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THE PRONOUN *SAM* ‘SELF’ IN SERBO-CROATIAN AND BINDING THEORY^{1*}

Abstract: We explore the distribution of the pronoun *sam* ‘self’ with the reflexive *sebe* ‘oneself’ and the pronominal *njega* ‘him’ in Serbo-Croatian (SC), in contexts in which the resulting pronoun complexes *sebe samog* and *njega samog* are used as arguments in the (seemingly) local domain with their antecedent (e.g. *Pera je kritikovao sebe/njega samog* ‘Pera criticized himself’). We focus on the question of why the pronoun *sam* enables the use of the pronominal (*njega* in this case) in the local domain, in violation of Principle B of the canonical binding theory (Chomsky, 1981, 1986). Our analysis is based on the intensifying nature of the pronoun *sam*, as a result of which this pronoun imposes a focal status on the constituent it combines with, thus extracting it from its argument position into a higher hierarchical position in the structure. Following the proposal of Reinhart & Reuland (1993), binding conditions fail to apply in such contexts, as the pronoun no longer figures as a co-argument of its antecedent. We also look at the differences in the distribution of the pronoun complexes *sebe samog* and *njega samog*: the former combines only with (seemingly) local antecedents and passes tests that diagnose syntactic binding, while the latter combines with both local and non-local antecedents and passes tests that diagnose coreference. The observed and discussed facts favor Reinhart & Reuland’s (1993) theory of pronominal coreference to the classical approach proposed by Chomsky (1981, 1986).

Key words: pronoun *sam* ‘self’, intensified pronouns, anaphor, pronominal, binding, coreference

1. Introduction

The canonical binding theory (Chomsky, 1981, 1986) distinguishes two types of pronouns² – anaphors and pronominals, and postulates complementarity in their

¹ The paper is partly a result of the research conducted within the project *Hyperspace the Verb: The interplay between prosody, morphology and semantics in the Western South Slavic verbal domain*, financed by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

² *Pronouns* are expressions without descriptive content, whose reference is dependent either on an antecedent or on a gesture, specified only for grammatical features (person, number, gender, possessivity, ontological class). *Anaphors* are referentially defective pronouns, locally bound and cannot be used deictically (e.g. *myself, yourself*). *Pronominals* are pronouns that can be used deictically (e.g. *I, you, their*,

distribution: an anaphor is bound within its local domain³ (Condition A), while a pronominal must be free within its local domain (Condition B). Some languages have separate pronouns with anaphor interpretation, while others, such as Serbo-Croatian (SC) have reflexives. Conditions A and B correctly predict the grammaticality of the anaphor *sebe* in (1a) and the ungrammaticality of the pronominal *njega* ‘him’ in (2a) when the pronouns are co-indexed⁴ with the local antecedent in SC. However, in combination with the pronoun *sam* ‘self’, both the anaphor (1b) and the pronominal (2b) are grammatical in the given context with the co-indexed interpretation.⁵

- (1) a. Pera_i je kritikovao sebe_i.
 P. Aux criticized Refl.Acc
 ‘Pera criticized himself.’
- b. Pera_i je kritikovao sebe_i samog.
 P. Aux criticized Refl.Acc self.sg.M.Acc
 ‘Pera criticized himself.’
- (2) a. *Pera_i je kritikovao njega_i.
 P. Aux criticized him
 ‘Pera criticized himself.’
- b. Pera_i je kritikovao njega_i samog.
 P. Aux criticized him self.sg.M.Acc
 ‘Pera criticized himself.’

The goal of this paper is to explore the distribution of anaphors and pronominals with the pronoun *sam* ‘self’, focusing on its contribution to the grammaticality of the pronominal *njega* in contexts like (2b). Our analysis is based on the intensifying nature of the pronoun *sam*, which assigns a focal status to the constituent it combines with. It is well-known that focalized constituents may have a high interpretative scope, as a consequence of their high position in the structure (i.e. in terms of generative syntax, as a consequence of movement to a higher position induced by the focus feature), which evacuates the expression outside of the local domain of their antecedents. Hence, pronouns combined with *sam* are not in the same domain as their antecedents. As we see in detail in sections 2 and 3, binding fails to apply in such contexts (Reinhart & Reuland 1993).

here, etc.) (cf. Chomsky, 1981, 1986; Reinhart & Reuland, 1993; Reuland, 2006). Note that various other terminological solutions have been used for the same set of notions.

³ *Local domain* (or *governing category*) for the expression α can be defined, somewhat simplified, as the domain of the subject that is (structurally) closest to the expression α . In all relevant examples in the present paper, the local domain is the finite clause that contains both the pronoun and its antecedent. For a detailed discussion of this notion, see e.g. Reuland, 2006.

⁴ We use *co-indexing* as a (working) cover term for both binding as a structurally imposed referential dependency, and (accidental, i.e. independent) coreference of two expressions; see Section 4 for discussion.

⁵ The pronoun *sam* can also precede the reflexive (*Pera_i je kritikovao samog sebe_i*, ‘Pera criticized himself’), but with different scopal properties. This is evident by the fact that in this position it is ungrammatical when combined with the pronominal (**Pera_i je kritikovao samog njega_i*, ‘Pera criticized himself’). We leave this pattern for future research.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we present some problems with the standard binding theory, as well as an alternative approach (Reinhart & Reuland, 1993) which redefines the binding conditions from the perspective of the reflexivity of a predicate. Section 3 shows how this alternative approach captures the behavior of the pronoun complexes with *sam* in SC. In Section 4, we discuss the differences between the complexes *njega samog* and *sebe samog*. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Binding conditions: from pronouns to reflexive predicates

Standard binding conditions, listed in (3) (see Chomsky, 1981, 1986; Reuland, 2006), correctly predict the ungrammaticality of pronominals and the grammaticality of anaphors in examples like (4) and (5). However, as Reinhart & Reuland (1993) (henceforth R&R 1993) note, the standard conditions A and B fail to capture the behaviour of pronouns (the English anaphor *himself* and the pronominal *him*) in examples like (6): according to the majority of (mainstream) approaches, the pronouns in (6) are in the local domain of their antecedent, but the use of the pronominal is not ungrammatical (as would follow from Condition B).

(3) Binding conditions

A: An anaphor is bound within its local domain / governing category.

B: A pronominal is free in its local domain / governing category.

C: An R-expression⁶ is free.

(4) John_i criticized himself_i / *him_i.

(5) John_i told me [that Mark_j had criticized him_{i/*j} / himself_{j/*i}].

(6) Max_i saw a gun near himself_i / him_i.

R&R (1993) draw attention to the fact that, unlike in examples like (4) and (5), the pronouns in (6) are not arguments of the verb (*see*) in their local domain. These authors propose an alternative theory of binding, which essentially regulates the reflexivity of a predicate rather than the distribution of pronouns themselves (with the distribution of pronouns as a consequence of how the reflexivization patterns work). For their conditions A and B, listed in (7), argumenthood plays a crucial role. Namely, the *syntactic predicate*, as defined in R&R (1993), is formed of (a head of) P(predicate), all its syntactic *arguments*, and an external argument of P (the subject in finite clauses). Similarly, the *semantic predicate* formed of P is P and all its *arguments* at the relevant semantic level.⁷

⁶ R(eferential)-expressions are constituents whose heads have lexical (descriptive) content, e.g. *the merry linguist, the idiot, no one, everyone, which man*, etc. (Reuland, 2006, p. 263). They are not relevant for the main line of our paper, but see Section 3 for examples of combining the pronoun *sam* 'self' with some R-expressions.

⁷ For the relevance of the distinction between syntactic and semantic predicates, the reader is referred to R&R, 1993. We will not go into the specifics of this distinction here, since in all our examples all predicates are reflexive both syntactically and semantically.

- (7) Conditions (R&R, 1993)
 A: A reflexive-marked syntactic predicate is reflexive.
 B: A reflexive semantic predicate is reflexive-marked.

In their approach, a predicate is reflexive if two of its arguments are co-indexed, while a predicate is *reflexive-marked* if either P is lexically reflexive⁸ or one of P's arguments is a SELF-anaphor (e.g. *myself*, *herself* in English). Accordingly, these authors use the term *reflexives* as a synonym for *anaphors*. Just like the standard binding theory, R&R (1993) correctly predicted the distribution of pronouns in examples like (4) and (5). Crucially, however, the distribution of pronouns in contexts like (6) is exempt from the conditions, since they are not arguments of the head of P (the verb *see*), but of another predicate (in the given example, the preposition *near*). The question of why it is possible to use both reflexives and pronominals in such contexts, as well as what the difference between the two is, is not a question for the theory of *syntactic binding*, but rather for discourse theories.

Let us now move to examples like (8) (R&R, 1993, p. 672). The anaphor *myself* and the subject *this letter* are both arguments of the verb *address*.

- (8) This letter was addressed only to myself.

Since they are co-arguments, and the anaphor *myself* is a SELF-anaphor, according to Condition A, the predicate should receive a reflexive interpretation, otherwise the sentence is ungrammatical. However, neither the predicate nor the sentence (8) has a reflexive interpretation (the two co-arguments do not carry the same index).

This type of example turns out to instantiate an apparent problem in the theory of R&R (1993). They point out that in cases like (8) the anaphor *myself* is focused (cf. the particle *only*), and focus expressions undergo movement at LF, so, under the standard assumption, the anaphor *myself* in (8) is no longer an argument of the predicate *to address*. Just as in cases like (6) above, the pronoun in (8) is exempted from the binding/reflexivization conditions. R&R (1993) label such uses of anaphors as *focus anaphors* and consider them a subtype of *logophor anaphors*⁹, whose behavior consequently becomes a matter of discourse theories rather than syntax.

3. The pronoun *sam* in Serbo-Croatian

Having R&R's (1993) theory at hand, we can now return to the central problem of the paper, the use of the pronoun *sam* 'self' in SC with pronouns in the local

⁸ Lexically reflexive predicates can be illustrated by the verb *wash* in English, e.g. *The boy washed*, where the subject referent is both the agent and the undergoer of the action at the same time, although reflexivity is not marked by a reflexive pronoun, cf. R&R, 1993; Marelj & Reuland, 2016.

⁹ R&R (1993) use the term *logophor(ic)* for anaphors/reflexives that are not locally bound (including deictic uses), and usually reflect the point-of-view of their antecedent/referent. See Reuland, 2017 for a broader discussion, and Speas, 2004 for a broader view on logophoricity.

context of their antecedent, as in (9) and (10), repeated from (1b) and (2b). Given its intensifying nature, the pronoun *sam* ‘self’ can be plausibly analyzed as a pronoun that imposes a focal status onto the constituent it combines with. This holds for pronouns, but also for R-expressions, as shown in (11). Following the reasoning of R&R (1993), this means that the pronominal *njega* in the ‘problematic’ example (10) is no longer in the local domain of its antecedent (*Pera*), so it is exempted from the binding (i.e., reflexivization) conditions, just like the pronominals and anaphors in examples like (6) and (8) from English above.

- (9) Pera_i je kritikovao sebe_i samog.
 P. Aux criticized Refl.Acc self.sg.M.Acc
 ‘Pera criticized himself.’
- (10) Pera_i je kritikovao njega_i samog.
 P. Aux criticized him self.sg.M.Acc
 ‘Pera criticized himself.’
- (11) Žika se uplašio kao da je sreo đavola samog.
 Ž. Refl frightened like Comp Aux met devil self.sg.M.Acc
 ‘Žika was frightened as if he met the devil himself.’

Let us first address the obvious question: if the intensified pronoun is not an argument of the same predicate with its antecedent, then how is R&R’s (1993) condition B from (7b) satisfied? Under the assumption that the predicate is still reflexively interpreted, removing the argument which reflexively marks it leaves it reflexively unmarked. Our precise analysis is that the focal movement of the intensified pronoun, as standard in the theory of movement, leaves a trace or a copy in the base generated position – i.e., in the position of an argument of the relevant predicate (e.g., Chomsky 1995, Hale & Keyser 2002, Haugen 2009). For the combination of a pronominal with the intensifier, the lower, phonologically null copy (i.e., the trace) is available for interpretation, but being a pronominal rather than an anaphor, it only licenses a non-local antecedent. When this copy is interpreted, only non-local antecedents are available. This is effectively a scattered interpretation, as the pronoun is still interpreted for focus in the higher position. Alternatively, the pronoun may be referentially interpreted in the higher position, on par with the focal interpretation. This interpretation allows for what is pretheoretically described as a local antecedent (*stricto sensu*, after movement, it is not one any more).

When the intensifier is combined with the reflexive pronoun, which marks for reflexivity, only the scattered interpretation, with the reflexive marking interpreted in situ, is available. In the higher position, outside of the predicate domain, reflexive marking is uninterpretable: this copy remains interpretable only for focus. With this view, obviously, only the intensified reflexive is actually bound, while the intensified pronominal is only able to be accidentally coreferential with the antecedent.

The question remains, however, what is the underlying difference between the complexes *sebe samog* (9) and *njega samog* (10), that yields the observed behavior.

As a starting point, consider example (12). For both *njega samog* and *sebe samog*, the local antecedent is *Laza*, as the subject of the finite clause that contains these pronoun complexes. *Pera*, the subject of the main clause, is a potential non-local antecedent. In such a situation, *sebe samog* must be co-indexed with the local antecedent (*Laza*), while *njega samog* can be co-indexed with either the local (*Laza*) or the non-local antecedent (*Pera*). The next section is devoted to the discussion of this state of affairs.

- (12) Pera_i je pričao kako je Laza_j kritikovao sebe_{j/*i} / njega_{i/j} samog.
 P. Aux talked Comp Aux L. criticized Refl.Acc him self.sg.M.Acc
 ‘Pera said that Laza criticized himself.’

4. Explaining and reexamining the pronoun complexes with *sam*

In this section, we will test the analysis that we proposed for the differences between *sebe samog* and *njega samog* with respect to their co-indexing with (non-)local antecedents: that *sebe samog* is (syntactically) bound by the local antecedent, while *njega samog* is (accidentally) coreferential with either local or non-local antecedents.

As discussed above, there are two ways of pronoun resolution: (syntactic/logical) binding and (accidental) coreference or covaluation (Reinhart, 2000; Reuland, 2006; 2018; Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria, 2014, among others). Binding, in the dominant logical analysis, relies on argument abstraction: a reflexive predicate has the same variable in at least two positions. This variable is λ -abstracted. When the predicate is combined with a nominal expression, the abstraction is reduced, and the referent of the nominal expression values the variable in both positions. For a predicate to be reflexive, in terms of the lambda-calculus, it needs to involve the same λ -abstracted variable in at least two positions.

Consider the example in (13). The predicate *respect* is reflexive in (13b), because it has the variable x both in its experiencer and in its theme argument position, and this variable is λ -abstracted. The predicate denotes a set of individuals, such that each individual respects her husband. When the predicate is combined with the nominal expression *Lucie*, the λ -abstracted variable is reduced, and both instances of the variable x are valued by the referent of the name *Lucie* in the context. The sentence then asserts that Lucie is in the individuals mentioned above (cf. Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria, 2014, p. 861).

- (13) a. Only Lucie respects her husband.
 b. Binding
 Only Lucie λx (x respects x 's husband)
 c. Coreference/covaluation
 Only Lucie (λx (x respects y 's husband) & $y=Lucie$)

Coreference or covaluation, on the other hand, emerges when the relevant two arguments of a predicate (or more generally, two expressions in the same discourse) happen to be assigned the same semantic value or the same discourse entity. In the coreference/covaluation resolution of (13a), represented in (13c) (cf. Reinhart,

2000), Lucie is, independent and without any structural enforcement, picked out as the discourse referent by both the subject and the possessive pronoun *her*.

Another common context where both types of pronoun resolution are available is VP-ellipsis, as illustrated in (14) by Reuland (2011, p. 34). On the bound reading, both John and Peter belong to *own-cat-lovers*. In the covaluation interpretation, both of them love John's cat.

- (14) a. John loves his cat and Peter does too.
 b. Binding (sloppy reading)
 John (λx (x loves x's cat)) and Peter (λx (x loves x's cat))
 c. Coreference/covaluation (strict reading)
 John (λx (x loves a's cat & a=John)) and Peter (λx (x loves a's cat & a=John))

Reuland (2018) proposes the *Quantificational antecedent test* for diagnosing binding: quantificational antecedents require binding, and hence differentiate between binding and coreference. For instance, according to this author, on the coreferential interpretation, the pronominal *he* in (15) has to be interpreted as a bound pronoun, and does not have an available accidental covaluation interpretation. An example makes it clear that the negatively quantified expression doesn't have a referent that the pronoun could accidentally pick out as well, which makes this even more clear.

- (15) No soldier_i thinks he_i will attack.

Let us now see how the pronoun complexes *sebe samog* and *njega samog* behave in the described syntactic contexts, in order to establish their status regarding binding and accidental coreference.

Consider the examples in (16).

- (16) Antecedent focused by *only*
 Context: After losing a basketball game, all players are asked to evaluate all members of the team.
- a. Samo je Pera kritikovao sebe samog.
 only Aux P. criticized Refl.Acc self.sg.M.Acc
 'Only Pera criticized himself.'
 * -> Other players did not criticize Pera.
 -> Other people did not criticize themselves.
- b. Samo je Pera kritikovao njega samog.
 only Aux P. criticized him self.sg.M.Acc
 'Only Pera criticized himself.'
 ? -> Other players did not criticize Pera.
 * -> Other players did not criticize themselves.

In contexts where the subject is focused by the particle *only*, the use of *sebe samog* seems to force an implication that no other players criticized themselves, as in (16a), the reading characteristic of binding. It is more challenging to assess the implications of using *njega samog* in the same context (16b). This is actually expected, because both *only* and *sam* mark focus, and a sentence can only have one focus. In any case, a clear contrast obtains between the two competing interpretations in favor of the accidental covaluation interpretation where the question under discussion is

who criticized Pera. The binding interpretation, where the question under discussion is who indulged in self-criticism, is not available.¹⁰

In VP ellipsis contexts, as in (17), when *sebe samog* is used (17a), a binding-like interpretation is clearly preferable, although some speakers allow both a binding- and a coreference-like reading. With *njega samog*, by contrast, only the latter kind of interpretation is available, as shown in (17b).

- (17) VP ellipsis
Context: After losing a basketball game, all players are asked to evaluate all members of the team.
- a. Pera je kritikovao sebe samog. Laza isto.
P. Aux criticized Refl.Acc self.sg.M.Acc L. same
'Pera criticized himself. So did Laza.'
-> Laza also criticized himself.
-> ?? Laza also criticized Pera.
- b. Pera je kritikovao njega samog. Laza isto.
P. Aux criticized him self.sg.M.Acc L. same
'Pera criticized himself. So did Laza.'
-> Laza also criticized Pera.

Finally, only *sebe samog* can be used with quantificational antecedents, as shown in (18). According to the quantificational antecedent test, this implies that *sebe samog* is bound, while *njega samog* is an instantiation of coreference.

- (18) Quantificational antecedent test
Context: After losing a basketball game, all players are asked to evaluate all members of the team.
- a. Niko_i nije kritikovao sebe_i samog.
no_one Aux.Neg criticized Refl.Acc self.sg.M.Acc
'No one criticized himself.'
- b. *Niko_i nije kritikovao njega_i samog.
no_one Aux.Neg criticized him self.sg.M.Acc
'Intended: No one criticized himself.'

This is a clear confirmation of the different status of the two expressions with respect to binding vs. accidental covaluation. The proposed analysis, where the expression involving the reflexive (*sebe samog* and its other case forms) reflexively marks and undergoes binding, and the expression involving a pronominal is accidentally coreferential, is confirmed. It is further possible to derive both of these types of behavior in terms of feature specification, but this is an enterprise that we leave for future research.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we explored the distribution of the pronoun *sam* 'self' with the reflexive *sebe* 'oneself' and the pronominal *njega* 'him' in SC, in contexts in which the

¹⁰ Some speakers we consulted did have the binding interpretation, but this is probably due to the fact that there are varieties without the intensifying pronoun, and their speakers have unclear judgments about it.

resulting pronoun complexes *sebe samog* and *njega samog* are used as direct objects in the (seemingly) local domain with their antecedent. The focus of the paper was on the question of why the pronoun *sam* enables using the pronominal *njega* with a local antecedent, in violation of Principle B of the standard binding theory (Chomsky, 1981, 1986). We have proposed an analysis based on the intensifying nature of the pronoun *sam*, as a result of which this pronoun imposes a focal status on the constituent it combines with. As a consequence, the focalized constituent receives an additional, higher position in which it can be interpreted at LF and in which it is not in the local domain of the antecedent. Following the view of Reinhart & Reuland (1993), this means that the binding conditions fail to apply in such contexts, since in their approach, a pronoun and its antecedent must be co-arguments in order for the binding/reflexivization conditions to apply. We have also considered the difference in the distribution of the pronoun complexes *sebe samog* and *njega samog*: the former combines only with local antecedents and passes the tests that diagnose syntactic binding, while the latter combines with non-local antecedents and passes the tests that diagnose coreference.

In a broader theoretical perspective, the presented data from SC supports the theory of predicate reflexivization (Reinhart & Reuland, 1993) in comparison to the considered alternatives (Chomsky, 1981, 1986, and later work) – in particular by confirming the role of the focus and the co-argumenthood relation.

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ZAMENICA SAM U SRPSKO-HRVATSKOM I TEORIJA VEZIVANJA

Rezime

Standardna teorija vezivanja (Chomsky, 1981, 1986) razlikuje anafor od zamenica i postulira komplementarnost u njihovoj distribuciji: anafor je vezan u okviru svoje upravne kategorije (Princip A), dok je zamenica u njoj slobodna (Princip B). Reinhart & Reuland (1993) za anafor koriste pojam refleksiva i predlažu modifikaciju standardne teorije: refleksivno markirani sintaksički predikat je refleksivan (Princip A), refleksivan semantički predikat je refleksivno markiran (Princip B). Obe teorije ispravno predviđaju gramatičnost koreferencijalne upotrebe refleksiva u argumentskoj poziciji (*Pera_i je kritikovao sebe_i*) odnosno negramatičnost koreferencijalne upotrebe pronominala u datoj poziciji (**Pera_i je kritikovao njega_i*) u srpsko-hrvatskom jeziku. Međutim, ako se u datom kontekstu upotrebe varijante sa zamenicom *sam*, onda su i refleksiv i zamenica gramatični (*Pera_i je kritikovao sebe_i / njega_i samog*). U radu smo razmotrili distribuciju zamenice *sam* uz refleksive i pronominala sa posebnim osvrtom na njen doprinos koreferencijalnoj upotrebi pronominala u lokalnom domenu (*Pera_i je kritikovao njega_i samog*). Naša analiza se zasniva na intenzifikatorskoj prirodi reči *sam*, usled koje ova reč rečeničnom članu nameće fokalni status. Poznato je da fokalni rečenični članovi dobijaju visok interpretacijski opseg, odnosno da se (u terminima generativne sintakse) pomeraju na najviše mesto u strukturi, time napuštajući lokalni domen antecedenta. Ovim efektivno zamenice sa *sam* i nisu u istoj upravnoj kategoriji sa antecedentom. Sledeći Reinhart & Reuland (1993), to znači da su one izuzete od primene principa sintaksičkog vezivanja. U radu smo razmotrili i razliku u distribuciji zameničkih kompleksa *sebe samog* i *njega samog*: *sebe samog* kombinuje se samo sa (naizgled) lokalnim antecedentima i prolazi testove koji dijagnostikuju sintaksičko vezivanje, dok se *njega samog* kombinuje i sa nelokalnim antecedentima i prolazi testove koji dijagnostikuju (slučajnu) koreferenciju. Posmatrano iz šire teorijske perspektive, podaci iz srpsko-hrvatskog jezika daju prednost teoriji refleksivizacije predikata (Reinhart & Reuland, 1993) u odnosu na alternative (Chomsky, 1981, 1986, i kasnije varijante).

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