ELSEVIER

D.N.S. Bhat, Pronouns, Oxford University Press, 2004

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The fundamental motivation for this typological study is a dissatisfaction with the traditional definition of pronouns as 'words that stand for nouns'. To achieve a more nuanced definition, Bhat examines the pronoun inventories of 225 languages, presenting his findings in a monograph of 320 pages. Twelve chapters are arranged in two major parts. Following an introductory chapter, there are five chapters in Part I: Personal Pronouns, and five more in Part II: Proforms. A short chapter with a summary of the conclusions ends the volume. The author includes an appendix of the languages in the sample, a list of references, and indices of authors, languages, and subjects.

Due to the rather dense writing style (more below, in the critique), this review will begin as did my reading of the book: with a look at the conclusions, presented in Chapter 12. Bhat makes a primary distinction between *personal pronouns*, single-element expressions that indicate speech roles, and *proforms*, two-element expressions that perform functions involving entities. Major findings within this two-part framework include typological proposals for free-pronoun vs. bound-pronoun languages and two-person vs. three-person languages. Other important components of the arguments throughout the book involve (1) a distinction between plurality and conjunction, with respect to the association of personal pronouns and the semantic category of number; (2) the difference between pragmatic and semantic identity and reference, featured especially in the discussions on the position of third person pronouns and on characteristics of proforms; and (3) the characterization of interrogative pronouns as unmarked indefinite pronouns, which in turn resolves certain elusive puzzles in the cross-linguistic classification of pronouns.

With these main points in mind, the reader can better appreciate the abundance of detail and analysis in the individual chapters. Chapter 1 ''Introduction'' lays out the major questions and assumptions of the monograph. The division of 'pronouns' into personal pronouns and proforms

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is argued on formal and functional grounds. By 'personal pronouns,' Bhat especially means those for first and second persons, or speech act participants (SAP), while third person pronouns may belong to either major division. Noting the sometimes fuzzy boundaries between the two classes, the author supports a prototype theory approach to classify the forms found in any given language. A typological distinction is proposed according to the properties of third person pronouns: languages in which these resemble demonstratives (proforms, in this book) would be termed two-person languages, and languages with third person personal pronouns would be termed three-person languages. This proposal will be elaborated in Chapter 6.

A second typological proposal contrasts free-pronoun (FP) languages with bound-pronoun (BP) languages. FP languages have obligatory pronouns (or NPs) as arguments, and they may have non-obligatory verbal agreement markers which are diachronically unstable. In BP languages, arguments are encoded as obligatory pronominal markers on the verb. Non-obligatory NPs function as adjuncts, and any personal pronouns tend to be diachronically unstable. At times the discussion seems to conflate bound pronominals with agreement markers, although a distinction is noted between grammatical and anaphoric agreement systems, which may in fact occur in the same language (for example, in Chichewa: see Bresnan and Mchombo, 1987). Because bound pronouns often encode information unrelated to the primary function of indicating speech roles, such as number, case and agreement, Bhat clarifies that his characterization of pronouns in Part I can only be applied to FP languages. The decision fits the theory of this monograph, but it is a bit disappointing to those of us who work on BP languages (this reviewer, and see e.g. Mithun, 1988 and references therein). However, the lengthy discussion of properties and differences between the two types of languages will certainly encourage others to respond to the author's gracious urging to undertake a complementary study.

The next five chapters address Bhat's category of personal pronouns (in FP languages), especially those of first and second person. Chapter 2 "Relation to the Referent" emphasizes the function of personal pronouns as shifters, necessarily dissociated from specific referents. The notion of definiteness is explored, with evidence presented for and against the traditional assumption that SAP pronouns are inherently definite. In the same vein, the association of personal pronouns with the nominal category is examined. Unlike nominals, pronouns do not take articles, modifiers or complements, which makes a case for separate categories. However, like nominals, pronouns do occur in argument position and can indicate number, gender, or case. Bhat will argue in Chapter 4 that association with grammatical categories serves a different function in pronouns, more in keeping with their proposed function of distinguishing speech roles than with distinguishing referents.

Chapter 3 "Coreference and Non-Coreference" addresses the differences between SAP pronouns and other types of pronouns and proforms with respect to coreferential ambiguity. A rather dense discussion of logophoric pronouns ensues, followed by an examination of anaphora among personal pronouns and proforms. He points out that these devices directly concern pronominal reference, in contrast to reciprocal marking, switch-reference, and modal devices, which are often concerned primarily with predicate meaning.

In Chapter 4, "Association with Grammatical Categories," the basic premise is that indications of number, gender, or case in SAP pronouns are more related to the characterization of speech roles than to the identification of referents. With respect to number, Bhat suggests a modification to the proposed Animacy Hierarchy for number marking (Corbett, 2000; Smith Stark, 1974):

1 > 2 > 3 > kin > human > animate > inanimate (p. 105)

He contends that SAP number is concerned with conjunction (1 + 2, 1 + 3, 2 + 3, 1 + 2 + 3) rather than with plurality (1 + 1, 2 + 2), and proposes the following:

1 > 2>
Conjunction - ->
    3 > kin > human > animate > inanimate
    Plurality - ->(p. 108)

The claim is that this configuration permits association of other categories, such as inclusory conjunction, associative, collective, and distributive, in the appropriate section of the hierarchy.

With respect to case marking, Bhat notes the special treatment of SAP pronouns in split-ergative systems, direct-inverse systems, and as the major components of sagittal case marking. He argues that gender primarily indicates social role, not referent.

The next chapter, "Conflicting Characteristics," touches briefly on things languages do that would seemingly contradict the basic premise that SAP pronouns form a special category of personal pronoun, internally unified and distinct from proforms. These include unequal treatment of first and second persons and a recap of the ways in which personal pronouns and proforms receive equal treatment.

Chapter 6 "The Position of Third Person Pronouns" elaborates the proposed typology of two-person and three-person languages. In a two-person language, third persons are indicated partially or completely with demonstrative proforms. Languages that restrict subject marking to first and second persons are also included in this type. And finally, languages that denote all three persons with personal pronouns are termed three-person languages. Bhat makes two typological observations here. First, languages with third person gender or noun class distinction tend to be two-person languages, while those without this distinction tend to be three-person languages. In addition, the organizing principle of demonstratives may be a typological factor, as two-person languages tend to have person-oriented systems, and three-person languages, distance-oriented systems. A preliminary look at language families identifies proto-Indo European, proto-Dravidian, proto-Uto-Aztecan, Australian, and proto-Semitic as two-person languages, with proto-Uralic and Oceanic as three-person languages. Noting that this study is based on formal characteristics of third person pronouns, the author signals the need to examine functional characteristics. He proposes a study to identify any correlations between the two types of languages with respect to the referentiality and identifiability of third person pronouns.

Part II of the book deals with proforms, beginning with a description of their structure in Chapter 7. In general, proforms are two-element morphemes, with an internal structure that lends itself to presentation in a table format. The rows of the table are contributed by the first element, a general term that denotes the concept or scope of the proform. In any given language, these categorial distinctions may include person, thing, place, time, manner, amount, and type, or they may be better described with labels such as attributive, nominal, locative, direction, source, temporal, and kind. The columns of the table are contributed by the second component, a pronominal element that indicates the purpose of the proform. These deictic or functional notions may include proximate and remote demonstratives, interrogatives, specific and non-specific indefinites, and relatives. For example, in English, two columns of indefinites would have *some, someone, somewhere, something,* and *any, anyone, anywhere, anything*. There may be a typological correlation between element order and word order, such that verb-initial languages will tend to place the concept term first, while other languages will tend to place the concept term last. Interestingly, Bhat cautions that gaps in the proform inventory tables of underdocumented languages may reflect gaps in the contact language (to follow the English example, no medial terms, no visible-invisible contrast, no *sometype, anytype*) or may reflect the different frequency

of terms in discourse (interrogatives might be more frequent and easier to recognize than a proform for a medial source). Although most modern linguists collecting data for grammars are aware of this problem, the point is well taken.

Chapter 8 ''Constituent Elements of Proforms'' moves from the structure of proforms to their functional and word-class distinctions, with extensive discussion of the varied realizations of these in individual languages. Bhat identifies three main functional distinctions for proforms. Demonstrative proforms, based primarily on spatial deixis, locate an entity in the discourse context. Interrogative-indefinite proforms are concerned with the speaker's lack of knowledge, whether to ask for more information about an entity, to hide an entity, or to demonstrate indifference to the identity of an entity. And finally, relative-anaphors relate an entity of type X to some other entity of type X within the discourse context. The word-class distinctions among proforms may include nominal, adjectival, verbal, and adverbial; the type and number of distinctions tend to reflect the type and number of word classes in the language itself.

The intention of Chapter 9 ''Characteristics of Proforms'' is to situate the category of the proform with respect to nouns and personal pronouns. The distinction hinges chiefly on semantic vs. pragmatic notions of identifiability, definiteness and referentiality. Bhat argues that proforms require grounding in an extra-linguistic context so that they can perform their main functions. These 'strong' requirements mean that identifiability and referentiality are semantic for proforms, such that an entity can be located or further queried, or such that indefiniteness can persist. In contrast, identifiability and referentiality of third person pronouns and NPs are pragmatic, grounded in the linguistic context only and/or depending crucially on the intention of the speaker.

Chapter 10 ''Interrogative-Indefinite Puzzle'' addresses the fact that interrogative pronouns and indefinite pronouns are identical in shape or are related derivationally in many of the world's languages. Bhat takes a monosemic approach, based on shared semantics of 'ignorance, lack of knowledge', and argues that interrogative pronouns are better understood as unmarked indefinite pronouns. Notions of interrogation and focus are then expressed by alternative devices, such as question intonation, an additional interrogative or focus particle, use of interrogative mood, or movement to a focus position.

The assumption that interrogatives and indefinites are both indefinite pronouns then allows resolution of other related puzzles in Chapter 11. The derivation of indefinite pronouns is a predictable result of particles with indefinite pronouns. Indirect questions can be regarded as statements, not as questions per se, and it is easy to relate relative pronouns to unmarked indefinite pronouns.

The final chapter, ''Concluding Remarks'', presents an excellent summary of the main points and major findings of the monograph. These ideas were presented at the beginning of this review.

CRITIQUE

In his admirable zeal to present all possible exceptions and counter-arguments to his framework, Bhat sometimes loses the reader. Explanations become repetitious, with reiterated observations and the unremarked re-use of data examples. The prose is characterized by an off-putting overuse of ''on the one hand, on the other hand'' and of ''the former and the latter''. These devices are particularly distracting when one encounters an apparently orphaned ''on the other hand'' or ''latter'' without having previously established the missing sibling. In addition, there are allusions to arguments not yet made. These problems of style and organization create a real risk of missing or misunderstanding incremental argumentation and explanation. As mentioned at the beginning of this review, a useful approach is to read Chapter 12 first, then read Chapter 1.

The introductory and summary sections of each chapter are consistently helpful in sorting out the primary points of discussion and conclusions of each topic; therefore, an appreciation of each chapter should begin with a careful reading of the introduction and final summary. More tables and more data examples would help alleviate local confusion.

The author recognizes that his primary focus is on form rather than function, and at many points he calls for functional studies to address specific findings. There is, for example, a refreshing discourse component to the discussion of anaphoric pronouns (184–185). However, without a consistent consideration of discourse function, cognitive advantage, or communicative goal, he is often at a loss to motivate variation, simply reporting exceptions to his theory in great, often bewildering, detail. Other topics are given short shrift. For example, he claims that gender distinction in SAP pronouns is "used primarily for indicating social distinctions or for complying with social requirements . . . to represent distinctions in the speech roles themselves, rather than in the performers of those roles" (111). This assessment would have been more convincing with examples along the lines of Siewierska, 2004 (214–245) and not by pointing to the diachronic source of Spanish *nosotras* 'we, feminine' and *vosotras* 'you familiar plural, feminine' as incorporations of SAP pronouns plus a gendered adjective (*otras* 'others'). This point was especially displeasing in a monograph that adheres absolutely to the out-dated "generic masculine."

Bhat stays true to his theory, at times downplaying or disregarding data that does not fit. Exhibit A is the aforementioned distressing neglect of bound-pronoun languages. However, throughout the book he identifies unanswered questions, suggests complementary studies and lays the groundwork for these, identifying necessary and sometimes provocative elements and categories that can and should be taken into account. Most inspiring, the monograph is rich with typological proposals and possible paths to follow in follow-up investigations. The audience for this book includes philosophers of language and logicians, and it will certainly be of interest to typologists, grammarians, and descriptive linguists ready to roll up their sleeves and unpack the prose.

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