This thesis presents a study of syntactic constraints on the Russian reflexives sebja and svoj. Though they are usually subject-oriented and in complementary distribution with pronominals, this is not always the case. Furthermore, under certain conditions they demonstrate some hitherto poorly understood locality patterns and interpretive effects. They also have a wider distribution NP-internally than reflexives in many better-studied languages and thus offer interesting research opportunities.

In this dissertation, the Russian reflexives are considered to realize bundles of interpretable φ-features valued derivationally in feature sharing dependencies with the antecedents. The author argues that the anaphoric dependencies are established based on person or number separately, which accounts for many of their properties identified here and is enabled by defective φ-feature probes. The proposed analysis assumes no features or principles specific to the reflexives. General constraints on the Agree operation are discussed and refined.

It is shown that the complementary distribution of reflexives and pronominals as an effect of Agree holds for every alternating derivation separately, so if the alternatives don’t converge on the same antecedent, their superposition may result in apparent non-complementarity. This presents a challenge to transderivational approaches to pronominal distribution.

This dissertation may be of interest to researchers working on syntactic anaphora, φ-features, and the nature of Agree, as well as to those relying on the distribution of reflexives and pronominals in Slavic languages as a diagnostic tool in syntactic analysis.