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Denoting female professionals: semantic and grammatical gender agreement with hybrid nouns in Russian

A corpus and experimental study

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Abstract

This thesis investigates semantic feminine and grammatical masculine gender agreement in Russian, focusing on hybrid nouns associated with professional titles referring to females. Applying both corpus and experiment approaches, this research explores gender agreement in noun-verb (N-V) and adjective-noun constructions (A-N), as well as understudied mixed agreement adjective-noun-verb (A-N-V). Further, this work investigates factors that can potentially influence the type of agreement such as the duration of exposure of the hybrid noun to the language (old-new noun factor) and the presence of a feminitive counterpart of a hybrid noun. Another factor that has been explored is whether the type of adjective (i.e. qualitative or relational) affects the type of agreement in A-N structures.

The key findings confirm The Agreement Hierarchy by Corbett, that provided the theoretical frame for the present study, illustrating that semantic feminine agreement is more likely in N-V than in A-N structures. Furthermore, Russian native speakers demonstrated a robust ability to differentiate between grammatical and ungrammatical mixed agreement structures. Although the corpus data suggested that older professional nouns more frequently take semantic (feminine) agreement than grammatical (masculine) agreement, experimental results showed no statistically significant difference. Additionally, the presence of feminine counterparts did not significantly affect the type of agreement, calling for further research with different experimental designs. The research also revealed that the type of adjective plays a substantial role in determining the type of agreement, with relational adjectives tending to take grammatical masculine and qualitative adjectives leaning towards semantic feminine agreement.

Key words: Semantic agreement; Grammatical agreement; Hybrid nouns; Russian.

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List of abbreviations

A-N	adjective-noun
Am	adjective in masculine gender
Af	adjective in feminine gender
N-V	noun-verb
Vm	verb in masculine gender
Vf	verb in feminine gender
A-N-V	adjective-noun-verb
PST	past tense
FT	future tense
M	masculine gender
F	feminine gender
SG	singular
AJT	Acceptability judgment task

1. Introduction

The concept of gender agreement in Russian is a versatile phenomenon that has been discussed for decades. Over the recent years, growing interest to this topic arises from the complexity and ambiguity of gender agreement with nouns denoting professions referring to females.

The difficulty of the phenomenon lies in the fact that, in Russian, profession titles belong to declension I where most masculine nouns belong, but they can refer to both males and females, as presented in (1a). In the latter case (1b), they can occur with feminine agreement, thereby justifying their classification as hybrid nouns.

(1a) *menedžer otkryl dver'* male or female referent

      manager   open.PST.SG.M. door

'The manager opened the door'

(1b) *menedžer otkryla dver'* female referent

      manager   open.PST.SG.F. door

'The manager opened the door'

As examples demonstrate, in Russian, example (1a) containing the professional title *menedžer* 'manager' and the verb in past tense in masculine gender *otkryl* [open.PST.SG.M.] 'opened' can refer to both a male and a female, whereas example (1b) with the verb in feminine gender *otkryla* [open.PST.SG.F.] 'opened' is used to denote a female only.

The topic of semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement has been studied for a few decades. Panov (1968) was one of the first researchers who identified the dual behavior of hybrid nouns in Russian, which demonstrate both grammatical and semantic agreement with adjectives and verbs, typically showing feminine semantic agreement with verbs and masculine agreement with adjectives. Building on Panov's findings, Corbett (1979, 1982, 1991, 2015) elaborated on the discussion of gender agreement, proposing The Agreement Hierarchy, which suggests that agreement type is influenced by a hierarchy of targets. Further, this idea was confirmed and developed by Novikov and Priestly (1999) and Rodina (2008, 2013) who examines the acquisition and production of structures involving verbal targets and gender agreement among children and adults.

While previous studies mostly focused on the investigation of verbal gender agreement structures with hybrid nouns, the present study aims to shed light on masculine and feminine gender agreement constructions that have not been researched fully. Specifically, I investigate gender agreement on verbal and adjectival targets, as well as constructions presenting both the adjective and the verb, inconsistent (mixed) agreement (Corbett, 1979). To provide a comprehensive analysis, I conducted two studies: one based on a corpus and another using experimental methods. The participants of the experiment study are Russian native speakers primarily residing in the Russian Federation. The average age of participants is 37 years. Nearly all of them have higher education and are proficient in two to three languages, including Russian (native), Tatar, and English.

Moreover, this thesis contributes to the discussion of feminine and masculine agreement by introducing previously unexplored factors that may influence the type of gender agreement in Russian, such as noun type. One of the factors that I propose is the correlation between the type of agreement and the time when the hybrid noun has been introduced into the language: the longer the hybrid noun exists in Russian, the higher a possibility of semantic agreement with this noun, i.e. the targets of the old noun *vrač* 'doctor' are expected to follow semantic feminine agreement more often than the targets of the new noun *psixolog* 'psychologist'. The next factor concerns the presence or absence of a feminine counterpart of a hybrid noun. I claim that hybrid nouns that have feminitive counterparts take semantic feminine agreement less frequently than hybrids that do not have a feminitive counterpart (i.e. the hybrid noun *kassir* 'cashier' with a feminitive triggers grammatical masculine agreement more often that the hybrid noun *advokat* 'lawyer' without a feminitive). Additionally, in this work, I investigate the potential impact of adjective type on feminine or masculine agreement in the adjective + hybrid noun construction. I propose that relational adjectives evoke masculine agreement, while qualitative adjectives more often follow a semantic feminine agreement pattern (*škol'nyj psixolog* 'school psychologist' (relational adjective) vs. *neumolimaja menedžer* 'relentless manager' (qualitative adjective).

The main findings of the present study confirmed my predictions based on Corbett's Agreement Hierarchy. Firstly, semantic feminine agreement is more likely to occur in structures with verbal targets rather than in structures with adjectival targets. Secondly, Russian native speakers who participated in the experiment study were able to differentiate grammatical and ungrammatical mixed agreement structures. Moreover, the conducted corpus analysis has shown that the old hybrid nouns tend to agree semantically more often compared with the new

hybrid nouns. However, the studies have demonstrated that the presence of a feminitive is not a factor when it comes to type of agreement. Finally, the analysis of the corpus data confirmed that, as predicted, relational adjectives take masculine agreement more frequently, whereas qualitative adjectives tend to agree in feminine gender.

The structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 provides an overview of the theoretical background and literature overview relevant for the study. Chapter 3 presents research questions and predictions relevant for the study. Chapter 4 presents the corpus study and the analysis of the corpus data. Chapter 5 presents the empirical study and explores the results obtained using an Acceptability Judgement Task. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the thesis with a discussion of the results and limitations of the study.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Evidence from previous experimental and theoretical studies

In this chapter, I present a theoretical account of gender, gender assignment, gender agreement, and semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement in Russian. I cover the issues of masculine profession titles, i.e. hybrid nouns (see section 2.2), which take both semantic and grammatical agreement (see section 2.1.3. for a detailed overview), and feminitives, i.e. counterparts of hybrid nouns (section 2.2), the presence of which can additionally affect the agreement.

Panov (1968) was the first to notice the ambiguous behaviour of hybrid nouns, which demonstrate both grammatical and semantic agreement with adjective and verbal targets. His research showed that Russian native speakers tend to use feminine semantic agreement with verbal targets and masculine agreement with adjectival targets. Later, based on Panov's observations, Corbett (1979, 1982, 1991, 2015) contributed to the discussion of gender agreement and proposed The Agreement Hierarchy (see section 2.3), claiming that the type of agreement depends on the hierarchy of targets. Novikov and Priestly (1999) further observed the tendency of semantic feminine agreement in verbal targets and grammatical masculine agreement in adjectival targets. I cover this topic in detail in section 2.1.3.

More recent works focus on the morpho-syntactic analysis of gender agreement within a generative approach (Steriopolo and Wiltschko, 2010; King, 2015). A number of works explore the agreement with hybrid nouns through experimental studies, while also mentioning additional factors that might affect the choice between grammatical and semantic agreement. Rodina (2008, 2013) investigates how Russian native speakers, both children and adults, acquire and produce structures with verbal targets using gender agreement. Kapatsinski (2006) sets the focus on the sociolinguistic aspects, discussing sex associations of Russian hybrid nouns denoting professions. Magomedova (2021) considers case as an additional factor in the choice of the agreement type, claiming that semantic agreement occurs mostly with hybrid nouns in the nominative case. Among other factors that can potentially affect gender agreement in hybrid nouns, the presence of feminitive counterparts has been mentioned (Kapatsinski 2006). The morphology and use of feminitives in modern Russian corpus data have been thoroughly discussed in Nesset, Sokolova, and Pipersky (2022).

Based on the theoretical account of gender agreement and related concepts mentioned above, in my thesis, I contribute to the discussion on semantic and grammatical agreement in Russian by further exploring the factors that can potentially influence such agreement. Despite the research works mentioned above, the topic of gender agreement in Slavic remains largely understudied. This particularly applies to mixed agreement constructions with different types of targets (*Horošij vrač prišla* [Good.M.SG. doctor came.PST.F.SG] 'A good doctor came', discussed in more detail in section 2.3), which are among the major target constructions in my research. Furthermore, within the last 30 years, due to digitalization, the class of hybrid nouns has been substantially enlarged by new professions and job titles, e.g. 'copywriter', 'manager', etc. These have not yet been covered in the scholarly literature and require additional research. Finally, in this work, I investigate an additional factor that has not been analysed in previous studies, namely the type of adjective in the adjective + noun construction. I argue that the type of adjective (i.e. qualitative or relational) may affect the type of agreement. All these factors and their effect on gender agreement need to be investigated.

2.1. The Russian gender system

Gender is a linguistic phenomenon that exists in many languages. According to Corbett (2006), this phenomenon is very vividly represented in Slavic languages, including Russian. Having analysed 256 languages, Corbett (2013) concludes that in 144 languages the gender system is absent, while 50 languages contain the two-gender system. Three genders are in use in 26 languages, whereas four genders in 12 languages. Systems with five or more genders are represented in 24 languages. The Russian language belongs to the languages with three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter.

2.1.1. Gender assignment in Russian

Different languages use various approaches to gender assignment. Mostly, they include semantic and formal, non-semantic, gender assignment. Corbett (1982) has claimed that agreement involves both syntax and morphology. He has proposed a model that can predict the gender of Russian nouns. Russian is a language where gender is morphologically based, which means that morphological gender can be derived from the declensional class of the noun. In Russian, there are four declensional classes of nouns, which depend on the word ending, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Declension		I	II	III	IV
Meaning		'law' (Masc)	'school' (Fem)	'bone' (Fem)	'wine' (Neut)
Sg	Nom	zakon	škola	kost'	vino
	Acc	zakon	školu	kost'	vino
	Gen	zakona	školy	kosti	Vina
	Dat	zakonu	škole	kosti	vinu
	Instr	zakonom	školoj	kost'ju	vinom
	Loc	zakone	škole	kosti	Vine
Pl	Nom	zakony	školy	kost'i	Vina
	Acc	zakony	školy	kosti	Vina
	Gen	zakonov	škol	kostej	vin
	Dat	zakonam	školam	kostjam	vinam
	Instr	zakonami	školami	kostjami	vinami
	Loc	zakonax	školax	kostjax	vinax

As can be seen from Table 1, there are strong correlations between gender and declensional class. Nouns in the I declension are usually masculine, nouns in the IV-subtype are usually neuter, and nouns in the II and III declensions are usually feminine.

In my thesis, I consider the I declension nouns and partially the II declension nouns.

2.1.2. Semantic rule vs. grammatical rule

Corbett has suggested a gender assignment hierarchy for nouns like *papa* 'daddy' and *djadja* 'uncle' that morphologically belong to the second declension but are masculine (usually nouns of the II declensional class are feminine). Thus, gender, in this case, is assigned not by

declension class, but rather by semantics. Based on the analysis of Russian nouns, Corbett has claimed that gender in Russian is determined by "an item's semantic, morphological or phonological features, or from a combination of these" (Corbett, 1982: 227).

Based on this conflict of formal and semantic factors, Corbett and Fraser (2000) have proposed that semantics should be considered the core of any gender system: "As is universally the case, the formal gender assignment rules [...] are dominated by the semantic gender assignment rules" (Corbett and Fraser, 2000: 321). Moreover, Corbett and Fraser have extended their claim not only to *papa*-type nouns but also to all nouns. According to this statement, the semantic rule of gender assignment overrides the morphological. Corbett and Fraser have provided evidence from over 200 languages, where semantic information is adequate on its own to assign gender, while formal information is not sufficient to do that.

However, Corbett and Fraser's suggestion has not been fully confirmed by examples from some languages. As various researchers have stated, semantic agreement does not always prevail over grammatical agreement (Rodina, 2008). For example, formal rules do not envelope all nouns in German. In this language, semantic criteria do not refer to biological sex and can be overruled by morphological or phonological criteria. To illustrate, the German superordinate noun *die Waffe* 'weapon' is feminine by morphological rule, i.e. based on its morphological gender, (b) (from Nesset, 2006: 1386, after Steinmetz 1986: 190). This phenomenon questions Corbett and Fraser's position since the semantic rule does not work here.

a. Superordinate nouns are neuter

b. Nouns in –e are feminine

c. Nouns in /uxt/ are feminine

Rooted on Corbett's and Fraser's study, Nesset has developed research on gender agreement and suggested "The Core Semantic Override Principle". He has agreed with Corbett in acknowledging the precedence of semantic gender assignment rules. However, Nesset has pointed out that semantics overrules formal cues when it comes to biological sex (Nesset 2006: 1386):

The Core Semantic Override Principle:

Rules referring to biological sex take precedence in gender assignment.

2.1.3. Gender agreement in Russian

As Russian is a morphologically rich language, agreement presents a major challenge for both grammarians and non-native speakers of Russian.

Gender is an agreement category that in Slavonic can be marked on adjectives, participles, determiners, numerals, past-tense verbs, and some other forms (Berdicevskis, 2022). Usually, words in Russian are coordinated by grammatical agreement "consistent with the gender assigned on the basis of morphological or phonological properties of a noun" (Rodina, 2008: 5). For example, *temnaja noč',* /dark.NOM.F.SG night.NOM.F.SG/, 'a dark night', where the adjective *temnaja* 'dark' takes feminine gender from the noun *noč'* 'night'.

The semantic category of gender in Russian and Ukrainian has been analysed by Rojavin (2010). In her research, Rojavin has divided nouns into five groups that indicate: 1) female persons, 2) professions, 3) nouns of common gender, 4) young beings, and 5) nouns with quasi-sex. Rojavin has claimed that "masculisms (or hybrid nouns), which indicate participation of a person in various kinds of activity, fulfill the function of naming a person without biological sex differentiation and primarily express a person's general social role; they refer to a person as a socially active individual" (Rojavin, 2010: 512). Further, she has concluded that, masculisms in Russian and Ukrainian express the general idea of a human being. At the same time, feminitives in both languages concentrate on the female sex. Verb forms in the past tense, anaphoric pronouns, and lexis in the context distinguish the biological sex of a denotated person when nouns do not, i.e. the targets help to identify the sex of the controller.

Important concepts in the agreement system are the controller and the target. Following Corbett's terminology (2017), the controller is the component that dictates agreement, whereas the target is the component whose form is dictated by agreement. Targets agree on grammatical features of the controller: gender, number, person, and case. The sentence below illustrates the relationship between the controller 'son' and the target 'came'. As can be seen from example (2), the verb *prišël* 'came' selects gender according to the noun *syn* 'son' and agrees with it in masculine gender and singular number.

(2) *syn prišël*

son.M.SG came.PST.M.SG

'a son came'

According to Corbett (2006), agreement can be of two types: grammatical and semantic. Grammatical masculine agreement occurs when the target takes grammatical features from the controller. On the opposite, semantic agreement appears when the target agrees based on semantic properties of the controller. The example in (3) demonstrates grammatical masculine agreement.

(3) *Poduška ležala na divane*

Pillow.F.SG. lie.PST.F.SG. on couch

'The pillow was lying on the couch.'

As we can see, the agreement of the verb *ležala* 'was lying' is based on the grammatical features (gender and number) of the noun *poduška* 'pillow'.

However, there are cases when grammatical masculine agreement changes to semantic feminine agreement that is "consistent with the gender assigned on the basis of semantic properties of a noun" (Rodina, 2008: 5). This applies, for example, to words of common/double gender such as *plaksa* 'crybaby' (4).

(4) *Plaksa smotrel na menya bol'šimi glazami*

crybaby.M.SG look.PST.M.SG at me with big eyes

'Crybaby looked at me with big eyes'

In this case, the controller *plaksa* allows its verbal target in the past tense in masculine gender *smotrel* 'looked' to select gender based on the person's biological gender.

2.2. Hybrid nouns

Hybrid nouns play a significant role in semantic agreement, as there are cases where their grammatical gender does not match their semantic gender. Hybrid nouns and this discrepancy are the major focus of the present study.

According to Corbett (2015), hybrid nouns are those whose agreement specification varies according to the agreement target. In other words, they can take gender agreement that the target demands. In (5), the grammatical gender of the hybrid noun *vrač* 'doctor' is masculine. However, when referring to a female in the profession, the hybrid noun takes the feminine gender, and the target *zašla* 'entered' agrees with the feminine gender.

(5) *Vrač bystro zašla v komnaty*

Doctor.M.SG. quickly enter.PST.M.SG room

'The doctor quickly entered the room.'

Hybrid nouns denote human beings by profession, rank, or social status. Many hybrids do not have a stylistically neutral feminine counterpart (Gerasimova, Lyutikova, 2020), cf. the noun *vrač* 'doctor' and the pejorative feminitive *vračiha* 'female doctor'. Nouns like *vrač* /doctor.M.SG.NOM./'doctor' and *povar* /cook.M.SG.NOM./'cook' are hybrid nouns since the target can take either masculine or feminine form despite grammatical gender. Their use leads to a morpho-semantic mismatch (Rodina, 2008), as exemplified in (6).

(6) *Povar otvetila na zvonok.*

Cook.M.SG.NOM answer.PST.F.SG. on call

'The cook answered the call.'

In (6), despite the grammatical masculine gender of the hybrid noun *povar* 'cook', the verbal target *otvetila* 'answered' takes feminine agreement, i.e. semantic agreement.

Grammatical masculine agreement in Russian is universal and can refer to both males and females (Rodina, 2008). In (7), the hybrid noun *povar* 'cook' can refer to both a male and a female, whereas in (6) the verbal target *otvetila* 'answered' is marked with feminine gender and refers to a female only.

(7) *Povar otvetil na zvonok.*

Cook.M.SG.NOM answer.PST.M.SG. on call

'The cook answered the call.'

Hybrid nouns can be opposed to feminitives, i.e. words marked with the feminine gender (Rojavin, 2010). According to Leshkova (2017), a feminitive is the formation and use of female derivatives of male names of professions, positions and titles. Feminitives are formed using different suffixes such as –*k-, -ess-, -ščic-* (*klient* /client.M.SG.NOM./ 'a female client' - *klientka* /client.F.SG.NOM./). In modern Russian, semantic agreement is typical for the names of professions where feminitives are not used for some reason, for example, when a feminitive has a pejorative connotation, female professionals can be expressed via hybrid nouns (Rojavin, 2010).

2.3. The Agreement Hierarchy

As has been discussed earlier, hybrid nouns can demonstrate both syntactic and semantic agreement. Yet, some researchers have noticed that the ability of some targets to take semantic agreement is stronger than that of other targets. To explain this phenomenon, Corbett (see e.g. Corbett 1979, 1982, 1991, 2015, 2017) has developed The Agreement Hierarchy. He has determined the factors that influence the relative frequency of either semantic or grammatical agreement (1979).

Corbett has proposed that semantic agreement positions may be ranged in the following hierarchy (Corbett, 1979: 204):

attributive < predicate < relative pronoun < personal pronoun

According to the hierarchy, the further left an element on the hierarchy, the more likely syntactic (grammatical) agreement is to occur, while the further right, the more likely semantic agreement is to take place (Corbett, 1979). Thus, semantic agreement is less likely in the attributive compared with the predicate.

Further, Corbett has argued that the agreement hierarchy is "an independent feature of natural languages" (Corbett, 1979: 217). However, the hierarchy is closely related to syntactic structures. Corbett has claimed that, following the traditional terms, "attributive agreement represents agreement within the simple phrase, predicative agreement goes beyond the phrase but is restricted to the clause, the agreement of the relative pronoun goes beyond the clause but is restricted to the sentence, while the personal pronoun is not restricted to the sentence of the item controlling agreement" (Corbett, 1979: 216).

Below are examples with the hybrid noun *vrač 'doctor'*, which can take both masculine and feminine gender as a controller and the positions of the agreement hierarchy as targets. All the examples demonstrate semantic agreement with the noun that refers to a female.

a.   Attributive

Horošaja vrač

good.F.SG. doctor

'A good doctor'

b.   Verbal predicate

Vrač prišla

Doctor came. PST.F.SG.

'A doctor came'

c.   Relative pronoun
Vrač, kotoraja prišla

Doctor which.F.SG. came. PST.F.SG.

'A doctor which came'

d.   Personal pronoun

Vrač zdes, ona prišla

doctor here, she came.PST.F.SG

'A doctor is here, she came'

Based on the agreement of *vrač* 'doctor' with the verbal and the adjective predicates, Corbett claims that semantic agreement is more likely to occur in syntactic constructions with the verbal target rather that the adjective target (Corbett, 1979).

2.4. Mixed gender agreement in Russian

Corbett notices another linguistic phenomenon in Russian which he calls 'inconsistent agreement', nowadays also known as mixed agreement. Inconsistent agreement occurs when targets demonstrate both semantic (feminine) and grammatical (masculine) agreement when sharing the same hybrid noun.

(8) *Horošij vrač prišla*

Good.M.SG. doctor came.PST.F.SG.

'A good doctor came.'

In (8), the adjective target *horošij* 'good' takes grammatical masculine agreement, while the verbal target *prišla* 'came' demonstrates semantic feminine agreement. This example goes in line with The Agreement Hierarchy.

Furthermore, constructions with two or more targets with either consistent semantic or grammatical agreement are also often used by native speakers.

(9) *Horošij vrač prišel*

good.M.SG. doctor came.PST.M.SG

'A good doctor.'

(10) *Horošaja vrač prišla*

good.F.SG. doctor came.PST.F.SG

'A good doctor came.'

In (9), both targets *horošij* 'good' and *prišel* 'came' agree grammatically and can refer to both a male or a female referent. However, (8) and (10) refer only to a female referent.

As Corbett (1979) claims, masculine agreement cannot emerge on the predicate when the attributive adjective demonstrates feminine semantic agreement. Otherwise, a sentence is considered as ungrammatical. Example (11) below illustrates Corbett's assumption:

(11) * *Horošaja vrač prišël*

Good.F.SG. doctor came.PST.M.SG.

'A good doctor came.'

In (11), the attributive target *horošaja* 'good' takes semantic agreement, but the verbal target *prišël* 'came' violates the corollary above and agrees grammatically. Thus, adjective targets control gender agreement. If the adjective predicate appears in the feminine gender, the verbal target cannot be in the masculine gender, whereas if the adjective target occurs in the masculine gender, the verbal target can take either masculine or feminine gender.

2.5. Additional factors. Types of adjectives

Besides the factors that have been mentioned in previous literature, there are some additional factors that affect gender agreement in Russian.

Traditionally, Russian adjectives are divided into two main classes: qualitative and relational. Qualitative adjectives express a property directly (e.g. *goluboe nebo* 'blue sky', *krasivyi golos* 'beautiful voice'). As Vinogradova (2014) claims, "they denote various properties of entities – physical properties such as shape, size, colour, age, temperature, mental and moral properties, etc". Relational adjectives, derived from nouns, cannot play the role of an independent predicate as their meaning is tied to the modified (head) noun, typically

conveying a general sense of being 'related to the noun' (*derev'annyj stol* 'wooden table = a table made of wood', *morskoj port* 'seaport = a port located by the sea') (Cornilescu and Giurgea, 2013).

The types of adjectives also differ grammatically: "relational adjectives do not form degrees of comparison, do not take the predicative syntactic function in a sentence, and do not have short forms" (Vinogradova, 2014). On the contrary, qualitative adjectives are gradable, they have short forms and form adverbs (Koenig and Laune, 2000). In other words, qualitative adjectives are often used to describe the properties of a person or an object, while relational adjectives express a relation to a noun and are commonly used to describe qualities related to professional activities.

Another important factor that should be considered is that relational adjectives are often included in collocations, groups of words that create a special meaning and tend to be used together (Kopotev, 2016). As Bogoyavlenskaya (2022) claims, the most effective collocational model for the Russian language is adjective plus noun. The adjective + noun collocation model specifies professional status, position (chief doctor), and qualification (senior engineer).

3. Present study

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this study aims to investigate semantic feminine and grammatical masculine gender agreement in Russian with hybrid nouns denoting females in professions. In my work, I will concentrate on the theoretical factors of gender agreement in Russian. I analyse new factors that might influence semantic and grammatical agreement. One of these factors is the correlation between the type of agreement and the time when the native speakers have been exposed to the hybrid noun. Another factor for semantic or grammatical agreement can be the presence or absence of the hybrid noun's feminitive counterpart. Moreover, I claim that the adjective type in adjectival phrases can also be a factor for semantic feminine or grammatical agreement. Furthermore, the present study focuses on mixed agreement structures with adjectival and verbal targets, which have not been investigated fully. Thereby, my thesis will contribute to the wide discussion on semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement in Russian.

3.1. Research questions and predictions

Based on the theoretical background outlined in Chapter 2 and the assumptions above, I consider the following research questions:

RQ1. Does grammatical gender agreement with hybrid forms occur more often in constructions A-N than N-V?

RQ2. Which subclasses of nouns agree semantically more often than grammatically?

RQ3. Will the presence of a feminitive influence the frequency of semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement?

RQ4. Are Russian native speakers able to distinguish ungrammatical semantic agreement in structures with mixed agreement, where the adjective target agrees semantically in feminine gender, whereas the verbal target agrees grammatically in masculine gender (Af-N-Vm construction)?

RQ5. Does the type of adjective (qualitative vs. relational) affect the type of gender agreement?

The predictions for these research questions are as follows:

Prediction 1. According to Corbett's Agreement Hierarchy (1979), I predict that A-N constructions will take grammatical masculine agreement more often than N-V constructions. Therefore, I predict that grammatical agreement in A-N structures with the adjective target in masculine gender will dominate semantic agreement in A-N structures with the adjective target in feminine gender. For N-V structures, I anticipate the opposite pattern: N-V structures with the verbal targets in feminine gender will significantly prevail N-V structures with the verbal targets in masculine gender.

Prediction 2. As has been presented in Chapter 2, during last decades many new professions appeared, such as 'manager', 'producer', 'blogger' etc., that are also in use in Russian. I argue that the longer the hybrid noun has been in the language, the more likely it will take semantic feminine agreement. I propose the noun subclass representing long-term used names of professions (e.g. nouns like *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver') to be more strongly associated with feminine gender than the noun subclass representing new professions (e.g. nouns like *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist').

Prediction 3. Hybrid nouns that have feminitive pairs (e.g. nouns like *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver', *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist') will take semantic feminine agreement less frequently than hybrids that do not have feminitive counterparts (e.g. nouns like *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist'). Thus, I propose that constructions with the hybrid nouns that do not have feminitives will occur more often following grammatical masculine agreement than constructions with the hybrid nouns that do not have feminitives.

Prediction 4. According to Corbett (1979), mixed agreement structures with the adjective target in feminine gender and the verbal in masculine gender will violate The Agreement Hierarchy. Thereby, I predict that structures with semantic feminine agreement in the adjectival target and grammatical masculine agreement in the verbal target will be treated as ungrammatical and, hence, unacceptable. The opposite mixed structure with the adjectival target in masculine and the verbal target in feminine will be considered as grammatical and, consequently, acceptable.

Prediction 5. I predict that relational adjectives are more likely to agree in masculine gender, whereas qualitative adjectives are more prone to agree in feminine gender.

Additionally, feminine gender adjectives are expected to be more prevalent in contexts describing physical appearance, while masculine gender adjectives are anticipated to be more common in contexts related to professional qualities.

The questions and predictions will be tested based on corpus and experimental data, i.e. Study 1 and Study 2 respectively. Given that the design of the corpus study and the experimental design differ, I present the methodology of each study in the following chapters.

4. Corpus study

This chapter provides the corpus data obtained and their analysis.

4.1. Design of the corpus chapter. A general overview of the data collection

In my thesis, I have selected 8 hybrid nouns denoting women in professions: *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver', *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist'. The reason for choosing these items is that they are the most frequent and representative for the Russian language environment as reflected by the RNC.

Furthermore, for this research the following syntactic constructions were chosen:

1. Adjective (target) + hybrid noun (controller) – A-N.
2. Hybrid noun (controller) + past tense verb (target) – N-V.
3. Adjective (target) + hybrid noun (controller) + past tense verb (target) – A-N-V.

It is important to note that in each case, both the adjective and the past tense verb can be in either feminine or masculine gender. I chose these specific targets because, in the Russian language, they carry gender information in addition to person and number. Additionally, it should be mentioned that all contexts refer to women, and the selection of units was done manually in the RNC, with a manual examination of each context.

The reason for selecting only contexts mentioning women, excluding those with men, is to compare the frequency of controller-target agreement in masculine and feminine genders when referring to women.

The RNC contains more than 2 billion words. For this research, I used the main written corpus from the period 1991-2023, which includes 50.468 texts and 128.55.459 words. This period was selected to zoom in on how the language functions and changes in the post-Soviet Russia. In addition to well-established professions, I investigate a new subclass of nouns, referring to professions that have been introduced into the Russian language recently, e.g. *kopyrajter* 'copywriter', *menedžer* 'manager', *dizainer* 'designer'.

On the RNC webpage, I have configured special settings such as the lemma (the noun denoting a profession), the distance between the controller and the target, and the grammatical

features of the target. These features include 'verb, past tense, singular, masculine/feminine' and 'adjective, singular, masculine/feminine'. The distance between the controller and the target is set at two words right and two words left. I have focused on such syntactic constructions as N-V, A-N, and A-N-V. In each construction the noun is a hybrid noun (the controller). I have further selected the verbal predicate in the past tense and the attributive adjective (the targets).

The most frequent tokens were the hybrid nouns *vrač* 'doctor' with 14.657 occurrences and *advokat* 'lawyer' with 3.945 occurrences in the established main written corpus setting. Less frequent ones included the item *bloger* 'blogger' with total 121 occurrences in all lexical contexts and the item *aktivist* 'activist' with total 230 occurrences. It is worth noting that the most frequent nouns belong to the old nouns subclass, while the less frequent ones belong to the new nouns subclass. This can be explained by the fact that old nouns have been in use for a longer time (since the 18th century) compared to new nouns (from the mid-20th century).

It should be emphasized that adjective targets are often represented by recurring items. This indicates specific collocations associated with certain professions, e.g. *staršaja kassir* 'senior cashier', *glavnyj vospitatel'* 'chief educator'. It is also important to note that in such collocations, the adjective target is often masculine and belongs to the relational type. I discuss this further in the section on adjectives.

The nouns considered in this study are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2 – Old and new nouns.

Old nouns	New nouns
vrač 'doctor'	bloger 'blogger'
advokat 'lawyer'	aktivist 'activist'
kassir 'cashier'	menedžer 'manager'
vospitatel' 'caregiver'	psixolog 'psychologist'

To collect the data, I have taken three types of syntactic constructions and two noun subclasses. The first one includes long-term used names of professions, whereas the second noun subclass includes new professions. It is worth noting that certain professions are dominated by females, e.g. *kassir* 'cashier' and *vospitatel'* 'caregiver'. I argue that the targets in constructions with the names of professions that have been in use in the language for a long time are more often marked with feminine gender than the names of new professions that have

come into the language recently. The rationale behind this hypothesis is that native speakers had longer exposure to old professions. These professions are thus more salient and more prone towards semantic agreement.

The search results are presented in Table 3 below. The collected data shows the distribution of the constructions under scrutiny.

As can be noted from the data, the RNC offers limited opportunities when it comes to the amount of the data for some items, e.g. *bloger* 'blogger' and *activist* 'activist'. Due to this reason, I test my hypotheses in an experiment, which I describe in Chapter 5.

Table 3 - The distribution of the target constructions across 8 hybrid nouns under scrutiny in the RNC (raw frequencies)

Noun	N-Vf	N-Vm	Af-N	Am-N	Am-N-Vf	Af-N-Vf	Am-N-Vm	Af-N-Vm
vrač 'doctor'	99	2	14	11	12	7	0	0
advokat 'laywer'	33	0	0	3	2	0	0	0
kassir 'cashier'	25	0	3	2	0	1	0	0
vospitatel' 'caregiver'	14	0	0	4	1	0	0	0
bloger 'blogger'	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Aktivist 'activist'	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
menedžer 'manager'	9	0	2	10	2	2	0	0
psixolog 'psychologist'	24	0	0	12	8	0	0	0
Total	204	2	19	43	26	10	0	0

As displayed, the most frequent hybrid noun is *vrač* 'doctor', whereas the less frequent hybrid nouns are *bloger* 'blogger' and *aktivist* 'activist'. The latter present only one occurrence each since the scope of the search included only the three constructions under scrutiny, which restricted the amount of the data obtained. The most frequent construction is N-Vf, while the less frequent construction is Af-N-Vm.

During the data collection process, I encountered a problem with finding and extracting the A-N construction. Whenever the target and the controller were not in immediate proximity with each other, the RNC, in addition to the contexts under investigation, provided searches for adjectives that do not relate to the hybrid noun. Thus, I have collected and sorted the data manually.

4.2. Hypothesis 1 - The Agreement Hierarchy

As been discussed in Chapter 2, Corbett's Agreement Hierarchy suggests that elements positioned further to the left are more prone to grammatical masculine agreement, whereas those on the right are more inclined towards semantic feminine agreement (Corbett, 1979: 203):

attributive < predicate < relative pronoun < personal pronoun

Based on The Agreement Hierarchy, I propose the following research question and hypothesis:

RQ1. Does grammatical agreement with hybrid nouns occur more often in constructions A-N than N-V?

Hyp.1. According to Corbett's Agreement Hierarchy (1979), I predict that A-N constructions will take grammatical agreement more often than N-V.

To test my hypothesis, I have collected data on A-N, N-V and A-N-V constructions, which I merged with A-N and N-V columns. Moreover, I have categorized the data by gender and added the results to Table 4 below.

As shown by the data in Table 4, the frequency of N-V constructions prevails over the frequency of A-N constructions. To illustrate, the number of semantic agreement occurrences of the hybrid noun *vrač* 'doctor' is 99, whereas the amount of grammatical agreement occurrences is only two. By contrast, the A-N constructions show more balanced distribution: 21 semantic agreement cases and 23 grammatical cases. Moreover, the frequency of N-V constructions dominates the frequency of A-N structures.

Table 4 – N-V and A-N constructions categorized by noun and gender.

Noun	N-Vf	N-Vm	Af-N	Am-N
Vrač 'doctor'	118	2	21	23

Advokat 'laywer'	35	0	0	5
Kassir 'cashier'	26	2	4	4
Vospitatel' 'caregiver'	15	0	0	5
Bloger 'blogger'	1	0	0	1
Aktivist 'activist'	0	0	0	1
Menedžer 'manager'	13	0	4	12
Psixolog 'psychologist'	32	0	0	20
Total	**240**	**2**	**29**	**71**

Table 4 presents the numbers of occurrence of N-V (N-Vf and N-Vm) and A-N (Af-N and Am-N) constructions. According to Table 4, the overall frequency of masculine agreement in A-N constructions is 71, whereas the frequency of masculine agreement in N-V structures is 29. Furthermore, the frequency of masculine agreement in A-N constructions is 2, while the frequency of feminine agreement in N-V structures is 240, which is the highest score.

The most frequent and indicative items are constructions with the hybrid nouns *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *kassir* 'cashier', and *psixolog* 'psychologist'. The last item is the only frequent unit among the new professions. Since the noun *vrač* 'doctor' is by far the most frequent noun on the list, it is important to exclude this item from the overall analysis of the constructions so that the results are not skewed by one frequent item. This item alone takes 154 occurrences out of 342 total occurrences, or 47,95% of the RNC data obtained, which might affect the general overview of the results. The extraction of this item gives a more balanced distribution within the constructions. Following this approach, I make sure that the results are not affected by the uneven distribution of the items.

Table 5 demonstrates the total frequency and percentage of both semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement in N-V and A-N structures.

Table 5 - N-V and A-N structures categorized by the type of a target and gender

Constructions	N-Vf	N-Vm	Af-N	Am-N
Total	240 (99,17%)	2 (0,83%)	29 (29%)	71 (71%)
Total without vrač 'doctor'	122 (100%)	0 (0%)	8 (14,28%)	48 (85,72%)

As follows from the data presented in Table 5, the percentage of N-Vf constructions (99,17%) significantly dominates the percentage of of N-Vm constructions (0,83%). When it comes to the constructions with adjective targets, the trend is the opposite: semantic feminine agreement takes 29% of the cases, while grammatical masculine agreement – 71% of the occurrences. Moreover, it should be noted that the extraction of the most frequent item *vrač* 'doctor' did not change considerably the general overview of the distribution. The most notable difference is the bigger number of Af-N constructions, which still supports my hypothesis. Thus, the data with and without the item *vrač* 'doctor' confirm The Agreement Hierarchy since grammatical masculine agreement prevails in A-N constructions, whereas semantic feminine agreement dominates in N-V constructions.

Figure 2 presents data on the distribution N-V and A-N constructions categorized by noun and gender with percentage. As can be seen, N-Vf is a more frequent construction followed by Am-N construction. Therefore, the presented data confirms The Agreement Hierarchy and, hence, my hypothesis.
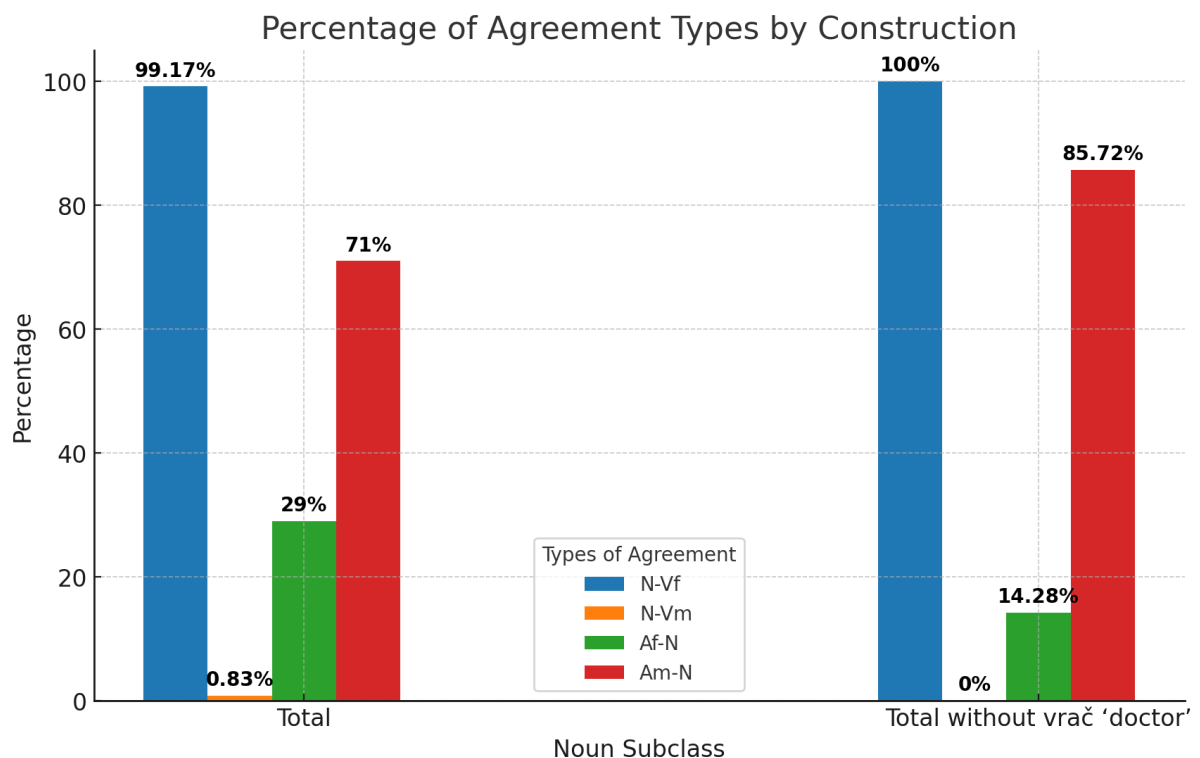

Figure 1 - Graphical distribution N-V and A-N constructions categorized by noun and gender, with percentage.

Further, I will provide examples from the RNC of both semantic and grammatical agreement.

(12) *Vrač sdelala ukol, čtoby stimulirovat' serdce.*

Doctor did.PST.F.SG injection to stimulate heart.

'The doctor gave an injection to stimulate the heart.'

As the context demonstrates, agreement in this sentence is semantic. Despite the masculine grammatical gender of the hybrid noun *vrač* 'doctor', the verbal target *sdelala* 'did' agrees in the feminine gender.

A similar pattern can be observed in (13) where the adjective target *očen' titulovannaya* 'highly esteemed' takes semantic agreement.

(13) *Est' odna vrač, očen' titulovannaya vrač s bol'šim avtoritetom*

Is oneF.SG doctor, highly esteemedF.SG. doctor with a great deal of authority

'There is one doctor, a highly esteemed doctor with a great deal of authority'

As has been discussed above, grammatical agreement prevails in A-N constructions. In (14), the adjective target *detskij* 'child' follows grammatical gender of the hybrid noun *psixolog* 'psychologist' although both refer to the female *moja podruga Tan'ka* 'my female friend Tanka'

(14) *Moja podruga Tan'ka, detskij psixolog, sčitaet, čto Maksimke soveršenno neobxodima sobaka*
My female friend. Tanka, child.SG.M. psychologist, believe.PRS.SG. that Maximka need.PRS.SG dog
'My friend Tanka, a child psychologist, believes that Maximka absolutely needs a dog'

Thus, based on the data obtained from the RNC, it can be concluded that Corbett's Agreement Hierarchy has been confirmed. It claims that semantic agreement is more likely to occur in constructions with verb targets than in adjective targets, while grammatical agreement is more frequent in adjective targets. The quantitative data presented in the tables in this section confirms both The Agreement Hierarchy and, hence, my hypothesis about the dominance of grammatical agreement in A-N and semantic agreement in N-V structures. This hypothesis will be further tested in Chapter 5 presenting the experiment with Russian native speakers.

4.3. Hypothesis 2 - Old vs. new professions

In this section, I discuss a research question and a hypothesis regarding old and new nouns referring to professions and how they might affect gender agreement in Russian.

The assumption that certain professions have historically been associated with one gender over the other have been confirmed by different research studies (Fufaeva, 2020). This can influence the way people perceive and use the language associated with those professions. It is also true that some professions are relatively new, and as a result, the language associated with those professions may be more flexible and less subject to traditional gender associations. For example, the field of computer science is relatively new compared to other fields like medicine or law, and as a result, there may be less entrenched gender associations with the language used to describe computer science professionals.

Relying on these assumptions, I propose the following research question and hypothesis:

RQ2. Which subclasses of nouns agree semantically more often than grammatically?

Hyp.2. Based on the assumptions that I discussed above, I propose the noun subclass representing long-term used names of professions is strongly associated with verbs and adjectives marked with feminine gender (i.e. targets) than the noun subclass representing new professions.

To check my hypothesis, I merged the nouns in each subclass the same way it is done in Chapter 5 presenting the experiment data. I take into consideration the fact that the overall distribution of each noun in RNC shows a lot of variation, but I merge the nouns within each respective subclass (old vs. new) together for a better comparison with the experimental data. As has been discussed earlier, the hybrid nouns of the old subclass include *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *kassir* 'cashier', and *vospitatel'* 'educator'. The hybrid nouns of the new subclass include *bloger* 'blogger', *activist* 'activist, *menedžer* 'manager', and *psixolog* 'psychologist'.

Further, I provide examples of the hybrid nouns from different noun subclasses, examples with A-N construction will be presented in more detail in section 4.5.

Example (15) demonstrates semantic agreement in N-V structure with the hybrid noun from the old noun subclass *vrač* 'doctor'. The verbal target *vygljanula* 'appeared' takes feminine gender agreement.

(15) *Ottuda vygljanula vrač v zelenom xalate*

From there appear.SG.PST.F doctor in a green gown

'From there, a doctor in a green gown appeared'

In example (16) the hybrid noun *menedžer* 'manager', representing the new noun subclass, together with the verbal target *pnula* 'kicked' also demonstrates semantic agreement:

(16) *Menedžer pnula menja nogoj pod stolom*

Manager kick.SG.PST.F me by leg under table

'The manager kicked me under the table'

Table 6 presents the data categorized by subclass of noun, type of construction, and gender, with the total amount of uses in the masculine (grammatical) and feminine (semantic) agreement.

The presented data show that the frequency of the constructions under scrutiny with the old nouns dominates the frequency of the constructions with the new nouns. For this reason, I compare the structures within the noun subclass and take them for 100%. However, the data in Table 5 mostly demonstrate the prevalence of feminine semantic agreement in the constructions with the old nouns (N-Vf and Af-N). Further analysis with a percentage is provided in Table 7.

Table 6 - Distribution of the nouns categorized by subclass of noun, type of construction, and gender.

Type	Noun	N-Vf	N-Vm	Af-N	Am-N
	Vrač 'doctor'	118	2	21	23
	Advokat 'laywer'	35	0	0	5
	Kassir 'cashier'	26	2	4	4
	vospitatel' 'caregiver'	15	0	0	5
	Total	**194**	**4**	**25**	**37**

	Bloger 'blogger'	1	0	0	1
New	Aktivist 'activist'	0	0	0	1
	Menedžer 'manager'	13	0	4	12
	Psixolog 'psychologist'	32	0	0	20
	Total	**46**	**0**	**4**	**34**

As mentioned in the previous section, the most frequent item among the old nouns is *vrač* 'doctor', while the most frequent hybrid noun among the new noun subclass is *psixolog* 'psychologist'. Additionally, the uneven distribution of new and old nouns can be noted since the old nouns are more frequent in the corpus data. The possible reason for that can be the fact that old nouns are more frequently used by native speakers than new ones. It affects the present study outcome. Thus, as in the previous section, the most frequent item *vrač* 'doctor' from the old nouns subclass will be excluded from the general overview. *Vrač* 'doctor' takes 63%, or 164 hits out of 260 occurrences in the old nouns subclass.

Table 7 presents semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement in N-V and A-N constructions with the old and new nouns followed by the percentage. Besides, it should be noted that I compared the constructions within each subclass and took as 100% the sum of all items in one subclass.

Table 7 - Occurrence of the hybrid nouns divided into the old (with and without vrač 'doctor') and new nouns subclasses, with percentage.

Type of agreement	Semantic feminine agreement		Grammatical masculine agreement	
Constructions	N-Vf	Af-N	N-Vm	Am-N
Total old nouns	194 (74,6%)	4 (1,53%)	25 (9,61%)	37 (14,23%)
Total old nouns without *vrač* 'doctor'	76 (80%)	2 (2,1%)	4 (4,2%)	13 (13,68%)
Total new nouns	46 (54,76%)	0 (0%)	4 (4,76%)	34 (40,47%)

As outlined in Table 7, in both old and new nouns subclasses can be observed the same trends. To illustrate, semantic feminine agreement prevails in N-V structures and grammatical masculine agreement dominates in A-N constructions. However, it should be highlighted that the verbal and adjective targets tend to agree in feminine gender more often with the hybrid nouns from the old noun subclass (74,6% and 1,53%) rather than the new noun subclass (54,76% and 0%). Furthermore, as can be seen from Table 7, the exclusion of the most frequent item *vrač* 'doctor' has not changed the general overview significantly. The most observable distinction is the increase of the occurrences of N-Vf structures (80%) and the decrease of N-Vm constructions. As a result, the item *vrač* 'doctor' does not affect the total overview of the distribution of the hybrid nouns belonging to the old noun subclass.

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the constructions categorized by subclass of noun. According to it, semantic agreement prevails in the constructions with the old noun subclass (N-Vf, Af-N, Af-N-Vf).
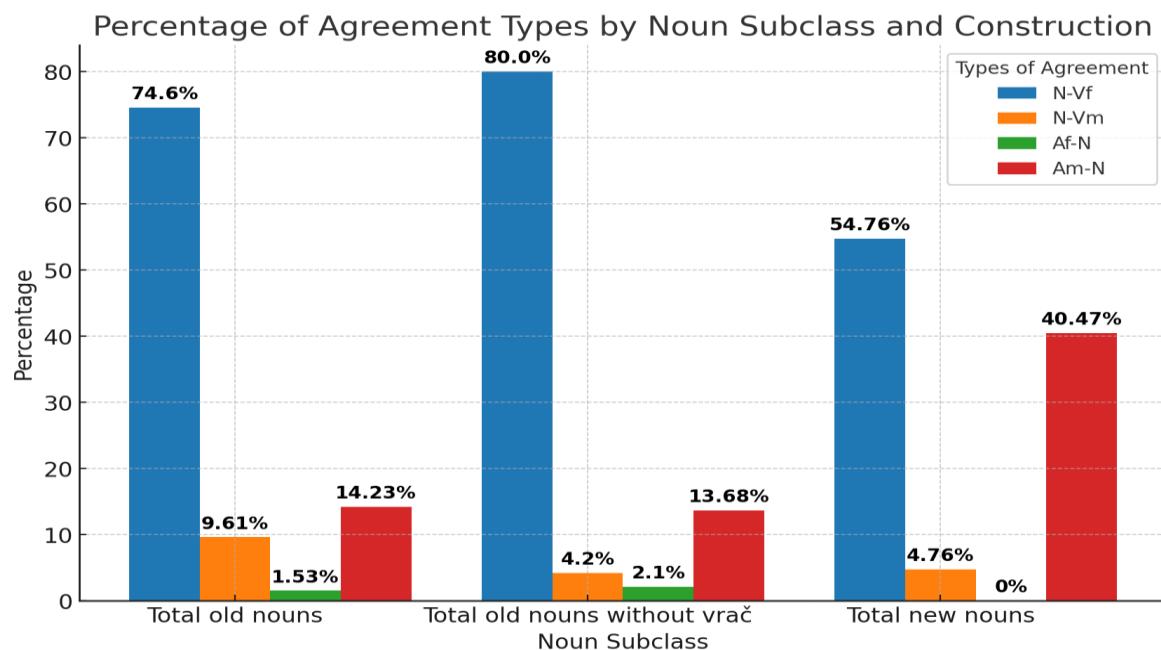
Figure 2 - Graphical distribution of the constructions categorized by subclass of noun

Thereby, it can be concluded that the result I have obtained confirms my prediction that the noun subclass representing long-term used names of professions is stronger associated with feminine targets than the noun subclass representing new professions.

To sum up, in this section I investigated whether hybrid nouns from the old noun subclass tend to take semantic feminine agreement comparing with the new noun subclass. As

the provided analysis showed, my hypothesis was confirmed. This pattern may be explained by the fact that old professions that have existed for a long time have a stable lexical foundation, whereas new professions may be less established and less frequently encountered in the language. As the data revealed, the general pattern is not distorted by highly frequent units like *vrač* 'doctor'.

4.4. Hypothesis 3 - Feminitive counterpart factor

In this section, the research question and the hypothesis regarding the correspondence between the presence and absence of feminine counterparts of hybrid nouns will be covered.

As discussed in Chapter 1, 'feminitive' is a word in the feminine gender that has a semantic equivalent in the masculine gender. In the present study, a feminitive refers to the female counterpart of a hybrid noun, specifically referring to professions:

(17) *prodavec* 'seller' – hybrid noun
prodavščica 'female seller' – feminitive counterpart

It is important to highlight that certain names of professions and their feminitives reflect the historical prevalence of women in those fields. Examples include *kassirša* for female cashiers, *vospitatel'nica* for female educators, *učitel'nica* for female teachers, and so forth.

It is worth noting that not all hybrid nouns have feminitive counterparts for different reasons. Besides, some feminitives are marked with pejorative or informal connotation (Rozental et al. 1998).

For example, the hybrid noun *vrač* 'doctor' do not have a neutral feminitive pair. This fact explains why the noun *vrač* 'doctor' is very frequent (14657 uses in the whole RNC**).** It should be noted that *vrač* 'doctor' has the informal pejorative feminitive pair *vračixa* 'woman doctor', which presents a negative connotation. *Vračixa* '*female doctor*' is used in the RNC 291 times.

Thus, in this work I will consider four hybrid nouns that have feminitive counterparts that are neutral and four hybrid nouns that do not have feminitive. It is intuitive to suggest that the presence of feminitive will decrease the frequency of the hybrid noun's use. Based on this assumption and gender agreement in hybrid nouns, I propose the following research question and hypothesis:

RQ3. Will the presence of a feminitive influence the frequency of semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement?

Hyp.3 Hybrid nouns that have femininitive counterparts take semantic feminine agreement less frequently than hybrids that do not have feminitive counterparts. Thus, hybrid nouns that do not have feminitives will show grammatical masculine agreement more often.

To test my research question and hypothesis, first, I divided the eight nouns considered in the present study into two groups: four hybrid nouns with feminine counterparts (*bloger* 'blogger', *activist* 'activist', *kassir* 'cashier', and *vospitatel'* 'educator') and four hybrid nouns without feminine counterparts (*vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *menedžer* 'manager', and *psixolog* 'psychologist'). Then, I checked the frequency of use of both the hybrid nouns and their feminitive counterparts according to the RNC. Table 8 represents the data obtained, which shows that feminitives take a significant amount of the usage of profession names. This implies that the presence of formal femininives affects the distribution of both hybrid nouns and feminitives, underlying the significance of gender specificity in professions that are traditionally associated with women, e.g. education sphere *vospitatel'nica* 'female educator', *učitel'nica* 'female teacher'.

Table 8 - Occurrences of hybrid nouns and their feminitive counterparts.

bloger 'blogger'	121	blogerša 'female blogger'	8
aktivist 'activist'	230	aktivistka 'female activist'	162
vospitatel' (educator)	547	vospitatel′nica 'female educator'	593
kassir 'cashier'	414	kassirša 'female cashier'	410

The aforementioned trend can be observed by the numbers of occurrences in Table 8. The most frequent items are *vospitatel'* 'educator' (547 occurrences) - *vospitatel'nica* 'female educator' (593 oc.) and *kassir* 'cashier' (414 oc.) - *kassirša* 'female cashier' (410 oc.). Further, I provide examples of feminitive counterparts, as well as semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement with the hybrid nouns.

In the following examples (10) and (11) the feminitive counterparts are presented. It should be highlighted that since all feminitives are grammatically marked with feminine gender, the targets agree in feminine gender.

(18) *Vospitatel'nica pricepilas' s dobroželatel'nymi nazojlivymi rassprosami*
Caregiver.SG.F. clung.SG.F. with friendly persistent questions

'The female caregiver clung herself with friendly and persistent questions'

In (18) the feminitive *vospitatel'nica* 'female caregiver' marks the verbal target *pricepilas'* 'clung herself' with feminine gender. This agreement is grammatical since the grammatical gender of *vospitatel'nica* 'female caregiver' is feminine.

Example (19) illustrates the same pattern, but in a two target A-N-V structure:
(19) *Simpatiyu vyzvala ochen' rumyanaya, vysokogrudaya aktivistka*
Sympathy attracted very blushing.SG.F., well-bosomed.SG.F. activist.SG.F.
'She attracted sympathy as a very blushing, well-bosomed female activist'

The feminitive *aktivistka* 'female activist' triggers both adjective (*ochen' rumyanaya, vysokogrudaya* 'very blushing well-bosomed') and verbal (*vyzvala* 'attracted') targets to take grammatical feminine agreement. The following examples from the RNC illustrate how the hybrid nouns with and without feminitives agree with different targets.

In (20) the verbal target *sela* 'sat' agrees with the hybrid noun without a feminitive counterpart *psixolog* 'psychologist' semantically, taking feminine agreement.

(20) *Ja razvalilsja i utonul, psixolog s vyprjamlennoj spinoj sela na kraj*
I collapsed and sank, psychologist with straight back sit.PST.F. on edge
'I collapsed and sank, the psychologist with a straight back sat down on the edge'

In (21) the adjectival target *staršaja* 'senior' also follows semantic feminine agreement with the hybrid noun *kassir* 'cashier' that have a feminitive pair.

(21) *Staršaja kassir govorit: 'My pobedili!'*
Senior.SG.F. cashier says: 'We won!'
'The senior cashier says: 'We won!'

According to my prediction, the hybrid nouns with feminitives tend to take grammatical masculine agreement, while the hybrid nouns without feminitives are likely to take semantic feminine agreement.

Table 9 presents the data obtained. Considering the uneven distribution of the subclasses, namely with feminitives and without feminitives, I analyse the data within each subclass.

Table 9 - Hybrid nouns with and without feminitives.

Type	Noun	NVf	NVm	Af-N	Am-N
With feminitives	bloger 'blogger'	1	0	0	1
	aktivist 'activist'	0	0	0	1
	kassir 'cashier'	26	2	4	4
	vospitatel' 'caregiver'	15	0	0	5
	Total	**42**	**2**	**4**	**11**
Without feminitives	vrač 'doctor'	118	2	21	23
	advokat 'laywer'	35	0	0	5
	menedžer 'manager'	13	0	4	12
	psixolog 'psychologist'	32	0	0	20
	Total	**198**	**2**	**25**	**60**

As follows from the data in Table 9 and Table 10, the hybrid nouns that have feminitive counterparts show that semantic feminine agreement prevails in N-Vf, whereas grammatical masculine agreement dominates in Af-N structures (respectively 71,2% and 18,6%). N-V is not affected much by whether comparing the nouns with or without feminitives. Further, for A-N the percentage of grammatical agreement is slightly higher for hybrids without a feminitive, which contradicts with Hypothesis 3. This means that other factors, e.g. the noun subclass (old vs. new), are more important than the presence of the feminitive. Thus, the corpus data obtained contradicts my hypothesis about the dominance of grammatical masculine agreement in the hybrid nouns with the presence of feminitives.

Table 10 - Occurrence of the hybrid nouns divided into the subclasses with and without feminitives in the RNC.

Type of agreement	Semantic feminine agreement		Grammatical masculine agreement	
Presence of a feminitive	N-Vf	Af-N	N-Vm	Am-N
Total with	42 (71,2%)	4 (6,8%)	2 (3,4%)	11 (18,6%)
Total without	198 (69,5%)	25 (8,8%)	2 (0,7%)	60 (21%)
Total without vrač 'doctor'	80 (66,1%)	4 (3,3%)	0 (0%)	37 (30,6%)

For the hybrid nouns without feminitives, my prediction was not confirmed as well. Semantic feminine agreement occurs in 69,5% of N-Vf constructions and 8,8% of Af-N structures. The grammatical masculine agreement appears in 0,7% of N-Vm and 21% of Am-N of cases.

Nonetheless, as in the previous sections, it is also crucial to investigate a general overview from a balanced distribution by extraction the most frequent item *vrač* 'doctor'. This item alone takes 57,54% of the 'without feminitives' subclass data, which affects the general overview of the results. Thus, the extraction of this item provides a more balanced distribution of occurrences within the subclass.

Furthermore, Table 10 demonstrates that semantic feminine agreement (66,1% of N-Vf and 3,3% of Af-N structures) overrides grammatical masculine agreement (0% of N-Vm and 30,6% of Am-N constructions) in N-V constructions. Besides, it should be highlighted that the item *vrač* 'doctor' does not change the overall results since the proportion of the constructions remains approximately the same. Figure 4 illustrates the percentage distribution of the constructions under scrutiny divided into three noun subclasses: the hybrid nouns with feminitives, the hybrid nouns without feminitives, and the hybrid nouns without feminitives excluding the item *vrač* 'doctor'.
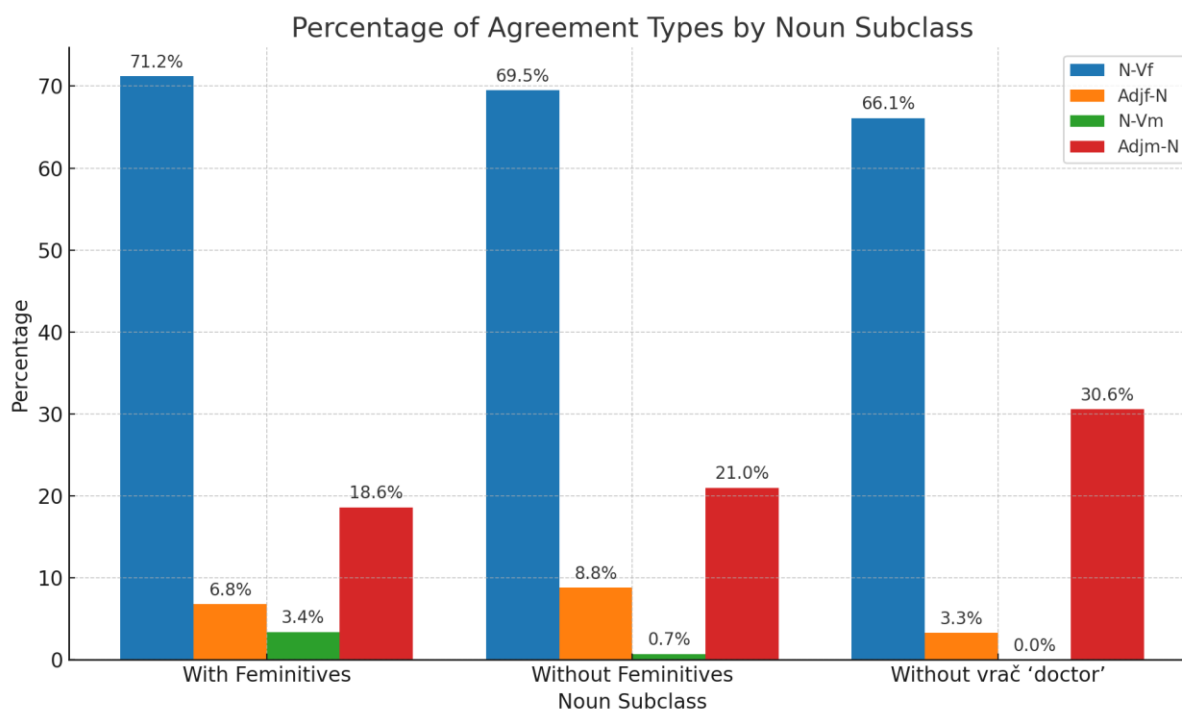
Figure 3 - Percentage of occurrence of the hybrid nouns divided into the subclasses.

To sum up, I predicted that grammatical masculine agreement would prevail in the hybrid nouns with feminitives, whereas semantic feminine agreement would dominate in the hybrid nouns without feminitive counterparts. The data reveals that semantic feminine agreement is predominant in both subclasses within N-Vf structures (71,2% and 69,5%, respectively), while grammatical masculine agreement is more prevalent in A-N structures (18.6% and 21%). These findings support Hypothesis 1 regarding the prevalence of semantic feminine agreement in N-V constructions over A-N constructions, but Hypothesis 3. Therefore, the presence of a feminitive is not a factor when it comes to the type of agreement. The research question and hypothesis will be further investigated in Chapter 5.

4.5. Hypothesis 4 - Types of adjectives

As shown in section 5.2, adjectival targets tend to take grammatical masculine agreement, following The Agreement Hierarchy by Corbett. However, I argue that there is an additional factor that might affect the type of agreement in A-N constructions. In this section I investigate a correlation between the type of adjectives and type of agreement in A-N constructions.

As pointed out in Chapter 2, adjectives in Russian are divided into two big classes: relational and qualitative. Hacken claims (2019), a relational adjective is an adjective that does

not express a property, but rather a relation to a concept designated by a noun. When it comes to qualitative adjectives, they describe the features of a person or thing and usually have positive, comparative, and superlative forms. Therefore, if a qualitative adjective refers to a female, most likely the adjective will be marked with feminine gender (*dobraja vrač* 'kind doctor', *opytnaja psixolog* 'experienced psychologist'). The opposite trend can be observed in relational adjectives. One of the factors is that relational adjectives are often included in collocations, or fixed expressions, describing the field of professional activity.

According to the theory explained in Chapter 2 and above, I propose the following research question and hypothesis:

RQ4. Does the type of adjective (qualitative vs. relational) affect the type of gender agreement?

Hyp. 4.1. I predict that relational adjectives more often agree in masculine gender, whereas qualitative adjectives tend to agree in feminine gender (*zubnoj vrač* 'dental.SG.M. doctor' and *simpatičnaja doktor* 'pretty.SG.F. doctor'). In other words, I hypothesize that relational adjectives tend to agree grammatically, while qualitative adjectives tend to agree semantically.

Hyp. 4.2. Furthermore, I propose that adjectives in the feminine gender are more likely to be used in contexts where physical appearance is being described, while adjectives in the masculine gender are more frequently used in contexts related to professional qualities.

To validate my hypothesis, I merged the following syntactical structures with previously mentioned hybrid nouns:

- Adjective (target) hybrid noun (controller) – A-N constructions.
- Adjective (target) hybrid noun (controller) verb in past tense (target) – A-N-V constructions.

Further, I categorized the collected/extracted adjectives by type – relational or qualitative. Table 11 presents the data obtained.

Table 11 - Adjectives categorized by type.

Hybrid noun	Gender	Relational	Qualitative
bloger 'blogger'	M	1	0
	F	0	0
aktivist 'activist'	M	1	0
	F	0	0
kassir 'cashier'	M	2	0
	F	2	1
vospitatel′ 'caregiver'	M	2	3
	F	0	0
vrač 'doctor'	M	14	7
	F	7	11
advokat 'laywer'	M	3	4
	F	0	0
menedžer 'manager'	M	2	0
	F	0	2
psixolog (phycologist)	M	15	7
	F	0	0

As the RNC data demonstrate, the distribution of constructions is uneven. For instance, the hybrid noun *bloger* 'blogger' is mentioned only once, while the number of A-N constructions with the hybrid noun *vrač* 'doctor' amounts to 39. This unbalanced frequency highlights the variation in the use of different hybrid nouns in the RNC, suggesting that some hybrids are more prevalent or contextually relevant than others. The item *vrač* 'doctor' stands out more prominently in the data due to its higher frequency. Nevertheless, my data also allow for the observation of certain trends and regularities.

Table 12 - The distribution of adjectives by type and gender.

Gender	M	F	Total
Relational	40	4	44
Qualitative	75	19	94
Total	115	23	138

Table 12 offers the distribution of relational and qualitative adjectives between the two genders. The total amount of adjectives in my RNC data is 138. It is worth noting that some units are repeated ('senior manager', 'district doctor', 'chief doctor'). The total number of relational adjectives is 44, while the number of qualitative adjectives is 94. The gender distribution is as follows: 115 adjectives of both types agree in masculine gender, and 23 in feminine gender. Thus, the most frequent type of adjective is qualitative; the most frequent type of agreement is grammatical masculine.

The visual distribution of relational and qualitative adjectives in the feminine and masculine genders is presented in Figure 6. Examples are provided in sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2.
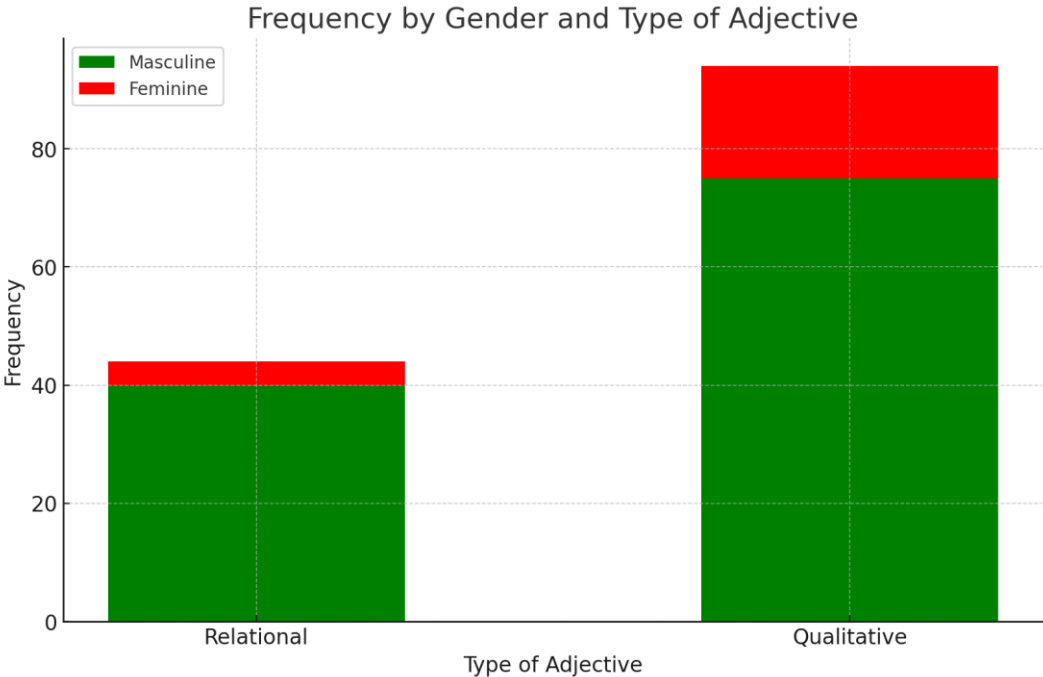

Figure 4 - Distribution of relational and qualitative adjectives.

Next, I examine in detail examples of semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement between relational and qualitative adjectives and possible additional factors that affect the distribution.

4.5.1. Relational adjectives and collocations

Relational adjectives define a relation to a corresponding noun (Hacken, 2019) and are widely used to express professional activity.

As has been mentioned in Chapter 2, Bogoyavlenskaya argues (2022) that the most frequent collocational model in Russian language is A-N construction. This model describes a

professional status, a position (duty doctor), a qualification (senior designer). According to Bogoyavlenskaya, collocations refer to a sequence of two or more lexical units that tend to occur together. This phenomenon is based on the semantic and grammatical compatibility of the elements within the phrase. Based on Bogoyavlenskaya's observations, I predict that relational adjectives appear often in collocations used by Russian native speakers.

In the RNC I discovered a total of 44 relational adjectives. Among them, 4 take semantic feminine agreement, while 40 follow grammatical masculine agreement. Next, I will analyse 12 random adjectives from my data and divide them into two groups: personal features related to behavior or appearance and profession-related properties.

As many combinations are stable collocations, it is worth noting that some of the items are more frequent and appear multiple times in the RNC data, e.g. *znakomaja vrač* 'familiar doctor' (2 occ.), *učastkovyj vrač* 'local doctor' (3 occ.), *staršij menedžer* 'senior manager' (5 occ.).

Profession-related property adjectives include the following items:

(22)   *škol'nyj psixolog* 'school psychologist' (Am-N)

(23)   *učastkovyj vrač* 'local doctor' (Am-N)

(24)   *detskij vrač* 'pediatrician' (Am-N)

(25)   *zubnoj vrač* 'dentist' (Am-N)

(26)   *učastkovaja vrač* 'district doctor' (Af-N)

(27)   *praktičeskij psixolog* 'practical psychologist' (Am-N)

(28)   *japonskij menedžer* 'japanese manager' (Am-N)

(29)   *novgorodskij bloger* 'novgorod-based blogger'   (Am-N)

(30)   *bezrabotnyj advokat* 'unemployed lawyer' (Am-N)

(31)   *dežurnyj vospitatel'* 'duty educator' (Am-N)

All the 10 adjectives mentioned above describe profession-related properties. The agreement of 9 of them is grammatical, meaning the adjective is marked with masculine gender. Only one combination, *učastkovaja vrač* 'district doctor' (Af-N), agrees semantically, i.e. the adjective appears in feminine gender.

According to the CoCoCo portal (CoCoCo: Collocations, Colligations, and Corpora), which provides information about the collocability of Russian words, almost all the adjectives

mentioned above show that they form strong collocations with the hybrids I am researching in the present study.

According to the CoCoCo portal, the most frequent item *vrac* 'doctor' shows strong collocability with adjectives that are traditionally included into collocations describing diverse medical professions and fields (*sanitarnyj* 'sanitary', *lečaščij* 'therapeutic', *zubnoj* 'dental', *dežurnyj* 'duty', *veterinarnyj* 'veterinary').

Also, it should be highlighted that only one adjective, *zubnoj* 'dental', shows the ability to collocate exclusively with the words *vrač* 'doctor' and *texnik* 'technician', essentially defining a person who cures teeth.

The other relational adjectives demonstrate compatibility with various nouns, including those denoting professions. To illustrate, based on the CoCoCo data, the relational adjective *detskij* 'child' is able to collocate with the following professions: *pisatel′* 'writer', *nevrolog* 'neurologist', *psixolog* 'psychologist', *vrač* 'doctor', *psixiatr* 'psychiatrist', *poèt* 'poet'.

The next group of relational adjectives refers to personal features.

> *(32)* *domoroščennyj psixolog* 'home-grown psychologist' (Am-N)
> *(33)* *titulovannaja vrač* 'titled doctor' (Af-N)

In this context, the profession becomes less prominent, the relational adjectives describe personality traits. It is also necessary to note that some individual items have lost their grammatical features. For example, *domoroščennyj* 'home-grown' in (32) and *titulovannaja* 'titled' in (33) were originally participles that have lost their participial features and have become relational adjectives.

When it comes to the items' gender, *titulovannaja vrač* demonstrates semantic feminine agreement, while is *domoroščennyj psixolog* presents grammatical masculine gender. Apart from that, no collocations have been found. Table 13 shows the distribution of relational adjectives by type of agreement and by group of describing a professional. As follows from Table 13, grammatical masculine agreement in the constructions under scrutiny dominates considerably.

Table 13 - Distribution of relational adjectives.

Relational adjectives			
Type of agreement	Profession related adjectives	Appearance or personal qualities related adjectives	Total
Grammatical masculine	9	1	10
Semantic feminine	1	1	2
Total	10	2	12

As presented in Table 13, the group of relational adjectives describing professional traits (10 items) is noticeably larger than the group of relational adjectives denoting personal traits (2 items). It confirms Hyp. 4.1. claiming that relational adjectives tend to take grammatical masculine agreement. Additionally, it can be observed that relational adjectives are part of collocations specifying the qualification of a profession or job title. This assumption is supported by the data from the CoCoCo portal, which demonstrates that the combinations of A-N in my dataset occur more frequently than expected, implying that they can be considered as lexical collocations. Thus, Hyp. 4.2 referring to the dominance of professional qualities in relational adjectives has been confirmed as well.

4.5.2. Qualitative adjectives

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, qualitative adjectives denote the external characteristics of animate and inanimate objects, as well as the internal qualities of animate objects, such as appearance, age, size, etc.

The RNC data presented 94 qualitative adjectives, which exceeds the number of relational adjectives by more than two times. Among them, 75 are marked with masculine gender, and 19 demonstrate semantic feminine agreement. For this section, I selected 12 random qualitative adjectives. As in the previous section, I will categorize them into two groups describing professional qualities and referring to personal traits.

Professional qualities group:
>   *(34)*   *staršaja kassir*   'senior cashier'   Af-N
>   *(35)*   *glavnyj vospitatel′* 'chief educator'   Am-N
>   *(36)*   *staršij menedžer* 'senior manager'   Am-N

(37)   *izvestnyj advokat* 'well-known lawyer'   Am-N

(38)   *otmennyj psixolog* 'excellent psychologist' Am-N

(39)   *horošaja vrač* 'good doctor' Af-N

In this group, 2 A-N constructions take semantic feminine agreement, whereas 4 A-N constructions agree grammatically. It is also worth noting that in these contexts, the qualitative adjectives *glavnyj* (35) and *staršij* (36) lose their evaluative properties and become part of collocations denoting professional positions. For example, in (34) *staršaja kassir* 'senior cashier', (35) *glavnyj vospitatel* 'chief educator', (36) *staršij menedžer* 'senior manager'.

According to the CoCoCo portal, the adjectives demonstrate flexible compatibility with different nouns.

Personal qualities group is represented by the following adjectives:

(40)   *znakomaja vrač* 'familiar doctor' Af-N

(41)   *tolstaja vrač* 'overweight doctor' Af-N

(42)   *beremennaja vrač* 'pregnant doctor' Af-N

(43)   *obajatel'naja vrač* 'charming doctor' Af-N

(44)   *neumolimaja menedžer* 'relentless manager' Af-N

(45)   *molodoj advokat* 'young lawyer' Am-N

Out of the 6 presented constructions, 5 agree semantically in feminine gender, while only one construction in (45) *molodoj advokat* 'young lawyer', is marked with masculine gender. Furthermore, all the adjectives presented describe physical characteristics or behavior, i.e. in (43) *tolstaja vrač* 'overweight doctor' and in (44) *neumolimaja menedžer* 'relentless manager'). Apart from these examples, the CoCoCo portal did not show any collocations with the qualitative adjectives.

Table 14 demonstrates the distribution of qualitative adjectives within two groups. As can be seen, grammatical masculine agreement prevails in the group of profession related adjectives (5 items out of 6). The opposite trend can be observed in the group of personal quality related adjectives: 5 out of 6 adjectives take semantic feminine agreement. However, the general distribution is balanced, which does not allow me to make strong conclusions about the dominance of a particular type of agreement. Nevertheless, the frequency of semantic feminine agreement in qualitative adjectives is higher (7 items) comparing with relational adjectives in

the previous section (2 items). That partially confirms Hyp. 4.1. about a tendency of semantic agreement in qualitative adjectives.

Table 14 - Distribution of qualitative adjectives.

Qualitative adjectives			
Type of agreement	Profession related adjectives	Appearance or personal quality related adjectives	Total
Grammatical masculine	4	1	5
Semantic feminine	2	5	7
Total	6	6	12

Moreover, the data obtained show that qualitative adjectives are stronger associated with personality traits and demonstrate association with feminine gender, which proves Hyp. 4.2.

To conclude, the analysis conducted in this section, confirms the proposed hypotheses to a certain extent, showing a tendency for relational adjectives to agree grammatically in masculine gender and qualitative adjectives semantically in feminine. In addition, the data demonstrate that relational adjectives are often associated with collocations and are frequently used in professional contexts. By contrast, qualitative adjectives, which describe personal characteristics or appearance, tend to agree in feminine gender. This pattern supports the hypothesis but also highlights the complexity of adjective usage and agreement in Russian. However, it is important to clarify that, due to the limitations of the collected RNC data, I can only make assumptions about tendencies.

4.6. Mixed gender agreement

As discussed in Chapter 2, mixed agreement is a type of agreement with two targets that share the same hybrid noun, but follow different agreement pattern, i.e. semantic feminine or grammatical masculine. In Russian, this phenomenon is illustrated in A-N-V construction.

However, according to Corbett (1979), the only grammatical mixed agreement appears in A-N-V structure, where the adjective target takes grammatical masculine agreement, while the verbal target agrees semantically in feminine gender. The opposite pattern, where the adjective target is marked with feminine gender and the verbal takes masculine agreement,

violates The Agreement Hierarchy and, thus, is considered ungrammatical by Russian native speakers.

Therefore, based on the theory in Chapter 2 and above, I propose the following research question and hypothesis.

RQ4. How grammatical is Af-N-Vm construction for Russian native speakers?

Hyp.4. Following Corbett (1979), I hypothesise that Russian native speakers perceive semantic agreement Af-N-Vm as ungrammatical.

The corpus data obtained presented an inconsiderable number of A-N-V items due to a technical issue with a search system in the RNC that did not allow to detect the mixed constructions and is insufficient to conduct an analysis. In order to investigate the proposed research question and the hypothesis, I performed an experiment, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

5. Experimental study

This chapter will present experimental tasks for Russian native speakers. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the corpus data extracted from the Russian National corpus, is not sufficient to answer the research questions of the present study. Thus, the goal of the experiment that I will describe in this chapter, is to provide equally distributed data on gender agreement with the hybrid nouns and answer the research questions of the study. It should be noted that I will not further explore the hypothesis about the types of adjectives in the experiment due to the time and length limitations of the research.

5.1. Research questions and predictions

RQ1. Does grammatical gender agreement with hybrid forms occur more often in constructions A-N than N-V?

RQ2. Which subclasses of nouns agree semantically more often than grammatically?

RQ3. Will the presence of a feminitive influence the frequency of semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement?

RQ4. Are Russian native speakers able to distinguish ungrammatical semantic agreement in structures with mixed agreement, where the adjective target agrees semantically in feminine gender, whereas the verbal target agrees grammatically in masculine gender (*Af-N-Vm construction)?

The predictions for these research questions are as follows:

Prediction 1. According to Corbett's Agreement Hierarchy (1979), I predict that A-N constructions will take grammatical masculine agreement more often than N-V constructions. Therefore, I predict that the participants of the experiment more likely will choose grammatical agreement in A-N structures with the adjective target in masculine gender over semantic agreement in A-N structures with the adjective target in feminine gender. For N-V structures, I anticipate the opposite pattern: N-V structures with the verbal targets in feminine gender will significantly dominate N-V structures with the verbal targets in masculine gender.

Prediction 2. Based on the assumptions that I mentioned in Chapter 4, I propose the noun subclass representing long-term used names of professions (e.g. nouns like *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver') to be more strongly associated with

feminine gender than the noun subclass representing new professions (e.g. nouns like *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist'). Thus, I predict that the participants of the experiment will prefer semantic feminine agreement in A-N, N-V and A-N-V constructions more often with the hybrid nouns belonging to the old noun subclass than with the hybrid nouns from the new noun subclass.

Prediction 3. Hybrid nouns that have femininitive pairs (e.g. nouns like *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver', *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist') will take semantic feminine agreement less frequently than hybrids that do not have feminitive counterparts (e.g. nouns like *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist'). Thus, I propose that the participants of the experiment will choose grammatical masculine agreement with the hybrid nouns that have a feminitive more frequently than with the hybrid nouns without a feminitive.

Prediction 4. Mixed agreement structures with the adjective target in feminine gender and the verbal in masculine gender will violate The Agreement Hierarchy. Thereby, I predict that the structures with semantic feminine agreement in the adjectival target and grammatical masculine agreement in the verbal target will be treated by the participants as ungrammatical and, hence, acceptable (*Af-N-Vm). The opposite mixed structure with the adjectival target in masculine and the verbal target in feminine will be considered by the participants as grammatical and, consequently, acceptable (Am-N-Vf).

5.2. The experimental design: Acceptability judgement task

In my experiment, I use an acceptability judgement task (AJT), one of the most common experimental empirical methods. It is based on whether a participant considers the utterance acceptable or unacceptable. It has been chosen because AJT is an intuitive method and does not require any previous training.

The goal of the experiment is to investigate how Russian native speakers use grammatical masculine and semantic feminine agreement with hybrid nouns denoting professions and referring to females. Therefore, the data will allow me to answer four research questions of the present study that have been mentioned above.

The experiment has been based on an online questionnaire containing 98 questions. The participants were asked to judge the three types of constructions namely A-N, N-V, & A-N-V, which have been discussed in detail in the previous chapters.

5.2.1. AJT items

In the AJT, the participants evaluated three constructions (A-N, N-V, & A-N-V) with 8 hybrid nouns that are presented in Table 5.1. The hybrid nouns that belong to the old noun subclass are *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver', whereas the hybrid nouns that represent the new noun subclass are *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist'. Furthermore, the hybrid nouns *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver', *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist' have feminitive counterparts, while the nouns *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist' demonstrate the absence of feminitive pairs.

Table 5.1. The nouns presented in the experiment.

	Noun
	Noun
1.	vrač 'doctor'
2.	advokat 'lawyer'
3.	kassir 'cashier'
4.	vospitatel' 'caregiver'
5.	bloger 'blogger'
6.	aktivist 'activist'
7.	menedžer 'manager'
8.	psixolog 'psychologist'

The design of the experiment included three types of items:

- 48 experimental items
- 32 baseline condition items
- 19 fillers

5.2.2. Experimental items

In the experimental items, the participants evaluated 8 hybrid nouns referring to females as acceptable or unacceptable in three experimental conditions: A-N, N-V, & A-N-V. Table 5.2 presents the experimental design and provides examples with the hybrid noun *bloger* 'blogger'. There were 16 items in the A-N condition, 16 items in the N-V condition, but only 15 items in the A-N-V condition. One item was removed from the A-N-V condition due to a technical failure.

Table 5.2. The example of target structures of the experiment

Condition/agreement target	Agreement	Example	Number of items
Adjective (A-N)	Semantic (Af-N)	izvestnaja bloger 'famousF.SG. blogger'	8
	Grammatical (Am-N)	izvestnaja bloger 'famousF.SG. blogger'	8
Verb (N-V)	Semantic (N-Vf)	bloger napisala 'blogger writePST.F.SG.'	8
	Grammatical (N-Vm)	bloger napisal 'blogger write.PST.M.SG.'	8
Mixed (A-N-V)	Grammatical (Am-N-Vf)	izvestnyj bloger napisala 'famousM.SG. blogger writePST.F.SG'	8
	Ungrammatical (*Af-N-Vm)	*izvestnaja bloger napisal 'famousF.SG. blogger writePST.M.SG'	7

To make sure that the participants knew that the test nouns referred to females, each of the three target structures had a context sentence referring to a female name. As shown in (46a) and (46b) the same context was used for semantic feminine (Af-N) and grammatical masculine (Am-N) gender agreement.

As shown in (46a) and (46b), the A-N structure items represent grammatical (46a) and semantic (46b) agreement, as exemplified *molodoy vrač* 'youngM.SG. doctor' and *molodaya vrač* 'youngF.SG. doctor'.

(46a) Vrač Ekaterina Vasilyevna skoro okončit medicinskij universitet.

Doctor Ekaterina Vasilyevna soon graduateFT.SG. medicalACC.SG/ universityACC.SG.

'The doctor Ekaterina Vasilyevna will soon graduate from the medical university'.

Molodoj vrač mnogomu naučitsja!

YoungM.SG. doctor learnFT.SG.a lot

'The young doctor will learn a lot!'

(46b) Vrač Ekaterina Vasilyevna skoro okončit medicinskij universitet.

Doctor Ekaterina Vasilyevna soon graduateFT.SG. medicalACC.SG/ universityACC.SG.

'The doctor Ekaterina Vasilyevna will soon graduate from the medical university'

Molodaja vrač mnogomu naučitsya!

YoungF.SG. doctor learn.FT.SG. a lot

'The young doctor will learn a lot!'

The items (47a) and (47b) illustrate N-V structure and, as in previous examples, grammatical and semantic agreement, respectively *kassir obslužil* (cashier serve.PST.M.SG.) and *kassir obslužila* (cashier serve.PST.F.SG).

(47a) U kassira Galiny segodnja zanjatoj den′ — v magazine mnogo pokupatelej.

On cashier Galina today busy day — in shop many customers

'Cashier Galina has a busy day today — there are a lot of customers in the store'.

Kassir bystro obslužil posetitelej.

Cashier quickly serve.PST.M.SG. customers

'The cashier quickly served the customers'.

(47b) U kassira Galiny segodnja zanjatoj den′ — v magazine mnogo pokupatelej

On cashier Galina today busy day — in shop many customers

'Cashier Galina has a busy day today — there are a lot of customers in the store'.

Kassir bystro obslužila posetitelej.

Cashier quickly serve.PST.F.SG. customers

'The cashier quickly served the customers'.

The items (48a) and (48b) demonstrate A-N-V mixed agreement structure. In (48a) *populyarnyy bloger polučila* (popular.M.SG. blogger receive.PST.F.SG.) the adjective shows masculine agreement and the verbal target takes feminine gender. While in (48b) the adjective target takes feminine gender and the verbal target takes masculine gender *populyarnaja bloger polučil* (popular.F. SG. blogger receive.PST.M.SG.). The last mixed agreement structure with semantic feminine agreement in the adjective target and masculine grammatical agreement in the verbal target (Af-N-Vm) is considered ungrammatical as I have already shown in Chapter 2.

(48a) Bloger Polina posvyaščaet mnogo vremeni svoej rabote.

Blogger Polina devotePST.SG. a lot time her work

'Blogger Polina devotes a lot of time to her work'.

Nedavno populjarnyj bloger polučila nagradu na gorodskom festivale kultury za osveščenie kul′turnyx sobytij Kazani.

Recently popular.M.SG. blogger receive.PST.F.SG. award on city Festival of Culture for covering cultural events in Kazan

'Recently, the popular blogger received an award at the city Festival of Culture for covering cultural events in Kazan'

(48b) Bloger Polina posvyaščaet mnogo vremeni svoej rabote.

* Nedavno populjarnyj bloger polučil nagradu na gorodskom festivale kultury za osveščenie kul′turnyx sobytij Kazani.

Blogger Polina devotePST.SG.

a lot time her work

'Blogger Polina devotes a lot
of time to her work'.

Recently popular.F.SG. blogger receive.PST.M.SG.
award on city Festival of Culture for covering cultural
events in Kazan.

'Recently, the popular blogger received an award at
the city Festival of Culture for covering cultural
events in Kazan'.

5.2.3. Baseline condition items

The baseline condition was used to check whether the participants were capable of differentiating between inherently grammatical and ungrammatical items. The items were formed with A-N and N-V structure sentences, but unlike the experimental items, the hybrid nouns in the baseline conditions referred to male individuals. Each of the 8 hybrid nouns (*vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver', *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist') was judged as grammatical (masculine agreement) or ungrammatical (feminine agreement), i.e. it occurred twice in each condition. There were 32 items in total: 16 in the A-N condition and 16 in the N-V condition. Thus, 16 items were designed as grammatical, whereas 16 items were ungrammatical.

The example A-N structure (4a) is considered grammatical because the adjective target *otvestvennogo* (responsible.M.SG.) agrees in grammatical gender with the subject that refers to male Maksim. In contrast, in (4b) the adjective target *otvěstvennyjy* (responsible.F.SG.) in feminine does not correspond with the biological gender of the subject and it is considered ungrammatical.

(49a) Menedžer Maksim zanimaetca prodažey
medicinskogo oborudovaniya uže 10 let.

'Manager Maxim has been selling medical
equipment for 10 years'.

Otvěstvennogo menedžera cenjat v
kompanii.

ResponsibleM.SG. manager
appreciated in company

	'The responsible manager is appreciated in the company'.
(49b) Menedžer Maksim zanimaetca prodažey medicinskogo oborudovaniya uže 10 let.	*Otvestvennyjy menedžera cenjat v kompanii.
'Manager Maxim has been selling medical equipment for 10 years'.	ResponsibleF.SG. manager appreciated in company
	'The responsible manager is appreciated in the company'.

The examples in (50a) and (50b) follow the same pattern as in (50a) and (50b), apart from the type of the target, which focuses on the verbal targets.

(50a) Vospitatelja Andreya Mixajloviča očenʹ cenjat roditeli detej iz ego grupp.	S junosti vospitatelʹ ljubil rabotatʹ s detʹmi.
Educator Andrey Mikhailovich highly appreciated parents of children from his groups.	Since youth educator love.PST.M.SG. to work with children
'The educator Andrey Mikhailovich is highly appreciated by parents of children from his groups'.	'Since his youth, the educator loved working with children'.
(50b) Vospitatelja Andreya Mixajloviča očenʹ cenjat roditeli detej iz ego grupp. Educator Andrey Mikhailovich highly appreciated parents of children from his groups. 'The educator Andrey Mikhailovich is highly appreciated by parents of children from his groups'.	* S junosti vospitatelʹ ljubila rabotatʹ s detʹmi. Since youth educator love.PST.F.SG. to work with children 'Since his youth, the educator loved working with children'.

5.2.4. Fillers

In addition to the experimental and baseline condition items, there were 19 fillers that prevented the participants from discovering what the target structures were as well as to avoid the yes bias in the AJT. Filler sentences had gender and general grammatical violations, but they did not include nouns denoting professions. In the example in (6), the masculine pronoun *ego* 'his' does not correspond in gender with the female subject Arina. Thus, the sentence is ungrammatical.

(51) Arina s detstva kollekcioniruet raznye bloknoty.

Arina since childhood collectPRS.SG. various notebooks since childhood.

'Arina has been collecting various notebooks since childhood'.

* V ego neobyčnoj kollecii bol′še 200 bloknotov.

In his unusual collection more than 200 notebooks

'There are more than 200 notebooks in his unusual collection'.

5.3. Participants and procedure

Thirty-four Russian native speakers, mostly living in the Russian Federation, took part in the experiment. They were recruited via the Russian social network VKontakte. Before the experiment, participants had to take a short survey about their age, gender, education, profession, and the languages they speak. The ages of the participants ranged from 21 to 56 years old, the mean age is 37 years. Almost all participants had a higher education and were proficient in two to three languages (Russian (native), Tatar, and English). The main places of residence of the participants are Tatarstan Republic and Moscow.

The data collection was conducted during three weeks from April 24, 2023. The questionnaire has been held on Question.Pro platform and included 98 questions. The average length of time spent completing the survey was 30 minutes. The different types of items were given in random order, so that the participants could not predict the upcoming structure.

The Russian native speakers were asked to evaluate whether the stimuli were 'Acceptable' or 'Unacceptable' for the participants. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the participants were not able to go back and change their responses. The participants were not rewarded for taking part in the experiment.

5.4. Results

The statistical data presented in this section was analysed using generalized linear mixed models in R Studio (R Core Team, 2020). The obtained results are displayed according to the research questions and the hypotheses as follows.

5.4.1. Fillers

In order to evaluate the results of the experiment, it is necessary to ensure firstly that the participants correctly understood the task and were able to distinguish grammatical constructions from ungrammatical ones. All filler structures were ungrammatical sentences in Russian. The participants had 91,03% accuracy with fillers.

5.4.2 Baseline conditions

To check the capability of the participants to distinguish between inherently grammatical and ungrammatical items I visualised their performance in the baseline conditions. Figure 5.1 presents the obtained results. The red bar demonstrates both A-N and N-V structures referred to male subjects in the grammatical masculine agreement, while the blue bar shows A-N and N-V structures referred to male subjects in feminine agreement, i.e. ungrammatical agreement. As Figure 5 shows, the participants were able to differentiate between inherently grammatical and ungrammatical items. To be precise, the participants accepted the grammatical masculine agreement 89,15% of the time. 3,86% of the participants (21/544) accepted ungrammatical feminine baseline condition, while 96,14% did not accept this condition (523/544). With respect to grammatical masculine baseline condition referring to a male, 89,15% of the participants (485/544) judged it as acceptable, whereas 10,85% (59/544) did not accept it.
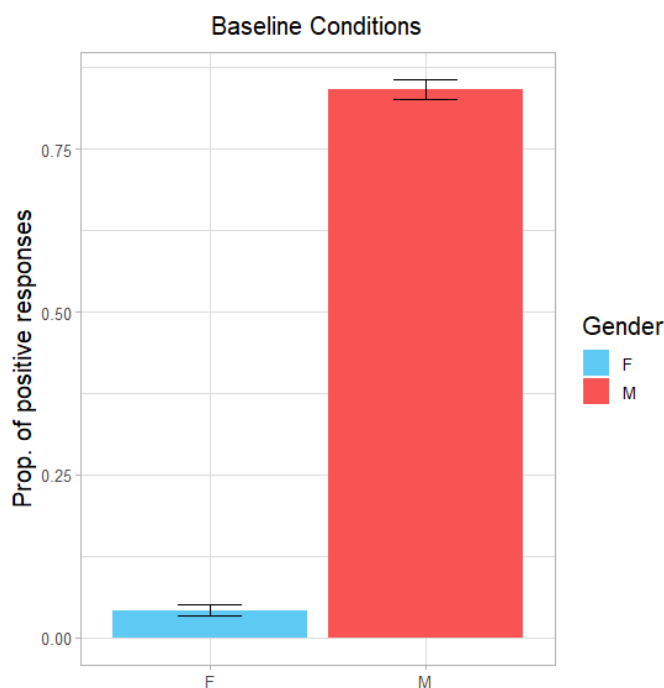
Figure 5 - Distribution of baseline conditions

Thus, it can be concluded that the participants of the experiment understood the task of the experiment.

5.4.3. The experimental items analysis

Further, I will present the results of the experiment for the experimental items and analyse them.

RQ1. Does grammatical agreement with hybrid nouns occur more often in constructions A-N than N-V?

The predictions are presented in section 5.1. Figure 5.2 compares the results for the A-N and N-V conditions: the blue column represents grammatical agreement (i.e. masculine agreement), whereas the red column refers to semantic agreement (i.e. feminine agreement). As Figure 6 shows, my participants accepted grammatical masculine agreement in A-N constructions at a 84,55% rate (230 items out of 272), but they accepted it at a 36,7% rate with N-V structures (82 items out of 272). The semantic feminine agreement was accepted at a 64,33% rate in A-N constructions, whereas in N-V phrases it was accepted at a 94,4% rate (257 items out of 272).
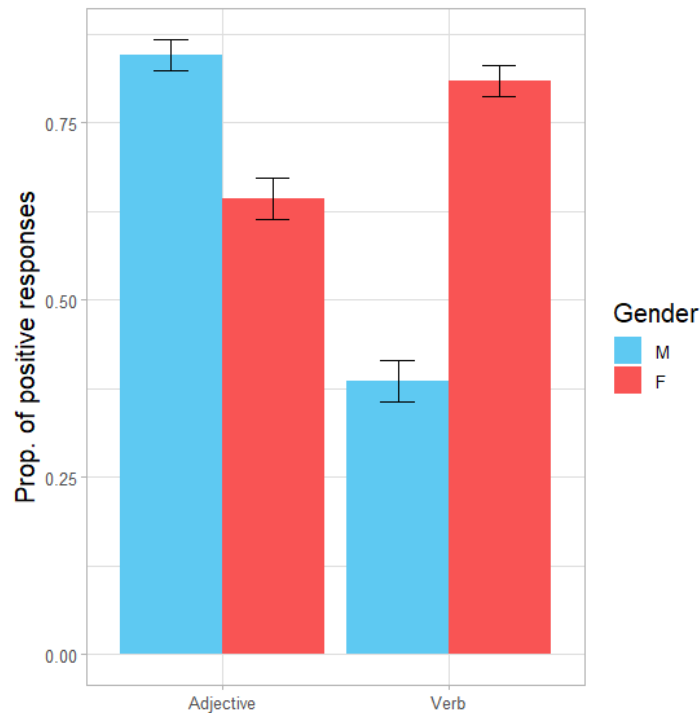
Figure 6 - The acceptability (percentage) of feminine and masculine agreement in A-N and N-V structures

Another important factor that should be reported is p-value, that is a statistical indicator which determines the statistical significance of the result obtained. If p-value is lower than 0,05, the statistical result is considered significant.

When it comes to the p-values of the statistical analysis for Hypothesis 1, p-value for A-N structures demonstrates a high number that exceeds the recommended number 0,05.

Locus = Adjective:

p.value 0.1073

Furthermore, p-value for N-V constructions shows a high significance of the result obtained.

Locus = Verb:

p.value 0.0012

Thereby, with respect to the significance of the conducted statistical analysis, only the p-value for N-V constructions was statistically significant, whereas the p-value for A-N phrases showed an insignificant result.

RQ2. Which subclasses of nouns agree semantically more often than grammatically?

Figure 7 demonstrates the distribution of feminine agreement in structures with verbs and adjectives and two noun subclasses. The blue columns represent the new noun subclass, whereas the red columns show the old noun subclass. As follows from Figure 5.3, the participants of the experiment accepted semantic feminine agreement with the old nouns in the A-N phrases at a 67,64% rate (92 items out of 136), but it was accepted at a 87,5% rate with the N-V structures (119 items out of 136). When it comes to the new noun subclass, semantic feminine agreement was accepted at a 61% rate (83 items out of 136) in the A-N phrases, while in the N-V structures it was accepted at a 79,4% rate (108 items out of 136).
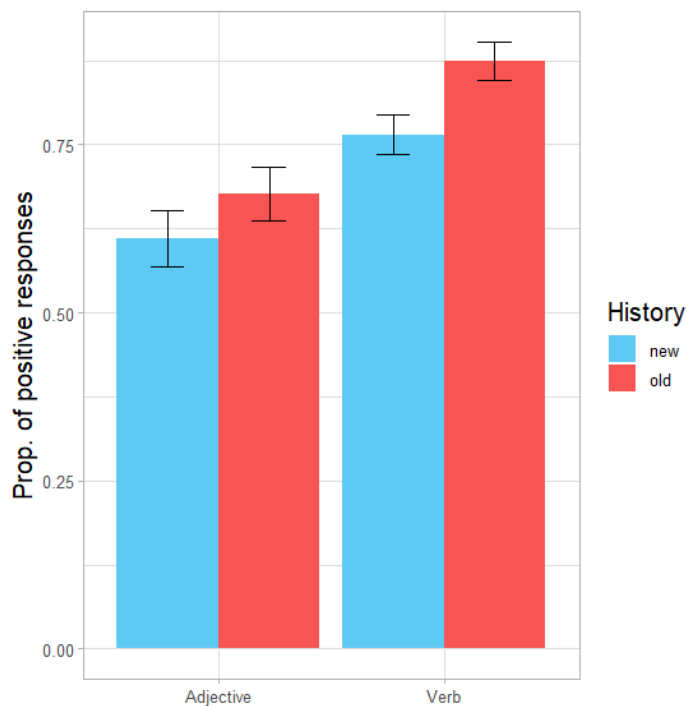

Figure 7 - Distribution of feminine agreement in A-N and N-V structures with new and old noun subclasses.

However, the p-values obtained during the analysis are higher than 0,05:

Locus = Adjective:

p.value 0.9383

Locus = Verb:

p.value 0.7004

The numbers lead to the conclusion that the result of the statistical analysis is insignificant and the preference for semantic agreement within each condition does not depend on the noun type. Hence, the hypothesis about the dominance of the old noun subclass over the new noun subclass in feminine agreement was not confirmed in the experiment.

RQ3. Will the presence of a feminitive influence the frequency of semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement?

The results for RQ3 are illustrated in Figure 8. The red columns represent the hybrid nouns that have a feminine counterpart, while the blue column stands for the hybrid nouns that do not have a feminine counterpart.

Figure 8 shows that semantic feminine agreement with the nouns that have feminitives in A-N constructions was accepted at 63,97% rate (87 items out of 136), but it was accepted at a 84,55% rate with the N-V structures (115 items out of 136). Furthermore, semantic feminine agreement with the nouns that do not have feminitives, was accepted at a 64,7 % rate (88 items out of 136) in A-N structures, whereas in N-V constructions it was accepted at a 92,64% rate (126 items out of 136).
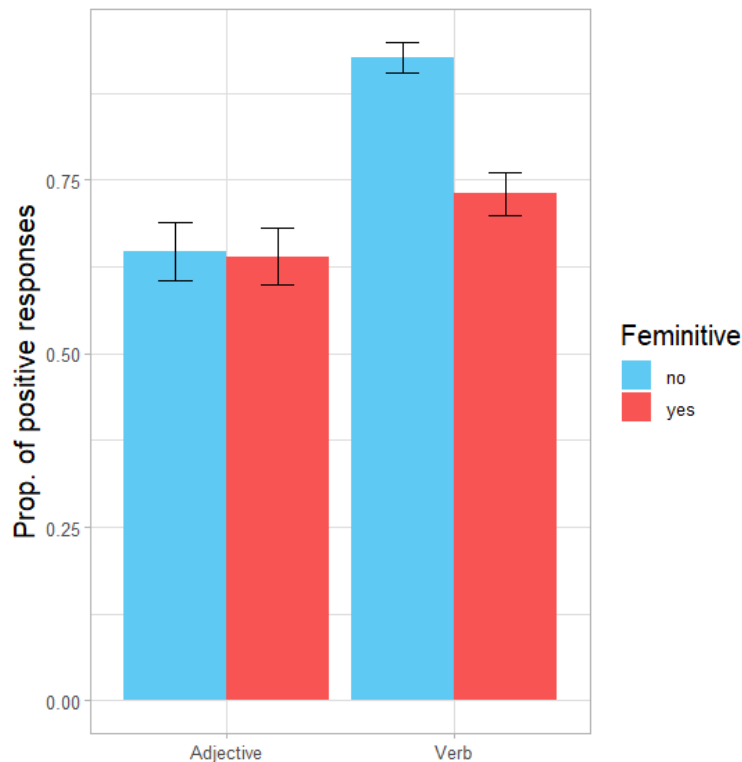
Figure 8 - Distribution of feminine agreement in A-N and N-V structures with hybrid nouns with and without a feminitive pair.

However, when it comes to the p-values of the statistical analysis, they demonstrate the following numbers:

Locus = Adjective:

p.value 0.6497

Locus = Verb:

p.value 0.1778

These numbers indicate that the results obtained are insignificant. Therefore, Hypothesis 3, according to which hybrid nouns with a feminitive counterpart are more likely to show grammatical agreement, was not confirmed in the experiment.

RQ4. Are Russian native speakers able to distinguish ungrammatical semantic agreement in structures with mixed agreement, where the adjective target agrees semantically in feminine gender, whereas the verbal target agrees grammatically in masculine gender (the Af-N-Vm construction)?

The statistical analysis was performed to examine if Russian native speakers are able to recognise whether mixed agreement structures Af-N-Vm and Am-N-Vf are grammatical or ungrammatical.

As can be seen in Figure 9, the blue column visualizes the ungrammatical Af-N-Vm structure, while the red column represents the grammatical Am-N-Vf structure. The figure shows that the participants of the experiment judged mixed constructions with adjective feminine and verbal masculine targets (Af-N-Vm) as acceptable at a 4,41% rate (9 items out of 204), whereas mixed structures with adjective masculine and verbal feminine targets were accepted at a 74,5% rate (228 items out of 306).
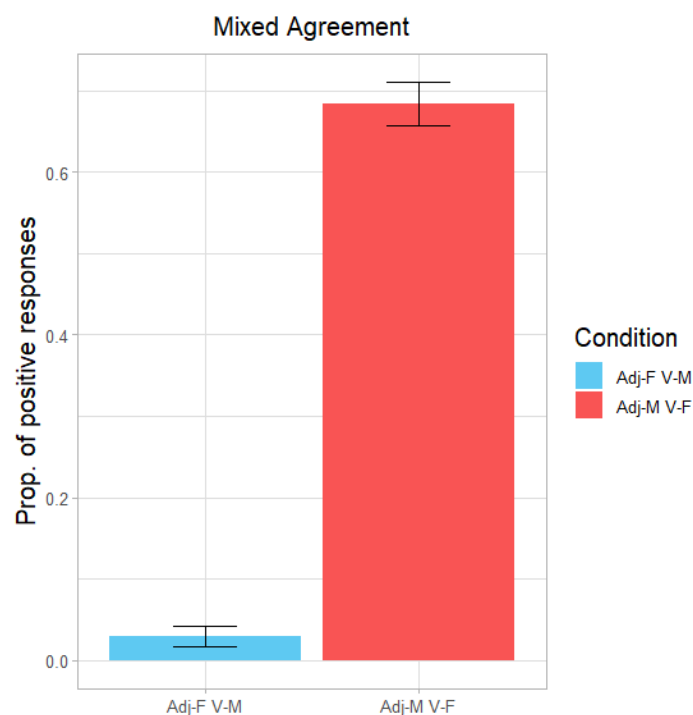
Figure 9 - Distribution of grammatical and ungrammatical responses in A-N-V structures.

I explored the results with a logistic mixed-effects regression model using the R packages lme4 (Bates et al. 2015). The model included Condition (Am-N-Vf and Af-N-Vm) as a fixed effect and random intercepts for Participants and Items. Statistical significance of Condition is presented below, where (Intercept) represents the Af-N-Vm condition, while Conditionmixedmf stands for the Am-N-Vf condition.

Fixed effects:

	Estimate Std.	Error	z value	Pr(>|z|)
(Intercept)	-5.653	1.290	-4.382	1.18e-05 ***

Conditionmixedmf   6.833   1.437   4.756   1.98e-06 ***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

The p-value of Af-N-Vm condition is 1.18e-05 ***, while the p-value of Am-N-Vf condition is 1.98e-06 ***, which means that both reported values have statistically significant and robust effects. The output of the model presented above shows that there is a significant effect of Condition, which suggests that the participants accepted the Am-N-Vf structure significantly more than the Am-N-Vf construction.

5.5. Conclusion of the chapter

The acceptability judgement task experiment was designed to answer the research questions discussed above. The participants demonstrated high sensitivity of the Russian native grammar which can be confirmed by the results obtained. To analyse the data, generalized linear mixed statistical models were used. Hypothesis 1 for N-V constructions and Hypothesis 4 were confirmed through the statistical analysis, whereas the reported p-values of the Hypothesis 1 for A-N constructions, as well as Hypotheses 2 and 3 demonstrated an insignificant result. Thus, Hypotheses 2 and 3 were not confirmed.

The discussion of the results will be provided in the following Chapter 6.

6. Discussion

This chapter presents the discussion of the results obtained in Corpus and Experiment chapters. Below I scrutinize how each type of data verifies each of the proposed hypotheses, emphasizing where the evidence converges and diverges. In addition, I outline the limitations of the present study, while setting the frame for further research on the topic.

6.1. Discussion of the results

RQ1. Does grammatical gender agreement with hybrid forms occur more often in constructions A-N than N-V?

The theoretical ground for this research question is The Agreement Hierarchy by Corbett (1979), claiming predicates (verbs) are more likely to agree semantically in feminine gender than attributives (adjectives). Thus, in my work, I predicted that that adjectival targets would agree grammatically more frequently than verbal targets and aimed to test this prediction through a corpus and an experimental study.

According to the corpus data obtained (see Table 5 in section 4.2), semantic agreement in N-V constructions (99,17%) largely prevails over grammatical agreement in N-V structures (0,83%). When it comes to adjectival targets, 29% of them demonstrate semantic agreement, while 71% – grammatical agreement.

The experiment data demonstrate the same tendency. However, the distribution of semantic and grammatical agreement varies. To illustrate, semantic feminine agreement occurred at a 64,33% rate in A-N structures (29% in the corpus data), while in N-V constructions – at a 94,4% rate (99,17% following the corpus data). Regarding grammatical masculine agreement, the frequency in A-N constructions is 84,55%, whereas in N-V structures – 36,7% (0,83% in the corpus data). The difference in numbers between the corpus and experimental data can be explained by the limitations of the corpus data, manual collection of the data and variations in sample size. The statistical analysis shows that the preference for semantic agreement is significant in the N-V conditions. The opposite pattern, i.e. the preference for grammatical agreement, is not statistically supported. In other words, there is only a tendency for the preference of grammatical agreement in the A-N condition.

Additionally, another important finding has been obtained within this research. According to Corbett's Agreement Hierarchy, attributive targets (adjectives) agree grammatically, whereas personal pronoun targets agree semantically. When it comes to predicate targets (verbs), that follow attributives to the left, following the logic of the hierarchy, it can be assumed that the proportion of predicates that agree semantically will increase. However, we do not expect that feminine agreement will dominate over masculine agreement. Nevertheless, according to the data obtained from both the corpus and the experimental studies, feminine semantic agreement prevails over masculine grammatical agreement in N-V structures. This finding further elaborates The Agreement Hierarchy and establishes a foundation for future research.

RQ2. Which subclasses of nouns agree semantically more often than grammatically?

Based on previous theoretical and experimental studies (Kapatsinski 2006; Fufaeva 2020; Nesset, Sokolova, and Pipersky, 2022), I argued that hybrid nouns that have been accessible to Russian native speakers for a long time (e.g. nouns like *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver') tend to follow semantic feminine agreement than hybrid nouns that appeared in the language a few decades ago (e.g. nouns like *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist'). I have proposed that semantic feminine agreement should appear more frequently with the old noun subclass, while grammatical masculine agreement is expected to occur more often with the new noun subclass.

According to the corpus data presented in Table 7 in section 4.3, that N-V and A-N phrases containing the hybrid nouns form the old noun subclass agree semantically more frequently (74,6% and 1,53% respectively) than with the hybrid nouns representing the new noun subclass (54,76% and 0% respectively). Thereby, a 20% difference in N-V structures and a 1,5% difference in A-N constructures validates my prediction about the association between the type of noun and the type of agreement.

Nevertheless, the result obtained from the experiment data diverges. As follows from Figure 7 in section 5.4.3, semantic feminine agreement with the old hybrid nouns in A-N constructions demonstrates a 67,64% rate and 87,5% rate with N-V structures. With respect to the new hybrid nouns, semantic agreement in A-N constructions was accepted by the participants at a 61% rate, while in the N-V phrases – at a 79,4% rate. According to the

experiment data, the prevalence of semantic agreement with the old hybrid nouns converges with the results from the corpus study. However, a considerable mismatch when it comes to semantic agreement in A-N structures can be observed. A possible reason for this is the limitation of the RNC data and more even distributed data obtained from the experiment.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the statistical analysis conducted to analyse the experiment data revealed that the result is not statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis about the prevalence of the old noun subclass in semantic feminine agreement was suggested only by the corpus data.

RQ3. Will the presence of a feminitive influence the frequency of semantic feminine and grammatical masculine agreement?

I predicted that the hybrid nouns that have femininitive pairs (e.g. nouns like *kassir* 'cashier', *vospitatel'* 'caregiver', *bloger* 'blogger', *aktivist* 'activist') should agree semantically more frequently than the hybrids that do not have feminitive counterparts (e.g. nouns like *vrač* 'doctor', *advokat* 'lawyer', *menedžer* 'manager', *psixolog* 'psychologist').

According to the corpus data, presented in Table 9 in section 4.4, neither of the subclasses of the hybrid nouns support the hypothesis. The data indicates a prevalence of semantic feminine agreement in both subclasses in N-Vf structures (71,2% and (69,5% respectively) and grammatical masculine agreement in A-N structures (18,6% and 21%). These numbers only confirm Hypothesis 1 about the prevalence of semantic feminine agreement in N-V constructions compared to A-N constructions.

As follows from Figure 8 in section 5.4.3, the experiment data demonstrates slight dominance of the hybrid nouns without feminitive counterparts in semantic agreement (64,7% rate vs. 63,97% in A-N structures, 92,64% rate vs. 84,55% in N-V constructions). Furthermore, a mismatch of the corpus and the experiment data can be observed. The most notable mismatch concerns findings involving constructions with adjectival targets, e.g. 6,8% and 8,8% in the corpus data vs. 64,7% and 63,97% in the experiment data.

Lastly, the following statistical analysis demonstrates that the result is not significant. Thus, based on the corpus and experiment data, the presence of a feminitive does not seem to be a factor that affects the type of agreement. However, it is noteworthy that this hypothesis

can be researched and tested in a different experiment with a special adapted design in the future.

RQ4. Are Russian native speakers able to distinguish ungrammatical semantic agreement in structures with mixed agreement, where the adjective target agrees semantically in feminine gender, whereas the verbal target agrees grammatically in masculine gender (Af-N-Vm construction)?

Following Corbett's Agreement Hierarchy, I proposed that mixed agreement A-N-V phrases with the feminine adjectival target and the masculine verbal target will be considered by the participants of the experiments as unacceptable, whereas mixed constructions with the masculine adjectival target and the feminine verbal target will be judged as acceptable. As has been mentioned before, due to the limitations of the RNC, this hypothesis was tested only in the experiment. The experiment data confirmed my prediction. The participants showed the ability to differentiate both grammatical and ungrammatical mixed structures. Figure 9 in section 5.4.3 demonstrates that ungrammatical mixed constructions with adjective feminine and verbal masculine targets (Af-N-Vm) were judged as acceptable at a 4,41% rate. Grammatical mixed structures with adjective masculine and verbal feminine targets (Am-N-Vf) were accepted at a 74,5% rate.

Finally, the result of the statistical analysis can be considered significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is proven.

RQ5. Does the type of adjective (qualitative vs. relational) affect the type of gender agreement?

I predicted that relational adjectives tend to select masculine gender, while qualitative adjectives more often agree in feminine gender. Moreover, adjectives in the feminine gender are likely to be used more often when describing physical appearance, and those in the masculine gender are expected to be more frequent in contexts discussing professional qualities.

This research question was investigated only based on the corpus data due to the limitation on the size of the experiment.

Both hypotheses were confirmed by the corpus study. When it comes to relational adjectives, the analysis of the data demonstrated that relational adjectives tend to take grammatical masculine agreement. Thus, the adjective type influences the type of agreement in

targets. Moreover, relational adjectives are frequently included in collocations describing the qualification of a professional or a job title. Furthermore, the analysis of qualitative adjectives has shown that they more frequently denote personal traits, whereas relational adjectives mostly refer to professional traits.

6.2. Limitations

Within my research, I encountered several limitations. One such limitation stemmed from the search possibilities in the RNC. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the search format available in the RNC posed challenges in the extraction of constructions with mixed agreement. Moreover, after the manual verification of the corpus data I obtained very few examples with items like 'blogger' and 'activist'. On the other hand, I was limited on how many conditions I could test in the experiment. As a result, it is crucial to clarify the complementarity of the studies. The corpus data allowed me to take a closer look at the role of adjectives in gender agreement. This factor was excluded from the experiment study as its addition would inconveniently inflate the size of the experiment. The experiment, on the other hand, allowed me to additionally test the hypotheses on the nouns for which there was little data in the corpus ('blogger', 'activist', etc.) and to test my predictions regarding mixed agreement structures that could not be collected in the RNC.

Another limitation of the present study was the manual selection of the examples, which further complicated the picture: I selected only contexts that already contained explicit feminine markers in the context (e.g. personal names) and this in itself may slightly skew the data towards semantic feminine agreement.

All the mentioned restrictions will be taken into account and handled in future research.

7. Conclusion

In this study, I aimed to investigate the complex phenomenon of gender agreement in Russian, with a particular focus on hybrid nouns denoting professions referring to females. The exploration of grammatical masculine and semantic feminine agreement structures, including understudied mixed agreement constructions, revealed findings that contribute to our understanding of structural characteristics of grammatical gender agreement in Russian.

Through both corpus analysis and experimental research, I have uncovered significant insights into the factors influencing gender agreement. The Agreement Hierarchy proposed by Corbett provided a theoretical framework for my predictions regarding the connection between the type of targets and the type of agreement. Notably, semantic feminine agreement dominated in N-V constructions compared with A-N structures. Additionally, the data obtained in this research complements The Agreement Hierarchy with the discovery of a feminine agreement dominance in N-V structures that has not been discussed before. Moreover, my prediction about the ungrammaticality of mixed Af-N-Vm structure followed from The Agreement Hierarchy was born out based on the experimental data. Additionally, the ability of Russian native speakers to distinguish grammatical and ungrammatical mixed agreement structures was confirmed, shedding new light on the status of mixed agreement in Russian.

Furthermore, I investigated the analysis of the factors that have not been researched before. The first prediction claimed that the noun subclass representing long-term used names of professions would be more likely to be associated with the verbal and adjectival targets marked with feminine gender, i.e. semantic agreement, rather than the new noun subclass due to longer exposure in the language. The corpus study supported the hypothesis, yet the experimental findings demonstrated that the result was not statistically significant.

The next prediction about the presence of feminitive counterparts as a factor influencing the type of agreement was not confirmed either by corpus or experimental data in the present study. This hypothesis should be investigated in future research employing a different experiment design.

Finally, the analysis of adjectives in the corpus study revealed that the type of adjective can affect the type of agreement as relational adjectives tended to follow grammatical masculine agreement, while qualitative adjectives were more likely to agree in semantic feminine gender.

This distinction reflects the semantic roles and contexts in which these adjectives are typically employed.

It is important to admit that several limitations were encountered such as a low frequency of some hybrid nouns in the RNC data, as well as the length and time of the experiment. Future research will focus on overcoming the mentioned limitations and developing predictions about the old and new noun subclasses, as well as feminitive counterparts as a factor in gender agreement.

To summarise, this study contributes to the ongoing discussion on gender agreement in Russian, highlighting the multifaceted nature of this linguistic phenomenon. By addressing previously unexplored factors and confirming findings from earlier theoretical and empirical studies, this research sets the stage for future investigations on gender agreement in Russian.

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Appendix

The syntactical structures data used in the current thesis' empirical study are listed as follows.

Structure	Noun	Context	Target structure
AN	Кассир	Галина работает кассиром в супермаркете и быстро обслуживает покупателей.	Хороший кассир!
		Галина работает кассиром в супермаркете и быстро обслуживает покупателей.	Хорошая кассир!
NV		У кассира Галины сегодня занятой день — в магазине много покупателей.	Кассир быстро обслужил посетителей.
		У кассира Галины сегодня занятой день — в магазине много покупателей.	Кассир быстро обслужила посетителей.
ANV		Кассира Галину знают все местные покупатели.	Дружелюбная кассир завоевала их доверие.
		Кассира Галину знают все местные покупатели.	Дружелюбный кассир завоевал их доверие.

Structure	Noun	Context	Target structure
AN	Врач	Врач Екатерина Васильевна скоро окончит медицинский университет.	Молодой врач многому научится!
		Врач Екатерина Васильевна скоро окончит медицинский университет.	Молодая врач многому научится!
NV		Екатерина Васильевна работает врачом-педиатром уже несколько месяцев.	Врач уже многому научилась.
		Екатерина Васильевна работает врачом-педиатром уже несколько месяцев.	Врач уже многому научился.
ANV		Маленькие пациенты едутк врачу-педиатру Екатерине Васильевне на прием со всей области.	Юный врач долго к этому шла.
		Маленькие пациенты едутк врачу-педиатру Екатерине Васильевне на прием со всей области.	Юная врач долго к этому шел.

Structure	Noun	Context	Target structure
AN	Психолог	Ирина трудится психологом уже 10 лет.	Участливый психолог вдохновляется своей работой каждый день.
		Ирина трудится психологом уже 10 лет.	Участливая психолог вдохновляется своей работой каждый день.
NV		Ирина — гештальт-психолог с опытом консультирования.	Психолог училась этой специальности 6 лет.
		Ирина — гештальт-психолог с опытом консультирования.	Психолог учился этой специальности 6 лет.
ANV		Благодаря своей врожденной эмпатии психолог Ирина пользуется популярностью у пациентов.	Чуткий психолог всегда знала, как помочь тем, кто нуждается в помощи.
		Благодаря своей врожденной эмпатии психолог Ирина пользуется популярностью у пациентов.	Чуткая психолог всегда знал, как помочь тем, кто нуждается в помощи.

Structure	Noun	Context	Target structure
AN	Блогер	Полина – блогер из Казани, у нее тысячи подписчиков в социальных сетях.	Известный блогер часто посещает мероприятия, связанные с культурной повесткой.
		Полина – блогер из Казани, у нее тысячи подписчиков в социальных сетях.	Известная блогер часто посещает мероприятия, связанные с культурной повесткой.
NV		Будучи блогером, Полина умеет писать хорошие тексты.	Недавно блогер выпустила книгу – сборник своих статей о столице Татарстана.
		Будучи блогером, Полина умеет писать хорошие тексты.	Недавно блогер выпустил книгу – сборник своих статей о столице Татарстана.
ANV		Блогер Полина посвящает много времени своей работе.	Недавно популярный блогер получила награду на городском фестивале культуры за освещение культурных событий Казани.
		Блогер Полина посвящает много времени своей работе.	Недавно популярная блогер получил награду на городском фестивале культуры за освещение культурных событий Казани.

Structure	Noun	Context	Target structure
AV	Активист	Как экоактивист Петрова пользуется популярностью у населения.	Сегодня известный активист даст интервью городскому телеканалу.
		Как экоактивист Петрова пользуется популярностью у населения.	Сегодня известная активист даст интервью городскому телеканалу.
NV		Петрова является активистом общества «За чистую среду обитания» уже несколько лет.	За эти годы активист смогла добиться улучшения качество воздуха в Самаре.
		Петрова является активистом общества «За чистую среду обитания» уже несколько лет.	За эти годы активист смогла добиться улучшения качество воздуха в Самаре.
ANV		Цель активиста Петровой – уменьшить количество выбросов в атмосферу местными заводами.	За несколько лет упорный активист добилась ограничения производства химикатов в Самаре.
		Цель активиста Петровой – уменьшить количество выбросов в атмосферу местными заводами.	За несколько лет упорная активист добился ограничения производства химикатов в Самаре.

Structure	Noun	Context	Target structure
AN	Воспитатель	Воспитателя Веру Андреевну из детсада «Солнышко» знают уже несколько поколений ростовчан.	Заботливая воспитатель подкупает отзывчивостью и добротой.
		Воспитателя Веру Андреевну из детсада «Солнышко» знают уже несколько поколений ростовчан.	Заботливый воспитатель подкупает отзывчивостью и добротой.
NV		Воспитателя Веру Андреевну очень ценят родители детей из ее групп.	С юности воспитатель любила работать с детьми.
		Воспитателя Веру Андреевну очень ценят родители детей из ее групп.	С юности воспитатель любил работать с детьми.
ANV		Сегодня воспитатель Вера Андреевна на работе с 6 утра: сегодня у детей из ее группы утренник.	Неравнодушный воспитатель переживала за своих подопечных.
		Сегодня воспитатель Вера Андреевна на работе с 6 утра: сегодня у детей из ее группы утренник.	Неравнодушная воспитатель переживал за своих подопечных.

Structure	Noun	Context	Target structure
AN	Менеджер	Менеджер Ольга занимается продажей медицинского оборудования уже 10 лет.	Ответственного менеджера ценят в компании.
		Менеджер Ольга занимается продажей медицинского оборудования уже 10 лет.	Ответственную менеджера ценят в компании.
NV		Менеджер Ольга обычно уходит с работы позже всех.	Но сегодня менеджер ушла пораньше, чтобы сходить к стоматологу.
		Менеджер Ольга обычно уходит с работы позже всех.	Но сегодня менеджер ушел пораньше, чтобы сходить к стоматологу.
ANV		Менеджер по продажам Ольга думает о смене места работы.	Успешный менеджер уже нашла несколько подходящих ей вакансий.
		Менеджер по продажам Ольга думает о смене места работы.	Успешная менеджер уже нашел несколько подходящих ей вакансий.

Structure	Noun	Context	Target structure
AN	Адвокат	Адвокат Чистякова специализируется в семейном праве и представляет интересы женщин при разводе.	Грамотный адвокат помогает правильно разделить имущество и учесть интересы детей.
		Адвокат Чистякова специализируется в семейном праве и представляет интересы женщин при разводе.	Грамотная адвокат помогает правильно разделить имущество и учесть интересы детей.
NV		Адвокат Чистякова имеет безупречную репутацию.	За 12 лет адвокат проиграла лишь два дела.
		Адвокат Чистякова имеет безупречную репутацию.	За 12 лет адвокат проиграл лишь два дела.
ANV		Адвокат Чистякова не любит опаздывать.	Вот и сегодня пунктуальный адвокат пришла за 30 минут до начала заседания.
		Адвокат Чистякова не любит опаздывать.	Вот и сегодня пунктуальная адвокат пришел за 30 минут до начала заседания.

Fillers	
Анна Андреевна любит пить чай каждый день и предпочитает травяные сборы.	Анна Андреевна выпил сегодня уже три кружки чая с мятой.
Аня и Максим взяли собаку Солу из приюта 5 лет назад.	Сола — очень дружелюбной собаке.
На улице бушует сильная гроза, все небо заволокло темными тучами.	Люди на улице спешит поскорее домой, чтобы укрыться от грозы.
Стоял тихий солнечный день.	Вдруг раздался громкая крик стаи чаек, которые прилетели на охоту.
Паша работает на удаленке с 2020 года.	Сейчасс Паша будут хотеть работать в офисе, чтобы больше общаться с людьми.
Кристина занимается спортом в фитнес-клубе четыре раза в неделю рано утром.	Так девушкам лучше концентрируются на процессе.
Олег любит ходить на масштабные рок-концерты.	Особенно Олегом нравится атмосфера на концертах рок-групп «Сплин» и «Би-2».
Кот Тишка задумчиво смотрел в окно — это было его любимым занятием.	Однако забавно, что на улицу Тишка никогда не просилась.
Карина обожает путешествовать по миру.	Сейчас Карина путешествуют два раза в год и с нетерпением ждут новых приключений.
Артуру никогда не нравилось читать книги, он предпочитает смотреть фильмы.	Больше всего ему будет нравиться приключенческие боевики триллеры.
Миша проводит много времени в телефоне.	Миша тратить на это 5 часов в день.
У Юли очень много одежды, особенно платьев.	В ее небольшой квартире для одежды есть отдельные гардеробные комната.
Арина с детства коллекционирует разные блокноты.	В его необычной коллекции больше 200 блокнотов.
У Анатолия Сергеевича аллергия на орехи.	Из-за аллергии Анатолию Сергеевичу часто приходится переспросить официантов несколько раз о наличии орехов в блюдах.
Руслан любит ходить в походы.	В прошлом летом Руслан и его друзья ездили в горы на Кавказ.
На юге России зимой часто не бывает снега.	Вместо снега там часто идет проливная дождь.
Пицца считается итальянской едой.	Однако пиццу можно найти в меню любого кафе или ресторанам по всему миру.
Рыбка Ариэль живет в аквариуме в квартире несколько месяцев.	У Ариэль яркие оранжевые длинные плавники и переливающаяся чешуять.
За окном ярко светило весеннее солнце.	Люди широко улыбались друг другу на улице без повода – пришел весна.
Городские чайки могут быть довольно агрессивными и отбирать еду у прохожих.	Поэтому в таких местах чайки бывают гораздо крупные.

		Baseline conditions	
AN	Кассир	Петр работает кассиром в супермаркете и быстро обслуживает покупателей.	Хороший кассир!
		Петр работает кассиром в супермаркете и быстро обслуживает покупателей.	Она быстро обслуживает покупателей. Хорошая кассир!
NV		У кассира Петра сегодня занятой день — в магазине много покупателей.	Кассир быстро обслужила посетителей.
		У кассира Петра сегодня занятой день — в магазине много покупателей.	Кассир быстро обслужил посетителей.
AN	Врач	Врач Григорий Валерьевич скоро окончит медицинский университет.	Молодой врач многому научится!
		Врач Григорий Валерьевич скоро окончит медицинский университет.	Молодая врач многому научится!
NV		Григорий Валерьевич работает врачом-педиатром уже несколько месяцев.	Врач многому научился.
		Григорий Валерьевич работает врачом-педиатром уже несколько месяцев.	Врач многому научилась.
AN	Психолог	Василий трудится психологом уже 10 лет.	Участливый психолог вдохновляется своей работой каждый день.
		Василий трудится психологом уже 10 лет.	Участливая психолог вдохновляется своей работой каждый день.
NV		Василий — гештальт-психолог с опытом консультирования.	Психолог учился этой специальности 6 лет
		Василий — гештальт-психолог с опытом консультирования.	Психолог училась этой специальности 6 лет.
AN	Блогер	Иван – блогер из Казани, у него тысячи подписчиков в социальных сетях.	Известный блогер часто посещает мероприятия, связанные с культурной повесткой.
		Иван – блогер из Казани, у нее тысячи подписчиков в социальных сетях.	Известная блогер часто посещает мероприятия, связанные с культурной повесткой.
NV		Будучи блогером, Иван умеет писать хорошие тексты.	Недавно блогер выпустил книгу – сборник своих статей о столице Татарстана.
		Будучи блогером, Иван умеет писать хорошие тексты.	Недавно блогер выпустила книгу – сборник своих статей о столице Татарстана.

AN	Активист	Как экоактивист Петров пользуется популярностью у населения.	Сегодня известный активист даст интервью городскому телеканалу.
		Как экоактивист Петров пользуется популярностью у населения.	Сегодня известная активист даст интервью городскому телеканалу.
NV		Петров является активистом общества «За чистую среду обитания» уже несколько лет.	За эти годы активист смог улучшить качество воздуха в Самаре.
		Петров является активистом общества «За чистую среду обитания» уже несколько лет.	За эти годы активист смогла улучшить качество воздуха в Самаре.
AN	Воспитатель	Воспитателя Андрея Михайловича из детсада «Солнышко» знают уже несколько поколений ростовчан.	Заботливый воспитатель подкупает отзывчивостью и добротой.
		Воспитателя Андрея Михайловича из детсада «Солнышко» знают уже несколько поколений ростовчан.	Заботливая воспитатель подкупает отзывчивостью и добротой.
NV		Воспитателя Андрея Михайловича очень ценят родители детей из ее групп.	С юности воспитатель любил работать с детьми.
		Воспитателя Андрея Михайловича очень ценят родители детей из ее групп.	С юности воспитатель любила работать с детьми.
AN	Менеджер	Менеджер Максим занимается продажей медицинского оборудования уже 10 лет.	Ответственного менеджера ценят в компании.
		Менеджер Максим занимается продажей медицинского оборудования уже 10 лет.	Ответственную менеджера ценят в компании.
NV		Менеджер Максим обычно уходит с работы позже всех.	Но сегодня менеджер ушел пораньше, чтобы сходить к стоматологу.
		Менеджер Максим обычно уходит с работы позже всех.	Но сегодня менеджер ушла пораньше, чтобы сходить к стоматологу.
AN	Адвокат	Адвокат Молодцов специализируется в семейном праве и часто представляет интересы женщин при разводе.	Грамотный адвокат помогает правильно разделить имущество и учесть интересы детей.
		Адвокат Молодцов специализируется в семейном праве и часто представляет интересы женщин при разводе.	Грамотная адвокат помогает правильно разделить имущество и учесть интересы детей.
NV		Адвокат Молодцов имеет безупречную репутацию.	За 12 лет адвокат проиграл лишь два дела.

		Адвокат Молодцов имеет безупречную репутацию.	За 12 лет адвокат проиграла лишь два дела.