

# Bengali imposters\*

Satarupa Das

## Abstract

This paper is concerned with the *imposter* phenomenon studied in Collins and Postal (2010). Pronominal agreement with imposter DPs (and secondary sources) are subject to cross-linguistic variation, which is illustrated herein with a comparative study of the relevant facts from English and Bengali. I suggest that the verbal agreement system of a language is the crucial factor that constrains pronominal agreement possibilities. More specifically, if the category *person* is overtly marked on the finite verb, then pronominal agreement with a secondary source is systematically disallowed. The examples involving illicit pronominal agreement are shown to violate the *homogeneity principle*. Lastly, I discuss how the hypothesis fares when tested against data from Italian and Albanian.

## 1 Introduction

Collins and Postal (2010) discusses and analyzes a certain type of DP in English which they call *imposters*. The distinctive feature of this type of DP is that they give rise to 3rd person verbal agreement but have 1st or 2nd person reference. Furthermore, as illustrated in (2), non-singular imposters can antecede both 3rd person and non-3rd person pronominal forms.

- (1) a. Daddy is/\*am sick of your tantrums. (3rd person DP referring to the speaker)  
b. Is/\*Are Madam having a good time? (3rd person DP referring to the addressee)
- (2) a. The present authors consider themselves/ourselves to have been slandered.  
b. Mommy and Daddy are enjoying themselves/ourselves on the beach.

(C&P 2010:158, ex. 9c)

Based on a broad sample of pronominal agreement facts such as those in (2), Collins & Postal (2010) pursue the hypothesis that although imposters appear to be identical to non-imposter DPs, their syntactic structures differ considerably from non-imposter 3rd person DPs. More specifically, they defend the view that the key property which distinguishes an imposter from a non-imposter DP is that the former, like any non-expletive pronominal, has an antecedent. Under this view, a 1st person imposter, such as in (1a) and (2), can antecede a 1st person pronominal, since *AUTHOR* is the ultimate antecedent of a 1st person imposter. Likewise, 2nd person imposters, such as in (1b), are similar to 2nd person pronominals, since they both have *ADDRESSEE* as their ultimate antecedent.

---

\*I am grateful to Chris Collins for his guidance and unwavering encouragement. Thanks are due to my family members, especially my father Swapan Das, for their patience and good humor while I elicited grammaticality judgements; and the two anonymous NYUWPL referees and the editors for the detailed comments and suggestions. One of the referees, in particular, offered an insightful hypothesis which is explored in this paper.

Typologically, then, there are three logical possibilities for pronominal agreement with an imposter antecedent: the pronoun could only agree with the ultimate antecedent of the imposter, as in Chinese (cf. Wang 2009); the pronoun could agree with both the imposter and its ultimate antecedent, as in English (Collins & Postal 2010); and the third logical possibility, namely pronominal agreement with the imposter alone, which is instantiated in the case of Bengali. Some examples of imposter DPs in Bengali is given in (3).

(3) Bengali Imposters

- a. 1st Person: *ei sharma*, *ei mokkel* ‘this guy’; *ei sangbadik* ‘this reporter’; *ei chatro brinda* ‘this group of students’; *nimna-sakhorito* ‘the undersigned’; *Archana Das* ‘Proper Name’; *baba* ‘Daddy’, etc.
- b. 2nd Person: *mahashoy/a* ‘sir/madam’; *dharmabotar* ‘your honor’; *amar pathok* ‘my reader’; *amar lokkhiti* ‘my darling’; *Archana Das* ‘Proper Name’, etc.

All these DPs can be used as 3rd person referential expressions. For instance, *baba* in (4) and *Archana* in (5) are garden variety DPs, which do not denote either the speaker or the addressee.<sup>1</sup>

(4) *baba rege ach-e*  
 father angry be-3.FAM  
 ‘Daddy is angry’

(5) *Archana hath-te gach-e*  
 A walk-INF went-3.FAM  
 ‘Archana went for a walk’

But the DP in (4) can be used by the speaker to refer to himself and the DP in (5) can be used to refer to the addressee. In other words, these DPs lend themselves to imposter readings, paralleling those given in (1).

(6) *baba rege ja-b-e/\*ja-b-o*  
 father angry go-FUT-3/go-FUT-1  
 ‘Daddy will get angry’

(7) *Archana Das ki ekhon cha khe-te cha-y/\*cha-o*  
 A D Q now tea eat-INF want-3/want-2  
 ‘Would AD like the tea now?’

The foregoing examples show that Bengali imposters determine 3rd person verbal agreement. This generalization holds for all kinds of imposters (singular, plural, co-ordinated).

<sup>1</sup>In this paper, I use the following abbreviations in the glosses: 1 = ‘first person’, 2 = ‘second person’, 3 = ‘third person’, FAM = ‘familiar’, Q = ‘question’, INF = ‘infinitive’, FUT = ‘future tense’, PERF = ‘perfect’, COMP = ‘complementizer’, NEG = ‘negation’, CLA = ‘classifier’, REL = ‘relative pronoun’, SG = ‘singular’, PL = ‘plural’, REF.CL = ‘reflexive clitic’, CL.MASC = ‘masculine clitic’, ACT = ‘active’, NACT = ‘non-active’.

## 2 The structure of imposter DPs

In this section, following Collins & Postal (2010), I provide a brief overview of the structure of an imposter DP. As mentioned earlier, though an imposter DP appears to be non-pronominal, it is nonetheless distinct from the ordinary 3rd person DP in that it has a non-3rd person antecedent. Consider, to begin with, the parallelisms between the examples in (8) and (9).

- (8) a. *I, Nixon*, am going to get even.  
b. *We, the present writers*, disagree with that point.  
c. *We, the undersigned*, propose a number of improvements.  
d. *You, Madam*, should not try to deceive us.
- (C&P 2010:85, ex. 3)

- (9) a. Nixon is going to get even.  
b. The present writers disagree with that point.  
c. The undersigned propose a number of improvements.  
d. Madam should not try to deceive us.
- (C&P 2010:86, ex. 4)

The italicized expressions in (8), which they dub (*imposter*) *precursors*, are shown to be single DP constituents, each of which is comprised of a pronominal DP and a reduced non-restrictive relative. The non-restrictive component stands in a predication relationship to the pronominal DP. Furthermore, the precursor DP as a whole is non-3rd person, as evidenced by the fact that (8a) exhibits the 1st singular form of the copula. Next, according to Collins & Postal, all pronouns, including indexicals, must have antecedents. For the pronoun in the precursor in (8a), for instance, the antecedent is the singular version of null DP, AUTHOR.

The precursor DP provides the necessary syntactic and semantic elements for creating an imposter. For example, the imposter in (9a) has a 1st person singular denotation; the corresponding precursor in (8a) has an overt pronominal part that aligns precisely with this denotation. Also, the overt lexical component of the imposter DP is identical in both form and meaning to the predicate nominal in the precursor DP. Given the resemblance between the precursor DPs in (8) and the corresponding imposter DPs in (9), Collins & Postal propose that an imposter results from a syntactic deformation of a suitable precursor DP. Thus, *Nixon* is created via deforming *I, Nixon* and *Madam* is a deformation of *You, Madam*, and so on. Given the assumption that precursors have antecedents, and the treatment of imposters as syntactic deformations of precursors, an imposter could be taken to have the same antecedent as its corresponding precursor.

A precursor DP in (8a) is given by the structure in (10). As noted earlier, the precursor DP is a single constituent whose phi-feature values match those of the initial pronominal component. Because of this property of precursors, and the additional assumption that all pronouns must have antecedents, the precursor DP itself is also anteceded, in this case by AUTHOR. The antecedence relationship is encoded by the arrow pointing from the precursor

DP to AUTHOR. The pronominal component of the precursor, DP2, is modified by the reduced non-restrictive relative clause consisting of DP3 only.

(10) AUTHOR ← [DP1 [DP2 I] [CLAUSE [DP3 Nixon ] ] ]

The structure of the imposter DP corresponding to the precursor *I, Nixon* is given in (11). As indicated below, the syntactic deformation consists in raising the predicate nominal of the precursor DP to the highest [Spec, DP] position. From this position, the predicate nominal, which has 3rd person singular phi-feature values, determines the 3rd person phi-feature values of the imposter. Furthermore, this movement is also responsible for the fact that the pronominal core of the imposter DP is covert.

(11) AUTHOR ← [DP4 [DP3 Nixon ] [D' [D ] [DP1 [DP2 I] [CLAUSE [<DP3> ] ] ] ] ] ]

In summary, imposters obtain via syntactic deformation of the underlying precursor DPs. As a result of the deformation, the pronominal component of the precursor DP ends up covert. The core of the imposter DP has AUTHOR or ADDRESSEE as its *ultimate* antecedent. In addition, the raised predicate nominal obligatorily determines the 3rd person phi-feature values of the imposter DP. However, because of the notional core of the imposter DPs, alternative pronominal agreement is possible.

### 3 Bengali imposters and pronominal agreement

In what follows, I provide data concerning Bengali imposters with respect to bound pronouns, reflexives, and control. The small, informal survey that I have conducted shows a dichotomy among speakers: for six speakers (including myself), pronominal agreement is strictly with the shell DP; however, for one of my informants, pronominal agreement is possible both with the shell and the core.

#### 3.1 Bound pronouns – local & long distance

This section shows that bound pronouns can only agree with the imposter DP alone, never with the notional core. For the singular cases, pronominal agreement is permissible with the imposter shell alone, in both English and Bengali, as shown in (12) and (15). I will have nothing to say about this similarity. However, with plural or co-ordinated imposters, pronominal agreement with the ultimate antecedent of the imposter seems marginally better in English, as shown in (13b) and (14b). These data clearly show that for most speakers, Bengali usually exhibits 3rd person agreement between the imposter DP and a bound pronoun.

- (12) a. 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’ (Agr with core OK for 1 informant)
- b. This reporter is about to lose his/\*my patience.

- (13) a. ei chatro-ra tader/\*amader dhoirjya hara-te cholech-e  
 these student-CLA their/our patience lose-INF go-3  
 ‘These students are about to lose their patience’  
 b. The present authors are about to lose their/?our patience.
- (14) a. baba aar ma tader/\*amader dhoirjya hara-te cholech-e  
 Daddy and Mommy their/our patience lose-INF go-3  
 ‘Daddy and Mommy are about to lose their patience’ (Agr with core OK for 1 informant)  
 b. The present author and his collaborator are about to lose their/?our patience.
- (15) a. ei sharma thik korech-e je se/\*ami bideshe ja-b-e na  
 this guy decide.PERF-3 COMP he/I abroad go-FUT-3 NEG  
 ‘This guy has decided that he won’t go abroad’  
 b. This reporter has decided that he/\*I won’t go abroad.  
 c. \* [ei sharma]<sub>i</sub> thik korech-e je ami<sub>i</sub> bideshe ja-b-o na  
 this guy decide.PERF-3 COMP I abroad go-FUT-1 NEG  
 ‘This guy has decided that he won’t go abroad’ (OK for 1 informant; rejected by others)
- (16) ei chatro-ra thik korech-e je tara/\*amra bideshe por-te  
 these student-CLA decide.PERF-3 COMP they/we abroad study-INF  
 ja-b-e na  
 go-FUT-3 NEG  
 ‘These students have decided that they won’t go abroad to study’
- (17) baba aar ma thik korech-e je tara/\*amra bideshe ja-b-e na  
 Daddy and Mommy decide.PERF-3 COMP they/we abroad go-FUT-3 NEG  
 ‘Daddy and Mommy have decided that they won’t go abroad’

### 3.2 Reflexives

This section shows that there is a sharp contrast between Bengali and English with respect to antecedence possibilities by non-singular imposters. More specifically, while English plural imposters can serve as antecedents for non 3rd person reflexives, similar plural imposters in Bengali may only antecede 3rd person reflexives. A parallel contrast exists in the domain of co-ordinate structures, where one conjunct is an imposter.

The examples in (18) show that in both English and Bengali, a singular imposter can only antecede a 3rd person reflexive.

- (18) a. ei sharma shudhu tar/\*amar nijer jonnoi ranna kor-b-e  
 this guy only his/my self for cook do-FUT-3  
 ‘This guy will only cook for himself’ (Agreement with core OK for 1 informant)  
 b. Daddy will only cook for himself/\*myself.

This parallelism does not hold when one considers non-singular imposters. The example in (19a) shows that a plural imposter in Bengali can only antecede a 3rd person reflexive. This contrasts with the English example given in (19b), which shows that an English plural imposter may antecede both a 3rd person and a non 3rd person reflexive.

- (19) a. ei chatro-ra shudhu tader/\*amader nijer jonnoi ranna kor-b-e  
 these student-CLA only their/our self for cook do-FUT-3  
 ‘These students will only cook for themselves’
- b. In this reply, the present authors<sub>1</sub> (= the writers of the reply) attempt to defend ourselves<sub>1</sub>/themselves<sub>1</sub> against the scurrilous charges which have been made. (C&P 2010:33, ex. 6b)

Similarly, as illustrated in (20), a co-ordinate structure in English, where one conjunct is an imposter, has wider antecedence possibilities as compared to its analog in Bengali.

- (20) a. baba aar ma shudhu tader/\*amader nijer jonnoi ranna kor-b-e  
 Daddy and Mommy only their/our self for cook do-FUT-3  
 ‘Daddy and Mommy will only cook for themselves.’
- b. In the reply, the author<sub>1</sub> (= the writer of the reply) and his<sub>1</sub> assistant<sub>2</sub> attempt to defend ourselves<sub>1,2</sub>/themselves<sub>1,2</sub> against the scurrilous charges which have been made. (C&P 2010:34, ex. 8b)

### 3.3 Control

This section provides further evidence for the observation that English and Bengali imposters differ in their antecedence possibilities. Drawing from data involving chains of antecedents mediated by backwards control, this section shows that while English imposters can antecede both 3rd person and non 3rd person reflexives, their Bengali counterparts can only function as antecedents for 3rd person pronominals.

Collins & Postal (2010) reports that while the example in (22a) is perfect, the one given in (22b) is somewhat dubious, according to one of the authors. The anonymous internet survey of grammaticality judgements reported in Collins, Guitard and Wood (2009) supports this intuition. For (22a), out of a total of 15 participants, eight people rated it marginal, and seven people rated it good. On the other hand, (22b) received eight bad, six marginal, and one good rating. The corresponding Bengali examples given in (21) show that a singular imposter that refers to the speaker can only antecede a 3rd person pronominal.

- (21) tar/\*amar shorir shustha rakhar jonno ei sharma rojdin aat glash jol kh-ay  
 his/my body healthy keeping for this guy everyday 8 glass water eat-3  
 ‘For keeping his body healthy, this guy drinks eight glasses of water everyday’
- (22) a. To keep himself from getting sunburned, Daddy will put on suntan lotion.  
 b. ? To keep myself from getting sunburned, Daddy will put on suntan lotion.  
 (C&P 2010:161, ex. 13b,d)

For English, the judgements involving non-singular imposters are less controversial. The (b) examples in (23) and (24) show non-singular imposters in English can serve as an antecedent for both 3rd person and non 3rd person reflexives, while the corresponding Bengali examples in (23a) and (24a) show that only 3rd person pronominals are permissible.

- (23) a. tader/\*amader shorir shustha rakhar jonno ei chatro-ra rojdin  
 their/our body healthy keeping for these student-CLA everyday  
 beyam kor-e  
 exercise do-3  
 ‘For keeping their bodies healthy, these students exercise everyday’
- b. To keep ourselves/themselves from getting sunburned, the present authors will put on suntan lotion. (C&P 2010:162, ex. 14b)
- (24) a. tader/\*amader shorir shustha rakhar jonno Mr./Mrs. M rojdin beyam  
 their/our body healthy keeping for M everyday exercise  
 kor-e  
 do-3  
 ‘For keeping their bodies healthy, Mr. and Mrs. M exercise everyday.’
- b. To keep ourselves<sub>1,2</sub>/themselvess<sub>1,2</sub> from getting sunburned, the present author<sub>1</sub> and his<sub>1</sub> assistant<sub>2</sub> will put on suntan lotion.

At this point, we can make the following empirical generalization: For most Bengali speakers, pronominal agreement is only possible with the shell of the DP imposter. In what follows, however, I present data that shows that this pattern of pronominal agreement with an imposter DP happens to be a special case of pronominal agreement with any secondary source.

#### 4 Sources

As shown in (2), an imposter DP in English exhibits ambivalent behavior with respect to pronominal agreement. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of notion of sources, and in turn account for a variety of pronominal agreement facts, including those in (2). This section also provides further evidence for the observation that there is a contrast between Bengali and English with respect to antecedence possibilities by both imposter and non-imposter DPs. To begin with, we state the definitions of (*primary*) *source(s)* (C&P 2010:254-255).

- (25) Definition: *primary source*  
 A is a *primary source* for B if and only if:
- a. A immediately antecedes B or
  - b. A shares a lexical basis with B<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Definition: Lexically based/lexical basis

A DP Q is *lexically based* on a noun N (N is a lexical basis for Q) if and only if Q dominates N and there exists

(26) Definition: *source*

A is a *source* for B if and only if:

- a. A is a primary source for B or
- b. there is a C which is a source for B and
  - i. A is a primary source for C; or
  - ii. C is a predicate nominal and A is C's subject; or
  - iii. C is a partitive DP and A is C's set DP<sup>3</sup>

(27) Definition: *secondary source*

A is a secondary source of B if and only if A is a source of B and not a primary source of B.

In what follows, I discuss how the definitions given above can be used to account for the pronominal agreement facts in English, and illustrate the difference that exists between English and Bengali in this domain.

#### 4.1 Ultimate antecedent of an imposter DP

An imposter DP always has 3rd person (singular or plural) phi-feature values associated with its overt component. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the precursor DP is similar to a pronoun in that it has an antecedent. Since the imposter is syntactically derived from the precursor, the imposter has the same antecedent as its underlying precursor. In the example in (28), *the present authors* could itself be the antecedent for the reflexive *themselves*. Alternatively, since the imposter DP has an ultimate antecedent, the plural instance of AUTHOR, the 1st person plural form of the reflexive is also permissible.

(28) [AUTHOR] The present authors will defend themselves/ourselves.

In this case, the secondary source for the reflexive is the ultimate antecedent of *the present authors*. As shown in section 3.2, a plural imposter in Bengali may only antecede a 3rd person reflexive.

#### 4.2 Subject of a Predicate Nominal

In example (28), since the relative pronoun, DP2, is the immediate antecedent of DP3, *my students*, DP2 is a source for DP3 (by (25a) and (26a)).

(29) I am [<sub>DP1</sub> [<sub>D</sub> a ] [<sub>NP1</sub> [<sub>NP2</sub> teacher]][<sub>CLAUSE</sub> [<sub>DP2</sub> who [ <NP2> ] ] takes care of [<sub>DP3</sub> my students]]].

---

a path of nodes Q...N, where every node between Q and N is a nominal, a non-conjunct and a non-specifier (C&P 2010:102). Collins and Postal also assume that pronouns like *I* are DPs with a null determiner whose noun is *I*. It then follows that an imposter DP such as *Nixon* shares the same lexical basis as its pronominal core, *I*. This is because both the imposter DP *Nixon* and the pronominal core DP dominate the same noun.

<sup>3</sup>A partitive phrase is taken to be a DP of the form [<sub>DP1</sub> Quantifier + [<sub>NP</sub> Noun (= one(s)) + ] + of DP2 ]. DP2 is referred to as the set DP of DP1 (C&P 2010:276).

DP1 also shares a lexical basis with DP2, since under the head raising analysis of relative clauses (Kayne 1994), both DP1 and DP2 dominate the noun *teacher*. Therefore, by (25b), DP1 is a primary source for DP2, and by (26bi), DP1 is a source for DP3. Since the predicate nominal is a source for DP3, the subject of the predicate nominal is also a source for DP3, thereby allowing the 1st person form of the pronoun in DP3.

The Bengali datum in (30) is in sharp contrast to the example above. Here the pronoun in the relative clause *must* agree in the phi-features with the relative pronoun, which in turn agrees with the 3rd person singular head of the relative clause. In other words, the phi-features associated with the secondary source are not accessible to the predicate nominal.

- (30)   ami ekjon lok   je   tar/\*amar nijer shasther jotno nei  
           I   a   person REL his/my   own health   care take.3  
           ‘I am the kind of person who takes care of his health.’

### 4.3 Partitives

The sentence in (31a) lends itself to a bound variable interpretation. This is because the so-called set DP *us* is a secondary source of phi-features for the bound pronoun *we*. The Bengali example in (31b), however, does not have a bound variable reading with the pronoun *amra* in the embedded clause, which indicates that pronominal agreement with the set DP is disallowed in Bengali.

- (31) a.   [Every one of  $us_j$ ] $_i$  thinks  $we_i$  are talented.  
       b.   [*amader modhye protyeke*] $_i$  mone kor-e je     $se_i$ /\**amra\_i* sob theke  
           our    among each    mind do-3 COMP he/we    all from  
           buddhiman  
           clever  
           ‘Each one among us thinks that he is the cleverest.’

We can state the following empirical generalization: In Bengali, pronominal agreement with all secondary sources is blocked.

## 5 Towards an analysis

We have established the following contrast: English imposters allow pronominal agreement with both the ultimate antecedent and imposter shell; Bengali imposters, on the other hand, allow pronominal agreement *only* with the imposter shell. Furthermore, the preceding section shows that pronominal agreement in English, generally speaking, is ambivalent in that both an immediate antecedent and a secondary source may supply phi-feature values. In Bengali, however, immediate antecedents constitute the only source of phi-feature values. To account for this variation, one could formulate a hypothesis in terms of structural differences between English and Bengali imposters. However, for reasons to be discussed, a proposal along these lines is both difficult to formulate and also unattractive. Alternatively, one could assume

that the source of the variation is rooted in the verbal agreement systems of the languages.<sup>4</sup> In this section, I pursue the latter option. Specifically, I show that an analysis couched in terms of the *Homogeneity Principle* (to be spelled out below), and an additional assumption concerning the person feature on inflected verb, allows us to capture all the Bengali facts presented in this paper.<sup>5</sup>

## 5.1 Homogeneity principle

Below I provide an overview of the *homogeneity principle*, as stated in Collins & Postal (2010). To begin with, consider the following sentences.

- (32) a. The present authors feel that they need to defend themselves.  
 b. The present authors feel that we need to defend ourselves.  
 c. \* The present authors feel that they need to defend ourselves.  
 d. \* The present authors feel that we need to defend themselves.

(C&P 2010:229, ex. 1)

To explain these and other related facts concerning collections of pronominal elements, Collins & Postal formulate the homogeneity principle, which itself couched in terms of a number of auxiliary concepts defined as follows (C&P 2010:229-235).

- (33) Definition: *immediate antecedence chain (IAC)*  
 A sequence of constituents  $[D_1, \dots, D_n]$  is an *immediate antecedence chain* iff for all  $i$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq n$ :  $D_i$  is an immediate antecedent of  $D_{i+1}$ .

In example (34), the immediate antecedent of *herself* is *she*, and the immediate antecedent of *she* is *Katie*. Therefore, [Katie, she, herself] constitutes an immediate antecedence chain.

- (34) Katie decided that she would take herself out for a nice dinner.

The following examples may be used to illustrate the notion of *sealing*.

- (35) Definition: *seal*  
 A DP Q is *sealed* (by S) in constituent C iff S is the immediate antecedent of Q and C is the minimal constituent dominating both S and Q.

In (36a) below, the pronoun *her* is sealed in the embedded clause by the DP *Katie*. In (36b), *his* is sealed by *he*, which itself is not sealed in the embedded clause; rather, *he* is sealed in the matrix clause by *Ari*. In (36c), *his* is not sealed in the complement clause but sealed by *Ari* in the main clause.

- (36) a. Ari thinks Katie<sub>1</sub> would miss her<sub>1</sub> train.

<sup>4</sup>I thank the anonymous reviewer who pointed this out to me.

<sup>5</sup>I am grateful to Chris Collins for encouraging me to pursue this idea, and for providing helpful clues on how to go about it.

- b. Katie<sub>1</sub> thinks she<sub>1</sub> would miss her<sub>1</sub> train.
- c. Ari<sub>1</sub> thinks Katie should clean his<sub>1</sub> apartment.

(37) Definition: *available*

A DP V is available in a constituent C iff V is not sealed in a sub-constituent of C.

Given the definition in (37), the pronoun *her* in both (36a) and (36b) is not available in the matrix clause. However, in (35a) *Katie* is available in the main clause. In (36b), both *Katie* and *she* are available in the main clause. And in (36c), both *Ari* and *his* are available in the matrix clause.

(38) *Immediate Antecedence Chain Condition*

For any constituent C, the maximal set of *available* DPs with ultimate antecedent U dominated by C form an immediate antecedence chain, called the *U-availability chain in C*.

According to this condition, for the example in (36b), [Katie, she] is the U-availability chain in the matrix clause.

(39) *Homogeneity Principle (HP)*

If A and B are pronominal members of some U-availability chain, A and B agree.

Returning to the examples in (32), we can show that the deviant sentences are correctly ruled out by HP. In (32c), for instance, both *they* and *ourselves* are available in the embedded clause, thereby forming the U-availability chain [they, ourselves]. However, this particular U-availability chain clearly violates HP, which accounts for the unacceptability of (32c).

## 5.2 Analysis of Cases

The crucial observation is that Bengali, unlike English, has rich verbal agreement, as shown in the table below. The inflected verb in Bengali is marked for tense, aspect, person, and a pragmatically relevant category.

**Table 1:** The paradigm for the verb *bola* ‘to speak’ in present tense.

1st Sg/Pl	bol-i		
2nd Sg/Pl (v.f.)	bol-ish		
2nd Sg/Pl (f.)	bol-o	3rd Sg/Pl (f.)	bol-e
2nd Sg/Pl (p.)	bol-en	3rd Sg/Pl (p.)	bol-en

I propose that the overt person marker on the inflected verb functions like a pronominal element. Consequently, such an inflected verb and its pronominal neighbors, if any, are collectively subject to the Homogeneity Principle. This suggests (40):

(40) **Verbal Agreement Hypothesis:**

The cross linguistic variation in the availability of pronominal agreement with a secondary source is constrained by the variation in verbal morphology systems. Specifically, pronominal agreement with a secondary source is permissible only in languages with impoverished verbal morphology. Such agreement relations do not obtain if the finite verb bears an overt person marker.

Under the current proposal, the ungrammatical examples discussed above can be ruled out by HP. It will be shown that for each of the ill-formed sentence, there is a particular U-availability chain which violates HP.

Consider, for instance, the example in (17), replicated below. In the embedded clause, both the subject pronoun and the pronominal associated with the verbal inflection are available, since neither of them is sealed in any sub-constituent of the embedded clause. Two U-availability chains are possible: [*tara*, 3 person] and [*amra*, 3 person], of which only the former satisfies HP.

- (41) [<sub>A</sub> baba aar ma thik korech-e je [<sub>B</sub> tara/\*amra bideshe ja-b-e  
Daddy and Mommy decide.PERF-3 COMP they/we abroad go-FUT-3  
na ]]  
NEG  
'Daddy and Mommy have decided that they won't go abroad'

Next, consider the example in (23a), repeated below in (42). Here, the U-availability chain in the purpose clause is given by [PRO, *tader/amader*]. Likewise, the U-availability chain in constituent B is [*ei chatro-ra*, 3 person]. For the constituent C, the U-availability chain is [*ei chatro-ra*, PRO]. For the example to be well formed, this U-availability chain must obey HP, which means PRO is 3rd person plural. Now, returning to the U-availability chain in constituent A, we have an account of why *amader* is disallowed. This is because HP is only satisfied if the U-availability chain is [PRO, *tader*].

- (42) [<sub>C</sub>[<sub>A</sub> tader/\*amader shorir shustha rakhar jonno [<sub>B</sub> ei chatro-ra  
their/our body healthy keeping for these student-CLA  
rojdin beyam kor-e ]]]  
everyday exercise do-3  
'For keeping their bodies healthy, these students exercise everyday'

The pronominal agreement facts presented in sections 4.2 and 4.3 are also accounted for in a similar manner. Consider the example in (31b), repeated below as (43a).

- (43) a. [<sub>A</sub> [amader modhye protyekte]<sub>i</sub> mone kor-e je [<sub>B</sub> se<sub>i</sub>/\*amra<sub>i</sub> sob theke  
our among each mind do-3 COMP he/we all from  
buddhiman ]]  
clever  
'Each one among us thinks that he is the cleverest.'

- b. [amader modhye protyeke]<sub>i</sub> mone kor-e je se<sub>j</sub>/amra<sub>j</sub> sob theke buddhiman

As noted earlier, the bound variable reading is only available with the pronoun *se* in the embedded clause. The pronoun in the complement clause is not sealed. The U-availability chain in the matrix clause could either be [*amader modhye protyeke*, 3 person, *se*] or [*amader modhye protyeke*, 3 person, *amra*], of which only the former satisfies HP. Notice that on the reading of (43b) where the embedded and matrix subjects are not co-referential, both *se* and *amra* are permissible in the matrix clause. Since, under this reading, the ultimate antecedent of the embedded clause pronoun is *not* co-referential with the subject of the matrix clause, the U-availability chain in the matrix clause is [*amader modhye protyeke*, 3 person], which satisfies HP regardless of the choice of pronoun in the embedded clause.

Lastly, let us consider the example in (30), repeated below as (44).

- (44) [A ami ekjon lok [B je tar/\*amar nijer shaster jotno nei ]]  
 I a person REL his/my own health care take.3  
 ‘I am the kind of person who takes care of his health.’

Here, the relative pronoun *je* is 3rd person singular, since its phi-feature values match those of the noun it modifies, *ekjon lok* (a person). The U-availability chain in constituent B could either be [*je*, *tar*, 3 person] or [*je*, *amar*, 3 person], of which only the former satisfies HP.

In this section, I have shown that if one assumes that the person marker on the inflected verb is considered to be pronominal, the ungrammatical Bengali sentences can all be ruled out on the basis of HP.

The other possible direction, one which explains the pronominal agreement facts in terms of the structure of the imposter DP, seems problematic for the following two reasons. First, Bengali is similar to Chinese in that neither language has a definite article. However, as mentioned earlier, Bengali imposters differ from the Chinese ones in that the latter allow pronominal agreement with the notional core only. Therefore, it is not at all obvious how this difference between the English and Bengali D could be exploited to account for all the facts. More importantly, an explanation in terms of imposter structure would not account for the fact that pronominal agreement with the other secondary sources is also systematically disallowed in Bengali (cf. Sections 4.2 and 4.3). And insofar as pronominal agreement with the notional core of the imposter DP is a special case of agreement with secondary sources, an account in terms of the imposter structure alone would fail to be sufficiently general.

### 5.3 Italian

In this section, I test the hypothesis against data from Italian. The main point that emerges is that the Italian facts can be fully accounted for by the verbal agreement hypothesis. The finite verb in Italian is marked for mood, tense, person and number, as shown below in Table 3.

**Table 2:** The paradigm for the verb *parlare* ‘to speak’ in present tense indicative mood.

1st Sg	parl-o	1st Pl	parl-iamo
2nd Sg (f.)	parl-i	2nd Pl	parl-ate
2nd Sg (p.)	parl-a		
3rd Sg	parl-a	3rd Pl	parl-ano

Italian imposters, like their English and Bengali counterparts, trigger 3rd person verbal agreement, as shown in (45a) and (45b). Given this pattern of verbal agreement, we predict that in Italian pronominal agreement would match the phi-feature values on the inflected verb, which is indeed borne out, as illustrated by (45a) and (45c). This pronominal agreement pattern holds for co-ordinated imposters as well, as shown in (46).

- (45) a. Gli autori cercheranno di difendere loro/se stessi  
the authors attempt.FUT.3PL of defend themselves  
‘The authors will try to defend themselves’
- b. \*Gli autori cercheremo di difendere noi stessi  
the authors attempt.FUT.1PL of defend ourselves
- c. \*Gli autori cercheranno di difendere noi stessi  
the authors attempt.FUT.3PL of defend ourselves  
(Servidio 2010:1, ex. 1)
- (46) a. Papà e mamma si prederanno cura di se stessi  
daddy and mommy REF.CL take.FUT.3PL care of themselves  
‘Daddy and Mommy will take care of themselves’
- b. \*Papà e mamma si prederanno cura di noi stessi  
daddy and mommy REF.CL take.FUT.3PL care of ourselves  
(Servidio 2010:2, ex. 3)

Servidio (2010) reports a number of subtle judgments concerning reflexive agreement with the subject of a predicate nominal. He notes that the acceptability judgments vary with different person and number values. However, the data also show a consistent pattern, namely for any U-availability chain that violates HP, the margin of degradation is less severe for those in which the reflexive pronoun agrees in phi-feature values of the inflected verb belonging to the same U-availability chain. This fact lends additional support for the idea that verbal agreement may be involved in mediating pronominal agreement with secondary sources. The data are given below.

- (47) a. Sono il genere di persona che si prende cura di se stesso  
am the kind of person who REF.CL take.3SG care of himself  
‘I am the kind of person who takes care of himself’
- b. ?\* Sono il genere di persona che si prende cura di me stesso  
am the kind of person who REF.CL take.3SG care of myself

- c. ?? Sono il genere di persona che mi prendo cura di me stesso  
am the kind of person who REF.CL take.1SG care of myself
- (48) a. Sei il genere di persona che si prende cura di se stesso/a  
are the kind of person who REF.CL take.3SG care of himself/herself  
'You are the kind of person who takes care of himself/herself.'
- b. \* Sei il genere di persona che si prende cura di te stesso  
are the kind of person who REF.CL take.3SG care of yourself
- c. ?\* Sei il genere di persona che ti prendi cura di te stesso  
are the kind of person who REF.CL take.2SG care of yourself
- (49) a. Siamo il genere di persone che si prendono cura di se stessi  
are the kind of people who REF.CL take.3PL care of themselves  
'We are the kind of people who take care of themselves'
- b. \* Siamo il genere di persone che si prendono cura di noi stessi  
are the kind of people who REF.CL take.3PL care of ourselves
- c. ? Siamo il genere di persone che ci prendiamo cura di noi stessi  
are the kind of people who REF.CL take.1PL care of ourselves
- (50) a. Siete il genere di persone che si prendono cura di se stessi  
are the kind of people who REF.CL take.3PL care of themselves  
'You are the kind of people who take care of themselves'
- b. \* Siete il genere di persone che si prendono cura di voi stessi  
are the kind of people who REF.CL take.3PL care of yourselves
- c. ? Siete il genere di persone che si prendete cura di voi stessi  
are the kind of people who REF.CL take.2PL care of yourselves
- (Servidio 2010:6-7, exs. 18-21)

First, the grammatical sentences are only those in which the U-availability chain associated with the embedded clause obey HP. Consider (47a). Here, the relevant U-availability chain is given by [*che*, 3 *person*, *se stesso*]. Given that the relative pronoun *che* matches in phi-feature values with the noun it modifies, this U-availability chain satisfies HP. Next, the (c) examples are reported as being marginally better than the corresponding (b) examples. The reflexive pronoun in the (c) examples agree in phi-feature values with the inflected verb in the embedded clause, while those in the (b) examples do not. This suggests that verbal agreement may indeed be playing a role in mediating pronominal agreement relations.

#### 5.4 Albanian

The relevant Albanian facts happen to be quite complex. And since I have access to only a limited data set, I am not in a position to formulate any robust descriptive generalizations. Consequently, in this I can only offer some tentative remarks about Albanian. Specifically, I discuss whether the Albanian facts are problematic for the verbal agreement hypothesis. Albanian, too, exhibits rich verbal morphology, though unlike both Bengali and Italian, the

category ‘voice’ is also marked on the verb. The finite verb is marked for voice, mood, tense, person, and number, as illustrated below (Kallulli 2010).

**Table 3:** The voice paradigm for the verb *thaj* ‘to dry’ in present tense indicative mood.

	Active	Non-active
1st Sg	tha-j	tha-h-em
2nd Sg	tha-n	tha-h-esh
3rd Sg	tha-n	tha-h-et
1st Pl	tha-jmë	tha-h-emi
2nd Pl	tha-ni	tha-h-eni
3rd Pl	tha-jnë	tha-h-en

Albanian, unlike any of the languages discussed so far, allows verbal agreement with both the core and the shell of the imposter DP, as shown in (51). Given this pattern of verbal agreement, we predict that a first person pronoun is permissible if the inflected verb is also in the first person. For the cases in which the verb agrees with the imposter shell, we predict that the Albanian facts would be parallel to the Bengali and Italian cases. However, this second prediction is not borne out. Contrary to what one would expect, pronominal agreement is possible with both the immediate antecedent and a secondary source when the verb is in the 3rd person. We review the well behaved examples first, followed by the recalcitrant ones.

- (51) Mami { shko-n / shko-j } tani  
 mummy { go-3SG / go-1SG } now  
 ‘Mummy is going away now’ (Kallulli 2010:2, ex. 2)

The following data clearly show that when the verb is in the first person, only the first person form of the pronoun is allowed or preferred. These cases are easily covered by the verbal agreement hypothesis.

- (52) a. Mami e kam shpirt bebushin { tim / \*e vet / \*e saj }  
 Mummy CL.MASC has.1SG.ACT soul little baby { my / her own / her }  
 ‘Mummy loves her little baby’ (Kallulli 2010:3, ex. 6’)
- b. Jam një mësues që kujdesem për veten {(time) / (\*e tij) }  
 am a teacher that care.1SG.NACT for self {my / his }  
 ‘I am a teacher who takes care of myself’ (Kallulli 2010:4, ex. 22b)
- c. Secili nga ne mendojmë se { ? është inteligjent / jemi inteligjent }  
 each of us think.1PL.ACT that { is intelligent / are intelligent }  
 ‘Each of us think that we are intelligent’ (Kallulli 2010:5, ex. 24)

Next, we note that when the verb is in the 3rd person, the pronoun may agree with either its immediate or its ultimate antecedent, a fact which poses a problem for the hypothesis under consideration. The sentence in (53) is grammatical with the 1st person form of the reflexive in the purpose clause even when the matrix verb bears 3rd person morphology. Similarly, the null pronoun in the embedded clause in (54) could either 1st person plural or 3rd person singular.

- (53) Për të mbrojtur **veten tonë**, autorët nuk do t'u **ekspozohen/ekspozohemi**  
 for to protect self our authors not will **expose.3PL.NACT/.1PL.NACT**  
 pyetjeve të publikut  
 questions of public  
 'To protect ourselves, the authors will not expose themselves/ourselves to public questioning.'  
 (Kallulli 2010:3, ex. 11)
- (54) Secili nga ne mendon se {**është** inteligjent / **jemi** inteligjent}  
 each of us think.3SG.ACT that {**is.NACT** intelligent / **are.NACT** intelligent}  
 'Each of us think that we are intelligent' (Kallulli 2010:5, ex. 23)

In this section, I have noted some Albanian facts that seem to be problematic for the verbal agreement hypothesis. However, since finite verbs in Albanian, unlike those in Bengali and Italian, are marked with the voice category, perhaps the deviant examples could be accounted for once the hypothesis has been appropriately modified. Indeed, as Dalina Kallulli (p.c.) confirms, voice morphology interacts with pronominal agreement. As such, a proper treatment of the Albanian data should follow from a discussion of the nature of such interactions, which is beyond the scope of the paper.

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented a comparative study of English and Bengali, which shows a sharp contrast in pronominal agreement with secondary sources in these two languages. I hypothesized that pronominal agreement possibilities are constrained by the verbal agreement system of a given language. Specifically, only languages those languages in which the finite verb is overtly marked with the category person disallow pronominal agreement with a secondary source. A unified analysis has been proposed, in which all the ungrammatical examples in Bengali and Italian are shown to disobey the homogeneity principle. Finally, I have presented some Albanian data, which seem problematic for the verbal agreement hypothesis.

## References

- Collins, Chris, Stephanie Guitard and Jim Wood. 2009. Imposters: An Online Survey of Grammaticality Judgments. *NYU Working Papers in Linguistics 2*.
- Collins, Chris and Paul Postal. 2010, to appear. *Imposters*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Kallulli, Dalina. 2010. Albanian Imposters. Handout of talk given at New York University, Nov 24, 2010.
- Kayne, Richard. 1994. *The antisymmetry of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Servidio, Emilio. 2010. Italian Imposters. Handout of talk given at NYU, Nov 24, 2010.
- Wang, Chyan-an Arthur. 2009. Some Notes on Chinese Imposters. *NYU Working Papers in Linguistics 2*.

*Satarupa Das*  
*The Graduate Center of The City University of New York*  
*Linguistics Program*  
*CUNY Graduate Center*  
*365 Fifth Avenue*  
*New York, NY 10016-4309*  
*phoebe.phish@gmail.com*