Malayalam long-distance anaphor *taan*: a null theory[1]

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ABSTRACT

The Dravidian languages, Malayalam included, have a third-person pro-form *taan*, with a surprising locality profile. Like pronouns, *taan* cannot be bound locally; like reflexives, it seems to require a sentence-internal antecedent. Nearly three decades years ago, Jayaseelan (1997) argued that Malayalam *taan* is a Condition B-obeying pronoun, but this analysis has since fallen out of favor. A prominent alternative instead treats *taan* as a reflexive, bound by a silent pronoun instantiating a syntactically-represented perspectival center (Jayaseelan 1998 for Malayalam; Sundaresan 2012, Sundaresan 2018 for Tamil). In this paper, I will reexamine the syntactic and interpretive profile of *taan* and argue that the evidence favors the '*taan*-as-pronoun' analysis. Minor amendments to *taan*'s semantics — specifically, encoding its perspective-sensitivity as a presupposition — capture much of its distribution.

1 Introduction

1.1 Two approaches to *taan*

The 'long distance anaphor' *taan* in Malayalam[2] and related Dravidian languages has been well-studied (Mohanan 1982; Amritavalli 1984; Lidz 1995; Jayaseelan 1997, 1998; Sundaresan 2012, 2018; Jayaseelan 2017; Aravind to appear. It is a third-person, +human anaphor, which typically requires an utterance-internal antecedent that can be arbitrarily far, but cannot be local. Thus, (1-a), where the only utterance-internal antecedent is a clause-mate of *taan*, is ill-formed. In (1-b) and (1-c), *taan* can be co-construed with a non-local subject. When multiple long-distance antecedents are available, a sentence with *taan* is ambiguous (1-c).[3]

[1]Unless otherwise noted, all Malayalam data reflect my own judgment, confirmed with two other native speakers.

[2]Malayalam is spoken primarily in Kerala, a province of India that stretches along its southwest coast. It has SOV word order (with relative word-order freedom), a nominative-accusative case system, and is head-final (has postpositions, final complementizers). Exceptional for a Dravidian language, it lacks agreement.

[3]The language also has a set of polymorphemic reflexives that are licensed only in the presence of a clause-mate co-construed antecedent, as in (i). These are ordinary Condition-A obeying reflexives, and I will put them aside in this paper.

(i) a. *Raman*$_i$ ***tann-e-tanne***$_i$ *sneehikk-unnu*
Raman self-ACC-self love-IMPF
'Raman loves self.'

b. *Raman*$_i$ ***avan-e-tanne***$_i$ *sneehikk-unnu*
Raman 3MSg-ACC-self love-IMPF

(1) a. *$Raman_i$ ***tann-e***$_i$ *sneehikk-unnu*
Raman ANAPH-ACC love-IMPF
'Raman loves self.'

b. *$Raman_i$ vicaarichu [peNkuTTikaL$_j$* ***tann-e***$_{i/*j}$ *sneehikk-unnu ennu]*
Raman thought [girls ANAPH-ACC love-IMPF COMP]
✓'Raman thought the girls love him.'
✗'Raman thought the girls love themselves.'

c. *$Raman_i$ vicaarichu [Amma$_j$ [peNkuTTikaL* ***tann-e***$_{i/j}$ *sneehikk-unnu*
Raman thought [Mom [girls ANAPH-ACC love-IMPF
ennu] paranju ennu]
COMP] said COMP]
✓'Raman thought Mom said the girls love him.'
✓'Raman thought Mom said the girls love her.'

The problem posed by *taan* is the same as that posed by long-distance anaphora generally: it does not fit neatly into classical binding theory (Chomsky 1981 *et seq.*). It seemingly has a freer distribution than Condition A obeying reflexives, which require a co-indexed local antecedent. It also has a stricter distribution than Condition B obeying pronouns, which can pick up antecedents from the discourse.

Prior attempts to reconcile *taan*'s distribution with binding theory have fallen into two camps. One approach, pursued by Jayaseelan (1997), argues that *taan* is a species of Condition B-obeying pronoun.[4] Crucially, it is ϕ-featurally deficient, which forces the presence of an utterance-internal antecedent for interpretation. He observed that modulo discourse anaphora, *taan* is in free variation with third-person personal pronouns in many contexts. Both *taan* and ordinary pronouns can participate in cross-clausal anaphora, as in (1-b) and (1-c). Both *taan* and personal pronouns can appear inside a DP (2) or a PP (3) and be felicitously anteceded by a phrase-external DP.

(2) *Pronoun*

a. $\boxed{Raman_i}$ *[$_{DP}$* ***avan-te***$_i$ *kutti-e] snehikkunnu*
Raman 3Msg-GEN child-ACC loves
'Raman loves his child.'

b. $\boxed{Raman_i}$ *[$_{PP}$* ***avan-te***$_i$ *munn-il] oru aana-ye kaNDu*
Raman 3Msg-GEN front-LOC one elephant-ACC saw
'Raman saw an elephant in front of him.' [Jayaseelan 1999, ex.71]

(3) *Taan*

a. $\boxed{Raman_i}$ *[$_{DP}$* ***tan-te***$_i$ *kutti-e] snehikkunnu*
Raman ANAPH-GEN child-ACC loves
'Raman loves his own child.'

'Raman loves himself.'

[4]Jayaseelan was building here on prior observations in Mohanan (1982) and Amritavalli (1984)

b. $\boxed{Raman_i}$ $[_{PP}$ ***tan-te***$_i$ *munn-il]* *oru aana-ye* *kaNDu*
Raman ANAPH-GEN front-LOC one elephant-ACC saw
'Raman saw an elephant in front of himself.' [Jayaseelan 1999, ex.24]

Both, furthermore, can be anteceded by a non c-commanding nominal external to its clause.

(4) a. $\boxed{Raman\text{-}te_i}$ *aagragraham* ***[avan***$_i$ *manthri aakaN-am* *ennu]* *aaNu*
Raman-GEN wish [3MSg minister become-MOD COMP] COP
'Raman's wish is that he become minister.'
b. $\boxed{Raman\text{-}te_i}$ *aagragraham* ***[taan***$_i$ *manthri aakaN-am* *ennu]* *aaNu*
Raman-GEN wish [ANAPH minister become-MOD COMP] COP
'Raman's wish is that he become minister.' [Jayaseelan 1999, ex.41]

But Jayaseelan himself had a change of heart soon, thereafter. In Jayaseelan (1998), he noted a set of interpretive restrictions on *taan* that suggested that the anaphor is *perspective-sensitive*.[5] Its antecedent has to be identified with the 'point-of-view' holder or 'perspectival center' of the sentence. To account for this perspective-sensitivity, he proposed that *taan* is bound by a silent perspectival element at the clause-edge. On this analysis, *taan* is a Condition A-obeying reflexive, with a local binder that happens to be silent.

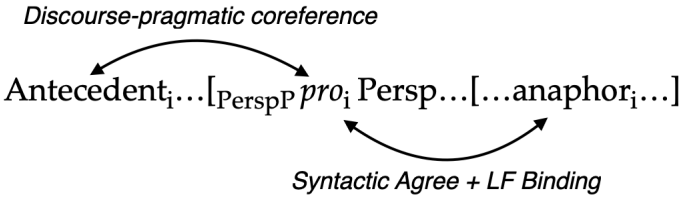
In the three decades since, the earlier, *taan*-as-pronoun analysis has fallen out of favor. In contrast, there has been much interest in the perspective-bound reflexive analysis. The general idea — that apparent long-distance anaphora with *taan* in fact involves local binding by silent material — has since been developed and extended to account for long-distance anaphora in many languages, including other Dravidian languages (see in particular, Sundaresan 2012, 2018; Nishigauchi 2014; Charnavel 2019). Here I will sketch in more detail Sundaresan's (2018) proposal, as it pertains to the anaphor *taan* in the closely related Dravidian language Tamil.[6]

1.2 Sundaresan's (2018) account of perspectival anaphora

Sundaresan (2018) defines perspectival anaphora as cases where an anaphor "is properly contained within a predication which is evaluated relative to the perspective, mental or spatial, of some sentient individual... and the antecedent of the anaphor must denote this individual" (p.6). Long-distance anaphora, she notes, seems to be regulated both by structural constraints (anti-locality) and pragmatic constraints (perspective-sensitivity). To capture both effects, she develops a "two-stage" model, schematized in (5).

[5] Jayaseelan's characterization of perspective is similar to the notion of "empathy" discussed by Kuno and Kaburaki (1977), Kuno (1987) and Oshima (2006) in relation to the Japanese long-distance anaphor *zibun*.

[6] It's worth noting, though, that everything I mention about Sundaresan's proposal should equally apply to other similar proposals on the market.



(5) (Sundaresan 2018, p.2)

Core to Sundaresan's proposal is the idea that perspectival anaphors are syntactically bound by a silent pro-form, the perspectival *pro*. Perspectival *pro* is introduced in the specifier of a Perspective Phrase (PerspP). The head Persp^0 assigns the pronoun a θ-role and semantically relates the individual denoted by the pronoun to an event argument as the perspective-holder of that event.

Perspectival *pro* itself receives its reference from the context and co-refers with the most salient antecedent. The tendency for long-distance anaphors to have utterance-internal antecedents is simply a consequence of the greater salience of these mentioned antecedents compared to those that are not mentioned. In this system of multiple dependencies, only one element — perspectival *pro* — is formally the perspectival holder, but the nature of binding and co-reference is such that its antecedent (the overt "antecedent" of *taan*) and the element that it antecedes (*taan*) will also track the perspective-holder.

Whenever a perspectival reflexive is licensed, that means that there is a sufficiently local PerspP projection and a perspectival *pro* that can bind the reflexive. Sundaresan ties perspective to phasehood: CPs, *v*Ps, DPs and PPs can all host their own PerspPs. This is consistent with data we already saw: *taan* is licensed not just in clauses, but also inside DPs and PPs.

The primary evidence for Sundaresan's proposal comes from Tamil. The Tamil long-distance anaphor *taan* has a highly similar distribution as its Malayalam counterpart. A critical difference between the two languages is that Tamil has subject-verb agreement, and Tamil *taan* can appear in configurations involving so-called "monstrous" agreement. *Taan* can optionally control first-person agreement morphology on the verb. Thus in (6), the embedded verb displays first-person agreement morphology, though neither *taan* nor the overt antecedent *Sai* is first-person.

(6) *Sai$_i$ [taan$_i$ djej-pp-**een**-nnu] so-nn-aan*
Sai ANAPH win-FUT-1SG-COMP say-PST-3SG
'Sai said that he would win.' (Sundaresan 2018, ex.57)

Sundaresan (2018) argues that the unexpected agreement pattern arises due to the interaction of the agreeing T, the anaphor *taan* in subject position, and the silent perspectival *pro*. Building on earlier work (e.g. Jayaseelan 1997), *taan* is taken to lack ϕ-features altogether. This means that when the subject is *taan*, T will fail to find ϕ-features on the subject DP, leading to an expansion of its search domain. T will then probe upwards and agree with the next closest DP — the perspectival *pro*. Monstrous agreement takes place in attitude and

speech contexts, contexts that are known to trigger shifted readings of indexicals in certain languages. Sundaresan argues that in monstrous agreement scenarios, the perspectival *pro* in the embedded CP is a shifted first person indexical. Thus, monstrous agreement involves genuine agreement with a silent first person element, whose reference, given indexical shift, tracks *not* the speaker coordinate of the utterance context, but the author of the attitudinal context.

1.3 Present work

The perspective-bound reflexive approach is appealing on both theoretical and empirical fronts. In unifying long-distance and local anaphora, it simplifies the typology of anaphoric dependencies. Empirically, the approach accounts for the interpretive quirks of long-distance anaphors and provides an explanation for otherwise recalcitrant data, such as monstrous agreement in Tamil. Despite these virtues, I will argue in this paper that this approach is insufficient for Malayalam *taan*. Specifically, it fails to fully capture its distribution. The *taan*-as-pronoun approach fares better in this regard. I will therefore attempt to rescue this approach by making certain modifications to deal with *taan*'s perspective-sensitivity. The crucial move will be to shift away from a "syntactification" of perspective, and instead treat perspective as a contextual parameter — a strategy pursued by various semantic treatments of perspectival phenomena (Lasersohn 2005; Stephenson 2007; Percus 2011; Sudo 2015). This revised *taan*-as-pronoun approach effectively captures many, though not all, of *taan*'s properties.

I begin in the next section by presenting data that showcase *taan*'s perspective-sensitivity and outlining how these data might be explained on a perspective-bound reflexive approach. In §3, I'll discuss patterns that are more problematic for the perspective-bound reflexive approach. The main problem is that the postulated perspectival domains are sometimes too small and other times too large. I turn to my own proposal in §4, which incorporates insights of both camps of prior analyses. In §5, I discuss some shortcomings of this proposal.

2 Evidence for perspective-sensitivity

Despite otherwise having a similar distribution as pronouns, *taan* shows certain restrictions on its antecedents that are not shared by ordinary third-person pronouns. *Taan*, unlike regular pronouns, tends to be subject-oriented. This contrast is demonstrated in (7): a non-subject DP in the matrix clause can antecede a regular pronoun (7-b), but not *taan* (7-a).

(7) a. *Raman* [*Sita-yode*$_j$] ***tan-te***$_{*j}$ *bhaavi-e patti paranju*
Raman Sita-soc ANAPH-GEN future-ACC about told
✗'Raman told Sita about her own future.'

b. *Raman* [*Sita-yode*$_j$] ***avaL-uDe***$_j$ *bhaavi-e patti paranju*
Raman Sita-soc 3FSg-GEN future-ACC about told
✓'Raman told Sita about her future.'

Sundaresan (2012) argues this is not a syntactic restriction but a conceptual one. The real requirement is that the antecedent of *taan* is sentient, as only sentient beings can be perspective-holders. Once the sentience requirement is met, subject-orientation can be explained on the perspective-bound reflexive approach if the more salient antecedent for the perspectival *pro* is the matrix subject. Indeed, subjects have been argued to be more prominent than non-subjects for pronoun resolution (Crawley et al. 1990; Grosz et al. 1995).

But as previously noted by Jayaseelan (1998), subject-orientation is only a descriptive tendency for *taan*. When the perspectival center is clearly something else, e.g. the "protagonist" of the narration in Free Indirect Discourse (FID) contexts, *taan* can appear *sans* an overt antecedent and get co-identified with that protagonist.

(8) $\boxed{John_i}$ *manassilaakki, ee bandham awasaaniccu ennu.* ***Taan***$_i$ *ini*
John understood, this relationship finished COMP. ANAPH now-on
Mary-e orikkalum kaaN-illa.
Mary-ACC ever see-NEG
'John understood that this relationship is finished. He [John] will never see Mary again.' (Jayaseelan 1998, ex. 14)

This, too, is unproblematic of the perspective-bound reflexive approach. Recall that the relation between *taan* and its surface antecedent is claimed to be *mediated*. In actuality, the apparently unbound *taan* in (8) is bound by the silent perspectival *pro* at the clause-edge. FID involves special contexts where a narrator uses a sentence (what appears to be a root clause) to communicate the thoughts and perceptions of a character who inhabits the world of the (potentially fictional) narrative. In such circumstances, the FID-protagonist is presumably highly salient, and a suitable antecedent for the perspectival *pro*.

Yet another piece of evidence pointing to *taan*'s perspective-sensitivity is the way it interacts with other perspectival elements. Certain verbs of transfer in Malayalam encode whether the goal *should* or *should not* be identified with the perspective holder.[7] When *taan* co-occurs with these verbs, perspectival consistency is enforced (original observations due to Jayaseelan 1998). As an illustration, consider the contrast in felicity between the (a) and (b) sentences in (9), which involve the perspectival verbs *tar-* and *koDukk-*, both of which roughly translate to 'give'.

(9) a. $\boxed{Raman_i}$ *[Sita sammaanam* ***tan-ikku***$_i$ *<u>tar-um</u> ennu] vicaariccu*
Raman [Sita prize ANAPH-DAT give-FUT COMP thought
'Raman thought that Sita would give the prize to him.'

b. # $\boxed{Raman_i}$ *[Sita sammaanam* ***tan-ikku***$_i$ *<u>koDukk-um</u> ennu] vicaariccu*
Raman [Sita prize ANAPH-DAT give-FUT COMP thought
'Raman thought that Sita would give the prize to him.'

The verb *tar-* requires that the goal of transfer is also the perspective-holder. The verb *koDukk-* requires that the goal is *not* the perspective-holder. On the perspective-bound

[7] These verbs are similar to the better-studied Japanese empathy verbs (Kuno 1987).

reflexive account, the oddness of (10-b) is explained if the perspectival requirements of the binder of *taan* conflict with those of *koDukk*: *taan* is bound by an element that represents the perspectival center, but the verb mandates against such an element being the goal.

A final interpretive restriction worth noting is that *taan* cannot co-occur with co-referential personal pronouns in the same clause (10-a). It can, however, co-occur with other co-construed instances of *taan* (10-b).

(10) a. *$\boxed{\textit{Raman}_i}$ *[**taan**$_i$ **avan-te**$_i$ viiTT-ileekku pook-um ennu] paranju*
Raman ANAPH 3Msg-GEN house-LOC go-FUT COMP said
'Raman said that he will go to his house.'

b. $\boxed{\textit{Raman}_i}$ *[**taan**$_i$ **tan-te**$_i$ viiTT-ileekku pook-um ennu] paranju*
Raman ANAPH ANAPH-GEN house-LOC go-FUT COMP said
'Raman said that he will go to his own house.'

On the perspective-bound reflexive account, this restriction can be explained by Condition B. The sentences in (10) both contain an occurrence of *taan*, co-construed with the matrix subject. To capture this co-construal, the account posits a structure like (11) for these sentences.

(11) [Raman$_i$ .... [*pro*$_i$ Persp^0 [... anaphor$_i$/pronoun$_i$]]]

Because the perspectival *pro* is co-indexed with Raman in this structure, only a reflexive — i.e. *taan* — can occur in its scope. A pronoun would be too local to a co-indexed antecedent, violating Condition B. See related discussion in Sundaresan (2018), though for different types of data.

3 Locality troubles

We have seen that many characteristics of Malayalam *taan* can be straightforwardly accounted for on the perspective-bound reflexive account. In this section, I turn to properties whose explanation is less clear, which have to do with *taan*'s locality profile. I will focus in particular on two. The first involves situations where the PerspPs we need to posit to license *taan* fail to correspond to the domains where perspectival constraints are enforced. The second has to do with the behavior of *taan* in infinitival complements. Here, *taan*'s distribution fully parallels that of ordinary pronouns, and does not follow from a treatment of the expression as a reflexive bound by silent material at the edge of the infinitival clause.

3.1 Conflicting perspectival domains

We saw in the previous section that when there are multiple perspective-sensitive elements, their perspectives need to resolve to the same center. The perspective-bound reflexive approach can make sense of this, so long as the elements are within a single PerspP. In addition to clauses, DPs and PPs are argued to constitute independent perspectival domains (Sundaresan 2012, 2018). Postulating PerspPs inside DPs and PPs is necessary to account

for the fact that *taan* is licensed inside them with phrase-external, but still clause-internal, antecedent. However, perspectival consistency requirements do not seem to correspond to every domain hypothesized to host PerspPs. Rather, they seem to be operative uniformly over *an entire clause.*

Consider the simplex sentence in (12). The sentence contains an occurrence of *taan* inside the possessive DP, understood to co-refer to the sentential subject *Sita*. The fact that *Sita* can antecede *taan* despite being part of the same clause is taken to show that the possessive DP hosts its own PerspP. This sentence also involves a perspective-sensitive verb of motion, *var-*, which requires that the perspective-holder be at the goal-location. Here, both perspectives — the referent of *taan* and the individual at the goal-location — naturally resolve to the subject. Note that this is so despite there being two distinct PerspPs.

(12) *Sita$_i$ [[**tan-te**$_i$ kuTTi-uDe] veeTT-ileekku] vannu*
Sita ANAPH-GEN child-GEN house-LOC walked
'Sita came to her child's house'

This alone is uninformative. But consider (13-a), where we have embedded the above sentence under the attitude verb *vicaarikk-* 'think', thereby introducing another potential antecedent for *taan*. Not all predicted readings for this sentence are available. If Raman is at the goal-location, then *taan* must also resolve to Raman. Sita is no longer an option, despite being a possible antecedent for *taan* in the unembedded variant.

(13) *Raman [Sita [[**tan-te** kuTTi-uDe] veeTT-ileekku] <u>vannu</u> ennu] vicaariccu*
Raman Sita ANAPH-GEN child-GEN house-LOC came COMP thought
✓*taan* = Raman; Raman in child's house
✗*taan* = Sita; Raman in child's house

If we replace the perspective-sensitive *var-* with a non-perspectival verb like *naDakk-* 'walk', as in (14), the "mixed" reading becomes available. Here, both Raman and Sita are possible antecedents for *taan*.

(14) *Raman [Sita [[**tan-te** kuTTi-uDe] veeTT-ileekku] <u>naDannu</u> ennu]*
Raman Sita ANAPH-GEN child-GEN house-LOC walked COMP
vicaariccu
thought
✓*taan* = Raman
✓*taan* = Sita

The contrast between (13) and (14) suggests that the loss of a reading is due to a requirement for perspectival consistency across *taan* and *var-*. But if a DP can in principle host its own PerspP, it is not clear why there needs to be consistency between a DP-internal *taan* and the perspectival-verb, which is outside the perspectival domain of the anaphor.[8]

[8]Sundaresan (2018) reports that mixed readings are in fact available in similar structures (involving PPs) with Tamil *taan*. I'm not sure what to make of this variation.

One possible response is to blame extra-grammatical factors for the lack of mixed readings. Perhaps salience considerations could result in the perspectival pronouns in both domains being resolved to the same referent. It is difficult to fully control for salience factors, but here is an attempt using conjoined subjects. (15) serves as the baseline. It shows that the individual conjuncts, *Raman* and *Ravi*, are both salient enough to serve as antecedents for ordinary pronouns within the sentence. Importantly, they can each antecede a different pronoun, yielding the mixed reading indicated by the indices in (15).[9]

(15) $\boxed{\textit{Raman}_i\textit{-um}}$ $\boxed{\textit{Ravi}_j\textit{-um}}$ ***avan-te***$_i$ *Amma-ye-um* ***avan-te***$_j$
Raman-CONJ Ravi-GEN-CONJ 3Msg-GEN mother-ACC-CONJ 3Msg-GEN
aniyatti-ye-um *New York-il* *koNDuvannu*
sister-ACC-CONJ New York-LOC brought
'Raman and Ravi brought Raman's mother and Ravi's sister to NY.'

In principle, these DPs should also be salient enough to serve as antecedents for silent pronominals, such as the perspectival *pro* that binds *taan*. However, when we replace the overt pronouns with *taan*, as in (16), the mixed reading disappears. Notice, though, that each DP remains sufficiently salient to serve as the antecedent for *taan*, so long as it antecedes *both* occurrences of the anaphor, not just one.

(16) # $\boxed{\textit{Raman}_i\textit{-um}}$ $\boxed{\textit{Ravi}_j\textit{-um}}$ ***tan-te***$_i$ *Amma-ye-um* ***tan-te***$_j$
Raman-CONJ Ravi-CONJ ANAPH-GEN mother-ACC-CONJ ANAPH-GEN
aniyatti-ye-um *New York-il* *koNDuvannu*
sister-ACC-CONJ New York-LOC brought
✗'Raman and Ravi brought Raman's mother and Ravi's sister to NY.'
(✓Raman's mother and Raman's sister)
(✓Ravi's mother and Ravi's sister)

The loss of the mixed reading here is difficult to explain on the perspective-bound reflexive account. Both possessive DPs should be able to contain their own PerspPs, from whose specifier a silent pronoun can locally bind each instance of *taan*. This pronoun, furthermore, should be able to pick up reference from the context, as any ordinary pronoun. The prediction then is that (16) should have all the same readings as (15), but this prediction is not borne out. Rather, the generalization appears to be that the relevant domain for perspective is the whole clause, and not the proposed PerspPs.

3.2 Infinitives

Inside infinitival complements, *taan* has the same distribution as ordinary pronouns. This was already observed by Jayaseelan (1997) and used as evidence for his *taan*-as-pronoun account. In this subsection, I will argue that the distributional restrictions on *taan* inside

[9]The sentence is most naturally read with contrastive stress on both genitive pronouns. Crucially, stress does not save the *taan* variant.

infinitives cannot be explained if it is in fact a reflexive bound by a perspectival *pro* at the edge of the infinitival clause.

Let us first consider ECM-infinitives, arguably the least problematic for the perspective-bound reflexive approach. A matrix clause subject cannot antecede *taan* or pronouns when the latter are ECM subjects; compare (17-a) with the finite complement in (17-b).

(17) a. *$Raman_i$ [**tan-ne$_i$/avan-e$_i$** *oru miDukkan aayi] karuthi*
Raman$_i$ ANAPH-ACC/3Msg-ACC a clever.person COP considered
✗'Raman considered self/him a smart person.'

b. *$Raman_i$ [**taan$_i$/avan$_i$** oru miDukkan aaNu ennu] karuthi*
Raman ANAPH/3Msg a clever.person COP COMP considered
✓'Raman thought that he is a smart person.' [Jayaseelan 1999]

The inability of pronouns to occur in this environment is standardly explained by Condition B. The pronoun is too close to a co-indexed, c-commanding DP. But what about *taan*, if it is indeed a reflexive? On the perspective-bound reflexive account, the inability of *taan* to occur as ECM-subjects can be explained if the embedded subject moves past the embedded PerspP to a position in the matrix, as schematized in (18).

(18) [pro_i Persp^0 [... [Raman$_i$ .... [$_{VP}$ taan$_i$ [... [$_{TP}$ ... pro_i Persp^0 [... <~~taan$_i$~~>]]]]]]]

In such a scenario, *taan* would be too high to be bound by the embedded perspectival *pro*. The higher perspectival *pro*, while in principle a suitable binder, cannot co-refer with Raman, as that would cause a Condition C violation. Thus, the account explains *taan*'s inability to serve as an ECM subject co-indexed with the matrix subject, although the reasoning differs from why pronouns cannot be ECM subjects under the same circumstances.

Once we move beyond ECM, however, further problems emerge. In non-ECM contexts, a matrix subject can antecede an embedded non-subject *taan* or pronoun when a non-coreferential embedded subject intervenes (19-a).[10] However, the absence of this intervening subject blocks co-reference between *taan* and the matrix subject; see (19-b).

(19) a. *$Raman_i$ [Sita **tan-ne$_i$/avan-e$_i$** pukazht-aan] aagrahiccu*
Raman Sita ANAPH-ACC/3Msg-ACC praise-INF wanted
✓'Raman wanted Sita to praise him'

b. *$Raman_i$ [PRO_i **tan-ne$_i$/avan-e$_i$** pukazht-aan] aagrahiccu*
Raman ANAPH-ACC/3Msg-ACC praise-INF wanted
✗'Raman wanted to praise himself'

This contrast is unexpected. Why should a domain that could in principle host a PerspP and license *taan* fail to do so in the absence of an overt subject?

A possible response might be that the two infinitives in (19) are not of the same size. Perhaps infinitives that do not license an overt subject are structurally smaller than those

[10]Note that unlike ECM subjects, which receive exceptional ACC case, an embedded subject of *want*-predicates receives NOM case.

that don't, and they in turn do not project their own PerspPs. This is conceivable, but the same argument can be made with obligatory control environments involving only PRO-subjects. A matrix subject cannot antecede an embedded non-subject *taan*, or for that matter a third-person pronoun, in *subject-control* environments. This is illustrated in (20-a) with the subject-control predicate *try*. However, *taan can* be anteceded by the matrix subject in an *object-control* environment, (20-b).

(20) a. *$Raman_i$ [PRO_i **tan-ne$_i$/avan-e$_i$** *nannaakkuv-aan] shramiccu*
Raman ANAPH-ACC/3Msg-ACC improve-INF tried
✗'Raman tried to improve himself.'

b. $Raman_i$ *Ravi-ode$_j$* [PRO_j **tan-ne$_{i/*j}$/avan-e$_{i/*j}$** *nannaakkuv-aan]*
Raman Ravi-SOC ANAPH-ACC/3Msg-ACC improve-INF
paranju
said
✓'Raman said to Ravi to improve him (=Raman).'

Postulating clause-size differences for the two sentences in (20) is more methodologically suspect. The fact that *taan* is licensed in (20-b) suggests that there is a PerspP at the edge of the infinitival clause. Why it becomes unavailable in (20-a) is a mystery on the perspective-bound reflexive account.[11]

All of these distributional facts are straightforwardly accounted for on a pronoun account. *Taan* and ordinary pronouns like *avan* are both subject to Condition B — hence their parallel distribution inside infinitives. The contrast between overt and covert subjects in (19) tells us that the binding domain in Malayalam is the smallest clause containing the pronoun and a c-commanding subject. In the absence of that subject, neither *taan* nor *avan* is free in their binding domain. Both *taan* and pronouns are blocked in (20-a) for the same reason: because PRO, co-indexed with Raman, causes a Condition B problem for both types of expressions. In contrast, with object control predicates ((20-b)), *taan*/*avan* can be co-construed with the subject, with which PRO is contra-indexed. In sum, *taan* appears subject to identical locality constraints as personal pronouns — Condition B. It should therefore be treated as a pronoun.

4 Proposal: *taan* as a perspectival pronoun

A perspective-bound reflexive account of *taan* captures the perspective-sensitivity of the anaphor and related interpretive properties, but makes the wrong distributional predictions. A simplistic pronoun account, while accounting for the locality profile of *taan*, does not say anything about its interpretive restrictions. My diagnosis is that the issue lies not in treating *taan* as a perspectival element, but with the "syntactification" of perspective. In what follows, I will try to amend the pronoun approach to capture *taan*'s perspective-sensitivity.

[11] Questions also arise regarding the interaction of PRO — another arguably perspective-sensitive element — and PerspP; I am going to ignore these here.

4.1 A semantics/pragmatics for perspective

Perspective-sensitive phenomena are abundant in natural language. Other examples beyond anaphors include relative locative terms (e.g. *to the left, come, go,* the Malayalam *tar-/koDukk-* verbs we saw earlier), predicates of personal taste (e.g. *tasty, fun*), and relative socio-cultural terms (e.g. *foreigner*). Some of these have been given a "relativist-semantic" treatment in prior work (see e.g., Lasersohn 2005; Stephenson 2007; Percus 2011; Bylinina 2014; Sudo 2015 a.o.), which I will be building on here.

It is standard to assume that the interpretation function is relativized to three parameters: a variable assignment g, an index of evaluation i, and a context c. Indices and contexts are tuples, <x,y,t,w>, where x and y are individuals, t is a time and w is a world. For the context parameter, the values of these elements are set to the utterance coordinates: <speaker/author, addressee, utterance time, world of utterance>.[12] Indexicals such as *I*, *you* and *now* make reference to the c-parameter.

The crucial innovation necessary for capturing perspectival phenomena is the addition of a second context parameter, the "d" parameter, relevant for perspective terms (Percus 2011). This can be thought of as an enriched variant of the judge parameter in Lasersohn (2005).[13] We can think of the d-parameter as also being formally identical to c, though only the author-coordinate of d — auth(d) — will be relevant for us here. The fuller representation of the interpretation function is as in (21).

(21) $[\![.]\!]^{c,d,g,i}$

Perspective-sensitive expressions make reference to the d-parameter. For example, relative location verbs like *come* can be thought of as having a perspectival presupposition that the perspective-holder is at the goal-location (Oshima 2006; Sudo 2015):

(22) $[\![$Sita is coming to Kochi$]\!]^{c,d,g,i}$
is defined iff auth(d) is in Kochi
when defined, $[\![(19)]\!]^{c,d,g,i}$ = 1 iff Sita is traveling to Kochi in w_i.

Generally speaking, a speaker s uttering a sentence S in w while adopting the perspective of an individual y is saying that S evaluated at their own context c and at y's context d (the perspectival context) holds in w. In cases where the speaker is not obviously adopting anyone else's perspective, we can assume that they are taking their own perspective and identify auth(d) with auth(c). This feels correct for Malayalam, as it is for a language like English. Both the Malayalam sentence in (23) and the English one in (22) seem to convey that the speaker is currently in Kochi.

[12] The formally identical treatment of indices and contexts is argued for in, e.g., Anand 2003, von Stechow and Zimmermann 2005 and Deal 2020.

[13] The two context approach is also commonly adopted in discussions of FID, e.g. Doron 1991; Schlenker 2004; Sharvit 2008; Eckardt 2014; Abrusan 2020.

(23) *Sita Kochi-yileekku var-unnu*
Sita Kochi-LOC come-IMPF
'Sita is coming to Kochi.'

The motivation for postulating a separate perspectival parameter in addition to the usual context parameter is that perspectival and indexical terms can diverge in behavior. In languages like English and Malayalam, indexicals do not shift under attitudes. This means that in (24), the first person indexicals get their reference from the utterance context c and resolve to the speaker, even though the indexical is embedded under an attitude verb. Perspectival terms, on the other hand, do shift. The perspectival location relevant for the embedded perspective-sensitive verb *come* is most naturally that of the attitude holder Raman. Perspective shifting under attitudes will be discussed in more detail later in the paper.

(24) a. Raman thinks that I am coming to Kochi.
I = speaker of utterance; Raman at goal-location
b. *Raman [njaan Kochi-yileekku var-unnu ennu] vicaarikk-unnu*
Raman I Kochi-LOC come-IMPF COMP think-IMPF
'Raman thinks that I am coming to Kochi'
njaan 'I' = speaker of utterance; Raman at goal-location

4.2 A pronoun analysis for *taan*

I assume that all pronouns, including first and second pronouns, are uniformly interpreted as variables, following Heim & Kratzer (1998); Sauerland (2003); Heim (2008), among others. Pronouns come furnished with indices in the syntax. Indices are variables and mapped to semantic values by the contextually given assignment function g. This approach contrasts with treatments of first and second person pronouns are constants with an indexical semantics. Pronominal ϕ-features, including person features, constrain the range of possible referents by triggering presuppositions. For instance, first person pronouns presuppose that their referent is the speaker of the current context, (25).

(25) $[\![\mathrm{I}_7]\!]^{c,g,i}$ is defined iff g(7) is auth(c).
when defined, g(7) (Heim 2008)

We now have all the ingredients to propose a lexical entry for Malayalam *taan*. The proposal is simple: *taan* is a pronoun with a perspectival presupposition; see (26).[14]

(26) $[\![\mathrm{taan}_7]\!]^{c,d,g,i}$ is defined iff g(7) is auth(d).
when defined, g(7)

[14] A similar analysis has been proposed for the silent experiencer argument of taste-predicates by Stephenson (2007). Anand (2003) also treats *taan* as having a contextual presupposition, but one tied to the utterance context c:
(i) $[\![\mathrm{taan}_7]\!]^{c,d,g,i}$ is defined iff g(7) is auth(c); when defined, g(7).

Like ordinary third-person pronouns, *taan*'s interpretation is assignment-dependent. Its referent is whatever the contextually-given assignment function assigns to its index. Unlike ordinary third-person pronouns, *taan* carries a perspectival presupposition that its referent is identified with the author of d.

4.3 Welcome consequences

Various properties of *taan* fall out straightforwardly from this analysis. To start, its locality profile comes for free: *taan* is a pronoun and we expect its distribution to be governed by Condition B, modulo perspectival requirements.

One such requirement noted earlier is perspectival consistency: if multiple perspectival elements are part of the same sentence, their associated perspective sites typically have to be the same. We saw in §3, that this is a requirement enforced at the clause-level, independently of the locality conditions governing *taan*. On the present view, this is because perspective is a contextual parameter, and contextual parameters become relevant when evaluating the truth of a sentence.

This makes perspective-dependency, like other types of context-dependency, a phenomenon at the semantics-pragmatics interface. The semantics tells you where in the computation of the expressed proposition there are gaps for the pragmatics to fill in (e.g. in the form of presuppositions on pronouns). The pragmatics establishes how the contexts involved in sentence use (context of utterance, perspectival context) are identified and how such contexts determine a domain of discourse.

This approach also allows for a rethinking of the *quasi*-subject-orientation of *taan* as a kind of perspective "shift" under attitude verbs. The literature on indexical shift has taught us that contexts can systematically shift under attitude or speech situations. Attitude and speech predicate as quantifiers over indices: the lexical entry for a verb like *think*, for instance, says that every index that constitutes the attitude holder's doxastic alternatives are those where ϕ is true (27).

(27) $[\![\text{think } \phi]\!]^{c,d,g,i} = \lambda \text{x}.\ \forall \text{i'} \in \textbf{DOX}(\text{x})(\text{w}_i).\ [\![\phi]\!]^{c,d,g,i'} = 1$
where i' $\in$ **DOX**(x)(w_i) iff i' is compatible what x believes in w_i

Indexical shift happens when the c-parameter of the attitude complement is overwritten with the (attitude-bound) index parameter. In the framework for indexical shift originally proposed by Anand and Nevins (2004) and subsequently developed by many others (e.g. Anand & Nevins 2006; Sudo 2012; Deal 2020, a.o.), this over-writing is done by an intermediate element, a context shifter operator.

Recall that in under attitude verbs, *taan* is most naturally understood as co-referring with the attitude-holder. We see this in (28) (repeated from (1b)).

(28) $\boxed{\textit{Raman}_i}$ *vicaarichu [peNkuTTikaL* ***tann-e***$_i$ *sneehikk-unnu ennu]*
Raman thought [girls ANAPH-ACC love-IMPF] COMP
'Raman thought the girls love him.'

We can explain this tendency if under attitude contexts, the d-parameter gets overwritten in a manner similar to indexical shift. Attitude predicates may (optionally) combine with a perspective shifter as in (29-a), which overwrites the coordinates of the d-parameter with those of the index (see e.g. Percus 2011, Sudo 2015). In the context of this perspective shifter, auth(d) of an attitudinal complement will be identified with the attitude holder, the author of the attitudinal context (29-b).

(29) a. $[\![\text{OP}_d\ \phi]\!]^{c,d,g,i} = [\![\phi]\!]^{c,\underline{\mathbf{i}},g,i}$

b. $[\![\text{Raman thinks [Op}_d \text{ the girls like } \textit{taan}]]\!]^{c,d,g,i}$
$\forall$i' $\in$ **DOX**(Raman)(w_i) . $[\![\text{Op}_d \text{ the girls like } \textit{taan}]]\!]^{c,\underline{\mathbf{i}'},g,i'}$
all contexts that constitute Raman's doxastic alternatives are ones in which the girls like Raman's counterpart in those contexts[15]

5 Problems and (partial) solutions

The perspectival pronoun analysis predicts the distribution of *taan* to be relatively free as long as its perspectival presupposition is satisfied. In this section, I will highlight two puzzles for this prediction in Malayalam, both having to do with when *taan* can be co-construed with a speech act participant. The first problem is the *absence* of speaker-oriented readings of *taan*. I will propose a solution that will also rule out addressee-oriented readings. This makes way for a different problem. Addressee-oriented readings of *taan* are in fact available (in informal registers).

5.1 Absence of speaker-oriented readings

One of the pragmatic assumptions in the previous section was that at the matrix level, the d-parameter is identified with the c-parameter. This captures the fact that we naturally take the individual whose perspective the speaker adopts to be the speaker themself, if there are no clear indications otherwise. For *taan*, then, we predict that (30)— with an unembedded occurrence of *taan* — should have a reading where *taan* is co-construed with the speaker. But the sentence does not have this reading.

(30) ***Taan*** *oru linguist aanu*
ANAPH a linguist COP
✗'I am a linguist'

The absence of the intended reading in (30) may be related to another characteristic of *taan*: even in anaphoric contexts, *taan* cannot be anteceded by a participant. Co-construal of an embedded clause *taan* with a matrix subject that is first person (31-a) or second person (31-b) results in ill-formedness.

[15] I am collapsing the assertion/presupposition distinction here for convenience.

(31) a. *$njaan_i$ *[Sita* ***tan-ne***$_i$ *pukazhthi ennu] paranju*
I [Sita ANAPH-ACC praised COMP said
'I said that Sita praised me.'

b. *Nii_i *[Sita* ***tan-ne***$_i$ *pukazhthi ennu] paranju*
You [Sita ANAPH-ACC praised COMP said
'you said that Sita praised you.'

It is desirable to have a unified solution for both (31) and (30). Mine is the same as the one proposed by Sauerland (2003) and Heim (2008) for why (32) cannot be used to say that the speaker is a linguist.

(32) She is a linguist.

These authors propose that pronouns compete at the level of presupposition, and all else equal, the presuppositionally stronger one is forced. This is due to a principle "Maximize Presupposition" (Heim 1991), formalized in (33), which mandates that speakers should opt for forms with the strongest satisfied presupposition.

(33) **Maximize Presupposition (MP):** An utterance of a sentence S is infelicitous in a context c iff there is an alternative S' to S such that:
a. S and S' are contextually equivalent
b. The presuppositions of S and S' are both satisfied in c
c. The presuppositions of S' is stronger than the presuppositions of S

The proposed semantics for third and first person pronouns, given in (34), are such that the first person pronoun's presuppositions asymmetrically entail (trivially) that of the third person pronoun. The choice of the latter over the first gives rise to an "anti-presupposition" that g(7) does not include auth(c).

(34) a. $[\![\text{pro-3rd}_7]\!]^{c,d,g,i}$ = g(7)
b. $[\![\text{pro-1st}_7]\!]^{c,d,g,i}$ is defined iff g(7) = auth(c). when defined, g(7)

Could we simply extend this analysis to *taan*, which is also a third person pronoun? A hiccup in doing so is that *taan* also has a contextual presupposition. This means that sentences with *taan* and one containing a first person pronoun like (34-b) would fail to meet clause (c) of (33). The first person pronoun would not have a stronger presupposition than *taan*, just a different one. To solve this, I suggest that we modify the semantics of the Malayalam first person pronoun *njaan* to also encode a perspectival presupposition, as in (35). This would make it presuppositionally stronger and a suitable competitor for *taan*.

(35) $[\![\text{njaan}_7]\!]^{c,d,g,i}$ is defined iff g(7) = auth(c) = auth(d); when defined, g(7).

The move does not seem obviously wrong for Malayalam, as suggested by the oddness of the sentence in (36). In (36), we have a perspective-sensitive verb-of-transfer *koDukk-* 'give', which requires the goal not to be perspective-holder. The combination of this verb

and a first person goal is ill-formed, a pattern similar to what we saw in §2 with *taan* (compare (9b)). We can explain the ill-formedness if *njaan* and *koDukk-* have conflicting perspectival requirements.

(36) #*Sita sammaanam* ***eni-ikku*** *koDukk-um*
Sita prize 1Sg-DAT give-FUT
'Sita will give the prize to me.'

This proposal also provides a new explanation for another puzzling feature of *taan*, namely that it cannot co-occur in the same clause as participant pronouns irrespective of *taan*'s referent. See (37) and (38). This effect is often called the *participant blocking effect*, which *taan* shares with many long-distance anaphors crosslinguistically (see e.g. Tang 1989; Pan 1998; Jayaseelan 1998).

(37) Raman cannot antecede *taan* if *njaan* intervenes:

a. *$\boxed{\textit{Raman}_i}$ *[njaan* ***tan-ne***$_i$ *pukazhthi ennu] paranju*
Raman [I ANAPH-ACC praised COMP said
✗'Raman said that I praised Raman.'

b. $\boxed{\textit{Raman}_i}$ *[Sita* ***tan-ne***$_i$ *pukazhthi ennu] paranju*
Raman [Sita ANAPH-ACC praised COMP said
✓'Raman said that Sita praised Raman.'

(38) Raman cannot antecede *taan* if (non-c-commanding) *njaan* is in the same clause

a. *$\boxed{\textit{Raman}_i}$ *[****taan***$_i$ *enn-e orikkalum kaND-iTT-illa ennu] paranju*
Raman [ANAPH 1Sg-ACC ever saw-PERF-NEG COMP] said
✗'Raman said that he hasn't ever seen me.'

b. $\boxed{\textit{Raman}_i}$ *[****taan***$_i$ *Mohan-e orikkalum kaND-iTT-illa ennu] paranju*
Raman [ANAPH Mohan-ACC ever saw-PERF-NEG COMP] said
✓'Raman said that he hasn't ever seen Mohan.'

On the perspectival account of first person pronouns, we can explain these facts as the result of contradictory perspectival presuppositions. *Taan* presupposes that its referent is auth(d) and anti-presupposes that it is not the speaker; *njaan* presupposes that its referent is both the speaker and auth(*d*). These are requirements that can never be simultaneously met.

5.2 Presence of addressee oriented readings

Like the first person pronoun *njaan*, the second person pronoun *nii* also cannot antecede *taan*. Furthermore, it too, creates participant blocking effects. This, at first blush, suggests that we should extend our perspectival treatment of *njaan* to *nii*. On the other hand, treating both first and second person indexicals as encoding perspectival presuppositions would mean that one would never be able to say sentences like (39), though the sentence is acceptable.

(39) *njaan ninn-e kaNDu*
1sg 2sg-ACC saw
'I saw you.'

More puzzlingly, *taan* can in certain circumstances be understood as picking out the addressee. Typically, this happens when the address is informal (to a close friend, for instance). In the examples below, there is no second person antecedent. In fact, we already saw in (31b) that second person antecedents are banned. The addressee oriented *taan* is the highest argument in (40-b).

(40) a. *Raman$_i$ [Sita* ***tan-ne***$_i$ *pukazhthi ennu] paranju*
Raman [Sita ANAPH-ACC praised COMP] said
✓'Raman said that Sita praised you.'
b. ***Taan*** *miDukki aaNu*
ANAPH clever.person.F COP
'You are a clever (female) person.'

These addressee uses have been previously noted, but considered a case of accidental homophony in Jayaseelan (1999) and Asher & Kumari (1997) (though cf. Swenson & Marty (2014) who argue against this view). However, perspectival consistency is enforced with these uses, which points towards a unified analysis that makes reference to perspective. We see in (41) that when there are multiple occurrences of *taan* in a clause, the type of use (second-person, third-person) has to be consistent.

(41) *Sita [****taan*** *[****tan-te*** *kuTTi-ye] pukazhti ennu] paranju*
Sita ANAPH ANAPH-GEN child-ACC praised COMP said
✓you praised your child
✓Sita praised her child
✗you praised Sita's child

Perhaps these addressee-oriented uses are exactly what you would predict if auth(d) in these contexts happens to be the addressee and *taan* is free to pick it out (i.e. reference to addressee is not blocked via competition). On the other hand, the ban on second person antecedents and blocking by second person remain open problems, to which I have no concrete solutions to offer.

6 Concluding remarks

In this paper, I considered two analytic options for the Malayalam long-distance anaphor *taan*. The first involved taking the surface distribution of *taan* seriously, and treating it as a Condition B obeying pronoun. The setback of this approach was that it had little to say about *taan*'s interpretive restrictions. On the second approach, the surface distribution of *taan* was viewed as somewhat misleading. The expression's interpretive properties were taken to signal the presence of a silent local binder, making it a Condition A obeying reflex-

ive. I argued in favor of the pronoun approach. To capture *taan*'s interpretive differences from ordinary pronouns, I suggested that part of its meaning is a perspectival presupposition. This means — I believe correctly — that the distribution of *taan* is sensitive to two distinct domains: (*i*) its binding domain, which is same as that of pronouns, and (*ii*) the perspectival domain, which is uniformly the clause. Problems remain, and there are many I have not even touched on. But the hope is that pinning down the right character of the anaphor — *as a pronoun* — still helps to push the needle forward (or set it back to where Jayaseelan (1997) left it).

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