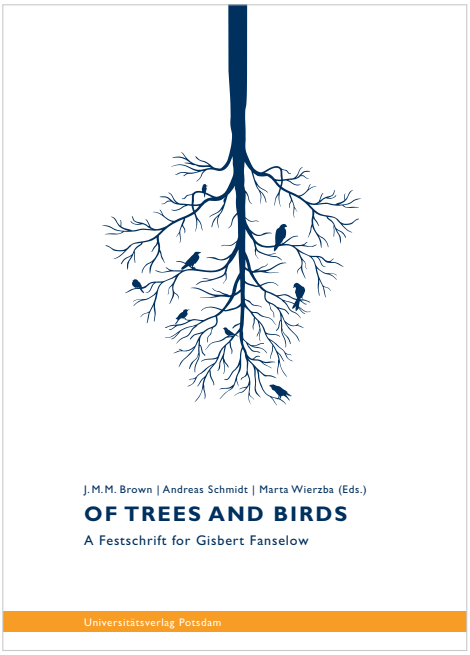
University Press Potsdam

Article published in:

J.M.M. Brown, Andreas Schmidt, Marta Wierzba (Eds.)

Of trees and birds
A Festschrift for Gisbert Fanselow

2019 – 435 p.
ISBN 978-3-86956-457-9
DOI https://doi.org/10.25932/publishup-42654



Suggested citation:
Šimík, Radek: On doubling unconditionals, In: Brown, J.M.M. / Schmidt, Andreas / Wierzba, Marta (Eds.): Of trees and birds. A Festschrift for Gisbert Fanselow, Potsdam, University Press Potsdam, 2019, pp. 155–169.
DOI https://doi.org/10.25932/publishup-43226

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons License: Attribution 4.0
This does not apply to quoted content from other authors. To view a copy of this license visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

On doubling unconditionals

Radek Šimík, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

1 Introduction

Unconditionals are conditional-like structures expressing that the consequent holds independently of the particular value of the antecedent. The sentence in (1a), for instance, expresses that for all times t such that you wake up at t, it holds that you'll hear a robin sing. That is, if you get up at 5, you'll hear a robin; if you get up 6, you'll hear a robin, if you wake up at 7, you'll hear a robin; etc. The non-constant value of the antecedent is a constitutive property of unconditionals. The locus of variation is often represented by a wh-word—as in (1a) (*when* $\rightsquigarrow$ variation in the **time** of waking up), (1d) (*what* $\rightsquigarrow$ variation in the **contents** of speech reports), or (1e) (*where* $\rightsquigarrow$ variation in the **place** of going), but not necessarily so—in (1c), variation is conveyed by the disjunction and (1b) entails variation in the hearer's opinion by embedding *your opinion* under *regardless of*. Antecedents can be "headed", by expressions as *no matter* (1a) or *regardless of* (1b), or "headless", as in (1c) through (1e). The wh-word in the antecedent can (but need not) "bind" a pronominal in the consequent. An example of this is the *where–there* couple in (1e).

(1) a. No matter when you wake up, you'll hear a robin sing.

b. Regardless of your opinion, you won't discourage me from going to see the azure tit!

c. A nut or an earthworm, a crow will eat anything it comes across.

d. Whatever the others say, the muscovy duck is the most beautiful bird.

e. Wherever you end up going, you'll see a wader there in this time of year.

This paper is about DOUBLING UNCONDITIONALS. These are wh-based structures in which the verb appears to be doubled. Consider the examples in (2), where the verb *entre / vier / přijde* 'enter/come' appears twice—once before and once after the wh-word.

(2) a. *Spanish*

Entre quien entre, lo atacaré.
enter.SBJV.3SG who enter.SBJV.3SG him attack.FUT.1SG
'Whoever comes in, I'll attack him.' (Quer 1998: 243)

b. *Brazilian Portuguese*

Venha quem vier, eu vou embora.
comes.SBJV.PRS who comes.SBJV.FUT I go away
'No matter who comes, I'm still leaving.'
(Quer & Vicente 2009: 12)

c. *Czech*

Ať přijde kdo přijde, zaútočím na něj.
AT comes who comes attack at him
'Whoever comes in, I'll attack him.'

Doubling unconditionals seem to be cross-linguistically rare, but are arguably related to the more common type exemplified in (3), where there is no genuine verb doubling, but still an occurrence of two verbs: a lexical one (*come / komme*) and a modal one (*may / wolle* 'want'). The two constructions are also similar due to the cross-linguistic tendency to use subjunctive morphology.

(3) a. *English*
Come what may, I'll stay with you.

b. *German*

Komme wer da wolle, die Party wird
come.SBJV.3SG who.NOM PRT want.SBJV.3SG the party will
ein Erfolg werden.
a success become
'Whoever comes, the party will be a success.'
(Quer & Vicente 2009: 12,
via A. Kleemann-Krämer and G. Fanselow, p.c.)

c. *Czech*

Ať přijde kdo chce, oslava se bude konat.
AT comes who wants party REFL will take.place
'Whoever comes, the party will take place.'

This paper focuses on the type illustrated in (2), leaving a comparison between (2) and (3) for another occasion, and is based on evidence from selected Slavic and Romance languages in which doubling unconditionals are productive. I will argue that they can be brought in line with Rawlins's (2013) analysis of unconditionals in the following way: Doubling unconditionals involve wh-in-situ, where the wh-in-situ element is not just a plain wh-phrase, but in a fact a full-blown free relative. This free relative—semantically a definite description—is focused and as such introduces entity-level alternatives, which propagate to the propositional level, giving rise to a set of propositions at the level of the (un)conditional. Each of these propositions then functions as a conditional antecedent. I will first sketch the analysis (§2) and then provide evidence in its favor (§3). I close by a tentative generalization of the proposed analysis to all "headless" wh-based unconditionals (§4).

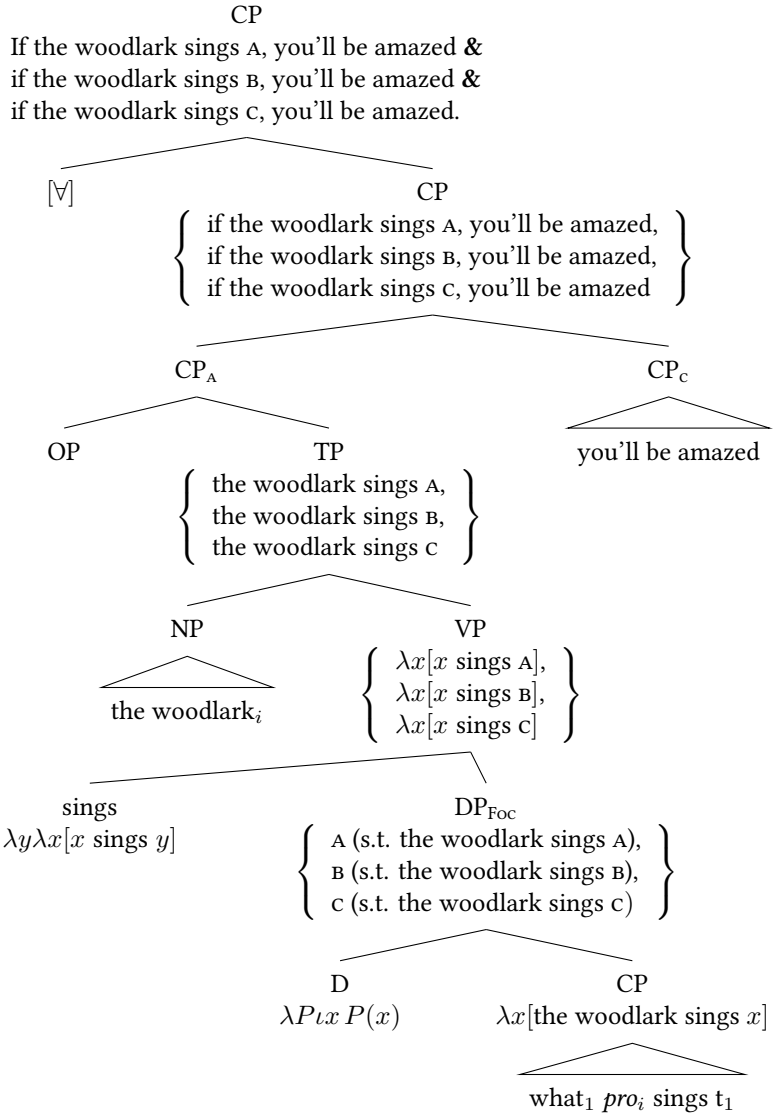
2 Proposal

Consider the Czech example (4) and the associated tree in (5).[1] The proposal is that the wh-structure *co zazpívá* 'what sings.pfv' is a **free relative** and as such it denotes a definite description (Jacobson 1995, Šimík 2016). On top of that, it is **focused** and as such it generates alternative denotations—alternative things that the woodlark sings. The focus-semantic value of the free relative is provided under node DP_{Foc} in (5); assuming a particular contextual restriction, the value is the set {a, b, c}, each member of that set being a woodlark song.[2] The focus semantic denotation propagates in a standard pointwise fashion to the propositional level, such that the TP denotes a set of propositions of the form 'the woodlark sings x', x being a woodlark song.[3] From this point, the account is no different from the one of Rawlins (2013). Each one of the propositions is used as a restrictor (in a pointwise fashion) of OP—a modal operator that generates the conditional semantics.[4] After the consequent is fed into the second argument slot of OP, we arrive at a set of conditionals, which gets turned into a single proposition by the alternative-sensitive operator $[\forall]$ (à la Kratzer & Shimoyama 2002). The resulting proposition is true iff each member of the set of conditionals is true.

1. For purposes of this paper, I am disregarding the clause-initial morpheme *ať*. It is homophonous with the morpheme used to form non-2nd person imperatives and a few broadly related functions. A very similar pattern obtains in Slovenian, which uses the functionally similar morpheme *naj*. Their role in (doubling) unconditionals is not clear at this point and awaits to be investigated.
2. I leave it open whether the expressions also have an ordinary semantic value or if only the focus semantic value is defined, similarly as in Beck's (2006) account of wh-questions.
3. I'm implicitly assuming Hagstrom (1998: 142) flexible function application, which allows composition of ordinary denotations with alternative denotations.
4. I leave the semantics of OP implicit for the sake of readability. However, the proposal implicitly builds on the classical account of Kratzer (1979, 2012). See Rawlins (2013) for an application to unconditionals compatible with the present proposal.

(4) Ať ten skřivan$_i$ zazpívá [$_{FR}$ co *pro*$_i$ zazpívá]$_{Foc}$, budeš
AT the woodlark sings.PFV what sings.PFV will.2SG
žasnout.
marvel
'Whatever the woodlark sings, you'll be amazed.'

(5)



3 Evidence

A number of kinds of evidence can be used to support the proposal. I will show that the wh-structure within the doubling unconditional (§3.1) is a free relative and that it is focused (§3.2).

3.1 The wh-structure is a free relative

It turns out that the wh-structure does not just contain a (doubled) verb, it contains a whole clause. If the unconditional involves a (di)transitive predication, as in (6b) and (6c), all obligatory arguments must be present in the wh-structure, albeit preferably in pronominal form. Likewise, obligatory elements such as auxiliary verbs (cf. *jsi* 'be.AUX.2SG' in 6b) also must be present.[5] The fact that we deal with a full and finite clause supports the idea that the wh-structure is a free relative rather than just a wh-phrase.

(6) *Czech*

a. INTRANSITIVE

Ať **usnul** kdo **usnul**, musíme ho vzbudit.
AT fell.asleep who fell.asleep must.1PL him wake.up
'Whoever fell asleep, we must wake him up.'

b. TRANSITIVE

Ať **jsi** **ten telefon** **našel** kde *(**jsi**)
AT be.AUX.2SG the phone.ACC found where be.AUX.2SG
*(**ho** / **ten telefon**) **našel**, je můj.
it.ACC the phone.ACC found is mine
'Wherever you found the phone, it's mine.'

5. It is possible though that there is some speaker variation. František Kratochvíl (p.c.) reports that he does not find pure verb doubling unacceptable.

c. ditransitive

Ať **ten telefon Marii dal** kdo *(**jí**) *(**ho**)
at the phone.acc Marie.dat gave who her.dat it.acc
dal, má problém.
gave has problem
'Whoever gave the phone to Mary, s/he has a problem.'

Full clause doubling happens also in Spanish, as illustrated in (7a). And strikingly, Spanish even allows headed relatives in doubling unconditionals, see (7b). The fact that the head is definite further supports the free relative analysis of the wh-structure (free relatives are definites).

(7) *Spanish*

a. **Se lo des** [$_{FR}$ cuando **se lo des**], lo
him it give.sbjv.2sg when him it give.sbjv.2sg it
perderá.
lose.fut.3sg
'Whenever you give it to him, he will lose it.'
(Josep Quer, p.c.)

b. **Compres** [$_{DP}$ el libro [$_{CP}$ que **compres**]], estaré
buy.sbjv.2sg the book comp buy.sbjv.2sg be.fut.1sg
contento.
happy
'Whatever book you buy, I'll be happy.'

Further evidence comes from wh-morphology. A language with two sets of wh-words—interrogative and relative—will use the relative kind in doubling unconditionals. In the examples below, Catalan uses *el que* 'what.rel' (lit. 'the what/that') rather than *què* 'what.inter', (8a), and Slovenian uses *kjer* 'where.rel' rather than *kje* 'where.inter'. This is predicted by the free relative analysis.

(8) a. *Catalan*

Diguin [FR **el que** diguin], continuarem amb
say.SBJV.3SG the that say.SBJV.3PL go.on.FUT.1PL with
la nostra protesta.
the our protest
'Whatever they say, we will go on with our protest.'
(Quer 1998: 237)

b. *Slovenian*

Naj živi [FR **kjer** živi], ne bom ga obiskal.
NAJ lives where.REL lives, NEG will.1SG him visit
'Wherever he lives, I won't visit him.' (Adrian Stegovec, p.c.)

The last piece of evidence I offer is that the wh-word in doubling unconditionals can be modified by the ever-morpheme typical of so called ever free relatives. The result is felt to be semantically redunant but grammatical, an intuition expressed in Quer & Vicente (2009) for Spanish and one that I can confirm for Czech, see (9).

(9) a. *Spanish*

Entre [FR **quien** (**-quiera** **que**) entre],
enter.SBJV.3SG who -EVER that enter.SBJV.3SG
sigue trabajando.
keep.IMP working
'Whoever comes in, I'll attack him.' (Quer 1998: 243)

b. *Czech*

Ať viděl [FR **co** (**-koliv**) viděl], nesmí to nikomu
AT saw what -EVER saw NEG.may it nobody.NCI
říct.
tell
'Whatever he saw, he can't tell it anybody.'

3.2 The wh-structure is focused

As it turns out, the wh-structure is not just in-situ, it must be focused. This follows from the proposal, where focussing the free relative is necessary to generate the required alternative denotations. In a language like Czech, focused phrases are typically placed in the clause-final position and, just like in German (Lenerz 1977), really hate to be scrambled (see Šimík & Wierzba 2017 for related experimental evidence). Therefore, the fact that the wh-structure in Czech doubling unconditionals must occupy the clause-final position, illustrated by the contrast in (10), supports the idea that it is focused.

(10) a. *Czech*

Ať dali **tu** **knížku** [$_{FR}$ **komu** **ji** **dali**],
AT gave.PL the book.ACC who.DAT it.ACC gave.PL
ztratila se.
lost RFL
'Whoever they gave the book to, it got lost.'

b. *Ať dali [$_{FR}$ **komu** **(ji)** **dali**] **tu** **knížku**,
AT gave.PL who.DAT it.ACC gave.PL the
ztratila se.
book.ACC lost
Intended: 'Whoever they gave the book to, it got lost.'

Prosodic evidence further corroborates the analysis: sentence stress within the unconditional obligatorily falls on the wh-word, as illustrated in (11). Provided that the whole free relative is focused (and not just the wh-word), the attested stress pattern follows from the ban on stressing given constituents in Czech (see Šimík & Wierzba 2015, 2017) and since the wh-word is the only non-given expression in the free relative, it is the only one to be able to realize the focus-related stress on the free relative.

(11) *Czech*

Ať to dal [$_{FR}$ **KOMU to dal**], ztratilo se to.
AT it gave.SG.M who.DAT it gave.SG.M lost RFL it
'Whoever he gave it to, it got lost.'

The situation in Spanish, albeit different, also supports the analysis. Sentence stress in Spanish doubling unconditionals is placed on the predicate in the wh-structure, as illustrated in (12). It is, therefore, placed within the free relative, supporting its focused nature. The reason why there is no stress shift to the wh-word is that given material in Spanish, in contrast to Czech, does not get de-accented; see Cruttenden (1993).

(12) *Spanish*

Venga [$_{FR}$ **quien VENGA**], estaré contento.
come.SBJV.3SG who come.SBJV.3SG be.FUT.1SG satisfied
'Whoever comes, I'll be happy.' (Josep Quer, p.c.)

4 Generalizing the analysis

There are reasons to believe that doubling unconditionals are simply overt exponents of what happens covertly in all headless wh-based unconditionals. There are two parameters to consider: (i) whether the wh-structure is in-situ or ex-situ and (ii) whether there is sluicing in the free relative or not. This generates the four types headless wh-based unconditionals schematized in (13).

(13) a. I give him [$_{FR}$ what(ever)$_1$ I give him t_1], … IN-SITU, DOUBLING
b. I give him [$_{FR}$ whatever$_1$ ~~I give him t_1~~], … IN-SITU, SLUICING
c. [$_{FR}$ what(ever)$_1$ I give him t_1]$_2$ I give him t_2, …EX-SITU, DOUBLING
d. [$_{FR}$ whatever$_1$ ~~I give him t_1~~]$_2$ I give him t_2, … EX-SITU, SLUICING

Type (13a) is the doubling unconditional discussed in this paper. Type (13b) exists in Czech and Slovenian, alongside type (13a), and is illus-

trated in (25). The Slovenian example (14b) exhibits two phenomena that can be considered arguments in favor of the sluicing-based analysis: the wh-word *kdorkoli* 'whoever' contains the morpheme *-r,* which is used to derive relative wh-words from interrogative ones (see the discussion above). This morpheme arguably spells out a relative complementizer (see Rudin 2014 and Franks & Rudin 2015 for that kind of analysis of the same kind of morpheme in Bulgarian and Macedonian), suggesting that even in the absence of a full-blown relative clause, the wh-word occupies the left periphery of one. The optional morpheme *že* not only can occur in a doubling unconditional but it is also one that can "survive" sluicing; for independent evidence from Slovenian wh-questions, see Marušič et al. (2018).

(14) a. *Czech*

Ať přijde kdokoli, budu spokojený.
AT come.3SG who.EVER will.be.1SG satisfied
'Whoever comes, I'll be happy.'

b. *Slovenian*

Naj pride kdorkoli (**že**), bom zadovoljen.
NAJ come.3SG who.REL.EVER already will.be.1SG
'Whoever comes, I'll be happy.' (Adrian Stegovec, p.c.)

Type (13d) is the type found in English and is arguably most common crosslinguistically. How about the remaining type (13c)? Gullì (2003) (here via Quer & Vicente 2009) reports data from Calabrian and Standard Italian showing the predicted pattern, i.e., what appears to be a free relative fronted to the left periphery. Given the productivity of focus fronting in Italian (dialects), it does not come as a surprise that the wh-structure in Italian doubling unconditionals gets fronted.

(15) a. *Calabrian*

[$_{FR}$ **Aundi vaju**]$_1$ **vaju** t$_1$, u viju.
where goes goes him see
'Wherever he goes, I see him.'
(Quer & Vicente 2009: 3; my analysis)

b. *Standard Italian*

[$_{FR}$ **Come la giri**]$_1$ **giri** t$_1$, è sempre la stessa cosa.
how it turn.2SG turn.2SG is always the same thing
'However you look at it, it's always the same.'
(Quer & Vicente 2009: 3; my analysis)

One suspect thing about the proposed generalization is that the wh-phrase in non-doubling unconditionals should be a sluicing remnant. Is it not a solid generalization that there is no sluicing in relative clauses, be it headed or free (see e.g. Lobeck 1995)? That certainly is a concern, but there is one intriguing piece of evidence that the analysis could be on the right track. Lipták (2015) shows that relative pronouns can be sluicing remnants in Hungarian. Consider example (16), where the relative pronoun *akivel* 'REL.who.with' is a sluicing remnant. There are at least two important facts about this construction in Hungarian that can be understood as arguments in favor of the sluicing-based analysis of wh-phrases in unconditionals. First, Hungarian relative sluicing occurs in light-headed relatives, free relatives, or comparatives—all of which fall into one broad class of relative clauses (cf. Pancheva Izvorski 2000). Second, the sluicing seems conditioned by the matrix clause containing the sluiced material—just as in unconditionals.[6]

6. This might not be immediately clear from (16), and many other examples in Lipták (2015), because the matrix clause itself involves ellipsis. But the English translation makes it clear: 'he met whoever ~~he met~~'.

(16) a. *Hungarian*

Ismerőssel eggyel találkozott, mulatságosnak
acquaintance.with one.with met.3sg funny.dat
találta, hogy éppen azzal, [RC akivel
found.3sg that just that.with rel.who.with
~~találkozott~~].
met.3sg

'Acquaintances, he met only one, and he found it funny that he met whoever he did.' (Lipták 2015: 189)

It is an open question why relative sluicing should be conditioned in just the way it appears to be. My hope is, however, that unconditionals could contribute to our understanding of this apparently rare phenomenon.

Bibliography

Beck, Sigrid. 2006. Intervention effects follow from focus interpretation. *Natural Language Semantics* 14(1). 1–56.

Cruttenden, Alan. 1993. The de-accenting and re-accenting of repeated lexical items. In David House & Paul Touati (eds.), *European Association of Speech Communication (ESCA) workshop on prosody* (Working Papers 41), 16–19. Lund, Sweden: Lund University, Department of Linguistics & Phonetics. https://www.isca-speech.org/archive%20open/archive%20papers/prosody%2093/pro3%20016.pdf.

Franks, Steven & Catherine Rudin. 2015. Invariant *-to* in Bulgarian. In Miriam Shrager, Edna Andrews, George Fowler & Steven Franks (eds.), *Studies in accentology and Slavic linguistics in honor of Ronald F. Feldstein*, 99–136. Bloomington, IN: Slavica.

Gullì, Antonio. 2003. *Phrasal reduplication in syntax*. New York City, NY: City University of New York, dissertation.

Hagstrom, Paul. 1998. *Decomposing questions*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, dissertation.

Jacobson, Pauline. 1995. On the quantificational force of English free relatives. In Emmon Bach, Eloise Jelinek, Angelika Kratzer & Barbara

Partee (eds.), *Quantification in natural languages*, vol. 2, 451–486. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer.

Kratzer, Angelika. 1979. Conditional necessity and possibility. In Rainer Bäuerle (ed.), *Semantics from different points of view*, 117–147. Berlin, Germany: Springer.

Kratzer, Angelika. 2012. *Modals and conditionals: New and revised perspectives*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Kratzer, Angelika & Junko Shimoyama. 2002. Indeterminate pronouns: The view from Japanese. In Yukio Otsu (ed.), *Proceedings of the 3rd Tokyo Conference on Psycholinguistics (TCP)*, 1–25. Tokyo, Japan: Hituzi Syobo.

Lenerz, Jürgen. 1977. *Zur Abfolge nominaler Satzglieder im Deutschen*. Tübingen, Germany: Narr.

Lipták, Anikó. 2015. Relative pronouns as sluicing remnants. In Katalin É. Kiss, Balázs Surányi & Éva Dékány (eds.), *Papers from the 2013 Piliscsaba Conference* (Approaches to Hungarian 14), 187–207. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.

Lobeck, Anne. 1995. *Ellipsis: Functional heads, licensing, and identification*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Marušič, Franc, Petra Mišmaš, Vesna Plesničar & Tina Šuligoj. 2018. Surviving sluicing. In Denisa Lenertová, Roland Meyer, Radek Šimík & Luka Szucsich (eds.), *Advances in formal Slavic linguistics 2016*. Berlin, Germany: Language Science Press.

Pancheva Izvorski, Roumyana. 2000. *Free relatives and related matters*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, dissertation.

Quer, Josep. 1998. *Mood at the interface*. Utrecht, Netherlands: Utrecht University, dissertation.

Rawlins, Kyle. 2013. (Un)conditionals. *Natural Language Semantics* 40(2). 111–178.

Rudin, Catherine. 2014. Sorting out *-to* and *-što*: Bulgarian and Macedonian relative markers. In Jacek Witkoś & Sylwester Jaworski (eds.), *New insights into Slavic linguistics*, 317–328. Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang.

Šimík, Radek. 2016. On the semantics of Czech free relatives. In Markéta Ziková & Pavel Caha (eds.), *Linguistica Brunensia: Festschrift for Petr Karlík*, vol. 64, 109–129. Brno, Czech Republic: Masaryk University.

Šimík, Radek & Marta Wierzba. 2015. The role of givenness, presupposition, and prosody in Czech word order: An experimental study. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 8(3). 1–103.
Šimík, Radek & Marta Wierzba. 2017. Expression of information structure in West Slavic: Modeling the impact of prosodic and word-order factors. *Language* 93(3). 671–709.