

A black and white illustration of a hand holding a globe. The globe depicts a living room scene with a man sitting on a sofa, a bookshelf, a window, and a chair. The hand is shown from the bottom, with fingers gripping the globe. The overall style is a detailed, textured drawing.

# INDEXICALS AND PERSPECTIVALS

PLIN0020 ADVANCED  
SEMANTIC THEORY

# INDEXICALS

# INDEXICALS

Expressions whose referents are determined in relation to utterance context are called **indexicals**.

*me*   *you*   *we*  
*here*   *there*  
*now*   *today*   *yesterday*  
*this*   *that*

Third person pronouns have demonstrative use (except for *it*), which can be considered indexical.

## MORE NUMBER MARKING

It's common to have sg-pl distinctions among 1st and 2nd person pronouns, even in languages that don't mark number on nouns (e.g. Mandarin Chinese, Japanese).

Some languages have more number categories, e.g. dual, and some mark inclusive vs. exclusive among non-singular 1st person pronouns.

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E.g. nominative pronouns in Hawai'ian:

		singular	dual	plural
1st	inclusive	—	<i>kāua</i>	<i>kākou</i>
	exclusive	<i>au</i>	<i>māua</i>	<i>mākou</i>
2nd		<i>'oe</i>	<i>'olua</i>	<i>'oukou</i>
3rd		<i>ia</i>	<i>lāua</i>	<i>lākou</i>

## AUGMENT-MINIMAL SYSTEM

Bobaljik (2008), Cysouw (2011), and Harbour (2016) propose to replace SG-DL-PL with the Augment-Minimal e.g. Ilocano pronouns:

		singular	dual	plural
1st	inclusive	—	<i>ta</i>	<i>tayo</i>
	exclusive	<i>co</i>	—	<i>mi</i>
2nd		<i>mo</i>	—	<i>yo</i>
3rd		<i>na</i>	—	<i>da</i>

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		minimal	augmented
1st	inclusive	<i>ta</i>	<i>tayo</i>
	exclusive	<i>co</i>	<i>mi</i>
2nd		<i>mo</i>	<i>yo</i>
3rd		<i>na</i>	<i>da</i>

# POLITENESS MARKING

Some languages have distinguish informal and formal 2nd person pronouns.

Some European languages reuse plural 2nd person pronouns (e.g. *vous* in French, *вы* in Russian) or 3rd person pronouns (e.g. *lei* in Italian, *Sie* in German).

Some have both sg and pl formal pronouns, e.g. *usted-ustedes* in Spanish.

Hungarian has three levels (*maga* literally means 'self'):

	informal	formal	formal?
sg	<i>te</i>	<i>ön</i>	<i>maga</i>
pl	<i>ti</i>	<i>önök</i>	<i>maguk</i>



## MORE DISTINCTIONS

Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai, etc. are languages with a lot of 1st/2nd person pronouns.

First-person pronominal forms			
	<i>Context</i>		
	<i>Formal</i>		<i>Informal</i>
Women	<i>watakushi</i> ( <i>atakushi</i> )	<i>watashi</i>	<i>atashi</i> ( <i>atai</i> )
Men	<i>watakushi</i> ( <i>jibun</i> )	<i>watashi</i> ( <i>washi</i> )	<i>boku</i> <i>ore</i>

Figure 6.2. Shibamoto-Smith's (2004) inventory of Japanese 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns (2004: 120)

(Christofaki 2018)

## 'IMPOSTERS'

Question: What counts as a 1st/2nd person pronoun?

In languages like Japanese and Vietnamese, it's not uncommon to use a proper name or a kinship term to refer to oneself or one's addressee.

*Imposters: yours truly, your faithful servant, my lord* (Collins & Postal 2012).

- ▶ Podobryaev (2017) claims that there are essential grammatical differences between imposters and *bona fide* 1st/2nd person pronouns.
- ▶ Christofaki (2018) claims that all personal pronouns in Japanese are imposters.

Possible project: Investigate the grammatical properties of imposters and other indexical expressions

# INDEXICAL SHIFT

# RIGIDITY

Indexicals 'directly refer' = don't interact with modals

- (1) a. *Paul likes me.*  
b. *Paul likes the person who's speaking.*
  
- (2) a. *Paul thinks that Mary hates me.*  
b. *Paul thinks that Mary hates the person who's speaking.*
  
- (3) a. *I could have been Dutch.*  
b. *The person who is speaking could have been Dutch.*

## QUOTATIONS

The only context where indexicals can be interpreted relative to other contexts than the current one is quotations.

(4) *Hans said, "I am Dutch".*

This is true in English but not in all languages.

# LANGUAGES WITH INDEXICAL SHIFT

## Amharic

(5) *John j̥əɡna n-ññ̃ yil-all*

John hero be-1sg says

'John says that {I am, he is} a hero.'

(Schlenker 2003: 68)

This sentence might be ambiguous between indirect vs. direct speech (quotation). But:

(6) *John j̥əɡna ləmin n-ññ̃ yil-all?*

John hero why cop.pres-1s says-3sm

'Why does John say that {I am, he is} a hero?'

(Anand 2006)

The *wh*-phrase can modify the embedded sentence.  
Quotations don't allow this!

# INDEXICAL SHIFT IN UYGHUR

Uyghur is a language where indexical shift is obligatory in finite complement clauses (Shklovsky & Sudo 2014).

(7) *Ahmet* [ *men ket-tim* ] *didi.*

Ahmet [ I left-1sg ] said

'Ahmet said that **he** left.'

(unavailable) 'Ahmet said that **I** left.'

(8) *Tursun Muhemmet-ke* [ *xet jaz-ding* ] *didi.*

Tursun Muhemmet-dat [ letter wrote-2sg ] said

'Tursun told Muhemmet that he (=Muhemmet) wrote a letter.'

(unavailable) 'Tursun told Muhemmet that you wrote a letter.'

# LONG-DISTANCE PHENOMENA

## Wh-extraction

- (9) *Tursun* [ *men kim-ni* *kör-dim* ] *didi?*  
Tursun [ I who-acc saw-1sg ] said  
'Who did Tursun say that he saw?'

Negative words like *hichkim* 'anybody' must co-occur with negation.

- (10) *Tursun* [ *men hichkim-ni* *kör-dim* ] *di-mi-di?*  
Tursun [ I anybody-acc saw-1sg ] say-NEG-past.3  
'Tursun didn't say that he saw anybody?'



## NOMINALIZED CLAUSES

Indexical shift not observed in nominalized clauses.

- (11) *Ahmet* [ *mening kit-ken-lik-im-ni* ] *didi*  
Ahmet [ my leave-REL-NML-1sg-acc ] said  
'Ahmet said that I left.'
- (12) *Tursun Muhemmet-ke* [ *xet jaz-ghan-liq-ing-ni* ] *didi*  
Tursun Muhemmet-DAt [ letter write-REL-2sg-acc ] said  
Tursun told Muhemmet that you wrote a letter.'

Nominalized complements are just like English, suggesting that the semantics of indexicals and attitude predicates like *say* are the same as in English.

## PARTIAL SHIFTING

Another notable feature of Uyghur is that accusative subjects never shift.

(13) *Tursun* [ *men* *ket-tim* ] *didi*  
Tursun [ I.nom left-1sg ] said  
'Tursun said that he left.'

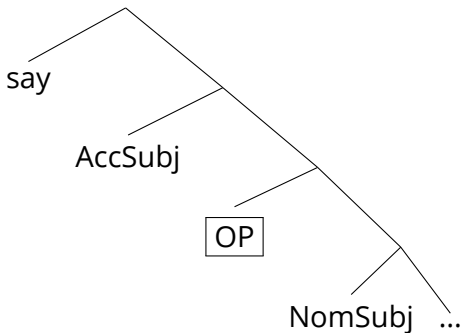
(14) *Tursun* [ *meni* *ket-ti* ] *didi*  
Tursun [ me.acc left-3 ] said  
'Tursun said that I left.'

Note also that the verb in (14) agrees in 3rd person (because in the embedded context, the first person would be Tursun!).

## THEORETICAL IDEA

Using a variety of diagnostics, Shklovsky & Sudo (2014) argue that the ACC subject is structurally lower than the embedding verb but higher than the NOM subject.

They propose that there is an operator that triggers indexical shift between them (maybe the complementizer).



# TYPOLOGY

- ▶ English doesn't have the operator.  
⇒ No indexical shift
- ▶ Nominalized clauses in Uyghur cannot contain the operator.  
⇒ No indexical shift
- ▶ In Amharic and Zazaki, finite clauses may but don't need to contain the operator.  
⇒ Optional indexical shift
- ▶ Uyghur finite clauses must contain the operator.  
⇒ Obligatory indexical shift

Alleged universal (unexplained): No languages seem to use the operator in a non-finite clause, or in a finite but non-attitude clause (e.g. *it is possible that...*, *if ...*).

## MORE ON VARIATION

Further variation among languages with indexical shift:

Sudo (2012) observes that Uyghur indexical shift happens under all sorts of attitude predicates: *de-* 'say', *maxtan-* 'brag', *aghrin-* 'complain', *bil-* 'think/know', *oyla-* 'think', *ümid qil-* 'hope', *xejal qil-* 'dream', *angla-* 'hear'.

Slave/Slavey/Dene K'e seems to be a language like Uyghur, but more data need to be gathered.

In Amharic and Zazaki, indexical shift happens only under the verb *say/tell*.

See Anand (2006).

## MORE ON VARIATION

Another locus of variation: Which indexicals shift (and where)?

In Uyghur 2nd person pronouns shift, but only when there's an addressee argument of the embedding predicate. E.g. doesn't shift under *think* and is ungrammatical.

*Hear* is an interesting case: shifted 1st person refers to the original hearer, and 2nd person is ungrammatical.

- (15) *Ahmet Aygül-din* [ *qaysi imtihan-din öt-tim* *dep* ] *angladi*.  
Ahmet Aygül-from [ which text-from passed-1sg C ] heard  
'Which test did Ahmet hear from Aygül that he passed?'
- (16) \**Ahmet Aygül-din* [ *qaysi imtihan-din öt-ting* *dep* ] *angladi*.  
Ahmet Aygül-from [ which text-from passed-2sg C ] heard  
(intended) 'Which test did Ahmet hear from Aygül that she passed?'

## INDEIXCAL ADVERBIALS

In Uyghur, locative indexicals like *here* do not seem to shift, and the judgments about temporal indexicals like *today* and *yesterday* are not stable.

In Zazaki indexical adverbials seem to shift.

- (17) *Waxto kε ma Diyarbekir-de bime, Heseni; mɨ-ra*  
When that we Diyarbekir-at were, Hesen.obl me-at  
*va [ kε o<sub>i/j</sub> ita ame dina ]*  
said [ that he here came world ]  
'When we were in Diyarbekir, Heseni<sub>i</sub> told me he<sub>i/j</sub> was  
born {here, Diyarbekir}.'  
(Anand 2006)

## SHIFTY AGREEMENT

Podobyaev (2014) observes that in Misha Tatar, overt indexicals do not shift, but null indexicals (optionally) do.

- (18) *Alsu* [ *min* *kaja* *kitte-m* *diep* ] *ar'tɘ?*  
Alsu [ I where left-1sg C ] said  
'Which place did Alsu say that I went?'  
(unavailable) 'Which place did Alsu say that she went?'
- (19) *Alsu* [ *kaja* *kitte-m* *diep* ] *ar'tɘ?*  
Alsu [ where left-1sg C ] said  
'Which place did Alsu say that I went?'  
'Which place did Alsu say that she went?'

(from Podobryaev 2014)



# PERSPECTIVE SENSITIVE ITEMS

## PERSPECTIVE SENSITIVITY

The truth/falsity of sentences containing expressions like *left* and *right* is dependent on the 'perspective' one takes.

(20) *Paul is standing to the left of the tree.*

Let us call such expressions *perspective sensitive items (PSIs)*.

Other (potential) PSIs:

- ▶ Predicates of personal state, e.g. *tasty*
- ▶ Socio-cultural expressions, e.g. *foreigner*
- ▶ Epistemic modals and evidentials, e.g. *might*

## CONTEXT SENSITIVITY

PSIs are context-sensitive, just like indexicals, but whose perspective one takes is only very loosely determined.

E.g. the perspective does not need to be the speaker's.

- (21) a. *Please flip over the card on the left.*  
b. *Paul threw a ball at me. The ball curved to the left.*

## 'COME' AND 'GO'

*Come* and *go* are perspective sensitive.

- (22) a. *Natasha is coming to the party now.*  
b. *Natasha is going to the party now.*

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- (22) a. *Natasha is coming to the party now.*  
b. *Natasha is going to the party now.*

Roughly, if something is moving towards the perspectival center (PC), *come*; otherwise, *go*.

Complication: The goal location can be something that the is associated with PC, rather than their physical location (in English; but not in Brazilian Portuguese).

- (23) *Chomsky is coming to Tokyo.*

But consider:

- (24) *The police/My brother came to my sister's place and asked a lot of questions about me.*

## WHO'S PC?

PC can be the addressee:

- (25) Context: I'm in London, on the phone with Natasha in Moscow.
- a. *Chomsky is coming to Russia next week.*
  - b. ?*Chomsky is going to Russia next week.*

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PC can be in a past location:

(26) I was in Paris last week.

a. *Lisa came to see me.*

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  - b. *#Lisa went to see me.*

If in the future, *go* is also an option.

- (27) I am going to a conference in Amsterdam next month.
- a. *Sam is coming to the same conference.*
  - b. *Sam is going to the same conference.*



# SHIFTING

PSI can shift in attitude contexts too.

(28) *Paul came to my office, and told me that Andrew was coming to his place.*

The speaker is PC for the first come *come*, and Paul for the second.

Recall that indexicals don't shift in English, so this is a different (though similar) phenomenon to indexical shift.

## MORE SHIFTING

Other shifting contexts:

- ▶ Conditionals

(29) *If anyone comes/goes to Moscow, Sasha will take them to VDNKh.*

- ▶ Shifting to the subject

(30) *Sasha recommends VDNKh to anyone who comes/goes to Moscow.*

## CROSSLINGUISTIC VARIATION?

Perspectival shift is potentially universal.

Russian has the prefix *pri-* with a motion verb to mean something close to *come*, but the conditions of its use are not the same as *come*. Cf. *arrive*.

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Russian has the prefix *pri-* with a motion verb to mean something close to *come*, but the conditions of its use are not the same as *come*. Cf. *arrive*.

Some languages lexically distinguish movement to the speaker vs. movement to the addressee, e.g. Palauan (Nakazawa 2007).

- me* if goal = speaker's location
- eko* if goal = addressee's location
- mo* if neither ( $\approx$  go)

No information about the shifting behavior of these items.

## MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE ADDRESSEE

In English, German, Italian, Catalan, Fukuoka Japanese, etc. if the speaker is moving to the addressee, *come* must be used.

(31) *I'll {come, #go} to your office later to talk to you.*

In Tokyo Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Uyghur, etc. *go* must be used.

In English, German, Japanese, Korean, etc. when a third person is moving towards the addressee, *come* is at least possible.

(32) *Natasha is coming to your office later.*

In Thai, Shibe, etc. this must be *go* (Nakazawa 2007).

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For more information about *come* and *go* and other related items, see my handout (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucjtudo/Rutgers/seminar.pdf>) and references there.