

Deictic, discourse deictic and anaphoric uses of demonstrative expressions in English

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1. Introduction

My major goal: to provide a principled means of distinguishing between the canonical **anadeictic** and **discourse-deictic** functions of demonstratives, both of which involve reference via the discourse context upstream.

2. Deixis, anadeixis, anaphora and the demonstratives

Deixis and *anaphora* are complementary discourse procedures which the user exploits in constructing, modifying and accessing the contents of mental models of an unfolding discourse represented in the minds of speaker and addressee (or writer and reader in the written form of language).

Deixis: serves prototypically to draw the addressee’s attention focus to a new object of discourse (or to a new aspect of an existing one) that is derived by default via the situational context of utterance – whose center point is the ‘here and now’ of the speaker’s verbal and non-verbal activity. Deixis under this view involves the use of the speech situation (the (deictic) *ground*, in Hanks’ 1992 terminology) to profile a *figure* (a new referent or a new conception of an existing referent within the discourse registry).

Anaphora: the occurrence of an anaphor is a signal to continue the existing attention focus established hitherto (or assumed to be so established); thus, the referents of (weakly stressed, phonologically non-prominent) anaphors are presupposed by the speaker to enjoy a relatively high degree of psychological salience or attention focus level for the addressee at the point in the text where these are used. Anaphora consists in the retrieval from within a given ground of an already existing ‘figure’, together with its ‘ground’, the anaphoric predication acting to extend that ground (see Kleiber 1994: Ch. 3).

Both anaphora and deixis operate at the level of memory organization, enabling the speaker to manage it by guiding the addressee’s processing of the incoming segments of a text (cf. also Ehlich, 1982: 325, 330).

- (1) “Deixis is a linguistic¹ means for achieving focusing of the hearer’s attention towards a specific item which is part of the respective deictic space”. (Ehlich, 1982: 325)

“Anaphora is a linguistic means for having the hearer continue (sustain) a previously established focus towards a specific item on which he had oriented his attention earlier”. (Ehlich, 1982: 330)

¹ I would take issue with Ehlich, however, on the implied restriction of deixis to expression via *linguistic* means (though this is no doubt a correct characterisation as far as anaphora is concerned). After all, deixis may well be realized via a gesture, or prosodically via a high pitch accent.

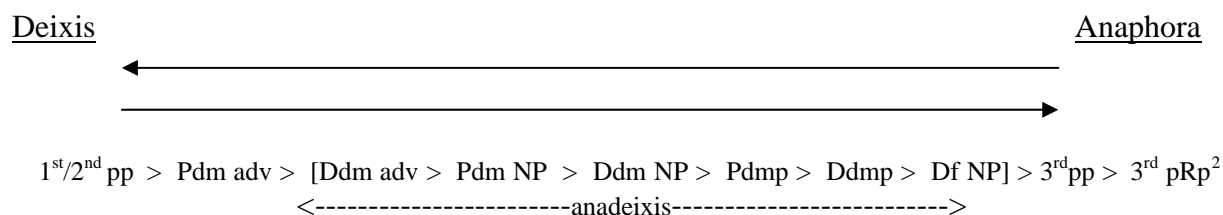


Figure 1: Scale of anaphoricity and deixicity coded by certain categories of indexical expressions

3. The deictic vs. “anadeictic” functioning of demonstrative expressions

3.1 The deictic use

- (2) **Little Miss Jocelyn** *10.30pm BBC3*
 “*This uproarious, if hit-and-miss, sketch show demonstrates how BBC3 is nurturing an impressive comic talent...*” (“Little Miss Jocelyn”, *10.30pm BBC3*, by Geoff Ellis, *Radio Times*, 19-25/08/06, p. 76: first sentence of text)
- (3) a “(...) The top [of the bikini worn by Ursula Andress in the James Bond film *Dr No*] I know *this* was the 1960s and they were playing it safe, but the top has far too much fabric...” (“Bikini Babes”, by Gok Wan, *Radio Times*, 19-25/08/06, p. 20)
- b “Less rain where you see *this sign*” (Picture of M-B trademark: steel tripod set in a circle, under which is the caption “Mercedes Benz”). (Advertisement for Mercedes Benz, *Radio Times*, 19-25/08/06, p. 140)

3.2 The “anadeictic” use

- (4) “I noted with smug satisfaction that I own copies of 20 of the 25 films in your “How to be a film buff” feature (22 July), and generally agreed with the list. But I was staggered to see *Armageddon* included. Was it there for a joke, or a dare?
 I rate *that film* as one of the most laughably bad I’ve ever seen, with its corn, abuse of the laws of physics, slow-motion shots of US “heroes” trudging purposefully, script straight from the Big Book of Clichés, poor music, cartoon characterisation and sheer implausibility. I could probably list 1,000 films that should be on *that list* rather than *Armageddon*, but will restrain myself to one: *Touch of Evil*.” (Ian Honest, Hessele, East Riding of Yorkshire, Letter to *Radio Times*, 29/07-4/08/06, p. 136)
- (5) “Originally written and read by their author Alan Bennett (...) for TV, these autobiographical stories work so much better on the radio. He re-recorded them for Radio 4 in just one day back in 2000 with the then producer and now head of programmes at BBC 7, Mary Kalemkerian. *These snapshots of his childhood growing up in Leeds* are delivered in that quietly spoken voice, where his pauses are just as powerful as the words that led up to or followed them...” (“**Choices**. Telling Tales” (Mon-Fri 11.30 a.m./12 midnight BBC 7), *Radio Times* 29/07-4/08/06, p. 126)
- (6) a “At the end of *Hooligans* (2 August BBC1), an unedifying hour of English hooligan violence in Germany during this year’s World Cup, I waited for some comment or analysis. It wasn’t forthcoming.

² Key to the abbreviations used in Figure 1: ‘1st/2nd/3rd pp’: “first/second/third person pronoun”; ‘P’: “proximal”; ‘D’: “distal”; ‘dm’: “demonstrative”; ‘adv’: “adverb”; ‘NP’: “noun phrase”; ‘p’: “pronoun”; ‘Df’: “definite”; ‘R’: “reflexive”.

Unless we understand the causes of *this behaviour* we can't hope to deal with it. In spite of their bravado, *these young men* are deeply unhappy..." ("Mindless spectacle?", Letter from Peter Galbraith, Leicester, *Radio Times*, 19-25/08/06, p. 137)

- (6) b "(...) I caught up with McCoy recently, and we'll be hearing from *that conversation* in a few moments..." (Programme devoted to the pianist McCoy Tyner, *BBC Radio 3*, 2002)

4. The discourse-deictic use of demonstratives

Discourse deixis: contextual pointing to a part of the recently constructed discourse representation, and building it into a discourse entity which may subsequently be retrieved via an anaphor³. In this type of contextual reference, reader or addressee must create a referent from within the immediate discourse context.

In the **anadeictic** use of demonstratives, seen in §3.2, on the other hand, there is an identifiable entity within the discourse representation upstream of the point of occurrence whose saliency level (whether high or medium) the demonstrative reference can boost. This "boosting" function is a reflex of the proximal or distal (pointing) character of the demonstrative, and the anaphoric function corresponds to the maintenance of the reference involved.

- (7) "In the fury of a force-ten storm, 30ft waves lift and toss a fragile-looking fishing boat on churning seas as skipper Jimmy Buchan and his crew frantically bid to free their nets from the seabed before their boat sinks beneath the waves pounding on its stern. Should *that* happen, there'll be no survival beyond a few minutes in the near-freezing North Sea..." (Article "Hell on high water", *Radio Times* 29/07-4/08/06, p. 14)
- (8) "There's a word for people who keep obsessive records about how often they've mowed their lawn in the past 25 years. But one listener to last year's *The First Cuckoo and the Last Swallow* on Radio 4 counted *those boring Sundays* and has now proved to be one of the many extremely important contributors to a nationwide nature diary..." ("Return of the First Cuckoo" (3.45pm R4), *Radio Times* 5-11/08/06, p. 132)
- (9) "We all have our own ways of filling idle moments. For instance, I revise my eight records ready for the call from *Desert Island Discs*. Does Tony Hancock's *The Radio Ham* count? Is Joy Division's *Love Will Tear Us Apart* just too depressing a soundtrack for a stranded, solitary life? At other times, I refine the title of my autobiography. Until recently, it was *EastEnders Poisoned my Soul*, but lately I've decided upon *TV Light Entertainment Almost Ruined My Life*.
I know *this statement* to be true, having watched the excellent *The Story of Light Entertainment* (Saturday BBC2)..." (Article "Slight entertainment", *Radio Times* 29/07-4/08/06, p. 31)
- (10) a "*Buoyant tax revenues from North sea oil won't last for ever - what will Mr. Lawson* [at the time, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer] *do THEN?*"
L* H*L%⁴

³ See Webber (1991), Bühler (1982), Fillmore (1997: 103-6), Diessel (2006: 475-6), Himmelmann (1996), Guillot (2006) and what Lyons (1977: 668) calls "impure textual deixis".

⁴ I use Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg's (1990) notation system for intonation here, as follows: 'L' = "low pitch syllable", 'H' = "high pitch syllable"; '*' = "accented syllable"; '%' = "boundary syllable". See Ladd (1996) for further details of this "phonological" approach to intonation; see also Hirschberg (2004) for a more wide-ranging discussion, as well as Cornish (2006) on the effects of prosody on the reference potential of 3rd person and demonstrative pronouns in English.

(*The Listener*, 17 January, 1985; Example (4.6) in Cornish, 1999: 122)⁵

b ...#What will Mr Lawson DO *then* ?
H*L L%

(11) a [Interview with Jonathan Porritt, then leader of the environmental pressure group *Friends of the Earth*, by Nicholas Witchell, *BBC Radio 5*, 16 October, 1994]

NW: *do you think that he* [‘Prince Charles’] *will become a GREEN monarch?*

JP: *well, yes, but I don’t think that everyone necessarily subscribes to THAT.*
L L* L H*L%

NW: -- *what, that he will ever one day beCOME king?*

JP: *yes.* (Example (2.8a) in Cornish, 1999: 30)

b ...JP: #...well, yes, but I don’t think that everyone necessarily subSCRIBes to *it*
L H*L L L%

c Presupposition structure of the complement clause in line 1 in (11a): “that Prince Charles [will] become an X monarch”

Questioned predicate: “X = “environmentally-conscious”?”

Effect on this presupposition structure created by the interpretation of *THAT* within its predicational context: “that Prince Charles [will] become monarch”

5. Conclusion

See Table 1 below for the main parameters in terms of which the canonical **anadeictic** and **discourse-deictic** uses of demonstratives in English may be distinguished:

Table 1 : « Anadeictic » uses of demonstratives in English

Parameters	Canonical anadeictic use	Discourse-deictic use
Referent is a determinate entity already bearing a minimal level of saliency	+	-
Requires understander to operate on immediate discourse context, in order to construct a new discourse entity	-	+
Possible introduction by a variety of syntactic types of antecedent-trigger	-	+
Demonstrative expression can be replaced by a definite NP where denotation of NP’s lexical component is presupposed	+	-
Demonstrative substitutable by an unaccented 3 rd person pronoun	+?	-

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⁵ The capitals with which the word *THEN* is written here are due to me.

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