Possessive Reflexives in Russian

Anna Grashchenkova Russian State University for Humanities
Pavel Grashchenkov Moscow State University

Russian has an anaphoric element in possessives, namely sobstvennyj. Its distribution cannot be accounted for in terms of the standard Binding Theory. Syntactic properties of sobstvennyj differ from both possessive reflexive svoj and possessive pronominal ego. Besides the two latter can appear alone or with sobstvennyj (forming complex expressions svoj sobstvennyj, ego sobstvennyj), but the form sobstvennyj itself can only be simplex. This gap in the paradigm of possessives is filled in if we posit a null pronoun that (just like svoj and ego) can appear with or without sobstvennyj. This hypothesis seems not to come into conflict with the empirical data.

The paper is organized as follows: section 1 explores properties of simplex possessives svoj and ego. Section 2 concentrates on syntactic distribution of sobstvennyj. In 2.1 we advance the hypothesis that surface sobstvennyj is a complex expression formed by a null anaphoric pronoun and sobstvennyj. Section 3 deals with the structure of prenominal possessives in Russian. We state that agreeing possessives are generated in Spec, NP and surface in this position in Old Russian, whereas in modern Russian they move to the Spec, nP. Sobstvennyj under this hypothesis could be nP or NP adjunct. Section 4 concentrates on the distribution of complex possessives. We argue that their properties are dependent on those of simplex pronouns and sobstvennyj element. Section 5 sums up the functions of sobstvennyj and shows that Ø + sobstvennyj construction displays the same effects as other possessive complexes do.

1 Syntactic distribution of possessive pronouns

1.1 Svoj

* We are indebted to Ekaterina Lyutikova and Yakov Testelets for their valuable comments and criticism at various stages of this research, thanks are also due to the audience at FASL-15. We are grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their detailed comments that helped us greatly to improve the paper.
Possessive *svoj* exhibits properties, perfectly consistent with Principle A of the Binding Theory. As was noted as early as 1986 by Gilbert Rappaport: "The locality domain of the Russian reflexive is the minimal finite clause containing it". The same is true for possessive reflexives.

In the object position of the finite verb, *svoj* cannot take an antecedent outside the embedded clause (see (1a) ¹), but in the infinitival clause (example (1b)) *svoj* may be coindexed with both subjects: of the matrix and of the embedded clause.

    Vanja NOM knows that Volodja NOM loves self's sister ACC
    ‘Vanja knows <that Volodja nom loves *hisj/ his ownj sister>.’

    b. Professor poprosil assistenta <PRO chitat' svoj doklad>.
    professor NOM requested assistant ACC to-read self's report ACC
    ‘The professor requested his assistant to read his own report.’

    The set of potential binders of *svoj* is not restricted (as is usually supposed) to nominative subjects. In absence of the latter, *svoj* can also be anteceded by the psych-predicate experiencer object.²

In (2) one of the psych-predicate arguments (namely the Theme: Petja in (2a) and svoja sobaka in (2b)) can be assigned the nominative case. It makes it, then, impossible for the experiencer object to bind the reflexive possessive in a subject position (2b):

(2) a. Petja i razdrazhaet svoju i sobaku.
    Peter NOM irritates self ACC dog ACC
    ‘Peter's dog is irritated with him’

    b. *Petja i razdrazhaet svoja i sobaka.
    PeterACC irritates self NOM dog NOM
    ‘Peter is irritated with his own dog.’

Examples in (3) illustrate psych-predicates that can not project external argument. This results in the possibility of experiencer object

---

¹ Examples (1a,b) are borrowed from Rappaport (1986). Author's notation is preserved.
² This property of *svoj* is not a unique characteristic of Russian. The same phenomenon is attested in some other languages (see Pesetsky (1987), Belletti & Rizzi (1988), Pollard & Xue (1998), Xue (2002) among others).
(3a)  Pete_{\text{DAT}} \text{ to feel sorry self}_{\text{ACC}}^{s} \text{ dog}_{\text{ACC}}^{s}  \\
   ‘Peter feels sorry for his dog.’

b.  * Pete_{\text{ACC}} \text{ to feel sorry self}_{\text{DAT}}^{s} \text{ dog}_{\text{DAT}}  \\
   ‘Peter’s dog feels sorry for him.’

c.  Pete_{\text{ACC}} \text{ feels sick Prep self}_{\text{GEN}}^{s} \text{ job}_{\text{GEN}}^{s}  \\
   ‘Peter’s job makes him sick.’

d.  * Ot Pete_{\text{GEN}} \text{ feels sick self}_{\text{ACC}}^{s} \text{ sister}_{\text{ACC}}^{s}  \\
   ‘Peter makes his sister sick.’

1.2  Ego
The referential properties of possessive ego are similar to those of pronominals in terms of Principle B of the BT. Still, it exhibits a number of peculiarities, not accountable for by the standard BT.

Consider examples (4) – (5). In (4) ego may not have antecedent within the embedded finite clause and must be coindexed with the subject of the matrix predicate (or some other, non-sentence-internal noun phrase).

(4) Vanja_{\text{NOM}} \text{ knows that Volodja}_{\text{NOM}} \text{ loves his sister}_{\text{ACC}}^{s}.  \\
   ‘Vanja knows that Volodja loves his own sister.’

In (5) ego is embedded in the infinitival clause, but still it can be coindexed only with the subject of a matrix clause.

(5) Professor_{\text{NOM}} \text{ requested assistant}_{\text{ACC}} \text{ to-read his report}_{\text{ACC}}^{s}.  \\
   ‘The professor asked his assistant to read his own report.’

Now consider cases in which ego is contained in a noun phrase:

\footnote{(4), (5) are modified instances of (1a,b).}
In (6a) ego can not be anteceded by the subject of the clause. In (6b) the presence of an overt specifier moj makes it possible for ego to be coindexed with Petja.

The locality domain of ego, thus, can be informally stated as a minimal category, containing the pronoun and a subject.

Principle B states that pronominal must be free in its GC. Let us see if it is the case with ego. As is shown in (4), (5) ego can not be coindexed with the subject of its own clause. In ditransitive clauses it can be anteceded by the indirect object as in (7a)\(^4\), but not by direct object (7b):

\begin{align*}
\text{(7a) a. } & \ \text{Devochki pokazali Masha} \ e\text{-}j \ komnatu. \\
& \ \text{girls NOM showed Masha DAT her room ACC} \\
& \ \text{‘Girls showed to Masha her own room.’} \\
\text{b. } & \ \text{Vrachi pokazali Mashu} \ e\text{-}j \ roditeljam to\text{-}ko na} \\
& \ \text{doctors NOM showed Masha ACC her parents DAT only on} \\
& \ \text{next day} \\
& \ \text{‘Doctors showed Masha to her parents only the next day.’}
\end{align*}

Data like those in (7) allow us to suppose, that in ditransitive clauses the accusative noun phrase c-commands the dative one.

Problems arise in context of psych-predicates. It is not clear, why (8) under the current coindexation, though is not fully ungrammatical, but is treated by speakers as somehow odd. It is not predicted by BT, since, as it was shown in (3a,b), the psych-predicate experiencer object c-commands its theme object.

\begin{align*}
\text{(8) a. } & \ \text{Devochki pokazali Masha} \ e\text{-}j \ komnatu. \\
& \ \text{girls NOM showed Masha DAT her room ACC} \\
& \ \text{‘Girls showed to Masha her own room.’} \\
\text{b. } & \ \text{Vrachi pokazali Mashu} \ e\text{-}j \ roditeljam to\text{-}ko na} \\
& \ \text{doctors NOM showed Masha ACC her parents DAT only on} \\
& \ \text{next day} \\
& \ \text{‘Doctors showed Masha to her parents only the next day.’}
\end{align*}

\(^4\) (7a) is a modified version of example (9) from Avrutin (1994, p.714)
The similar problem is faced in cases like (9), where ego may be antecedeed by the experiencer object of the psych-predicate toshnit:

(9) ? Petjui davno uzhe toshnit ot ego, raboty.
    Peter{ACC} long since feels sick Prep his job
    ‘It is long since Peter’s job makes him sick.’

Though examples like (9) are not as frequently met in texts as the similar examples with reflexive possessor (see above (3c)), (9) is not ungrammatical. This also is not predicted by the Principle B.

Another evidence of Principle B violation comes from cases like (10). BT can not account for the fact that ego can not be antecedeed by obliques in (10):

(10) a. * Egoij sobaka byla ubita Peteji toj zhe nochju.
     his dog{NOM} was killed by.Peter that same night
     ‘His dog was killed by Peter the same night.’
     a’. ?* Toj zhe nochju Peteji byla ubita ego, sobaka.
          that same night by.Peter was killed his dog{NOM}
     ‘His dog was killed by Peter, the same night.’
     b. * Ot Peti i toshnit ego i druzej.
     Prep Peter{GEN} feels sick his friends{ACC}
     ‘Peter makes his friends feel sick.’

2 Syntactic distribution of sobstvennyj

As far we dealt only with simplex instances of possessives. But svoj and ego can be used in complex forms as well.

Tableau 1 Four types of possessive pronouns in Russian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simplex</th>
<th>svoj ‘self’s’</th>
<th>ego ‘his’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>svoj sobstvennyj ‘self's own’</td>
<td>ego sobstvennyj ‘his own’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Tableau 1, svoj sobstvennyj and ego sobstvennyj are formed by combination of simplex possessives svoj / ego and sobstvennyj ‘own’.

Sobstvennyj, in addition to its function of forming complex expressions, listed in Tableau 1, can occur independently:

(11) Petja, udaril sobstvennuju, sobaku.
    Peter hit own dog
    ‘Peter hit his own dog.’
In what follows we will discuss syntactic properties of such independent occurrences of *sobstvennyj* and propose the analysis that can account for its distribution.

2.1 *Locality*

Syntactic behavior of *sobstvennyj* shows a number of peculiarities. Its distribution differs significantly from that of possessive reflexive *svoj*. Consider the case in which *sobstvennyj* is contained in a complement noun phrase of a finite verb:

(12) Olga, znaet, chto Petja udaril sobstvennuju, sobaku.
    Olga knows Comp Peter hit own dog
    ‘Olga knows that Peter hit his/*her dog.’

As indicated in (12), *sobstvennyj* can be coindexed with the subject of its own clause, but not with the subject of the matrix one. The similar restriction holds, when *sobstvennyj* is embedded in an infinitival clause:

(13) Professor poprosil assistenta [PRO j chitat' sobstvennyj, report].
    The professor requested assistant to-read own report.

Comparing (13) to the similar example (1b) with *svoj* we can see that the local domain of *sobstvennyj* is narrower than that of *svoj*: *sobstvennyj* must find its antecedent within the minimal IP domain.

Though PRO blocks binding of *sobstvennyj* by the external subject, noun phrase specifier (overt as well as non-overt) is transparent for *sobstvennyj*:

(14) a. Petja prochital otzyvy na sobstvennuju rabotu.
    Peter read reviews on own work
    ‘Peter read reviews on his own work.’

b. Petja prochital [ moya [ otzyvy na sobstvennuju, my work].
    Peter read my review on own work
    ‘Peter read my review on his own/my work.’

2.2 *C-command*

*Sobstvennyj* may be anteceded by the nominative subject as in (11) and (15).
Petja, uvidel tarakana na sobstvennom stole.  
‘Peter saw a cockroach on his own desk.’

But the subject is not the only appropriate antecedent for *sobstvennyj*. (16) illustrates that *sobstvennyj* may take an object noun phrase as its antecedent (not an option for *svoj*).

(16) Vrachi pokazali Mashu sobstvennymi roditeljami only on next day.  
‘Doctors showed Masha to her own parents only the next day.’

Psych-predicate contexts discussed in 1.1 with respect to *svoj* represent another case of striking asymmetry between *svoj* and *sobstvennyj*. Experiencer object Petju in (17) can be coindexed with *sobstvennyj* but not with *svoj*:

(17) Petju razdrazhaet sobstvennaja rabota.  
‘Peter is irritated with his own job.’

Moreover, *sobstvennyj* can appear in contexts not allowed for other simplex possessives. In passives *sobstvennyj* can be anteceded by the passive agent:

(18) Sobstvennaja sobaka toj zhe nochju.  
‘His own dog was killed by him the same night.’

Finally the crucial difference between *sobstvennyj* and *svoj* is that the former (but not the latter) can have an indisputably non-c-commanding antecedent:

(19) Zvuk sobstvennogo golosa okonchatel'no.  
‘The sound of his own voice woke him up completely.’
2.3 Analysis of sobstvennyj

Syntactic behavior of sobstvennyj as illustrated in 2.1 and 2.2 shows a number of peculiarities. How can it be accounted for? There are at least two possible analyses.

2.3.1 Sobstvennyj as a possessive pronoun

Analysis of sobstvennyj as a possessive pronoun faces with at least two serious problems.

− Its syntactic properties are not consistent with Binding Theory principles as stated in Chomsky (1981), (1986). Sobstvennyj is not an anaphor, since it is possible for it not to be bound in its Governing Category (see (19)). It is also not a pronominal in terms of Principle B, as long as it can have a c-commanding antecedent within its GC (see (11)).

− Russian data provide evidence that the structural position of sobstvennyj in a noun phrase differs from that of other possessive pronouns (a detailed analysis of this issue is offered in section 3).

Besides, such an account leaves unexplained a strange asymmetry in Russian pronominal system (see Tableau 2.). Why there are three simplex, but only two complex possessive pronouns?

Tableau 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simplex</th>
<th>svoj ‘self’s’</th>
<th>ego ‘his’</th>
<th>sobstvennyj ‘own’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>complex</td>
<td>svoj sobstvennyj ‘self’s own’</td>
<td>ego sobstvennyj ‘his own’</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.2 Ø + sobstvennyj analysis

We assume that every noun phrase structure has a potential position for a possessor. This position may be occupied either by an overt noun phrase, (such as Petinu, svoj and ego in (20a)) or by a null anaphoric pronoun (nominal PRO in terms of Abney (1987)), (20b).

(20) a. Vasja, ljubit Petinu / svoju / ego, i mamu.

‘Vasja, loves Peter’s / his own / his, i mother.’

b. Vasja, ljubit Ø i mamu.

‘Vasja, loves his, i mother.’
We suppose that referential properties of noun phrase *mamu* in (20b) are in fact determined by the referential properties of the null pronoun.

Now, we suggest that there is no such a pronoun as *sobstvennyj*, and that the so-called independent occurrences of *sobstvennyj* are not in fact independent. We suppose that in cases like (11), *sobstvennyj* constitute with a null anaphoric pronoun a kind of complex anaphoric expression (see (11)'), just as it does with *svoj* and *ego* in complex pronouns.

(11') Petja, udaril {Ø sobstvennuju}; sobaku.
    ‘Peter hit his own dog.’

Additional evidence of plausibility of such an account is brought out by the fact that *sobstvennyj* can be used not only with pronouns but also with lexical noun phrases:

(21) Petin sobstvennyj dom
    ‘Peter's own house’

If *sobstvennyj* in all other cases should be accompanied by some possessive noun phrase, why then should it be otherwise in cases like (11) – (19)?

In addition, this analysis allows us to avoid the asymmetry illustrated in Tableau 2. The revised, pretty symmetric Russian pronominal system is presented in Tableau 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>simplex</th>
<th>svoj ‘self’s’</th>
<th>ego ‘his’</th>
<th>Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>complex</td>
<td><em>svoj sobstvennyj</em> ‘self's own’</td>
<td><em>ego sobstvennyj</em> ‘his own’</td>
<td><em>Ø sobstvennyj</em> ‘own’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

5 Another evidence of existence of a null anaphoric pronoun in Russian comes from constructions with external possessor.

(i) a. Petina sobaka umerla.
    Peter’s dog died

b. U Peti umerla sobaka.
    Prep Peter GEN died dog
    ‘Peter's dog died.’

The possibility of NP *dog* in (i.b) to refer to *Peter* as its owner, may be explained if we suppose that its possessor position is filled with null anaphoric pronoun (*U Peti, umerla Ø, sobaka*).
3 Structure of Russian Noun Phrases with Prenominal Possessors

3.1 Morphology
Some agreeing possessives pattern with adjectives according to their declination type (moj, tvoj, svoj); others differ from adjectives only in nominative (Petin, papin,...) and ego (Pl. – ih) exhibits no case / gender agreement (and is phonologically identical to the genitive inflections of adjectives). Sobstvennyj morphologically is an adjective, i.e. it follows the same case / number / gender paradigm as adjectives do.

3.2 Position of prenominal possessives in the noun phrase
3.2.1 Syntactic structure of possessive noun phrases in Russian
Consider the distribution of adjectival (Petin, papin,...) and pronominal (moj, tvoj,...) possessors on the one hand and svoj, ego and sobstvennyj on the other. The only item that can co-occur with any other possessive expression is sobstvennyj (but not svoj or ego):

(22) a. Petin (*svoj /*ego /sobstvennyj) dom
   ‘Peter’s own house’
b. papin (*svoj / *ego / sobstvennyj) dom
   ‘father’s own house’
c. moj (*svoj / *ego / sobstvennyj) dom
   ‘my own house’

So, all the possessive adjectives (with -in, -ov inflections) and pronouns occupy the same position that differs from that of sobstvennyj.

As for the position of possessors, in Old Russian both agreeing and genitive possessors were much freer in their pre- or postnominal order than in modern language. The possessors may be preposed to the head:

(23) a. k sobstvennoj ih cerkvi
   ‘towards their own church’
b. sobstvennyj obvinjaemyh episkop
   lit. ‘the own father (bishop) of the accused’

But much more frequently agreeing possessives (svoi ‘self’s’, mů ‘my’) were postposed to the head noun (kon’ ‘horse’):

(24) a. I pomjanu Oleg kon’ svoi.
   ‘And Oleg remembered his horse.’
b. Kde est’ kon’ mů?
‘Where is my horse?’

Now let us turn to the position of sobstvennyj. Whereas in Old Russian it was usually placed before the possessor (see above), the modern language allows for two orderings in case of prenominal possessives (25a,b) and the order sobstvennyj-N-possessor with postnominal genitives (25c):

(25) a. k ih sobstvennoj cerkvi
    b. k sobstvennoj ih cerkvi
      ‘towards their own church’
    c. k sobstvennoj cerkvi prihozhan
      ‘towards the own church of parish’

In sum: agreeing possessives have the declination paradigm similar (but not identical) to the adjectival one, whereas sobstvennyj declines as adjective; agreeing possessives and sobstvennyj occupy different syntactic positions; possessive pronouns were often postposed to the head noun in Old Russian and can only precede it in modern language; sobstvennyj was preposed to possessives in Old Russian and may precede or follow prenominal possessors in modern Russian.

Let us now enumerate the previous analyses of syntactic position of (agreeing) possessives in Slavic. According to Veselovska (1998), Czech possessors are generated in Spec, NP and move to Spec, DP, a similar approach is adopted by Tasseva-Kurktchieva (2004) for Bulgarian possessive noun phrases. Isakadze (1998) places Russian and Czech agreeing possessors in Spec, PossP position, where they remain without further movement. Rappaport (2004) suppose that Slavic possessive adjectives and pronouns are merged in Spec, PossP and move to Spec DP for feature checking. Trugman (2005) treats Russian prenominal possessives either as heads or phrases, merged in Spec, NP and (not obligatory) moved to Spec, DP. Finally, Zlatič (2002), based on Serbo-Croatian and other Slavic data, argues that agreeing possessives morphologically pattern with adjectives but exhibit semantic properties of nouns (occupy argument position, i.e. Spec of NP, and establish anaphoric relations).

To capture the structure and syntactic properties of Russian (prenominal) possessives, we postulate some small n head, analogous to PossP in previous works. Pronominal possessors are merged in Spec, NP.
The n head has some features that need to be checked. The mechanism of feature checking changed from Old to modern Russian. In Old Russian it was realized via N-to-n head movement, overt, as in kon’ svoi; or at LF, as in ih cerkvi. In modern Russian n features are checked via Spec-head agreement and the possessor is attracted from Spec, NP to Spec, nP.

At the same time, sobstvennyj is an nP or NP adjunct, i.e. it always adjoins to the constituent which contains the possessor. Adjectival morphology on possessives and sobstvennyj is due to the rules of concord, applied to all prenominal elements in Russian (adjectives, determiners, etc.). Sobstvennyj is more consistent in taking adjectival inflections since it is an adjunct, just as the meaningful adjectives are.

Thus the structures for the noun phrase with prenominal possessives and sobstvennyj in Old (26a) and modern (26b) Russian are:

(26)  a.  sobstvennyj [nP i [Spec, NP ih [N tk]]]
   b.  /sobstvennyj/ [Spec, nP t i [n /sobstvennyj/ [Spec, NP t i [N dom]]]]

‘their own house’

The ability to be adjoined quite “high” (to nP) is not the unique property of sobstvennyj, there are other Russian adjectives, which also display such behavior. For instance, poslednij, as opposed to novyj, can precede prenominal possessives or follow them:

(27)  a.  ego poslednjaja rabota  vs poslednjaja ego rabota
       ‘his last job’
   b.  moja novaja mashina  vs #novaja moja mashina
       ‘my new car’

3.2.2 Properties of sobstvennyj in picture nouns context

Picture nouns allow for two prenominal possessive expressions:

(28)  Moj sobstvennyj Petin portret gorazdo luchshe tvoego. my own Peter's portrait much better than yours
       ‘My own portrait of Peter is much better than yours.’
       (lit. ‘My own Peter's portrait…’)

The example above is perfectly consistent with our analysis: the higher possessive is in Spec, nP whereas the lower one is in Spec, NP. Picture noun contexts bring out additional evidence of the plausibility of Ø + sobstvennyj analysis:
a. Oni porval Petina sobstvennyj portret.
   [Spec, np Petina n [np sobstvennyj [spec, np i [np portret]]]]
   ‘He tore up Peter’s own portrait.’
   √Peter = Poss / Ag
   *he = Poss / Ag

b. Oni porval sobstvennyj i Petina portret.
   sobstvennyj [spec, np Ø, n [spec, np Petina [np portret]]]
   ‘He tore up his own portrait of Peter.’
   √he = Poss / Ag
   *Peter = Poss / Ag

Thus, the rule for sobstvennyj may be stated as follows: sobstvennyj may be associated with a possessor, if on some stage of derivation it adjoins to the projection containing this possessor.

4 Syntactic distribution of complex possessive pronouns

Above we proposed to analyze sobstvennyj as Ø + sobstvennyj. Now the question immediately arises: How can this structure help to account for its distribution?

We suggest that syntactic distribution of Ø sobstvennyj and other complex possessive pronouns is determined by two independent factors. These are:

i. distribution of the simplex pronoun
ii. properties of sobstvennyj

We will test this hypothesis on svoj sobstvennyj and ego sobstvennyj complexes.

4.1 Svoj sobstvennyj

Svoj sobstvennyj in local contexts exhibits the same distribution as svoj, as illustrated by (30a-c):

(30) a. Petja i udaril svoju i sobstvennuyu sobaku.
   ‘Peter hit his dog.’

b. Pete DAT to feel sorry self'sACC/self's ownACC dogACC
   ‘Peter feels sorry for his own dog.’

c. Petju i toshnit ot svoej sobstvennoi raboty.
   PeterACC feels sick Prep self'sGEN/self's ownGEN jobGEN
‘Peter’s job makes him sick.’

The important point here is that occurrences of *svoj sobstvennyj* in sentences like (30a-c) obligatorily entail the contrastive reading. Stated more precisely: in contrastive contexts *svoj sobstvennyj* may be used in positions accessible otherwise only to *svoj*.

Now consider non-local instances of *svoj sobstvennyj*:

(31) a. Vanja, * znaet, <chto Volodja ljubit [ svoju sestru].<="
   Vanja NOM knows that Volodja NOM loves self's sister.
   ‘Vanja knows that Volodja loves his own sister.’

b. Professor, * poprosil assistenta, <PRO to read svoj doklad>.
   Professor NOM requested assistant to read self's report.
   ‘The professor asked his assistant to read his report.’

Contrary to *svoj*, *svoj sobstvennyj* does not allow for long-distant antecedents as illustrated in (31b).

Now we can summarize the properties of *svoj sobstvennyj* as opposed to *svoj*. Occurrences of *svoj sobstvennyj* show two kinds of effects:

i. contrastive reading
ii. locality effects

4.2 *Ego sobstvennyj*

_Ego sobstvennyj_ can be used in the same positions as ego only in case of contrastive contexts. In (32b) *ego sobstvennyj* must be contrastively focused, otherwise the sentence would be awkward. No such restriction obtains in (32a).

(32) a. Petja, poprosil sosedej PRO postorozhit’ ego dom.
   Peter asked neighbours to watch over his house
   ‘Peter asked his neighbours to watch over his house. (neutral)’

b. Petja, poprosil sosedej PRO postorozhit’
   Peter asked neighbours to watch over
   *ego sobstvennyj dom.*
his own house
‘It was his own house that Peter asked his neighbours to watch over. (contrastive)’

The crucial difference between the referential properties of ego sobstvennyj and those of ego is that the former may not be $r$-free:

(33) a. Prinesi mne ego knigu, a ne eë.
give me his book not hers
‘Give me his book, not hers.’
b. * Prinesi mne ego sobstvennuju knigu, a ne eë.
give me his own book not hers
intended meaning: ‘Give me his book, not hers.’

Crucially, ego sobstvennyj differs from ego in that it may not have a sentence external antecedent. It results in the fact that reference of ego sobstvennyj in contrast to ego is never ambiguous. Ego in (34) (as well as all other examples with ego) may refer either to sentence internal (Petin in (34)) antecedent or to some other previously mentioned noun phrase. For ego sobstvennyj in (34) (and others) only the first option is available.

(34) a. Petina i sosedka udarila ego i,k sobaku.
Peter’s neighbour hit his dog
‘Peter’s neighbour hit his dog.’
b. Petina i sosedka udarila ego sobstvennuju i,*k sobaku.
Peter’s neighbour hit his own dog
‘Peter’s neighbour hit his dog.’

To sum up, occurrences of ego sobstvennyj, as opposed to ego entail two types of effects:

i. contrastive context
ii. sentence-internal antecedent

5 Functions of sobstvennyj

5.1 Semantic and syntactic functions of sobstvennyj
In section 4 we advanced the hypothesis that the syntactic distribution of complex possessive pronouns is determined by two factors, namely the distribution of the simplex pronoun and the properties of sobstvennyj.

In sections 4.1, 4.2 we saw that the set of possible antecedents of complex pronouns represents the subset of possible antecedents of its
simplex counterparts. It means that, as it was supposed, the distribution of possessive complexes is dependent on that of simplex pronouns.

As for the second part of our hypothesis, we suggest that effects of locality and contrastive reading, outlined in the previous sections must be attributed to the *sobstvennyj* component.\(^6\)

Evidence that these effects are due to particular functions of *sobstvennyj* comes from constructions with *sobstvennyj* linked to a lexical possessive. Both (35) and (36) necessarily imply that Katja and Sasha have been previously mentioned in the text. Both Katiny *sobstvennye* and Sashiny *sobstvennye* are contrastively focused.

(35) Vera vyterla devochku pushistym polotencem i nadela svoju futbolku - poluchilos', budto trikotazhnoe platjice. Noskov podhodjaschego razmera ne bylo, prishlos' obojts' bez nih. *Katiny sobstvennye* i stirat' ne imelo smysla...

‘Vera dried the girl with a bath towel and dressed her in her own T-shirt – it looked like a dress. Socks of a proper size could not be found. Kate's own (socks) were so dirty, that there was no point in washing them.’

(36) Inogda voprosy, kotorye zadaval Petr, kazalis' chrezvychajno jasnymi i chetkimi, a *Sashiny sobstvennye* otvety byli do glubiny durackimi.

‘Sometimes, questions that Peter would ask seemed extremely plain and clear, while Sasha's own answers were deeply idiotic.’

As is illustrated by (35) – (36) *sobstvennyj* imposes on nominal possessors the same restrictions as on pronouns.

Stated more explicitly, *sobstvennyj* has two functions:

1. "Semantic" function: *sobstvennyj* imposes contrastive semantics on possessives, with which it is associated;
2. "Syntactic" function: *sobstvennyj* reduces the set of potential antecedents of the possessive to the most local one.

5.2 Referential properties of Ø *sobstvennyj*

It seems possible now to extend the proposed analysis of complexes *ego/svoj sobstvennyj* to the construction Ø *sobstvennyj*. We suppose that

---

\(^6\) The analysis advanced here is similar, though not identical to the analysis of English *himself* proposed by Zribi-Hertz (1995). In particular, Zribi-Hertz denies the locality effect of own-adjunction.
the referential properties of this complex construction are formed by referential properties of null anaphoric pronoun and outlined functions of sobstvennyj. Though the distribution of Ø is far beyond the scope of this paper, we may however note that examples (11) – (19) above allow for the same interpretation without sobstvennyj (see for instance (37)):

(37) a.  Petja, udaril sobstvennuju, sobaku.
    ‘Peter, hit his, dog.’
   b.  Petja, udaril Øi,k sobaku.
    ‘Peter hit the dog.’

This and the following (38) examples demonstrate that sobstvennyj imposes the same restrictions on referential properties of Ø as on that of other simplex possessives, namely (38a) is contrastively focused and the set of potential binders of Ø in (38b) is restricted to the most local one in (38a):

(38) a.  Olga j znaet, chto Petja i udaril sobstvennuju i,*j sobaku.
    ‘Olga knows Comp Peter hit own dog
    ‘Olga knows that it was his own dog that Peter hit.’
   b.  Olga j znaet, chto Petja, udaril Øi,j,k sobaku.
    ‘Olga knows Comp Peter hit dog
    ‘Olga knows that Peteri hit hisi,k/her dog.’

The syntax of null anaphoric pronoun certainly should be investigated more thoroughly. We leave this for further research.

In this paper we discussed properties of Russian possessive anaphoric expressions. In particular, we focused on sobstvennyj that was not previously discussed in the literature. We proposed to analyze sobstvennyj as a complex expression Ø + sobstvennyj, which proved to display the same effects of locality and contrastive reading as complex possessives do.

References


Grashchenkova Anna
izmaja@mail.ru
Grashchenkov Pavel
gra-paul@mtu-net.ru