

German Impersonal Pronouns and Logophoricity

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0. What this talk is going to be about

Logophoric contexts	Sentences that report somebody's words, dreams, hopes, beliefs, wishes, and other attitudes.
Logophoric Pronouns	Scholars of West-African languages have observed that pronouns in logophoric contexts can have puzzling properties.
<i>De se</i> pronouns	Philosophers have observed that pronouns in logophoric contexts can have puzzling properties: They may be interpreted <i>de se</i> .
A case study	German generic pronouns are shown to have puzzling properties in logophoric contexts. I will argue that this is so because they can be <i>de se</i> pronouns.
Relevance	A window into how we talk about other minds. Diagnostics for the presence of a 'theory of mind' in developmental studies.

1. ‘Us’ and ‘them’. Unembedded ‘man’.

The German impersonal pronoun ‘man’ has an inclusive and an exclusive reading. When ‘man’ is unembedded, we have the following : On the exclusive reading, ‘man’ refers to a group that excludes the speaker. On the inclusive reading, ‘man’ refers to a group that the speaker is part of or sympathizes with.

Exclusive ‘man’: ‘Them’

- (1) Als ich in die Pension zurückkam, servierte man schon
When I into the boarding house returned, served man already

die Suppe.

the soup

When I returned to the boarding house, they were already serving the soup.

- (2) Im Ministerium wusste man ganz genau über mich Bescheid.
in the ministry knew man completely about me info
In the office of the minister, they knew everything about me.

- (3) Man behauptete, man habe meine Akte verloren.
man claimed man had(subj.) my file lost
They claimed they had lost my file.

Inclusive ‘man’: ‘Us’

- (4) Als ich klein war, wurde man nur am Freitag gebadet.
 when I little was got man only on the Friday bathed
 When I was little, we only had a bath on Fridays.
- (5) Es war völlig klar, dass man sich nie mehr wiedersehen würde.
 it was compl. clear that man refl. never again see again would
 It was completely clear that we would never see each other again.
- (6) Wir spielten Karten, weil man ja hier nichts Besseres zu tun hatte.
 we played cards since man part.here nothing better to do had
 We played cards since we didn’t have anything better to do here.

2. Grammatical differences

Dative and accusative forms

	exclusive	inclusive
nominative	man	man
accusative	-	einen
dative	-	einem

Predicative NPs

- (1) [Als Hüter _____ des Gesetzes] war
 as guardian(nom.sing. / plur. masc.) the(gen.) law(gen.) was
man verpflichtet, die Einhaltung aller Bestimmungen zu
 man(incl.) obliged the observance all(gen.) regulations(gen.) to
 überwachen.
 watch over
 As guardian of the law, we were obliged to watch over the observance of
 all regulations.
- (2) * [Als Hüter _____ des Gesetzes] hat man mir
 as guardian(nom.sing. / plur. masc.) the(gen.) law(gen.) has man me
 erklärt, ich könne hier nicht wohnen.
 explained I could(subj.) here not live.
 As guardians of the law, they explained to me that I couldn't live here.

In (1), the presence of a predicative NP related to the subject eliminates the exclusive reading of 'man'. In (2), an inclusive reading of 'man' is excluded, and the sentence comes out as ungrammatical.

Possessive pronouns

- (3) Wenn man seine Hausaufgaben gemacht hatte, durfte man spielen.
 when man man's homework done had could man play
 When we had done our homework, we were allowed to play.
- (4) * Wenn man seine Brille aufsetzte, kriegten wir Angst.
 when man man's glasses put on got we fear
 When they put on their glasses, we got frightened.

Exclusive 'man' lacks agreement features

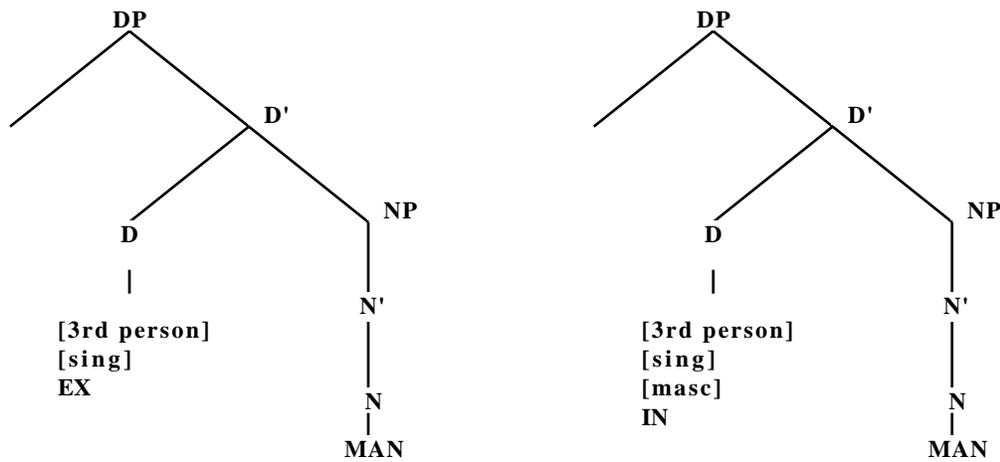
The inability to license predicative NPs and possessive pronouns suggests that exclusive 'man' might not have the full set of agreement features.

- (5) Man erkundigte sich nach mir.
 man inquired refl. after me.
 They inquired about me.

German 3rd person reflexive pronouns have no number and gender features. Since exclusive 'man' shows singular number agreement with finite verbs, we may conclude, that the feature that it lacks is the gender feature.

3. A first analysis

Syntax



Semantics

- [[**MAN**]]^{c,w} = the speaker in (context) c.
 [[**IN**]]^{c,w(a)} = the group of a in (world) w.
 [[**EX**]]^{c,w(a)} = the anti-group of a in (world) w.

Predictions

- 'Man' is definite.
- 'Man' can be semantically plural
- 'Man' is not a rigid designator.

Definiteness of ‘man’

- (1) * Es war man gekommen.
 there was man come
 They/we had come.
- (2) Es war wer gekommen.
 there was somebody come
 Somebody had come.
- (3) Es war jemand gekommen.
 there was somebody come
 Somebody had come.

Possible plurality

- (5) Man redete miteinander.
 man talked with each other.
 One talked with each other.
- (6) Man bekam je einen Luftballon.
 one got each a balloon

Non-rigidity

- (7) Wenn ich Kinder hätte, könnte man zusammen Monopoly spielen.
 If I children had could man together Monopoly play.

 If I had children, we could play Monopoly together.
 (Example inspired by Partee 1989).

4. Switch of Perspective in Logophoric Contexts

Switch from exclusive 'man' to 'inclusive 'man'

(1) Man erzählte uns, dass einem Unrecht geschehen war.
 man told us that man(dat.) injustice happened had
 They told us that they had been treated unfairly.

(2) Man erklärte mir, man habe [als Beamter]
 man explained me(dat.) man have(subj.) as employee(agr.)

die Verpflichtung, mich über diesen Vorfall zu informieren.
 the duty me about this incident to inform

They explained to me that as public employees, they were obliged to inform me about this incident.

(3) Man erklärte mir, man habe seine Brille vergessen.
 man explained me(dat.) man had(subj.) man's glasses forgotten.
 They explained to me that they had forgotten their glasses.

5. Anaphoric Relations

- (1) * Jedes Paar verstand sich besser als man dachte.
 Each couple understood refl. better than man thought
 Each couple got along better with each other than they thought.
- (2) Jedes Paar behauptete, man verstünde sich gut.
 each couple claimed man understood(subj.) refl. well
 Each couple claimed they got along well with each other.
- (3) Jedes Paar glaubte, man verstünde sich gut.
 each couple believed man understood(subj.) refl. well
 Each couple believed they got along well with each other.

7. ‘Man’ and *de se* pronouns

Reminder: The two parts of ‘man’

Inclusive ‘man’: DP[**IN** NP[**MAN**]]

Exclusive ‘man’: DP[**EX** NP[**MAN**]]

‘MAN’: Amended analysis

‘MAN’ can be free, in which case it refers to the speaker. If it is bound, it is interpreted as a *de se* pronoun. (A unified analysis would be possible within a dynamic, context change framework.)

What's a *de se* pronoun?

De se pronouns occur in logophoric contexts and refer back to the one whose attitudes or words are being conveyed. The attitudes or words are reported by taking a 'first person' perspective.

Illustration

“An amnesiac, Rudolf Lingens, is lost in the Stanford library. He reads a number of things in the library, including a biography of himself, and a detailed account of the library in which he is lost...He still won;t know who he is, and where he is, no matter how much knowledge he piles up, until that moment when he is ready to say, “*This* place is aisle five, floor six, of Main Library, Stanford. *I* am Rudolf Lingens.”¹

Suppose Rudolf Lingens knows everything that can be known about Rudolf Lingens and John Perry from books, pictures, videos, etc., but wrongly believes that he himself is John Perry, rather than Rudolf Lingens.

- (1) Rudolf Lingens believes that he is John Perry.
- (2) Rudolf Lingens believes that Rudolf Lingens is John Perry.

¹ John Perry: “Frege on Demonstratives”. Philosophical Review, 86, 1977, 474-497.

Experimental condition	Rudolf Lingens' response
Rudolf Lingens is shown videos of himself, and asked: "Is this you?"	"No, that's not me, that's Rudolf Lingens, the amnesiac who thinks he is me. He is lost in the Stanford library right now, and is watching a video of himself."
Rudolf Lingens is shown videos of John Perry, and asked: "Could this be you?"	"Yes, that's definitely me."
Rudolf Lingens is asked whether John Perry and Rudolf Lingens are the same person.	"Of, course not, how could they? Come on, I am not that stupid, I am a famous philosopher."

Ingredients for an analysis of logophoric pronouns

- Logophoric contexts express properties, not propositions.
David Lewis: "Attitudes *de dicto* and *de se*". Philosophical Review 88.
- (3)
 - a. John Perry believes that he is John Perry.
 - b. Rudolf Lingens believes that, too.
 - c. But Perry is right, and Lingens is wrong.
- Logophoric contexts that contain logophoric pronouns can express properties because the pronouns are variables bound by an abstraction operator.
Gennaro Chierchia: "Anaphora and Attitudes *de se*". In R. Bartsch et al. : Semantics and Contextual Expression. Dordrecht 1989.

Implementation

(1) Rudolf Lingens believes that_n he_n is John Perry.

Predicate Abstraction

If β is a branching node whose daughters are an index i and α , then for any variable assignment g , $[[\beta]]^g = x_e. [[\alpha]]^{g^{x/i}}$.

(1') Rudolf Lingens self-ascribes the property of being John Perry.

(1'') For all doxastic alternatives $\langle x_e, w_s \rangle$ of Rudolf Lingens in the actual world: $[x_e. w_s. x \text{ is (a counterpart of) John Perry in } w](x)(w) = 1$

For all doxastic alternatives $\langle x_e, w_s \rangle$ of Rudolf Lingens in the actual world, x is (a counterpart of) John Perry in w .

8. Explaining the Logophoricity effects

Switch of perspective

(3) Man erzählte uns, dass einem Unrecht geschehen war.
 man told us that man(dat.) injustice happened had
 They told us that they had been treated unfairly.

(3') Talking to us, 'they' self-ascribed the property
 $[x. w. \text{ the group of } x \text{ suffered injustice in } w]$.

Anaphoric relations

- (4) Jedes Paar glaubte, man verstehe sich gut.
 each couple believed man understood(subj.) refl. well
 Each couple believed they got along well with each other.
- (4') Each couple self-ascribed the property
 [x. w. the group of x got along well with each other in w].

8. Non-source perspectives

- (1) Wir haben jedem Austauschschüler eingeschärft, dass man
 we have each exchange student (dat.) made clear that man
 als kleiner Botschafter des Vaterlandes auftreten müsse.
 as little ambassador of the father country appear must

We made it clear to each exchange student that (s)he had to assume
 the role of a little ambassador of his/her country.

- (2) Wir haben betont, dass man als kleiner Botschafter des
we have emphasized that man as little ambassador of the

Vaterlandes auftreten müsse.
father land appear must

We emphasized that everybody had to assume the role of a little
ambassador of his/her country.

- (3) Coach Cal berichtete von jedem Team, dass man sein Bestes
Coach Cal reported of every team that man his best

gegeben habe.
give had.

Coach Cal reported of every team that it had given its best.

- (4) Er verlangte von jedem Schüler, dass man ihn mit ‘Herr Professor’
He asked of every student that man him with ‘Herr Professor’

betitulierte.
addressed

He asked of every student that (s)he addressed him as ‘Herr
Professor’.

(5) Der Psychiater machte jedem Paar klar, dass man sich
the psychiatrist made each couple(dat.) clear that 'man' refl.

erst nach vielen Jahren so richtig gut verstehen würde.
only after many years so really well understand would

The psychiatrist explained to every couple that they would only understand
each other really well after many years.