Some Modifications to Bassi's Theory of Fake Indexicals

Daniel Tiskin · ⊠ · Higher School of Economics St Petersburg

Introduction. Fake Indexicals (FIs) are the uses of indexicals (importantly, 1st- and 2nd-person pronouns and verbal morphology) that function as bound variables rather than denote their usual contextual referents at least at some level of meaning (presupposition or assertion). Two prominent types of FIs are pronouns bound by focused antecedents (1) and bound pronouns in the scope of certain quantifiers, often in relative clauses (RCs) (2)—only relevant readings are given here.

(1)   Even I did **my** homework. (modified from Irene Heim, Schlenker 2004)
       presupposes: others did **their** homework (and this is more expected than that I would)

(2)   I am the only one around here who will admit that **I** could be wrong. (Partee 1989)
       asserts: others will not admit that **they** could be wrong

Influential analyses either model focus in a way that prohibits the ϕ-features on pronouns from entering into the computation of focus alternatives (Sauerland 2013) or stipulate ambiguity in pronouns: some are born with ϕ-features and simply refer, while some are born "minimal" and acquire the features that determine their exponence via a feature transmission mechanism, which critically involves binding so that they 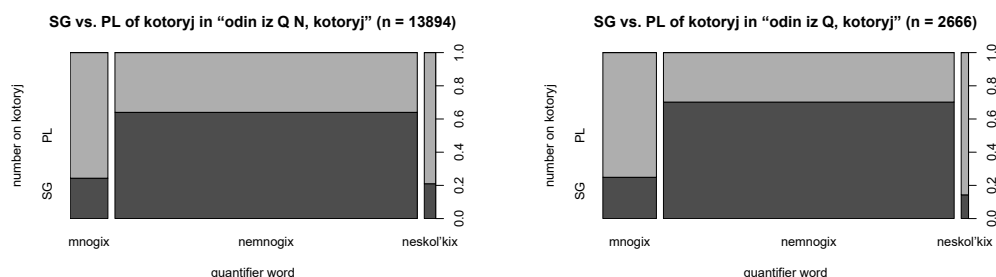end up as FIs (Kratzer 2009; Ivan & Mirrazi 2019). Bassi (2021) avoids both ambiguity and complex semantics of focus by suggesting that pronouns are born with indices but acquire ϕ-features post-syntactically by inspecting the features of the index's referent (Valuation from Context, VfC). If bound, as in *Only Mary / Every girl submitted her paper*, their features are determined by examining all values in the local range of the variable (all female $\Rightarrow$ use *her*). For RCs, Bassi must therefore argue that the binder is the matrix subject, despite syntactic distance; he suggests that the RC moves rightward, shortening the distance:

(3)   I am [PredP [PredP the only one [CP ~~who finished my paper~~]] [CP who finished **my** paper]]]

As an argument, Bassi point to partitive cases where the verb in the RC gets singular agreement as if it was controlled by *one* rather than *few*, in which case it would be plural. This phenomenon patterns together with **FIs** but precludes *NPIs*, which are not licensed outside the scope of *few* (4).

(4)   a.   Mary is [[one of the few students] [who (*ever*) submits **her** papers on time].
       b.   Mary is [one of [the few students [who *ever* submit their papers on time]]].

Relative Clauses. Peculiarly, Bassi postulates the double semantic contribution of the moved RC, although the contribution of the higher copy is redundant. This is unlike Trace Conversion (Fox 2002), where the trace behaves as a bound variable, or reconstruction, where the higher copy does not contribute. Even assuming reconstruction, the reason for movement is unclear.

A more traditional analysis is thus called for. In Russian, singular agreement is substandard but frequently used (*pace* Longenbaugh 2019) and to some extent lexically conditioned, e.g. used significantly more often with the quantifier *nemnogix* 'few'—despite its ability to license NPIs— than with *mnogix* 'many' or *nekotoryx* 'some' both with and without the quantified noun before the RC (Araneum Russicum Maximum corpus, restrictive and non-restrictive RC included; I study *kotoryj* 'which' rather than *kto* 'who' as the latter can induce singular agreement by itself).

SG vs. PL of kotoryj in "odin iz Q N, kotoryj" (n = 13894)

SG vs. PL of kotoryj in "odin iz Q, kotoryj" (n = 2666)

Moreover, partitive constructions with RCs are marginally available with a demonstrative (5), suggesting that at least for some speakers *odin* is not necessarily the highest head so the RC can attach above it but still below the demonstrative head of the DP.

(5)   Moloko Tëma — **tot** odin iz nemnogiz produktov, **kotoryj** ja pokupaju reguljarno. (Web)
        'The milk *Tyoma* is **that** one of the few products **which** [SG] I buy regularly'

Given this, I suggest that instances of singular agreement and other FI effects should be analysed without movement, with the RC generated above the quantifier word, so NPIs are not licensed:

(6)   [$_{DP}$ ∅/tot [$_{NP}$ [odin iz [$_{DP}$ nemnogix produktov]] [$_{CP}$ kotoryj …]]]

(a rough but not unconventional outline of structure, cf. Knyazev 2023). The meaning of the RC's sister is then 'one of the few (Ns) that have the salient property P,' while the RC specifies the P and is therefore restrictive. As regards the distance between the RC and the matrix subject (which was Bassi's motivation for positing the movement of RCs), the idea that FIs in the RC are bound from outside the DP containing the RC may be misguided: at least the head of the RC also plays a role, as FIs are impossible in French if there is an overt head, i.e. are possible with *le seul* ∅ 'the only' but not *le seul étudiant* 'the only student' (Charnavel & Sportiche 2023). Charnavel and Sportiche's suggestion that null heads can have ϕ-features may be incorporated into a Bassi-style account. With the head noun matching the deleted head within the RC ((7), cf. Longenbaugh 2019), the $\boxed{\text{minimal pronoun}}$ bound by (the trace of) *Op étudiant* will surface as 3rd-person. With the null pronominal having 1st- or 2nd-person features as it refers to a group including the speaker (resp. addressee), the minimal pronoun will surface as 1st- or 2nd-person.

(7)   [$_{DP}$ le seul [$_{NP}$ étudiant [$_{CP}$ [$_{DP}$ *Op* ~~étudiant~~]$_1$ que t_1 … $\boxed{\text{FI?}}$ …]]]

"Fake" full DPs. One reason to preserve the basics of Bassi's approach is its uniformity w.r.t. the acquisition of features in context. E.g. he treats reflexives as minimal pronouns that acquire the reflexive feature due to its syntactic position (defined by Binding Theory). Rather than as an arity reducer or as carrying an identity presupposition (options #1–3 in Sportiche 2023), *-self* is thus viewed as signaling (local) coreference/covariation that already obtains, not imposing it.

This approach also has a unifying potential as it can be extended to cases of bound uses of full DPs apparently violating Condition C. For Thai, where some DPs that would be R-expressions in English can be bound by their own higher copies, Lee (2003) offers an analysis based on the [COPY] feature that requires a bound pronoun to assume the exponence of its binder. As binding of full DPs in Thai is limited to honorifics and proper names, Chaiphet & Jenks (2021) reject this analysis in favour of assuming, on a par with ϕ-features on indices (Sudo 2012), a feature for each honorific or proper name (!) so that a name can only be bound by another token of itself. This is avoided if the lower token is taken to be born minimal and features like being a proper name are assumed to enable copying. In English (8) and Russian (9), conditions for binding of full DP are different and involve focus, viz. focus (together with semantic features like reference to a kind or standard: Cotta Ramusino 2019; Endresen & Janda 2020) can license the [COPY] feature on the minimal pronoun, which leads to its copying its binder rather than bearing *-self*.

(8)   Only **Mary** still looks like **Mary** in these old pictures. (Roeper 2006)

(9)   …po mne tak vsë očen' dostoverno… daže **bandity** kak **bandity** (Araneum)
        'to me everything looks very accurate… even bandits are like bandits'

Other potential analyses are at a disadvantage here: (a) while a bound definite or a proper name (8) may behave like a variable with a presupposition that disappears under binding (Charnavel & Sportiche 2023), this is not possible for (9); (b) while one can analyse (8) as containing two covarying foci on *Mary* within a larger focus domain (Charnavel & Sportiche 2022), it is not clear if the second of two identical DPs is any more focal than *one* in *Only the cat looks like one*.

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