On Schlenker's Donkeys

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"No spoken language has a pronoun system remotely like this, so how can it be part of our innate knowledge?"

– Geoffrey Sampson, The Language Instinct Debate

The Basic Assumption

Lillo-Martin & Klima 1990: the location gesture associated with pronouns is an overt manifestation of referential indices.

Schlenker: "In spoken languages, indices are not morphologically realized. But they are in sign languages: pointing."

Sauerland

- has developed a system (*flat binding*) that does not use indices (cf. also Minimalist mooting of the idea that indices are not real)

- response to ASL/FSL facts (pc to KvF, 11/10/09):

  "this is a true modality effect; sign languages are different in this respect"

Locus Shifting

Padden (1983):

IX_a $_bCL$:LEGS-WALK-TO$_c$, STOP THINK-ABOUT. IX_c DECIDE WAIT

'She$_i$ walked over there, stopped, thought a bit, then she$_i$ decided to wait there.'

Not really indices

Lillo-Martin 2002: location pointing is not part of the syntax; it is a gestural component analogous to pointing in spoken languages

Mary likes him and him, but not him.

The former – the latter

- How do these work?

- *The entity referred to first*

- Not an index-laden expression, but actually an E-type pronoun?

What are SL pronouns?

a-pro =

the entity referred to at location **a** ?

Are these pronouns really E-type pronouns containing a demonstrative?

Wider range of demonstratives possible b/c sign language can set up proxy referents to be pointed at?

cf. Stalnaker (1998, On the representation of context) for suggestions of how to track coreference without dynamic indices;

see also Dekker (various) on ways of implementing Stalnaker's sketch

Mixed approach

Irreducibly E-type uses of pronouns

> *Almost all students chose a book. Most of them wrote an essay about it. (Nouwen)*

> *Every man except John gave his paycheque to his wife. John gave it to his mistress.*

> *Every married man loves her.*

Lillo-Martin (pc to KvF, 11/14/09): no pronouns with implicit antecedents, no paycheck pronouns

What does that mean for us?