

Construing personal pronouns without features

One of the fundamental problems in accounting for pronoun construal is that in some situations they are subject to pragmatic interpretation, as in identifying co-referents in anaphoric contexts (1) or directly being associated with referents in indexical uses (2); while in other (bound) contexts their interpretation is entirely dependent on the semantics of the construction (3).

- (1) I helped a student with her assignment. She was happier after that. [Co-referring]
- (2) SHE's the best student in the class. [Indexical]
- (3) Every man thinks he's clever. [Bound]

In Dynamic Syntax (Kempson et al. 2001, Cann et al. 2005), a unitary account of these apparently irreconcilable construal is provided by the use of placeholder metavariables for third person pronouns, with free contextual update, with the process of term evaluation ensuring bound interpretations in the appropriate contexts. With first and second person pronouns, matters are different either the singular versions requiring direct indexical interpretation without any descriptive content or the possibility of binding:

- (4) I_i thought I_i did well.
- (5) I_i thought the current speaker $_{*i}$ did well.
- (6) Every current speaker $_i$ thought I_{*i} did well. (Intended: Every current speaker thought they did well)

Given the resistance of first and second person pronouns to replacement by apparently descriptively equivalent terms or of being bound by quantificational terms, such pronouns should not be analysed in terms of metavariables but as directly accessing the context and returning appropriate values given by some sort of speech act index along the lines proposed by Kaplan and others. But things change the plural where binding (and indeed co-reference) are now possible:

- (7) Each of my neighbours is so pleasant that we often end up spending more time with each other than with our families.
- (8) You and every colleague of yours must ensure that you give appropriate feedback to your students.

In (7), the pronouns *we* and *our* are partly indexically construed as involving the speaker and partly bound by the third person singular matrix subject. In (8), the second instance of *you* is second person but also partly bound by the third person singular second conjunct in the matrix subject. Furthermore, there are instances of 'double binding' with third person plural pronouns as in (9) where two singular terms bind a plural pronoun:

- (9) Every student asked some lecturer whether they could work on a project together.

For theories of grammar that utilise features as grammatical tools, such apparent mismatches in person and number are significantly problematic, requiring such features to be uninterpretable in binding contexts but semantically potent in other contexts; or there need to be complex 'spell out' rules for feature bundles realised as pronouns (see for example Schlenker 2004, Kratzer 2009 *inter alia multa*). From a more philosophical perspective, the examples in (7) pose problems for the idea that first and second person pronouns are inherently indexical, taking their reference directly from the situational context of an utterance and involving, perhaps, some notion of self ascription of the relevant discourse role (Wechsler 2010).

In this paper, I extend the theory of pronominal anaphora in Dynamic Syntax to include plural pronouns and first and second person pronouns, showing how the introduction into the context of a speech act index allows a straightforward analysis of indexical reference while the use of the LINK mechanism provides a means of accounting for partial anaphora and binding of plural pronouns.

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