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Condition B and Other Conditions on Pronominal Licensing in Serbo-Croatian*

Ivana Jovović

Abstract: I argue that certain binding facts from Serbo-Croatian (SC), previously analyzed as Condition B violations by Despić (2011, 2013), are best captured in terms of specific discourse constraints on coreferential pronouns and that such cases have no bearing on the categorial status of the nominal domain in SC. I show that the availability of clitic and non-clitic pronouns that are coreferential with a possessor antecedent crucially depends on whether the antecedent is a discourse topic or new information focus, which will lead me to conclude that such cases are not Condition B violations. I also observe that pronouns in English are subject to identical conditions and conclude that English also has clitic and non-clitic pronouns.

Keywords: clitics, Condition B, focus, nominal domain, pronouns, Serbo-Croatian

1 Introduction

Despić (2011, 2013) (see also Franks 2019) argues that the binding contrast between Serbo-Croatian (SC) and English illustrated in (1)-(2) below follows straightforwardly from independently motivated differences in their nominal structure (see Bošković 2008, 2012). More precisely, he claims that the opposite behavior of SC and English with respect to binding here can be captured under the assumption that DP is projected in English but not in SC: the coreference between the pronoun and the possessor is legitimate only in the former as the DP projection prevents the possessor from c-commanding the pronoun. On the other hand, in a DP-less language like SC the possessor is able to c-command out of the subject phrase, hence the intended interpretation is ruled out in (1) by Condition B.¹

(1) *[NP Kusturicin₁ [najnoviji film]] (*ga*₁) je zaista razočarao (*njega*₁).

Kusturica's latest movie him_{CL} is really disappointed him_{STR.PRN}.

[intended] Kusturica₁'s latest movie really disappointed him₁.

(2) [DP Kusturica₁'s [latest [movie]]] really disappointed *him*₁.

(adapted from Despić 2013: 245)

In this paper, I argue that the pattern in (1)-(2) is best captured in terms of certain discourse constraints on coreferential pronouns and that the contrast in (1)-(2) is actually not relevant to the issue of the categorial status of nominal phrases in English and SC.² To this end, I show that the possibility of coreference in configurations like (1)-(2) does not correlate with the proposed structural difference in the manner predicted by Despić's account but instead crucially depends on the notions of topic and focus. This will lead me to argue that (1) is not a Condition B effect. I will show that, unlike (1), clear Condition B violations in SC cannot be rescued by manipulating the relevant discourse factors.³ In addition, I show that the same constraints on coreferential pronouns observed below regarding (1) also hold at the level of discourse where Condition B is uncontroversially not at issue, thus further supporting my claim that (1) should not be analyzed as a Condition B violation.

Below I discuss the interaction of topicalization and focalization with pronominal reference and explicate the most robust dependencies. After discussing the basic assumptions of Despić's approach in Section 2, in Section 3 I spell out novel discourse conditions on licensing of coreferential readings of pronouns. I show that coreferential clitics are allowed if their antecedent functions as a discourse topic, while the relevant interpretation of strong pronouns is licensed by focus – by focalizing the antecedent or the pronoun itself. I also observe that English

pronouns are sensitive to the discourse conditions in question, on a par with SC strong and weak pronouns, and suggest that English makes a strong/weak distinction in its pronominal system, as also independently argued by Bošković (1997, 2004). In Section 4, I tease apart clear Condition B violations from cases like (1) above, crucially showing that the two pattern differently with respect to the above discourse conditions. In Section 5, I look at the behavior of pronouns in intersentential anaphora and observe that the same conditions constrain coreference in such cases as well. Finally, in Section 6, I discuss a third way of licensing of coreferential readings of pronouns, namely by focus placement on elements other than the pronoun or its antecedent. Section 7 concludes the paper.

2 More than NP/DP

Before discussing the discourse conditions on the availability of (1)-(2), I will briefly discuss the role of the NP/DP distinction in Despić's analysis.

As noted above, Despić (2011, 2013) argues that the binding facts in (1)-(2) show that SC, unlike English, lacks a DP projection in its nominal domain, thus providing additional support for Bošković's (2008, 2012) NP/DP parameter.⁴ In this section I spell out some key theoretical underpinnings of Despić's approach and show that the contrast in (1)-(2) above cannot be derived solely in terms of the NP/DP difference anyway.

Recall that Despić argues that (1)-(2) can be accounted for if the possessor in English is dominated by DP and therefore cannot c-command anything outside of the subject phrase, while DP is not projected in SC and the possessor c-commands the pronoun coindexed with it, causing a Condition B violation.⁵ However, the assumption that DP is projected only in English is actually not sufficient to derive the contrast; rather, for the system to work, additional architectural assumptions that I spell out below are necessary.

Assume, for instance, that possessors in (1)-(2) occupy the SpecNP and SpecDP position respectively, as in (3):

(3) a. [_{NP} Kusturica's [_{N'} [_{NP} latest movie]]] *SC*

b. [_{DP} Kusturica [_{D'} s [_{NP} latest movie]]] *English*

Given the standard assumption that, unlike adjoined elements, specifiers do not c-command out of their phrase, then no violation should occur in (1) either. Thus, unless it is stipulated that possessors are specifiers in English and adjuncts in SC, English and SC binding facts should be identical regardless of the proposed structural difference.⁶ To circumvent this problem, Despić follows Kayne (1994) and assumes that all specifiers are adjuncts, hence they c-command out of the phrase they are located in. Moreover, in order to block the possessor from c-commanding the pronoun in English, Despić adopts another Kaynean assumption whereby possessors in English are actually generated lower in the structure, as ‘specifiers’ of the possessor phrase (PossP) that is immediately dominated by DP, the DP then preventing the possessor from c-commanding out. The resulting structures for SC and English nominal phrases are given in (4) below.⁷ Given (4), (1)-(2) are then accounted for: (1) is a Condition B violation since the possessor is an adjunct which, by virtue of being dominated only by a segment of the NP, c-commands out of that NP, while there is no violation in (2) as the possessor in English is embedded within PossP dominated by DP.⁸ Note, however, that the presence vs. absence of DP is not the only difference between (4a) and (4b).

(4) a. [_{NP} Kusturica's [_{NP} latest movie]]] *SC*

b. [_{DP} ... [_{DP} D [_{PossP} Kusturica [_{PossP} 's [_{NP} latest movie]]]]]]] *English*

To summarize, we have seen above that Despić’s analysis requires positing some

additional structural distinctions between SC and English (in addition to requiring rather specific theoretical assumptions) in order to capture the contrast in (1)-(2); in other words, the presence vs. absence of DP by itself is not enough.

3 Discourse Constraints on Coreferential Pronouns

3.1 Why Antecedents Matter

In Despić's approach, the binding contrast in (1)-(2) above amounts to the issue of c-command between the coreferential elements. In this section I will argue that the availability of the relevant interpretation in (1)-(2) in fact depends on certain discourse properties of the antecedent and show that coreference is in principle possible even when under the analysis proposed in Despić the pronoun is c-commanded by a local antecedent, as is the case with SC (1), and conversely, that it can also be disallowed when under Despić's analysis the antecedent does not c-command the pronoun, as is the case in (2). I will therefore conclude that (1) is not a Condition B violation and, more generally, that the coreference relationship in question is not a reliable test for probing the structure of the nominal domain, including c-command relations, in examples like (1)-(2).

Consider (5)-(7) (with the contexts given there): coreferential readings of strong and clitic pronouns in SC are allowed in (6)-(7) respectively, in contrast to (5), where both are ruled out on a par with Despić's (1).⁹ If (5) is ungrammatical because of Condition B, as Despić argues, then no coreferential pronoun should be allowed in (6)-(7) either since the latter are structurally identical to (5). I will show below that the crucial factor determining the interpretive possibilities for the pronouns in (5B)-(7B) is actually the discourse status of the antecedent, as specified by the context questions given in (5A)-(7A) for each utterance in (5B)-(7B) (note, however, that a clitic in (5B) is ruled out independently of coreference, for reasons to be discussed below in fn. 13).

(5) A: *Who did Kusturica's latest movie disappoint?*

B: Kusturicin₁ najnoviji film (**ga*₁) je razočarao (**njega*₁).

Kusturica's latest movie him_{CL} is disappointed him_{STR.PRN}.

[intended] 'Kusturica₁'s latest movie disappointed him₁.

(6) A: *Whose latest movie disappointed whom?*

B: Kusturicin₁ najnoviji film (✓*ga*₁) je razočarao (✓*njega*₁).

Kusturica's latest movie him_{CL} is disappointed him_{STR.PRN}.

'Kusturica₁'s latest movie disappointed him₁.'

(7) A: *What about Kusturica's latest movie? I know directors usually like their latest movies. Is it the case with Kusturica and his latest movie?*

B: Kusturicin₁ najnoviji film (✓*ga*₁) je razočarao (**njega*₁).

Kusturica's latest movie him_{CL} is disappointed him_{STR.PRN}.

'Kusturica₁'s latest movie disappointed him₁.'

Consider first how the coreferential strong forms are licensed here. In (6B), the antecedent of the pronoun represents narrow new information focus as it corresponds to the *wh*-constituent provided in the context question in (6A) (the so-called question-answer congruence test, Büring 2005: 4).¹⁰ The relevant interpretation of the strong pronoun is allowed here, as opposed to (5B) and (7B), where strong coreferential forms are ruled out. Contrary to (6B), the antecedent of the pronoun in (5B) and (7B) is not new information focus; rather, it represents discourse-given information in (5B) (see (5A)), while in (7B) it functions as a discourse topic/aboutness phrase, as the *What about X* test applied in (7A) forces its topic construal (Reinhart 1981). Given that (5B)-(7B) differ only in terms of the discourse properties of the antecedent, it follows that strong coreferential pronouns are only licensed by antecedents that are new information focus and,

conversely, that they are disallowed if coreferential with antecedents that represent given information or function as discourse topics.¹¹

Note, however, that new information focus licenses the strong form only if placed on the antecedent, not on the pronoun itself. The latter is the case with (5B), where the strong pronoun also bears main sentential stress. Importantly, it is only new information focus antecedents that can license the relevant reading of the strong pronoun – contrastively focused antecedents cannot do so, as shown in (8B) (capital letters mark contrastive focus). However, if placed on the pronoun, contrastive focus can license the relevant interpretation, even if the antecedent has been previously introduced in the discourse. This is shown in (9B).¹²

(8) A: *Kusturica's latest movie disappointed Šijan.*

B: Ne. *ŠIJANOV₁ najnoviji film je razočarao **njega**₁.

No. Šijan's latest movie is disappointed him_{STR.PRN}.

'No. Šijan's latest movie disappointed him.'

(9) A: *Did Kusturica's latest movie disappoint his sister?*

B: Ne. Kusturicin₁ najnoviji film je razočarao **NJEGA**₁.

No. Kusturica's latest movie is disappointed him_{STR.PRN}.

'No. Kusturica₁'s latest movie disappointed him₁ (*not his sister*).'

Another way to license the relevant interpretation when the antecedent requirement for strong pronouns is not met is by associating the pronoun with the focus particle *only*, as in (10).

However, both instantiations of focus – prosodically marked contrastive focus, as in (9B), and focus associated with a focus-sensitive particle *only*, involve the key component of contrast.

(10) A: *Did Kusturica's latest movie disappoint his sister?*

B: Ne. Kusturicin₁ najnoviji film je razočarao *samo njega*₁

No. Kusturica's latest movie is disappointed only him_{STR.PRN}.
(a ne njegovu sestru).
and not his sister

'No. Kusturica's latest movie disappointed only him (*not his sister*).'

Coreferential clitics, on the other hand, require antecedents that are discourse topics, hence (7B) above is grammatical. Note that in (5B) the discourse topic is the entire NP, not just the antecedent *Kusturica*.¹³

The above data demonstrate that the availability of coreferential readings of pronouns in examples like Despić's (1) in fact depends on the topic or focus interpretation of the antecedent (and in some cases the pronoun). I showed that strong pronouns require new information focus antecedents, while clitics are licensed by antecedents that function as discourse topics. In addition, if no appropriate antecedent is available for the former, coreference is possible provided that the pronoun is contrastively focused. Thus, depending on these discourse conditions, coreferential pronouns can in fact be allowed in (1), which is crucially unexpected if (1) were a Condition B effect (as will be shown in Section 4, true Condition B violations cannot be rescued in the discussed ways).

3.2. *Weak and Strong Pronouns in English*

Pronouns in English are also sensitive to discourse properties of their antecedents, in the manner discussed above for SC pronouns. I will show below that pronouns coreferential with a possessor in examples like (2) above are in fact not always grammatical although Condition B is not at issue here (recall that the possessor in such cases does not c-command the pronoun (Kayne 1994, Despić 2011)). This will provide further support for the two main claims made here: namely, that the (un)availability of coreferential pronouns in cases like (1)-(2) is not a reliable test for probing

structure (i.e., c-command relations) and, by analogy, that SC (1) is not a Condition B violation since the restriction on coreference in such contexts is governed not by structural c-command but by discourse considerations.

Consider the contrast given in (11)-(12): as indicated by the context question in (11A), the antecedent of the pronoun in (11B) is a topic and the relevant interpretation is allowed. If the antecedent is new information focus, as in (12B), the coreferential pronoun is disallowed unless the pronoun bears stress, as in (12B').¹⁴ This suggests that unstressed English pronouns pattern with SC clitics in that they can only be coreferential with topic antecedents (cf. (11B)-(12B)), while stressed pronouns behave like SC strong pronouns since they require new information focus antecedents (note crucially that if the pronoun in (11B) is stressed, it must be disjoint from the topic antecedent).¹⁵

(11) A: *What about John? Who disappointed him?*

B: John₁'s friends disappointed *him*₁.

(12) A: *Whose friends disappointed who?*

B: *John₁'s friends disappointed *him*₁.

B': John₁'s friends disappointed **HIM**₁.

The observed parallelism indicates that English also has a two-way (i.e., weak/strong) split in its pronominal system, at least in object positions. Using the established antecedent constraints for coreferential pronouns in SC as a diagnostic, I showed that unstressed pronouns in English behave like clitics, while pronouns bearing stress show properties of non-clitic or strong pronouns.¹⁶ That the former should indeed be analyzed as clitics has also been independently argued for by Bošković (1997, 2004). Bošković (1997) observes that *wager*-class verbs cannot exceptionally Case-mark lexical NPs (as also noted by Postal 1974) unless they θ -mark them or

unless the NPs in question are X^0 's, that is, clitics. Given the data in (13)-(17), he concludes that if the pronouns in (13)-(14) are analyzed as clitics, then the ill-formed (15)-(16) could be captured in the same manner as the parallel example from French (17), which shows a well-known observation that clitics cannot be coordinated. Note that Bošković also observes that the pronouns in (13)-(14) must be unstressed, which further supports the clitic analysis.¹⁷

(13) Mary alleged *him* to have kissed Jane.

(14) Mary never alleged *him* to have kissed Jane.

(15) *Mary alleged *him* and *her* to have kissed Jane.

(16) *Mary never alleged *him* and *her* to be crazy.

(17) *Je *le* et *la* rencontre tous les jours.

I him and her meet all the days

[intended] 'I meet him and her every day.' (Bošković 1997: 58-59)

Bošković (2004) provides additional evidence from Quantifier Float (QF). Consider (18)-(19), from Bošković (2004: 706): given his generalization that quantifiers cannot be floated in θ -positions, the ill-formedness of (18) follows because *all* is floated in a θ -position (note that Bošković shows that, as also argued by a number of authors (e.g. Authier 1991, Johnson 1991, Ura 1993, Koizumi 1995, Bošković 2002, 1997, a.o.), English has overt object shift – which means that *the students* in (18) does move). However, the grammaticality of (19), with an object pronoun, is then surprising. Bošković suggests that the contrast in (18)-(19) immediately follows if English object pronouns move higher than object NPs, undergoing an additional step of movement, that is, cliticization. Then, in contrast to (18), the quantifier in (19) is not floated in the θ -position but in the object shift position, hence the sentence is grammatical.¹⁸

(18) *Mary hates the students all.

(19) Mary hates *them* all.

This is further supported by (20)-(21), which show that contrastively focused and coordinated object pronouns (hence, unambiguously non-clitics) cannot float a quantifier:¹⁹

(20) *Mary hates **THEM** all.

(21) *Mary hates *you, him* and *her* all. (Bošković 2004: 708)

The preceding discussion raises the question why the binding contrast between SC and English reported in Despić appears to hold in the first place. I would like to suggest that the difference can be easily explained in terms of stress – the main idea being that there is always an implied context for each utterance, with stress placement crucially aiding the interpretation when no explicit context is provided.

Consider in this regard a modified version of (1)-(2), given in (22) (I am focusing on SC strong forms here):²⁰

(22) a. *Kusturicin₁ papagaj je ujeo *njega*₁.

Kusturica's parrot is bit him_{STR.PRN}.

'Kusturica₁'s parrot bit him₁.'

b. Kusturica₁'s parrot bit *him*₁.

In SC, main sentential stress always falls on the most deeply embedded element which is consequently interpreted as new information focus.²¹ This is not the case in English, where stress and focus do not have to be on the rightmost element (Zubizaretta 1998).²² Thus, given its position, the pronoun in (22a) receives the main stress and is interpreted as new information focus, which in turn leads the speaker to build a context forcing such interpretation (in this case, *Who did Kusturica's parrot bite?*), hence the ungrammaticality (recall that both clitics and strong pronouns are disallowed in such contexts if coreferential with the possessor).²³ This is, however,

not the case in English – without a specific context, the main stress in (22b) actually falls on the verb rather than the pronoun and the new information focus interpretation of the pronoun is unavailable here. Note that if the pronoun in (22b) were stressed, as in SC (22a), the coreferential reading would be unavailable, on a par with SC (22a).

That this is the main culprit behind the reported difference in (22a) and (22b) is confirmed by Italian, which conveniently patterns with English in that it has articles (hence, it is a DP language) but behaves like SC in that the main stress uniformly falls on the rightmost element (see Cinque 1993, Zubizarreta 1998 for details on stress assignment in Italian). Thus, on a par with SC (22a), the pronoun in (23) receives the main stress and is interpreted as new information focus.^{24,25} As predicted, the coreferential reading of the pronoun in (23) is banned. Note that (23) cannot be a binding violation given that there is no c-command between the coreferential elements.

- (23) *Il pappagallo di Gianni₁ ha morso *lui*₁.
 the parrot of John's has bit him_{STR.PRN.}
 [intended] 'John₁'s parrot bit him₁.'

To summarize, in this section I argued that the coreferential readings of pronouns in examples like (1)-(2) crucially depend on the discourse properties of the antecedent. I showed that coreference is in principle possible even when under the analysis proposed in Despić the pronoun is c-commanded by a local antecedent, as in (1), and that it can be disallowed when the antecedent does not c-command the pronoun under Despić's analysis, as in (2). I have shown that SC and English pattern alike with respect to coreferential pronouns in configurations like (1)-(2) and that the initial contrast reported in Despić disappears once the relevant contextual factors are controlled for.

4 Apparent and Real Condition B Effect

The above observations on discourse licensing of coreferential readings of pronouns have important implications for Despić's analysis of (1), repeated here as (24). Despić contends that (24) is a Condition B violation – both the strong and the clitic pronoun disallow coreference with the possessor which, by assumption, c-commands out of its phrase, hence the violation. However, I showed that the coreference in (24) can in fact be allowed, provided that certain discourse conditions on coreferential readings of pronouns are met.

(24) [NP Kusturicin₁ [najnoviji [film]] (**ga*₁) je zaista razočarao (**njega*₁).

Kusturica's latest movie him_{CL} is really disappointed him_{STR.PRN}.

[intended] Kusturica₁'s latest movie really disappointed him₁.

Consider now examples like (25), a standard Condition B violation, where the antecedent is not a possessor and hence uncontroversially c-commands the pronoun.

(25) Kusturica₁ (**ga*₁) je razočarao (**njega*₁).

Kusturica him_{CL} is disappointed him_{STR.PRN}.

[intended] 'Kusturica disappointed himself.'

Let us consider whether satisfying the above discourse conditions would make the strong pronoun in (25) acceptable under the relevant interpretation. In (26), the antecedent is new information focus but, contrary to (6) above, this does not suffice to license a coreferential strong pronoun. If the antecedent is a topic, as in (27), we would expect that contrastive focus would facilitate the intended reading, on a par with (9) (if both involve the same kind of violation, Condition B, as Despić argues). However, the coreferential strong form is still disallowed.

(26) A: *Who disappointed who?*

B: *Kusturica₁ je razočarao *njega*₁. *STR.PRN.

Kusturica is disappointed him_{STR.PRN.}

[intended] 'Kusturica disappointed himself.'

(27) A: *What about Kusturica? Did he disappoint his sister?*

B: *Ne. Kusturica₁ je razočarao *njega*₁/ **NJEGA**₁. *STR.PRN.

No. Kusturica is disappointed him_{STR.PRN./himFOC.}

[intended] 'No. Kusturica disappointed himself.'

Similarly, a coreferential clitic in (25) is ruled out without exception, even if the antecedent is a discourse topic, as in (28), which crucially differs from (7) above.

(28) A: *What about Kusturica? I know that directors usually admire themselves and their own work – is he like that?*

B: *Ne. Kusturica₁ *ga*₁ je razočarao. *CL.

No. Kusturica him_{CL.} is disappointed

[intended] 'No. Kusturica disappointed himself.'

Thus, there is a clear-cut contrast with respect to coreferential pronouns in configurations like (24), where the relevant interpretation can in fact be allowed under the discourse conditions discussed above, and (25), where coreference is invariably disallowed. Given that (25) uncontroversially involves a Condition B violation, the different behavior of (24)-(25) in the relevant respects then provides evidence that (24) should not be treated as a Condition B effect – as shown above, clear Condition B violations cannot be rescued by manipulating the relevant discourse factors. As I will show in the next section, the same discourse conditions on strong/clitic pronouns observed in configurations like (24) also hold in cases of intersentential anaphora, thus further supporting my claim that (24) is not a Condition B violation.

Finally, consider the data in (29) (Guglielmo Cinque, pers.comm.). (29a) and (29b) differ

only in terms of antecedent type (possessor vs. non-possessor), just like (24)-(25). The coreference between the possessor and the clitic pronoun is acceptable in (29a), but not in (29b), where the antecedent is not a possessor. Thus, unlike the possessor example (29a), (29b) is a Condition B violation.

- (29) a. Njegov₁ otac *ga*₁ smatra glupim. ✓CL.
his father him_{CL} considers stupid
‘His₁ father considers him₁ stupid.’
- b. *On₁ *ga*₁ smatra glupim. *CL.
he him_{CL} considers stupid
[intended] ‘He₁ considers him₁ stupid.’

5 Support from Intersentential Anaphora

The grammaticality of the pronoun-coreferential-with-possessor constructions was shown above to depend on the discourse properties of the possessor, rather than the presence or absence of c-command between the coreferential elements – that is, it was argued that Condition B is not the responsible factor in the relevant cases. Below I will demonstrate that the same discourse constraints on coreferential pronouns in SC also hold in cases of intersentential anaphora – that is, in environments where coreferential elements are in separate sentences and Condition B is clearly not at issue. This will further support my claim that examples like (1) are in fact not Condition B violations.

Recall that SC strong pronouns require new information focus antecedents and cannot be coreferential with discourse topics or discourse-given referents unless they are contrastively focused; weak pronouns, on the other hand, are most readily interpreted as coreferential with topic antecedents. The same pattern is observed at the level of discourse: as shown in (30)-(31),

the strong form must be disjoint from the discourse topic, even though the two are not in a c-command relationship.²⁶ Expectedly, only weak forms (*pro* in (30) and a clitic in (31)) are felicitous here.²⁷

(30) A: *What about John₁?*

B: Marija je čula da se *pro*₁ / ??*on*₁ preselio u Minhen.

Marija is heard that se_{REF.CL.} *pro*/he_{STR.PRN.} moved in Munich

‘Mary heard that he₁ moved to Munich.’

(31) A: *What about John₁?*

B: Marija je čula da *pro* su *ga*₁ / ??*njega*₁ juče uhapsili.

Mary is heard that *pro* are him_{CL.}/him_{STR.PRN.} yesterday arrested

‘Mary heard that they arrested him₁ yesterday.’

The antitopicality of strong pronouns obtains even when the topical antecedent is strongly preferred by the background context, as in (32) below. The pronoun in (32) can only be coreferential with the antecedent that is new information focus (*Maša*), not with the topic *Marija* (the latter interpretation is possible only if a *pro* is used).²⁸

(32) A: *Every weekend Marija invites a colleague from work to her place. Do you know who she invited for dinner today?*

B: Danas je [Marija₁]_{TOP} ugostila [Maša₂]_{FOC.} *Ona*_{2/*1} je napravila veliki nered praveći salatu!

today is Marija invited Maša. She_{STR.PRN.} is made big mess

making salad

‘Today, Mary₁ invited Maša₂. She₂ made a big mess making a salad!’

However, if the antecedent of the strong pronoun in (32B) is moved to a position where it can no

longer receive main sentential stress and is interpreted as given (the so-called *defocalized phrase scrambling* (Stjepanović 1999), the antecedent possibilities for the strong pronoun flip: in (33B), the pronoun can only refer to *Marija*, which is now interpreted as new information focus by virtue of being sentence-final.²⁹

(33) A: *Every weekend Maša gets invited for dinner by a colleague from work. Do you know who is hosting her today?*

B: Danas je [Mašu₂] ugostila [Marija₁]_{FOC}. **Ona**_{1/*2} je napravila veliki nered praveći salatu!

today is Maša_{ACC}. invited Marija_{NOM}. She_{STR.PRN} is made big mess making salad

'Today, Mary₁ invited Maša₂. She₁ made a big mess making a salad!'

Defocalized phrase scrambling therefore provides direct evidence that SC strong pronouns require new information focus antecedents, as demonstrated by the contrast in (32)-(33). In that regard, they function as *topic-shift anaphors* (Givón 1983, Van Kampen 2004), taking focused antecedents and turning them into new topics. By contrast, given their antecedent requirements, coreferential weak pronouns have a pragmatic role of marking topic continuity rather than topic-shift.³⁰

Finally, note that the parallelism between SC and English pronouns discussed above also extends to cases of intersentential anaphora. In (34)-(35), the only available antecedent is a discourse topic *Mary* – in such cases, an unstressed pronoun is used in English (34B), and a clitic in SC (35B). If the pronoun is stressed, as in (34B')-(35B'), it is necessarily interpreted contrastively in both languages (*John kissed Mary, and not Emma*).

(34) A: *Mary₁ came to the party.*

B: John kissed *her*₁.

B': John kissed **HER**₁.

(35) A: *Mary*₁ came to the party.

B: Jovan *ju*₁ je poljubio (**nju*₁).

Jovan her_{CL} is kissed her_{STR.PRN}.

‘Jovan kissed her.’

B': Jovan (**ju*₁) je poljubio **NJU**₁ (a ne Emma).

Jovan her_{CL} is kissed her_{STR.PRN} (and not Emma)

‘Jovan kissed her (*and not Emma*).’

To summarize, I have shown above that the same discourse conditions on coreferential pronouns apply both in cases of possessor binding like Despić’s (1) and in environments where the pronoun is clearly not c-commanded by its antecedent, hence Condition B is not at issue. Moreover, those conditions are irrelevant for traditional Condition B violations, which remain ungrammatical under the discourse conditions that make (1) and cross-clausal cases of coreference discussed in this section acceptable. This confirms that (1) should not be analyzed as a Condition B violation. The preceding discussion has also shown that SC patterns with English with respect to the relevant discourse conditions on coreferential pronouns, both in basic cases like Despić’s (1)-(2) and in contexts where the coreferential elements are part of separate sentences, hence clearly not in a c-command relationship.

6 A Third Way of Licensing Coreferential Strong Pronouns

The availability of the coreferential reading for strong pronouns in SC was shown above to depend on focus such that the relevant interpretation is allowed only if the antecedent of the pronoun represents new information focus or, alternatively, if the pronoun bears contrastive

focus. These discourse conditions hold both in configurations like (1) above and in cases where Condition B is clearly not at issue (but not in traditional Condition B cases). Below I will introduce a third way of licensing of coreferential strong pronouns in SC – namely, by placing contrastive focus on elements other than the pronoun itself.

As also observed by Despić (2011), strong pronouns embedded in an adjunct clause are degraded if coreferential with the matrix subject – the intended interpretation is only felicitous if a weak pronoun is used. This is illustrated in (36). Note that the antecedent of the pronoun in (36) represents discourse-given information. Note also that the pronoun does not c-command the R-expression in the matrix clause, hence the violation cannot be a Condition C effect (in fact, the ill-formedness of the example is not due to a disjointness requirement on R-expressions, but due to the choice of the pronoun since the example becomes grammatical if a weak pronoun is used).

Context: *Marija and Jovan are in a relationship.*

- (36) Kad je *pro*₁/**on*₁ kod kuće, **Jovan**₁ želi da Marija hoda gola po
 when is *pro*/*he*_{STR.PRN.} at home, Jovan wants that Marija walks naked around
 kući.
 house
 [intended] ‘When he₁ is at home, Jovan₁ wants Marija to walk around the house
 naked.’

Interestingly, if a focalized adverb is present in the structure, the relevant interpretation becomes available. This is shown in (37) below.

- (37) Pošto je *on*₁ *uvijek* kod kuće, **Jovan**₁ želi da Marija hoda gola po
 since is *he*_{STR.PRN.} always at home, Jovan wants that Marija walks naked around
 kući.

house

‘Since he₁ is always at home, Jovan₁ wants Marija to walk around the house naked.’

In (37), the contrastively focused adverb is in the same clause as (and adjacent to) the pronoun. However, the effect in question is found even if the adverb is a clause-mate with the antecedent, as in (38), or if the adverb is in a clause that contains neither the pronoun nor the antecedent, as in (39) (the adverb is also not adjacent to the pronoun in these cases).

- (38) Kad je *on*₁ kod kuće, **Jovan**₁ *uvijek* želi da Marija hoda gola po
when is he_{STR.PRN.} at home, Jovan always wants that Marija walks naked around
kući.

house

‘When he₁ is at home, Jovan₁ always wants Marija to walk around the house naked.’

- (39) Kad je *on*₁ kod kuće, Marija *uvijek* želi da **Jovan**₁ hoda go po
when is he_{STR.PRN.} at home, Marija always wants that Jovan walks naked around
kući.

house

‘When he₁ is at home, Marija always wants Jovan₁ to walk around the house naked.’

However, there is a requirement for examples like (39) – the adverb in examples like (39) cannot be in a lower clause than the coreferential element. This is shown in (40) (cf. (39)-(40)), where the relevant coreferential element is *Jovan*.

- (40) *Kad je *on*₁ kod kuće, **Jovan**₁ želi da Marija *uvijek* hoda gola po
when is he_{STR.PRN.} at home, Jovan wants that Marija always walks naked around
kući.

house

'When he₁ is at home, Jovan₁ wants Marija to always walk around the house naked.'

The same requirement also holds for examples like (37): the adverb cannot be in a lower clause than the coreferential pronoun, as shown in (41).

(41) ?*Pošto *on*₁ želi da Marija *uvijek* hoda gola po kući, **Jovan**₁

since he_{STR.PRN.} wants that Marija always walks naked around house, Jovan works from home
radi od kuće.

'Since he₁ wants that Marija always walks around the house naked, Jovan₁ works from home.'

Contrastively focused adverbs can license the strong form in cases of intersentential anaphora as well.³¹ Recall that strong pronouns have the property of antitopicality which bans them from being coreferential with topic antecedents, hence the ungrammaticality of (42) (only a coreferential null pronoun is grammatical here). The relevant example is repaired if a focalized adverb is present, as in (43). However, the same contrast as in (39)-(40) above is observed here as well: the adverb cannot be in a lower clause than the coreferential element, as the ill-formed example in (44) shows (cf. (43)-(44)).

(42) **Nataša**₁ je juče hodala gola po kući. *Jovan želi da *ona*₁ bude

Nataša is yesterday walked naked around house. Jovan wants that she_{STR.PRN.} be gola.

naked

[intended] 'Yesterday Nataša₁ walked around the house naked. Jovan wants her₁ to be naked.'

- (43) **Nataša**₁ je juče hodala gola po kući. Jovan *uvijek* želi da
 Nataša is yesterday walked naked around house. Jovan always wants that
*ona*₁ bude gola.
 she_{STR.PRN.} be naked
 'Yesterday Nataša₁ walked around the house naked. Jovan always wants her₁ to be
 naked.'
- (44) **Nataša**₁ je juče hodala gola po kući. ***Ona**₁ želi da je Jovan
 Nataša is yesterday walked naked around house. She_{STR.PRN.} wants that her_{CL.} Jovan
uvijek primjeti.
 always notices.
 'Yesterday Nataša₁ walked around the house naked. She₁ wants Jovan to always
 notice her.'

To sum up, in this section I introduced a third way of licensing of strong coreferential pronouns. I showed that, in addition to the contrastive-focus-on-the-pronoun effect discussed earlier, a contrastively focused adverb (i.e., an element other than the pronoun or its antecedent) can also license the strong form as long as the adverb is not in a lower clause than the coreferential element. This provides additional evidence that focus is crucial for licensing of strong pronouns and in fact adds another way in which focus can facilitate coreferential readings of pronouns.

7 Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that cases of possessor binding in SC discussed in Despić (2011, 2013) should not be analyzed as Condition B violations for several reasons. I showed that the pronoun-coreferential-with-possessor violation reported in Despić (2011, 2013) can in fact be repaired by

controlling for discourse factors such as topic or focus status of the possessor or its antecedent. I demonstrated that there is a clear-cut contrast between Despić's cases of possessor binding (henceforth simply possessor binding) and traditional Condition B configurations, where the antecedent is not a possessor – unlike the former, clear Condition B violations cannot be rescued by manipulating the relevant discourse factors. Furthermore, I showed that coreferential pronouns are subject to identical discourse conditions in cases of possessor binding AND in configurations where Condition B is clearly not at issue, thus providing further support for my claim that the former is not a Condition B violation.

Based on these observations, I concluded that the possibility of coreference for pronouns in the relevant cases is not a test for c-commanding out of the nominal domain and therefore cannot tell us anything about the categorial (NP/DP) status of the nominal phrases containing the possessor, which is actually one of Despić's main points. I supported this claim by showing that coreference can also be ungrammatical in English, which is not predicted under Despić's analysis where the relevant interpretation should be allowed since the DP projection is assumed to prevent the possessor from c-commanding the pronoun. I also observed that English has weak and strong forms as well.

Finally, by placing Despić's paradigm in a broader discourse context, I arrived at novel discourse conditions on licensing of coreferential weak and strong pronouns in SC in pronoun-coreferential-with-possessor configurations. The two types of pronouns were shown to have different antecedent requirements – while weak pronouns require their antecedents to be discourse topics, the grammaticality of coreferential strong forms was shown to depend on focus in more than one respect. I demonstrated that strong pronouns require antecedents that are new information focus; if no focalized antecedent is available – that is, if the only available

antecedent is a topic, a coreferential strong form is licensed if it is contrastively focused. Furthermore, I showed that contrastive focus can license the relevant interpretation even if placed on an element other than the pronoun itself. The conditions on the licensing of strong coreferential pronouns that are outside of the domain of Condition B are summarized in (i) below.

(i) *A strong coreferential pronominal form is licensed:*

- (a) if its antecedent bears new information focus
- (b) if the pronoun is contrastively focused
- (c) if another element in the same sentence as the pronoun bears contrastive focus

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University of Connecticut
365 Fairfield Way
Unit 1145
Storrs, CT 06269
ivana.jovovic@uconn.edu

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¹ Note that Despić assumes a non-focused interpretation for the pronoun in (1). As will actually be discussed later, focus on pronouns can affect binding relations in important ways. Note also that clitics in SC occur in the second position of their intonational phrase, hence the difference in the placement of the pronominal elements (clitic and strong pronoun) in (1) (see Franks and King 2000, Bošković 2001, among others, for a detailed discussion).

² Hence, the NP/DP distinction between SC and English argued for by authors like Bošković (2008, 2012) and Despić (2011, 2013) is in fact irrelevant here (note, however, that the conclusions reached in this paper do not argue against this distinction).

³ Note that, though I will only discuss Condition B here, similar observations hold for

Condition C environments. While (i), where the pronoun preceding the R-expression is a possessor, can be rescued by manipulating certain discourse factors, (ii), which is a standard Condition C violation, is banned under the intended interpretation regardless of these factors (note that Despić (2011) argues that both (i) and (ii) are Condition C violations).

(i) **Njegov*₁ najnoviji film je zaista razočarao Kusturicu₁.

His latest movie is really disappointed Kusturica

[intended] 'His₁ latest movie really disappointed Kusturica₁.'

(ii) **On*₁ je zaista razočarao Kusturicu₁.

He is really disappointed Kusturica

[intended] 'He₁ really disappointed Kusturica₁.'

Though similar discourse conditions on the interpretation of the pronoun also hold in cases like (i) above (which means that my conclusions regarding examples like (1) can be extended to (i)), I will not discuss them here for reasons of space.

⁴ Other authors have also argued that SC lacks a DP projection (see Corver 1992, Zlatić 1997, Marelj 2011, Takahashi 2013, Runić 2014, Talić 2017, among others).

⁵ Despić (2011, 2013) adopts the following definition of Condition B: *A pronoun is free in its own predicate domain (i.e., phrase). An element is free if it is not c-commanded by a coindexed NP.*

⁶ Note, however, that if we assume that possessors are specifiers in English and adjuncts in SC, then the NP/DP distinction is no longer necessary – that is, the binding contrast could be accounted for even if a DP projection were present in both languages, as long as possessors are analyzed as DP adjuncts in SC and DP specifiers in English.

⁷ As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, Bošković's (2008, 2012) NP/DP approach

explicitly allows for projections lower than DP in languages without articles. This could be taken to imply that SC should also have a PossP, which in turn would have a negative effect on Despić's account.

⁸ When it comes to the structure of NPs in SC, Despić (2011, 2013) follows Bošković (2008, 2012), who argues that all prenominal modifiers (with the exception of certain quantifiers and numerals) in SC, including possessives, demonstratives and adjectives, are NP-adjoined (they are in fact all morphologically adjectives).

⁹ Unless otherwise specified, all sentences should be read with a neutral intonation, where the final item typically bears nuclear stress, but importantly not contrastive stress. As will be shown below, contrastive stress improves the acceptability of coreferential pronouns.

¹⁰ Note that the distinction between narrow new information focus and broad new information focus, that is, the type of focus attested in 'What happened?' contexts where the entire sentence represents new information, is important here. It is only when the pronoun's antecedent carries the former type of focus that the coreferential readings of strong pronouns are licensed. Thus, a strong pronoun in (6B) is not possible under the intended interpretation if (6B) is used as a response to a 'What happened?' question (as will be shown below, the same holds in English as well). Importantly, note that the two types of focus have been shown to be both prosodically and semantically distinct (see e.g., Zubizarreta 1998, Selkirk 2008, Katz and Selkirk 2011, Kratzer and Selkirk 2011, Kratzer and Selkirk 2020). At any rate, what matters for our purposes is narrow new information focus. Below, for ease of exposition, I will be using the term new information focus to refer to narrow new information focus.

¹¹ For the moment, I am putting aside contrastively focused strong pronouns. As will be shown below, contrastive focus always makes coreference better, even if the above antecedent

requirement is not met.

¹² That focus interacts with binding has been noted in passing by a number of authors, including Despić, but it was generally put aside without explanation. In fact, the standard wisdom regarding pronouns and focus has nothing to do with coreference – it is simply that strong forms in general are used when focalized (as Cardinaletti & Starke (1999) show, there are some exceptions where strong pronouns are not focalized, namely in prosodically neutral ostension and coordination). The issue of coreferential focused pronouns, on the other hand, was only discussed in cases where Condition B is not at issue (i.e., in cross-clausal bound variable contexts discussed by Montalbetti (1984)). The interaction of focus with coreferential readings of pronouns discussed here is a separate issue; I will establish the precise ways in which focus matters – we will actually see that strong pronouns need not be focused for the coreferential reading to be licensed. The discussion below is also supported by Japanese, where the standard wisdom about focus and pronouns does not apply in the first place – Japanese does not belong to the group of Spanish/SC-style *pro*-drop languages where strong pronouns in general are typically used when focalized. Nonetheless, a pronoun coreferential with a possessor is ungrammatical in Japanese, as shown in (i) below (from Kang 2014: 106). The example in (i) becomes acceptable if the pronoun bears contrastive focus, on a par with the SC data discussed above.

(i) *? Kurosawa_i-no saisin-no eega-wa hontoo-ni kare_i-o rakutans-ase-ta

Kurosawa_{.GEN.} latest_{.GEN.} movie_{.TOP.} really him_{.ACC.} disappointed_{.CAUS.PST.}

[intended] ‘Kurosawa₁’s latest movie really disappointed him₁.

¹³ A clitic is actually ruled out in (5B) even when not coreferential with the possessor - as prosodically weak elements that cannot bear stress, clitics are incompatible with new information focus (the latter being identified through stress). In SC, the part of the sentence representing

neutral new information focus obligatorily surfaces sentence-finally, following the presupposed material, and bearing the main sentential stress (see Stjepanović 2003). This clashes with two key properties of clitics – as a second position element, the clitic cannot appear sentence-finally here and, as a prosodically weak element, it cannot be contrastively focused either.

¹⁴ Note that *John* in (12B) is new information focus and carries strong stress. I'm not capitalizing it here as we are focusing on the behavior of pronouns.

¹⁵ Note that (12B') is unacceptable under the intended interpretation in a 'What happened?' context where the entire sentence, rather than just the antecedent, represents new information. Thus, stressed pronouns in English pattern with SC strong pronouns in that they require narrow new information focus antecedents as well (see in this respect fn. 10).

¹⁶ That the same form can behave like a clitic or a non-clitic depending on whether or not it is stressed has been shown for other languages as well, e.g. Czech 3rd person singular feminine clitic *jí* (see Franks and King 2000: 99).

¹⁷ English object pronoun *it* is actually unambiguously a clitic – thus, it must be verb-adjacent and cannot be contrastively focused at all.

(i) Mary turned *it* down.

(ii) *Mary turned down *it*.

(iii) *Mary turned down IT.

¹⁸ Since cliticization involves head movement, the pronoun cannot carry a modifier, hence *all* has to be stranded in the object shift position, prior to movement of the clitic.

¹⁹ Given the above observation that unstressed pronouns in English can only be coreferential with topic antecedents, a question arises whether coordinated pronouns would allow coreference with topic antecedents. As shown in (i), the coreference in such cases is in fact

allowed. The same holds for coordinated pronouns in SC, as in (ii) (which involves non-clitic form). This suggests that the discourse requirements on different types of pronouns discussed above hold only in cases where both forms are in principle available; if no such alternation exists even in principle (as in coordination), strong forms allow coreference with topic antecedents. However, I am putting such cases (and this rather interesting issue) aside here since the goal of this paper is to discuss discourse conditions on coreferential pronouns when both forms are in principle possible (see Section 3.1 where I spell out discourse conditions on weak and strong pronouns in SC) and more importantly, the relevance of the relevant data for Despić's Condition B analysis of examples like (1).

(i) A: *What about John? Who hates him?*

B: John₁'s friends hate [*him*₁ and his family].

(ii) A: *What about Kusturica? Who hates him?*

B: Kusturicini₁ prijatelji mrze [*njega*₁ i njegovu porodicu].

Kusturica's friends hate him_{STR.PRN.} and his family

'Kusturica₁'s friends hate him₁ and his family.'

²⁰ The reason I modified Despić's examples in (1)-(2) is because they are very odd pragmatically. Namely, the choice of the verb *to disappoint* creates an additional presupposition which makes the intended coreference pragmatically implausible (unless the context is further specified).

²¹ This is somewhat of an oversimplification (see Halupka-Rešetar 2011), which, however, suffices for our purposes.

²² This is responsible for other important differences between SC and English – for instance, they differ regarding how a question like '*Who left?*', where the subject represents

neutral new information focus, is answered (see Stjepanović 1999, 2003). This is shown in (i)-

(ii) (small capital letters indicate main sentential stress):

(i) A: *Who left?*

B: JOHN left.

(ii) A: *Who left?*

B: Otišao je JOVAN.

left is John

B': #JOVAN je otišao.

John is left

'John left.'

In English, the subject receives the main stress and is interpreted as a neutral new information focus (iB). This is, however, not the case in SC. In SC, the answer has a completely neutral focus reading only if the relevant element is in the sentence final position, receiving the main stress, as in (iiB).

Note also that SC being a free word order language, there are independently available movement operations in SC that can affect elements which do not bear new information focus, leaving elements bearing new information focus in the sentence final position (see Stjepanović 1999, 2003).

²³ Nothing would change if (22a) is used in a 'What happened?' context. As noted in footnote 10, strong coreferential pronouns are disallowed in such contexts.

²⁴ Destressing the pronoun in (23) would actually lead to using a clitic form, which also has different syntactic placement. Contrary to SC and Italian, in English clitic and non-clitic pronouns have the same form, as shown above.

²⁵ As in SC and English (see fn. 23 and 15), the intended interpretation of the strong pronoun is also ruled out in a broad/What happened? focus context.

²⁶ SC strong pronouns parallel German *d*-(emonstrative) pronouns in this respect. Unlike personal pronouns, *d*-pronouns in German likewise cannot be coreferential with topic antecedents, a fact which led a number of authors to argue that *d*-pronouns carry an antitopicality presupposition (see Bosch, Rozario and Zhao 2003, Bosch and Umbach 2007, Hinterwimmer 2015). The same behavior has also been observed for pronouns in Dutch (see Kaiser 2011, a.o.) and Finnish (Kaiser and Trueswell 2008).

²⁷ Note that I'm putting aside the issue of deaccented full pronouns, simply noting that they seem to pattern with weak, rather than strong pronouns.

²⁸ Recall that if part of a sentence is new information focus, the focused element, whatever it is, must be in the sentence final position, following the presupposed material and bearing main sentential stress.

²⁹ Note that such interpretation is unavailable if a *pro* is used: given that weak pronouns are most naturally interpreted as coreferential with topics, *pro* in (33) would be interpreted as coreferential with the discourse topic *Maša*, not with *Marija*.

³⁰ Recall that the discourse requirements on strong coreferential pronouns hold only if both types of pronouns are in principle allowed, hence the topic-shift function of strong pronouns should likewise be relativized to the presence of alternative, weaker forms.

³¹ Note that the focalized element need not be an adverb: focus on an argument, as in (i), where the argument is associated with the focus particle *only*, or a verb, as in (ii), has the same effect.

(i) Marija₁ je prilično rezervisana osoba. *Ona*₁ se *samo* Petru povjerava.

Marija is pretty reserved person. She_{STR.PRN.} s_{REF.CL.} only Petar_{DAT.} confides.in

‘Marija is a pretty reserved person. She confides in Peter only.’

(ii) A: Marija₁ još radi na tom projektu.

Marija still works on that project

‘Marija is still working on that project.’

B: Ne. Ona₁ je ODUSTALA_{CONT.FOC.} od tog projekta.

No. She_{STR.PRN.} is given.up. from that project

‘No. She gave up that project.’