

Agreement and Anaphora in the Context of Imposters

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1. Introduction

This paper investigates the lesser-studied phenomenon of imposters and camouflage DPs, e.g. *the present authors, your majesty* (Collins & Postal, 2012), through an examination of the interaction of imposters with pronominal and verbal agreement. Collins & Postal (C&P, 2012:chap. 17) focuses on the interaction of camouflage DPs (e.g. *your highness* vs. *his highness*) with pronominal elements in English. On the other hand, Wood & Sigurdsson (2014) and Kallulli (2014) mainly investigate variation in the verbal agreement in the presence of an imposter, e.g. *the undersigned*. This paper combines the two lines of inquiry, considering the interaction of the form of the camouflage DP, bound pronouns and verbal agreement.

I account for the observed patterns extending Podobryaev's (2014) semantic analysis in two ways:

- (i) agreement with local person (1st and 2nd) is pronominal, unlike 3rd person, and is subject to interpretation via the imposter operator.
- (ii) the operator introduced by the imposter is subject to a locality constraint, which I will call *Operator-Imposter Locality (OIL)* after Akkuş & Frank (2016).

I also argue that this account can be extended to “inverse vocatives” (Boeder, 1989), thus show that this phenomenon is not limited to inside of the clause, but is also found in the speech act layer.

2. Imposter and Camouflage DPs

C&P (2012: 5) define imposters as “a notionally *X* person DP which is grammatically *Y* person, $X \neq Y$ ”. For instance, 3rd-person DPs such as *the present authors, Daddy, yours truly, the undersigned, this reporter* are imposters that are used to refer to the speaker. 3rd-person DPs such as *Madam, the General, little Jonnie* are used to refer to the addressee. Camouflage DPs, on the other hand, are defined by the presence of an overt pronominal possessor, e.g. *your honor, your majesty* are 3rd-person DPs used to refer to the addressee.

2.1. Crosslinguistic Agreement Patterns

Agreement with imposters seems to have some interesting restrictions across languages. This restriction falls into three categories. In Bengali, for instance, agreement (pronominal and verbal) with imposters is always with the 3rd-person, i.e. the grammatical features of the imposter, (1) (Das, 2014).

- (1) ei sharma tar/*amar dhoirjya hara-te cholech-e
this guy his/my patience lose-INF go-3
'This guy is about to lose his patience.' (Collins, 2014:18)

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In others, agreement with imposters is always with the notional component, as in Mandarin (2) (Wang, 2014) (and also Indonesian (Kaufman, 2014)).

- (2) Laoshi₁ kuai yao shiqu *ta₁/wo₁ de naixing le (Mandarin)
 teacher almost going.to lose (s)he/I POSS patience ASP
 ‘Teacher₁ is going to lose *his₁/*her₁/my₁ patience’ (Wang, 2014:175)

In the third group of languages, agreement can vary between the notional and grammatical features of the imposter, e.g. English, Spanish, Romanian, Italian, Icelandic.¹ For instance, in English verbal agreement is uniformly with the grammatical features of the imposter:

- (3) a. The present author / the undersigned / this reporter is /*am (speaker)
 b. Your Majesty / his majesty / little Jonnie is /*are (addressee)

On the other hand, pronouns and reflexives that are co-referential with imposters or camouflage DPs permit ϕ -feature alternations, which do not correlate with differences in meaning or truth conditions (4).

- (4) a. In this reply, [**the present authors**]₁ (= the writers of the reply) attempt to defend ourselves₁/themselves₁ against the scurrilous charges which have been made.
 b. **Your₁ Majesty** should praise yourself₁/herself₁. (Collins, 2014:1)

In (4a), the reflexive can either be 3PL (agreeing in phi-feature values with the bolded antecedent) or 1PL. In (4b), the reflexive can either be 3SG (agreeing with the bolded antecedent) or 2SG.²

3. Collins and Postal’s Puzzle

In addition to English facts in the previous section, C&P (2012: chap. 17) point to a limitation regarding the form of the bound pronouns with respect to the form of the pronoun in the camouflage DPs. As seen in (5a), some imposters are able to bind elements that share either their grammatically expressed ϕ -features or those associated with their interpretation. In other cases, as in (5b) only binding of elements that share their grammatically expressed ϕ -features is possible.

- (5) a. Your₁ Majesty should praise yourself₁/himself₁.
 b. His₁ Majesty should praise *yourself₁/himself₁.

The generality of this analysis of the English contrast between (5a) and (5b) is supported by the fact that the contrast is replicated cross-linguistically, e.g. Turkish, Albanian or Moroccan Arabic (6).³

- (6) a. siyaadt-kum xass-hum ymædh-u rus-hum/rus-kum (Moroccan Arabic)
 master-your missing-their praise-3P heads-their/heads-your
 ‘Your highness should praise.3 yourself/ himself.’
 b. siyaadt-hum xass-hum ymædh-u *rus-kum/rus-hum
 master-his missing-their praise-3P *heads-your/heads-their
 ‘His highness should praise.3 *yourself/himself.’

In the next section I will apply Podobryaev’s (2014) semantic analysis to this crosslinguistic pattern since Podobryaev does not specifically deal with such instances, but focuses on the imposter *yours truly*.

¹See Akkuş & Frank (2016) about the restrictions regarding the variation in several languages.

²In this paper, I focus on imposters that allow agreement variation, thus I set aside languages such as Bengali, Mandarin or Indonesian.

³Due to space reasons, I will usually provide examples only from one of the languages mentioned.

3.1. Extending Podobryaev's account to the puzzle

Podobryaev (2014) provides an account of DP interpretation under which imposters are semantic binders and ϕ -features are semantically interpreted. Imposters and camouflage DPs are syntactically ordinary 3rd person DPs, where 3rd person pronouns can come to denote speakers or hearers in the presence of imposters, which license silent assignment-function-manipulating *operators* in syntax. These operators make uninterpretable/undefined the 1st or 2nd person features, which are part of referential indices interpreted by an assignment function, as shown in (7).

- (7) a. $\llbracket \textcircled{1} \varphi \rrbracket^g = \llbracket \varphi \rrbracket^{g'}$ where g' differs from g in that $\forall i \in \mathbb{N}$, $g(\langle i, \textcircled{1} \rangle)$ is undefined.
 b. $\llbracket \textcircled{2} \varphi \rrbracket^g = \llbracket \varphi \rrbracket^{g'}$ where g' differs from g in that $\forall i \in \mathbb{N}$, $g(\langle i, \textcircled{2} \rangle)$ is undefined (Podobryaev, 2014:37).

Moreover, in order to allow 3rd person features to pick out the speaker/hearer when (7) applies, Podobryaev suggests a change to Sudo's (2012: 162) *Admissibility Condition for Assignment Functions* and gives the definition in (8) that makes the use of 3rd person pronouns an elsewhere case.

- (8) *Elsewhere 3rd person Principle*:
 $\forall i, j, k \in \mathbb{N}$, a complex index with the 3rd person feature $\langle i, \textcircled{3} \rangle$ is not licensed in a position P of a sentence S , if there is an alternative sentence S' , different from S at most in that $\langle i, \textcircled{3} \rangle$ in P is replaced by $\langle i, \textcircled{1} \rangle$ or $\langle i, \textcircled{2} \rangle$, such that $\llbracket S \rrbracket^g = \llbracket S' \rrbracket^{g'}$.

1st/2nd person pronouns are impossible in the scope of such operators, or operators are not introduced in the case of 1st/2nd person pronouns. Accordingly, regarding the use of the 3rd person reflexive himself in (5a), the H(earer)-imposter *your majesty*, licenses the operator $\textcircled{2}$, which renders 2nd person pronouns undefined in its scope, and thereby allows 3rd person pronouns to be used to refer to the hearer as an “elsewhere” form. Because of the 2nd person pronoun in the imposter itself, this operator must not c-command the imposter, as it would render this pronoun uninterpretable.

For cases where the bound pronoun is 2nd person, following Podobryaev, I assume that there is no operator. For (5b), the pronoun within the imposter is 3rd person, but is interpreted as referring to the hearer. Therefore, this imposter requires the presence of a c-commanding operator, leading to the correct prediction that 2nd person pronouns are impossible in such cases.

In the next section, I extend this analysis to cases of verbal agreement.

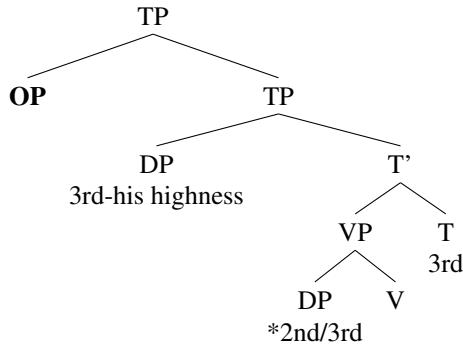
4. Imposter Operators and Verbal Agreement

Turkish (9) and Albanian (10) differ from English in allowing both 3rd person, and 1st and 2nd person verbal agreement with the S(peaker) and H(earer)-imposters, respectively. The same pattern is also attested in Moroccan Arabic as well, as seen in (11).

- (9) Zatialiniz çok yorgun-Ø/-sunuz. (10) Mami shkon/shkoj tani
 your highness very tired-3/-2 mommy.the go.PR.3/go.PR.1 now
 ‘Your highness is very tired.’ ‘Mommy is going (away) now.’
- (11) a. siyaadt-kum gha ymshi yen'es b. siyaadt-kum gha temshi ten'es
 highness-your will 3M-go 3M-sleep highness-your will 2M-go 2M-sleep
 ‘Your highness is going to sleep.3’ ‘Your highness is going to sleep.2.’

Crucially, the presence of a 3rd person pronoun within the imposter blocks the possibility of 2nd person ϕ -features in all three languages, as illustrated from Turkish in (12).

- (12) Zatialleri çok yorgun-Ø/*-sunuz.
 his highness very tired-3/*-2
 ‘His highness is very tired.’

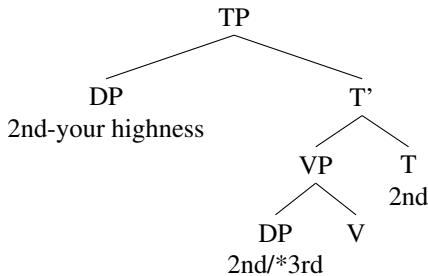
(18) **High-OP**

4.1.2. Prediction 2: No Operator

The second prediction concerns cases in which the imposter contains a 1st or 2nd person pronoun. One possible structure, and the one implicated in cases of 1st or 2nd person verbal agreement, includes no operator at all. This will entail that bound pronouns must be 1st or 2nd person as well. The Albanian data in (19) (as well as Turkish and Moroccan Arabic) conform to this expectation.

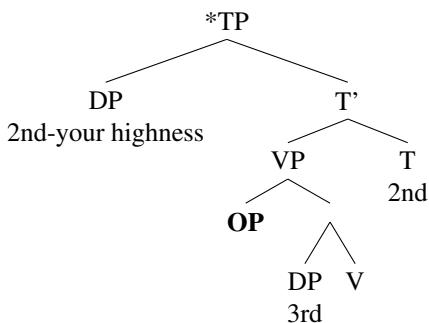
- (19) Madhëria Juaj duhet të lavdëroni veten tuaj/*e saj
 majesty your should SUBJ praise.act.PL self.THE.ACC your/her
 ‘Your majesty should praise yourself/*her own self.’ (Kallulli 2014, ex. 24)

As already noted, this pattern follows from the *No-OP* structure:

(20) **No-OP**

Note that the impossibility of the 3rd person bound pronoun in (19) also tells us that a structure in which an operator is adjoined below T, either at VP or directly to the object DP is ruled out, as it would incorrectly allow 2nd person verbal agreement to co-occur with a 3rd person bound pronoun.⁴

(21)



This would be ruled out from Podobryaev’s assumption that the operator must c-command its associated imposter. However, the structure in (16b) already signals that this assumption cannot be

⁴I assume that adjunction of the operator directly to the imposter must be ruled out in general. Otherwise, we would allow examples like (18) with 2nd person bound pronouns to be generated by adjoining the OP to the subject DP imposter.

correct. We might instead attribute the impossibility of this structure to a restriction on the position to which the operator is adjoined, say only to TP. However, this would lead us to expect that 3rd person pronouns in an embedded clause could co-occur with matrix 2nd person agreement, with an operator in the embedded clause. Albanian and Turkish data in (22) and (23) show that this is not possible.

- (22) *Madhëria Juaj mendoni se konkluzionet e saj/e veta mbështesin idetë e saj/e veta.
 majesty your think.2 that conclusions her/own.3 support ideas her/own.3
 ‘Your highness thinks.2 that **her/own** conclusions support **her/own** ideas.’
- (23) *Zatëriniz sonuçlar-ı-nın fikirler-i-ni destekle-diğ-ini düşünüyor-sunuz.
 your highness results-3POSS-GEN ideas-3POSS-ACC support-NMLZ-ACC think.2
 ‘Your highness thinks.2 that **his** conclusions support **his** ideas.’

Instead, following Akkuş & Frank (2016) I attribute the impossibility of (19) to a locality constraint on the relation between the imposter and its associated operator:

- (24) **Operator-Imposter Locality (OIL):** An imposter and its associated operator must stand in a c-command relation, and no head or phrase can intervene between them.

Intervention: X intervenes between A and B if (i) A asymmetrically c-commands X and X asymmetrically c-commands B, or (ii) B asymmetrically c-commands X and X asymmetrically c-commands A.

OIL is respected in the High-OP structure posited in (18), as nothing intervenes between the operator and the subject imposter. *OIL* also makes a prediction for cases in which a 3rd-person-pronoun-containing imposter appears in object position. In such a case, the OP must be adjoined directly to the DP, as otherwise there would be something intervening between it and the imposter. This predicts then that a 3rd person pronoun in subject position that is co-referential with the speech act participant is not possible, while a 2nd person pronoun is. This is confirmed by the following Turkish contrast in (25).

- (25) a. Anne-niz zatıallerini sev-iyor. c. Anne-si Orhan’ı sev-iyor.
 your mother his highness like-3PROG his mother Orhan-acc like-3PROG
 ‘Your mother likes his highness.’ ‘His mother likes Orhan.’
- b. *Anne-si zatıallerini sev-iyor.
 his mother his highness like-3PROG
 ‘His mother likes his highness.’

4.1.3. Prediction 3: Operator scopes below the imposter

The last prediction concerns the structure involving an imposter containing a 1st or 2nd person pronoun, but with 3rd person verbal agreement. I have argued above that this involves an operator that is generated just below the subject (in accordance with *OIL*), a configuration I will call *Low-OP*. *Low-OP* predicts that bound pronouns should be obligatorily 3rd person.

- (26) **Low-OP**
-
- ```

graph TD
 TP1[TP] --- DP1[DP
2nd-your highness]
 TP1 --- TP2[TP]
 TP2 --- OP[OP]
 TP2 --- T_prime[T']
 T_prime --- VP[VP]
 T_prime --- T[T
3rd]
 VP --- DP2[DP
3rd]
 VP --- V[V]

```

While this pattern of agreement and pronominal binding (3rd person verbal agreement with 3rd person bound pronoun) is possible, the Albanian example in (27) shows that the prediction is not quite correct: a 2nd person within the imposter allows 3rd person verbal agreement together with 2nd person bound pronouns.<sup>5</sup>

- (27) Madhëria Juaj do votojë për idetë tuaja/e saj (Albanian)  
 highness yours.2PL will vote.3SG for ideas yours.2PL/ hers  
 ‘Your Highness will vote for your/her ideas.’

In order to explain the compatibility of 3rd person verbal agreement in this case with 2nd person bound pronouns, I propose to analyze this pattern as one deriving from a structure that does not involve an operator (No-OP).

I will depart from my previous assumption that all verbal agreement is pronominal (Borer, 1986, 1989; Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou, 1998), taking this property to be true only of local persons, i.e., 1st and 2nd. 3rd person, in contrast, is not interpretable, and therefore is not sensitive to the presence or absence of an imposter operator. 3rd person agreement arrives purely as an instance of syntactic agreement with the features on the entire imposter DP. This implies that the presence of a 3rd person agreement on the verb is not a diagnostics of the availability of an imposter operator, unlike a 3rd person pronominal element.<sup>6</sup>

## 5. Imposters in the Speech Act Layer

In this section, I discuss a type of vocative in Turkish and Sason Arabic, “inverse vocatives” à la Boeder (1989), which bear possessive markers that agree with the hearer in gender and number. I suggest that the observed agreement pattern can be explained through the imposter-operator.

In (28), the noun *haval* ‘friend’ denotes the speaker, and the 3rd person possessive agrees with the hearer, reminiscent of the allocutive agreement in Basque (Akkuş, 2016).

- (28) [Context: to a male friend] (Sason Arabic)  
 hawal-**u**, amma timme?  
 friend-3M where 2M.go  
 Lit: ‘His friend, where are you going?’

In the same context, it is also possible to use 1st person or 2nd person possessives, without any change in meaning, as illustrated in (29) from Turkish and (30) from Bahraini Arabic.

- (29) [Context: mother addresses her son] (Turkish)  
 Anne-**m**, krediye uygun ev var di-yor-lar.  
 mother-1SG loan eligible house there say-PROG-3PL  
 ‘Lit: My mother, they say there is a house eligible for loan.’
- (30) [Context: father addresses his son] (Bahraini Arabic)  
 9aT-ni finjāl gahwa yab-**ūk**  
 give-me cup coffee father-2SG  
 ‘Lit: Give me a cup of coffee oh your father!’

Leaving details about the inverse vocatives aside for space reasons, I capitalize on the intuition Collins & Postal (2012) point out, that “Vocatives are *bona fide* imposter”. Therefore, following the

<sup>5</sup>Turkish and Moroccan Arabic (6a) show the same pattern of interactions. Moreover, this pattern extends to cases of embedded bound pronouns. See Akkuş & Frank (2016) for further discussion.

<sup>6</sup>An alternative line of analysis could posit an operator in this case, but would adjoin it directly to T. From this position it would scope over agreement, yielding 3rd person, but not over the object pronoun, allowing it to remain 2nd person. An operator in this position would be close enough to the imposter to satisfy OIL. However, I do not choose this option since assuming that operators are usually phrases, it would require adjunction of a phrasal category to a head.

structure of Haegeman & Hill (2013), I posit that in (28) the OP ② is in Spec,VocP, thus 3rd person picks out the hearer. In the case of (29) and (30), i.e. in cases of local persons, no OP is introduced.<sup>7</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

This paper investigates imposters through an investigation of the interaction of imposters with pronominal and verbal agreement. In so doing, I contribute to the empirical domain and propose the patterns in (31) on the basis of the observed facts.

- (31) a. **High-OP:** [② his highness V3 Pro-\*2/3 ]  
 b. **No-OP:** [ your highness V2 Pro-2/\*3 ]  
 c. **Low-OP:** [your highness ② V3 Pro-3 ]

In order to account for the empirical facts, I propose

- (i) that local agreement is pronominal, thus subject to assignment function.  
 (ii) that the imposter and its associated operator are subject to a locality constraint, *Operator-Imposter Locality (OIL)*.

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<sup>7</sup>see Hill & Akkuş (to appear) for further investigation of this issue.

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