

**When person agreement and binding go their separate ways:
Generic second person pronoun in Russian¹**

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1 Introduction

The German *Mädchen* ‘girl’, a neuter noun denoting a female referent, is a commonplace example of a linguistic item whose formal and semantic features are at odds with each other. Another example is the French *sentinelle* ‘watchman’, a feminine noun denoting a (traditionally) male referent. Such gender dissociations are common and well known (Corbett 1991: 225–260), and they shed light on possible mismatches between syntax and morphology, an area that has received quite a bit of coverage in linguistic research. But the dissociation between formal and semantic features is not limited to gender, nor is it limited to the syntax–morphology interface. This paper probes into an underexplored type of feature dissociation, this time between person agreement on the one hand and binding properties as well as agreement features other than person on the other. The case in point is the Russian second person singular (2sg) pronoun used as an arbitrary pronoun. When it occurs in the nominative-subject position (viz., the only constituent that triggers verbal agreement in Russian), this pronoun determines regular verb agreement in second person singular, but its other properties are different from those of a regular 2sg pronoun. The resulting mismatch informs our understanding of the ways syntax and semantics interface, in particular with respect to binding.

To make the data below slightly more user-friendly, let me start with the basics of Russian agreement. Russian verbs agree with their nominative subjects in number and person in the non-

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past tenses and in number and gender, with no person distinctions, in the past tense. A partial paradigm for the verb *igrat* ‘to play (imperfective)’ is shown below.

(1) Russian agreement: Non-past tense, stem *igraj-*

	Present	
	SG	PL
1	igraj-u	igraj-em
2	igraj-eš’	igraj-ete
3	igraj-et	igraj-ut

(2) Russian agreement: Past tense, stem *igra-*, tense suffix: *-l-*

	SG	PL
MASC	igra-l-∅	igra-l-i
FEM	igra-l-a	
NEUT	igra-l-o	

Russian is not a pro-drop language; its limited inventory of null pronouns includes the 3sg expletive, which appears in weather expressions and some other typical expletive contexts, (3), and a 3pl null pronominal with the generalized meaning ‘people’, shown in the impersonal constructions in (4) (see Mel’čuk 1974; McShane 2005). In both cases, the null pronominal cannot alternate with an overt one.

- (3) a. *expl*/*ono stanovitsja xolodno.
 it become.3SG.PRS.REFL cold.NEUTER
 ‘It is getting cold.’
- b. *expl*/*ono bylo pora exat’.
 it be.PST.NEUTER time go.INF
 ‘It was time to go.’

- (4) a. *pro*/*oni cypljat po oseni sčitajut.
 they chickens.ACC on autumn count.3PL.PRS
 ‘Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.’ (lit.: They count chickens...)
- b. *pro*/*oni s det’mi tak ne razgovarivajut.
 they with children so not speak. 3PL.PRS
 ‘One doesn’t speak to children like that.’

In addition to the two types of non-alternating null pronominals, a null second person subject is optional in the imperative; null subjects in all three persons are also optionally available in certain types of embedded clauses, the majority of them subjunctive (Avrtuin and Babyonyshev 1997; Livitz 2014). Finally, the overt and null variants of the 2sg pronoun (*ty/pro*) alternate in the subject position; this pronoun, which I will be referring to as “arbitrary 2sg,” is the focus of this paper.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In section 2, I introduce clauses with arbitrary 2sg and show how this type of pronoun differs from the impersonal 3pl and the addressee 2sg. Differences between the two types of 2sg pronouns will be discussed in section 2.3, which concludes with a summary of the puzzle that needs to be accounted for: namely, the disconnect between the second person singular agreement with the arbitrary 2sg and all other properties of that pronoun, including binding. Section 3 presents arguments in support of a generic interpretation of clauses with the arbitrary 2sg. Based on the generic properties of these clauses, I propose an account of the structural properties of arbitrary 2sg subjects in section 4.

2 Structural properties of sentences with arbitrary 2sg

2.1 *The pattern*

The most common function of the second person pronoun is to indicate the addressee of the clause in question. The addressee pronoun in Russian can be null in imperatives (5), in some embedded clauses, such as the finite complement clauses shown in (5), and in root questions in

the spoken language, where its distribution is reminiscent of the English subject drop observed with topic subjects (Haegeman 1990; Haegeman and Ihsane 1999), as in (5):²

- (5) a. *pro_{addr}* sygraj! Ty že obeščal [čto (ty)
 play.PFV.2SG.IMP 2SG.NOM EMPH promised.M that 2SG.NOM
 sygraješ'].
 play.2SG.FUT

‘Please play! You did promise that you were going to play.’

- b. *pro_{addr}* xočeš est’?
 want.2SG.PRS eat.IPFV.INF
 ‘Are you hungry?’ (lit.: do you want to eat?)

In these contexts, a null second person pronoun is equally possible for the singular *ty* and for the plural *vy*; the latter can be used either for a plurality of addressees or as a polite form for a single person, cf. (5) and the following example used as a polite address:

- (6) a. *pro_{addr}* sygrajte! Vy že obeščali [čto (vy)
 play.PFV.2PL.IMP 2PL.NOM EMPH promised.PL that 2PL.NOM
 sygrajete].
 play.2SG.FUT

‘Please play! You did promise that you were going to play.’

The other use of the second person pronoun—the one that is at stake here—is to indicate an arbitrary referent, with a meaning close to English *you* and *one*, German *man*, or French *on*. Used with this arbitrary reading, the 2sg pronoun does not alternate with the 2pl pronoun. Moreover, the arbitrary 2sg pronoun can be easily omitted—much more easily than the addressee pronoun.

² The comparison is not quite as exact. English diary drop is most commonly found in root declaratives; in Russian, similar pronoun drop is most common in questions, as in (5b).

Arbitrary 2sg is common in proverbs and sayings, as shown in the examples below (I will return to the common use of arbitrary 2sg in proverbs in the discussion of negation in section 3.1 below):

- (7) *pro_{arb}* pospešiš', *pro_{arb}* ljudej nasmešiš'. 2SG-ARB
 hurry.2SG.FUT people.ACC make.laugh.2SG.FUT
 'Haste makes waste.' (lit.: if you hurry you will make people laugh)

- (8) Ljubov' zla, *pro_{arb}* poljubiš' i kozla. 2SG-ARB
 love.NOM bitter fall.in.love.2SG.FUT ADDITIVE billy.goat.ACC
 'Love is blind.' (lit.: love is unfair; you will fall in love even with a billy goat)

- (9) Kašu maslom *pro_{arb}* ne isportiš'. 2SG-ARB
 gruel.ACC butter.INSTR not spoil.2SG.FUT
 'You can never have too much of a good thing.' (lit.: you will not ruin porridge with butter)

All such statements have a generic interpretation, the details of which I will examine in section 3 below. Before I do so, let me discuss how such sentences differ from those with null 3pl subjects and those with a (non-arbitrary) 2sg addressee.

2.2 2SG-ARB vs. 3PL

Clauses with arbitrary 2sg and impersonal 3pl subjects both involve a null subject pronoun, but there are several differences. First, as I already stated, arbitrary 2sg can alternate with an overt pronoun, while impersonal 3pl cannot (see also section 1):

- (10) Kogda *pro_{arb}/ty* idjoš' po nočnoj Moskve... 2SG-ARB
 when 2SG.NOM go.2SG.PRS over nightly Moscow
 'When one walks over Moscow at night...'

- (11) Kogda *pro/*oni* idut po nočnoj Moskve... 3PL
 when 3PL.NOM go.3PL.PRS over nightly Moscow
 'When one walks around Moscow at night...'

Second, the two types of null subjects differ in their interpretation; arbitrary 2sg has to be interpreted as speaker-oriented, whereas impersonal 3pl excludes the speaker, and its use often implies a contrast (almost a face-off) between the speaker and the rest of the world (Peškovskij 1956: 330–334; Bulygina and Shmelev 1997: 347–351, and further references therein). Compare the following minimal pairs, from Bulygina and Shmelev (1997: 348):³

- (12) a. V ètom dome *pro_{arb}* kuriš' ne perestavaja. 2SG-ARB
 in this home smoke. 2SG.PRS not stopping
 'At this house, you smoke nonstop.' (speaker included)
- b. V ètom dome *pro* kurjat ne perestavaja. 3PL
 in this home smoke. 3PL.PRS not stopping
 'At this house, they smoke nonstop.' (distancing the speaker from everyone else)

- (13) V každom igrajuščem detstve... četyre rojalja. Vo-pervyx, tot,
 in each performing childhood four grand-pianos firstly that
 za kotorym *pro_{arb}* sidiš'. Vo-vtoryx, tot, za kotorym
 behind which sit.2SG.PRS secondly that behind which
pro sidjat...
 sit.3PL.PRS

'In every childhood that had musical instruments in it, there are four grand pianos. First, the piano that one likes to play (lit.: the one that you sit behind). Second, the piano that people have to play (lit.: the one that they sit behind).' (Marina Tsvetayeva, cited from Bulygina and Shmelev 1997: 349)

Although clauses with the arbitrary 2sg subject are generally speaker-oriented, these clauses can also include constituents expressed by a 1sg pronoun, indexing the speaker. For example, in (14), the object is expressed by a 1sg pronoun, and in (14) that pronoun occurs in a prepositional phrase:

³ In example (13), the contrastive forms of the verb 'sit' occur in the same utterance.

- (14) a. *pro_{arb}* menja tak legko ne ubediš'. 2SG-ARB
 1SG.ACC so easily not convince.2SG.FUT

‘There is no convincing me so easily.’

- b. *pro_{arb}* pogovoriš' so mnoj o global'nom poteplenii, 2SG-ARB
 speak.2SG.PRS with 1SG about global warming

pro_{arb} srazu vsjo uznaješ'.
 right.away all find.out.2SG.FUT

right.away all find.out.2SG.FUT

‘Let one talk to me about global warming, I will set them straight.’ (ironic, meant to express empathy with someone else)

In such instances, the pragmatic conditions call for the exclusion of the speaker (despite the general speaker-orientation of the arbitrary 2sg). The result is an impression that the focus of empathy is removed from the speaker (Bulygina and Shmelev 1997: 349–351). However, this seems to be a mere pragmatic implicature, which is cancellable:

- (15) *pro_{arb}* menja tak legko ne ubediš'. Ja i
 1SG.ACC so easily not convince.2SG.FUT 1SG.NOM ADDITIVE

sama ne vseгда soglašajus' so svoimi dokazatel'svami.
 by.self.FEM not always agree.1SG.PRS with self's arguments

by.self.FEM not always agree.1SG.PRS with self's arguments

‘There is no convincing me so easily. I myself don't always agree with my own arguments.’

In sum, the meaning of the arbitrary 2sg presupposes speaker-orientation, whereas the meaning of the 3pl impersonal excludes the speaker.

Sentences with arbitrary 2sg also differ from sentences with impersonal 3pl in their modal flavor. Arbitrary 2sg clauses express general statements concerning (im)possibility or the fact that something is being done (or not done) in a certain way; impersonal 3pl clauses, by contrast, have a strong deontic interpretation. Such modal differences are particularly apparent under negation. In (16) below, the sentence with arbitrary 2sg has a habitual reading, indicating general impossibility, while the sentence with the impersonal 3pl subject has a deontic reading.

- (16) a. Zdes' *pro_{arb}* ne pokuriš', #no Maša vsjo vremja 2SG-ARB
 here not smoke.PFV.2SG.PRS but Masha all time
 narušæt.
 break.rule.3SG.PRS
 'There are obstacles to smoking here, #but Masha is constantly breaking the rule.'
- b. Zdes' *pro* ne kurjat, no Maša vsjo vremja. 3PL
 here not smoke.IMPFV.3PL.PRS but Masha all time
 narušæt.
 break.rule.3SG.PRS
 'It is not allowed to smoke here, but Masha is constantly breaking the rule.'

Assuming that the arbitrary 2sg subject imparts a generic interpretation, it is not surprising that clauses with this pronoun resist the deontic reading. Generics and the deontic interpretation are compatible only under a circumscribed, specific set of conditions (Krifka et al. 1995; Moltmann 2010; Zobel 2014). In (16b), the conditions are such that the place is designated as non-smoking, and the continuation refers to a violation of the rule imposed by someone.

2.3 2SG-ARB vs. 2SG-ADDR: Distributional differences

As mentioned above, the arbitrary 2sg pronoun differs from the addressee 2sg pronoun in that the former cannot alternate with the 2pl form. In addition, the addressee 2sg pronoun and the arbitrary 2sg pronoun can also *co-occur in the same clause* (see also Bulygina and Shmelev 1997: 348ff. for similar observations and further examples). This co-occurrence is illustrated in (17); note, however, that a coreferential use of the addressee 2sg within the same clause is impossible (17), an issue that I will return to in the discussion of binding below:⁴

⁴ The grammatical and ungrammatical versions with the overt pronoun are string-identical and differ only in their indices/interpretation. Therefore the difference between (17) and (17) cannot be reduced to the difference between null and overt pronouns, consider the following example:

- (19) a. *pro_{arb-i}* sebj_{a_i} tak legko ne ubediš'. 2SG-ARB
 self.ACC so easily not convince.2SG.FUT
 'There is no convincing oneself so easily.'
- b. Ty_i sebj_{a_i} tak legko ne ubediš'. 2SG-ARB/2SG-ADDR
 2SG.NOM self.ACC so easily not convince.2SG.FUT
 'There is no convincing oneself so easily.'
 'You (=addressee) won't convince yourself so easily.'

In the following pair of examples, the 2sg pronoun in the subject position binds a prepositional phrase:

- (20) a. *pro_{arb-i}* v sebe_i vsegda somnevaješ'sja. 2SG-ARB
 in self always doubt.2SG.PRS
 'One always has doubts about oneself.'
- b. Ty_i v sebe_i vsegda somnevaješ'sja. 2SG-ARB/2SG-ADDR
 2SG.NOM in self always doubt.2SG.PRS
 'One always has doubts about oneself.'
 'You (=addressee) always have doubts about yourself.'

When the 2sg pronoun in the subject position binds a possessive reflexive, there is a clear contrast between the arbitrary type and the addressee type. The arbitrary 2sg can only bind a reflexive possessive, whereas the addressee 2sg can bind either a reflexive or a pronominal possessive:

- (21) a. Čego tol'ko *pro_{arb-i}* ne sdelaš' dlja svoix_i/*tvoix_i družej! 2SG-ARB
 what.PART only not do.2SG.PRS for self's/2SG.POSS friends
 'The things one does for one's friends!'
 (lit.: What wouldn't you do for self's friends!)
- b. Čego tol'ko ty_i ne sdelaš' dlja svoix_i/tvoix_i družej! 2SG-ADDR
 what.PART only 2SG.NOM not do.2SG.PRS for self's/2SG.POSS friends
 'The things you (=addressee) do for your friends!' (lit.: What wouldn't you do for self's/your friends!)

Turning to reciprocal binding, the addressee 2sg cannot bind a reciprocal, but the arbitrary 2sg can (Knyazev 2015):

- (22) a. Esli *pro_{arb-i}* ljubiš' drug druga_i, vsjo legko. 2SG-ARB
 if love.2SG.PRS each other.ACC all easy
 'If people love each other everything is easy.'
- b. *Esli ty_i ljubiš' drug druga_i... 2SG-ADDR
 if 2SG.NOM love.2SG.PRS each other.ACC
 ('If you are in love with one another...')

To summarize, the binding properties of the addressee 2sg and arbitrary 2sg pronoun in the subject position are as follows:

(23) Binding properties

	2sg addressee	2sg arbitrary
Binds reflexive in an argument position	✓	✓
Binds reciprocal in an argument position	✗	✓
Binds possessive reflexive	✓	✓
Binds possessive 2sg pronoun	✓	✗

The next example illustrates a symmetrical predicate with a reciprocal anaphor bound by the arbitrary 2sg subject (as in (22) above):

- (26) a. *pro_{arb-i}* nagovoriš' drug drugu_i obidnogo, a potom 2SG-ARB
 say.2SG.PRS each other hurtful.GEN and then
 rassazivaeš'sja po svoim uglam i molčiš'
 spread.out.in.sitting.2SG.PRS over self's corners and keep.silent.2SG.PRS
 po očeredi.
 in turn
 'First, people say hurtful things to each other, and then they spread out in their own spaces and take turns not saying anything.'
- b. *Ty_i nagovoriš' drug drugu_i obidnogo, a potom 2SG-ADDR
 2SG.NOM say.2SG.PRS each other hurtful.GEN and then
 rassazivaeš'sja po svoim uglam i molčiš'
 spread.out.in.sitting.2SG.PRS over self's corners and keep.silent.2SG.PRS
 po očeredi.
 in turn

Turning now to collective predicates, their meaning presupposes a plurality of subjects and is incompatible with a singular subject: the English *collide* or *disperse* are good examples. The [+participant/+singular] *ty* is impossible with such predicates, but the arbitrary 2sg subject is fully acceptable:

- (27) a. Esli ty/*pro_{arb}* prevosxodiš' po čislennosti sosednie narody, 2SG-ARB
 if 2SG.NOM surpass.2SG.PRS over number neighboring peoples
 vsjo ravno ne stoit ix obizat'.
 nevertheless not necessary them hurt.INF
 'If you outnumber your neighbor nations there is no need to insult them.'
- b. *Esli ty prevosxodiš' po čislennosti sosednie narody,... 2SG-ADDR
 if 2SG.NOM surpass.2SG.PRS over number neighboring peoples
 ('If you (=addressee) outnumber your neighbor nations...')

The resulting picture is that the arbitrary 2sg is not specified as semantically singular but all the while the morphological agreement with this pronoun must be in second singular.

(iii) *The addressee 2sg and arbitrary 2sg differ in their gender specification.* If the arbitrary 2sg is not semantically specified for singular, what about its gender? So far all the examples have been in the present tense, where morphological agreement is in person and number. Gender agreement in Russian verbs appears in the past tense, as was shown in (2), and in the subjunctive (whose forms are homophonous with past tense forms). Outside verb forms, gender agreement is visible on adjectival/participial secondary predicates.

In all these contexts, the gender of the addressee 2sg is determined by the natural gender of the speech participant. This is easy to show using predicates whose denotation specifies a particular gender; the Russian equivalents for ‘get married’ are a well-known example of this, with *ženit’sja* applying to males and *vyxodit’ zamuž* to females.

- (28) a. V Japonii ty by zamuž ne vyšla. 2SG-ADDR
 in Japan 2SG.NOM SBJV married not go.FEM
 ‘In Japan you would not have got married.’ (speaking to a woman)
- b. V Japonii ty by ne ženilsja. 2SG-ADDR
 in Japan 2SG.NOM SBJV not married.MASC
 ‘In Japan you would not have got married.’ (speaking to a man)

The gender on secondary predicates (depictives) and resultatives must also match the natural gender of the addressee. Thus, (29) has to be used when addressing a male hearer, and (29) when addressing a female:⁷

⁷ The case of the secondary predicate may vary (Nichols 1981), but this variation is irrelevant for the discussion here.

- (29) a. Ty vseгда prixodiš' ustalyj/ustalym. 2SG-ADDR
 2SG.NOM always come.back.2SG.PRS tired.NOM.MASC/tired.INS.MASC
 b. Ty vseгда prixodiš' ustalaja/ustaloj.
 2SG.NOM always come.back.2SG.PRS tired.NOM.FEM/tired.INS.FEM
 'You always come back tired.'

With that in mind, let us now turn to the arbitrary 2sg. It appears that the gender of this pronoun is set as masculine, as shown in (30) for verbal predicates and in (31), for depictives:

- (30) V srednie veka esli ty rodilsja rabom, 2SG-ARB
 in middle ages if 2SG.NOM was.born.MASC slave.INS
 to rabom i umiral.
 then slave.INS and died.MASC
 'In the Middle Ages, if one was born a slave, one died a slave.'

- (31) S raboty *pro_{arb}* vseгда prixodiš' ustalyj/ustalym. 2SG-ARB
 from work always come.back.2SG.PRS tired.NOM.MASC/tired.INS.MASC
 'One always comes back tired after work.'

With human referents, the masculine is the default gender in Russian; if a noun phrase is not specified as [+FEMININE] then it should be treated as masculine (Corbett and Fraser 2000: 83; Corbett 2007: 266-268; Doleschal and Schmid 2001: 264). This requirement overrides world knowledge. For example, all the native speakers I consulted accept examples such as (32) or (33), where the referent clearly has to be female, and only a subset of speakers also allowed agreement in the feminine, (32), (33):

- (32) a. V srednie veka esli ty zboleval sepsisom 2SG-ARB
 in middle ages if 2SG.NOM got.sick.MASC sepsis.INS
 posle rodov, to ty navernjaka umiral.
 after childbirth then 2SG.NOM for.sure died.MASC
- b. %V srednie veka esli ty zbolevala sepsisom 2SG-ARB
 in middle ages if 2SG.NOM got.sick.FEM sepsis.INS
 posle rodov, to ty navernjaka umirala.
 after childbirth then 2SG.NOM for.sure died.FEM
- ‘In the Middle Ages, if one developed sepsis after childbirth, one was doomed to die.’

- (33) a. V starye vremena esli ty rožal rebenka 2SG-ARB
 in old times if 2SG.NOM gave.birth.MASC child.ACC
 bez muža, ty podvergalsja ostrakizmu.
 without husband 2SG.NOM underwent.MASC ostracism.DAT
- b. %V starye vremena esli ty rožala rebenka 2SG-ARB
 in old times if 2SG.NOM gave.birth.FEM child.ACC
 bez muža, ty podvergalas’ ostrakizmu.
 without husband 2SG.NOM underwent.FEM ostracism.DAT
- ‘In old days, if one had a child out of wedlock, one was ostracized.’

With secondary predicates, however, the masculine agreement is overridden in contexts where the generic statement specifically targets female participants:

- (34) Poka ty/*pro_{arb}* xodiš’ beremennaja/*beremennyj, 2SG-ARB
 want.2SG.PRS 2SG.NOM go.2SG.PRS pregnant.FEM/pregnant.MASC
 ty/*pro_{arb}* vsjo vremja xočeš’ est’.
 2SG.NOM all time want.2SG.PRS eat.INF
- ‘While pregnant, one is always hungry.’

Crucially, such semantic overrides are only possible with the gender feature, not the number feature. Compare example (31), and the ungrammatical plural depictive below:⁸

- (35) S raboty *pro_{arb}* vseгда prixodiš' ustalymi. 2SG-ARB
 from work always come.back.2SG.PRS tired.INS.PL
 ('One always comes back tired after work.')

The semantic agreement in gender presents an interesting challenge to the well-known hierarchy of agreement targets (Corbett 1979, 1983). Following Corbett, there is a hierarchy of agreement targets (probes) with respect to whether they can show semantically motivated agreement, as opposed to solely formal (syntactic, in Corbett's terms) agreement. For targets on the scale in (36), if some element is able to show semantic agreement then all positions to the right on the scale will also be able to show semantic agreement. Conversely, if a position can show formal agreement, then all positions to the left will also be able to show morphological agreement:

⁸ If a verbal predicate and a depictive co-occur in those contexts that force the feminine gender reading, the results are disastrous. Most speakers find such sentences unacceptable no matter what, (i), and look for paraphrases. Some speakers however accept the feminine both on the verb in the past tense and on the depictive, (ii):

- (i) *V starye vremena esli ty rožal nezamužnim/nezamužnej...
 in old times if 2SG.NOM gave.birth.MASC unmarried.INS.MASC/FEM
 ('In old days, if one gave birth unmarried...')
- (ii) %V starye vremena esli ty rožala nezamužnej...
 in old times if 2SG.NOM gave.birth.FEM unmarried.INS.FEM
 'In old days, if one gave birth unmarried...'

(36) attributive > predicate > relative pronoun > personal pronoun

← formal agreement

semantic agreement →

If we now compare the formal agreement in (32) with the semantic agreement in (34), we find that these data do not follow the predictions of the agreement hierarchy. I leave the question of how to reconcile the hierarchy in (36) with these particular results for future research.

Leaving the borderline examples aside, we can conclude that the arbitrary 2sg is not semantically specified for number or gender. Its morphological number is set as singular, and its morphological gender is set as masculine; both these feature specifications constitute the morphological defaults in Russian. This morphological default for gender (but not for number) can be “overridden” by semantic information, as shown in (34).

(iv) *The addressee 2sg and arbitrary 2sg differ in the animacy requirements on the subject.* The 2sg addressee pronoun can index personified inanimate or non-human participants, for example:

(37) Kogda že ty zakolosiš'sja, pšenica? 2SG-ADDR
 when indeed 2SG.NOM become.eared.2SG.FUT wheat
 ‘Oh wheat, when will you finally plump up (lit.: form ears)?’

No such interpretation is ever available for the arbitrary reading; the verb *kolosit'sja* ‘form ears, spire’, whose subject must be inanimate, is impossible with the arbitrary pronoun:⁹

(38) *V xolodnoe leto *pro_{arb}* ne zakolosiš'sja. 2SG-ARB
 in cold summer not become.eared.2SG.FUT
 (“Ears won’t form on wheat when the summer is cold.”)

⁹ The translation is rather figurative here, designed to render the general intended meaning.

The arbitrary 2sg is conceptualized as indexing a human, sentient referent, which explains the ungrammaticality of (31). In this property, the Russian arbitrary 2sg resembles English *one*, and *you*, German *man*, and French *on*, which also require a [+human] denotation (Wiltschko 2016).

Two additional observations provide further support for the generalization that the arbitrary 2sg requires a [+human] referent. First, if the participant indexed by the arbitrary 2sg must be interpreted as sentient via coercion, then the use of the arbitrary form becomes acceptable. Such coercion can be provided by the set phrase *xočeš' ne xočeš'* 'whether you like it or not; willy-nilly', which presupposes a sentient referent.¹⁰ The expression itself is the frozen form of the verb 'want' in 2sg, but it is currently used more broadly and is not limited to second persons. Compare the ungrammatical (38) with the following felicitous sentence:

- (39) *Xočeš' ne xočeš', a pro_{arb} zakolosiš'sja.* 2SG-ARB
 like not like but become.eared.2SG.FUT
 'Whether you like it or not you will have to spire up.'

Likewise, in the sentence below, the referent is a personified animal, whose sentience is established via pragmatic coercion:

- (40) *Xočeš' ne xočeš', a pro_{arb} staneš' lajat'* 2SG-ARB
 like not like but get.2SG.FUT bark.INF
za ugoščenje.
 for treat
 'Whether you like it or not you will bark to get a treat.'

¹⁰ I am grateful to Lena Borise for suggesting this set of examples.

The second observation supporting the [+sentient] or [+human] feature of the arbitrary 2sg comes from verbs whose meaning varies depending on the humanness or animacy of the subject. For example, the verb *ržat* 'has the meaning 'neigh' but can also be used figuratively in the meaning 'snicker', with a human subject. Only this latter meaning is possible with the arbitrary 2sg. Compare the literal meaning of (41), where the addressee is a horse, and the figurative meaning (the only one available) in (42):

(41) Čto ty ržoš', moj kon' retivyj? 2SG-ADDR
 what 2SG.NOM neigh.2SG.PRS my steed proud
 'Why are you neighing, oh my proud steed?' (Pushkin)

(42) Ot takix krikov byvalo ty/*pro_{arb}* tol'ko ržoš'. 2SG-ARB
 from such yells usually 2SG.NOM only snicker.2SG.PRS
 'One would only snicker/*neigh upon hearing such yells.'

The table below summarizes the differences between the arbitrary and addressee 2sg pronouns:

(43) Addressee 2sg subject vs. arbitrary 2sg subject

	2sg addressee	2sg arbitrary
Determines obligatory 2sg agreement on verbs in non-past tense (nominative subjects)	✓	✓
Binds 2sg possessive pronouns	✓	✗
Is semantically specified as singular (cf. binding of reciprocals, occurrence with collective/distributive predicates)	✓	✗
Is specified as morphologically masculine	✗	✓
Must be interpreted as [+HUMAN]	✗	✓

Throughout this section, I have concentrated on arbitrary 2sg in the nominative subject position. However, similar properties also hold of arbitrary 2sg in non-nominative forms when such forms encode an external argument (dative or accusative experiencer subjects; PP possessive subjects). Such external arguments do not determine verbal agreement, so it is harder to tell if the overt form of the pronoun can alternate with the null form, but the overt form has the same binding properties as the arbitrary 2sg in the nominative. Contrast the sentences in (21) and the following pair, where the arbitrary 2sg in the experiencer subject position can bind only the possessive reflexive:

- (44) a. V xorošej kompanii tebe/?*pro*_{arb} veselo daže 2SG-ARB
 in good company 2SG.DAT merry even
 ot svoix/*tvoix durackix šutok.
 from self's/2SG.POSS silly jokes
 'In good company, one gets merry even from one's own silly jokes.'
- b. V xorošej kompanii tebe veselo daže 2SG-ADDR
 in good company 2SG.DAT merry even
 ot svoix/tvoix šutok.
 from self's/2SG.POSS jokes
 'In good company, you get merry even from your own jokes.'

Likewise, the arbitrary 2sg in the locative-possessor position (*u*-XP) can serve as the antecedent of a reciprocal; compare the minimal pair in (22), above, and the following pair:

- (45) a. Kogda u tebja/*pro*_{arb} vznikae obida drug na druga... 2SG-ARB
 when by 2SG occurs grievance on.each.other
 'When people are upset with each other....'
- b. *Kogda u tebja vznikae obida drug na druga... 2SG-ADDR
 when by 2SG occurs grievance on.each.other
 'When you are upset with each other....'

Thus, the arbitrary 2sg in the external argument position is not limited to the nominative.

In the next section, I will consider the semantic import of sentences with the arbitrary 2sg subject. Strictly speaking, the [+HUMAN] requirement and [+MASCULINE] preference should also be counted among the interpretive properties of the arbitrary 2sg subject, but since they have an effect on morphosyntactic agreement, I have included them in the tally of their structural properties.

3 Interpretive properties of sentences with arbitrary 2sg

3.1 2SG-ARB sentences vs. 2SG-ADDR sentences: Differences in interpretation

Sentences with arbitrary 2sg have a number of interpretive restrictions, some of which are particularly vivid when compared to the use of addressee-2sg sentences. Addressee-2sg sentences can be episodic, express isolated facts, or denote repeated habitual events. They are also contextually free, in that they can occur in isolation and do not require special anchoring in terms of time or location. Meanwhile, as will be elaborated upon below, arbitrary-2sg sentences cannot have episodic readings and must be anchored in time or space (a typical property of generic sentences generally). I have already noted their generic flavor in the discussion above. The generic interpretation was particularly apparent in the comparison between (16) and (16), partially repeated below, where the former had the reading of impossibility, and the latter, a deontic interpretation.

- (46) a. *Zdes' pro_{arb} ne pokuriš'.* 2SG-ARB
 here not smoke.PFV.2SG.PRS
 'It is impossible to smoke here.' (= (16)a)
- b. *Zdes' pro ne kurjat.* 3PL
 here not smoke.IMPV.3PL.PRS
 'It is not allowed to smoke here.' (= (16)b)

As I already mentioned, deontic readings are not easily compatible with genericity, so this contrast is understandable.

Following up on the generic interpretation, the distribution of individual-level predicates differs with addressee 2sg versus arbitrary 2sg. When the following sentence is uttered out of the blue, the subject can only be interpreted as an addressee:

- (47) Ty prinadležiš' k izbrannomu obščestvu. 2SG-ADDR
 2SG.NOM belong.2SG.PRS to select society
 'You (=addressee) belong to an elite circle.'

In order for the subject of this sentence to be interpreted as arbitrary, it needs to be explicitly anchored to a set of events or locations; again, this is a typical condition on the felicity of individual-level predicates in generic contexts (Krifka et al. 1995; Chierchia 1995).

- (48) V takix universitetax *pro_{arb/ty}* neredko prinadležiš' 2SG-ARB
 in such universities 2SG.NOM frequently belong.2SG.PRS
 k izbrannomu obščestvu.
 to select society
 'In such universities, one often belongs to an elite circle.'

The anchoring of clauses with arbitrary 2sg can be achieved in two major ways. First, two (or more) clauses, all under the scope of a generic quantifier, may co-occur in an utterance, with one clause serving as the conditional antecedent for the other. In such utterances, the arbitrary 2sg can appear in either of the clauses (or both). Crucial for their interpretation, the two clauses must be interpreted as forming a contrast. The following examples illustrate the patterns. In (49), the arbitrary 2sg appears in the first coordinate clause; in (49), it occurs in both clauses; in (49), it occurs in the second coordinate.

- (49) a. Ty/*pro_{arb}* prixodiš' domoj, a tam nikogo net. 2SG-ARB
 2SG.NOM come.2SG.PRS home but there nobody be.NEG
 'One comes home to find nobody there.'
- b. Ty/*pro_{arb}* prixodiš' domoj i nikogo tam ne naxodiš'.
 2SG.NOM come.2SG.PRS home and nobody there not find.2SG.PRS
 'One comes home but does not find anybody there.'
- c. Doma nikogo net, a ty/*pro_{arb}* vsjo ravno ždjoš' kogo-to.
 home nobody be.NEG but 2SG.NOM still wait.2SG.PRS someone
 'There is nobody home, but one still waits for someone.'

Although I have used coordinate clauses here for illustrative purposes, the same anchoring effect can be achieved if one of the clauses occurs as an adjunct or if (all) the clauses appear as root clauses.

We have seen above several other examples in which two or more clauses occur in the utterance and an arbitrary-2sg clause served as the antecedent: see (7), (8), (14), and (22). The antecedent clauses in these sentences often co-occur with the adverbial *byvalo* 'habitually, occasionally' (a fossilized habitual form of the verb 'be'). For instance:

- (50) a. Byvalo na nedelju ujedeš', i (Russian National Corpus)
 habitually on week go.away.PFV.2SG.FUT and
 to zvoníš'.
 still call.IMPV.2SG.PRS
- b. Byvalo na nedelju ujezžaješ', i to pozvoniš'.
 habitually on week go.away.IMPV.2SG.PRS and still call.2PFV.2SG.FUT
 'One would go away for just a week but would still call.'

In all these cases, there are no aspectual restrictions on the predicate of the 2sg-arb sentence; the sentence can appear in the perfective or imperfective, as shown by the examples in (50).

The second way of anchoring clauses with the arbitrary 2sg involves the use of a temporary or locative adjunct, as already shown in (47) above. Such anchoring can also be implicit. Implicit anchoring is particularly common if the clause with the arbitrary 2sg is under the scope of negation; cf. (9), (14), (16), (17), or the example below:¹¹

- (51) Vyše golovy *pro_{arb}* ne prygneš'. 2SG-ARB
 higher head.GEN not jump.2SG.PRS
 'A man can do no more than he can.' (lit.: you can't jump higher than your head)

Informally, it appears that negation may be one of the ways of marking focus; the presupposed contrast is between p and $\neg p$, and negation serves to exclude a range of possibilities. The association between focus and the matrix material in generic sentences is well established (Krifka 1995; Rooth 1995). Assuming that the generic interpretation of sentences with the arbitrary 2sg subject is on the right track, negation can serve as a formal means of identifying the matrix material in arbitrary 2sg clauses.

This hypothesis leads us to expect that other means of identifying focus should also play a role in arbitrary 2sg clauses. At least two observations confirm this expectation. First, I have already mentioned a number of examples where two clauses with the arbitrary 2sg subject are juxtaposed, and the propositions in these clauses are interpreted contrastively: one of the clauses serves as the presupposition against which the material in the other clause is asserted. Second, generic sentences with the arbitrary 2sg subject often occur with the additive particle *i* 'also; even' (see Gast and van der Auwera 2011 for the functions of this particle; a saying with this particle appeared in (8) above in a set expression). Outside set expressions, a constituent with the additive particle *i* precedes the verb and bears a clear focus intonation, with the high–low boundary tone (HL*). Compare:

- (52) I ljagušek^{HL*} ty/*pro_{arb}* budeš' est'. 2SG-ARB
 ADDITIVE frogs.ACC 2SG.NOM AUX.2SG eat.INF
 'One would even eat frogs.'

¹¹ This is probably the most common use of the arbitrary 2sg in proverbs and sayings.

These observations on focus associations in generic clauses are preliminary. The overall picture is complicated by the rampant scrambling that seems to be a hallmark of Russian syntax; the interaction between the prosodic, information-structural, and propositional-semantic effects of scrambling is not fully understood, more work needs to be done in this area.

To conclude, this section has suggested that the interpretive properties of clauses with the arbitrary 2sg subject follow from the generic interpretation of these clauses; focusing on the generic interpretation allows us to account for the differences between arbitrary 2sg subjects and addressee 2sg subjects.

3.2 Null vs. overt TY in 2SG-ARB sentences: Differences in interpretation

One of the issues that I have not yet addressed has to do with interpretive differences between overt and null arbitrary 2sg subjects. As shown by examples throughout this work, both the overt and covert variants of this pronoun are generally possible, with the exception of sentences where the addressee 2sg also appears, such as (17). In set expressions, the null form predominates. Likewise, in sentences with the nominative form of the arbitrary 2sg subject, there is a preference for the null form appearing in that position; in 300 sentences with such subjects culled from the Russian National Corpus, 210 (about 70%) had the null form. By contrast, when arbitrary 2sg is used in non-nominative position (as an experiencer dative, as a PP, etc.), there seems to be a preference for the overt form.

Null forms are independently known in the literature to correspond to bound forms (Landau 2004, 2015), and this expectation is confirmed by the null arbitrary 2sg data. The examples below show the contrast between overt vs. silent 2sg in an embedded *whether*-clause ((53) vs. (53), respectively). In (53), the only available reading for *pro* is that of a bound variable. The interpretation of the overt form of arbitrary 2sg in the minimal pair, (53), is less clear; some speakers allow both readings, while others insist on the strict reading only.¹²

- (53) a. Tol'ko ty_i odin znaeš', smožeš' li ty_{i/%k}
 only 2SG.NOM alone.MASC know.2SG.PRS be.able.2SG.FUT COMP 2SG.NOM
 preodolet' takoe prepjatstvie.
 overcome.INF [such obstacle].ACC
 'Only the person himself_i knows whether he_{i/k} can overcome such an obstacle.'
- b. Tol'ko ty_i odin znaeš', smožeš' li *pro*_{i/*k}
 only 2SG.NOM alone.MASC know.2SG.PRS be.able.2SG.FUT COMP
 preodolet' takoe prepjatstvie.
 overcome.INF [such obstacle].ACC
 'Only the person himself knows whether he/*one can overcome such an obstacle.'

The contrast between the overt and null arbitrary 2sg pronouns needs to be explored further, but since these differences do not play a critical role in the present discussion, I leave them for further research.

¹² The readings for (53) are less crisp than the corresponding readings for “fake indexicals” reported for English or German (Partee 1989; Kratzer 2009). This may well be due to the availability of the null pronominal in Russian, as in (53), an option unattested in English or German. If the null pronominal is used exclusively to mark bound variable readings, such readings may in turn be less available (or outright impossible) with the null pronominal's overt counterpart.

4 Putting it all together

Now that we have observed structural and interpretive differences between clauses with the arbitrary 2sg subject and clauses with the addressee 2sg subject, it is time to examine where these differences come from. In a nutshell, clauses with the arbitrary 2sg subject are unusual in that their subject shares its agreement pattern with the addressee 2sg subject, but differs in its binding properties, plural interpretation, depictive/resultative agreement, and obligatory human interpretation. The relevant properties are repeated below:

(54) Addressee 2sg subject vs. arbitrary 2sg subject/highest external argument

	2sg addressee	2sg arbitrary
Determines obligatory 2sg agreement on verbs in non-past tense (nominative subjects)	✓	✓
Binds 2sg possessive pronouns	✓	✗
Is semantically specified as singular (cf. binding of reciprocals, occurrence with collective/distributive predicates)	✓	✗
Is specified as morphologically masculine	✗	✓
Must be interpreted as [+HUMAN]	✗	✓

In section 3, I showed that sentences with arbitrary 2sg have a generic interpretation. The literature on the semantics of generics is enormous, and I won't be able to do it justice here. For my purposes, the crucial ingredients of the analysis of generics are shown below: a covert quantifier, possibly adverbial in nature (Lewis 1975; Krifka et al. 1995), a restrictor, and the matrix material (whose association with focus further supports the tripartite generic structure):

(55) **GEN** [x; y] (**Restrictor** [x]; $\exists y$ **Matrix** [x y])

In the sentences considered in this paper, arbitrary 2sg is always in the subject position (or in some external argument position, for example, when it corresponds to the experiencer subject or

to an external argument in the form of a PP, as in (44) and (45)). Assuming that universal (generic) quantification targets the highest structural position (Diesing 1992), the generic quantifier has scope over this arbitrary 2sg. The generalized form of arbitrary 2sg sentences is therefore as follows:

(56) **GEN** [x; y; s] (x is in s & x is 2sg; $\exists y$ & $x \vee y$)

Scoping over the arbitrary 2sg, GEN unselectively binds this pronoun, causing it to acquire all the indices associated with the situation variable *s*.¹³ The arbitrary 2sg is no longer interpreted as uniquely associated with the addressee (although this association is still available, if only as an implicature). Example (17) repeated below shows that such an implicature can be canceled: the sentence contains the overt addressee pronoun in the object position and the null arbitrary 2sg pronoun is interpreted as excluding the addressee:

(17) a. *pro_{arb}* tebja tak prosto ne ubediš'.
 2SG.ACC so simply not convince.2SG.FUT
 'There is no convincing you (addressee) so easily.'

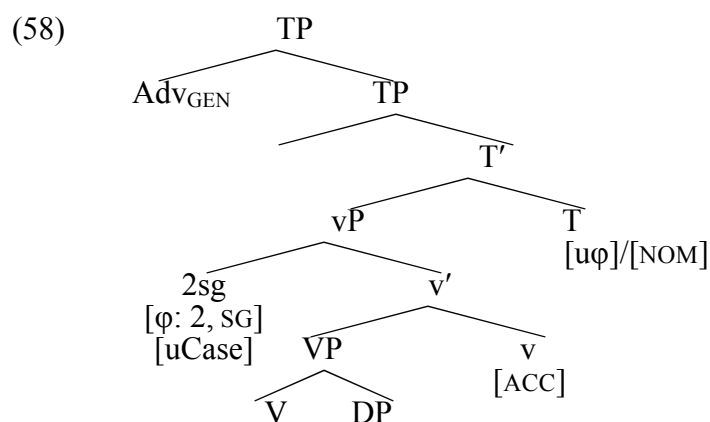
The binding and argument structure properties of the arbitrary 2sg subject follow from its being in the scope of GEN; the indices are passed down to the pronoun from all the possible situations *s* where the proposition denoted in the sentence holds true. The semantic representation is as follows (for the syntactic representation, where the generic quantifier is base-generated as an adjoined adverbial in the TP domain, as shown in (58) below):

(57) **GEN** [*s*₁, *s*₂, ... *s*_{*n*}] (*x*₁, *x*₂, ... *x*_{*n*})...

¹³ According to some analyses, GEN is an unselective binder; according to other approaches, it binds only the situation variable *s*, while all other apparent binding is indirect, derived from the binding of that *s*. Here, I will adopt the direct unselective-binding approach just for simplicity's sake—but both approaches, with their associated virtues and warts, are going to yield similar results for the purposes of the current discussion.

Binding by the generic quantifier forces a non-singular semantic interpretation on arbitrary 2sg as well as a gender-neutral interpretation, realized as the masculine. As a result, this pronoun in the subject/external argument position can fill the subject position of collective or distributive predicates and can bind reciprocal anaphors; in both of these contexts, the set of referents is two or more. Furthermore, the arbitrary 2sg *cannot* bind a 2sg possessive: to do so would require exclusion of all the other indices inherited from the quantifier above, leading to an interpretive clash.

We can now approach the mechanism of agreement in generic clauses with an arbitrary 2sg nominative in the subject position. In such clauses, the probing T head reaches the 2sg pronoun and values its phi-features [PERSON] and [NUMBER] in a straightforward way. In the past tense/conditional, agreement is in the masculine, as the default morphosyntactic feature. The structure below reflects a regular clause with a nominative subject and transitive verb in non-past tenses (irrelevant details not shown):



Agreement is not sensitive to variable binding, so the end result of this derivation is that agreement in finite clauses with the arbitrary 2sg is the same as in clauses with the addressee 2sg. The presence of the generic quantifier is responsible for the binding properties and plural/masculine interpretation of the arbitrary 2sg subject, while agreement is established in the standard way without influence from the generic quantifier, which is adjoined to the T as shown above.

The analysis presented here accounts for the bulk of the properties of generic sentences with an arbitrary 2sg subject listed in (54). However, the obligatory [+human] interpretation of the arbitrary 2sg subject remains unexplained. I do not have a solid account of this property at this time, but I expect that the connection between the clear speaker-orientation of generic sentences with the arbitrary 2sg and humanness is not accidental.

5 Conclusions

In this paper I examined the dissociation between person agreement and binding properties of the Russian second person singular (2sg) pronoun *ty*, in those contexts where it has an arbitrary interpretation (*ty_{arb}/pro_{arb}*). Regardless of the interpretation, this pronoun controls regular verb agreement appropriate for the second singular, but its binding properties and its semantic properties (number, gender) are different from those of a regular 2sg pronoun. I proposed that the binding and number/gender properties of the arbitrary 2sg follow from its being in the scope of a generic operator; this is where these properties are no longer synchronized with agreement, thus offering a tantalizing example of Janus-like behavior so familiar from work on gender but explored much less in other domains of grammar.

In clauses without arbitrary interpretation, no generic operator is observed, and the binding properties of the pronoun are not dissociated from its agreement properties; it is well behaved and does everything that is expected of it. Of course, my main point in this paper was to illustrate the divergence between binding and agreement using empirical data from just one language, but the facts concerning the arbitrary 2sg in Russian can also inform our understanding of binding as a diagnostic of properties outside of narrow syntax. This result reiterates the proposal by Eric Reuland (2011: xv):

[T]he conditions on anaphoric dependencies are the result of the interaction of many factors, some independent of language ..., others irreducibly linguistic. Small differences in structure, entirely independent of binding, may give rise to what appear to be major differences in the way anaphoric dependencies manifest themselves. The following conclusion is unavoidable: ... the superficial constraints on anaphoric dependencies tell us very little in isolation of other

properties of a language. This means that in order to understand patterns of anaphora in one language—or language in general—one has to take into account a great many factors from different parts of the grammar.

Some of the properties of the arbitrary 2sg remain unaccounted for. In particular, why does it have to be animate? This puzzle leads us to a larger outstanding question of why it is the second person singular that is selected for using generic statements. How do the semantics of person, number, and gender get co-opted for the generic reading: Is there wholesale overriding of the normal semantics, or should we assume that Russian has two separate pronouns *ty*₂ each with its own set of properties? Nothing in the material presented here allows me to answer this question definitively; both options (overrides on a single lexical item and two lexical items) are available. Furthermore, the choice between these two options is not unique to the pronoun *ty* discussed here; it arises with respect to other lexical items, for instance, control verbs (Perlmutter 1970; Polinsky 2000) or the English *climb* (Jackendoff 1985). In other words, the dilemma concerning the representations for the Russian *ty* goes well beyond that particular lexical item, but that does not make the problem go away.

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