DEMONSTRATIVES AS REFERRING EXPRESSIONS

Abstract: Our intention in this paper is to show reference realised by demonstrative forms in three different styles of written discourse: narrative stories (short stories and children’s stories), fairytales and biographies where their interpretation depends on the previous and the following text. The aim is to provide answers to the questions: a) which demonstrative forms are more frequent than the others, b) what is the nature of referents they refer to and c) what type of reference they establish and maintain in the three styles. As the analysis has shown, written discourse expresses a preference for the use of singular demonstrative forms, which are more frequently used than plural ones. Demonstrative forms may refer to animate and inanimate entities alike, the former of which being rare and confined to certain styles. Demonstrative forms establish several types of reference, while demonstrative determiners establish progressive, regressive, temporal and associative reference; demonstrative pronouns establish only progressive and regressive reference.

Keywords: demonstrative forms, reference, written discourse, English.

Introduction

In this paper we focus on demonstratives as referring expressions, that is, we discuss the nature of the entities they refer to and the type of reference they establish and maintain in different styles of written discourse. „There are two subcategories of demonstrative NPs. One consists of the demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these, and those)“, ... and the other of „NPs with a demonstrative determiner or ‘complex demonstratives’ as they are now frequently called“ (Abbott 2010:181). The primary referential role of both subcategories is to maintain a once established reference.
There is an overlap in meaning between the demonstrative determiner and the definite article, which makes them pragmatically interchagenable\textsuperscript{2} in certain contexts. They are close substitutes in reference maintenance despite the fact that \textit{this} refers to the things that are less distant, \textit{that} to the things that are more distant while „the definite article is quite neutral in showing distance,“ (Lyons 1975).

But it would be wrong to say that demonstrative forms are restricted to reference maintenance only. Under certain conditions demonstrative determiners can introduce an animate or inanimate entity into discourse, though it happens very occasionally in the parts of the texts that belong to a spoken situation, where the hearer is instructed to match the linguistic referent “with some identifiable object” (Hawkins 1978:12).

Demonstrative pronouns have the same ability of introducing entities into discourse but their reference to humans is restricted and also confined to the parts of the text related to dialogues in which the speaker addresses the hearers directly. Here, the function of a demonstrative pronoun becomes that of a subject that cataphorically introduces a new entity into discourse. In Halliday and Hasan’s terms (1976:63) demonstratives pronouns refer to human reference in „relational clauses of the equative type where one element is supplying the identification of the others“. In Quirk’s terms (1985:374), cases like these refer to situational reference, and they are often compared with other ‘pointing’ items, which also contrast in terms of ‘near’ and ‘distant’ reference, where the former refers to introducing someone and the latter to pointing out someone in a crowd.

One of the referential properties of demonstrative determiners is their ability to refer to temporal distance establishing in that way the type of reference Quirk (1985: 374) calls situational reference and we call temporal reference. The determiner \textit{this} in the noun phrase \textit{this} morning refers to ‘the morning of today’ and the determiner \textit{that} in \textit{that} morning refers to ‘the morning of a day some time ago’. In reference to time, \textit{this} is typically associated with ‘what is before us’, and \textit{that} with ‘what is behind us’. Accordingly, \textit{this Friday} means ‘the Friday to come’. Apart from situational reference (Quirk 1985: 345/5), demonstrative determiners may establish anaphoric (coreference to an earlier part of the discourse) and cataphoric reference (coreference to a later part of the discourse) or progressive and regressive reference as we will refer to them respectively.

\textsuperscript{2}Of course, there are contexts where demonstrative usage does not overlap with that of articles. According to Hawkins (1978) this happens in three situations: larger situation \textit{I’ll see this town clerk about it.} (said nowhere near the town clerk); introductory visible situation \textit{Here is/This is this goosh-injecting thyroid and associative anaphoric use \rightarrow I’ve just bought a book. This author is a friend of mine.}
Demonstrative pronouns have similar properties. Like demonstrative determiners, demonstrative pronouns may also express anaphoric and cataphoric reference (Quirk 1985). The ‘near’ demonstrative pronouns this/these, as Quirk argues, can have both anaphoric and cataphoric reference, while the ‘distant’ demonstratives that/those can have only anaphoric reference. The similar view that both this and that may corefer with elements in the preceding linguistic context, and that only this may corefer with elements in the following linguistic context is held by Lakoff (1974), and Halliday and Hasan (1976). We are going to disprove this argument by showing that that can also refer forward.

Some other studies on reference like that of Halliday, Hasan (1976) tried to find a connection between a style and the choice of a demonstrative form. The same authors argue that there are marked differences among different styles and varieties of English as regards their patterns of anaphoric usage. According to them (1976:61) „in narrative of a traditional kind such as children’s stories and ballads, that is used where, in conversational narrative, a speaker would tend to use this, conveying a sense of immediacy and also of solidarity with the hearer, of shared interest and attention“.

It is this complex nature of demonstrative forms in English that inspired us to do this study in which we explore their referential abilities in three different styles of written discourse.

**Metodology**

The texts we used for analysis were a selection of stories Interpreter of Maladies (IoM) by J. Lahiri (six stories), short stories for children Villainous Victorians (VV) by T. Deary (six stories), a selection of fairytales The Ugly Duckling and Other Fairy Tales (FT) by H.C. Andersen (six fairytales) and biographies (of six people). The total number of demonstrative forms analysed in this paper includes 340 demonstrative forms, 199 of which are demonstrative determiners and 141 demonstrative pronouns. Generally speaking, the highest number of demonstrative forms (211) is found in the corpus of short stories and the lowest (19) in biographies. Children’s stories contain 47 and fairytales 63 demonstrative forms.

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3 More information should be found in section Sources.
Results

In 25 examples out of a total of 199, demonstrative determiners maintain a once established reference and have the definite article as their antecedent (*the weavers*→ *these weavers, the books*→ *these books, the kids*→ *those criminal kids*). Yet, in a few number of cases the indefinite article acts as their antecedent as in:

1) Beyond the fields was a forest, and in this forest, there was a clear, blue lake. (FT, p. 4)

 According to Chesterman (1991:49), the explanation for this use of a demonstrative determiner could be found in Hawkins' matching constraint for demonstratives.4 „Being a stronger constraint than locatability, it seems to focus attention on the referent in isolation from its surroundings: the emphasis is on the feature [ + proximate], which takes priority here as the previous mention is so close. The acceptability of this will therefore decrease as the distance between it and the previous mention increases“ (Chesterman 1991: 53).

 Though rarely regarded as a means of introducing a new entity into discourse, demonstrative determiners may actually introduce a new entity into discourse under the circumstances already described:

2) "Hey, do you mind stopping the car. I just want to get a shot of this guy." Mr. Kapasi pulled over to the side of the road as Mr. Das took a picture of a barefoot man... (IoM, p. 33)

The data analysis has shown that singular demonstrative determiners, *this* and *that* in equal amounts, occur three times more frequently than plural ones. More details on their occurrence across styles are given in the tables in the Discussion section.

In all analysed styles of written discourse, demonstrative determiners refer mainly to inanimate entities. However, they can refer to animate entities, though it occurs in a few number of examples which include 4 examples in short stories (out of a total of 135), 5 examples in children's stories (out of a total of 21), and 11 fairytale examples (out of a total of 33). Demonstrative determiners do not refer to animate entities at all in biographies.

When used to refer, demonstrative determiners establish four different types of reference: progressive, regressive, temporal, and associative reference.

The most common type of reference demonstrative determiners establish is progressive reference. All demonstrative determiners (*this, that, these, those*) can

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4According to the same author demonstratives indicate a matching constraint rather than a location constraint.
establish this type of reference, but the determiner *this* is predominant (for it establishes progressive reference in 66 examples out of 116) particularly in short stories, fairytales and biographies. Progressive reference is established in children’s stories too, but the reference made here is mainly realised by plural determiners *those* and *these*:

3) *The kids* learned maths and English and so on but they did not learn speaking and listening skills like they do in British schools today. What a shame! Imagine some of the true stories *those criminal kids* could have told … (VV, p. 40)

Unlike progressive reference determiners, which refer backward, regressive reference determiners refer forward to things that are to be mentioned after the demonstrative. Regressive reference is established only in short stories, mainly by determiners *this* and *that*:

4) Each time he thought of *that moment: the last moment he saw Shoba pregnant.* (IoM, p. 11)

Demonstrative determiners are combined with nouns such as *time, year, summer, evening* etc to show whether something is near or distant in time establishing temporal reference. This type of reference is usually realised by the singular demonstrative determiner *that* but it can be realised by other demonstratives as well. Temporal demonstrative reference is a frequent occurrence in short stories (27 examples out of 36 examples are found in the short stories corpus) but this type of reference also occurs in other styles. The following example is excerpted from children’s stories:

5) Robert was only 61 years old in 1837—quite wrinklie *at that time.* (VV, p. 7)

Demonstrative determiners which presuppose that the interlocutor/listener will be able to establish an associative relation between the antecedent, which is usually a verb phrase (*was dismissed*), and the noun phrase that follows it (*this dismissal*) establish associative reference:

6) … *he was dismissed* in 1849 on account of political changes. *This dismissal* led to a period of hardship… (N. Hawthorne biography)

Associative reference can be established by all determiners, but for the most part it is established by determiner *that*, principally in short stories. It is interesting that this type of reference does not occur in fairytales. The reason for this might be sought in the nature of the fairytale itself and its audience for whom relations of this kind might be difficult to understand.
Demonstrative pronouns have the same form as demonstrative determiners and can be singular (*this*/*that*) or plural (*these*/*those*). Like demonstrative determiners, demonstrative pronouns may introduce an entity into discourse. This also occurs rarely, in 5 examples out of a total of 141, always in dialogues, where the hearer has to match the linguistic referent “with some identifiable object” Hawkins (1978:12):

7) Do you want to know the woman who's fainted? (VV, p. 50)

*That's Michael Barrett's girlfriend...*

All styles of written discourse analysed in this paper show preference for singular pronoun forms. In 103 examples out of a total of 141, demonstrative pronouns are used in the form of singular. Demonstrative pronouns show several distinctive characteristics:

The singular form refers back to the whole text previously mentioned in 39 examples out of a total of 103 examined:

8) I never liked him much. Thank you Frederick, I think we might have guessed *that*. (VV, p. 43)

The singular form may refer forward to establish regressive reference as in (9) and (10). The latter disproves some earlier theories on the use of this distant demonstrative pronoun (see Introduction):

9) Somehow, without saying anything, it had turned into *this*. Into an exchange of confessions — the little ways they'd hurt or disappointed each other, and themselves. (IoM, p. 16)

(10) "Let's do *that,*" she said suddenly. "Do what?" "Say something to each other in the dark." (IoM, p. 13)

Demonstrative pronouns may refer to plural referents (11) and plural forms can also refer to a whole range of previously mentioned things that have plural-like characteristics (12). Yet, the latter is the exception rather than the rule:

11) He had never admired the backs of his wife's legs the way he now admired *those* of Mrs. Das ... (IoM, p. 60)

12) You should learn how to do something important like stretching your back, purring or laying eggs. *Those* are the only things that matter in the world. (FT p. 10)
Discussion

Table 1 Distribution of demonstrative forms (short stories)

| Demonstrative determiners | Demonstrative pronouns |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Animate                   | Inanimate              |
| This                      | These                  | This | These | This | These |
| 2                         | 0                      | 50   | 13    | 35   | 3     |
| That                      | Those                  | That | Those | That | Those |
| 1                         | 1                      | 53   | 15    | 33   | 4     |

Table 1 shows the data collected from the corpus of short stories, where demonstrative determiners are used almost two times more often than demonstrative pronouns. The only determiner that does not refer to animate entities is the plural determiner *these*. As the figures show, singular determiners refer to inanimate entities three times more often than plural ones. This style of written discourse has a preference for singular pronouns that are ten times more frequently used than plural ones.

Table 2 Distribution of demonstrative forms (children's stories)

| Demonstrative determiners | Demonstrative pronouns |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Animate                   | Inanimate              |
| This                      | These                  | This | These | This | These |
| 1                         | 2                      | 7    | 3     | 13   | 1     |
| That                      | Those                  | That | Those | That | Those |
| 0                         | 2                      | 4    | 2     | 12   | 0     |

Table 2 shows data collected from the corpus of children's stories, where demonstrative determiners and demonstrative pronouns make reference in an almost equal number of examples. The demonstrative determiner *that* is the only demonstrative determiner which does not make reference to animate entities in this style of written discourse. Singular determiners refer to inanimate entities two times more often than plural ones. This type of written discourse prefers the use of singular demonstrative pronouns *this* and *that* which maintain reference in almost all analysed examples.

Table 3 Distribution of demonstrative forms (fairytales)

| Demonstrative determiners | Demonstrative pronouns |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Animate                   | Inanimate              |
| This                      | These                  | This | These | This | These |
| 5                         | 1                      | 10   | 3     | 14   | 0     |
Table 4 shows the data collected from the corpus of biographies, where demonstrative determiners and demonstrative pronouns establish and maintain reference in an almost equal number of examples. In this style of written discourse, demonstrative determiners do not refer to animate entities. When they refer to inanimate entities, they do it with singular forms, which are two times more frequent than plural ones. The most frequent demonstrative pronoun is the pronoun *this* while pronouns *that* and *these* are not used here.

**Conclusion**

Performing their referential function, demonstrative determiners refer to animate and inanimate entities alike but their reference to animate entities occurs only in one-tenth of analysed examples. The biography is the only style of written discourse in which demonstrative determiners do not refer to animate entities.

Seventy-two percent of demonstrative determiners occur in the singular form, which makes it the dominant form in this type of discourse.

When making reference, demonstrative determiners primarily make a progressive reference but they can establish and maintain other types of reference such as regressive, temporal and associative. All demonstrative determiners may establish a
progressive reference but in a great number of examples it is established by singular determiner *this*, particularly in short stories.

The greatest number of examples of regressive, temporal and associative reference is also found in short stories. Regressive reference is established by singular determiners *that* and *this*, temporal reference by the demonstrative determiner *that* and one of the following nouns: *evening, year, afternoon*, while associative reference is established by all determiners, but in a good number of cases the singular determiner *that* establishes this type of reference. In the corpus of fairytales we found no examples of associative reference.

As the results show, demonstrative pronouns mainly refer to inanimate entities. When they refer to humans their use is restricted and confined to the parts of the text related to dialogues where the speaker addresses the hearers directly. Eighty percent of demonstrative pronouns are singular. Demonstrative pronouns primarily make progressive reference but they can make regressive reference too. Like progressive reference, regressive reference is also established by singular pronouns *that* and *this*.

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Jelena V. Šajinović Novaković
Univerzitet u Banjoj Luci
Filološki fakultet

POKAZNI OBLICI KAO REFERENCIJALNI IZRAZI

Rezime

Cilj ovog rada je da pokaže referenciju ostvarenu pokaznim oblicima u tri stila pisanog diskursa: pripovijetkama, bajkama i biografijama, gdje tumačenje pokaznih oblika zavisi od prethodnog i potonjeg teksta. Namjera nam je da istražimo koji se pokazni oblici koriste češće u odnosu na ostale, kakva je priroda referenata na koje upućuju i koju vrstu referencije pri tome uspostavljaju. Prema podacima iz analiziranog korpusa, pisani diskurs pokazuje sklonost ka pokaznim oblicima singulara, koji se češće koriste od oblika plurala. Pokaznim se oblicima uglavnom upućuje na nežive referente, dok se upućivanje na žive referente vrši u daleko manjem broju slučajeva, pod
određenim uslovima i uz izuzetak biografija. Kada upućuju, pokazni determinatori uspostavljaju progresivnu, regresivnu, temporalnu i asocijativnu referenciju, a pokazne zamjenice samo progresivnu i regresivnu referenciju.

Ključne riječi: pokazni oblici, upućivanje, pisani diskurs, engleski jezik.

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