N-effects are not P-effects

Pronoun competition in Scottish Gaelic

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Abstract
This paper analyzes pronominal competition and its pragmatic consequences in Scottish Gaelic (Celtic). In cases of competition cross-linguistically, use of a particular pronoun can trigger pragmatic effects like negative appraisal (N-effects). Although Scottish Gaelic exhibits a superficially similar pattern of competition and negative appraisal, I show that existing accounts based on referential potential (Sichel and Wiltschko 2020) and structure (Patel-Grosz and Grosz 2017) are unable to capture the Scottish Gaelic pattern. Instead, I argue that negative appraisal in Scottish Gaelic stems from the absence of positive appraisal, signaled via use of exempt anaphors. Following Charnavel (2020), I propose that exempt anaphors are antecedent by a null pro\textsubscript{log}, introduced by a logophoric operator, which requires its complement to be evaluated from the perspective of pro\textsubscript{log}'s antecedent. By using an exempt anaphor, a speaker adopts the perspective of the pronoun's referent, indicating positive appraisal since they are willing to take the referent's point of view. Yet when a speaker chooses not to use an exempt anaphor, they refuse to make this perspective shift, which translates as negative appraisal. Apparent N-effects in Scottish Gaelic are, then, better characterized as not-P-effects.

Keywords Pronoun competition · Appraisal · Exempt anaphora · Pragmatics · Scottish Gaelic

1 Introduction

Many languages have large inventories of pronouns, which are licensed in different syntactic and semantic contexts. Pronominal competition arises when multiple pronouns are licit in a given context. This competition often triggers pragmatic effects, such as negative appraisal, emotivity, disambiguation, or register shift (Patel-Grosz

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Table 1 Pronoun inventory of Scottish Gaelic

|        | Personal | Emphatic | Anaphors |
|--------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1SG    | mi       | mise     | mi fhèin|
| 2SG    | thu      | thusa    | thu fhèin|
| 3SG.M  | e        | esan     | e fhèin |
| 3SG.F  | i        | ise      | i fhèin |
| 1PL    | sinn     | sinne    | sinn fhèin|
| 2PL    | sibh     | sibhse   | sibh fhèin|
| 3PL    | iad      | iadsan   | iad fhèin|

and Grosz 2017). Competition between personal and demonstrative pronouns, for instance, can be seen in German and Hebrew. In the German example in (1), personal and demonstrative pronouns are both licensed:

(1) German (Sichel and Wiltschko 2020:9)

{Sie / die} ist gross.

3SG.F DEM.SG.F be.PRS tall

’She is tall.’

However, use of the demonstrative pronoun—rather than the personal pronoun—triggers negative appraisal of the pronoun’s referent (i.e. an N-effect).

In the recent literature, this type of pronominal competition and the resulting pragmatic effects have been studied exclusively for personal and demonstrative pronouns and in only a small handful of languages. Nevertheless, two classes of analyses emerge to derive these competition-driven pragmatic effects. Referent-based accounts rely on the fact that pronouns often differ in their referential potential (e.g. some pronouns are restricted to discourse subjects, while others are not). Use of a referentially “unexpected” pronoun triggers pragmatic inferences (see e.g. Sichel and Wiltschko 2020). By contrast, structure-based accounts make use of the fact that pronouns can have different amounts of internal structure (e.g. some pronouns contain built-in indices, while others do not). Due to principles of economy, use of a structurally larger pronoun yields a pragmatic effect (see e.g. Patel-Grosz and Grosz 2017).

This paper details a seemingly similar pattern of pronominal competition and negative appraisal in Scottish Gaelic, a Celtic language spoken by approximately 57,400 people (Eberhard et al. 2019). Scottish Gaelic has (at least) three sets of pronouns: personal, emphatic, and (reflexive) anaphoric pronouns, as seen in Table 1. Personal pronouns are the morphological base for emphatic and anaphoric pronouns. Emphatic pronouns are built from personal pronouns with the addition of the suffix -sel-san. This suffix descends historically from the demonstrative seo ‘this’ but no longer carries demonstrative meaning. Anaphors are personal pronouns with an added

1Abbreviations include: 1=first person, 2=second person, 3=third person, ANA=anaphor, COMP=complementizer, COND=conditional, COP=copula, DEF=definite, DEM=demonstrative, EM=emphatic pronoun, F=feminine, FUT=future tense, M=masculine, NEG=negation, PL=plural, PRS=present tense, PST=past tense, SG=singular, VN=verbal noun.
The *swe*- derived *fhèin* particle, which is a derivative of the Indo-European reflexive root *swe-*, though the details are complicated and disputed (see e.g. Schrijver 1997). In many contexts, personal pronouns are ruled out, while emphatic and anaphoric pronouns are both licensed. Precisely in these contexts, use of emphatic pronouns comes across as rude, while anaphors are deemed more polite.

This paper provides a semantics of these three pronoun types and describes and analyzes the N-effect that arises when emphatic pronouns and anaphors are in competition. I argue that personal pronouns are variables that denote individuals in their referential uses, while emphatic and anaphoric pronouns contribute additional meaning. Emphatic pronouns are focus-marked personal pronouns, which invoke individual alternatives to the pronoun’s referent along the lines of Rooth (1992). Anaphors, on the other hand, fall into two classes: plain and exempt. Following Charnavel (2020), I claim that both types of anaphors must be locally bound but by different types of elements; plain anaphors are bound by a local argument DP, while exempt anaphors are bound by a null logophoric pro introduced in the specifier of a logophoric operator. This operator requires its syntactic complement to be evaluated from the first person perspective of pro's antecedent.

I show that neither the referent-based, nor structure-based accounts of pronominal competition are able to capture Scottish Gaelic N-effects. Rather, I argue that this negative appraisal is actually the absence of positive appraisal. When a speaker uses an exempt anaphor, they adopt the perspective of the pronoun’s referent, which indicates positive appraisal since they are willing to metaphorically step into the referent’s shoes. Yet when a speaker chooses to use an emphatic pronoun—rather than a similarly licensed exempt anaphor—they refuse to make this perspective shift, which translates as negative appraisal. Consequently, apparent N-effects in Scottish Gaelic are actually not-P-effects.

By providing a semantics of these pronouns in Scottish Gaelic and analyzing a novel form of pronominal competition, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of pronoun typology cross-linguistically. My analysis also fills a gap in the Celtic literature, where the co-existence of different pronoun paradigms has been noted but not fully explored, and offers a framework that can be used to analyze similar pronouns in other languages. Furthermore, this paper describes and analyzes a new type of pronoun competition. Existing accounts focus on personal and demonstrative pronouns, yet here I show that seemingly similar effects can arise via competition of emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors. Finally, this paper provides a new way to derive N-effects, which does not rely on reference or structure. Pronoun competition can, then, have superficially similar effects cross-linguistically, but their sources can be quite different.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the distribution of the pronouns and offers an analysis of their structure. In Sect. 3, I give a pragmatic analysis of the not-P-effects associated with use of emphatic pronouns rather than exempt anaphors. Section 4 concludes. Data come from my fieldwork on the language based in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, Scotland. Judgements come from six native speakers.  

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2Emphatic pronouns can also combine with *fhèin*, resulting in pronouns like *mise fhèin*, *thusa fhèin*, etc. I do not pursue this pattern here, though nothing in my analysis prevents emphatic pronouns from combining with *fhèin*. 

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Scottish Gaelic speakers living in or around Stornoway. The data primarily reflect Lewis Gaelic, though some speakers originally come from the Isles of Skye, Harris, and Uist.

2 Scottish Gaelic pronoun structure and semantics

2.1 Personal pronouns are phonologically and syntactically small

Data from object postposing and coordination suggest that personal pronouns are phonologically—and, I suggest, structurally—small. First, only personal pronouns can undergo rightward postposing when in object position. Canonically, objects surface immediately after the subject (VSOX). However, personal pronoun objects can shift to the right, optionally surfacing at various points in the clause. Emphatic pronouns and anaphors cannot undergo this rightward shift:

(2) Chunnaic Catriona {e / esan / e fhèin} anns a’ phàirc
see.PST Catriona 3SG.M 3SG.M.EM 3SG.M.ANA in.DEF the park
{e / *esan / *e fhèin} an-dè {e / *esan / *e fhèin}. 3SG.M 3SG.M.EM 3SG.M.ANA yesterday 3SG.M 3SG.M.EM 3SG.M.ANA
‘Catriona saw him in the park yesterday.’

Bennett et al. (2016) analyze an identical pattern of pronoun postposing in Irish, arguing that pronoun displacement occurs to satisfy a phonological constraint. Following them, I assume that the distribution in (2) is phonological at its core and that personal pronouns—but not emphatic and anaphoric pronouns—are phonologically weak.

Second, personal pronouns cannot be coordinated; speakers must use emphatic pronouns and anaphors in coordinations. Although speakers can coordinate emphatic pronouns with anaphors, coordinations containing even one personal pronoun are ungrammatical:

(3) Phòg an cù {*mi agus thu / *mi agus thusa / kiss.PST the dog 1SG and 2SG 1SG and 2SG.EM 1SG.EM and 2SG.EM
mi fhèin ’s tu fhèin }. 1SG.ANA and 2SG.ANA
‘The dog kissed you and me.’

I assume that the pattern in (3) also has a phonological explanation; coordinations in Scottish Gaelic require their conjuncts to be sufficiently phonologically strong, though it is beyond the scope of this paper to formalize this phonological analysis. Rather, I include the postposing and coordination facts to show that personal pronouns are phonologically weak.

Following Cardinaletti and Starke (1999), I translate the phonological weakness of personal pronouns to their syntactic structure, assuming that weak phonology indicates minimal syntactic structure. There are two possible structures that personal pronouns could have. They could be simple $\phi$Ps (4) as in Wiltschko (1998), or they could contain a null NP embedded within a DP shell (5) as in Elbourne (2013).
On either approach, I propose that personal pronouns form the base upon which the other pronoun types are built, since they pattern together for gender mismatch. In Scottish Gaelic, all pronoun types must track the real-world gender of their antecedent, even when this conflicts with its grammatical gender. For instance, *boireannach* ‘woman’ is grammatically masculine, but—as (6) shows—all pronouns anteeceded by this noun must have feminine forms:

(6) Chunnaic mi *boireannach*. Bha i / ise / i fhèin / *e
    see.PST 1SG woman(M)  be.PST 3SG.F 3SG.F.ANA 3SG.M
    / *esan / *e fhèin  air leth breagha.
    3SG.M.EM 3SG.M.ANA very beautiful
    ‘I saw a woman. She was very beautiful.’

Because all three pronoun types pattern together, their base structure must be uniform. For simplicity, I adopt the representation in (4), but my analysis is also compatible with the structure in (5).

2.2 Emphatic pronouns invoke alternatives

Emphatic pronouns invoke alternatives and indicate contrast, which I analyze as focus in the sense of Rooth (1992). Emphatic pronouns are ideal in contexts when a speaker wants to single out an individual from a crowd (7) or highlight contrast between two or more individuals (8):

(7) We’re at a singing competition, with lots of mediocre performers before the current singer.
    Tha { #e / esan / #e fhèin } math air seinn.
    be.PRS 3SG.M 3SG.M.EM 3SG.M.ANA well at sing.VN
    ‘He’s singing well.’

(8) Chunnaic mi boireannach. Bha ise air leth breagha, ach cha
    see.PST 1SG woman be.PST 3SG.F.EM very beautiful but PST.NEG
    robh an duine aice.
    be.NEG the man at.3SG.F
    ‘I saw a woman. She was very beautiful, but her husband wasn’t.’

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3 For the sake of space, I only include data with free pronouns here, but bound pronouns show the same behavior.

4 The type of gender mismatch seen in (6) motivates Wiltshko’s (1998) φP analysis of German personal pronouns, since the presence of the NP in (5) predicts that pronouns should track the grammatical gender of their referent. Yet it is possible to derive gender mismatch with the structure in (5) if one assumes “dummy” NPs with grammatical gender corresponding to real-world gender (Patel-Grosz and Grosz 2017). In this way, gender mismatch alone cannot distinguish between the structures in (4)–(5).
Furthermore, emphatic pronouns appear with the Scottish Gaelic equivalents of “even” (9) and “only” (10), which are typical association-with-focus contexts (see e.g. van der Wal 2016 for recent discussion):5

(9) Chaidh a h-uile duine dhan taigh-dhealbh, fiù ’s {#i / ise / go.PST the every person to.DEF cinema even 3SG.F 3SG.F.EM i fhèin}. 3SG.F.ANA

Everyone went to the movies, even her.

(10) Chan fhaca mi duine aig an taigh-dhealbh, ach {#i / ise / NEG.PST see.PST 1SG person at the cinema but 3SG.F 3SG.F.EM i fhèin}. 3SG.F.ANA

I didn’t see anyone at the movies, only her.

The structure in (10) is the only way to express at-issue exhaustivity in Scottish Gaelic. This makes it semantically comparable to English “only,” though it is more literally akin to an exceptive construction. Finally, emphatic pronouns are infelicitous in contexts incompatible with focus—for instance, when the referent is established as an aboutness topic as in (11):

(11) Innis dhomh mu Iain. ‘Tell me about Iain.’

Chaidh Catriona dhan taigh-dhealbh còmhla {ris / #risan} go.PST Catriona to.DEF cinema with to.3SG.M to.3SG.M.EM an-de.
yesterday
‘Catriona went to the movies with him yesterday.’

Based on these data, I conclude that emphatic pronouns are focus-marked personal pronouns with the schematized structure in (12). The -se/-san suffix realizes a focus head within the nominal domain:

(12) **Emphatic pronoun:**

\[
\phi P \\
\phi P \quad \text{FOC} \\
\mid \quad -\text{se}/-\text{san}
\]

This focus suffix triggers the introduction of a focus semantic value for the pronoun in addition to its preexisting ordinary semantic value (Rooth 1992). The ordinary semantic value is simply the pronoun’s referent as determined by applying the contextual assignment function to the pronoun’s index. The focus semantic value is the set of salient individual alternatives to the pronominal referent. I assume that there

5 Anaphors are also felicitous here—a pattern discussed at length in Sect. 3.
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is a focus operator (e.g. ~) higher in the syntax, which operates over the pronoun’s focus semantic value.6

2.3 Anaphors come in two flavors

Cross-linguistically anaphors often respect Condition A, which states that they must be bound within their binding domain—roughly the clause (Chomsky 1986). However, anaphors in Scottish Gaelic show two distinct behaviors with respect to this condition. Anaphors can be locally bound, which leads to a reflexive meaning, but they do not need to be—they can simply refer to a salient discourse referent:

(13) Thuirt Calum gun bhual Iain j e fhèin i,j,k.
    say.PST Calum COMP.PST hit.PST Iain 3SG.M.ANA
    ‘Calum said that Iain hit(himself)i,j,k.’

Without an appropriate context, the locally bound reading (here indexed with j) is preferred. However, in context, these anaphors can refer to someone else in the discourse. This referent can be the attitude holder of a matrix clause verb (here indexed with i) or another individual who is salient in the discourse (here indexed with k). Consultants report that this discourse-salient individual is often a boss, (ex-)partner, or another common subject of gossipy conversation.

The dual behavior of anaphors in (13) parallels the distinction between plain and exempt anaphora as analyzed by Charnavel (2020). Plain anaphors appear subject to Condition A of binding theory, while exempt anaphors—though morphologically identical to plain anaphors—do not. To unify plain and exempt anaphora, Charnavel proposes that both types of anaphors are subject to strict locality conditions but that they are bound by different elements. An anaphor is plain if it has a local argument DP antecedent. It is exempt if it is bound by a null logophoric pronoun introduced as a specifier of a syntactically represented logophoric operator (Charnavel 2020:215):

(14)

The logophoric operator requires that its complement—αP in (14)—be presented from the first person perspective of the null logophoric pronoun (Charnavel 2020:215):

6 A possible alternative to the analysis in (12) is to treat emphatic pronouns like demonstrative pronouns. However, this analysis does not derive the focus interpretation seen in (7)–(11) and faces additional challenges. First, Scottish Gaelic has other pronouns—an tè ‘the one(F)’ and am fear ‘the one(M)’—which behave more like demonstrative pronouns cross-linguistically. Second, emphatic pronouns come in all φ-feature specifications unlike demonstrative pronouns, which are typically restricted to 3rd person (Bliss and Ritter 2009). Third, emphatic pronouns can co-vary with quantifiers, which contrasts with the behavior of demonstrative pronouns predicted by Patel-Grosz and Grosz (2017).
Antecedents to pro\textsubscript{log} come in two types: attitude holders who have an intellectual perspective and empathy loci who have a perceptual or emotional perspective.

Charnavel’s analysis accounts for the syntactic and semantic distribution of Scottish Gaelic anaphors. Plain and exempt anaphors have the same syntactic structure—schematized in (16)—and differ only in their binder. I remain agnostic about the syntactic structure expounded by the anaphoric particle \textit{fhèin}, though I assume that it is indicative of some additional structure (see e.g. Preminger 2019):

\begin{equation}
\textbf{Anaphor:}
\begin{array}{c}
\phi P \\
\phi P & \Lambda \text{NA} \\
\downarrow & \text{fhèin} \\
\phi
\end{array}
\end{equation}

Both plain and exempt anaphors are subject to Condition A in Scottish Gaelic, but they appear to differ in this respect due to the nature of their binders. Plain anaphors are anteceded by a local argument DP, whereas exempt anaphors are anteceded by a null pro\textsubscript{log} introduced by a logophoric operator. This unification of plain and exempt anaphora differentiates Charnavel’s analysis from other approaches to exempt anaphora (e.g. Pollard and Sag 1992), which claim that exempt anaphors simply fall outside the scope of Condition A. Because all anaphors are subject to Condition A on Charnavel’s account, if an anaphor does not have a co-indexed argument antecedent within the binding domain, it must be bound by a null pro\textsubscript{log}. These exempt anaphors are more limited in their interpretation, since their pro\textsubscript{log} antecedents are restricted to logophoric centers—specifically attitude holders or empathy loci. The notion of empathy locus explains why Scottish Gaelic speakers consistently report that exempt anaphors are common when speaking about discourse-salient individuals who they have a personal connection with.

The analysis in Charnavel (2020) requires referents of exempt anaphors to be living human individuals capable of serving as perspective holders. Humanness, then, is an important diagnostic of exempt anaphors. The following section discusses humanness restrictions on the antecedents of all three pronoun types in Scottish Gaelic, further confirming the Charnavel-style analysis outlined here.

2.4 Ruling out existing accounts of N-effects

In this section, I show that the existing referent-based and structure-based accounts of N-effects are unable to capture the Scottish Gaelic pattern. Emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors are both restricted to human referents, making a Sichel and Wiltschko (2020)-style analysis untenable. Likewise, the structural account in Patel-Grosz and Grosz (2017) is unable to derive the specific pragmatic effects associated with emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors.

Sichel and Wiltschko (2020) derive N-effects in German and Hebrew by taking advantage of the different referential possibilities of personal and demonstrative pronouns. Personal pronouns refer to discourse subjects—entities that participate in the...
discourse in addition to being talked about. By contrast, demonstrative pronouns pick out discourse objects—entities that can only be talked about. In this way, a speaker’s choice to use a demonstrative pronoun when a personal pronoun is licensed indicates that the speaker views the referent as someone to be talked about, not with or to, giving rise to negative appraisal. The key difference between personal and demonstrative pronouns stems from their different referential possibilities.

This analysis is not available in Scottish Gaelic because emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors are referentially restricted in the same way; both pronoun types must have human referents, while personal pronouns can refer to non-humans. This restriction—shared by the two competing pronoun types—makes it unlikely that emphatic pronouns or exempt anaphors refer to different sorts of discourse entities:

(17) Chunnaic mi Iain a’ bhuth. Bha {e / esan / e fhèin} see,PST 1SG Iain at the shop be,PST 3SG.M 3SG.M.EM 3SG.M.ANA a’ ceannach buntàta. PROG buy,VN potatoes ‘I saw Iain at the shop. He was buying potatoes.’

(18) Chunnaic mi an cù anns a’ gharradh. Bha {e / *esan / see,PST 1SG the dog in.DEF the garden be,PST 3SG.M 3SG.M.EM *?e fhèin} na ruith. 3SG.M.ANA PROG run,VN ‘I saw the dog in the garden. It was running.’

(19) Chunnaic mi leabhar anns a’ chidsin. Bha {e / *esan / see,PST 1SG book in.DEF the kitchen be,PST 3SG.M 3SG.M.EM *e fhèin} air a’ bhòrd. 3SG.M.ANA on the table ‘I saw a book in the kitchen. It was on the table.’

Living human referents can antecede all pronoun types (17), yet emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors cannot be anteceded by animate, non-human (18) or inanimate (19) referents. For exempt anaphors, this restriction falls out of the logophoric analysis; the anaphor’s antecedent must be capable of serving as the perspective holder, which is typically only possible with human referents. For emphatic pronouns the source of this human-antecedent restriction is less obvious (e.g. perhaps it is an artifact of a larger person-animacy hierarchy that held historically; Griffith 2008). Nevertheless, the key takeaway is that the referents of emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors are restricted in the same way—they both require human referents. Neg-
tive appraisal associated with emphatic pronouns cannot, then, be derived via different referential possibilities of the pronouns, as in Sichel and Wiltschko (2020).

By contrast, Patel-Grosz and Grosz (2017) derive demonstrative pronoun N-effects in German structurally via principles of economy. They argue that pronouns with more syntactic structure require special discourse conditions to be licensed and trigger pragmatic inferences if used when these conditions are not met. Specifically, they claim that German demonstrative pronouns contain a Deix projection, which makes them larger than personal pronouns. The use of this larger pronoun leads to N-effects.

However, as Sichel and Wiltschko (2020:46) observe, structural differences alone do not derive a contentful inference; there is nothing a priori negative about using a structurally larger pronoun. I assume that emphatic and anaphoric pronouns in Scottish Gaelic contain the same amount of internal structure. However, even if there were structural differences between these pronoun types, this fact alone would not derive the empirical pattern. For instance, consider the possibility that anaphors are larger than emphatic pronouns. The analysis in Patel-Grosz and Grosz (2017) predicts that exempt anaphors should trigger negative appraisal, by analogy with structurally large German demonstrative pronouns. Yet this is the exact opposite of the Scottish Gaelic pattern, in which exempt anaphors are associated with positive appraisal. To summarize, the structural analysis in Patel-Grosz and Grosz (2017) is unable to derive the specific pragmatic effects associated with use of a larger pronoun; the derivation of this interpretation must refer to something beyond structure.

3 Deriving N-effects from a lack of perspective taking

3.1 In competition contexts, emphatic pronouns trigger negative appraisal

When emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors are both licensed, use of emphatic pronouns triggers negative appraisal of the pronoun’s referent, while exempt anaphors come across as more polite. In the contexts in (20)–(22), emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors are both licensed, but personal pronouns are infelicitous. Precisely in these competition contexts, emphatic pronouns trigger negative appraisal of the pronoun’s referent, while exempt anaphors are associated with positive appraisal (i.e. a P-effect):

(20) Catriona usually hates going to the movies, but you saw her there this weekend.

Chaidh a h-uile duine dhan taigh-dhealbh, fiù ’s [#i / ise / go.PST the every person to.DEF cinema even 3SG.F 3SG.F.EM i fhèin].

3SG.F.ANA

‘Everyone went to the movies, even her.’

9I focus on this hypothetical, since the pronoun competition analyzed in this paper is between emphatic pronouns and focused exempt anaphors (Sect. 3.1). Given this characterization, it is reasonable to wonder whether focused exempt anaphors contain a null focus projection in addition to fhèin, making them larger than emphatic pronouns.
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(21) You have two siblings—Seumas and Màiri—and you know that one of them called your mom over the weekend. You ask Seumas, “Did you or Màiri call Mom this weekend?” He responds by saying:
Bha {#i / ise / i fhèin} a’ bruidhinn ri mo mhathair.
be.PST 3SG.F 3SG.F.EM 3SG.F.ANA PROG talk.VN to my mother
‘She talked to Mom.’
Speaker comment: “ise sounds a bit rude”

(22) You say to me, “I went to a dinner party at Calum and Màiri’s house last night! There was a delicious cake for dessert.” I reply, “Màiri’s a great cook, I’m sure she made the cake.” But you correct me:
Chan e, rinn {#e / esan / e fhèin} a’ chèic.
NEG.PST 3SG.M make.PST 3SG.M 3SG.M.EM 3SG.M.ANA the cake
‘No, he made the cake.’
Speaker comment: “e fhèin is kinder—with a nuance of fun or warmth”

Multiple consultants independently report that use of the emphatic pronoun is rude or unfriendly in (20)–(22). Exempt anaphors, on the other hand, signal familiarity and closeness.10

Specifically, I assume that the competition seen in (20)–(22) and analyzed in this paper is between emphatic pronouns and focused exempt anaphors, which bear a focus feature but do not contain a syntactically represented FOC head.11 The semantic contributions of the competing pronouns are, then, only minimally different; emphatic pronouns invoke alternatives, while focused exempt anaphors invoke alternatives and trigger perspective taking.

3.2 Negative appraisal cannot be built into the meaning of emphatic pronouns

Just as with German and Hebrew, emphatic pronouns’ negative appraisal cannot be built into their semantic meaning because it goes away when exempt anaphors are not licensed. In (23)–(24), the speaker does not know the pronoun’s referent, so that individual cannot be an attitude holder or empathy locus referred to by a null $pro_{\text{log}}$.12

10 A reviewer wonders whether competition between emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors could give rise to other types of semantic or pragmatic effects. I have not observed any effects beyond appraisal, though it is likely that the pronouns differ in their ability to be read de re in certain contexts. I leave this possibility for future research, but see fn. 18 for more discussion.

11 The assumption that focus features can be borne by various elements without corresponding to a syntactic FOC head is standard following Rooth (1992).

12 This is a slight simplification. For some speakers, if they are able to ascertain enough information about an individual’s mental or emotional state, then $pro_{\text{log}}$ can refer to that individual. For instance, one speaker reports that the exempt anaphor might be acceptable in (24) if the referent has just made a nice point in the debate that the speaker agrees with. In this way, the infelicity seen in (23)–(24) is a strong dispreference, rather than flat out unacceptability.
Since emphatic pronouns require no such perspective taking, they are licensed in the scenarios in (23)–(24):

(23) We’re at a singing competition, with lots of mediocre performers before the current singer.
Tha {#e / esan / #e fhèin} uabhasach math air seinn.
be.PRS 3SG.M 3SG.M.EM 3SG.M.ANA very well at sing.VN
‘He’s singing very well.’

(24) We’re watching a political debate together, though you aren’t familiar with any of the candidates. Conversation has turned to what we want to eat for dinner, but you chime in to say:
Tha mi an dòchas gum buannaich {#i / ise / #i fhèin}.
be.PRS 1SG the hope COMP win.PRS 3SG.F 3SG.F.EM 3SG.F.ANA
‘I hope that she wins.’

When exempt anaphors are ruled out, there is no more negative appraisal associated with the referent of the emphatic pronoun, illustrated by the fact that emphatic pronouns are felicitous in sentences expressing overt positive appraisal of the referent. Although it is possible to say positive things about a negatively appraised referent, if the N-effect were encoded in the meaning of the emphatic pronoun, speakers should report a clash between the negative appraisal contributed by the pronoun and the positive appraisal contributed by the utterance as a whole. Even when explicitly asked about this possibility, speakers report no sense of contradiction. In fact, the sentences in (23)–(24) can be followed by even more direct praise of the pronoun’s referent:

(25) Following the sentence in (23).
Bu chòir dha an co-fharpais a bhuanachadh.
cop.COND right to.3SG.M the competition to.win
‘He should win the competition.’

(26) Following the sentence in (24).
Tha ise a’ faireachdainn tuigseach agus glic. ’S caomh
be.PRS 3SG.F.EM PROG feel.VN intelligent and wise COP kind
leam na biachdan aice.
with.1SG the ideas at.3SG.F
‘She seems intelligent and wise. I like her ideas.’

The disappearance of N-effects precisely when exempt anaphors are ruled out shows that they must be derived through competition between emphatic and anaphoric pronouns. In this way, the data in (23)–(26) rule out a Potts (2007)-style analysis of emphatic pronouns as expressives. According to Potts, expressive meaning is built into the denotation of expressives, so there is no straightforward way to model competition-driven effects in such a system. Table 2 summarizes felicity judgements for the different pronouns in various contexts. The key observation is that only in contexts of pronominal competition does use of the emphatic pronoun trigger negative appraisal of the pronoun’s referent (cf. row a vs. rows b - g).
3.3 P-effects arise from perspective taking

Unlike N-effects, I argue that P-effects are not derived through competition, but rather result from the perspective taking triggered by use of exempt anaphors. Following Charnavel (2020), I assume that perspective taking is effectively lexically encoded; although the lexical entries for plain and exempt anaphors are identical themselves, the exempt interpretation necessarily arises when a logophoric operator is introduced into the syntactic structure along with a null $pro_{log}$ in its specifier. The P-effect can, then, be considered a type of expressive content associated with use of the logophoric operator and $pro_{log}$. Following Potts (2007), I classify this expressive content as a conventional implicature; by using an exempt anaphor, the speaker adopts the perspective of someone else in the discourse, which signals familiarity and closeness with the chosen perspective holder. In this way, the connection between exempt anaphors and P-effects is somewhat indirect—mediated by the logophoric operator and $pro_{log}$—though these structures necessarily occur alongside exempt anaphors.

Because P-effects are not derived through competition, they should persist in contexts where exempt anaphors do not compete with other pronouns. However, an important hallmark of exempt anaphors cross-linguistically is that they are in free variation with pronouns. This is also the case in Scottish Gaelic, where unfocused exempt anaphors alternate with personal pronouns:13

(27) Your one-and-only boss called you into her office and offered you a raise. Now you’re telling me about your conversation with her.

Bha {i / #ise / i fhèin} cho còir agus taingeil agus toilichte be.PST 3SG.F 3SG.F.EM 3SG.F.ANA so kind and grateful and happy leis an obair agam.
with.DEF the work at.1SG
‘She was so kind and grateful and happy with my work.’

In (27), emphatic pronouns are ruled out because there is only one relevant individual in the context, while the other pronoun types remain licit. Yet the alternation between

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13Some speakers deem the exempt anaphor in (27) marginal and use only the personal pronoun. The judgements in (27) and (28) come from the same speaker, which makes the comparison valid despite inter-speaker variation.
personal pronouns and exempt anaphors raises the question of whether it is possible to illustrate P-effects in the absence of any kind of pronominal competition—as needed to show that these effects are not derived through competition.

Despite their shared distribution, I suggest that personal pronouns do not compete with unfocused exempt anaphors. If the personal pronoun competed with the exempt anaphor in (27), my analysis would predict the personal pronoun to trigger N-effects like emphatic pronouns do in focus contexts. Yet this is not the observed pattern; there are simply no appraisal effects associated with the use of personal pronouns. In this way, personal pronouns and unfocused exempt anaphors do not seem to compete with each other. I propose that the absence of competition here has a structural explanation. Because personal pronouns are smaller than exempt anaphors, they act as a default and do not trigger pragmatic effects like appraisal—even when they can alternate with other pronoun types (e.g. exempt anaphors, which remain viable because they contribute additional meaning). This explanation draws inspiration from Patel-Grosz and Grosz (2017), yet—rather than using structure to derive pragmatic effects—I suggest that structural similarity is necessary for pronouns to compete in the first place.14

Because personal pronouns and unfocused exempt anaphors do not compete, any P-effects that remain with unfocused exempt anaphors must not be due to competition. P-effects persist, even when emphatic pronouns are ruled out. When the context is controlled to discourage a focus interpretation, exempt anaphors are unnatural in sentences expressing overt negative appraisal:

(28) You can’t stand your one-and-only boss. She constantly criticizes you and off-loads work onto you without ever giving you any credit. Now you’re venting about her.

Tha {i / #ise / #i fhèin} cho mi-mhodhail; chan eil mi be.PRS 3SG.F 3SG.F.EM 3SG.F.ANA so rude NEG be.PRS 1SG dèidheil oirre idir. fond at.3SG.F at.all

‘She’s so rude; I’m not fond of her at all.’

Comparison of (27) and (28) shows that, while exempt anaphors are generally licit in contexts barring focus, they become unnatural when expressing overt negative appraisal of the pronoun’s referent. In this way, P-effects associated with exempt anaphors arise even in the absence of competition, suggesting that they are associated with use of the exempt anaphor rather than the failure to choose a different pronoun type.

Further support for the idea that P-effects arise from perspective taking comes from plain anaphors. Plain anaphors in Scottish Gaelic are antecedced by a local ar-

14The lack of competition between personal pronouns and exempt anaphors is reminiscent of a more general constraint on alternatives from the scalar implicature literature. The complexity-based constraint on structural alternatives rules out consideration of structurally more complex alternatives, but allows consideration of smaller ones (Katzir 2007). Although I do not analyze Scottish Gaelic pronoun competition as scalar implicature, this constraint would prevent personal pronouns from competing with structurally larger exempt anaphors, exactly as observed in Scottish Gaelic. Many thanks to a reviewer for bringing this parallel to my attention.
gument DP and do not force the proposition to be evaluated from the antecedent’s perspective. Because perspective taking is not necessary for plain anaphors, they can be anteceded by humans (29) and non-humans (30)–(31):

(29) Cheannaich mo charaid as fhearr dreasa ùr dhith fhèin an-dè. buy.PST my friend best dress new for.3SG.F.ANA yesterday ‘My best friend bought herself a new dress yesterday.’

(30) Bhìd an cú e fhèin. bite.PST the dog 3SG.M.ANA ‘The dog bit itself.’

(31) Chàraich an coimpiutair e fhèin. fix.PST the computer 3SG.M.ANA ‘The computer fixed itself.’

Crucially, plain anaphors do not trigger appraisal effects; speakers can view the antecedents of plain anaphors favorably, though this positive appraisal is not required. In (29), the plain anaphor is anteceded by mo charaid as fhearr ‘my best friend’ which refers to someone who the speaker likes. Yet plain anaphors can also be anteceded by expressions referring to individuals who the speaker expresses overt negativity towards. For instance, it is natural to follow the sentence in (30) with the criticism Abair cú gòrach! ‘What a foolish dog!’ These data show that positive appraisal disappears with plain anaphors, which differ from exempt anaphors only with respect to perspective taking. In this way, there is a demonstrable link between P-effects and perspective taking.

This analysis is also compatible with the fact that exempt anaphors can be used ironically to refer to individuals that the speaker is known to dislike. A younger consultant reports that exempt anaphors are common when talking sarcastically about an ex-partner, often accompanied by an eye roll:

(32) You and your partner Iain had a messy break up yesterday, but today you spotted him at the park getting cozy with another woman.
Chunnaic mi e fhèin anns a’ phàirc còmhla ri boireannach eile. see.PST 1SG 3SG.M.ANA in.DEF the park with to woman other ‘I saw him in the park with another woman.’

In this use, the speaker subverts the typical P-effects associated with exempt anaphors, since everyone in the conversation knows their true (negative) feelings towards the pronoun’s referent. The use of exempt anaphors is similar to the English expression “my good friend,” which can be used earnestly (33) and sarcastically (34):

(33) My good friend John made a surprise visit yesterday and we had a blast catching up!

(34) Today my good friend John spilled coffee on my desk and talked over me in our afternoon meeting.

In fact, Charnavel (2020:167) uses this type of paraphrase to diagnose exempt anaphora, arguing that French cher ‘dear’ identifies empathy loci. To summarize, use
of exempt anaphors canonically indicates positive appraisal of the pronoun’s referent, although speakers can play with expectations and use these pronouns sarcastically when talking about someone who they are not on good terms with.

I argue that P-effects associated with exempt anaphors result from the perspective taking that they trigger. This type of appraisal is not specific to competition between emphatic pronouns and exempt anaphors in Scottish Gaelic, so it should not be a language-specific phenomenon. However, to my knowledge, such P-effects have not been documented for exempt anaphors in other languages. I cannot provide a full cross-linguistic analysis here, though I have two suggestions about why P-effects are not yet reported. First, exempt anaphors have a limited syntactic distribution in many languages, which makes studying their pragmatics more challenging. Because exempt anaphors surface in syntactically marked positions and are infrequent in many languages, it is more difficult for speakers to have firm judgements about their appraisal effects. Second, the P-effect triggered by exempt anaphors is subtle, making it easy to miss when not explicitly studying appraisal. P-effects are not the same as politeness in the sense of languages with a T-V distinction; because they arise as conventional implicatures based on perspective taking, P-effects are more varied, registering with some speakers as politeness but with others as friendliness. Although more work is needed, these suggestions offer one way to integrate the Scottish Gaelic pattern into the larger typology of exempt anaphora and appraisal.

3.4 N-effects are actually not-P-effects

As discussed in Sect. 2.4, Scottish Gaelic N-effects cannot be attributed to differences in the pronouns’ referential potential or merely to a difference in size between them. In this way, the existing referent-based and structure-based accounts of pronominal competition cannot capture the Scottish Gaelic pattern.

Rather, I propose that the apparent N-effect arises as a conversational implicature from a speaker’s choice not to use a focused exempt anaphor, which is associated with positive appraisal. Exempt anaphors require the speaker to present the utterance from the first person perspective of the antecedent of \( \text{pro}_{\text{log}} \). Their use, therefore, signals a willingness on the part of the speaker to take the perspective of the pronoun’s referent, which shows respect, proximity, and friendliness. In contexts where both emphatic and anaphoric pronouns are allowed, a speaker has a choice; they can use either a focused exempt anaphor, which triggers perspective taking and highlights alternatives to the chosen perspective holder, or an emphatic pronoun, which simply invokes alternatives. When a speaker chooses to use an emphatic pronoun rather than an anaphor, there is a conversational implicature that the speaker is not willing to adopt the referent’s perspective. In this way, the apparent N-effect associated with emphatic pronouns is derived from the absence of a P-effect triggered by the use of exempt anaphors.\(^{15,16}\)

\(^{15}\) A reviewer asks about the extent to which the focus alternatives component of emphatic pronouns relates to the derivation of N-effects. Focus alternatives are compatible with negative appraisal, but are not inherently negative. This is evidenced by the fact that N-effects go away in the absence of competition, though the semantics of emphatic pronouns remains the same.

\(^{16}\) A reviewer points out two predictions of this analysis, which, unfortunately, cannot be tested. First, emphatic pronouns should not give rise to N-effects when competing with plain anaphors, since plain
Evidence that these N-effects are conversational implicatures comes from the fact that they are reinforceable and cancellable. When the sentences in (20)–(22) contain an emphatic pronoun, they can be followed by an overt reinforcement of the N-effect (a) or a cancellation of this negative appraisal (b):

(35) \textit{Chaidh a h-uile duine dhan taigh-dhealbh, fiù 's ise.} ‘Everyone went to the movies, even her.’
   a. Chan eil mi dèidheil oirre.  
      \textit{NEG be.PRS 1SG fond at.3SG.F}  
      ‘I'm not fond of her.’
   b. Ach bha math a faicinn, bha i gu math snog.  
      but \textit{be.PST good 3SG.F see.VN be.PST 3SG.F quite nice}  
      ‘But it was good to see her, she was quite nice.’

(36) \textit{Chan e, rinn esan a’ chèic.} ‘No, he made the cake.’
   a. Cha toil leam Calum, tha e mòr e fhèin.  
      \textit{NEG like with.1SG Calum be.PRS 3SG.M big 3SG.M.ANA}  
      ‘I don’t like Calum, he’s big on himself.’
   b. Ach bha Calum càirdeil an-dè.  
      but \textit{be.PST Calum friendly yesterday}  
      ‘But Calum was friendly yesterday.’

Reinforcing the N-effect triggered by use of the emphatic pronoun is not redundant, and cancelling this negative appraisal is not contradictory. These facts support the claim that N-effects arise via implicature from a speaker’s choice not to use an exempt anaphor.

A consequence of this not-P-effects analysis is that negative appraisal associated with pronouns likely has different sources across languages. In Scottish Gaelic, apparent N-effects exist alongside P-effects. By contrast, Sichel and Wiltschko (2020:28) note that N-effects associated with demonstrative pronouns do not have a positive counterpart in German or Hebrew (or, potentially, cross-linguistically). Even though demonstrative pronouns indicate negative appraisal, personal pronouns do not indicate positive appraisal. Comparison with Scottish Gaelic shows that pronoun competition can have superficially similar outcomes across languages with very different root causes. In fact, my analysis makes a typological prediction. If a language has pronominal P-effects and competition involving this pronoun, then it should also show N-effects, since the choice not to convey proximity or friendliness is inherently negative. However, if a language has pronoun competition that derives N-effects, then

anaphors are not associated with positive appraisal (Sect. 3.3). However, plain anaphors and emphatic pronouns do not alternate in Scottish Gaelic due to Condition B. For instance, plain anaphors alternate with pronouns in English reciprocal possessives (e.g. \textit{They saw each other’s/their pictures}), yet Scottish Gaelic uses a unique construction for this purpose (i.e. \textit{a chèile ‘each other’}) rather than the plain anaphor. Second, N-effects should disappear in contexts where only unfocused exempt anaphors and emphatic pronouns are allowed because the focus contribution of the emphatic pronoun should be sufficient to choose this form. However, such contexts do not exist. If a context is compatible with focus (i.e. it allows emphatic pronouns), it must be compatible with any kind of focus—including focused exempt anaphors. In this way, it is impossible to build a context that allows only unfocused exempt anaphors alongside emphatic pronouns.
it does not necessarily have P-effects because not using a negative pronoun does not obligatorily signify positivity (as in German and Hebrew).

3.5 N-effects pattern differently for 1st vs. 2nd and 3rd person pronouns

This analysis—in which N-effects are derived as not-P-effects—predicts that 1st person pronouns should pattern differently than 2nd and 3rd person pronouns. I assume that sentences are evaluated from the first person perspective of the speaker by default. Given this, use of 1st person exempt anaphors does not trigger a change in perspective taking; they are always evaluated from the speaker’s perspective (at least in a language like Scottish Gaelic without indexical shift). I analyze P-effects as conventional implicatures dependent on this perspective shift, so they cannot arise with 1st person exempt anaphors. Since negative appraisal depends on the availability of P-effects, it also cannot be derived with 1st person pronouns. (37) schematizes this domino effect:

(37) 1st person pronouns:
No perspective shift $\rightarrow$ no P-effects $\rightarrow$ no N-effects

On the other hand, 2nd and 3rd person pronouns should cluster together, showing the types of not-P-effects analyzed here. Use of 2nd and 3rd person exempt anaphors involves a true perspective shift—from that of the speaker to that of the 2nd or 3rd person referent. This perspective shift generates P-effects, which enables N-effects to be derived for emphatic pronouns:

(38) 2nd and 3rd person pronouns:
Perspective shift $\rightarrow$ P-effects $\rightarrow$ N-effects

This prediction about the different behaviors of 1st vs. 2nd and 3rd person pronouns is upheld. 1st person emphatic pronouns and focused exempt anaphors are both common, for example surfacing in response to wh-questions (39) and with “only” (40):17

(39) Cò chaidh dhan a’ bhuth? ‘Who went to the store?’
Chaidh {#mi / mise / mi fhèin} dhan a’ bhuth.
go.PST 1SG 1SG.EM 1SG.ANA to.DEF the shop
‘I went to the shop.’

(40) Cha deach duine dhan a’ movies, ach {#mi / mise / mi fhèin}.
NEG.PST go.PST person to.DEF the movies but 1SG 1SG.EM 1SG.ANA
‘No one went to the movies, only me.’

In each of these examples, emphatic and focused exempt anaphoric pronouns are felicitous, making them prime competition contexts. However, there is no evidence of negative appraisal with emphatic pronouns or of positive appraisal with exempt

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17 It is worth mentioning that unfocused 1st person exempt anaphors seem uncommon, which might have a principled explanation. Because the perspective shift triggered by exempt anaphors is vacuous in the 1st person, these personal pronouns and unfocused exempt anaphors have the same semantic contribution. Given this, the structurally smaller personal pronoun should always be chosen over the unfocused exempt anaphor.
anaphors. Consultants do not report any sense of self-deprecation when the emphatic pronoun is used, nor do they suggest that the anaphor is kinder. The disappearance of these pragmatic effects with 1st person pronouns falls out of my analysis, since they hinge on a perspective shift that does not occur with 1st person pronouns.  

2nd person pronouns, on the other hand, show N-effects, since the pronoun-containing propositions are not inherently evaluated from the antecedent’s perspective. Consultants report that 2nd person emphatic pronouns are rude in contexts where focused exempt anaphors are also licensed. In (41) and (42), the emphatic pronoun is inappropriate to say to the referent’s face, since it is unfriendly and abrupt; rather, the speaker should use the exempt anaphor to maintain a good relationship with their addressee:

(41) Chunnaic mi a h-uile duine aig an taigh-dhealbh, fiù ‘s {#thu / see.PST 1SG the every person at the cinema even 2SG thusa / thu fhèin}.  
2SG.EM 2SG.ANA  
‘I saw everyone at the movies, even you.’

(42) An unexpected visitor walks into the room.  
Dè tha {thu / thusa / thu fhèin} a’ dèanamh ann seo?  
what be.PST 2SG 2SG.EM 2SG.ANA PROG do.VN at here  
‘What are you doing here?’

As with 3rd person pronouns, this negative appraisal stems from the speaker’s choice not to adopt the addressee’s perspective, leading via pragmatic reasoning to the conclusion that the speaker is unwilling to step into their addressee’s shoes.

4 Conclusion

This paper described the distribution of personal, emphatic, and (exempt) anaphoric pronouns in Scottish Gaelic and provided an analysis of their semantics. Personal pronouns are variables that denote individuals, while emphatic pronouns invoke focus alternatives and exempt anaphors force the speaker to evaluate the proposition from the first person perspective of the anaphor’s referent. Given these semantics, I offered a pragmatic analysis of competition between emphatic pronouns and focused exempt

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18 A reviewer notes that my analysis also predicts N-effects to disappear in non-de se attitude contexts. Exempt anaphors must be read de se in attitude contexts (Charnavel 2020:140). Emphatic pronouns, on the other hand, should not share this restriction. This leads to the prediction that emphatic pronouns should not trigger N-effects in non-de se attitude contexts, as there is an independent reason for choosing an emphatic pronoun over an exempt anaphor. At present, I do not have the data to test this prediction, but leave it open for future work.

19 I assume that competition here is between the emphatic pronoun and the focused exempt anaphor. As suggested in fn. 16, the acceptability of the emphatic pronoun indicates that the context is compatible with focus; it is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the exempt anaphor can be focused here. Personal pronouns do not participate in this competition, as described in Sect. 3.3.
anaphors, arguing that the negative appraisal associated with emphatic pronouns actually stems from the absence of positive appraisal. In this way, apparent N-effects in Scottish Gaelic are better characterized as not-P-effects. Use of exempt anaphors indicates respect for and proximity with the referent, since the speaker adopts their perspective; when a speaker chooses not to signal this perspective taking by using an emphatic pronoun, apparent negative appraisal results. This analysis shows that perspective taking is relevant in analyzing pronominal competition and its resulting pragmatic effects cross-linguistically. Such a perspective-based account enables the derivation of both P- and N-effects, whose coexistence in Scottish Gaelic highlights a typological asymmetry. N-effects can be basic—as in German and Hebrew—or they can be pragmatically derived—as in Scottish Gaelic. These two types of negative appraisal have superficially similar effects cross-linguistically, but their root cause differs quite substantially.

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Declarations

Ethics Approval  This project was conducted under the approval of the University of California, Berkeley’s Commiee for the Protection of Human Subjects (title: Documenting and analyzing Scoish Gaelic (Celtic), protocol number: 2019-05-12207).

Consent to Participate  All participants in this project provided written consent to participate.

Consent for Publication  All participants in this project provided written consent for the resulting data to be published.

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