A curious 3/4 paradigmatic gap in shifty pronouns

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This abstract combines, for the first time, ideas on indexical-shift with insights into pronominal structure & licensing. Among other things, this explains a hitherto unstudied paradigm gap in the exponence of "indexical doublets" across languages. Indexical shift (Schlenker, 1999, 2003, a.o.) obtains when indexical pronouns ('I', 'you', 'here' ,'now') in an attitude-report are evaluated w.r.t. the *<Speaker, Addressee, Location, Time>* of the intensional, not the utterance, event (1):

(1) Ahmet [[men] ket-tim]   di-di.
     Ahmet [1SG   leave-PST.1SG say-PST.3
     'Ahmet$_i$ said that I$_i$ left.' $\approx$ Ahmet$_i$ said that he$_i$ left. (Shklovsky and Sudo, 2014, Ex. 4b)

Anand (2006), Deal (2020) a.o. propose that indexical-shift is due to a contextual operator (or "monster"/☺) which overwrites the utterance-context with the intensional one: all indexicals in its scope thus get evaluated w.r.t. the latter, not the former. Support comes from the "Shift Together Constraint", i.e. that a shifty indexical cannot shift to the exclusion of another in its local domain.

But exceptions to Shift Together have been reported for some languages (see e.g. Sundaresan, 2018) involving locally co-occurring "indexical doublets" – two indexicals of the same class (e.g. both 'I' or both 'you') which differ minimally w.r.t. shiftiness. Such exceptions suggest that indexical-shift is not due to context-overwriting, but must stem from the lexical specification of an indexical working in tandem with a ☺ which shifts the utterance-context but crucially doesn't overwrite it (Schlenker, 2003, et seq.). Curiously, such doublets also show a 3/4 paradigm gap crosslinguistically – languages where the shifty indexical *alone* in the doublet is overt, are unattested (2):

(2) Hitherto undiscussed 3/4 paradigmatic gap for indexical doublets:

Shifting indexical	Unshifting indexical	Language
Overt	Overt	Zazaki (Anand, 2006)
Covert	Covert	Amharic (Schlenker, 2003)
Covert	Overt	Mishar Tatar (Podobryaev, 2014)
Overt	Covert	*unattested*

Background assumptions: **I.** indexical-shift is not just (LF-)semantic, but is also encoded in (narrow-)syntax: e.g. such shifting is sensitive to the structural position of the ☺ (Shklovsky and Sudo, 2014, for Uyghur) and can feed syntactic verbal agreement (Sundaresan, 2012, for Tamil). Morphosyntactic evidence (Wurmbrand and Lohninger, 2023) suggests that the ☺ is encoded on a C head embedded under an attitude verb. **II.** Cardinaletti and Starke (1999) & Déchaine and Wiltschko (2002) argue that pronouns crosslinguistically are structurally heterogenous as in (3a)-(3c), based on systematic variation holding in morphological complexity, (c)overtness, bound-variable behavior, and syntactic distribution:

(3) a. Strong pronoun/Pro-DP   b. Weak pronoun/Pro-ϕP   c. Clitic/Pro-NP

III. Prior analyses of person hierarchy effects, like the PCC (Bonet, 1991), argue that 1st- and 2nd-(but not 3rd)-person pronouns must be syntactically licensed, e.g. via Agree with a C head
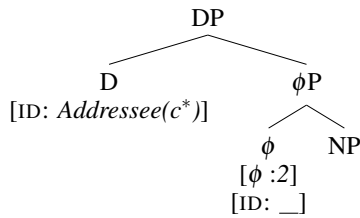
(Béjar and Rezac, 2003; Baker, 2008, a.o.). This jives well with independent research on speech-act syntax (Speas and Tenny, 2003; Zu, 2015; Miyagawa, 2017, a.o.) arguing that the speaker and/or addressee must be syntactically represented in the clausal periphery. Crucially, a sub-strand of this research (Ritter and Wiltschko, 2009; Gruber, 2013; Martin and Hinzen, 2014) has argued that speaker/addressee information may also be represented in the nominal periphery, on D. This means that a 1st/2nd-person pronoun may, in principle, be licensed not only by C, but also by D.

Proposal: Per Kaplan (1977), an indexical is a purely context-sensitive expression. Given **I**, I propose that the syntactic correlate of this is that an indexical is a context-deficient probe, with an unvalued contextual feature [ID:__] (Raynaud, 2020). Per **III**, [ID:__] must be licensed via upward Agree by a valued [ID] (e.g. [ID: *S(peaker)*] or [ID: *A(ddressee)*], Baker, 2008) on a minimally c-commanding C or D head. Given **II**, an indexical pronoun can structurally vary as in (3a)-(3c).

Putting these together, it immediately follows that a Pro-ϕP (3b) or Pro-NP (3c) 1st/2nd-person indexical, lacking D, will *have no choice* but to be valued by on [ID: *S*]/[ID: *A*] on the closest C; likewise, a Pro-DP 1st/2nd-indexical (3a) will *have no choice* but to be valued by its own D head, which is minimally closer than C (cf. Stegovec, 2020, for an analogous explanation for Slovenian PCC effects). Now, since a 👻, when present, is encoded on embedded C (**I**), only this C may bear a valued [ID: *S*]/[ID: *A*] denoting the *speaker/addressee* of the intensional context. Possible values for [ID] on D, in contrast, can only reflect utterance-contextual information.

This state-of-affairs entails the following. Since the [ID:__] probe on an embedded pro-DP indexical can only Agree with a valued [ID] on D, which cannot host a 👻, it can *never shift* (4a). Since the [ID:__] on an embedded Pro-ϕP (or clitic Pro-NP) can only be valued by the closest C head bearing valued [ID], and embedded C can host a 👻, it *can, in principle, shift* (4b):

(4) a. Unshiftable, strong 'you':   b. Shiftable, weak 'you':
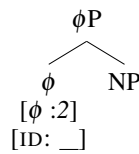
Note that simply being a Pro-ϕP or Pro-NP indexical is not enough for such shifting to obtain. Such an indexical will shift only if the [ID] feature on its C goal necessarily reflects information pertaining to the intensional context. If embedded C were instead to bear [ID] values pertaining to the utterance-context, a Pro-ϕP/Pro-NP in its scope could never shift. Finally, in clauses lacking a C head, an upward probing Pro-ϕP/Pro-NP indexical will fail to find a goal, thus [ID:__] will remain unvalued. I propose that Agree is fallible and defaults to the utterance-context (Preminger, 2014) in this case. This explains why C-less clauses never shift (Wurmbrand and Lohninger, 2023).

Fulfilled predictions: Exceptions to Shift Together are correctly predicted to exist whenever a 1st/2nd pro-ϕP/pro-NP locally co-occurs with a 1st/2nd pro-DP under the right 👻. The exceptionality of Shift Together reduces to that of indexical doublets crosslinguistically. This analysis also predicts the gap in (2). The missing cell in (2) would reflect a hypothetical scenario where a(n) (un-shifting) 1st/2nd Pro-DP (3a) has zero exponence while its (shifty) 1st/2nd Pro-ϕP/Pro-NP counterpart, whose structure corresponds to a proper subset of that for the Pro-DP, is overtly spelled-out. While not impossible, this would require spell-out rules (e.g. under DM or Nanosyntax) effectively yielding suppletion where, further, the variant spelling out the *larger* Pro-DP syntactic structure is null – a highly marked scenario. Finally, the current proposal also explains the No Intervening Binder restriction, which prevents an indexical from being evaluated wrt. some context c if there is an intervening context c' (Deal, 2017, 19, Ex. 33). Under the current proposal, this falls out straightforwardly as a Relativized Minimality constraint on [ID] valuation under Agree.

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