

Pronoun-agreement mismatches in Telugu

Troy Messick

University of Connecticut

INTRODUCTION: Schlenker (1999) proposes that pronouns under the *de se* reading in embedded speech reports are semantically bound by an embedded author coordinate even though the morphological form of the pronoun can be 3rd person. So he argues that in (1) under the *de se* interpretation, even though the embedded subject appears to be morphologically 3rd person, it is semantically 1st person.

(1) John_i said he_i passed the exam.

In this paper, I present novel data from Telugu which reveals a previously unobserved pattern that provides evidence that 3rd person pronouns in *de se* contexts are semantically 1st person.

PRELIMINARY DATA: In Telugu (Dravidian), the 3rd person *tanu* can control either 3rd person (2a) or 1st person (2b) agreement with the verb when embedded under an attitude verb.

(2) Raani [**tanu** exam pass {a. ajj- **ind**-ani b. ajj-aa-**nu**-ani}] nammuṭ-undī
Rani [**3SG** exam pass {a. happen- **F.SG-C** b. happen-**PAST-1SG-C**}] believe-F.SG
“Rani believes that she passed the exam”

THE STATUS OF *tanu*: Although *tanu* is cognate of the logophoric/anaphoric *ta(a)n* found in Dravidian languages (see Anand 2006 for Malayalam, Sundaresan 2013 for Tamil) and was evidently once logophoric itself, in current usage, Telugu *tanu* is a simple/non-logophoric 3rd person pronoun (Krishnamurti & Gwynn 1985:73).

AN INSTANCE OF INDEXICAL SHIFT: The phenomenon noted in Telugu is reminiscent of indexical shift (Schlenker 2003, Anand & Nevins 2004 a.o.). However, in languages that allow indexical shift, the indexicals themselves are the elements that shift (though see Sundaresan 2013 for cases where there is apparent 1st person agreement with a logophoric subject). For example, the first person pronoun *ez* in Zazaki can refer to the author of the reported speech act (Anand & Nevins 2004). In (2), however, it is not the indexical itself that shifts. It is only the agreement on the verb that appears to be 1st person. In Telugu, if the first person indexical *neenu* is used, it must refer to the current speaker.

(3) raaju [neenu eemi tinn-aa-nu ani] čepp-ææ-Du
Raju [I what eat-PAST-1SG C] say-PAST-M.SG
a. “#What did Raju say that he ate?” b. “What did Raju say that I ate?”

OBLIGATORILY *DE SE*: Evidence that it is the *de se* reading that conditions the 1st agreement comes from (4). The scenario in (4), which forces the *de re* reading, only (2a) could be uttered felicitously.

(4) *Situation:* Rani took an exam, and later saw the top 10 scores with the respective ID numbers. She forgot her own ID number, so didn’t know who was who. Pointing to the top score, she thought, “This student definitely passed!” But it turned out that she was that student. a. (2a) OK b. (2b) #

ANALYSIS: To account for the fact that in *de se* readings in Telugu, first person agreement appears on the verb despite the subject being a 3rd person pronoun, I assume, following Schlenker (1999) and von Stechow (2003), that pronouns in *de se* readings are bound by an embedded author coordinate but morphologically appear to be 3rd person. I implement this using Kratzer (2009)’s minimal pronoun theory, and the interpretable/uninterpretable distinction proposed in Chomsky (2000, 2001). The minimal pronoun that begins the derivation has both an interpretable and uninterpretable person feature. This is similar to the idea that nominals have both CONCORD and INDEX features in Wechsler & Zlatić (2000, 2003). Both of these features begin the derivation unvalued. In Telugu, as well as English, the pronoun is bound by the author coordinate of the embedded context as in Schlenker (1999) and its interpretable person feature is valued as 1st. The uninterpretable person feature

of the pronoun is valued by feature transmission with the 3rd person matrix subject. I treat feature transmission as post-syntactic feature agreement (Heim 2008, Landau to appear).

(5) a. [VP DP_[iPerson: 3rd] [V [CP... X_[iPerson: __ uPerson: __] ...]]]

b. After intensional functional application:

[VP DP_[iPerson: 3rd] [V λ_{<x,(y),t,w>}[CP... X_[iPerson: 1st uPerson: __] ...]]]

┌──────────┐

Binding

c. After feature transmission in the post syntax (Heim 2008):

[VP DP_[iPerson: 3rd] [V λ_{<x,(y),t,w>}[CP... X_[iPerson: 1st uPerson: 3rd] ...]]]

┌──────────────────────────┐

Feature Transmission

So the person features for a *de se* pronoun in Telugu and English are [iPerson: 1st uPerson: 3rd]. In Telugu, both the interpretable and uninterpretable feature of a DP are available for agreement with verbal complex. This is similar to semantic agreement (Corbett 1979) like number agreement in British English where either the semantically interpretable plural feature or the formal uninterpretable singular feature can control verbal agreement.

(6) The committee {a. has b. %have} decided. (Corbett 1979:203)

Following Smith (2012) and Bhatt & Walkow (2013), I account for this optionality by allowing agreement to occur either in the syntax or post-syntactically. When agreement with the verbal complex occurs in the syntax, the semantically interpretable features of the DP are available for agreement. For Telugu embedded pronouns under the *de se* reading, this would result in the verbal complex being valued as 1st person. When agreement occurs post-syntactically, the formal morphological features are available for agreement. Turning to Telugu embedded pronouns under the *de se* reading again, this would result in the verbal complex being valued 3rd person.

FURTHER IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION: This paper concludes by examining the cross-linguistic implications of this analysis. I show that the 1st person agreement with 3rd person pronouns occurs in Karimonjong (Nilo-Saharan) (Curnow 2002).

(6) àbó papà tolim [èbè àlòzì iṅèz morotó]
 AUX father say [that 1SG.GO.NONPAST 3SG Moroto]

‘The father said that he is going to Moroto’

I then show how this analysis can be extended to account for 1st agreement with logophors found in Donno Sò (Dogon) Curly (1994) (7) and Tamil (Dravidian) (Sundaresan 2013).

(7) Oumar [inyemɛ jɛmbɔ paza bolum] miñ tagi
 Oumar [LOG sack.DF drop left.1SG] 1SG.OBJ informed

‘Oumar told me that he had left without the sack’

Under Schlenker (1999)’s account, logophors are also bound by the embedded author coordinate and thus would also have semantically first person features, allowing for the embedded verbal complex to target them for agreement. To conclude, this paper presents an analysis of 1st person agreement with 3rd person pronoun embedded under attitude verbs. The mismatch is treated as an instance of semantic agreement.

REFERENCES: Anand & Nevins 2004. Shifty Operators in changing contexts. *SALT*. Bhatt & Walkow 2013. Locating agreement in grammar. *NLLT* Curly 1994. Aspects of logophoric marking. *Linguistics*. Curnow 2002. Three types of verbal logophoricity in African languages. *Studies in African linguistics*. Heim 2008. Features on bound Pronouns. Kratzer. 2009. Making a pronoun. *LI*. Krishnamurti & Gwynn. 1985. *A grammar of modern Telugu*. Landau to appear. Agreement at PF: An argument from partial control. *Syntax*. Schlenker 1999. Propositional attitudes and indexicality. von Stechow 2003. Feature Deletion under semantic binding. *NELS*. Sundaresan 2013. Context and (co)reference. Wechsler & Zlatić 2003. *The many faces of agreement*.