

snippets

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Interrogative flip and indexical shift are distinct phenomena

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Interrogative Flip (IF) is perspectival shift from the speaker in root declaratives to the addressee in matrix information-seeking questions (Tenny 2006) that affects, for example, high adverbials, experiencer predicates, and evidentials (see overviews in Korotkova 2016, Zu 2018). Some proposals treat IF as a variety of indexical shift (McCready 2007; Lim 2010; Murray 2012, 2017), a view that dovetails with perspectival accounts of indexicals (Bittner 2014, Hunter 2013, Roberts 2015). Those proposals predict that indexicals would shift in questions, at least in languages with indexical shift. Below I show that this prediction is incorrect. There are no known cases of indexical shift to the addressee in matrix questions, and approaches that treat interrogative flip and indexical shift on a par fail to predict this novel empirical generalization.

Consider Turkish (Turkic: Turkey). The language has both (a) interrogative flip (Meriçli 2016), illustrated with the contrast in (1) for the indirect evidential *miş*, realized below as *muş*, and (b) indexical shift in attitudes (Özyıldız 2012), illustrated in (2) for ‘I’. However, Turkish indexicals do not shift in matrix questions (3), illustrated with a personal indexical in (3) (‘here’ behaves the same way; Korotkova 2016:225-226).

- (1) a. Bura-da nane yetişi-yor-**muş**.
here-LOC mint grow-IPFV-IND
‘Given ✓my / #your evidence, mint grows here.’
b. Bura-da nane yetişi-yor mu-y-**muş**?
here-LOC mint grow-IPFV Q-COP-IND
‘Given #my / ✓your evidence, does mint grow here?’
- (2) *Beste and I are talking about kale*
Beste [sev-er-**im**] di-yor
Beste [like-HAB-**1SG**] say-IPFV
(i) ✓NON-SHIFTED, speaker’s ‘I’: ‘Beste says that I (speaker) like it.’
(ii) ✓SHIFTED, attitude holder’s ‘I’: ‘Beste says that she (Beste) likes it.’
- (3) sev-er mi-y-**im**?
like-HAB Q-COP-**1SG**
(i) ✓NON-SHIFTED, speaker’s ‘I’: ‘Do I like it?’
(ii) #SHIFTED, addressee’s ‘I’: ‘Do you like it?’

Several approaches to IF predict (3ii) to be felicitous. For example, Speas and Tenny 2003:330 lists shifted indexicality under the general perspectival umbrella, thus predicting indexical shift in questions. McCready 2007 explicitly argues that indexical pronouns shift in questions in the same way as evidentials do. It should be noted that second-person uses of Japanese *boku* ‘I’, discussed by McCready, do not instantiate genuine IF as they are not limited to questions and appear across clause types when talking to, or about, male children (Ide 1997:52). However, the account in

McCready 2007 predicts the existence of indexical pronouns that undergo IF. Finally, Lim (2010) and Murray (2012, 2017) independently analyze the individual argument of evidentials as an indexical pronoun whose reference can be shifted by the same mechanism that shifts indexicals in attitudes. This, again, incorrectly predicts that bona fide indexicals in indexical-shifting languages like Turkish would undergo IF.

What explains indexical non-shift in matrix questions? Perspectival expressions that undergo IF might still be Kaplanian indexicals, but anchored to a designated context coordinate (not the same as ‘I’) that selectively shifts in questions. However, this analytical option is problematic. First, some expressions that undergo IF, most notably predicates of personal taste and epistemic modals, have been shown not to be Kaplanian indexicals (MacFarlane 2014). Second, according to a prominent view advocated in Deal to appear and much of the previous literature, indexical shift is highly constrained syntactically and does not occur in matrix clauses. Perspectival shift, on the other hand, is more flexible and has been viewed as pragmatic at least in some cases (Mitchell 1986, Harris and Potts 2009, Roberts 2019).

To sum up, even though indexical non-shift in matrix questions has been left practically unaddressed in the literature on interrogative flip, the pattern is consistent with independent assumptions about the nature of indexical shift and perspective in language. The novel data in (3ii) show that accounts treating indexicality and perspective on a par overgenerate.

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