NOM.MASC.3SG
        'Ivan is drunk.'

Agreement in case between the subject and the primary predicate can occur even in the absence of nominative case assignment. This is observed in Polish

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[12] The reader is referred to Chapter 18 on secondary predication.

and Slovenian when the subjects are quantified noun phrases. In (31) and (32), the primary predicate agrees in genitive case with the genitive QNP subject. As the nominative case has not been assigned to the subject, the agreeing auxiliary and past participle morphologically express default (third person singular neuter agreement in pronominal features. Therefore, the examples (31) and (32) present a prime example of a *pure* syntactic agreement.

(31)   Pol.   *Tych pięciu ludzi było rannych.*

(32)   Sln.   *Tistih        pet možje        bilo                     ranjenih.*
                those.GEN.PL five men.GEN.PL AUX.3SG be.NEUT.SG injured.GEN.PL
                'Those five men were injured.'                    (Wayles Browne, p.c)

## 13.3   Special Cases of Agreement Alternations

Agreement alternations indicate presence of agreement sensitive to semantic or discourse properties of the subject's referent (e.g. natural gender/sex).[13] Semantic (and discourse) agreement can be observed with a group of nominal phrases where there are multiple sources for a single feature that has to be expressed on the agreeing element (e.g. the mismatching values on each of the conjuncts in the coordinated noun phrase) or where multiple sources of a single feature mismatch in their values (e.g. the grammatical and natural gender in hybrid nouns or the grammatical and discourse gender in honorifics) (Corbett 1983, 1991, 2006, Steriopolo 2018).[14] In addition to semantic (and discourse) properties of the nominal subject itself, several other factors play a role in promoting semantic (and discourse) agreement over syntactic agreement: locality (adjectives vs. pronouns), preverbal subjects, agentive subjects (animate, active verb), topics (specific, individuated, partitive vs. group reading), and low numerals (Corbett 1983, 1991, 2006, Pesetsky 1982, Pereltsvaig 2006, Mirković & Macdonald 2013).

### 13.3.1   Hybrid Nouns

Hybrid nouns form a small group of animate nouns where the natural gender and/or number of the subject's referent (e.g. male or collective) is inconsistent with the grammatical gender consistent with a declension class (e.g. feminine

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[13]  Wechsler & Zlatić's (2003) analysis of agreement alternations in Serbian/Croatian presents the first detailed formalization of agreement features inherent to the agreement controller, that is, the head noun. CONCORD (case, number, gender) features are grounded in inflectional morphology, correlating in value with the declension class of the noun. INDEX (person, number, gender) features, on the other hand, originate in the semantics of the referent of the head noun, correlating with animacy and natural gender.

[14]  Agreement in gender feature alternates between grammatical (syntactic), natural (semantic), and referential (discourse) gender (see Section 13.3.1 on agreement with hybrid nouns); number feature reflects alternations in numerical value (low vs. high numerals) or in group vs. individual reading (see Sections 13.3.1–13.3.3, and, in particular, Section 13.3.2 on agreement with quantified noun phrases); and, finally, person feature is primarily determined by the discourse (participants) and shows no alternations.

singular) (Corbett 1983, Alsina & Arsenijević 2012, Puškar 2018 for BCS; Steriopolo 2018 for Russian). These multiple sources of gender (and number) features are picked up in agreement and can be observed on the agreeing element giving rise to agreement alternations.[15] Hybrid nouns are found in the majority of Slavic languages.

Lexical hybrid nouns that have (fe)male referents but are assigned to a feminine or masculine declension class commonly show agreement in natural over grammatical gender (Cro. *ubojica*.FEM 'male killer', *mušterija*.FEM 'male customer', *sluga*.FEM 'male servant', *tata*.FEM 'daddy' etc.; Rus. *djadja*.FEM 'uncle'; Cze. *děvče*.NEUT 'young girl), (33a).[16] Gender alternations in this subset of hybrid nouns occur in (masculine) singular and/or plural dependent on the prominence of the (fe)male referent that can vary for each hybrid noun, compare (33b) and (34). For the purposes of presentation, the gender transcribed on the hybrid noun corresponds to the grammatical gender.

(33)  a. Cro.  *Optuženi*            *ubojica*        *je*          *pobjegao*          *policiji.*
               accused.NOM.       killer.NOM.     AUX.3SG   escape.MASC.SG   police
               MASG.SG             FEM.SG
               'Accused killer escaped from the police.'

      b. Cro.  *Optuženi/Optužene*  *ubojice*        *su*          *pobjegli/pobjegle*
               accused.NOM.       killer.NOM.     AUX.3PL   escape.MASC/FEM.PL
               MASG.SG/FEM.PL    MASG.SG
               *policiji.*
               police
               'Accused killer escaped from the police.'

(34)  Cro.  *Oholi/ohola*        *budala*      *je*          *zatražio/zatražila*  *oprost.*
            cruel.NOM.          fool.NOM.    AUX.SG    ask.MASC/FEM.SG    forgiveness
            MASG/FEM.SG       FEM.SG
            'Cruel fool has asked for forgiveness.'

Interaction of gender and number features in subject–verb agreement alternations can be observed with a small group of collective hybrid nouns (Cro. *gospoda* 'gentry', *vlastela* 'nobility'), (35).[17] In addition to grammatical agreement tracking the morphologically marked value of the noun (feminine

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[15] See Alsina & Arsenijević (2012) for arguments in favor of semantic agreement correlating with oblique case and person feature; Steriopolo (2018) arguing for semantic agreement being motivated by a referential D head denoting individuals; and Puškar (2018) for a recent analysis of hybrid nouns recast in the multi-agreement theoretical framework.

[16] In Polish, certain derogative nouns although denoting male humans (*łajdak*.VIR 'human wretch') can show alternative – non-viral agreement in plural. As noted by Corbett (1991), this alternation is observed with adjectives and predicates, but not with personal pronouns which show semantic agreement.
     *te łajdaki zepsuły mi radio do reszty!*
     those.NVIR.PL wretch.VIR.PL damage.NVIR.PL my radio to rest
     *Oni już ci kiedyś zepsuli telewizor.*
     they.VIR already your some time damage.VIR.PL television
     'Those wretches have ruined my radio! They have already damaged your television.' (Corbett 1991).

[17] Note that in East Slavic languages, these nouns (Rus. *gospoda* 'gentry', *brat'ja* 'brothers') have been reanalyzed as a group of male individuals, and, hence, agree accordingly in plural.

singular), semantic agreement referring to its collective interpretation (plural) can alternate between agreement in neuter or masculine plural on the past participle denoting group vs. individual reading, respectively.

(35) Cro. *Gladna*              *gospoda*
       hungry.NOM.FEM.SG gentry.NOM.
                            FEM.SG
       *je blagovala*             / *su blagovala*      / *su blagovali.*
       AUX.3SG eat.FEM.SG    /    AUX.3PL eat.      / AUX.3PL eat.MASC.PL
                                                  NEUT.PL
       'Hungry gentry was/were dining.'

Correlation between agreement alternations and syntactic domain is highlighted by a group of hybrid nouns which allow for subject-external grammatical agreement, only if subject-internal agreement was with the grammatical gender, (36a) and (37a); and, semantic agreement otherwise (36b) and (37b) (Cro. *vojvoda* 'duke', *gazda* 'landlord', *kolega* 'colleague'; *braća* 'brothers', *djeca* 'children'; Cze. *děvče* 'girl'), (38), compare to locality conditions on number agreement with the hybrid noun *couple* (Cro. *par*, Rus. *para*).

(36) a. Cro. *Stare*           *kolege*                 *su*      *me jučer*
          old.NOM.FEM.PL   colleague.NOM.FEM.PL AUX.3PL me yesterday
          *posjetili/e.*
          visit.MASC/FEM.PL
     b. Cro. *Stari*           *kolege*                 *su*      *me jučer*
          old.NOM.MASC.PL colleague.NOM.FEM.PL AUX.3PL me yesterday
          *posjetili/*posjetile.*
          visit.MASC/FEM.PL
          'Old colleague(s) visited me yesterday.'

(37) a. Cro. *(Dobra)*        *braća*          *su*       *se*      *igrala/igrali.*
          good.NOM.        brothers.NOM.   AUX.3PL REFL play.NEUT.PL/MASC.PL
          FEM.SG           FEM
          'Good brothers were playing.'
     b. Cro. *Oni/*a*              *su*       *bili/*a*
          they.MASC./NEUT.PL AUX.3PL be.MASC.PL/NEUT.PL
          *jako*               *tihi/*a.*
          very               quiet.MASC.PL/NEUT.PL
          'They were being very quiet.'

(38) Cro.*Ovaj*               *par*                   *se*    *je*      *digao.*
         this.NOM.MASC.SG   couple.NOM.MASC.SG REFL AUX.3SG get up.MASC.SG
         *Oni*            *su*                    *otišli.*
         they.MASC.PL  AUX.3PL              leave.MASC.PL
         'The couple got up. They left.'

Finally, instances of discourse agreement in referential (male or female) gender are observed with common-gender nouns (e.g. Rus. *vrač*.MASC '(fe)male doctor', *pedagog*.MASC '(fe)male pedagogue'; *plaksa* 'cry-baby', *vorjuga* 'thief', *sirota* 'orphan'), (39), and honorifics such as *Majesty* and *Vi*, (40a) and (40b) and (40c), respectively (cf. (28)).

(39) Rus. *Naš./Naša*           *vrač*                    *prišël/prišla.*
　　 our.NOM.MASC/FEM  doctor.NOM.MASC.SG   come.MASC/FEM.SG
　　 'Our doctor has arrived.'

(40)　a. Bul. *Negovo*         *Veličestvo*      *e*              *došăl.*
　　　　 his.NOM.        Majesty.NOM.     AUX.SG        come.MASC.SG
　　　　 NEUT.SG         NEUT.SG
　　　　 'His Majesty has come.' (Corbett 2006)

　　b. Rus. *Vaše*            *veličestvo*       *byl/byla*         *sliškom*
　　　　 Your.NOM.       majesty.NOM.     be.MASC/FEM.SG   very
　　　　 NEUT.SG         NEUT.SG
　　　　 *zanjat/zanjata*
　　　　 busy.MASC/FEM.SG
　　　　 'Your Majesty was very busy.'

　　c. Cro. *Vi*              *ste*             *profesor/profesorica.*
　　　　 You.NOM.PL       AUX.2PL       professor.NOM.MASC/FEM.PL
　　　　 'You are a professor.'

### 13.3.2　Quantified Noun Phrases

Quantified noun phrases with their complex and varied agreement patterns across Slavic languages provide insight into the principal syntactic relation of subject–verb agreement, and hence, form a major topic of extensive theoretical discussions on agreement in Slavic. Here, the focus is on agreement in pronominal features with low, (41), and high, (42), numeral quantifiers when genitive case is assigned to the head noun, as languages vary whether they show alternative – semantic (masculine plural), agreement on the agreeing element (see Franks 1994 and Bošković 2006 for discussion), compare Croatian and Russian examples in (41) and (42) to Polish in (43).[18]

(41)　Cro. *Dva plava*           *broda*          *su*        *se*
　　　　 two  blue.GEN.MASC.PL  GEN.MASC.PA  AUX.3PL  REFL
　　　　 *sudarila/sudarili.*
　　　　 colided.MASC.PA/MASC.PL
　　　　 'Two blue ships collided.'

(42)　Rus. *Pjat' studentov/studentok*       *prišli/prišlo*        *segodnja na zanjatie.*
　　　　 five  student.GEN.MASC/FEM.PL  came.PL/NEUT.SG  today to lesson
　　　　 'Five students came to class today.' (Madariaga & Igartua 2017)

(43)　Pol. *Pięć czarownic*              *przyjechało/*przyjechały.*
　　　　 five  witch.GEN.(FEM)NVIR.PL  arrive.NEUT.SG/NVIR.PL
　　　　 'Five witches arrived.' (Lyskawa 2020)

Furthermore, the contrast in agreement alternations across Slavic languages is observed with quantified noun phrases modified by a demonstrative (Franks 1994, Bošković 2006 for Russian and BCS, Pereltsvaig 2006 for Russian, Lyskawa 2020

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[18]　For further discussion, the reader is referred to Chapter 16 on numerals and quantity expressions.

for Polish). In Russian and Polish, the demonstrative is assigned nominative case when it precedes the numeral quantifier, (44a) and (45a), and genitive case when it intervenes between the numeral quantifier and the noun, (44b) and (45b). However, in Russian, while semantic agreement (PL) is available throughout, syntactic agreement (NEUT.SG) is blocked with the nominative-assigned demonstrative, compare (44a) and (45b). In Polish, irrespective of the case assignment only syntactic agreement (NEUT.PL) is available on the past participle, (45).

(44)  a.  Rus.  *Èti        pjat' devušek       rabotali/*rabotalo    tam.*
                these.NOM.PL five  girl.GEN.FEM.PL worked.PL/NEUT.SG there
                'These five girls worked there.' (Bošković 2006)

 b.  Rus.  *Pjat'  ètix       devušek        rabotali/rabotalo     tam.*
                five   these.GEN  girl.GEN.FEM.PL worked.PL/NEUT.SG there
                'Five of these girls worked there.' (Bošković 2006)

(45)  a.  Pol.  *Te           pięć czarownic        przyjechało.*
                These.NOM.NVIR five witch.NVIR.GEN.PL arrive.NEUT.SG
                'These five witches arrived.' (Lyskawa 2020)

 b.  Pol.  *Pięć  tych        czarownic        przyjechało.*
                five   these.GEN.NVIR witch.NVIR.GEN.PL arrive.NEUT.SG
                'Five of those witches arrived.' (Lyskawa 2020)

The presence of these alternatives rests on the intuition that the predicate can form an agreement relation either with the (genitive-assigning) quantifier – in which case, case assignment is blocked, syntactic agreement fails, and default neuter singular surfaces on the past participle; or, the (nominative-assigned) noun – in which case, the nominative case is assigned in the structural subject position, and agreement obtains resulting in masculine plural form on the past participle. The precise articulation of these intuitions has led to proposals that distinguish two syntactic categories of the subject – quantifier phrase vs. noun phrase (Pesetsky 1982, Pereltsvaig 2006 for Small noun vs. DP analysis), posit the structural position in which (nominative) case is assigned (Franks 1994), and strengthen the correlation between agreement and nominative case (Bošković 2006); often invoking semantics in deriving masculine plural agreement (in BCS in particular).[19]

### 13.3.3   Agreement with Conjoined Structures

In recent years, conjunct agreement has attracted a large amount of attention in theoretical and experimental work. Study of conjunct agreement in Slavic languages provides insight into the inner workings of agreement in pronominal features (gender, number and person) in the subject–verb relation. The multiple values of pronominal features increase the combinatorial potential in conjuncts to exemplify the majority of conjunct agreement strategies found

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[19]   Driemel & Stojković (2019) have drawn a deeper parallel between two seemingly independent structures – QNPs (KPs) and coordination phrases, based on experimentally collected data on pre- and postverbal agreement alternation patterns in BCS.

in the world's languages (see Citko 2004, 2018 for Polish, Willer-Gold et al. 2016, 2018 for BCS and Slovenian, Kučerová 2018 for Czech). These strategies can be categorized in two main groups: agreement with the conjunction phrase (resolution and/or default agreement) and agreement with only one of the conjuncts (first/hierarchical or second/linear agreement).

Single-conjunct agreement has been observed for gender, number, and person features. In subject–verb word order, single-conjunct agreement, here exemplified by gender agreement, is with the first (or hierarchically higher) conjunct, (46a), or the second (or linearly closer) conjunct, (46b). In verb–subject word order, single-conjunct agreement alternations do not occur as agreement is only observed with the first (hierarchically higher and linearly closer) conjunct, (46c). Co-occurrence of both instances of single-conjunct agreement are found in the so-called sandwiched agreement construction which features the two word orders; here exemplified by Polish person agreement where the complementizer and the verb agree in person with their respective closest conjunct (47).[20]

(46)  a. Cro.   *Ravnala,*         *olovke*          *i*      *gumice*
                ruler.NOM.NEUT.PL pencil.NOM.FEM.PL and rubber.NOM.FEM.PL
                *su*               *spremljena.*
                AUX.3PL            put away.NEUT.PL
                'Rulers, pencils and rubbers were put away.'

      b. Cro.   *Olovke,*          *gumice*          *i*      *ravnala*
                pencil.NOM.FEM.PL rubber.NOM.FEM.PL and ruler.NOM.NEUT.PL
                *su*               *spremljena.*
                AUX.3PL            put away.NEUT.PL
                'Pencils, rubbers and rulers were put away.'

      c. Cro.   *Spremljena*       *su*
                put away.NEUT.PL   AUX.3PL
                *ravnala,*         *olovke*          *i*      *gumice.*
                ruler.NOM.NEUT.PL pencil.NOM.FEM.PL and rubber.NOM.FEM.PL
                'Rulers, pencils and rubbers were put away.'

(47)  Pol.   *Maria chce,  žebym           ja  i    mój sąsiad          wyszedł.*
             Maria wants  that.COND.1.SG  I   and  my neighbour.VIR.SG left.VIR.SG
             'Maria wants me and my neighbour to leave.' (Citko 2018)

As noted in Section 13.2.1.1, agreement in matching values on conjuncts triggers (plural) agreement in the corresponding gender on the agreeing element, here exemplified by neuter plural, (48). These instances of agreement in corresponding gender features alternate with semantic agreement morphologically marked by masculine plural on the agreeing element, (48), compare to (49).[21]

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[20] See Marušič et al. (2015) for examples of sandwiched agreement in number feature in Slovenian.

[21] See Prażmowska (2016) for interaction of gender and animacy features in gender resolution.

(48) Cro. *Nalivpera                   i       ravnala                su*
fountain.pen.NOM.NEUT.PL  and  ruler.NOM.NEUT.PL  AUX.3PL
*spremljena/spremljeni.*
put away.NEUT/MASC.PL
'Fountain pens and rulers were put away.'

Noteworthy exceptions to the general gender resolution rule are found with two neuter singular conjuncts. In Croatian and Czech, for example, the past participle agrees in (non-animate) masculine (plural) irrespective of the available neuter plural morphemes, (49); compare to non-virile plural in Polish, (50).

(49) a. Cro. *Drvo               i     selo                 su*
tree.NOM.NEUT.SG  and  village.NOM.NEUT.SG  AUX.3PL
*zagađeni/*zagađena.*
polluted.MASC/NEUT.PL
'The tree and the village are polluted.' (Franks & Willer-Gold 2014)

   b. Cze. *Kotě              a      štěně            jedly/*jedla*
kitten.NOM.          and  puppy.NOM.       ate.MASC.
NEUT.SG                   NEUT.SG          INAN.PL/NEUT.PL
*ze stejné misky.*
from same bowl
'The kitten and the puppy ate from the same bowl.' (Kučerová 2018)

(50) Pol. *Wiadro             i      pudełko           upadły       na podłogę.*
bucket.NOM.NEUT.SG  and  box.NOM.NEUT.SG  fall.NVIR.PL  on floor
'A bucket and a box fell on the floor.' (Lyskawa 2020)

Default neuter singular agreement on the agreeing element is also observed in coordination of two quantified noun phrases despite clear semantic plurality of the conjunction phrase, (51) (see Marušič et al. 2015 for Slovenian).

(51) Pol. *Pięć czarownic        i     sześć wróżek         przyjechało/*przyjechały*
five  witch.GEN.       and  six   fairy.GEN.      arrive.NEUT.SG/
      NVIR                       NVIR            NVIR.PL
*do miasta.*
to city
'Five witches and six fairies arrived in the city.' (Lyskawa 2020)

Mismatch in feature values on the conjuncts is resolved by the marked value of the feature – (human animate) masculine for gender, (52), and dual or plural for number feature, (53); and, the highest-ranked value of the two conjuncts for person feature, (54), being morphologically expressed on the agreeing element.

(52) Cze. *Kotě               a     pes             jedli        ze stejné misky.*
kitten.NOM.          and  dog.NOM.       ate.MASC.    from same
NEUT.SG                   MASC.SG        ANIM.PL      bowl
'The kitten and the dog ate from the same bowl.' (Kučerová 2018)

(53) Sln. *Pet    skled              in   dve  pokrovki  sta       ležali        v koritu.*
         five dish.GEN.FEM.PL and two cover.DU AUX.DU lay.FEM.DU in sink
         'Five dishes and two lids were lying in the sink.' (Marušič & Nevins 2010)

(54) Cro. *Petar   i      ja/ti/ona     čitamo/čitate/čitaju   knjigu.*
         Peter   and    I/you/she    read.1/2/3PL          book.
         'Peter and I/you/she are reading a book.'

Conjunct agreement data from Slavic languages prompted the emergence of a variety of competing theoretical models, questioning the locus (syntactic or morphosyntactic, i.e. distributed) and mechanics of conjunct agreement and the presence of a gender value on the conjunction phrase, as well as seeking to provide a uniform account of multiple agreement strategies/grammars (Bošković 2009, Franks & Willer-Gold 2014, Marušič et al. 2015 for Sln., Murphy & Puškar 2018 for BCS, Citko 2004, 2018 for Polish, Kučerová 2018 for Czech).

In addition to syntactic analyses of conjunct agreement, the role morpho-phonology (syncretism) and semantics (animacy, agentive and collective interpretation) play in conjunct agreement have been pointed out to argue for its multi-facet nature (Arsenijević & Mitić 2016a, 2016b, 2019 for BCS).

## 13.4  Future Directions for Slavic Agreement

Agreement is a linguistic phenomenon pertinent to Slavic languages. Their multi-valued agreement features coupled with rich and omnipresent inflectional morphology on the agreeing element provide a fruitful ground for theoretical and experimental research into these complex agreement systems; whilst the variation within the Slavic language family allows for fine-tuning of specific hypotheses.

As demonstrated in this chapter, the primary advantage of studying agreement in Slavic is for its canonical subject–verb agreement, which offers a direct insight into this core syntactic relation (syntactic agreement). Additional value rests on the well-documented agreement alternations, which suggest involvement of other language components in agreement (semantic and discourse agreement). Further interest is driven by a strictly local agreement, often devoid of alternations, operating inside the nominal phrase. Aiming to capture canonical agreement, alternations, and agreement inside the nominal phrase under a single theoretical framework has given rise to numerous theoretical and experimental puzzles but equally led to advancements and new discoveries.

Three significant advances have contributed to the prominence of studying agreement in Slavic languages in the last 50 years. The first advancement is Corbett's (1979) seminal work on agreement in Slavic, summarizing typological observations on agreement alternations in syntactic domains. The second significant contribution comes from the evolving work in the generative framework on quantified noun phrases, and more recently on hybrid nouns and conjunct agreement. The newest advancement is represented by a growing body of experimental data on agreement mismatches and conjunct agreement.

Together theoretical innovations and experimentally collected data still challenge and push forward any theoretical and experimental work whose goal is to study agreement in general and agreement in Slavic in particular.

Looking ahead, agreement phenomena well studied in Slavic linguistics, such as multiple source controllers or feature mismatches, indicate that agreement potentially requires activation of multiple modules across grammar to incorporate phenomena such as definiteness agreement and clitic doubling in Bulgarian and Macedonian or participant marking in Bulgarian and Lower Sorbian. Feature interaction in agreement alternations provides a window into conceptualization and grammaticalization of notions such as individuation or definiteness dissimilar to those in other Indo-European languages. Importantly, agreement accounts developed for Slavic languages have a potential to inform studies of agreement in typologically (un)related but morphologically rich language families (class system in Bantu languages or classifiers in Chinese), as well as to inform phenomena in nearby corners of the grammar such as ellipsis, the person case constraint, or auxiliary drop. With little empirical and experimental data from Ukrainian or Sorbian, agreement in Slavic is still wide open for further exploration with the following idea in mind: "it is especially exciting when a Slavic-specific linguistic phenomenon combined with an innovative experimental technique delivers a decisive argument in a long-debated issue" (Sekerina 2012: 108).

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