

Doing things with grammar:

Presupposition accommodation across grammatical categories

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This paper studies the way utterances project properties of the interactional context via the choice of grammatical indexicals. Our analysis is an original combination of existing theoretical developments including notions of grammatical indexicality (Silverstein 1976), of the relational structure of indexical reference (Hanks 2014) and of presupposition accommodation (von Stechow 2008; Heim 1982; Karttunen 1974, among others). While Silverstein (1976) suggested that different types of grammatical indexicals can be (relatively) context-creating or (relatively) context-presupposing, we argue that presupposition vs creativity is not a property of specific categories, but rather of tokens in a given context and that in natural interaction, they are subject to negotiation. While all indexicals are presupposing, there are two types of uses of pragmatic presupposition involved forming a scale (Mazzarella & Domaneschi 2018; Sbisà 1999): non-informative (when the presupposition is already part of common ground of the interlocutors) and informative (when the presupposition needs to be accommodated by the addressee). The theoretical analysis is grounded in a discussion of data on evidentiality, egophoricity, pronouns of address, demonstrative reference, and tense and is based on literature review, as well as first-hand recordings of conversations in Wutun (mixed Sinitic language, China) and Mano (Mande, Guinea).

Keywords: indexicality, presupposition accommodation, grammar in interaction

1. Introduction

Utterances might carry with them their own contexts like a snail carries its home along with it. (Levinson 2003: 26)

A well-known observation from linguistic anthropology and conversation analysis holds that the context of interaction is not a given but is constituted and sustained by the very process of interaction (Duranti & Goodwin 1992). Verbal acts do not only presuppose context for their appropriate interpretation, but speech performance can also effectively create that context (Duranti 1990, 1994; Gumperz 1992; Hanks 1992: 66–67; Silverstein 2022: 44). Indexicals — linguistic expressions with context-dependent reference, such as personal pronouns and demonstratives — can also have both context-presupposing and context-creating uses (Silverstein 1976).

Indexicals are grammatical markers that express contextually resolved variables, and they therefore constitute “key points of juncture between grammar and context” (Hanks 1992: 47). Speakers position themselves with respect to objects, events, and interlocutors via the choice of indexical markers from close-knit paradigms. The motivations and dynamics of speakers’ indexical choices are sometimes analyzed using the concept of stance and stance-taking. We

propose an analytic complement to stance, in which we couple the relational structure of indexical categories with the notions of presupposition and presupposition accommodation.

The relational schema of deictic reference was developed by Hanks and first applied to demonstratives (1990) and then to evidentiality (2014), but we argue that it is equally applicable to other types of indexicals, such as honorifics, egophoricity, and tense. Thus, we claim that the meaning of indexical markers contains a presupposition of a particular relational structure.

The potential of indexicals both to reflect and to create utterance context corresponds to uses of presuppositions: non-informative ones (when the presupposition of the relationship is already part of common ground of the interlocutors) and informative ones (when the presupposition of the relationship needs to be accommodated by the addressee). Thus, presupposition accommodation (Heim 1982; Karttunen 1974) and more specifically the scalar approach to accommodation phenomena (Sbisà 1999) becomes our second key concept for describing the context-projecting properties of indexicals. Indexicals are frequently treated as presuppositional in the literature (see Jaszczolt 2018 for some discussion and references), but most works are concerned with lexical indexical markers (like ‘here’, ‘now’, or ‘this’) rather than the grammatical markers we focus on here. In addition, to the best of our knowledge, the incorporation of Hanks’s relational schema as what is being presupposed, and what potentially needs to be accommodated, is new to this work.

The theoretical ambition of this paper thus lies in cross-fertilization between several strands of research dealing with presuppositions: linguistic anthropology, on the one hand, and theoretical pragmatics, on the other, which have previously not been in direct dialogue. To ground the theoretical ambition of the paper and to illustrate the benefits of a dialogue, we introduce five case studies of distinct grammatical categories, including demonstrative reference (in Mano, a Mande language) and tense (in Shambala, a Bantu language), whose potential to be used creatively is straightforwardly denied by Silverstein (1976). And yet, the demonstrative meanings under discussion are very close to definiteness, the creative uses of which have been extensively discussed under the presupposition accommodation approach (see Section 2.3 for references). Presupposition accommodation has also been used, albeit more rarely, to account for interpretations of tense marking (e.g. Córdova 2002). We also discuss pronouns of address (in Russian), evidentiality (in Upper Napo Kichwa, Quechuan), and egophoricity (in Wutun, a mixed Sinitic language). The latter two have not been discussed in the presupposition accommodation literature, although they have been approached through the framework of stance (Grzech 2021; Sandman & Grzech 2022). This wide collection of case studies makes up the empirical contribution of this paper, two of which (on Mano and on Wutun) are based on our first-hand fieldwork data and the other three on published materials. By drawing our examples from naturalistic data of underdescribed languages, we hope to attract our fellow fieldworkers’ attention to the context-creating capacity of language: in our experience, such functions of language (let alone of grammar) are far from being widely accepted common knowledge in our community. In addition, most of the data we discuss comes from spontaneous conversations, in contrast to studies largely based on elicitation or introspection (such as Tonhauser *et al.* 2013) and, more rarely, on experimentation (Singh *et al.* 2016). Spontaneous conversational data offers a window into contextual effects on an utterance’s felicity. This approach constitutes the methodological contribution of the paper.

The article is organized as follows. In Section 2, we lay out our analytical framework and articulate the connection between indexical presupposition and the relational structure of

indexical reference, on the one hand, and presupposition accommodation, on the other. In Sections 3–7, we introduce our case studies on evidentiality (3), honorifics (4), egophoricity (5), demonstratives (6), and tense (7). We discuss our findings in Section 8.1 and in 8.2 compare our framework to that of stance, a framework in which some but not all of the discussed grammatical categories have been addressed. We conclude in Section 8.3.

2. Analytical frameworks

In this section, we lay out the background necessary for the grounding of our theoretical proposal. Our proposal is a novel way of combining existing ideas about presupposition and applying them to original types of data. Readers specializing in particular theoretical domains may therefore find little novelty in some of the individual theoretical summaries, but the novelty proposed is in the combination rather than in individual parts.

We start by sketching out the concept of linguistic indexicality as it has been developed in linguistic anthropology, including the notion of contextpresupposing and context-creating indices (2.1). Bridging proposals from linguistic anthropology and theoretical pragmatics, we then argue that the part of the meaning of indices that can be modelled as presupposition is the relational structure that ties indexical reference to the utterance context (2.2). We then lay out the basics of presupposition accommodation (2.3). Section 2.4 brings our full proposal together: the presupposition of relational structure in indexical reference can be context-creating and resolved via presupposition accommodation.

2.1 Linguistic indexicality: *Presupposing vs. creative indexicals*

In his famous article on shifter categories, building on prior work by Jakobson (1971) and on Peircean semiotics, Silverstein discusses indices, linguistic elements which bear “a connection of understood spatiotemporal contiguity to the occurrence of the entity signaled” (1976: 27). One type involves referential indices, or shifters, which have a dual function of contributing to the ‘telling about’ function of the utterance and its propositional meaning, which is subject to truthconditional evaluation, and of relating the utterance to the speech context by reflecting some of its properties. Among referential indices Silverstein discusses demonstratives, personal pronouns, tense and aspect.¹

According to Silverstein, referential indices can be classified as contextpresupposing indices, interpretable only given pre-existing knowledge of the speech situation, or context-creating indices, making “explicit and overt the parameters of structure of the ongoing events” (Silverstein 1976: 34). For example, first- and second-person pronouns are context-creating as they foreground the personae of the speech event itself (Silverstein 1976: 34; see also von Stechow 2008; Stalnaker 1998).²

Demonstrative pronouns, however, are treated by Silverstein as context-presupposing. He states that (1976: 33)

the proper use of the token of the deictic [in the token of a noun phrase this table or that table] presupposes the physical existence of an actual object which can properly be referred to by table, or it presupposes a prior segment of referential discourse which has specified such a referent.

The first type of presupposition occurs in the exophoric use in reference to physically present objects and the second type of presupposition occurs in the anaphoric or recognitional use. Similarly, Silverstein characterizes tense as a context-presupposing category: “the proper utterance or interpretation of each token of the past tense category, then, presupposes the knowledge of the time at which the speech event takes place” (Silverstein 1976: 24).

We believe that Silverstein’s treatment is only partially correct. We will argue that all the indexical categories, including all referential indices, are presupposing, but in some cases the presupposition is informative, yielding creative uses, and in some, it is not. But first, let us turn to the notion of presupposition and the way it applies to indexical categories.

2.2 Presupposition in indexical reference: Relational structure

Presupposition has been at the center of semantic and pragmatic discussions in the last several decades, so the account presented here will be necessarily incomplete. We hope, however, that it will suffice to ground our argument.

Presuppositions are assumptions held by the interlocutors which determine the conditions of proper use of an utterance, and, in particular, conditions under which an utterance can be assigned a truth value. Thus, the utterance in (1) can only be true or false if a King of France exists. In other words, the presupposition of existence of a French king must be satisfied (Strawson 1950: 330).

(1) The King of France is wise.

This view came to be known as the semantic approach to presupposition. In more formal terms, it can be said that “one sentence presupposes another *iff* whenever the first sentence [in this case, *the King of France is wise*] is true or false, the second [in this case, *there is a King of France*] is also true” (as formulated by Beaver *et al.* 2021). If, however, the presupposition fails — that is, if the second sentence is false (*there is no King of France*) — the question of truth or falsity of the first sentence does not arise, resulting in a semantic catastrophe.

In contrast with semantic presuppositions, a pragmatic view of presupposition shifts the focus from words to utterances, from what linguistic expressions presuppose to what people presuppose as they speak, from truth and falsity conditions to conversational acceptability (Schwarz 1977) or appropriateness in use (Simons 2003). Beaver *et al.* 2021 state that “a pragmatic presupposition associated with a sentence is a condition that a speaker would normally expect to hold in the common ground between discourse participants when that sentence is uttered” (see also von Stechow 2008; Karttunen 1974, among others).

Pragmatic presupposition also applies to the meaning of referential indices, namely, their referential structure, which we will now proceed to sketch out. A prototypical example of referential indices is that of demonstratives such as English *this* and *that*. As argued by Hanks (2009: 11; see also Hanks 1990, 1992, 2005, 2014, among others),

at its most basic, deictic speech [= demonstrative use] establishes a relation between an origo and an object of reference. Thus, it has three parts: a referential focus (the object), an origo from which it is picked out (the indexical ground), and the relation between the two.

Demonstratives thus index the relationship between the origo and the object. The relational structure of deictic reference, as argued by Hanks (2009, 2014), can be represented in the following way:

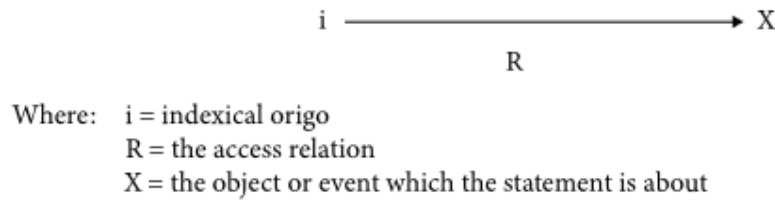


Figure 1. Relational structure of indexical reference (Hanks 2014: 10)

The three components of the relational structure all contribute to the conditions of proper use of the demonstratives which, in turn, index different properties of the interactional context. Different languages encode different types of categorizations of the object: in some languages, for instance, gender distinctions are marked on the demonstrative, and in some they are not. The origo can also be configured in different ways — some languages make use of egocentric demonstrative reference, where it is only the speaker that is taken into account in configuring the relational structure. In other languages, the relation is configured with respect to an allocentric origo centered on the addressee, as in Japanese (Bohnenmeyer 2018), or to a sociocentric origo including both the speaker and the addressee. A sociocentric origo is central for anaphoric and recognitional reference, based on mutual recognition, rather than solely the speaker’s or the addressee’s perspective (see Section 6). Finally, the encoded relation can, but does not have to, be limited to the relation of spatial proximity and visual access. Other relations may be indexed by deictic markers, such as, in the spatial domain, elevation (Bickel 1997; Forker 2020).

Beyond demonstratives, a structure like the one suggested by Hanks can apply to other indexical types as well, with some modifications. The object of reference can be a speech act participant, as in the case of pronouns, and the relation presupposed can be the social relation between the speech act participants, as is the case for pronouns of address (discussed in Section 4). In the case of verbal categories, the relation is established between an origo and an event or theme. The values of the relationship include temporal distance (in tense categories, Section 7), the speaker’s personal involvement (in egophoricity, Section 5) or information source (in the case of evidentiality, Section 3; see Hanks 2014 who discusses the application of the relational structure to evidentials).

Crucially, we suggest that the indexical structure of indexical reference is presupposed. Support for this argument can be found in Strawson (1950: 336–337). Indeed, for Strawson, the conditions of referring have a relational component: he claims that referential expressions must fulfil the requirement that “the thing should be in a certain relation to the speaker and to the context of utterance”. A prototypical example he gives concerns precisely an indexical — the first-person pronoun: “thus, for example, in the limiting case of the word ‘I’ the contextual requirement is that the thing should be identical with the speaker”. Moreover, these conditions are presupposed: “the fulfilment of the conditions for a correct referring use of an expression is never part of what is stated”, but it is presupposed by such a use (Strawson 1950: 336–337). Similarly, Heim (1994) analyzes past tense as a presupposition that the time referred to temporally precedes another temporal index (usually utterance time). In our terms, the

relational schema presupposed by the past tense contains the origo (in the default case, the time at which the utterance is made), the time being talked about, and a temporal relationship between the two, with the time being talked about preceding the origo time.

A key diagnostic for presuppositions lies in the conditions of presupposition failure. According to Silverstein (1976: 33), presupposition failure in the case of demonstratives results in inappropriate, that is, “uninterpretable and confusing”, deictic tokens. In the case of deictic use based on the relation of spatial proximity, the demonstrative *this* presupposes a relatively proximal object. If a listener assesses the referenced object as distant, rather than proximal, use of *this* may yield a correction on her part: “Oh, you mean that other table!” (Silverstein 1976: 34). The deictic expression *this table* does not fail to refer, and the utterance can still be assigned a truth value, but the listener has trouble resolving the reference.³ This confusion, however, is far from the semantic catastrophe caused by failed presuppositions in examples like (1) (when there is no King of France). Thus, indexical presuppositions, like other pragmatic presuppositions, do not influence the truth conditions of the utterance, but rather its appropriateness in use.

The pragmatic view of presupposition also applies to indexicals because it considers a broadly defined common ground, which goes beyond semantic meaning and involves both contextual and broader cultural knowledge. The examples we present in Sections 3–7 show that both subjectivity and context- and culture- specificity are crucial for the use and interpretation of indexicals (see also Hanks 2005 on culture-specific frames of demonstrative reference). Crucially, the pragmatic view also considers the speaker’s presuppositions, which may differ from the listener’s presuppositions (a term borrowed from Stalnaker 1973, 1974, 1998, etc.; see the discussion in Simons 2003). A way to analyze the clash between the speaker’s and the addressee’s presuppositions is presented in the next section through the notion of presupposition accommodation.

2.3 *Presupposition accommodation*

An utterance’s presupposition may contradict the assumptions held by the listener. In (2), the presupposition that “the new guy” has a wife, triggered by the possessive phrase, is satisfied whenever the speaker herself believes the “guy” is married. This belief may or may not be shared by her interlocutor.

- (2) A. The new guy is attractive.
B. Yes, and his wife is lovely, too. (Simons 2005: 342)

Regardless of whether the addressee of (2b) knows that the person in question is married, she is prompted to accept it as fact, potentially updating her prior assumptions (Simons 2003). Such a process is called presupposition accommodation. For pioneering discussions of the term, see Lewis (1979) and Heim (1982); for a review, see von Stechow (2008); for an experimental study of presupposition accommodation, see Singh *et al.* (2016).⁴

Presuppositions which do not need to be accommodated are called non-informative presuppositions, while accommodated presuppositions are called informative presuppositions (Karttunen 1974). The two types of uses of presuppositions do not form a sharp dichotomy, but rather a scale: see Sbisà (1999) and Mazzarella & Domaneschi (2018). To begin with, the speaker can use presuppositions deceptively, in contradiction with her own assumptions (Sbisà

2021) and is not always certain of the knowledge state of her addressee (Simons 2005: 342). The audience, moreover, may be divided regarding their knowledge of particular referents (Sbisà 1999, 2021).

Importantly, accommodated presuppositions may, in certain cases, be not only a part of (Ariel 2016), but also effectively the main point of what is being intentionally communicated (Simons 2005), as seems to be the case in (2): the main point is not that the wife is lovely, but that the wife exists. The exploitation of informative presuppositions as main points of utterances is not a secondary interpretative process (as in Simons 2005) nor an abuse of the interpretative procedure. Informative presuppositions are so widespread that they are part of the array of ways in which meaning gets communicated (von Stechow 2008), and especially so in persuasive speech, as in political communication (Mazzarella & Domaneschi 2018; Sbisà 1999; see also Yurchak 2005), but also, as we will see in Section 6, in religious communication. Such ‘spurious’ use of presuppositions may also have an array of creative functions in ‘sophisticated fiction’ (Clark & Haviland 1977; Strawson 1950).

2.4 Accommodation of indexical presupposition

Presupposition accommodation is the central notion for our treatment of creative indexicals. As we suggested in 2.2, referential indices presuppose a particular relationship between the origo and the object of reference or an event. In certain cases, this relationship can be accounted for in terms of non-informative presupposition, when it is part of background assumptions: this holds for instance when I treat my addressee on formal terms (i.e. with a formal pronoun of address, in contrast to informal terms) and she expects me to do so, given our social background, the topic of conversation, and the context in which it occurs. But in some cases, indexicals do not reflect but project a particular relational configuration. In other words, the presupposition is informative. The most trivial case would be pronouns denoting speech act participants: both you tagging the interlocutor as the intended addressee and *I* foregrounding the current speaker change the context by the fact that the speech act was made (von Stechow 2008: 144; following Stalnaker 1998; see also Jakobson 1971: 388).

Other indexicals present less trivial cases of presupposition accommodation, whereby the presupposed part contradicts what the hearer may assume. When I treat my addressee on formal terms by using a formal pronoun of address, while she expects us to be intimates, my addressee is coerced to accommodate the presupposition of a social distance relationship (see Section 4; see also Thomason 1990: 343).

Honorific pronouns are the only shifter category that was treated by Silverstein (1976) as straightforwardly context-creating. In contrast, Levinson (1983) and Keenan (1971) propose to treat honorifics as presupposing (and not creating or making overt) a specific relationship between the interlocutors. Our analysis in terms of presupposition accommodation allows for both views. Rather than being categorical and type-based, informative (creative) and non-informative presuppositions are token-level phenomena with the relative level of (non)-informativeness forming a scale depending on the assumptions that the addressees hold in context (Mazzarella & Domaneschi 2018; Sbisà 1999). As a result, while there are tendencies at the level of types — for example, the presuppositions of tense categories, especially in languages without remoteness distinctions, may tend to be non-informative (cf. Silverstein 1976) — most or all grammatical categories can, depending on the context, be used in context-creating ways that require presupposition accommodation.

Because presuppositions form a scale from informative to non-informative, depending on the assumptions of the hearer, there is often an intrinsic indeterminacy regarding the context-creating import of indexicals in conversation.⁵ From this indeterminacy, it follows that the choice of the appropriate indexical often must be negotiated in conversation.

To sum up, our theoretical framework is an original combination of existing theoretical developments including notions of grammatical indexicality (Silverstein 1976), the relational structure of indexical reference, which relates the indexical origo to the object of reference (Hanks 2014) and presupposition accommodation (von Stechow 2008; Heim 1982; Karttunen 1974, among others). It is the relational structure that is presupposed, and accommodated, depending on context and the interlocutors' views of it. While Silverstein (1976) argued that grammatical indexicals can be context-creating or context-presupposing, we add to this that all indexicals are presupposing, but their tokens in a given context differ depending on the use of presupposition involved: informative (when the presupposition of the indexical relation needs to be accommodated by the addressee) vs. non-informative (when the presupposition is already part of common ground of the interlocutors; see Mazzarella & Domaneschi 2018; Sbisà 1999). The two uses of pragmatic presupposition form a scale and are subject to negotiation in natural conversation.

Having laid this theoretical groundwork, we now turn to our first case study, the use of evidentiality in Upper Napo Kichwa, where the use of evidentials can be negotiated by interlocutors and the framework of presupposition accommodation allows us to capture the process.

3. Accommodating information source: Evidentiality in Upper Napo Kichwa

Evidentiality is traditionally defined as a grammatical category reflecting the speaker's source of information about the narrated event (Aikhenvald 2004, 2018; Jakobson 1971; Willett 1988). Speakers of languages that lack grammaticalized evidentiality, such as English (Clift 2006; Heritage & Raymond 2005; Stivers *et al.* 2011) and Spanish (Cornillie 2017), can also mobilize lexical means, including evidential verbs, adverbs and reported speech constructions, with similar functions. However, even the early treatment by Jakobson (1971) highlighted the fact that evidentiality is not only about expressing an information source as if it were fixed in stone but also about negotiating it. Recent research has paid increasing attention to the interactional workings of evidentials (Gipper 2017; Grzech 2021; Michael & Nuckolls 2014; Mushin 2013; Sandman & Grzech 2022), including the negotiation of epistemic rights and authority (Schultze-Berndt 2017). A crucial insight is that the use of evidentials in interaction is tied to the interlocutors' expectations of one another's existing knowledge states (for examples, see Grzech 2020; Hintz & Hintz 2017) and of the relation of the speaker and/or her interlocutor to information (Hanks 2014), which can be seen as a type of pragmatic presupposition (Michael 2020). As a further step, we argue that the concept of presupposition accommodation adds precision in analyzing evidentials in situated language use.

We illustrate the workings of evidentials in their communicative contexts with a case study from Upper Napo Kichwa (ISO 639-3 qvo), a Quechuan variety spoken in Ecuadorian Amazon by ca. 46,000 people. The data discussed in this section is based on a literature review (Grzech 2020, 2021; Sandman & Grzech 2022). Upper Napo Kichwa has a paradigm of eight evidential enclitics that encode meanings related to distribution of knowledge and epistemic authority between speech act participants, as shown in Table 1. Evidential enclitics are not obligatory, but they are quite common in spontaneous conversation. In addition to the enclitics shown in

the table, Upper Napo Kichwa has two question markers that are part of the same paradigm but discussing them is beyond the scope of this case study, and we have therefore omitted them from the table. Table 1 provides conditions of use for each of the markers under discussion.

Table 1. Epistemic enclitics attested in Upper Napo Kichwa (Adapted from Sandman & Grzech 2022 and Karolina Grzech, personal communication)

Form	Conditions of use
=mi	speaker-exclusive epistemic authority and access; the speaker considers the proposition
=ma	to be unexpected to the addressee
=mari	access shared between speaker and addressee, slightly superior epistemic authority of the speaker in declaratives and of the addressee in questions
=cha	the speaker considers the addressee to have superior epistemic authority over the
=chari	proposition
=tá	access shared between speaker and addressee, speaker's superior epistemic authority

In the following discussion, we focus on the enclitic =*mari*.

First, =*mari* is frequently used to express that the speech act participants have equal access to information. One context in which =*mari* is used is for situations in which the speaker and the addressee obviously have similar access to the information, but the addressee acts as if s/he were not aware of the information in question, and the speaker is reminding the addressee about the common ground. Such a context is illustrated in (3).

(3) Upper Napo Kichwa

kan-ta kan=mari!

2SG-ACC 2SG=**MARI**

'[she is talking] to you, you!'

(Grzech 2021:213)

Example (3) was uttered in a context where a husband and a wife were talking to a linguist. When it was the husband's turn to talk, he did not start to speak, despite the linguist's having prompted him to do so, and his wife reacted by uttering (3).

The meaning of =*mari* in (3) could be interpreted as 'We can both hear the linguist calling you. You should have noticed that.' In this case, the addressee's access to information is presupposed by the speaker, and the use of =*mari* reflects this presupposition.

Second, =*mari* and other evidential markers can be used to negotiate epistemic authority. This is illustrated in (4).

- (4) Upper Napo Kichwa
- (4.1) NA: *ayaj=cha panga*
bitter=**CHA** leaf
‘Is this leaf bitter?’
- (4.2) AR: *ayaj=tá*
bitter=**TÁ**
‘[It is] bitter.’
- (4.3) CG: *ayaj=mari*
bitter=**MARI**
‘[It is] bitter.’
- (4.4) NA: *chi-raygu=mari ambi-n=ga*
D.DEM-CAUSAL=**MARI** heal-3=TOP
‘That’s why it heals?’
- (4.5) CG: *mjm*
INTER
‘Yeah.’
- (4.6) AR: *mjm ayaj=mari*
INTER bitter=**MARI**
‘Yeah, [it is] bitter.’

(Grzech 2021: 210)

Example (4) is an excerpt from a conversation between three speakers: a native speaker interviewer (NA), an expert on medicinal plants (CG), and the expert’s husband (AR). The conversation takes place while the team is collecting plants for a natural remedy. In line 1 the interviewer (NA) asks a question about the leaves of a plant they are collecting. The expert’s husband (AR) and the expert (CG) both provide the same answer in lines (4.2) and (4.3), but the husband uses the enclitic =*tá* and the expert uses the enclitic =*mari*. Both =*tá* and =*mari* index the epistemic authority of the speaker over information, but =*tá* is used for making an even more forceful claim that the speaker is a knowledgeable speech act participant. In this case, the choice of evidential markers does not directly index the participant’s knowledge bases, since it is the expert (CG) who has most knowledge of medicinal plants, not the husband (AR). Instead, the husband (AR) uses =*tá* to get his epistemic authority on the topic recognized by other participants.

The expert (CG) then uses =*mari* to express that she is the knowing participant over a topic under discussion, while also acknowledging that other participants are aware of the information. The use of =*mari* allows her to claim her epistemic authority, but at the same time protect the face of other participants, including her husband, by recognizing their shared access and authority. The interviewer (NA) continues in line (4.4) with a follow-up question about the healing powers of the plant. By using =*mari* in his question, he expresses that he has just acquired some knowledge about the medicinal plant (that it is bitter) and makes an inference about it (it heals because it is bitter), but at the same time he recognizes the superior epistemic authority of the expert (CG). This time, the expert replies without any evidential marker in line (4.5) and the husband (AR) seizes an opportunity to display again that he has equal access to knowledge about medicinal plants as other participants by making a =*mari* marked claim in (4.6). Thus, (4) illustrates that evidentials in Upper Napo Kichwa do not directly index the properties of the communicative setting, such as the speech act participants’ knowledge states and access to information. Instead, they are used for negotiating their epistemic authority.

Finally, =*mari* can be used in cases where the context seemingly contradicts its conditions of use. In (5), =*mari* is used in a context in which the addressee likely does not share the same information with the speaker. Instead, the speaker uses =*mari* to portray the addressee as a knowing interlocutor:

(5) Upper Napo Kichwa

(5.1) WA: *ima uchu=ta=i kay=ga?*
 what chili.pepper=INT=EMPH P.DEM=TOP
 ‘What type of chili pepper is this?’

(5.2) MC: *alli puka uchu atun ima.shuti ima ni-nun payguna*
 good red chili_pepper big what.is.it what say-3PL 3PL
ni-nun tomate uchu-ruku=mi ni-nun=chu atun
 say-3PL tomato chili.pepper-AUG=MI say-3PL=Q/NEG big
uchu-ruku=mari
 chili.pepper-AUG=MARI
 ‘Tomato-like chili pepper they call it, the big chili pepper.’

(Grzech 2021: 217)

Example (5) is uttered in a context in which MC, a woman in her fifties, is teaching WA, an eighteen-year-old woman, to cook a traditional dish. By using =*mari*, she establishes herself as knowledgeable about traditional cooking, but at the same time portrays WA as having access to knowledge about properties of chili peppers that they are using for cooking. In (5), it is not clear whether WA is actually knowledgeable about these chili peppers — she likely isn’t, otherwise she wouldn’t have asked. The chili peppers MC uses are locally grown, and not even all the community members are aware of the properties they have and how they are used in cooking traditional dishes. However, by using =*mari* in (5), MC frames the information as being already accessible to WA, although this is evidently not the case. Therefore, the evidential enclitic =*mari* in (5) has a context-creating function. In everyday social interaction, constructing knowledge as mutually shared can serve an educational purpose, such as encouraging WA to learn traditional cooking.

Following Hanks’ framework (2014), the use of evidential markers is tied to the relation of the speaker and her interlocutor to information whose dimensions may include (non-)sharedness of access and relative epistemic authority. In addition, we argue that the relation in question is presupposed by evidentials. When the marker employed has as a condition of use shared access to information and the information is indeed accessible to both parties, as in (3), the choice of an evidential marker aligns with the current common ground, and the presupposition it triggers is non-informative. However, different parts of the presupposition — for example, of shared access to knowledge, as in (5) or of the speaker’s epistemic authority, as in (4) — are not necessarily shared by the listener and therefore, need to be negotiated and/or accommodated. This is particularly visible in (5), where the information is not part of the current common ground of the participants. Instead, the speaker frames the information as shared and presupposition of common ground must be accommodated by the listener.

4. Accommodating solidarity and distancing: Pronouns of address in Russian

Honorific, or deference, indices are used to mark social properties of speech act participants (construed broadly and including not only speaker and addressee, but also bystanders and overhearers). They signal inequalities of age, sex, kinship relations, social status, rank and the like. Their expression ranges from distinct vocabulary sets (Errington 1988; Keating & Duranti

2006) to contrasting forms in the pronouns of address, which are familiar to speakers of European languages (Brown & Gilman 2012 [1968]). As in the case of the evidentials discussed above, context (including known social characteristics of the interlocutors) does not fully determine the choice of honorific markers. Instead, interactional and ethnographic studies show that the (non-)choice of honorifics can contribute to constructing relationships of power and solidarity (e.g. Keating & Duranti 2006; Kleifgen 2001). Thus, honorific markers do not only indexically presuppose context but can have a context-creating capacity, as we argue, via accommodation of indexical presupposition. Speakers of languages with honorific markers will likely find the struggle over the appropriate choice of the marker familiar from their own lives.

In this section, we summarize a study of the choice between two pronouns of address, *ty* (lit. 2sg pronoun) vs. *vy* (lit. 2pl pronoun), in Russian by Friedrich (1972). Friedrich's material is drawn from Russian novels from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Although constructed, these examples are considered a very good approximation to the actual language use, since in the realistic novel, "ethnographic accuracy was an aesthetic imperative" (Friedrich 1972: 274).

The honorific patterns of use of Russian pronouns of address, *ty* and *vy*, echo those of their French counterparts, *tu* and *vous*, and appeared, most likely, through the influence of French and widespread bilingualism of the upper classes. Friedrich distinguishes several parameters affecting the choice between the two pronominal forms: topic of discourse, social context, and different social parameters of the interlocutors, including age, social class, relative generation, genealogical distance, relative authority, group membership. The final parameter is the 'solidarity' dimension: emotional affinity or antipathy. Different parameters were bundled together and received different weights depending on the context at hand. Thus, a girl belonging to the high class and attending a ball might address her mother with the formal *vy*, a choice motivated by their class membership, generational difference and social situation, but later in her mother's bedroom she would switch to *ty*, given the intimate context of the household.

Because of the complexity of contextual parameters, the choice of the form of address is not entirely predictable. Sometimes communication participants may make a non-trivial choice of the pronominal form, which is then interpreted by the addressee as the expression of a particular positioning regarding the relative importance of the contextual parameters, such as emotional solidarity winning over social class, or emotional distancing backed by class conventions overriding previous assumptions of emotional solidarity.

Friedrich gives eight examples of non-trivial choices of pronoun of address, of which we cite one, drawn from *A hero of our time* by Lermontov (2012, first published in Russian in 1840). Here we present Friedrich's analysis in full, numbering the situations which we further comment on.

(6) Russian

An arrogant, aristocratic lieutenant and a grizzled, older captain find themselves thrust together as the only officers on an isolated outpost in the Caucasus. Reciprocal formality at first seems appropriate to both. But while the latter is sitting on the young lieutenant's bed and discussing a confidential matter he switches to *ty*. (6.1)

When the lieutenant appears to suggest insubordination, however, the captain reverts to *vy* as he issues a peremptory demand; for the older man, the power of military rank is in delicate balance with the emotions uniting two lonely comrades in the Caucasus (6.2).

In the following scenes the lieutenant uses *vy* at all times, partly because he is almost thirty years younger, partly because, as in borne out by several episodes, he is emotionally incapable of warm, positive attachments to other people; as is so often the case, the relative power of the three determinants cannot be ascertained. [...] During the final scene the two friends accidentally meet again at an inn. The affectionate and simple-hearted captain rushes forward impulsively, but is countered with, "How glad I am to see *vy*, my dear Maksim Maksimych! Well, how are *vy*?" said Pechorin. "And... *ty* ... *vy*?" murmured the old man with tears in his eyes.⁶ (6.3)

As Friedrich concludes (1972: 288), "the wrenching quality of the passage turns on the binary and here ironic choice between two pronouns".

(Friedrich 1972: 287–288)

In the three situations described, different dynamics of pronominal choice can be observed, the choice relying on different contextual clues. In situation (6.1), the switch from *vy* to *ty* is motivated by the topic of conversation. In situation (6.2), the switch from *ty* to *vy* is motivated by the conflict between emotional solidarity and relative military rank. Further, the young lieutenant's consistent choice of *vy* is motivated by relative military rank, age and emotional distancing, all pointing in the same direction. After their separation, the old captain likely "thought of him as employing the more intimate pronoun" (Friedrich 1972: 287–288), an expectation which clashes with the young man employing *vy* in the final scene (6.3), making it clear once and for all that they are not intimates. In the final scene, the old captain does not immediately come to terms with the type of relationship imposed on him by the lieutenant's use of formal pronouns, and his murmuring ("*ty*... *vy*?") can be seen as an attempt at negotiation of the appropriate form.

We propose that contextual parameters regulating the choice of pronoun of address can be directly likened to an indexical presupposition of a relational structure which includes the speaker and the addressee, with the latter being indexed by the pronominal form, and both endowed with their salient social parameters, and, finally, the relation between them. Pechorin's utterance "How glad I am to see *vy*, my dear Maksim Maksimych! Well, how are *vy*?" presupposes that he considers himself to be on formal footing with his interlocutor, both being fellow officers, while the latter considered them to be confidants with a relationship stretching beyond common military duties. Maksim Maksimych's murmuring ("*ty*... *vy*?") is a direct reflection of the clash between his expectations and those of his interlocutor about the relation between them and an attempt at accommodating the presupposed formality imposed on him.

5. Accommodating participation: Egophoricity in Wutun

Egophoricity is a grammatical category whose primary function is to distinguish events that the conversationalists have participated in themselves from events they have not been part of (Bergqvist & Knuchel 2017; San Roque *et al.* 2018). In a canonical egophoric marking system, the same marker (EGO) is used with the first person in declarative sentences, with the reported speaker in reported speech, and with the second person in interrogative and imperative sentences (Hale & Shrestha 2006), while the other marker(s) (NON-EGO) are used elsewhere. However, in most egophoric-marking languages, egophoricity is not strictly tied to person or clause type. Ego markers can be used with non-first person if the speaker has some control over events concerning another person (for example, ‘He is going because I ordered him to do so’, Åkerman 2012). Non-ego markers in both first- and non-first-person declaratives can express the speaker’s lack of volition and control in relation to the denoted event, e.g. in doing something accidentally (Curnow 2002; DeLancey 1992; Hale 1980; Post 2013; Widmer & Zúñiga 2017). On the other hand, ego marking with first person is connected to assertiveness and it often serves to strengthen a claim of authority (for example in opposition to a counterclaim) or even to challenge the addressee’s views (see Häslér 2001; Sandman 2018; Slater 2003: 203–208). In other words, egophoric marking morphemes can be used to make statements about the speaker’s participation, including those that contradict prior assumptions.

In this section, we discuss egophoric marking based on first-hand data from Wutun (ISO 639-3 wuh), a mixed Sinitic language spoken by ca. 4000 people in Qinghai Province, Northwest China.⁷ The data comprises naturally occurring conversations, as well as descriptive and narrative texts and elicited data.

Wutun makes a distinction between one ego marker *-yek* and two non-ego markers, sensory-inferential *-li* and factual *re*. Egophoric marking in Wutun is obligatory. Examples (7)–(9) illustrate the basic egophoric marking morphology in Wutun.

- Wutun
- (7) *ngu huan xhe-di-yek*
1SG food drink-PROG-EGO
‘I am eating (personal involvement).’ [Elicited]
- (8) *ni/gu huan xhe-di-li*
2SG/3SG food drink-PROG-SEN-INF
‘You are eating/S/he is eating (as I see/infer).’ [Elicited]
- (9) *nianha she-wu tian yek-de re*
blind_eye ten-five day exist-NMLZ FACT
‘The Losar festival lasts for fifteen days (as we all know).’
[Wutun narratives 5_Festivals 0:15–0:17]

First-person declarative sentences, as in (7), typically include the ego marker *-yek* which indicates that the speaker has actively participated herself in the event she is talking about. The sensory-inferential marker *li* is used when the speaker is observing or inferring actions or states of others, as in (8). The third marker, *re*, indicates that the event in question is part of the common knowledge of the speech act participants and there is no need to specify whether the speaker’s experience of it is based on participation or observation (9). The subsequent discussion is limited to declarative sentences only and focuses on the contrast between *-yek* and *-li*.

In elicited data, the use of the ego marker in declarative sentences is associated with first person and marks the speaker’s participation in the denoted event in a relatively straightforward way. However, data from spoken interaction shows that participation is situationally constructed in moment-by-moment language use, and that the speakers’ choices of egophoric morphemes enable them to position themselves as active participants or observers in the situation. It is also worth noting that while elicited data includes personal pronouns, in naturally occurring speech the personal pronouns are often omitted, and egophoric marking can provide clues to interpreting the person marking. Example (10) illustrates how speakers use egophoric marking to negotiate who has privileged access to the other person’s experiences.

(10) Wutun

(10.1) Uncle: *je yize kan-la qhi shang-di-li*
 this appearance look-COND vital force rise-PROG-SEN.INF
 ‘Looks like he is angry (lit. his vital force is rising).’

(10.2) Mother: *jelanba gek-ge shaze hai-yek*
 Jealous dog-REF PRT EQU-EGO
 ‘I am so jealous!’ [wuh_babe_040918 12:15-12:19]

Example (10) is taken from a conversation between the mother of a 10-month-old baby boy and her uncle, who is one generation older and a member of the same extended family. The uncle is holding the baby, and the mother is standing next to them. At the same time, the father of the baby boy is holding another baby, an 8-month-old girl who is visiting the family with her grandmother. The baby boy is restless and crying a lot, and the adults suggest that he must be jealous because his father is holding another baby instead of him. In situation (10.1), the uncle comments on the baby boy’s behavior by using the sensory-inferential marker *-li* and the construction *kan-la*, ‘looking at, in view of’. By using these markers, he positions himself as an observer, who does not have primary access to the child’s state of mind and who is merely making inferences on the basis of his behavior. However, the mother replies to him by using the ego marker *-yek* (10.2) and frames her utterance as a direct quote attributed to her son, who cannot talk himself yet.

While the utterance is not overtly marked for person, the use of the ego marker and the intonation of the mother suggest an interpretation of the statement as a direct quote. In quotes, Wutun speakers systematically use the egophoric marking morpheme that represents the perspective of the person who originally uttered the statement. When reporting one’s personal experiences and internal states (like being jealous), the default choice would also be the ego marker. In addition, while the mother is uttering her statement, she changes her voice quality and speaks in a tone that imitates the speech of a small child. The mother and the uncle are both present in the situation and base their statements on inference when observing the child’s behavior. Although it is the uncle who is holding the baby and therefore physically closer to him, the mother shows strong emotional affiliation with her son and positions herself as having the primary right to assess his state of mind by using the ego marker and framing her utterance as reported speech. Note that Tournadre & LaPolla (2014: 244) have observed that in many languages, ego markers or direct evidentials cannot be used when talking about internal states (such as emotions) of others, because they are not directly perceivable to the speaker. Example (10) directly contradicts this tendency.

Egophoric marking morphemes can also be used in shifting the roles of the participants in the communicative context. In (11), the ego marker *-yek* is used in shifting from the role of an observer to the role of a caregiver.

- (11) Wutun
 (11.1) Mother: *lanba-ma-da qhe-la-li*
 jealous-RES.PO-CONSEQ start-INCOMPL-SEN.INF
 (11.2) *bai-kuu-ge ya*
 PROH-CRY-CAUS EMPH
 ‘(He) is getting more and more jealous, don’t let (him) cry.’
 (11.3) Uncle: *gu bai-jhan-ge-da be-kuu-yek*
 3SG PROH-see-CAUS-CONSEQ NEG-CRY-EGO
 ‘(I) will not let him see, then (he) will not cry.’
 (11.4) *guda ga-qhichai ga-qhichai yek-li*
 there small-car small-car EXIST-SEN.INF
 ‘There is a toy car over there, a toy car.’
 [wuh_babe_040918 12:41–12:51]

Example (11) is a follow-up to the conversation in (10). The baby boy is getting even more restless, and he is crying out loud. The mother asks the uncle to do something about it (11.1–11.2). The uncle turns the baby around and starts showing him some toy cars, so that he doesn’t see his father holding another baby. While the uncle has so far only used the sensory-inferential marker *-li* in commenting on the child’s behavior (10.1), he now switches to the ego marker *-yek* (11.3). By using the ego marker, he shifts from the role of an observer to the role of a caregiver, who exercises control over the subject in his care.

By contrast, the sensory-inferential marker *-li* can be used when the speaker positions himself/herself as ‘less involved’ in the action (s)he was actually performing, as in (12).

- (12) Wutun
qhanmen san-de je-ge do-gu-lio ze-li
 tsampa put-NMLZ this-REF (be).a.lot.of-COMPL-PFV EXEC-SEN.INF
 ‘It turned out to be too much tsampa!’ [wuh_lunch_040918 01:09–01:11]

Example (12) was uttered in a context where an elderly speaker of Wutun made some *tsampa*, a traditional Tibetan dish made of barley flour, butter, and hot tea. It turned out that he made too much *tsampa* and was not able to finish it all. He comments on his action by using the sensory-inferential marker *-li*. While he was definitely participating in the action himself, the outcome of the action was undesired, and by omitting the first-person pronoun and using the sensory-inferential marker instead of the ego marker, he positions himself as not being in control of the process from the beginning to the end. The making of *tsampa* is framed as an event that just happened by itself without conscious participation of the speaker. The use of the sensory-inferential marker in (12) is possibly motivated by accountability, the need to explain and justify one’s own actions to other speech act participants. The speaker was making the *tsampa* just before lunch time, so it was not a good idea to eat too much before a meal.

Using the theoretical framework that we propose, the relational structure of egophoric markers includes the speaker who relates herself to the situation through different types and degrees of personal involvement. The ego marker prototypically marks participation in the event and the non-ego markers a lack of participation, as illustrated by the elicited examples in (7)–(9). In actual conversation, however, speakers can use egophoric morphemes to position themselves as either mere observers in a particular situation, as in (10.1 and 12), or active participants, as in (11.3). Further interactional uses may arise from this positioning, such as negotiation of

epistemic rights, as in (10.2 and 11.3), or demonstration of affiliation to other speakers, as in (10.2 and 11.3). Therefore, while the key value of egophoricity, participation in the event under discussion, is presupposed by the conditions of use of egophoric markers, the speakers can approach the communication situation and their participation in it creatively. The egophoric markers help the speakers negotiate their participation in the event and, when the expressed participation contradicts prior assumptions, trigger presupposition accommodation.

6. Accommodating common knowledge: Recognitional deixis in Mano

Demonstratives are linguistic expressions serving, in their central function, to help the interlocutor establish joint attention to an object in the environment (Diessel 2006; Levinson 2018). Most of the literature on demonstratives focuses on their use to refer to objects in physical space. While the position of the object of reference in space is identified as a key factor determining demonstrative choice, increasing attention is being paid to space as subjectively, socially, and interactionally constituted (Enfield 2003; Margetts 2018). Mere distance to the object is but one of the factors; others include, as mentioned in Section 2.2, relative elevation (Bickel 1997; Forker 2020) but also visibility (Margetts 2018; Skilton 2021). Further factors include the type of indexical origo, egocentric vs. allocentric (Bohnenmeyer 2018), communicative dynamics and the interlocutors' attention state (Burenhult 2003; Küntay & Özyürek 2006), as well as broader contextual parameters, such as the interlocutors' common ground deriving from their communicative histories and cultural knowledge (Clark *et al.* 1983; Hanks 2005; Khachaturyan 2020; Laury 1997; Levinson 2005). Crucially, as we argue, the referent's belonging to the common ground is presupposed by the usage of some demonstratives, but that presupposition may need to be negotiated in communication. Furthermore, explicit marking can even contradict the existing knowledge state, resulting in presupposition accommodation.

This section focuses on the expression of a referent's recognizability through demonstrative use and is based on first-hand data in Mano (ISO 639-3 *mev*), a South Mande language spoken by about 400, 000 people in Guinea and Liberia.⁸ The data includes fieldnotes and recorded and transcribed naturally occurring conversations, as well as ritual speech, Christian and traditional.⁹

Mano (and, more specifically, the Guinean *màá* variety) has six demonstratives, *tóṣ*, *dìḡ*, *wē*, *yā*, *kilíwē*, and *kilīā*. For a fuller discussion of the demonstrative system, see Khachaturyan (2020). Demonstratives *tóṣ* and *dìḡ* are used only exophorically, for objects present in the communicative setting. Demonstratives *kilíḡbē* and *kilīā* are used only for anaphora. The present discussion is focused on markers *wē* ~ *bē* ~ *wāā*, glossed as DEM1, and *yā* ~ *ā* ~ *yāā*, glossed as DEM2. They are used for an array of functions both exophoric and endophoric (anaphora, discourse deixis, recognitional function). For details of a subtle difference between the two demonstratives, see Khachaturyan (2020). Because of the high number of allomorphs, in the subsequent discussion, we refer to these demonstratives as DEM1 and DEM2.

Among endophoric functions, anaphora and discourse deixis are relatively straightforward. Anaphoric demonstratives refer to an entity introduced in prior discourse, while discourse deictics refer to a chunk of discourse itself (for more on that classification, see Himmelmann 1996). In contrast to anaphora, the entity marked by recognitional demonstratives is usually not introduced in the discourse immediately preceding the utterance in question. Instead, recognitional reference occurs when the interlocutors' shared knowledge of the referent,

whether or not it is physically available in the communicative setting, is presupposed (Hanks 2005; Khachaturyan 2020; Levinson 2005).¹⁰

Example (13) illustrates that function. In this example, the speaker reminds a contractual worker about the agricultural work she employed him to do, namely, to beat the grains off newly harvested rice.

- (13) Mano
Tòdò yā, kòdò lō bú yā mē-è.
 tomorrow DEM2 1PL.IPFV go:IPFV rice:H DEM2 beat-GER
 ‘That tomorrow, we will beat that rice.’ [fieldnotes]

Here, *bū* ‘rice’, but also *tòdò* ‘tomorrow’, despite the latter being a temporal adverb, are both marked with the recognitional DEM2 and both refer to entities made recognizable by a prior arrangement. Indeed, when later asked for a comment on that utterance, the speaker explained that “everybody knows that I have to go tomorrow to my field to work”. The entities are thus considered by the speaker to exist as part of the common ground, which is directly marked by the demonstrative.

In everyday communication, some elaboration is often required before the speech act participants can reach common understanding of the identity of items referred to. Example (14) is taken from a conversation between two best friends, who, over the years of their friendship, have developed a lot of shared knowledge and a kind of secret language which allows them to speak indirectly. They do not always succeed in their hints, or not on the first attempt, as (14) shows:

- (14) Mano
 (14.1) A: *ñ nàáyìà ā ē ló diá, à yàà lē yālá Góésìàgbēēlà base là, áà ñ súd kè.*
 ‘That botherer of mine, who went and sat at the Goesìagbeela base, he called me.’
 (14.2) B: *ī dàā?*
 ‘Your father?’
 (14.3) A: *ññ gèē ñ nàáyìà yā, Kòó gbē.*
 ‘I say: That botherer of mine, the son of Ko.’
 (14.4) B: *nàáyìà ā ká mēñ.*
 ‘That botherer, whatchamacallit.’
 (14.5) A: *Ñhñ.*
 ‘M-hm.’ [K_P_20171220 02:46-02:59]

In the conversation the two men chat about all kinds of things and people, and (14.1) is where speaker A turns to a new subject and a new referent, a mutual acquaintance, by calling him *ñ nàáyìà yā* ‘that guy that bothers me, lit.: that botherer of mine’. He thus uses DEM2 in the recognitional function: the man in question is nowhere near and hasn’t yet been discussed, but the friend’s shared knowledge of him is presupposed. However, contrary to the expectations of the speaker, the addressee did not at first recognize who was being talked about and asked a verification question — whether that was A’s kin. In (14.3), A repeats the same identification as in (14.1), ‘that botherer of mine’, but accompanies it with a small clarification — that he is the son of Ko. After that B shows signs of recognition: he repeats the referent with DEM2 (*nàáyìà ā*, ‘that botherer’).

While in (14) the speaker chose to repeat the referential expression almost verbatim with little elaboration, in (15) the speaker builds the referent description incrementally.

- (15) Mano
 [léé wāā]_{NP1}, [léé bā gè yàt5l3 pàà wāā], [à dē
 woman:H DEM1 woman:H 2SG.PST>3SG see doctor at DEM1 3SG husband
 yā]_{NP2}, Dòmà zíé lē.
 DEM2 P.N. uncle COP
 ‘That woman, that woman that you saw at the hospital, that husband of hers,
 he is Doma’s uncle.’ [fieldnotes]

The addressee in (15) has just returned from a hospital visit to a woman who has just given birth. In NP1, the speaker first introduces the referent, *léé wāā* ‘that woman’, as straightforwardly recognizable by using DEM1, presupposing shared knowledge. He then decides that a bare reference is not enough and provides a further elaboration with a relative clause, explaining that the addressee has just seen the woman in question at the hospital. (Relative clauses in Mano, like a number of other subordinate clauses, are framed with demonstratives.) In NP2, the speaker introduces the main referent he wanted to talk about, the woman’s husband, who is identifiable by proxy, by using DEM2.

Another example of recognitional deixis comes from the spontaneous translation of Exodus 3:1 by a catechist during the Catholic Sunday celebration. The excerpt was translated from a French source provided in the examples.

- (16) Mano
 (16.1) *Moise ē kē ē jūēē kēpèlè ē dàā Jethro là tòlòpè vò mò éé mí lé ē kē Madiane líé sí mì ká.*
 ‘Moses was keeping an eye on his father Jethro’s domestic animals, the man who was a leader of Madiane.’
 French source: *Moïse était berger du troupeau de son beau-père Jéthro, prêtre de Madiane.*
 NIV: ‘Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, ...’ (*New International Version*, Exodus 3: 1)¹¹
 (16.2) *ē nū là tòlòpè vò yā ká yèí kpóy yā yí Horeb, éé ē kē wálà là tòy yāā ηwíí ká.*
 ‘He came with those domestic animals of his at **that border of the savannah**, at Horeb, that was a top of **that mountain of God’s**.’
 French source: *Il mena le troupeau au-delà du désert et parvint à la montagne de Dieu, à l’Horeb.*
 NIV: ‘... and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.’ (*New International Version*, Exodus 3: 1)
 [mass_godi_20160228 32:15–32:30]

In (16), *yā* occurs three times. In the first instance, *là tòlòpè vò yā* ‘those domestic animals of his’, DEM2 is used in the anaphoric function. Indeed, the domestic animals of Jethro were introduced in the preceding utterance, in (16.1). The other two instances are clearly recognitional because it is the first time the referents are introduced: the border of a desert and Mount Horeb, also known as the Mountain of God, where the Ten Commandments were given to Moses by God. We have ample attested cases of similar use of DEM1 and especially DEM2 in the speech of community leaders (catechists and priests) in the Roman Catholic Church. There are reasons to doubt that all the parties in interaction indeed share knowledge of the

referents such as those introduced in (16.2). The church community is very heterogeneous, consisting of adults and children, newcomers and old-time members. Therefore, one may expect that not everyone shares knowledge of Biblical referents, especially rare place names, such as Mount Horeb. And yet, in (16.2) the speaker frames the mountain as recognizable by the very use of the demonstrative. Because the discourse of community leaders is mostly monological — and especially so when reading the Bible — there is no place for negotiation of recognizability in the communicative setting, unlike what is done in (14). Instead, recognizability is imposed on the listeners.

In terms of the presupposition of relational structure that we suggest, recognitional demonstratives have a sociocentric indexical origo, including both parties in interaction. The relation to the object of reference is that of cognitive access and shared knowledge.¹² Our examples have shown that the presupposition of knowledge-sharing can reflect an existing common ground, as in (13). In other cases, the referents cannot be expected to be part of common ground but instead the presupposition of common knowledge is accommodated by the listeners (16). There are also intermediate cases where cognitive access is not established straightforwardly, but is a result of negotiation, as in (14), or incremental buildup, as in (15).^{13, 14}

7. Accommodating temporal distance: Tense marking in Shambala

Tense marks the relationship between the temporal origo of the utterance (usually the time of utterance) and the time that is being talked about.¹⁵ In many of the world's languages (especially concentrated in Niger-Congo, Trans New Guinea, and Amerindian languages; see Botne 2012: 536), tense systems contrast not only past, present, and future, but also mark multiple distinctions in 'remoteness' from the here-and-now of the discourse situation. In many cases, however, remoteness distinctions do not slice up the timeline into precise, discrete, and non-overlapping time periods.¹⁶ For example, Nurse (2008: 93), examining a database of grammars for 210 Bantu languages, finds that twenty-five of them "are explicitly described as having flexible reference", while the rest are silent on the matter, which suggests that the more frequent scenario for Bantu languages with remoteness distinctions may be that at least some morphologically marked temporal boundaries are flexible and can be used subjectively. In an early note about the phenomenon, Hyman (1980: 236) describes remoteness distinctions in the Grassfields Bantu language Bamileke-Dschang (ISO 639-3 ybb) as "in part subjectively controlled by the speaker". Machobane (1985: 18), dealing with Sotho (ISO 639-3 sot), describes a reference to an event that took place in 1824 using a recent past, with that tense being chosen to indicate the event's important and enduring cultural legacy. Crane (2023) reports that a speaker of isiNdebele (ISO 639-3 nbl) might use a remote past form to refer to a conversion experience that happened several minutes ago, to indicate that a speaker's old life of sin is no longer part of his new life or character. Nevertheless, Nurse's (2008) survey suggests that relatively little attention has been paid to this feature, likely under a general assumption that the semantic function of temporal remoteness markers is slicing up the timeline into discrete and temporally determined intervals.

In recent years, the use of temporal remoteness markers to make subjective portrayals of distance has been investigated more directly (e.g. Bernander 2017; Bochnak & Klecha 2018; Botne & Fanego Palat 2023; Crane 2011; Dom & Bostoen 2015; Kershner 2002; Kiso 2012, among others), especially following the publication of Botne & Kershner (2008). Botne & Kershner propose a more holistic understanding of temporal remoteness systems as deeply connected to not only time, but also space and reality. In their model, themes (i.e., what is being

talked about) can be portrayed as either part of the time, space, and reality of the currently invoked origo (in Botne & Kershner’s terms, contained in the origo’s ‘domain’), or they can be excluded from the domain of the origo. As a result, speakers can exploit temporal remoteness markers to construe subjective distance from, or nearness to, the theme.

Interactional examples of subjective uses of temporal distance markers are regrettably rare, but we do find an example documented for the Bantu language Shambala (also known as Shambaa or Sambaa; ISO 639-3 ksb). Shambala is spoken by around 600,000 people living in mountainous regions of northern Tanzania (see e.g. Riedel 2009: 14). Shambala marks at least two degrees of past tense, one more recent, and one more remote. The tense markers relevant to our discussion are the near past suffix *-i(y)e* and the remote past prefix *a-*.¹⁷

According to Besha (1989: 188–189) recent past marking is generally restricted to the two most recent time units, whether days, weeks, months, or years. For example, *-i(y)e* can be used to refer to events of the same day, the day before, or the day prior to that, but not to earlier times, unless the time unit in question is (for example) years, when it can be used to refer to events of the current year, the prior year, or the year before that, “but it does not go beyond that” (Besha 1989: 189). Some examples of typical uses are given in (17) and (18)–(19) for *-i(y)e* and *a*, respectively.

- Shambala
- (17) *Izi ng’ombe zi-j-iye hii lelo?*
 CL10.DEM CL10.COW CL10.SP-eat-RECPST where today
 ‘Where did the cows graze today?’ (Besha 1989: 202)
- (18) *Waja wagheni woshe w-a-is-a-wo.*
 cl2.DEM CL2.visitor CL2.all CL2.SP-REMPST-come-FV-CL2.REL
mw-a-wa-diki-a mbwai?
 2PL.SP-REMPST-CL2.OP-cook_for-FV what
 ‘What did you cook for all those visitors that came?’ (Besha 1989: 207)
- (19) *Àhò kàè n-à-sóm-á hàjà.*
 CL16.DEM far 1SG.SP-REMPST-read-FV CL16.DEM
 ‘Back then I studied there.’ (Riedel 2009: 33)

In contrast to these prototypical examples, Besha also reports a conversation in Shambala in which a young interviewer asks a question about early events in tribal history using a distant past marker, but the interviewee answers using the recent past. Besha (1989: 294–295) suggests that by using the recent past, although the events in question did not take place in his lifetime, the interviewee communicates his direct connection to the past events and his participation in the clan’s history by virtue of his chieftaincy and descentance from the clan’s founder (20).

(20) Shambala

- (20.1) Interviewer: *N-kund-a n-taiy-e Mbegha*
1SG.SP-like-FV 1SG.SP-know-SBJV Mbegha
a-law-a na hii,
CL1.SP.REMPST-come_out-FV from where
a-iza zeze na mbui sa
CL1.SP.REMPST-come-FV how with CL10.matter like
izo.
CL10.DEM
'I would like to know where Mbegha came from, how he
came here, etc.' (Besha 1989: 294, glosses added)
- (20.2) Interviewee: *Mbegha a-law-iyē na Nguu...*
Mbegha CL1.SP-come_out-RECPST from Nguu
'Mbegha came from Nguu...'
(Besha 1989: 289, glosses modified)

The interviewee in (20) uses a past form that is different from that used by his interlocutor in the immediately preceding question and that seemingly contradicts the restriction of *-iyē* to maximally the past two years. Through the lens of the framework we employ, the relationship between the origo of utterance time and the time being talked about is presupposed as being temporally distant in (20.1), with the remote past marker, and as near in (20.2), with the near past marker. Knowing that Mbegha's arrival occurred far less recently than the past two years, hearers of (20.2) must accommodate this temporal presupposition not to correct their knowledge of historical timeframes, but rather to understand that the interviewee is making a claim of status and connection to the chieftaincy.

8. Summary and discussion

In this section, we first summarize our arguments (Section 8.1), and then compare them with an alternative analytical framework, that of stance-taking (Section 8.2). We conclude the article in Section 8.3.

8.1 Summary

This paper takes as its point of departure a well-known observation that the function of certain grammatical categories, defined as indexicals, is intrinsically tied to the utterance context and reflects some contextual configurations, e.g. the relationship between the speaker and the referent in spatial deixis (Hanks 2005; Küntay & Özyürek 2006; Levinson 2005), social relationships between the interlocutors, as in pronouns of address (Friedrich 1972; Keating & Duranti 2006), or access to information, as in evidential categories (Boye 2012; Mushin 2001). At the same time, it has been observed that indexical categories may not only reflect, but also create or make explicit certain properties of the context (on deixis, see Hanks 1992: 66–67; on aspect, see Petrukhin 2013; on a non-indexical grammatical category in a similar function, namely, ergativity, see Duranti 1990, 1994). We have proposed a formalization of this insight by showing that the choice of indexicals can merely presuppose in a non-informative way the stabilized utterance context, can be subject to negotiation, or can contribute to shifting the communicative setting via presupposition accommodation. What is presupposed — and accommodated, depending on the context — is a relational structure tying together the indexical origo (often, but not always, the speaker), the object of reference and relation between them. The speaker's views of the relational structure thus become claims which need to be

accommodated or negotiated by the addressee. We have illustrated our proposal by demonstrating that by using an egophoric verbal marker, the speaker may claim a particular relationship to the ongoing activity, namely, her participation in it and control of it, and by using the non-egophoric marker, by contrast, distance herself from that activity (Section 5). By using a recognitional demonstrative, she may frame the referent as mutually known (Section 6). By using a formal pronoun of address, she may treat her addressee as socially distant, potentially denying a previous history of intimacy (Section 4). By using a recent or a remote past marker, she may claim her personal connection to or distance herself from the events described (Section 7). By using an evidential marker, the speaker may remind her addressee about the common ground or construct the addressee as equally knowledgeable and having shared access to information on the topic under discussion (Section 3).

8.2 An alternative analytical framework: Stance

As mentioned in Section 3, an alternative analytic framework that has been widely applied for the study of communicative dynamics of evidentiality marking is stance. The stance framework is part of the theory of conversational action and captures the relationship between the interlocutors and interactional unfolding and turn organization, with a focus on connected, dialogical speech and not just individual utterances. Stance is defined as a communicative act of simultaneous evaluation of objects (including physical objects or events), positioning subjects (self and others), and dialogic alignment with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field (Du Bois 2007: 163). Stance-related categories include evaluation (Conrad & Biber 2000), which includes expressions that imply value judgements of some referents (*That's horrible*) and alignment (Heritage & Raymond 2005; Stivers 2008), which covers the ways in which speakers orient to other speakers' turns, co-operate during conversation, and move the conversation forward (A: *I love that game!* B: *I love it, too!*). Crucially, a prominent form of stance is positioning, which involves situating the social actor on the epistemic or affective scale. In particular, affective stance (Ochs 1996) involves positioning the speaker's subjective feelings on some scale of affective value (*I am glad* vs. *I am so glad*). epistemic stance, in turn, involves positioning on the epistemic scale (*I know* vs. *I don't know*). This type of stance has been studied extensively in the conversation analytic tradition, where it is often seen as closely related to, but distinct from, the knowledge previously accumulated by the speech act participant on the matter at hand, which is known as epistemic status (Heritage 2012). Epistemic status is influenced by factors such as relevant personal experience, degrees of certainty of information, the time when that information was acquired, or a person's position in the social structure. Epistemic stance, on the other hand, is a more situation-dependent phenomenon that can only be studied in relation to the communicative context (Heritage 2012: 5). A speaker with a given epistemic status can adopt different epistemic stances: either knowledgeable or ignorant, depending on who they are talking to (e.g., a fellow expert, a layperson), or their interactional goal (being polite, convincing the interlocutor).

Evidentiality and related categories, including egophoricity, are increasingly being approached through the lens of epistemic stance and using the conversation analytic methodology (Sandman & Grzech 2022). This approach allows study of the sociocentric and dialogically constructed functions of the aforementioned categories in more detail than the initial approaches that merely focused on the perspective of the speaker.

Our framework is a sister concept to stance, with many intersections, but focused on the study of the interactional import of grammatical markers. Our analysis has added value for the

treatment of grammatical indexicals, compared to the notion of stance, for two reasons. First, the indexical relational structure, which, in its design, can be tailored to grammatical distinctions encoded by a particular language (Hanks 2009, 2014), allows addition of more detail to what exactly the grammatical stance-taking is about. Moreover, because the relationship between the origo and the object is not necessarily that of epistemic access, it makes it possible for the framework to apply to categories unrelated to epistemicity. Second, the scalar approach to presupposition accommodation allows us to better capture the fluidity and interactional negotiability of grammatical marking and address the intrinsic indeterminacy of the communicative import of indexical categories. Indeed, the question of whether a particular presupposition reflects mutual assumptions of the interlocutors is highly contextually dependent (von Stechow 2008; Mazzarella & Domanesci 2018). In the same way, whether a given indexical category reflects a status quo or contributes to its shift depends on the contextual configuration at hand. The analytic distinction between informative and non-informative presupposition enables a distinction between status-quo preservation and a genuine contextual shift, which the stance framework does not allow without additional elaboration.

8.3 Conclusions and outlook

This article has shown that many — and possibly all — types of grammatical indexicals can have not only context-presupposing, but also context-creative functions, and that they give space for the interlocutors to negotiate the indexical uses in conversation. We have shown how the notion of presupposition accommodation can account for the resolution of context-creative indexical functions. We have grounded our theoretical ambitions in several empirical case studies from a wide range of languages. The methodological approach of the paper — a focus on spontaneous speech (or ‘ethnographically accurate’ fiction material, in the Russian case) — offers a contribution to the study of presupposition, whose main approaches involve elicitation and introspection and, more rarely, experiments.

We have also reviewed an alternative approach to grammar in the communicative context, namely, stance. In contrast to the stance approach, our approach focuses more on the interactional contribution of an individual turn and in the end also of the grammatical marker. It both adds precision to the analysis of individual grammatical markers and allows broad applicability of the same analytical framework across different grammatical categories.

In addition, the bridge we have built between the literature on conversational analysis of grammar in communication, on the one hand, and theoretical analysis of presupposition and its accommodation, on the other, allows us to capture a greater variety of phenomena than usually addressed by either tradition. Indeed, while the stance literature focuses primarily on epistemicity (Biber & Finegan 1989; Clift 2006; Heritage 2012), the presupposition accommodation literature focuses largely on definiteness (Beaver 1999; Beaver *et al.* 2021; Singh *et al.* 2016; Tonhauser *et al.* 2013, among others). Our paper has covered both types of phenomena, and more, such as honorifics and tense.

The next steps would be to formalize the findings with the fine-grained elicitation techniques adopted in studies of projective content (Tonhauser *et al.* 2013). A further conceptual development would consist in a deeper integration of our framework with that of stance, and especially the problems of dialogical, collaborative construal of stance and (non)shared presuppositions, as well as the questions of alignment and disalignment. Finally, by demonstrating the complexity of the usage of grammatical indexicals in actual conversation we hope to encourage further ethnographic and conversation analytic studies of grammar in

context, where systems marking multiple temporal distances remain especially underexplored. We leave these three topics for future study.

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Notes

¹. Non-referential indices, in contrast, signal the structure of the speech context, in particular, by indexing the social personae participating in the speech event and do not contribute to the propositional meaning. Examples are gender indices used in some speaker-addressee gender configurations, affinal registers used in the presence of particular affines (such as mother-in-law), or deference vocabulary.

². Silverstein touched on the idea of a scale between “relatively presupposing” and “relatively creating” indices, with first person falling in between the two poles and second person being classified as straightforwardly presupposing (1976: 36), but he did not elaborate on relativity and in many instances he treated the first and the second persons together. See Nakassis (2018), where the term relative is also taken up without further elaboration. In our approach, we take the absence of a clear dichotomy more seriously, as we discuss in Section 2.4.

³. As noted by William F. Hanks (p.c.), “a mismatch of proximal for a distal denotatum would lead the hearer to assume space was not the relevant measure, and quick jump for another possible motivation for saying this”, such as a description which the speaker is going to launch into, where *this* is anticipatory, or a claim of ownership. In both cases *this* is proximal to the speaker, although it is not close in a spatial sense.

⁴. There is debate in the literature over whether presupposition accommodation exists as such or should be considered a type of conversational implicature (Levinson 2000; Tonhauser 2015). Technical details of the difference go beyond the scope of the present paper. See also a related discussion in Récanati (1987) on conversational implicatures in the interpretation of (implicit) performatives and Silverstein's (2022: 44) treatment of context-creating effects of utterances as entailments.

⁵. We would like to thank Dejan Matić who first pointed out to us the problem of indeterminacy.

⁶. In the translation by Wisdom & Murray (Lermontov 2012), the passage in question is rendered as “‘How glad I am to see you, my dear Maksim Maksimych! Well, how are you?’ said Pechorin. ‘And... thou... you?’ murmured the old man, with tears in his eyes.” In a footnote the translators comment on

their choice of pronominal forms (*thou*, as translation for *ty*, and *you*, for *vy*): “ ‘Thou’ is the form of address used in speaking to an intimate friend, etc. Pechorin had used the more formal ‘you.’ ”

⁷. The data discussed in this section comes from 10 hours of first-hand field data on Wutun, collected by Sandman in 2010, 2013, and 2018 from roughly 20 speakers during 9 months of fieldwork in the Qinghai province in P.R. China.

⁸. The data discussed in this section comes from participant observation undertaken by Khachaturyan during 7 months of fieldwork in 2015–2016, 2018 and 2019 in the Nzérékoré region of Guinea.

⁹. A corpus of annotated mostly narrative Mano texts can be found via the following link: <https://corporan.huma-num.fr/Archives/corpus.php?codeLangue=mev>

¹⁰. Recognitional referents are a prominent type of referents of definite articles (Becker 2021), although ‘definiteness’ and ‘recognition’ are not the same analytical and typological categories.

¹¹. *Holy Bible, New International Version*, NIV, copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. NIV Bible verses taken from the online source <https://www.biblegateway.com>.

¹². A reviewer wondered whether there is a substantial difference between existential presupposition and presupposition of recognizability. Shared knowledge and recognizability include, but are not limited to, the existential presupposition which characterizes definite expressions. Indeed, an explicitation (to borrow Sbisà’s (2021) terms) of the existential presupposition is not the same as an explicitation of the presupposition of recognizability. Following Sbisà in her treatment of existential presupposition, its explicitation may look like ‘there is one and only one X’, while the explicitation of the presupposition of recognizability is richer and may look like ‘there is one and only one X and we both know X’. As we noted in footnote 10, however, definite articles in natural discourse are often used in the recognitional function (Becker 2021), which brings them closer to recognitional demonstratives, but existential presupposition and presupposition of recognizability should still be treated as analytically distinct.

¹³. While our study focuses on the interactional functions of demonstratives expressing common knowledge, other means of incremental building, negotiating and projecting common knowledge — and above all, lexical means and definite expressions — have been studied, see Deppermann (2015), Harjunpää *et al.* (2021) and the classic work by Clark & Marshall (1981) and Clark *et al.* (1983).

¹⁴. In Mano religious discourse, presupposition accommodation is conventionalized to a certain degree and becomes part of genre and register characteristics: recognitional deixis is used to create a common ground between the members of a religious congregation and through such common ground, a sense of community (Khachaturyan 2019).

¹⁵. In many mainstream semantic treatments of tense, following Klein (1994), the time being talked about is referred to as ‘Topic Time’, which itself stands in relation to the time of the eventuality being referenced. However, it has been argued for at least one Bantu language with multiple tense distinctions, Gikūyū (ISO 639-3 kik), that the presuppositions associated with temporal remoteness morphology relate the origo directly to Event Time, rather than to Topic Time (Cable 2013).

¹⁶. These distances can also be negotiated in conversation without resorting to additional temporal specifications, as seen in an example from the Peruvian Panoan language Yaminawa given in Neely (2019: 319–320).

¹⁷. Shambala tense markers also vary based on aspect and on whether the verb form is ‘conjunct’ or ‘disjunct’, a distinction related to verbal focus or constituency. The forms in question are in the perfective conjunct paradigms, but these distinctions are not relevant for our arguments. For further discussion of the Shambala tense / aspect system, see Beshu (1989); Riedel (2009); Nurse (2019: 169–172) and references therein.

Abbreviations

1	first person	EMPH	emphatic
2	second person	EQU	equative copula
3	third person	EXEC	executive auxiliary
ASSOC	associative	EXIST	existential
AUG	augmentative	FACT	factual
CAUS	causative	FV	final vowel
CLI	noun class 1 (etc.)	GER	gerund
COM	comitative	H	high tone
COMPL	completive	INCOMPL	incompletive
COND	conditional	INT	interrogative
CONSEQ	consequential	INTER	interjection
COP	copula	IPFV	imperfective
DEM	demonstrative	NEG	negative
EGO	ego	NMLZ	nominalizer
NP	noun phrase	RECPST	recent past
OP	object prefix	REF	referential
P	proximal	REL	relative
P.N.	proper name	REMPST	remote past
PFV	perfective	RES.PO	patient-oriented resultative
PL	plural	SBJV	subjunctive
PROG	progressive	SEN.INF	sensory-inferential
PROH	prohibitive	SG	singular
PRT	particle	SP	subject prefix
PST	past	TOP	topic
Q	question		

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