Diagnosing the semantics of perspectival expressions

A wide range of expressions have been posited to be sensitive to perspective: epithets, appositives, predicates of personal taste, long-distance reflexives, exempt anaphors, spatial descriptions, spatial motion verbs, and more. Although there is a rich body of literature on many of these expressions, there is no consensus on whether perspectival expressions comprise a unified linguistic phenomena, and the perspectival components of these expressions have been analyzed in a number of ways. I lay out three broad categories of approaches to perspectival expressions that have been proposed, and explore the predictions that they make in order to develop a set of semantic perspectival diagnostics to aid the classification and comparison of perspectival expressions. I demonstrate the use of this set of perspectival diagnostics through a small case study on the perspectival motion verb *come* in American English.

Three semantic families of perspectival expressions

One way of deriving context-sensitive selection of the perspective holder is to treat perspectival expressions as indexicals (Taylor, 1988; Oshima, 2006b,a; Sudo, 2018; Korotkova, 2016). In an indexical analysis, the perspectival component contains a perspectival variable whose value is determined by the context parameter, allowing the perspective holder to co-vary with the context of utterance.

1. **Indexical semantics**:
   $[[p_{idx}]]^{C,g} = \alpha \wedge \text{PERSPECTIVE}(\alpha, C_{perspective})$, where $\text{PERSPECTIVE}(\alpha, x)$ is true if α is true according to perspective x.

The indexical family includes analyses that allow context shift to manipulate the context parameter: thus, analyses in this family do not necessarily predict that perspectival expressions must be interpreted according to the context of utterance.

A second family of analyzes proposes that the perspective holder is governed by syntactic operators. I use the term **logophoric operator** to refer to a syntactic operator that governs perspectival variables, because kind of approach has been developed in work on logophoricity (Nishigauchi, 2014; Sundaresan, 2018; Charnavel, 2018, 2019). In this family of approaches, the perspective holder is encoded in the semantics of a perspectival expression as a bound variable, which is then bound by a logophoric operator. The semantics in (2) builds on Charnavel (2019) proposed syntax for exempt anaphors in French: the logophoric operator, which may be projected in any spellout domain with a subject, takes a complement and a logophoric pronoun, and asserts that the complement is from the perspective of the pronoun's referent.

2. **Logophoric semantics**:
   (a) $[[p_{log}]]^{C,g} = \lambda a.\alpha \wedge \text{PERSPECTIVE}(\alpha, a)$, where a is a perspectival variable and $\text{PERSPECTIVE}(\alpha, x)$ is true if α is true according to perspective x.
   (b) $[[OP_{log}]]^{C,g} = \lambda\alpha_{<u,<v,t>>}.\lambda x_e.\exists a_u.\text{HOLDS-PERSPECTIVE}(a, x) \wedge \alpha(a)$, where HOLDS-PERSPECTIVE(a,x) is true if a is a first-person perspective of x.

A third family of analyses treats the perspective holder like a pronoun: the semantics of a perspectival expression contains a free variable in the semantics whose value is determined by the discourse context (Roberts, 2015; Barlew, 2017). The semantics shown below is based on Barlew (2017)'s analysis of American English *come*.

3. **Anaphoric semantics**:
   $[[p_{ana}]]^{C,g} = \alpha \wedge \text{PERSPECTIVE}(\alpha, a)$, where a is a prominent perspective holder in the Common Ground and $\text{PERSPECTIVE}(\alpha, x)$ is true if α is true according to perspective x.

A challenge in analyzing perspectival expressions is that the predictions by these three accounts largely overlap (Sundaresan, 2020). To aid the diagnosis of novel perspectival expressions, I identify the environments in which the predictions of these families of accounts differ and propose a set of diagnostics for fine-grained analysis of the semantics of perspectival expressions (Table 1). Within these three categories of perspectival encoding, there may be variants that do not lead to all of the predictions presented in Table 1. Each diagnostic should be seen not as conclusive evidence against an approach, but as a guide for identifying a critical environment in which to test the behavior of perspectival expressions to determine which kind of treatment is most promising.

Table 1: Semantic diagnostics for perspective encoding

	Indexical	Logophoric	Anaphoric	American English *come*
Perspective shift outside finite CP	X	✓	✓	✓
Perspective shift outside XP with subjects	X	X	✓	✓
Shift Together effects within finite CP	✓	X	X	X
Shift Together effects within XP with subjects	✓	✓	X	X
Anchoring across utterances	X	X	✓	✓
Co-variation in quantificational binding contexts	X	✓	✓	✓

I demonstrate the use of the proposed set of diagnostics in a case study on a canonical perspectival expression, American English *come*. Although analyses of perspectival motion verbs in all three families have been explored, (Oshima, 2006b,a; Sudo, 2018; Charnavel, 2018; Barlew, 2017), on the basis of these diagnostics, I argue in favor of a perspective-anaphoric treatment.