

# Understanding Complex Demonstratives Via Their Content, Context and Referent

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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present a method or a device to facilitate the process of understanding complex demonstratives. This is transpired by procedures involved investigating, elaborating and comparing some constructions and aspects of expressions that connect and affect the meaning of complex demonstratives. Although discrete tokens of demonstratives have a greater tendency than other expressions to be conraindexed they may be thought of as providing a class of disposable variables which are always ready to be assigned a fresh referent. Since understanding complex demonstratives involves both linguistically-given elements, and extra nonlinguistically-given elements (contextually determined elements), thus the material presented in this paper is founded on semantic and pragmatic concepts. The paper is hoped to present an assistant device to the learners of English language to lead them to clear understanding and correct use of complex demonstratives.

## 1.Introduction

Complex demonstratives are linguistic expressers of the form (this N/NP) or (that N/NP), example include "this book" and "that girl in a blue scarf". They are called complex demonstratives to distinguish between them and the simple demonstratives this and that; and to contrast them (complex demonstratives) with simple pronouns that have demonstrative uses such as 'he' and 'she'.

Speakers use complex demonstratives to refer to objects. In that respect they are similar to simple demonstratives. Complex demonstratives also resemble quantifier phrases in syntactic form, like "every table" and quantifier phrases do not refer to individuals. Hence, some theorists have argued that complex demonstratives are singular and others have argued that they are quantifier phrases.

Complex demonstratives are singular terms, they can give rise to genuinely

singular or genuinely quantificational truth conditions according to context. They are directly referential. their semantic contents, in contexts, are the individuals to which they refer. Davies (1982), McGinn (1981), and Larson and Segal (1995) assign extensions (or referents) to complex demonstratives that are appropriate for genuine singular terms. But they assume Davidsonian semantic frameworks that do not assign semantic contents to complex demonstratives, so their work is neutral on direct reference (Braun2003:57-99). Kaplan (1989:524, 527) briefly mentions complex demonstratives and suggests that they are directly referential. Schiffer (1981), Recanati (1993), and Perry (1997, 2000) presuppose that the semantic contents of complex demonstratives are simply objects. Richard (1993) presents a view on which the semantic content of "that N" consists of an object together with the property expressed by N. Dever (2001) presents a similar view, paired with an unorthodox syntactic theory. These disagreements about complex demonstratives create a sort of confusion and ambiguity in understanding and using complex demonstratives.

## 2- Theories of Complex Demonstratives

Since complex demonstratives have been defined as expression of the form (that N) or (this N) where N is a common noun phrase; then many theories of complex demonstratives are classified according to their semantic role they attribute to common noun phrase. These theories are divided into three types.

### 2-1 Minimal Theories

This sort is called minimal theories because they assign a minimal, or non-

existent semantic role to the common noun phrase. This type suggests that the common noun phrase in a complex demonstrative does not play a semantic role in determining the referent of the complex demonstrative. Depending on this concept, a person could be the referent of an utterance of 'that crook' even if she/he is not a crook. The other concept of this theory is that the content of the common noun phrase is not a constituent of the content of the complex demonstrative, but the content of an utterance of a complex demonstrative is just its referent. Thus, the common noun phrase serves merely as a pragmatic cue that helps the listener to estimate what the speaker's intended referent is (Larson and Segal 1995).

### 2-2 Intermediate Theories

This type of theories advocates the idea that the common noun phrase assists in specifying the referent; but its content does not appear as a constituent of the complex demonstrative content. According to this concept a person must be a crook in order to be the referent of an utterance of 'that crook', but the property of being a crook is not a constituent of complex demonstrative's content and this content is just its referent (Braun 1994).

### 2-3 Maximal Theories

These theories suggest that the common noun phrase assists in specifying the referent and at the same time its content appears as a constituent of complex demonstratives content. Complex demonstratives are considered quantifiers phrases that are comparable to definite descriptions (Richard1993);(King2000).

Advocates of minimal theories describe cases in which a speaker apparently refers to a person with an utterance of 'that crook', even though the person is not a crook. But advocates of intermediate and maximal theories reply by distinguishing between speaker reference and semantic reference (Kripke 1977:6-27): they say that, in such cases, the speaker refers to the non-crookish person, though the complex demonstrative itself does not semantically refer to that person in that context.

Some advocates of maximal theories claim that sentences like the following are logically or analytically true.

(1) If that crook exists, then that crook is a crook.

Whereas, this would not be so on minimal and intermediate theories, because those theories say that the content of the common noun phrase is not part of the content of the proposition expressed.

Advocates of intermediate views respond by admitting that (1) is true in all contexts ignoring reference failure. But they claim that this is not because the content of 'crook' is part of the content of the complex demonstrative. Rather, (1) is true in all contexts because 'that crook' refers in a context to a person only if the relevant person is a crook in the world of that context. Therefore, if the antecedent of (1) is true in a context, then so is its consequent.

Intermediate theorists point out that a sentence like :

(2) Necessarily: if that crook exists, then that crook is a crook.

seems to be false in many contexts, which seems contrary to maximal theories.

To avoid this difficulty, Maximal theorists may add rigidifying devices such as 'actually' to the contents of complex demonstratives.

There are some points of view hold that complex demonstratives are quantifier phrases. Neale (1993, 2004), and King (2001) endorse views of this sort. On King's view, the semantic content of sentence like:

(3) That crook should be put in jail.

in a context in which "Fred" is the speaker and is perceiving "Barney" and believes him to be a crook, is a proposition that is necessarily equivalent to the semantic content of (4) in that same context.

(4) The thing that is actually a crook and identical with Barney should be put in jail.

The complex demonstrative does not refer to Barney in Fred's context, but it does determine or denote Barney in Fred's context. King holds that quantification into complex demonstratives, as in:

(5) Every university professor cherishes that first publication of hers.

presents difficulties for the intermediate view of complex demonstratives that are considered above, because the semantic content in a context of the complex demonstrative that appears in (5) is not an individual (Braun 2007:1-22).

### 3- The Role of Complex Demonstratives in Communication

Having a clear idea on the role of complex demonstrative in communication, of the propositions

expressed by complex demonstrative utterances will be apparent.

Most of the scholars' arguments concerning this subject agree, either tacitly or overtly, on one underlying principle, is that whatever the meaning of complex demonstratives may be it must be analyzed along more than one dimension.

According to character-theories like Braun (1994:193-219) and Borg (2000:225-44), a satisfactory account recognizes the deferent contributions that complex demonstratives make to character and content; while quantificationalists like (King 2001), complex demonstratives are semantically chosen to introduce into propositional content not just the property expressed by their nominal, but also a further property determined by context.

According to hybridists like Richard (1993:207-230) and Neale (1999:35-82), complex demonstratives contribute both the property expressed by their nominal and their referent to propositional content to the content of different propositions.

For King, uses of complex demonstratives can be backed by either acquaintance or description, in King's terms by (perceptual intentions or descriptive intentions). Understanding complex demonstratives involves grasping both that what is being talked about, in the appropriate sense of talked about, is an "F" and that there is some other way in which the "F" being talked about is to be thought of, the property that saturates King's second argument place. For King, it is typical of uses of complex demonstratives backed by descriptive intentions that the property which saturates the second argument

position, the argument position reserved for first-order properties determined by speaker intention, is redundant.

In the following sentence if (Danielle) is imagined to be the person who knows (on purely general grounds) that there is currently one and only one person swimming across Lake Tahoe; then intending to talk about whoever it is that is currently swimming across Lake Tahoe, Danielle utters:

(6) That person swimming across Lake Tahoe now must be cold.

The first argument position (on King's analysis) is saturated by the property expressed by the nominal (i.e. the property of being a person swimming across Lake Tahoe now).

But, that is also the content of the descriptive intention which backs up Danielle's use of the complex demonstrative: her intention is to talk about whoever has the property expressed by the nominal. It is therefore the case that the second argument position is saturated with just the same property as saturates the first argument position. The speaker's intention is (not always but it can be) thus redundant.

Hence complex demonstratives are communicative tools designed for a particular purpose, that purpose being to guide the hearer's interpretive process in (at least) two ways. If the speaker only has one way of thinking of whatever she wants to talk about, then it would seem that in the sentence above, a complex demonstrative is the wrong tool for the job or purpose.

The following example that seems to be parallel to (6):

(7) That oldest man in the world must be worried about mortality.

Here, as in (6), the speaker can (self-evidently) believe on purely general grounds that there is one and only one oldest man in the world, giving any story on the semantics of superlatives. And here, again, the speaker's intention seems redundant, since she wants to talk about whoever is the oldest man in the world. And yet (7) seems infelicitous in a way that (6) isn't.

Two possible contexts can be outlined in:

(8) That dog with three legs is called 'Lucky'

This sentence might be uttered where the first context, "Janet" and "John" are standing in a room full of dogs, all but one of which have the standard canine allocation of legs. She turns to "John" and utters (8).

In the second context "Janet" and "John" are again in a room full of dogs, but now all of the dogs are three-legged. Pointing at a particular dog across the room she utters (8). There seems to be an intuitive difference between the work done by the nominal (dog with three legs) in these two contexts: in the first context, she is using the nominal not only to pick out which kind of thing she's talking about (she's talking about a dog), but also which individual within that kind she's talking about (the one with three legs). In the second context, by contrast, she is simply using the nominal to indicate which kind of thing she's talking about (she's talking about a dog with three legs), and John must turn to other, non-linguistic factors to establish which particular individual within this kind Janet is talking about (Janet's

demonstration is going to give him a big clue).

The distinction between Janet and John's two contexts clarifies that it does not always have to be a purely non-linguistic matter; sometimes the speaker can give the hearer information via her/his utterance that allows him either fully or partially to saturate this parameter.

So, returning to (8), in the first context, the property expressed by (dog), not (dog with three legs), will saturate the first parameter (the nominal parameter), and the property of having three legs will go some way towards saturating the second of the story. In a context such as this, however, where the speaker and the hearer are in an immediate perceptual relation with the object the speaker is intending to talk about, perceptual/causal properties of the referent will also enter into the saturation of the second parameter (Powell 2010:59-64).

Comparing an utterance of (8) in the first context to an utterance of (9):

(9) That professor who brought in the biggest grant in each division will be honored.

for which linguistically given material ('who brought in the biggest grant in each division') will entirely saturate the second argument position.

In the second context above, the nominal of (8), only goes

to identify the type of thing that "Janet" is intending to talk about; it is left to contextual indicators to determine which individual of that type she wants to talk about.

The property expressed by (dog with three legs) saturates just the first

parameter, with the second parameter left entirely to context, albeit a context manipulated by Janet's demonstration.

Reanalyzing (6) in comparison to (7) along the lines just sketched, it would seem that the kind of thing "Danielle" is intending to talk about is a person who is the one that swimming across Lake Tahoe now. In other words, the first parameter is saturated by the property of being a person, while the second is saturated by the property of being swimming across Lake Tahoe now. Both parameters are thus saturated. But in (7) there are no two properties that are separable in this way: the property of being the oldest man in the world is not the property of being both the oldest man and in the world. It is this that makes (7) infelicitous, because, contrary to King's account, the parameter which corresponds, on his story, to speaker intention, cannot be redundant: complex demonstratives are tools for picking things out via two or more distinct routes, and uses of complex demonstratives for which, as in (7), there is only one way of thinking of the speaker's intended referent, are thereby rendered infelicitous.

Hence complex demonstratives are designed in such a way that the hearer interpreting a complex demonstrative first goes to a class to which the thing talked about belongs, and then goes beyond that to discover which member of the class is being talked about. But of course for any utterance of (7), the nominal property will determine a unique individual, thus leaving the second parameter not doing any semantic work

over and above the work already done by the nominal.

Again this seems to go against the grain of complex demonstratives, although not as seriously as where there is no property to saturate the second parameter at all. Powell(2010:60-64) introduces terminology to distinguish that part of the nominal which goes to saturate King's first parameter, the part of the nominal which makes a complex demonstrative a complex demonstrative, and that optional part of the nominal which can go towards saturating King's second parameter. He proposes to call the former (a nominal sortal) and the latter (a nominal individuator).

Therefore complex demonstratives are communicative tools of a particular kind, they are tools for talking about individuals; given their meaning, they indicate that the individual in question is being thought of in at least two ways, firstly as a member of a particular class and then via some other route or routes that distinguish them from all other members of that class.

#### 4- Complex Demonstratives and Appositives

Much of the difficulty in producing an adequate account of demonstratives comes from the case of complex demonstratives.

Complex demonstratives are constructions which concatenate a demonstrative with an N' phrase, to create phrases such as:

(10) That man in the corner.

(11) Those admirers of Godard's early work.

Complex demonstratives thus, apparently represent the straddle that fills

up the gap between quantificational and referential noun phrases. On the one hand, they exhibit the same syntactic structure as quantificational noun phrases, combining a determiner with an N' serving as the restrictor on the quantifier. This similarity to quantificational noun phrases has led some to try to treat complex demonstratives quantificationally, either by taking 'that' and other demonstratives as quantifiers themselves or by taking such demonstratives to induce (actualized) definite descriptions. On the other hand, complex demonstratives clearly have some semantic allegiance with the (clearly referential) case of pure demonstratives, and continue to exhibit the rigidity characteristic of referential noun phrases. Thus in a sentence such as: (12) That man in the corner could have stayed home tonight. the phrase 'that man in the corner' continues to refer to the demonstrated man even with respect to worlds in which he is not in the corner; or even in which he is not a man, if there are such (Deversity 1991-1998:265-285).

#### 4-1 Conjoint Features of Complex Demonstratives and Appositives

Complex demonstratives share with appositives several features. Neither complex demonstratives nor appositives enter into scope interactions with other operators in the lexical context; both complex demonstratives and appositives allow only those forms of binding in which can operate cross-clausally; both complex demonstratives and appositives give rise to conflicted intuitions on truth value when the main claim is true but the

description contained in the complex demonstrative (appositional phrase) is inaccurate. Clearly, there is reason to suspect that the same semantic mechanisms are at work in both cases.

A sentence containing a complex demonstrative, such as:

(13) That student of Plato wrote several books.

can not be seen similar structurally to a sentence containing a quantified noun phrase, such as:

(14) Every student of Plato wrote several books.

but it is similar to a sentence containing an appositional phrase, such as:

(15) Aristotle, student of Plato, wrote several books.

A false analogy between the 'that' of complex demonstratives and the determiners of quantified noun phrases has made them to be treated as the same constructions, but in fact they employ radically different syntactic paradigms. A sentence with a complex demonstrative of the form like:

(16) That F is G.

Thus, expresses two propositions: the proposition that (that is G) and the proposition that (that is F). It does so by using a multi-headed phrase tree which has one S node linking the NP 'that' with the VP 'is G' and another S node linking that NP with the VP 'is F'. This position makes users of language able to explain people's conflicted intuitions on such sentences when the demonstrated object is G but not F, to explain the failure of scope interactions between complex demonstratives and other sentential operators, to explain the pattern of permissible binding into

complex demonstratives, and to provide a plausible syntactic model for complex demonstratives which respects their structured form while insisting that the core demonstrative 'that' serves the same function here as it does in the case of simple demonstratives. (Deversity1991-1998:265-285)

### 5-Singular Content and some Remarks on Pragmatics

Singular content is concerned by Kaplanian differentiation between possible-truth and truth-in-some-context for sentences containing complex demonstratives. Kaplan (1977) takes the semantic content of a demonstrative to be provided via a demonstration, but he(1989) retreats from this position:

In Demonstratives ... I claimed that the demonstration rather than the directing intention determined the referent I am now inclined to regard the directing intention, at least in the case of perceptual demonstratives, as criterial, and to regard the demonstration as a mere externalization of this inner intention. The externalization is an aid to communication, like speaking more slowly and loudly, but is of no semantic significance. (Kaplan 1989,582)

In sentences like :

(17) That spy is smart.

(18) Boris, being smart.

where the context *c* in which "Natasha" is the agent and "Boris" is the demonstratum, when "Boris" is supposed to be a spy in the world of context *c*; then the semantic content of 'that spy' in *c* is "Boris", and the semantic content of (17) in *c* is the singular proposition (18).

(18) is true at a world *w* if "Boris" is smart at *w*. It does not matter in the least whether Boris is a spy at *w*. Thus, the following sentence expresses a true proposition in "Natasha's" context *c*.

(19) Possibly: that spy exists but fails to be a spy.

The sentence embedded in (19), represented in sentence (20), expresses a false proposition or, at least, an untrue proposition at every context (in every structure), including Natasha's context.

(20) That spy exists but fails to be a spy.

Nonetheless, the proposition expressed by (10) in Natasha's context is true in the world of her context (Braun1996:145-173).

On the basis of singular content, complex demonstratives have the same syntactic form as standard quantifier phrases, and so they should be expected to behave syntactically like standard quantifier phrases.

King (2001:16-19) points to phenomena involving antecedent VP deletion and weak crossover to argue that complex demonstratives behave syntactically more like standard quantifier phrases than like proper names. This is consistent with the singular content theory, since it allows complex demonstratives to have the same syntactic form as standard quantifier phrases.

In some rather strong sense that Natasha may be committed to, so she might well assert or pragmatically convey the descriptive proposition semantically expressed by the sentence:

(21) The spy who is identical with Boris is smart.

Thus, when she assertively utters 'That spy is smart', she does not only assert its

semantic content, but probably also asserts or pragmatically conveys the propositions semantically expressed by (21) and 'Boris is a spy' (Braun1996:145-173).

## 6- Disanalogies Between Complex Demonstratives and Quantified Noun Phrases

Theorist attempts are continuous to develop an account of complex demonstratives which can respect the intuition that complex and pure demonstratives are of a class while explaining the syntactic form of complex demonstratives with its apparent appeal to a semantic role for demonstrative words quite different from that found in pure demonstrative cases.

The first step in meeting that challenge lies in arguing that quantificational noun phrases are not in fact completely the right syntactic model for complex demonstratives. While there is an apparent similarity between the two constructions, there are two important kinds of differences between them, differences lying at the intersection of syntax and semantics; and differences lying in the kind of binding the two constructions allow into the restrictor (Deversity1991-1998:267).

### 6-1 Differences Lying at the Intersection of Syntax and Semantics

These differences are represented in that claim that complex demonstratives, unlike quantificational noun phrases, do not engage in scope interactions. Ordinary multiple-quantifier sentences will not serve to establish this conclusion. A sentence such as:

(22) Every film critic loves that scene with Joseph Cotton.

admits of only one interpretation; while the related sentence with a quantificational noun phrase in place of the complex demonstrative admits of two as in:

(23) Every film critic loves some scene with Joseph Cotton.

This lack of ambiguity is to be expected of a quantifier which necessarily denotes a single object and is shared by the uncontroversial quantificational definite description as in:

(24) Every film critic loves the scene with Joseph Cotton.

(Deversity1991-1998:267-268)

In cases which serve to show that definite descriptions undergo scope interactions such as constrictions involving negation-containing monotone decreasing quantifiers like sentences:

(25) The king of France is not bald.

(26) Few Frenchmen have seen the king of France.

do not provide fully convincing arguments that complex demonstratives do not undergo scope interactions, since the lack of ambiguity of the corresponding sentences:

(27) That king of France is not bald.

(28) Few Frenchmen have seen that king of France.

is to be expected given via two cases; firstly when the two readings of (25),(26) above are distinguishable only in the case when there is no unique king of France (i.e., when the definite description fails to denote). Secondly when it represents a semantic feature of complex demonstratives in which they fail to denote, there is no proposition expressed

and thus no opportunity for two propositional readings with different truth conditions (Neale 1990:191-121).

The failing of complex demonstratives to manifest scope interactions can be declared in cases in which such demonstratives interact with intensional operators such as:

(29) That man in the corner could have stayed home tonight.

(30) Albert believes that upright citizen is a spy.

Each of the two examples above is unambiguous. So there is a considerable difficulty here facing the claim that complex demonstratives undergo scope interactions (Devesity 1991-1998:267-270).

In order to keep that claim stable, complex demonstratives should be held as quantifiers with an unaccountable tendency always to take wide scope. Thus, they fail to display the expected scope interactions of quantified noun phrases.

### 6-2 Differences Lying at the Kind of Binding the two Constructions Allow into the Restrictor

These kinds of differences concern the claim that complex demonstratives do not allow the kind of binding into restrictor that the quantified noun phrase allow consider the following sentences:

(31) Every man watched the movie he liked best.

(32) Every man watched several movies he had selected.

(33) Every man found few movies he liked.

In each of these cases; the second quantified noun phrase contains a pronoun (he) that acting as a variable

bound by the initial quantifier (every man).

In general a determiner can bind any kind of noun phrase, even the one that contains a free variable. Then, the resulting quantified noun phrase denotes will be dependent on the supplied value for that variable.

Thus, they do not allow binding into their restrictors hence following sentence is ungrammatical:

(34) Every boy read this book he liked.

If the complex demonstratives fall under the rule of quantified noun phrases, then the above sentence is unaccountably ungrammatical.

Some kinds of binding are permissible in complex demonstratives, thus pronouns can be easily allowed within a complex demonstrative bound by proper names external to the demonstrative. Thus, sentence (35) is perfectly interpretable and equivalent to sentence (36):

(35) Albert liked that movie he saw.

(36) Albert liked that movie Albert saw.

In a very limited sense, binding of pronouns can be allowed in complex demonstratives by quantifiers; thus the following sentence is interpretable:

(37) Several eyewitnesses described that assailant they saw.

however, it is interpretable only as:

(38) Several eyewitnesses described that assailant the eyewitnesses saw.

It is obvious that the complex demonstrative (that assailant they saw) cannot take on different referents for different eyewitnesses. Thus, two interrelated facts about binding into complex demonstratives are observed. Firstly, such binding cannot create

relativity in the referent of the complex demonstrative. It (the demonstrative) always refers to the same object, regardless of the quantificational behavior of the lexical context. Secondly, such binding is always of the cross-clausal rather than the intra-clausal sort (Devesity 1991-1998:272-273).

These two facts about binding provide further evidence for the claim that complex demonstratives are not best served by the quantified noun phrase.

### 7- Canonically Referring Complex Demonstratives

When the object demonstrated does not satisfy the noun phrase descriptive content, the proposition may or may not be expressed; for example:

(39) That knife is dirty. (Gesture at the speaker's fork)

In cases like this utterance no proposition is expressed, as it is argued by Braun (1994: 193-219), Borg (2000: 229-249) and Glanzberg and Siegel (2006: 1-42). But according to (Larson and Segal 1995:210-213) a proposition is expressed.

Although in such cases the object demonstrated is misdescribed, the propositional information can be picked up easily; to the effect that the demonstrated object has the property contributed by the verb phrase.

A proposition is indeed expressed in cases like this, but the exact details of what takes place will depend on whether or not the speaker actually thinks the (fork) in the sentence (39) is a (knife). If the speaker thinks that the fork is a knife (for example because tines are covered by a napkin, or because of some defect of

vision), then things are comparatively straightforward.

May be there are cases in which the speaker does not actually think that the fork in (39) is a knife. Therefore, the word knife has been used instead of fork due to a speech error. This kind of case can be clarified according to the possibility of undergoing the thoughts to different stage of speech production (Elbourne 2008:33-35). Thus, this kind of case presents a salient kind of crudity in the notion of proposition expressed.

If an utterance like (39) above is heard, in circumstances like those described, the hearer will have a clear intuition that the utterance is defective in some serious way. The conversation can continue after such an utterance, if the dialogist corrects the first speaker or just plays along; but, as Glanzberg and Siegel (2006: 1-426) point out, this does not mean that the original utterance is acceptable after all. The sense of serious deficiency can be felt, in effect, when the speaker intended to make a truth-evaluable claim but failed to do so. This leaves the fact that people who hear such utterances do extract propositional information from them. This can be explained easily by appealing the list of the speakers' intentions in such cases, who do, after all, wish to say something about the object they demonstrate. The hearer may presumably just overlooks the incorrect noun phrase descriptive content and treats the utterance as if it just contained a demonstrative with no associated noun phrase.

### 7-1 Stages of Speech Production

According to some theorists like (Fromkin 1973: 117-138, Garrett 1984:

172–193, Dell 1986: 93, 283–321, Leveth 1989 ) all models of speech production assume that there is a stage of conceptualization in which a thought is formulated in some non-linguistic medium (a conceptual system or language of thought). This stage is followed by a stage of formulation of the thought in language; and this in its turns followed by the actual utterance of the sentence.

The utterance of the sentence is accompanied by self-monitoring, a stage in which a person checks that his utterance matches his previous intentions (Levelt 1989). Some speech errors seem to involve a failure to select words in the linguistic formulation stage that accurately express the thought to be verbalized. For example, some errors involve uttering a semantically related word in place of the word that would accurately express the thought in question; sentence (39) if it were taken from real life, would be a typical example of this (Fromkin 1973,1988; Garrett 1988: 69–96). The speaker can be imagined trying to talk about forks, but mistakenly chooses the semantically related word knife in order to do so. The choice of the wrong word results from something going wrong in an unconscious search process that normally takes just a fraction of a second.

### 8- Distal and Proximal Demonstratives

In this section the differences in use between distal and proximal demonstrative terms are examined (e.g., singular “this” and “that”, and plural “these” and “those”).

The traditional approach assumes that the distal or proximal demonstrative merely reflects some feature of reality, (i.e., distance of the object to the speaker), whereas in essentially dynamic and action-oriented approach the difference between the two lies in what the speaker is doing, (i.e., the force or intensity with which the speaker directs the attention of the addressee). This gives rise to an alternative view on the possible meanings or uses of linguistic expressions which moves away from the idea of language as simply a tool for reflecting reality.

The proximal–distal distinction appears to be made in all languages and therefore promises to be an important window on the cognitive mechanisms underlying language production and comprehension (Piwek, Beun and Cremers 2008:3-17). This makes the treatment of proximal and distal features to be explained. To a first approximation, adopted from traditional grammar, the proximal and distal features of (this) and (that) are the features that indicate that the referent of (this) is near the speaker and the referent of (that) is distant from the speaker. If they are compared to the bare, and if bare and complex demonstratives are indeed individual concepts or quantifiers as King (2001) maintains, then there will not always be anything that can be called the referent of these phrases anyway; (Strictly speaking in fact there will not ever be such a thing).

There are also some intuitive judgments which suggest that proximals are used to refer to more important referents than distals. Lakoff (1974:350) remarks about the following examples:

(40) The prime minister made his long-awaited announcement yesterday.

This statement confirmed the speculations of many observers.

(41) The prime minister made his long-awaited announcement yesterday.

That statement confirmed the speculations of many observers.

that there seems, however, to be a subtle feeling in (40) that the speaker remains involved in the subject, and may well go on to say more about it. And in (41) distances the speaker from the report, making it less likely that he will expatiate on it. If Lakoff's analysis is followed, then (40) is a further example where the choice between "this" and "that" is influenced by the importance of the referent; assuming that speakers are more likely to continue speaking about referents which they currently deem important. Glover (2000: 915-926) argues that the choice between proximal and distal demonstratives is associated with problematic or unresolved and typically new issues versus referents with an established context, respectively.

According to (Elbourne 2008:27) referring expressions, such as demonstratives, convey information beyond their descriptive content by means of the linguistic type; when speakers formulate a referring expression they have to choose from a range of alternative types of noun phrase, including personal pronouns, definite descriptions, names, distal demonstratives and proximal demonstratives.

Botley & McEnery (2001: 7-33) suggest that also in English proximal demonstratives are more often used for reinterpretation than distals, they (Ibid)

carried out frequency counts on the demonstratives in a collection of three corpora.

Clark & Bangerter (2004: 25-49) claim that pointing acts to objects that are within reach of the speaker's arm close pointing and suggest that this type pointing allows for precise identification of the intended referent. They contrast it with distant pointing, where the things pointed at are out of arms' reach and pointing is less precise. In an experiment by Bangerter (2004), speakers tended to point less the more distant the referent was, presumably because speakers prefer precise close pointing and when this is not available seek alternative ways for identifying an object, in particular, description. This is advocated through the data in (Piwek, Beun and Cremers 2008:3-17) showing that proximals always require a pointing act. Thus, if it is true that when speakers refer to more distant objects, they also use less pointing, then when speakers refer to more distant objects, they would be expected to use fewer proximals.

Proximal and distal demonstratives can be found in all languages. This led to suspicion that despite differences in use among individual languages, there might be a universal cognitive principle underlying the use of demonstratives across languages. Piwek, Beun and Cremers (2008:3-17) proposed that a principle based on the notion of intensity of indicating can play this role, there starting point was the insight that indicating (the directing of attention) is an action which can be carried out with more or less intensity, and in this respect differs from symbolic and iconic signaling. They fleshed out this idea by

investigating intensity of indicating in relation to the cognitive notions of accessibility and importance; and succeeded in linking accessibility via intensity of indicating to the proximal/distal distinction.

Their concentration (Ibid) has been made on factors that influence the choice between a proximal and a distal demonstrative. The labels proximal and distal reflect the traditional analysis of the two term opposition as linguistically codifying the spatial concepts of nearby and faraway. Such a spatial interpretation of demonstratives is associated with their paradigmatic use for identifying objects that are located in the spatial environment of the interlocutors and can be found in entries for the terms (this) and (that) in dictionaries for English and other languages.

Though accessibility and importance are cognitive notions, they are relative to the ways that interlocutors perceive the world around them and their goals. Consequently, for different communities of language users and in different contexts, the use of proximal versus distal demonstratives can vary. It has been emphasized that all languages have a pair of deictically contrastive demonstrative terms (proximal versus distal). Most European languages are restricted to this two-way distinction. However, some languages have additional terms either indicating a position between proximal and distal, or introducing the location of the hearer .

### 9- Some Cases of Ambiguity

This section presents some cases where ambiguities may arise either in producing or interpreting sentences in which complex demonstratives are used.

The matter of using plural complex demonstratives is admittedly more complicated than of singular demonstratives. A sentence such as:

(42) Those men read a book.

might seem to share with sentences like:

(43) The men read a book.

(44) Both men read a book.

a scope ambiguity which yields one reading on which all the men read the same book and another on which each is allowed to read a different book.

This feature of plural complex demonstratives is resulted not from scope interactions but rather from general features of plural reference. Thus, obviously the following sentence :

(45) John and Albert read Hippolytus and The Trojan Women.

leaves open whether both read both plays or whether each read a different play. Thus, a similar ambiguity results here where there is no possibility of a scope-based interaction.

As further evidence that the ambiguity of plural complex demonstratives results from features of plural reference rather than features of quantifier scope interactions, is that plural complex demonstratives can also give rise to collective readings of various complexity. For example the sentence:

(46) Those men pushed a car up the hill.

can be true if the men collectively pushed a single car up the hill,

while sentences:

(47) Each man pushed a car up the hill.

(48) Both men pushed a car up the hill.

(49) The men pushed a car up the hill.

do not allow the collective reading. (48) may in fact allow the reading as slightly strained, and (49) certainly allows the collective reading.

(Deversity1991-1998:268)

According to Singular Content Theory, complex demonstratives have the same syntactic form as standard

quantifier phrases, thus if scope ambiguities are determined by syntax, then this theory entails that sentence (50) is scope ambiguous, with disambiguation indicated in (51) and (52).

(50) That spy might have existed but failed to be a spy.

(51) It might have been the case that: that spy exists but fails to be a spy.

(52) That spy is such that: it might have been the case that: he exists but fails to be a spy.

However, on the Singular Content Theory, these scope ambiguities make no difference to truth conditions with respect to contexts in which the complex demonstrative has a semantic content. For instance, in the context of (50) and (51) express the same propositions as (53) and (54), respectively, and thus either both will be true or both will be false in that context.

(53) It might have been the case that: Boris exists but fails to be a spy.

(54) Boris is such that: it might have been the case that: he exists but fails to be a spy.

Some times ambiguity may be perceived and apparently exhibited by the interaction of proper names and propositional contexts, as in:

(55) Albert believes that Superman can fly.

Here the role of gappy propositions is motivated by parallel issues concerning non-referring names. Speakers sometimes sincerely, literally, and assertively utter sentences that contain non-referring proper names. In such cases the semantic content of the sentence is a gappy proposition, and the speaker asserts and believes that gappy proposition of the uttered sentence containing a non-referring proper name. Thus, the semantic content of such a sentence in such a context is a gappy proposition and it is neither-true-nor-

false (Braun2008:14);(Deversity1991-1998:270).

Scope ambiguities involving negation do make a difference to truth values in contexts in which a complex demonstrative has no semantic content. Consider the two readings of the following sentence:

(56) That spy is not smart.

(a) It is not the case that: that spy is smart

(b) That spy is such that: he is not smart.

In a context in which 'that spy' has no semantic content, 'That spy is smart' expresses an atomic gappy proposition. If atomic gappy propositions are false, then the proposition expressed by (a) in the context is true, while the proposition expressed by (b) is false. If atomic gappy propositions are neither true nor false, then the proposition expressed by (a) in context is either false or neither true nor-false (depending on how negation works), while the proposition expressed by (b) is neither true nor-false. (Braun2008:14-15)

## 10- Conclusions

In the light of the previous discussion comparison of the different constructions connected to complex demonstratives, the researcher has come up with the following conclusions:

1-Complex demonstratives are genuine singular terms that refer to individuals, with respect to some contexts and worlds. Further, the extension of a complex demonstrative in a context and a world (if any) does not vary from world to world, when the context is fixed.

2-Complex demonstratives are rigid designators, they are obstinately rigid if a complex demonstrative refers to an object with respect to a context and a world, then it refers to that object with respect to the context and all

- worlds, whether or not the object exists at those worlds.
- 3-Although the semantic contents of (that) and (N) in a context determine the semantic content of (that N) in the context, but the semantic content of (that N) does not have the semantic contents of (that) and (N) in the context as constituents. Thus, complex demonstratives fail to be content-compositional in that strong sense. In that the semantic content of a complex demonstrative, in a context, is simply an individual, except in cases of gappy propositions.
- 4-The receiver of an utterance should expect speakers who utter sentences containing complex demonstratives in standard circumstances to assert and pragmatically convey propositions beyond those semantically expressed by the sentences they utter.
- 5-Complex demonstratives are communicative tools designed for a particular purpose, that purpose being to guide the hearer's interpretive process in (at least) two ways. Hence, complex demonstratives are designed in such a way that the hearer's interpreting a complex demonstrative first goes to a class to which the thing talked about belongs, and then goes beyond that to discover which member of the class is being talked about.
- 6-Speech production system proposes that words with similar meanings are stored in some sense "near" to each other in the mental lexicon.
- 7-Speaker's intuitions do not clearly distinguish between the semantic and the pragmatic contributions to the understanding of certain utterances. Here, then the hearer must resort to desires other than simple judgments of meaning to draw the line between semantics and pragmatics.
- 8-The communicative import of the speaker's referential intentions are best

- captured pragmatically through the notion of speaker's reference. In addition demonstration is not itself semantically significant, but rather it gives the hearer a way into the speaker's intentions which are semantically significant.
- 9-Certain difficulty in an utterance may occur in saying what proposition (if any) expressed; but no difficulty occurs in describing what is going on in this utterance. This because the notion of the proposition expressed is formulated without recognizing that there may be a discrepancy between the proposition formulated in the conceptual system or language of thought that someone tries to verbalize and the proposition yielded by the language formulation used to verbalize it (but speech errors show that these two things can come apart).
- 10-There is a proposition yielded by the language formulation (uttered), given supplementation by speaker intentions, and this proposition does not fulfill the communicative intentions of the speaker, which were presumably characterized by a different proposition formulated in the language of thought.

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### ملخص البحث:

فهم أسماء الإشارة المركبة عبر دلائلها، سياقها والمرجع

الهدف من هذا البحث هو تقديم طريقة أو وسيلة لتسهيل عملية فهم أسماء الإشارة المركبة. وهذا مَبِين من خلال إجراءات التحقيق، الشرح، ومقارنة بعض التراكيب وجوانب التعبيرات التي تتصل وتؤثر في معنى أسماء الإشارة المركبة. وعلى الرغم من أن رموز الإشارات المنفصلة لها ميل أكبر من تعبيرات أخرى لتكون مقاومة للفهرسة أو للانضمام إلا إنها من المعتقد أن تقوم بتزويد صنف من المتغيرات القابلة للتصريف الجاهزة للاستخدام والتي هي دائماً على استعداد لتعيين مرجع جديد. بما أن فهم أسماء الإشارة المعقدة يتضمن معاً العناصر المُقدّمة لغوياً، وعناصر إضافية غير مُقدّمة لغوياً (عناصر مُحدّدة بالسياق)، لذا إن المادة المُقدّمة في هذا البحث مبنية على المفاهيم الدلالية والتداولية. من المؤمل أن يقدم هذا البحث وسيلة مساعدة لمتعلمي اللغة الانكليزية لتقودهم إلى فهم واضح واستخدام صحيح لأسماء الإشارة المركبة.