

Bound Readings in Russian Clauses with Lexical Repetitions

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Introduction. It is well-documented that Condition C of Binding Theory (Chomsky 1981) is neither universal across languages nor unexceptional in English; in particular, with FOCUS particles such as *only* (Geach 1962) and *even* the restriction is waived in the local domain, at least when the use of the reflexive would yield a different, bound interpretation. Thus in (1), *John* is a natural choice since it is the property ‘ $\lambda x.x$ likes John,’ not ‘ $\lambda x.x$ likes x ,’ which is made salient by the first sentence—although *himself* is also a possible choice in (1) (Nediger 2015).

(1) Nobody likes John. Not even JOHN likes John/himself.

Another peculiarity under focus is the availability of a bound interpretation (of a pronoun or an ellipsis site) in the absence of c-command. E.g. (2) ascribes to Tanglewood the property ‘ $\lambda x.x$ is the only place s.t. I went to x because you went to x ’ (Kratzer 1991). Two current approaches to this problem are the covert movement of *Tanglewood* to the position of *only* (Erlewine and Kotek 2018) and Kratzer’s mechanism of focus binding (Bassi and Longenbaugh 2020).

(2) I only went to TANGLEWOOD because you did go to Tanglewood.

a. [only Tanglewood] λ_1 [I -ed go to t_1 [because you did go to Δ_1]]

b. I -ed [only [[go to Tanglewood]_{Fi} [because you did Δ_{Fi}]]]

(3) I only said that [complex DP the man who bought *ASPECTS*] couldn’t afford to buy *ASPECTS*.

Under CM, *Tanglewood* QRs to *only* and semantically binds both its trace and the elided material, as in the LF (2a), so island-sensitivity is predicted; FB postulates indexed foci and the ability of *only* to quantify over assignments of values to those designated indices (2b); it is geared to ignore islands, and its proponents show that the bound reading is indeed available in e.g. (3).

Data. Crucially, in the version of (2) without ellipsis the bound reading is claimed to be absent. The present paper investigates apparent Condition C violations in Russian which occur without ellipsis, do not require focus to be licensed but are compatible with focus, and most importantly, yield a bound interpretation with focus. Corpus cases with focus and *tol’ko* ‘only’ are in (4)–(5); in a separate experimental study, we showed that the bound reading of *X kak X* can at least be forced upon some speakers when it would be the only interpretation to make the sentence true.

(4) ...bogatyj stal ubogim, a ubogij bogatym; župany prevratilis’ v sermjagi, a sermjagi v karmaziny; kak že ty xočeš’, čtob tol’ko **Tur ostalsja Turom?** (Kulish, 1846–1857, RNC)

‘...the rich became poor, and the poor, rich; jackets became peasant’s coats, and peasant’s coats became finest wool coats; how would you expect Tur alone to have remained Tur?’

(5) Tol’ko odin **luk kak luk** i vyros. A vsě ostal’noe — drjan’, v rot ne idët. (Rytckheu, 1967)

‘Only onion has grown like real onion. All the rest is inedible scum’

The property at stake in (4) is ‘ $\lambda x.x$ remains x ’ rather than ‘ $\lambda x.x$ remains Tur,’ and in (5) it is ‘ $\lambda x.x$ grows like (normal) x ’ rather than ‘ $\lambda x.x$ grows like (normal) onion’—the latter trivially fails to hold of anything but onion and is therefore unlikely to be brought up in conversation. Some, like Cotta Ramusino (2019) for the construction *X kak X*, claimed that the second copy is interpreted predicatively; while the bound copy is indeed part of what is predicated of the preceding copy adjacent to the particle, an explanation is still needed for the perceived co-variation of the predicate (expressing the typical/salient properties of X) with the subject.

Ways of analysis. Given that both copies are overt and have a θ -role, a CM-analysis for (4)–(5) would require that we (a) adopt movement to θ -positions (Hornstein and Nunes 2014) and allow spelling out both copies, or (b) extend Bassi and Longenbaugh’s FB-free analysis of conjoined ellipsis (6), which involves covert ATB movement, to a subclass of asymmetrical no-ellipsis.

(6) a. I only said that Sue wanted to call BOB and couldn’t call BOB.

b. [only Bob] λ_1 [I said that Sue [[wanted to call t_1] and [couldn’t call t_1]]

At least for *X kak X*, (b)-extension may realise CxG’s intuition of a fixed pattern with two slots. Yet another way to amend CM would be (c) to block the content of the lower copy from entering the alternative-related part of the meaning. This is based on what Bassi and Longenbaugh (2018) propose for fake indexicals bound by focused antecedents, e.g. *Only I* $\lambda_1 t_1$ *did my₁ homework*; for proper names (4) this can be put to work by assuming (7) that a proper name presupposes its naming convention and contributes to assertion just the value assigned to the index it bears (Schoubye 2020), and moreover, that the presupposition does not enter the computation of alternatives. However, there is no obvious way to make it work for (5), with a common noun.

(7) $\llbracket [\text{tol'ko Tur}_1] \lambda_3 t_3 \text{ ostalsja Turom}_3 \rrbracket^g$ defined iff $g(1) = \text{Tur} \ \& \ [\lambda x.x \text{ remained Tur}](g(1))$
if defined, true iff $\nexists y(y \neq g(1) \ \& \ [\lambda x.x \text{ remained } x](y))$

For the FB-analysis to succeed, an amendment has to be made: the restriction of bound interpretations to elided and pronominal material should be waived but (in order to avoid unattested readings, e.g. in the non-elliptical version of (2)) replaced with the requirement that, whenever FB applies, DPs which are co-referential in the ordinary sense bear the same focus index as well.

(8) $\text{tol'ko } [\text{Tur}_1]_{\text{Fi}} \text{ ostalsja } [\text{Turom}_1]_{\text{Fi}/*j}$

This will not harm the predicted interpretation of (1): the second instance of *John* does not bear focus, so FB does not apply to it and no variable co-varying with the subject position is created and the reading under which the property that everyone fails is ‘ $\lambda x.x$ likes John’ is predicted.

Further problems. For (2), FB claims that the whole matrix VP is the complement of *only* but just parts of it bear focus; for cases like (9), it may be necessary to stipulate more focus given that the property in question is not ‘ $\lambda x.x$ is not x but... a courtesan’ but rather ‘ $\lambda x.x$ is not x but y ,’ where y depends on x but linguistic knowledge does not suffice to pick the y for the given x .

(9) *Daže Džokonda, govorjat, ne Džokonda, a portret kakoj-to kurtizanki...* (Dombrovsky, 1964)
‘Even Gioconda, they say, is not Gioconda but the portrait of a courtesan’

Thus viewed, (9) shows that the set of (salient) focus alternatives can, given extralinguistic information, include e.g. ‘Gioconda isn’t Gioconda but a courtesan’ and ‘cave bears aren’t bears but swines’ (as the text runs) but exclude e.g. ‘cave bears aren’t bears but courtesans.’ Once foci are indexed as in FB, the resources to specify the functional dependencies between the respective variables are available (Kratzer 1991; Stechow 1991) given that *portret...* is treated as focused:

(10) $\text{daže } [\text{Džokonda}_{\text{Fi}} \dots \text{ ne Džokonda}_{\text{Fi}}, \text{ a } [\text{portret kakoj-to kurtizanki}]_{\text{Fj}}]$

An additional problem is that the CM analysis is compatible with the view that focus particles in Russian need to be adjacent to focus (Zanon 2018), while the overall more powerful FB analysis entails distance association (Howell et al. 2021, whose examples do not look convincing).

Both problems are overcome if the whole clause is viewed as focused (hence a single adjacent focus), but this relegates too much work of selecting relevant alternatives to the context and is at odds with the adnominal position of *odin* and contrast between subjects marked with *a* in (5).

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