

Can we like me?

On the (im)possibility of
partial argument coreference

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“The problem concerns the description of sentences with subjects and objects which, while not fully identical, embody common reference to either a first or second person element, i.e. sentences which express meanings like ‘I like us’, ‘we like me’, ‘we inclusive like you’, etc. **It is interesting that in both Mohawk and English it is apparently impossible to find grammatical sentences which express such meanings.**”

Postal, Paul. 1966. A note on ‘understood transitively’, *International Journal of American Linguistics* 32(1): 90-93. (91, n. 1, emphasis added)

Unlike Person Constraint

“The point seems to be that a rule of interpretation (RI) applying to the structure NP-V-NP (among others) seeks to interpret the NPs as nonintersecting in reference, and **where this is impossible (as in the case of first and second person pronouns)**, it assigns ‘strangeness’, marking the sentence with *.”

Patient▶	1s	1de	1di	1pe	1pi	2s	2d	2p	3s	3d	3p
Agent▼											
1s						-ni	-nici	-nini	-u	-utsi	-umi
1de						-tsuku	-tsuku	-tsuku	-tsuku	-tsuku	-tsuku
1di									-tsi	-tsi	-tsi
1pe						-ku	-ku	-ku	-ku	-ku	-ku
1pi									-i	-itsi	-i
2s	-ŋi	-ŋitsi/ -tsiki		-ki					-na	-na	-na
2d	-ŋitsi	-tsiki		-tsiki					-tsi	-tsi	-tsi
2p	-ŋini	-kini		-kini					-ni	-ni	-ni
3s	-ŋi	-ŋitsi/ -tsiki	-tsiki	-ki	-sa	-na	-natsi	-nimi	-y	-ytsi	-ymi
3d	-ŋitsi	-ŋitsi/ -tsiki	-sa	-sa/ -kini	-sami	-natsi	-natsi	-nimi/ -nitsi	-ytsi	-ytsi	-ytsi
3p	-ŋimi	-tsiki	-sami	-sami/ -kimi	-sami	-nami	-nitsi/ -natsimi	-nimi	-mi	-ytsi/ -mi	-mi

Table 13 Non-past personal endings for transitive verbs

Lahaussois, Aimée. 2002. Aspects of the grammar of Thulung Rai: an endangered Himalayan language. Ph.D Dissertation: University of California, Berkeley.

- **Puedo volver a vernos**, parados en medio de una calle a las cuatro de la mañana.
(Henry Miller, *Tropic of Capricorn*)
- En écribant ces lignes, je revis notre dernière reencontre à Honfleur. [...]
Je nous revois à table.
(Henri Jeanson, Newspaper article)

Preferences for PAC

So why are we not voting for me
in green and yellow?

<http://forums.penny-arcade.com/showthread.php?t=48389&page=18>

...want to explain why we are voting for me?

<http://diablo.incgamers.com/forums/showthread.php?t=613724&page=51>

So, any reason we are voting for me?
I still don't see the reason.

<http://www.neoseeker.com/forums/118/t1236834-star-wars-deadly-mistakes-part-six/5.htm>

Then we're voting for me.

<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/041031/sm.02.html>

Encoding of partial argument coreference

- PAC is possible, though using different kinds of pronouns
 - ▶ Germanic/Romance: personal pronouns
 - ▶ Even, Lezgian: reflexive pronouns
- PAC seems to be impossible
 - ▶ Basque
 - ▶ Tibeto-Burman, Cariban, Yimas, Bunaba ...

Why ?

- Grammaticalization
- Low-frequency constructions (like PAC) do not lead to grammaticalization
- What about clitics?

Conclusion

- I would like to dispute the impossibility of PAC for many European languages
- Something is strange, but this is due to the rarity of such situations in the real world
- However, with morphological bipersonal marking, PAC seems to be indeed impossible
- Because low-frequency constructions (like PAC) will not be grammaticalized